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## Student participation in Service-Learning practices, perceptions of Spanish and Mexican University professors<sup>1</sup>

La participación del estudiantado en las prácticas de Aprendizaje-Servicio, percepciones de docentes universitarios españoles y mexicanos

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### Abstract

*Participation is a multidimensional concept frequently used in educational discourse, acquiring diverse meanings based on the aspects involved in its definition. It is considered the backbone of the Service-Learning (SL) pedagogical proposal. Thus, it is relevant to investigate its conception and identify the type of participation promoted by university teachers in SL projects. A qualitative study was designed with an exploratory and interpretative scope to achieve these objectives. The instrument used to collect the information was an in-depth interview with 18 university professors from Spain and Mexico. The results show that teachers' conceptions are limited due, among others issues, to institutional obstacles. It was found that there are contradictions in SL practices, on the one hand, in recognizing the importance of active participation and, on the other hand, in promoting limited participation. These contradictions allow us to inquire into the dimensions that are influencing the participation of students and teachers in SL practices.*

**Keywords:** service-learning (SL), student participation, higher education, didactic strategies.

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## Resumen

*La participación es un concepto multidimensional usado frecuentemente en el discurso educativo, en el que adquiere diversos significados a partir de los aspectos que involucra su definición. Se considera como un eje vertebrador en la propuesta pedagógica de Aprendizaje-Servicio (ApS). Por lo anterior, resulta relevante investigar sobre su concepción e identificar el tipo de participación que promueve el profesorado universitario en los proyectos de ApS. Para alcanzar estos objetivos, se diseñó un estudio cualitativo con alcance exploratorio e interpretativo. El instrumento para recopilar la información fue una entrevista en profundidad que se aplicó a 18 docentes pertenecientes a universidades de España y México. Los resultados muestran que las concepciones del profesorado son limitadas debido, entre otras cuestiones, a obstáculos institucionales. Se constató que en las prácticas de ApS, existen contradicciones, por un lado, al reconocer la importancia de la participación activa y, por otro, promover una participación limitada. Estas contradicciones permiten indagar en las dimensiones que están influyendo en la participación del alumnado y profesorado en las prácticas de ApS.*

*Palabras clave:* aprendizaje-servicio (ApS), participación estudiantil, educación superior, estrategia de enseñanza.

## Introduction and objectives

Participation is a multifaceted concept frequently used in educational discourse, posed as a means, an end or a process; its meaning is determined by the aspects that come into play. Its various definitions are categorized based on the following considerations:

a) The capacities, skills or learning it develops: this perspective is based on Hart (1998), for whom participation is the capacity to express decisions that impact one's own life or that of the community in which one lives. Similarly, Parés et al. (2012) state that:

*...participation is conceived not only as a means to improve the substantive results of decision-making on the policies under debate, but also as an end in itself, since participation produces positive results linked to the participatory process itself, i.e., learning in terms of the procedure, attitudes and values associated with participation. (p. 5)*

Moreover, Castro (2017) defines participation as a series of skills a subject acquires during their lifetime to express their views of the different situations experienced.

b) Contextual or relational conditions: Apud (2001) points out that this concept can be centered around three elements: "receiving, taking part in something and sharing" (p. 4). Borile (2011) mentions: "Participation is cooperation, responsible, direct, active and effective involvement that has an impact on social cohesion, fostering the exchange of knowledge and skills" (p. 1). Furthermore, Merino (2001) states:

*Participating is not just "taking part" in some activity or event. It is something more*

*than that. It implies a feeling of belonging, the responsibility of assuming duties and rights and becoming involved in the decisions and actions at a given moment.* (p. 9)

c) Alluding to its political meaning: Kauskopf (2008) states that participation is expressed when adolescents and young people contribute to the processes and activities of their lives and spheres in order to intervene in and influence decisions. Aguirre et al. (2012) state that "participation is a fundamental right sustained by horizontal dialogue that promotes equal opportunities and cooperation" (cited by De la Cruz & Matus, 2017, p. 9).

According to Pérez & Ochoa (2017), participation is understood as the power that individuals have to become involved in a real and genuine way in the social situations that concern them. De Puelles (2014) points out that it is also a quality factor of democracies: all countries that consider themselves democratic must frame citizen training through active participation in their public policies. Rodríguez and Macinko (1994) argue that the process of youth empowerment (Figure 1) requires participation, but warn of the need to distinguish the two terms: many of the activities in which young people are involved respond to a type of participation that Folgueiras et al. (2019) describe as simple or consultative, with few proposals for action based on projective participation or meta-participation where young people are protagonists. Studies conducted by different authors (Fielding, 2011; Hart, 1998) on the intervention of students show that not all projects promote a type of participation and involvement that empowers them.

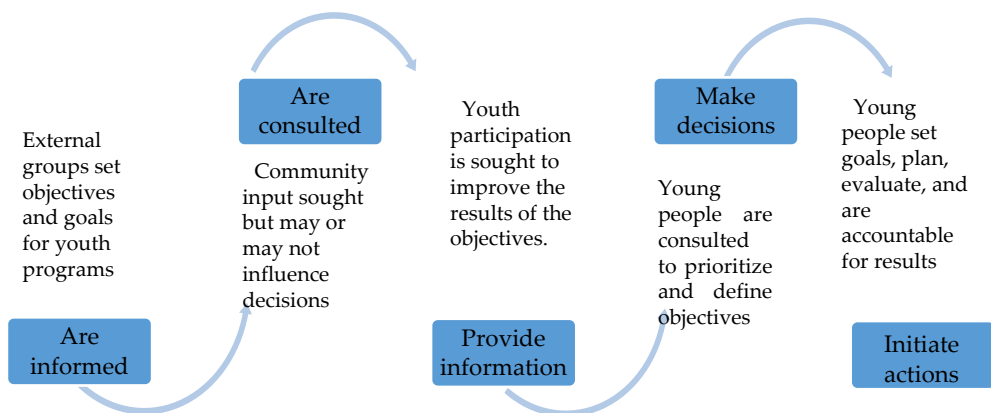


Figure 1. Youth empowerment process. Source: Prepared by the authors based on Rodríguez and Macinko (1994).

Therefore, the concept of participation acquires meaning and significance according to the related aspect leading to multiple interpretations and ways of promoting it. In this text, we understand participation as a right, an exercise of social action to transform the various problems faced. It is a practice and a process that involves making decisions to achieve common goals. Its impulse is undeniable regarding the type of participation promoted in educational institutions. However, it is reduced, limited to the academic environment, and controlled by adults (De la Concepción, 2015). Therefore, it is necessary to facilitate organizational processes whose objective is a community vision of collective action, with an ethic that seeks to generate social solidarity and individual well-being. That is to say, the participation promoted in schools should tend to democratize them so everyone can participate. Democratic education, according to Bolívar (2016):

*...is a first-order value, educational in itself, with participation at all levels: school and classroom management, coexistence, etc., and must more radically affect the fundamental decisions that determine the very nature of the school and the curriculum". (p. 71)*

Democracy in the school context encompasses not only formal mechanisms and representative bodies but also the forms of relationships, with daily experiences that encourage it, including participation. Astin (1999, p. 519, cited in Parejo, 2016) proposes a theory of student engagement based on the following assumptions: a) it refers to the investment of physical and psychological energy in various objectives; b) it occurs along a continuum: different students manifest different degrees of participation for a given objective; c) it possesses quantitative and qualitative characteristics that describe it; d) the amount of student learning and personal development associated with any educational program is directly proportional to the quality and quantity of their participation in that program; e) the effectiveness of any educational policy or practice is directly related to its ability to increase student participation.

In higher education, one of its functions is "to form citizens who participate actively in society and are open to the world, and to promote the strengthening of endogenous capacities and consolidation within a framework of justice, human rights, sustainable development, democracy and peace" (UNESCO, 1998, p. 4) implying that:

*...decision-makers at the national and institutional levels should place students and their needs at the center of their concerns and consider them essential participants and responsible actors in the process of higher education renewal. These principles should include the participation of students in issues related to this education, in evaluation, in the renewal of teaching methods and programs and, within the existing institutional framework, in the development of policies and the management of establishments. (UNESCO, 1998, p. 9)*

However, in 2016, the same organization called for the promotion of Global Citizenship Education as an approach that "seeks to empower learners to take active

roles both locally and globally, to face and solve global challenges and, ultimately, to become proactive contributors to a more just, peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, safe, secure and sustainable world" (UNESCO, 2016, p. 5). Ultimately become proactive contributors to a more just, peaceful, tolerant, inclusive, safe and sustainable world" (UNESCO, 2016, p.16). Various active methodologies (action research, participatory action research, project-based learning, problem-based learning, service-learning, etc.) have been used to encourage the participation of various stakeholders in formal education. This paper focuses on Service-Learning (hereinafter, SL) since we are interested in investigating university professors' perception of student participation.

SL projects are participatory pedagogical practices with theoretical and methodological roots in the postulates of the Active School. Some of the closest referents are Dewey (1995, cited by Gezuraza & García, 2018; Mayor, 2013, 2019), through the notion of experiential learning, and Freinet (1972), for whom pedagogical action is eminently social and, consequently, political. For the latter author, the origin of all knowledge is action, the experience related to the social life of the student body.

According to Puig and Palos (2006), SL, as a multidimensional and interdisciplinary object of study, is shaped by multiple theories, trends and purposes embodied in singular projects in each context where it is implemented. The analyses carried out in recent decades have made it possible to build an international consensus based on three interrelated axes, which serve to point out its contours and limits: the connection of learning with activities derived from service to the community in a pedagogical action, the policies aimed at improving or transforming reality, and the participation of the various agents in the different phases of the project (Mayor & Granero, 2021; Tapia, 2010).

The concreteness of student participation in SL depends on the socio-cultural contexts, institutional policies, training of teachers, students and community partners, type of service, duration of the projects, responsibilities assumed, etc. The analysis of these dimensions in each of the projects implemented highlights the types of participation and levels of involvement promoted, as well as their focus and scope.

Folgueiras et al. (2019), taking up Trilla and Novella (2001), propose to characterize the levels of participation identified in SL projects:

- Simple participation: the student body is not involved in the preparation or decisions regarding the content or development of the project.
- Consultative participation: the student body has a say in the project.
- Projective participation: the students participate in defining the project, determining its meaning and objectives, the design, planning, execution and evaluation.
- Meta-participation: the student body requests, demands or generates new spaces and mechanisms for participation in the project.

However, whatever the modality or typology of participation in SL experiences, the common factor is the students' protagonism, understood as a greater degree of autonomy in the teaching-learning process, made possible by the educational

accompaniment of the teacher (García & Mendía, 2015). Due to this complexity, the present study has the following objectives: a) to analyze the conception of participation shown by university professors who implement SL practices; b) to identify the type of participation they claim to promote in the projects they carry out.

### **State of the art**

Furco (2019) offers a panoramic image that helps to visualize the general trends and results of SL research: while 89% of studies refer to the learning acquired by the students, only 5% analyze the influence of the projects on the teachers involved in their implementation. Four percent show the processes put in place to promote the institutionalization of SL; two percent show the influences of the practices in the community and the analysis of the conceptual aspects that support it. The above data allow us to warn of the need to generate knowledge regarding the influence that the implementation of an SL project may or may not have. This trend was also observed in the study by Escofet et al. (2016), where only six of the 22 studies reviewed referred to teachers. The review by Salam et al. (2019) has compiled evidence regarding the benefits of SL for all participants, likewise, appreciating a greater amount of learner-centered literature.

Although several studies have shown that SL fosters values related to the social and democratic commitment from the formative exercise of critical citizenship (Folgueiras & Martínez, 2008; Folgueiras et al., 2020; Naval et al., 2011; Puig et al., 2011; Salam et al., 2019), few studies focus their interest on participation as a fundamental element of SL projects. Likewise, there is research that analyses the following:

- the opinion of university students regarding the obligatory/voluntary nature of participation in SL projects (Chan et al., 2021);
- the existence of barriers to access and full participation in SL experiences by low socioeconomic students of color (Deters, 2021);
- understanding the relationships between service, power relations, participation and learning in SL experiences in South Africa (Osman and Attwood, 2007, cited by Van Eeden et al., 2021);
- the perception of students and faculty on participation in university SL and its contribution to learning, personal and social development (Santos et al., 2020a, 2020b);
- the benefits for university faculty to improve their teaching skills, educational productivity, as well as their accountability and civic engagement by engaging in situated learning activities with the student body (Kinloch et al., 2015);
- the generation of a competency framework for "participatory readiness" of the student body to become collaborators in developing university-community partnerships (Allen, 2016, cited by Chung et al., 2018);

- the identification of the type and level of student participation, the skills and competencies acquired, the characteristics of the services provided, and their satisfaction levels (Folgueiras et al., 2020);
- the study of university faculty's perception of their involvement and participation in SL projects through the stages of adoption identified by the transtheoretical model (TTM) (Hou & Wilder, 2015);
- the analysis of educational policy regarding the introduction of Education for Democratic Citizenship through political participation through SL (Annette, 2005).

Concerning the participation that is developed explicitly in SL projects, Martínez and Folgueiras (2015) show that participatory evaluation in the diagnostic, implementation and results stages of an SL project allows for reaching a higher level of reflection on the meaning of the service and what is learned in relation to generic competencies.

Folgueiras et al. (2016) present partial results of a comprehensive analysis of SL projects. The authors show that the students who have participated actively are, in turn, the ones who feel more satisfied with their intervention. In another 2019 study, they analyzed the participation of university students who carry out SL projects and inquired into the perceptions of both students and faculty. Among the results, it is highlighted that the students associate the concept of participation with commitment, collaboration, and interest; the teachers emphasize the social commitment implied by the intervention of the students; on the other hand, most of both agents value the optional nature of the projects as a condition to motivate participation. Another relevant fact is that both groups indicated that time is a factor that conditions participation in SL projects.

In contrast, through documentary research, Sotelino et al. (2019) show that experiences in SL projects with the involvement of Third-Sector entities contribute to developing competencies for citizen participation.

Furthermore, a paper has recently been published that identifies and compiles the competencies that are acquired in SL projects through the global sense of their practice, their different phases and tasks in the so-called *Map of service-learning values* where citizen participation is found in the central values related to the purpose of SL (Martín et al., 2021).

In conclusion, studies on SL and participation focus on the following issues of student involvement: type of participation, equity/barriers to participation and learning outcomes from participation.

## **Methodology**

This work focuses on a qualitative, exploratory, descriptive, and interpretative research approach. For the inquiry, the quasi-ethnographic method (Silva & Burgos, 2011) was chosen to observe a specific aspect in a small population group.

## **Participants**

Sampling was non-probability purposive. The criterion for the inclusion of participants was their involvement in SL projects. Of the 18 participants, seven were from the University of Almeria, six from the University of Extremadura and five from the Autonomous University of Querétaro, Mexico (Table 1).

Table 1

*Sociodemographic distribution of the participating sample.*

Informant code	Gender	Age	University	Teaching staff categories
E-1	M	55	Almeria	Full Professor*
E-2	F	53	Almeria	Ph. D Assistant Professor**
E-3	F	63	Almeria	Full Professor*
E-4	M	32	Almeria	Temporary Interim Professor***
E-5	F	34	Almeria	Ph. D Assistant Professor**
E-6	F	46	Almeria	Ph. D Assistant Professor**
E-7	F	50	Almeria	Full Professor*
E-8	M	47	Extremadura	Scientific and Research Staff***
E-9	F	61	Extremadura	Full Professor*
E-10	F	38	Extremadura	Temporary Interim Professor***
E-11	F	54	Extremadura	Ph. D Assistant Professor**
E-12	F	44	Extremadura	Ph. D Associate Professor*
E-13	F	33	Extremadura	Temporary Interim Professor***
E-14	F	42	Querétaro	Temporary Interim Professor***
E-15	M	38	Querétaro	Temporary Interim Professor***
E-16	M	38	Querétaro	Temporary Interim Professor**
E-17	M	36	Querétaro	Temporary Interim Professor**
E-18	F	49	Querétaro	Full professor*

Source: Own elaboration.

\*Tenured

\*\*Contract-based but applying for tenure

\*\*\* Contract-based

## Instrument

A semi-structured in-depth interview was used, elaborated *ex profeso*. This was created based on the review of documents that included research carried out in the Anglo-Saxon and Latin American contexts. Two specialists in the study field validated the questions. The final script comprised 20 questions organized in the following sections: reasons that support the interventions, perceptions about the participation of the different agents, knowledge about the theoretical and methodological bases,



previous training, influence of SL in their professional development, evaluation processes, potentials and difficulties experienced by teachers who intervene in SL practices. This article presents the results related to the perceptions that teachers have about student participation.

Interviews were carried out between October 3 and December 14, 2020. After informing the participants of the voluntary and anonymous nature of the research, consent was obtained, and the interviews were conducted via videoconference. For the record, a literal transcription of everything that occurred and was expressed in the video was used to eliminate the researcher's bias and ensure the data's credibility and dependence or replicability (Simons, 2011). The transcript was returned to each informant to verify the content's fidelity and ensure the ethical criteria and credibility of the discourse.

### Data analysis

Data analysis was done by selecting discursive fragments and grouping them into theoretical and inductive analysis categories through *Atlas.ti* Web software. A general reading of the corpus was carried out to approximate the content, which allowed an initial identification of recurrences; subsequently, it was categorized by two complementary strategies: deductive and inductive. In the first case, the categories were derived from the conceptual framework; in the second, they emerged from the data (Strauss & Corbin, 2001), which were organized into three sections (see Table 2): characterization of participation, levels of participation, and knowledge, skills and values developed.

Table 2

*Categories and subcategories of analysis.*

Categories	Subcategories
Characteristics of participation	Mandatory Active
Levels of participation	Simple Consultative Projective Metaparticipation
Knowledge, skills and values developed	Reflection Awareness/Engagement Conflict resolution Significant curricular knowledge

Source: Own elaboration.

## Results and discussion

Participation implies being and taking part, that is, being involved in the activity. As mentioned by Parejo (2016):

*To be part of a community is synonymous with social bonding and integration... Participation refers to the substantive dimension by which the student is a member of the university. Belonging to the university makes students' participation an active and conscious behavior of being and being part of a community to the extent that they collaborate within it.... (p. 153)*

Based on this quote, the university is understood as a promoter of participation that generates social awareness and responsibility. That is why, in this work, participation results in SL practices are characterized as mandatory and active.

### **Mandatory participation**

In the results of this study, although teachers recognize the possibility of SL to promote student involvement, they also refer to mandatory participation due to institutional limitations to develop it, such as requiring time, small groups, teachers' recognition of the work involved in this practice, integration of contents, among others. See these responses:

*I have many students assigned to me, which forces me to be directive and make decisions regarding objectives and some activities. (E-7)*

*The four-month courses do not allow students to deepen their knowledge. (E-4)*

*I would like it to be more dynamic and involved, but sometimes I have difficulties initially. The student teacher arrives having learned well the role of the passive learner. (E-3)*

*Old style, sometimes mandatory ... but experience has shown me that our students, many times, however voluntary, don't sign up because they don't see compelling reasons. (E-9)*

*You have to think very hard. It is more convenient to perform traditional practices that take place inside the classroom. (E-2)*

Some of the interviewees referred to their vision of participation, their notion of being a student, as well as their understanding of teaching:

*Initially, my vision of participation, considering that in my formative process as a student, I had never worked with active methodologies, only transmissive ones where I explain and propose, and they, seated, respond and do. Initially, I related participation with attendance and whether they intervened during class. Working with SL has changed my perspective on education and participation. (E-5)*

*It has been difficult for me to change my perception of participation because I had never done it before. It has also changed my role as a teacher. (E-6)*

## Active participation

Participation is a process that impacts the personal dimension, which generates both personal and institutional identity, which in turn affects the motivation to get involved in various educational activities, such as SL projects. Given the non-institutionalization of SL in the universities explored, the people interviewed noted that, although this can be an obstacle, participation is active and voluntary when the student body is familiar with the methodology.

*That's right, because like this, anyone who is not motivated initially is not given a chance to experience it, so then you are unable to change their understanding or learning experience. However, due to the difficulty in initiating and managing so many people, the fact that it is voluntary and based on motivation makes it easier to manage this type of activity. (E-12)*

In both categories, there are institutional obstacles that determine whether participation is mandatory or, indeed, if they have agency, understood as the possibility of acting in the face of various situations. In both categories, the following institutional obstacles are shown: teachers' approaches to participation, tensions between project implementation times and their influence on student awareness, and time constraints to articulate SL actions as participatory projects of a pedagogical and political nature. These obstacles determine whether participation is mandatory or agency, which is understood as the possibility of acting in various situations .

## Levels of participation

The SL is committed to developing active participation that allows social transformation, positioning the student body as agents of change with sensitivity, commitment and empathy with social needs. However, as the above results show, participation starts with the involvement and agency of the student body. Therefore, following Folgueiras et al. (2021), the results obtained are classified as follows:

1) Simple participation: the students are not involved in the preparation and decisions about the content or development of the project. As the results show, it is determined by institutional conditions:

*I have many students assigned to me, which forces me to be directive and make decisions regarding objectives and some activities, leaving them free, within certain margins, to decide on some issues. For example, the theme they are going to work on. (E-7)*

*In four-month subjects, students often cannot actively participate in all phases of the project since there would not be enough time to complete the project. In this sense, in some phases, student participation is more passive. (E-1)*

*Participation is different in each activity. In the practice of the subject, "the invasive plant," they participated as interlocutors but not in the SL design. (E-8)*

2) Consultative participation: the student body gives its opinion on the project, as expressed:

*Identification and participation of students in the detection of needs. (E-5)*

*...Or they look for them, more or less, what is the need they want to work on so that they feel involved (even if it is proposed or suggested). (E-11)*

*Leading role: I give them options so that they can choose the entity. (E-2)*

The above results show that the students' margin of protagonism is low; although participation is a process, it is necessary to plan interventions in which they assume more responsibility to increase their involvement.

3) Projective participation: participates in the definition of the project, in determining its meaning and objectives; in the design, planning, implementation and evaluation, which would imply participating actively in the areas of political, pedagogical, organizational and social life of the institution:

*I find it interesting that they see, feel, think and try to bring about change and see what they can do to improve engagement. (E-10)*

*Strong participation (at assembly) in the different phases of the project...deciding where to intervene, joint analysis of the reality, choice of the project's name, number of sessions, evaluation, etc. If we want the students to be involved, they have to participate in making decisions about the different issues of the project. (E-4)*

*The projects can always be planned with them to detect the needs and see that they have the capacity and competence to solve them by applying what they will learn in class. (E-11)*

To achieve these levels of participation, a redistribution of power is required concerning decision-making: assumption of responsibilities and involvement in actions (Merino, 2001).

4) Meta-participation: the student body requests, demands or generates new spaces and mechanisms to participate in the project. For Rodriguez & Macinko (1994), this level consists of youth empowerment; they warn that there must be a distinction between empowerment and participation since many of the activities in which young people are involved remain focused on participation but rarely lead to empowerment. In the interviews conducted, teachers did not identify this level of participation in SL practices.

## **Knowledge, skills and values developed**

Several studies have shown that SL develops knowledge and values in students (Arellano & Jones, 2018; Furco, 2011, 2019; Ma & Law, 2019; Martín et al., 2021; Puig, 2016). In the recent work of Martín et al. (2021), a proposal is made to observe the following values acquired in the practice of SL: altruism and cooperation, citizen participation and transformative learning. These are transversal in the different phases

of the project.

*Altruism and cooperation refer to the development of behaviors that move away from the logic of individual interest and are based on mutual help, hospitality and the necessary interdependence of the members of a collectivity. Citizen participation refers to promoting the incorporation of students as active citizens in their community, a protagonism that allows them to contribute to the common good. Transformative learning refers to the desire to give civic meaning to knowledge, which is useful for improving reality and allows students to transform the world in which they live. (p. 18)*

The above can be seen in the results as teachers identify student participation with characteristics of citizen participation:

*They get a practical experience in democracy building; it helps to develop these characteristics of the political adult. (E-16)*

*I was surprised by the motivation and involvement of the students in SL practices. They feel useful, becoming become aware that they can contribute to society. (E-5)*

*Active participation empowers students as agents of change. (E-4)*

Empathy and collaboration are also highlighted:

*They have the chance to live the experience of approaching their fellow human beings and having contact with other people as humans, which promotes empathy, an ethically challenging experience. (E-17)*

In addition to developing transformative learning, they are the protagonists, and from this, they strengthen their skills:

*...they realize how they can transform realities through their learning. (E-16)*

*It promotes their active participation as agents of change. It develops social awareness and the acquisition of values. (E-4)*

In the findings, other processes are also shown, such as the necessary self-reflection of what was learned during the project:

*From the project's development, a more complex process of reflection is noticed, so it is no longer seen as a school activity but as an activity of personal involvement. (E-15)*

Finally, we note that SL practices develop the psychological, pedagogical, political and socio-community dimensions of participation.

## **Conclusions**

Student participation is an aspect that universities should promote, not only because it is a right but also because it is a central element in student learning processes to achieve satisfactory academic results (Mayor, 2019), achieve motivation to learn (Furco, 2019) and develop values for democratic coexistence (Martin et al., 2021). Concerning the first aim of the study, teachers display limited knowledge about the relationship between participation and SL practices, even though they try to implement it. In

addition to the above, these efforts are mediated by different institutional conditions, including, among others, time, the number of students served, and the inertia of the students themselves to adopt changes in their teachers' practices.

Concerning participation in SL projects specifically, in Mexico, university social service is developed, wherein students are expected to give back to society with their knowledge and university values. However, research on this practice (Escalante et al., 2018; Hernández & Magaña, 2015; Mungaray & Ocegueda, 1999) mention that, over time, it has weakened and lost its original meaning: to improve and transform reality (Morton, 1995). For SL practices to promote student meta-participation (Folgueiras et al., 2019) and materialize (Zarzuela & García, 2020), they must be articulated in time frames beyond developing a semester or four-month course. For this reason, collaboration among faculty from different degrees and courses is required.

As for the second study aim, the participation that is most evident in this research, although active, tends to be simple or consultative and not very projective. For practices to stop being adult-centric, students must assume increasing responsibilities in the different phases: design, implementation and evaluation. This requires generating spaces and mechanisms for participation so that students can assume responsibilities.

With regards to the emerging category of the knowledge and values that the teachers interviewed noted being developed with participation, the results of this study are consistent with the findings of numerous investigations (Arellano & Jones, 2018; Furco, 2011, 2019; Ma & Law, 2019; Puig, 2016). These studies also perceive that participation develops meaningful knowledge and promotes values, such as citizen participation, empathy and transformative learning (Martín et al., 2021) and the progression entailed by the levels of participation proposed by Parejo (2016).

Given the above, to obtain a panoramic picture of teachers' understanding and the types of participation they promote in their SL practices, it is necessary to broaden the sample of participants and regions in Spain and Mexico and use questionnaires and focus groups to obtain more information.

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