

## Perception of the implementation of virtual Service Learning, in nutrition students and community partners.

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**Abstract.** Introduction: Service learning in virtual mode is a strategy that allows adapting to the new challenges of education, through alternatives of solidarity action that allows working with the community, without geographical limitations. Objective: To determine the perception of students and community partners about the virtualization experience of the service learning strategy. Method: Mixed, exploratory, non-experimental, descriptive and cross-sectional. The sample consisted of 43 students and 22 community partners who met the inclusion criteria. The perception of the students was evaluated through a focus group and self-evaluation. Community partners responded to an online survey. The ethical aspects were safeguarded according to the ethical principles of Helsinki. Results: The satisfaction of community partners was high. The students' average self-assessment was 6.52. Over 90% agree or strongly agree with their performance in relation to generic competencies. The APSv strategy was associated with the concepts of; Professional skills, motivation, effective communication, strengths, feelings, emotions, reflection, feedback, teamwork, virtuality and suggestions. Conclusions: The APSv favors the integration of competencies that link the student with the community, through digital tools achieving meaningful learning.

**Keywords:** Virtual Service Learning, Service Learning, Meaningful Learning, Nutrition and Dietetics.

### 1 Introduction

Service Learning in virtual mode (APSv), is a teaching-learning strategy that allows adapting to the new challenges of current education, providing a multidimensional open space of collaborative environments, through new alternatives of solidarity action that allows working with the community, without geographical limitations.

In a public university in southern Chile, in the nutrition and dietetics career, the virtual service-learning strategy (APSv) was implemented, in the subject of "adult clinical nutrition workshop", taught in the fourth year of its formative stage.

The objective of the research was to determine the perception of students and community partners about the virtualization experience of the service-learning strategy implemented in the subject "Workshop on clinical nutrition of adults" of the nutrition and dietetics career of a Chilean public university.

## **2 Theoretical Framework**

Service-learning is defined as a teaching innovation methodology that allows students to approach reality (Santiago et al., 2021). This methodology has been applied in careers in the area of health sciences, which during the COVID-19 pandemic there was a process of adaptation to virtuality, being virtual service learning (APSV), an innovative modality that allows integrating technological tools, providing a service to the community without limitations of geographical location (García et al., 2021). It should be noted that there is greater bibliographic evidence of the application of PHC methodology in health sciences careers such as Nursing, Kinesiology, Obstetrics, among others and to a lesser extent experiences in nutrition students.

## **3 Methods**

Mixed, exploratory, non-experimental, descriptive, and cross-sectional design. The sample was intentional non-probabilistic of 43 students and 22 community partners. The inclusion criteria were adults, elderly people who had 2 or more cardiovascular and/or digestive pathologies, and who agreed to participate in the research through informed consent administered online. Students who took the adult clinical nutrition workshop during the second semester during the emergency remote education period due to COVID-19 and who agreed to participate in this research through informed consent were selected. Subjects who refused to be part of the study or who did not complete the survey were excluded. The APSV strategy was implemented through the following stages: motivation, diagnosis, design - planning, execution, and closure (Tapia, 2000) and at the end the perception of the students was evaluated through a focus group and self-evaluation. Community partners answered the "Evaluation of the service-learning methodology in virtuality". The ethical aspects were safeguarded according to the ethical principles of Helsinki.

## **4 Results**

A high level of satisfaction was observed on the part of the community partners (over 90% "strongly agree"). The students' average self-assessment was 6.52 (grade scale 1.0 to 7.0). Highlighting that over 90% agree or strongly agree with their performance in relation to generic competencies. With regard to the perception of the time spent, motivation, study of the contents and satisfaction, the students expressed an average of 66% to be "very much in agreement". The APSV strategy was associated with the

concepts of, Professional skills, motivation, effective communication, strengths, feelings, emotions, reflection, feedback, teamwork, virtuality and suggestions.

## **5 Discussion**

A high level of satisfaction was observed on the part of the community partners (over 90% "strongly agree"). The students' average self-assessment was 6.52 (grade scale 1.0 to 7.0). Highlighting that over 90% agree or strongly agree with their performance in relation to generic competencies. Regarding the self-evaluation of the students of the present research, the average of the course group was 6.52 (grade scale 1.0 to 7.0). Notably, over 90% agree or strongly agree with their performance in relation to generic competencies, findings similar to those reported in previous research (Mella-Núñez et al., 2015).

## **6 Conclusions**

The APSv is a methodology that contributes to the development of competencies for the student in emergency remote education, but its evolution is not limited to the socio-health contingency, which challenges the implementation of the APS in hybrid mode, where the component of virtuality of technological innovations and mediations is complemented by face-to-face activities of work with the community.

## **7 Limitations and Future Research**

The limitation of the study is related to the difficulties that arise when implementing an educational innovation strategy such as planning, teacher training, improvement of the teaching-learning process, associated resources, among others (Gonzalez and Henning, 2020). Further studies are needed with a larger sample of participants, including students, community partners and academics, and it is suggested to assess the level of achievement of the skills acquired by students.

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