

# Implementation of Service-Learning in Madrid Primary Schools

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*Service-Learning (SL) is an experiential educational approach that engages students in solving real-world problems within their local environments, thereby enhancing both learning and community well-being. This study conducts a quantitative analysis of SL implementation in primary education across the Community of Madrid, using data from questionnaires distributed among local schools. From 262 responses, descriptive statistics and non-parametric tests were applied. The findings highlight that, despite the recognized benefits of SL and the interest from many teachers in adopting this approach, there is a significant lack of adequate training during both initial teacher training and ongoing professional development. SL projects, though infrequent, have been implemented across various grades, with a higher occurrence in the later stages, and have covered all subjects, most notably Social and Civic Values. However, the overall implementation of the SL methodology remains sparse in the Community of Madrid.*

*Keywords: service-learning, questionnaire, primary education, teacher training, quantitative investigation*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Educational practices require a deep transformation in order to adapt to the demands of today's society, which calls for a more active, participatory, responsible citizenship committed to sustainable and global development, as well as to their own lifelong learning (Banks et al., 2007; Faure et al., 1973; UNESCO, 2016 and 2017). Only through educational innovation can students be prepared as conscious, empowered citizens committed to social welfare. Educational centers must therefore provide them with the tools, values and skills necessary to face current and future challenges, and to contribute positively to the construction of a more just, sustainable and equitable world.

In this context, Service-Learning (SL) is defined as an educational philosophy capable of promoting both the active participation of students and the work of curricular elements outside the classroom (Martín-

García et al., 2021). The SL is "a special way of combining two well-known educational methods in active pedagogies: experiential learning and community service action" (Lucas-Mangas & Martínez-Odría, 2012, p. 1). To this end, it implements actions that benefit society and the community in which the student lives (Batlle, 2020), resulting in reciprocal benefits between those who provide the service and those who receive it (García-Gutiérrez et al., 2016). This convergence of actions allows the student to become an active person capable of offering solutions to the different social problems of his/her environment. The SL, therefore, involves an educational proposal "that combines learning processes and community service in a single well-articulated project in which participants learn to work on real needs of the environment in order to improve it" (Puig-Rovira et al., 2011, p. 53).

Following a review of research on SL to demonstrate its pedagogical possibilities, Martínez-Odría (2007) identifies certain components that a SL project should include and that differentiate it from other community-based educational experiences and volunteer services (see Table 1):

**TABLE 1**  
**COMPONENTS OF A SERVICE-LEARNING PROJECT**

<b>Student protagonism</b>	Students identify needs and design, implement and evaluate service projects.
<b>Attention to a real need</b>	The detection of a real need is decisive in determining the focus of the project and the success of its results.
<b>Connecting curricular objectives</b>	The design, execution and evaluation of the project is carried out in accordance with the objectives of each curricular area involved in its development.
<b>Implementation of the service project</b>	The design of the project must culminate in its execution in order to respond to the community need detected.
<b>Reflection</b>	It is the element that favors the continuous evaluation of the different phases and guarantees the internalization of the curricular learning objectives.

Source: Martínez-Odría (2007, p. 631).

From these components derive the benefits associated with the incorporation of SL in the educational setting —according to numerous studies (Aramburuzabala, 2013; Aramburuzabala et al., 2015; Belando-Montoro & Carrasco, 2018; Culcasi et al., 2021; Escofet, 2020; García-Gutiérrez & Ruiz-Corbella, 2020; García-Gutiérrez et al., 2020; García-Gutiérrez et al., 2021; Gómez-Gómez et al., 2021; Rutti et al., 2016; Sandía & Montilva, 2020; Soslau & Yost, 2007)—, including:

1. Active and meaningful understanding: SL allows children to learn in an active way, engaging in projects that have a real purpose and positively impact the community. This connection between learning and service helps them to gain a deeper understanding of the subjects studied and to apply what they learn in real situations. This enhances their personal growth and promotes their formation as active, informed, responsible, committed citizens who generate social change.
2. Development of social and emotional skills: Through SL, children have the chance to interact with different people and communities, which promotes the development of social skills such as empathy, collaboration, effective communication and teamwork. They also develop a sense of responsibility, generosity and gratitude towards others.
3. Encouraging critical thinking and problem solving: the SL gives children the opportunity to confront real challenges and problems in their community, so they are motivated to think critically, seek creative solutions, and develop problem-solving skills. This helps them to

develop a reflective and critical approach to problems, as well as gain confidence in their ability to deal with them.

4. Improved academic performance: It has been observed that by participating in meaningful, hands-on activities, students are actively engaged in the learning process, which can lead to greater retention of knowledge and skills, and consequently a positive impact on academic performance. In addition, the SL fosters interest in learning, leading to greater engagement and motivation in the classroom.
5. Developing civic and citizenship awareness: Participating in SL projects helps children understand the needs of their community and contribute in a positive way. The acquisition of humanistic values — solidarity, social and civic responsibility, social justice, etc.— is thus encouraged, laying the foundations for becoming committed citizens in the present and the future.

Thus, Service-Learning offers academic and social benefits to elementary students: it provides them with a more meaningful education, promotes the development of important skills, and fosters an attitude of service and commitment to the community.

### **Teacher Training**

In order to carry out effective Service-Learning projects, it is essential to implement a series of measures, among which the initial and continuous training of teachers in this methodology stands out.

As for initial teacher training in Spain, it generally includes pedagogical and didactic knowledge, as well as curricular content. However, specific training in SL may be limited or not included in their curriculum. Therefore, some teachers may not have received in-depth preparation on how to effectively design and carry out Service-Learning projects. In that sense, the literature review prepared by García-García & Cotrina-García (2015) reveals that, in initial teacher training, SL reaches its maximum potential through a critical approach and they collect preceding studies (Aramburuzabala & García, 2012; Bates et al., 2009; Castellán, 2013) to affirm that the inclusion of Service-Learning in teacher education plays a significant role in the development of their professional awareness and competence, as future teachers acquire aspects of the profession that are rarely addressed in the conventional subjects of their curricula.

Taking into account the relevance of SL training from undergraduate studies, Álvarez-Castillo et al. (2017) also conducted a literature review with the aim of quantifying and characterizing the SL training offer in Spanish universities. While the results indicate an increase in Service-Learning training offerings, there were significant limitations identified that affect the practical orientation and hinder the coordinated planning of learning ecologies. As the authors note, this considerably reduces the reflective, cooperative and transformative impact expected from this methodology. Based on this diagnosis, the inclusion of training activities in multi-year plans, the combination of socio-critical and practical approaches, and the strengthening of collaboration between universities and community partners are suggested.

In addition to initial training, continuous training is essential for teachers to update their pedagogical approaches and improve their educational practices, adapted to the plurality of situations generated as a result of constant social changes (Correia, 2008). In the case of Service-Learning, it is important that teachers participate in professional development programs that train them specifically in this methodology, which will allow them to understand the principles and strategies of Service-Learning, as well as to acquire skills for its implementation. In this sense, it is worth highlighting the outstanding work of the Centro Promotor de Aprendizaje-Servicio (Center for the Promotion of Service-Learning) and the Zerbikas Foundation, who have carried out valuable documentation work and have promoted intense training aimed at teachers and other educational and social actors (Lucas-Mangas & Martínez-Odria, 2012).

While training is essential, teachers must have resources and institutional support, including access to appropriate teaching materials, time allocated in the school curriculum, administrative support, and collaboration with other teachers and the local community. However, without the necessary institutional support, teachers may face difficulties in implementing Service-Learning projects effectively (Sartor-Harada et al., 2020). Moreover, SL often requires collaboration between different disciplines and curricular areas, so it is necessary to work as a team with other teachers to integrate the projects in a cross-cutting

manner in the curriculum. Teacher training should encourage interdisciplinary collaboration and provide strategies to address this integrated approach (Gilabert & Bernabé, 2020).

### **The SL in Spain**

The term *service-learning* emerged in the United States in 1966, although projects had been carried out earlier (Trilla, 2009). However, it was not established until the 1990s, so it is considered a relatively recent methodology; in Spain, it was not until the beginning of the 21st century that it began to have a presence. Despite its short history in our country, its expansion has been remarkable thanks, above all, to the diffusion promoted by national associations and organizations, among which the Red Española de Aprendizaje-Servicio (Spanish Network of Service-Learning) (REDAPS by its Spanish acronym), founded in 2010, stands out (Villa, 2021). This non-profit organization is made up of "educational centers, teacher training centers, social entities, universities, other local initiatives... all of them with a common focus of interest: to promote and disseminate Service-Learning" (Red Española de Aprendizaje-Servicio, s.f.a).

This educational proposal has been acquiring a greater presence in Spanish legislation and, consequently, in the pedagogical field. Accordingly, the recently implemented Organic Law 3/2020, of December 29, amending Organic Law 2/2006, of May 3, 2006, on Education (LOMLOE) calls for the curricular incorporation of the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes needed to live a successful life, make informed decisions and take an active role in facing and solving problems common to all citizens of the world. In addition, many studies on the use of SL in multiple contexts have been published in recent years. In the case of Primary Education, several experiences have been documented, among which those of Mayor (2017 and 2019), Uruñuela (2018), Piñana (2018), Gutiérrez et al. (2019) and Álvarez-Muñoz et al. (2021). This research confirms the adaptability of SL to suit local contexts and address global challenges. Likewise, experiences aligned with sustainable development and the 2030 Agenda are observed, thus supporting the usefulness of this methodology to meet the new legislative requirements promoted by the LOMLOE.

On the other hand, some autonomous communities have launched some initiatives, evidencing the growing interest in SL in the educational field. These initiatives include the following (Red Española de Aprendizaje-Servicio, s.f.b):

- In Asturias, SL training has been incorporated since 2014 and there have been annual calls for awards on this methodology since 2016.
- In the Canary Islands, the government has promoted a selection of SL projects to improve the environment.
- In Andalusia, the Government evaluated during 2018 the SL projects developed in its community, preparing a census and designing quality indicators.

However, in the context of the Community of Madrid (CAM), the extent of the use of SL in Primary Education and the degree of knowledge that teachers have about its characteristics are unknown, so research is needed to know these variables in order to evaluate its application in Primary Education in Madrid. Thus, this research has the following objectives:

1. To know the current level of implementation of the SL in the schools that teach Primary Education in the CAM.
2. To find out if there are significant differences in the implementation of this methodology according to the type of center and the training received (initial and continuous) on SL.
3. To inquire about the subjects and courses in which SL projects have been developed in the Community of Madrid.

## METHOD

### Design

In order to achieve the objectives described above, a descriptive, cross-sectional, quantitative research study was designed using the survey method, which is frequently used in other research on SL, such as that of Sánchez-Calleja et al. (2019). Specifically, a structured questionnaire was prepared and completed by active primary school teachers from public, subsidized and private schools in the CAM. Descriptive studies and the use of structured questionnaires are common in some of the research studies having the greatest impact in the university setting (Lucas-Bria, E., & Roa, J., 2021), and represent a convenient methodological approach to achieve the objectives of this research.

### Tool

For data collection, therefore, an *ad hoc* questionnaire was designed using Google Forms, which was subjected to inter-judge validation in order to ensure its reliability (Cabero et al., 1996; Dubé, 2008) and on which the Content Validity Coefficient was calculated (Hernández-Nieto, 2002). Based on this calculation, those items that did not reach a  $CVC \geq 0.80$  were eliminated. Finally, the questionnaire was divided into three blocks:

- First block. It includes seven closed, multiple-choice, single-answer questions to collect socio-demographic information through descriptive variables: gender, age, years of experience, education, membership in innovation groups and tutoring of a primary school grade. In addition, it also includes the independent variable "type of center" in which they work.
- Second block. It includes four questions on the following dependent variables: knowledge, initial training and continuing education. This information is collected using a simple Likert-type rating scale matrix with five response categories ranging from Nothing (1) to Very Much (5).
- Third block. It is answered exclusively by those teachers who have developed some SL experience throughout their teaching experience. The three single-choice multiple-choice questions refer to the educational level and the subject in which the project was carried out, as well as the duration of the project.

The questionnaire has the approval of the Research and Teaching Ethics Committee of the Faculty of UDIMA University and the Faculty of Education of the University, thus ensuring compliance with the Organic Law 3/2018 of December 5, on Personal Data Protection and guarantee of digital rights, following the recommendations issued by the Spanish Data Protection Agency.

### Procedure

After validation of the questionnaire, the data were collected, coded and statistically analyzed using SPSS v.27 software. The type of measurement scale was taken into account in the analysis of the data. Thus, in a first descriptive approach, frequencies ( $n$ ) and percentages (%) were used for nominal variables, and, in addition, median and mode for ordinal variables (Rodríguez-Rodríguez & Reguant-Álvarez, 2020). On the other hand, the Kruskal Wallis ( $H$ ) non-parametric statistical test was used to compare the distribution of the ordinal variables knowledge, training and use in more than two independent samples (public, private and concerted), and the Spearman rank correlation coefficient ( $\rho$ ) was *obtained* to assess the existence of linear relationships between the ordinal qualitative variables described above, which have been graphically represented using box and whisker diagrams, as they were considered the most appropriate for this purpose (Hernández-Sampieri & Mendoza, 2018; Reguant Álvarez et al. , 2018). Finally, Cronbach's alpha was calculated for the items that are presented on a Likert-type scale and measure the relationship of teachers with the SL (Rodríguez-Rodríguez and Reguant-Álvarez, 2020); the coefficient obtained ( $\alpha=0.80$ ) allows us to affirm that the internal consistency of the instrument is high (Pelegriñ et al., 2016).

## Participants

The population under study amounts to 44710 teachers (Consejería de Educación y Juventud, 2020). In order to determine the level of representativeness of the sample, a confidence level of 95% is set and a z-value of 1.96 is used in the normal distribution table, so the optimal sample is estimated to be 380 primary school teachers.

After consulting the official databases, a file was created in which the e-mail addresses corresponding to the 1344 schools in Madrid were recorded, whose management teams were asked to distribute the measuring instrument among the teachers who teach at the primary level in their school. Therefore, a non-probabilistic convenience sampling was carried out.

Finally, a sample of 262 was obtained, which places the final margin of error at 6.03%. After cleaning the data matrix and carrying out an exploratory analysis of each variable to detect *outliers*, no unusual data were found, so it was not necessary to exclude any response.

The first questions were aimed at finding out the profile of the teachers participating in the study, with the result that 80.9% (n=212) were women. This gender distribution of the sample is considered within the established confidence levels, since according to CAM data (Consejería de Educación y Juventud, 2020), the percentage of female teachers is 75% and that of male teachers is 25%.

The average age of the teachers was 40 years old, with the most representative age range being between 30 and 39 years old (33.6%; n=88), followed by the group between 40 and 49 years old (30.2%; n=79). According to CAM data, approximately 10% of teachers are under 30 years old and about 25% are over 50 years old. Therefore, the sample obtained is slightly biased towards younger teachers, within the established confidence levels (p=0.95). In terms of teaching experience, 42.7% (n=112) of the respondents have less than ten years of experience, while 32.8% (n=86) have between 11 and 20 years and 24.4% (n=64) have more than 20 years of experience.

Regarding their education, 72.4% (n=189) have another academic degree in addition to the Bachelor's Degree in Primary Education. Of these, 55.9% (n=105) have another university degree and 37.2% (n=71) have a university master's degree. On the other hand, 76.7% (n=201) of the participants are not part of any innovation team within their work center. In addition, 67.9% (n=178) of the respondents are tutors of some course: 29.6% are tutors in the first cycle courses; 39.7% tutor in the second cycle and 30.7% in the third cycle, so the representativeness of the tutored courses is balanced.

## RESULTS

The results of the research study on the implementation of the Service-Learning methodology in the Primary Education stage in Madrid schools are presented below.

### Implementation of SL in Primary Schools in the CAM

At a descriptive level, the second block of the survey provides information on knowledge, teacher training regarding this methodology and its use in CAM schools, as shown in Table 2.

**TABLE 2**  
**DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS ON KNOWLEDGE, TRAINING AND USE OF SL**

	1 (Nothing)	2 (Few)	3 (Some)	4 (Quite a lot)	5 (Very much)		
	n (%)					Med	Mod
Knowledge	104 (39,69%)	45 (17,18%)	47 (17,94)	42 (16,03%)	24 (9,16%)	2	1
Initial training	233 (88,93%)	19 (7,25%)	8 (3,05%)	2 (0,76%)	-	1	1
Continuous training	190 (72,52%)	26 (9,92%)	24 (9,16%)	16 (6,11%)	6 (2,29%)	1	1
Use	170 (64,89%)	38 (14,50%)	35 (13,36%)	14 (5,34%)	5 (1,91%)	1	1

Source: prepared by the author.

More than half of the teachers surveyed (56.87%; n=149) do not know or know little about this methodology, while one out of four teachers (25.19%; n=66) say they are fairly or very knowledgeable about it. These data are tangentially consistent with the training received, which tends to be scarce, especially in the Teaching Degree, given that 88.93% (n=233) declare not having received instruction on the subject in their undergraduate studies, although this percentage decreases to 72.52% (n=190) in continuing education, which reveals that the teachers' knowledge of SL comes mostly from the updating of knowledge after their initial training. However, the percentage of teachers who are adequately qualified does not reach 10% of the respondents. The data related to qualification coincide with the implementation of SL experiences. In fact, 80% (n=209) of teachers have never, or rarely, developed projects of this type, so it seems that the degree of implementation of this methodology in CAM primary schools is very low.

The main results of this first point show that teachers have received very little training in their initial studies and that in most cases when there is specific training in SL, it is in the context of continuing training. Having said this, it is observed that the degree of knowledge is higher than the degree of training, which suggests that self-training phenomena are taking place in this methodology. If we pay more attention to the frequency of use, it seems to correspond to the training; however, occasional use is higher than the training received, which indicates interest in the methodology and a possible impact of self-training on the initial implementation of the SL.

### **Correlational Analysis of Variables**

The data obtained in the first two blocks allow us to analyze, firstly, whether there are significant differences in the use, knowledge and training in SL according to the type of center and, secondly, whether there is a relationship between knowledge of this methodology, its training and the implementation of SL experiences.

In order to analyze whether there are differences according to the type of center, we used the Kruskal Wallis *H* test for more than two independent samples, the results of which are shown in Table 3.

**TABLE 3**  
**DIFFERENCES BETWEEN KNOWLEDGE, TRAINING AND USE OF SL ACCORDING TO THE OWNERSHIP OF THE CENTER.**

	Knowledge	Initial training	Continuous training	Project development
Kruskal-Wallis H	.956	.812	.722	.042
gl	2	2	2	2
sig. asin. (p)	.620	.666	.697	.979

Source: prepared by the author.

Taking into consideration the  $p$ -value obtained in the different contrasts, the  $H_0$  is accepted, which states that there are no significant differences ( $p > .05$ ) between the public, private and subsidized centers of the CAM with respect to the variables under study.

On the other hand, Spearman's  $\rho$  rank correlation coefficient was calculated for the ordinal qualitative variables included in the questionnaire, which refer to knowledge, initial training, continuous training and implementation of SL projects, and the following correlation matrix was generated (see Table 4).

**TABLE 4**  
**CORRELATION MATRIX BETWEEN ORDINAL VARIABLES**

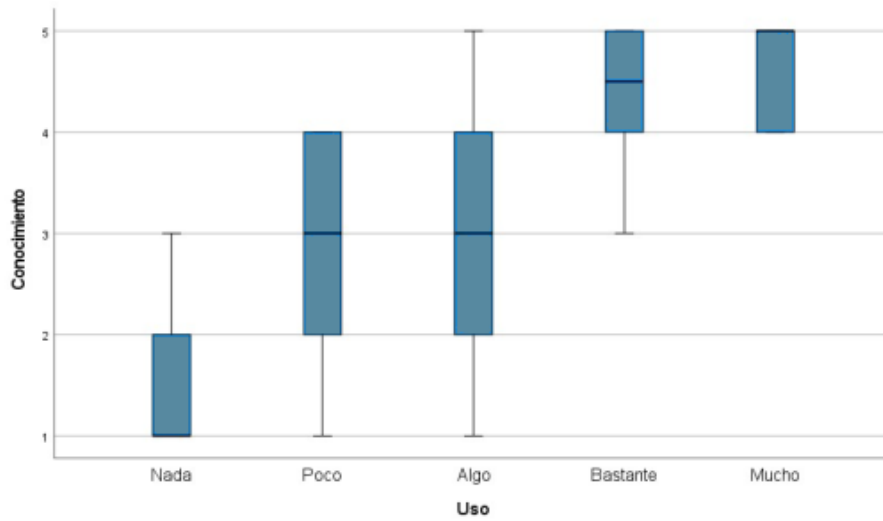
	Knowledge	Initial training	Continuous training	Use
Knowledge	-	rho .277 p=.000	rho .579 p=.000	rho .544 p=.000
Initial training	rho .277 p=.000	-	rho .355 p=.000	rho .322 p=.000
Continuous training	rho .579 p=.000	rho .355 p=.000	-	rho .507 p=.000
Use	rho .544 p=.000	rho .322 p=.000	rho .507 p=.000	-

Source: prepared by the author.

Correlations are significant in the contrasts of all variables ( $p=.000$ ). In terms of the strength of the relationship, although it is positive in all cases, it tends to be low in some of them ( $.2 < \rho < .4$ ), although knowledge of the methodology with its implementation in Primary Education classrooms ( $\rho .544$ ) stands out especially (see Figure 1).



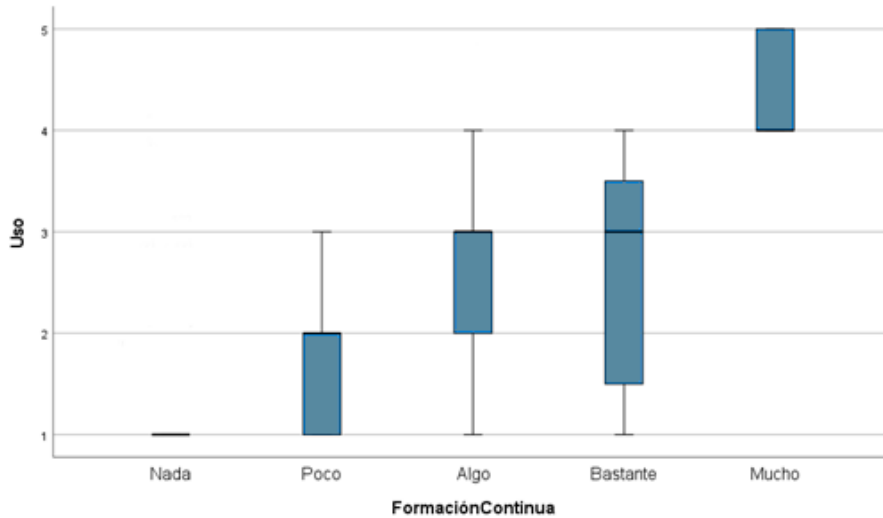
**FIGURE 1**  
**CORRELATION BETWEEN USE IN THE CLASSROOM AND KNOWLEDGE OF SL**



Source: prepared by the author.

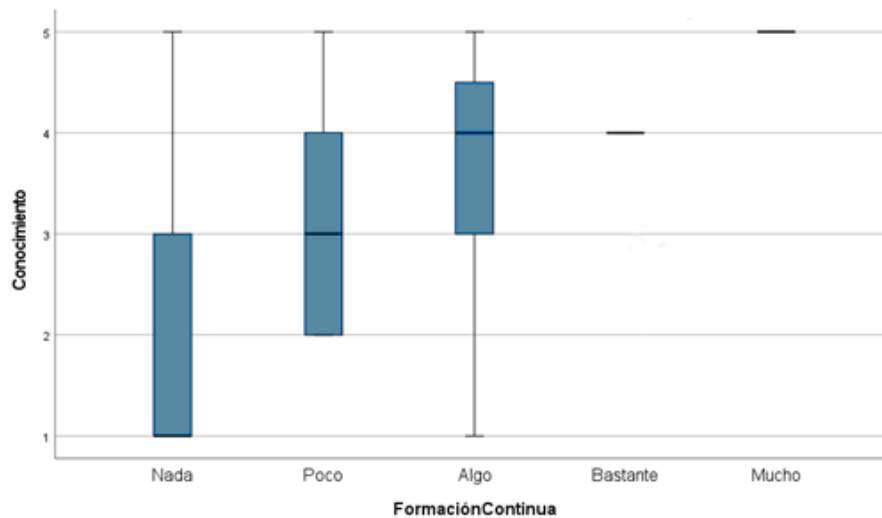
On the other hand, it is remarkable that knowledge and use find a stronger relationship with continuing training ( $\rho$  .579 and .544, respectively) (see Figures 2 and 3) than with initial training ( $\rho$  .277 and .322) (Figure 1).

**FIGURE 2**  
**CORRELATION BETWEEN USE IN THE CLASSROOM AND CONTINUING TRAINING RECEIVED**



Source: prepared by the author.

**FIGURE 3**  
**CORRELATION BETWEEN KNOWLEDGE OF SL AND CONTINUOUS TRAINING RECEIVED**



Source: prepared by the author.

**SL Projects in Primary School: Subjects and Courses**

Only 6.49% of the teachers surveyed stated that they have used this methodology quite often or very often, compared to 87.02%, who have not implemented it or have done so on very few occasions; the remaining 6.49% have implemented it on some occasions.

On the other hand, the implementation of SL projects has been carried out in all grades of primary education, although the third cycle concentrates almost half of the projects (49.1%) and in the second cycle it is presented as a minority (22.6%).

The durations tend to vary, ranging from several days (25.5%) to more than one academic year (9.1%). There is a tendency to carry out long-term projects, since more than half of them have a duration of one month or more (56.3%); in fact, 21.8% cover a full academic year.

As for the subjects in which they are usually developed, a certain heterogeneity is perceived, although *Social and civic values* stand out in particular; thus, more than half of the 62 teachers who responded to this question (23.66% of the total), stated that they had carried out some SL experience in this subject. It can also be seen that, despite the fact that 62 teachers used SL in the projects developed, 146 subjects were involved, demonstrating the versatility of this methodology (Figure 4).

**FIGURE 4**  
**SUBJECTS IN WHICH SL PROJECTS HAVE BEEN CARRIED OUT**

Subject	n	%	Graphical representation (out of 100%)
<i>Social and civic values</i>	32	51,6	[Horizontal bar representing 51.6%]
<i>Language</i>	22	35,5	[Horizontal bar representing 35.5%]
<i>Natural sciences</i>	21	33,9	[Horizontal bar representing 33.9%]
<i>Social sciences</i>	18	29,0	[Horizontal bar representing 29.0%]
<i>Mathematics</i>	18	29,0	[Horizontal bar representing 29.0%]
<i>Arts</i>	9	14,5	[Horizontal bar representing 14.5%]
<i>Physical Education</i>	9	14,5	[Horizontal bar representing 14.5%]
<i>Music</i>	5	8,1	[Horizontal bar representing 8.1%]

<i>Religion</i>	5	8,1	
<i>Foreign language</i>	4	6,4	
<i>Technology</i>	3	4,8	
<b>Total</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>100</b>	

*Note:* The question allowed multiple answers, so the percentages have been calculated on the 62 answers received (146 subjects). Source: prepared by the author.

## DISCUSSION

Nowadays, there is a boom in educational methodologies thanks to which the student is the active protagonist of his/her learning, thus significantly increasing his/her motivation and involvement in it. One of these methodologies is Service-Learning. Although during the literature search we found several articles on SL and several associations that are disseminating its benefits to promote its knowledge and subsequent use in the classroom, we did not find any data that provide information on the implementation of this methodology in schools with Spanish curricula. This lack of knowledge has led to the objectives of this study, which is limited to the Community of Madrid.

An analysis of the results shows that a large number of respondents do not form part of the existing innovation teams within their schools (76.7%), and although 43.2% were aware of SL, very few have ever used it. This low use seems to be related to the meager initial training received in undergraduate studies (3.8%) and in subsequent continuing training (18.7%). Furthermore, it is revealing that 10.4% of the teachers who have received specific training on SL say that they do not know this methodology well, which seems to indicate that instruction in this regard has been superficial or insufficient. These data are consistent with the conclusions provided by Calvo-Varela et al. (2019), who point out that at this time more teacher training on Service-Learning is needed, since it is not possible to implement a methodology that is not known. It would therefore be advisable for teachers to receive adequate training on this methodology in order to be able to implement it in primary school classrooms, since 93.5% of the respondents found it interesting and would like to apply it in the future. Appropriate and comprehensive teacher training provides teachers with tools to solve difficulties in the classroom and to help their students put into practice the knowledge acquired in the subject, as can be seen in the study by Opazo et al. (2019). Furthermore, it offers tools to transfer knowledge while maintaining the students' interest thanks to their active participation and involvement, fostering critical capacity, reflection and constant innovation (Franco-Sola et al., 2021). Along the same lines, the study conducted by Sartor-Harada et al. (2020) concludes that it is necessary to support specific teacher training in Service-Learning.

In this sense, a direct relationship can be noted between the degree of teacher training and the use and consideration of Service-Learning, with teachers trained in this methodology being the ones who consider it most beneficial at the primary school stage and the ones who propose the most Service-Learning projects. In general, 81.6% of the teachers who participated in the study believe that the SL methodology offers benefits at this educational stage. This result is consistent with what is pointed out by Mayor (2017), who evidences that the active participation of the student in their educational process through the practices carried out in the SL projects, favors the acquisition of learning and produces an improvement in the school, social and personal spheres. In addition, it encourages students to become aware of environmental problems and to participate in what they can do to improve it, as reported in the study by Álvarez-Muñoz et al. (2021).

Finally, the findings show that SL can be applied throughout the six primary school grades, in projects of widely varying duration and linking the knowledge addressed with the contents of multiple subjects. However, its use in the subject of *social and civic values* stands out, which seems to agree with the map of the principles of SL elaborated by Martín García et al. (2021), where it is evident that SL encourages altruism, cooperation, the common good and participation in the student.

## CONCLUSIONS

In the review carried out in this study, research that includes experiences related to Service-Learning in the Primary Education stage stands out. Most of them are works carried out in the last five years that document part of the work developed by SL associations and educational centers, showing a growing interest on the part of the educational community, both in its professional and research aspects, in the definition of this methodology, the identification of its characteristics and the analysis of the benefits of its use for learning and education in values.

This paper makes it possible to establish a first approach to the implementation of SL in the Primary Education stage in the Community of Madrid and to detect the variables that influence its use. In general, the findings show that the use of this methodology among teachers at this stage is scarce: it has been used once by 23.66% of the teachers, but with very limited durations in one out of three cases. Among the most plausible explanatory variables, according to this study, seems to be the insufficient training, both initial and continuous, received in this regard. Given the statistically significant importance of training in the knowledge and implementation of SL projects, this variable seems to be a probable cause of the scarce use of this methodology in primary schools in the Community of Madrid.

Likewise, the results obtained reveal that the majority of teachers trained in SL recognize the benefits offered by this methodology, thus establishing a directly proportional relationship between teacher training and the SL experiences carried out.

Another noteworthy aspect of this study is that the type of center variable does not show significant differences with respect to knowledge, perception and use of SL among teachers. This is interesting in terms of educational equity, since the benefits derived from this methodology are accessible to the entire educational system.

Regarding the projects that are being developed, it should be noted that they are being carried out in all primary school grades, with emphasis on 5th and 6th grades. In addition, they are usually carried out in an interdisciplinary manner and over different periods of time. This seems to indicate that SL is a useful methodology in Primary School for the work of transversal contents, the objectives of the stage and the acquisition of competencies, so it can be adapted to all ages and contents. In addition, among the findings of the study, it is noteworthy that performing a service in non-bilingual communities seems to discourage the use of this methodology in the subject of English, which opens up a line of future work that should be studied in greater depth.

Finally, it is necessary to remember that we are in a scenario of social and legislative change in Education in which SL is aligned both with the Sustainable Development Goals included in the 2030 Agenda (Álvarez-Muñoz et al., 2021) and with the new requirements of the LOMLOE, which advocates a greater relationship between school and society (Álvarez-Muñoz et al., 2021; Mayor, 2017). Thus, Royal Decree 157/2022, of March 1, establishing the organization and minimum teachings of Primary Education, refers to the need to design learning situations that integrate diverse basic knowledge and that favor the transfer of knowledge acquired by students, while favoring the ability to learn how to learn and lifelong learning. Therefore, educational legislation places teachers before the challenge of connecting the educational system with the essential problems of society. In this regard, the positive perception and the interest shown by the participants in this study in developing Service-Learning projects in their classrooms constitute an opportunity to contribute to this challenge, so it is considered essential to offer solid teacher training on SL, both initial and continuous, to make way for this methodology in primary school classrooms. But this training must be accompanied by interdisciplinary collaboration and institutional resources and support that allow teachers to effectively implement Service-Learning experiences, taking advantage of all the benefits that this methodology offers so that students can receive a quality education.

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