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Improving Faculty of Education Students' EFL Productive Skills and Collaboration through Service Learning

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Abstract

The current research examined the effect of service learning on improving EFL productive skills (oral and written performance) and collaboration for fourth-year basic education students in the English section of the Faculty of Education. The quasi-experimental design was adopted using a pre-post administration for one research group consisting of 20 students. Instruments designed and used were an EFL oral performance test, an oral performance analytic rubric, an EFL writing performance test, a writing performance analytic rubric, and a collaboration scale. The five main phases of implementing service learning (investigation, planning, action, reflection, and demonstration) were adopted for designing and conducting the treatment. The results revealed that the research group students' mean ranks in the post-administration of the productive skills tests and the collaboration scale were significantly higher than those in the pre-administration, which emphasizes the large effect of service learning on improving students' EFL productive skills and collaboration. The research recommends examining the use of service learning for enhancing receptive language skills.

Keywords: productive skills, collaboration, service learning

تحسين المهارات الإنتاجية للغة الإنجليزية والتشارك لدى طلاب كلية التربية من خلال التعلم الخدمي

المستخلص

نتاول البحث الحالي أثر التعلم الخدمي في تحسين المهارات الإنتاجية للغة الإنجليزية (الأداء الشفهي والكتابي) والتشارك لدى طلاب الفرقة الرابعة من التعليم الأساسي بقسم اللغة الإنجليزية بكلية التربية، وتم اعتماد التصميم شبه التجريبي باستخدام التطبيق القبلي-بعدى لمجموعة بحثية واحدة مكونة من 20 طالباً، وتضمنت الأدوات التي تم تصميمها واستخدامها: اختبار الأداء الشفهي للغة الإنجليزية، ومقياس تقييم تحليلي للأداء الشفهي، واختبار الأداء الكتابى للغة الإنجليزية، ومقياس تقييم تحليلي لأداء الكتابة، ومقياس التشارك. وقد تم تبنى المراحل الخمس الرئيسية لتنفيذ التعلم الخدمي (التحقيق، والتخطيط، والتطبيق، والتأمل، والعرض) فى تصصميم وتنفيذ المعالجة، وأظهرت النتائج أن متوسط رتب طلاب مجموعة البحث فى التطبيق البعدي لاختبارات المهارات الإنتاجية ومقياس التشارك كان أعلى بكثير من نظيراتها فى التطبيق القبلي، مما يؤكد الأثر الكبير للتعلم الخدمي في تحسين المهارات الإنتاجية للطلاب في اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية وكذلك مستوى تشاركهم فى فرق التعلم الخدمى، ويوصي البحث بدراسة أثر استخدام التعلم الخدمي فى تعزيز مهارات اللغة الاستقبالية.

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Introduction

Learners' ability to actively use the language to convey meaning, thoughts, and feelings through different types of communication, such as speaking, writing, and nonverbal cues, refers to productive or expressive language. Speaking is perhaps the most common form of productive language since it involves a learner's skill of articulating words and phrases with proper pronunciation, constructing well-grammatically coherent sentences, and keeping a fluent style to successfully engage in communication. Similarly, writing refers to expressing language in a written form, requiring a learner to have mastery of vocabulary, grammar, mechanics, and cohesion and coherence to convey accurate meaning. Moreover, productive language includes non-verbal cues like gestures, facial expressions, eye contact, and body language, conveying emotions and intentions without spoken or written words. Thus, when learners demonstrate proficiency in using a language to express themselves, they have strong, productive language skills.

However, research reveals that many students in EFL classes encounter various challenges in improving productive language skills due to a lack of exposure to authentic practice opportunities. Consequently, students' English proficiency is low, particularly when it comes to speaking, which is an essential goal of communication and learning English. Additionally, many students frequently struggle with the necessary writing skills and have unsatisfactory written performance levels (Altamimi, 2024).

Learning the language for mere academic goals is never enough for learners if they cannot use it in real-life situations (Kaess, 2017). Improving English language skills should not be limited to the four walls of classrooms; rather, it can be implemented through various methods that enrich the educational process while integrating some supporting services into society. There is a constantly growing need to adopt new pedagogical approaches targeting the collaboration of students, teachers, and the community. Such approaches might create a perfect area for the teaching process and acquiring new knowledge within the specific subject field.

Recently, the adoption of service learning in higher education has emerged as a trendy teaching and learning approach. The incorporation of

service learning into English language teacher education is relatively new. It implies going beyond the limits of the stereotypical classroom to live new experiences and situations where they can put theories into practice. Askildson et. al. (2013) emphasized the significance of these experiences when writing, "*Students experience growth by stepping beyond their comfort zones as they encounter people and realities well beyond what they may have experienced prior to that time*" (p. 405). Service learning is an approach that focuses on addressing learners' needs effectively, ensuring their active involvement in all learning stages, and intentionally linking to a learning context. (Olszak, 2023).

Various scholars (e.g., Geller et al. 2016; Rutti et al. 2016) have indicated that service learning can be incorporated into the higher education curricula in several ways, such as through class projects with specific credit hours, extracurricular tasks, or research projects. All forms of service-learning tasks involve the integration of academic learning with community service, which enhances the improvement of varied skills through their application in real-world scenarios. However, after conducting a comprehensive literature review of service-learning implementation, Salam et al. (2019) emphasized that there is a lack of research on the effect of service learning in the higher education sphere, despite its significant value. Accordingly, the current research attempted to assess the effect of using service learning on improving faculty of education students' EFL productive skills and collaboration.

Review of literature

This section presents a review of literature and previous studies related to the variables of the current research, which are: EFL productive skills, collaboration, and service learning, while shedding light on the relationship between them.

EFL productive skills

Effective communication is essential in academic and foreign language classroom contexts where it is essential to transmit ideas in a clear, understandable, and effective manner. Oral and written communication skills are classified as productive skills, which require students to produce rather than receive information through language (Harmer, 2007). Classroom speaking and writing activities allow students to practice the target language to express meaning by producing suitable oral or written utterances. In speaking, a person interacts with and influences others by saying something that may impact or change a particular thought or point of view (Astawa, Artini, and Nitiasih, 2017). While writing is viewed by Harmer (1991) as the only language skill through which students can produce a touchable and readable output.

Thus, since both speaking and writing involve the activity of 'producing' language in a communicative context, these skills are typically regarded as language productive skills.

Speaking is recognized as a social, contextualized, participatory communication event that helps people express their identity, communicate their feelings, and sustain successful connections. Nunan (1991) emphasized that success in acquiring a foreign or second language is dependent on one's ability to maintain a successful conversation in the target language. For most learners, mastering the skill of speaking is the most challenging task since it requires them to be proficient in multiple oral performance elements in order to communicate properly and smoothly. These elements are: grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary, comprehension, and fluency (Fulcher & Davidson, 2006).

Consistently, Islam and Roy (2024) explored the challenges teachers and learners encounter with EFL speaking skills at the tertiary level. It was revealed that learners' lack of vocabulary and grammar knowledge, incompetent pronunciation, anxiety, lack of confidence, insufficient practice, discouraging environment, fear of criticism, and negative judgment are some of the vital challenges learners and teachers encounter in developing their speaking skills. Similarly, many Egyptian studies were conducted to determine learners' speaking difficulties. For example, Abdelreheem (2023) indicated that Egyptian learners face many key English pronunciation difficulties, both segmental (on the level of speech sounds) and suprasegmental (rhythm, stress, and juncture), resulting from the use or interference of the mother tongue. Additionally, Emam (2023) emphasized that Egyptian students at the Faculty of Education face various challenges in their major speaking skills, which hinder their capacity to produce proper oral performance due to the inadequacy of training available for those learners.

Writing ability is the other productive skill crucial for communication because it allows individuals to convey their ideas, sentiments, and opinions in writing. According to Nunan (2003), writing is a physical as well as a cerebral activity of transmitting ideas or words to a surface. It is the mental process of coming up with ideas and considering how to arrange them into sentences and paragraphs that are understandable to readers. Ngoc Anh (2019) indicated that writing ability is both a complicated social and cognitive activity. It is typically the last skill to be acquired when compared to the other three skills of listening, speaking, and reading throughout the development and acquisition of any

language. Students frequently struggle when writing in their own language; then, EFL writing is said to be more and more challenging.

Many studies (e.g., Tanyer & Susoy, 2019; Muamaroh, Mukti, & Haryanti, 2020; Arochman et al., 2023; Riswanto, Teferi, & Abdel-Al Ibrahim, 2023; Arochman, 2024) evaluated the writing competence of EFL learners at advanced levels. It was revealed that many EFL learners, either students or pre-service teachers, agree that writing is a complicated skill and students often struggle with various aspects of writing, including content, organization, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics. The factors that hinder them from writing involve a lack of confidence in writing English, a lack of grammar and vocabulary mastery, and a lack of writing practice. Consistently, the same challenges are encountered by Egyptian students, as Ahmed (2010) and Saleh (2021) highlighted these problems, adding those Egyptian learners of English face extra problems in the cohesion and coherence of their EFL essay writing.

To conclude, EFL students usually have difficulties when they are asked to produce both written and oral texts. In fact, production skills—speaking and writing—are considered the ones with which students have the most problems (Roca, 2020). Therefore, it is essential for instructors to maximize their professionalism to enhance the improvement of those EFL competencies. It is time to step beyond the stereotypical classroom and reject the traditional methodologies that may neither engage all types of learners nor bring out the best in them. Students need to learn through real-life situations while collaborating with teachers and the community to create a perfect area for the teaching and learning process and acquire difficult skills. Service learning is proposed to fulfill students' need to improve their EFL speaking and writing skills while engaging them to learn through collaborative teams.

Collaboration

Collaboration has become a twenty-first century trend and a vital skill in every sphere of life, as the necessity of thinking and working together on important community issues has prompted the transition from individual efforts to teamwork, from independence to social interaction. Bedwell (2012) regarded collaboration as "*an evolving process whereby two or more social entities actively and reciprocally engage in joint activities aimed at achieving at least one shared goal*" (p. 130). Thus, it includes doing or taking action, and it cannot occur until partners have a certain kind of relationship (reciprocal, equal) (Lewis, 2006).

Collaboration is not only about learners working in teams inside or outside the classroom; it also seeks to promote the skill of socializing and controlling the ego and emotions. This skill enhances the sense of unity

and accountability among team members. Features of collaboration involve demonstrating the ability to work effectively and respectfully within different teams, showing flexibility and willingness to exert the required effort to reach a common goal, being in charge of collaborative work, and appreciating each team member's contributions (Smit, 2015; Handajani & Pratiwi, 2018).

The words collaborative and cooperative are often used interchangeably. During both collaborative and cooperative learning, students work together as they tackle new concepts and form new understandings. Although the two strategies are slightly different, they are both effective for structuring project work and classroom learning. In cooperative learning, students work together to achieve a goal or develop an end product, which is usually content-specific. Cooperative projects tend to be more teacher-directed. On the other side, according to collaborative learning, students may still work toward a goal or develop an end product, but the process is distinguished by self-responsibility and awareness, respect for others, and contributions from different perspectives. Collaborative projects are more student-centered and student-directed (Bias and Kolk, 2024).

Learning through collaboration is an essential educational variable influencing the process of teaching and learning that involves multiple clusters and teams of learners working together to solve many problems. It is about finding solutions to problems, completing tasks, and creating a product collectively in a collaborative way (Riaz & Din, 2023). Collaborative teams consist of individuals who have several features in common: (1) they have a shared collective identity; (2) they share the same goals; and (3) they are interdependent regarding their assigned tasks or outcomes (Hughes and Jones, 2011).

Engaging learners in collaborative teams is recommended for enhancing their language skills, especially the productive ones. Tabatabaei, Afzali, and Mehrabi (2015) revealed that collaborative learning has a positive impact on improving the speaking skills and decreasing the stress of Iranian EFL learners. In addition, Bikowski and Vithanage (2016) examined the impact of in-class web-based collaborative writing tasks on language writers' individual writing scores. Analyzing data obtained through administering a test, surveys, class observations, and teacher interviews indicated that the learners in the collaborative writing groups experienced statistically significant writing gains in their individual writing over the learners in the individual web-based writing group.

One of the major challenges in higher education is how to offer students opportunities to not only collaborate but also to reflect on how collaboration occurs, to consider the reasons for successful collaboration, and how it can be coaxed forth. Britt (2014) stressed that service-learning is a way of supporting students' collaboration since it requires them to work together to determine needs and collaboratively develop strategies to meet these needs. The following section sheds light on service learning and how it can be employed to create a collaborative atmosphere for enhancing learners' EFL language skills.

Service learning

In service-learning research, the philosopher John Dewey is often cited as an inspiration for pedagogy and philosophy due to being an influential theorist in setting the foundation for service learning. Although Dewey did not coin the phrase "service learning," he has historically been associated with that pedagogy and is often called the "father" of service learning (Zentner, 2011). Experiential learning theory by Dewey (1938) provides the theoretical basis for service-learning. In the early 1900s, Dewey believed in 'learning by doing' and highlighted the influencing role of academic institutions in overall community development. He stressed the importance of linking learning institutions with communities when emphasizing that the school must itself be a community life; social perceptions and interests can be enhanced only in a real social context— one where there is give and take in the creation of a shared experience. Thus, there is a mutual benefit between the service provider (students) and the recipient (community) so that stereotypes of "served and server" are smashed or decreased (Sheffield, 2011).

While service learning is framed by the experiential-learning theory inspired by Dewey, it was popularized by Kolb (1984), who extended the concept of experiential learning by creating an experiential learning cycle with four phases: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. Salam et al. (2019) indicated that Kolb's experiential learning cycle is the most widely recognized theoretical framework for integrating service learning in higher education curricula. This cycle, as Rose (2020) described, provides a framework for engaging students in meaningful learning that is connected to the community around them, thereby fulfilling John Dewey's (1938) goal of education as an experience.

Service learning is an approach that links community service and academic study so that each strengthens the other. Its theoretical basis lies in the belief that the interaction of knowledge and skills with experience is key to learning. Students achieve better learning outcomes not by

reading the Great Books in a closed room but by opening the doors and windows of experience. Learning starts with a problem and continues with implementing increasingly complex ideas and skills to solve highly complicated problems (Ehrlich & Jacoby, 1996).

Minor (2001) also indicated that service-learning is a union of community service and formal learning. It involves students going out into their communities and applying what they learn in class to help others, and then bringing what they learn in their community service back into the classroom for demonstration and reflection to enhance their learning. It is, then, service with learning objectives and learning with service objectives. Consistently, Meuers (2023) added that service learning is a learning experience first and a service experience second since students use academic and civic knowledge and skills to address authentic community needs. In the same vein, KU Leuven (2023) emphasized that service-learning (also referred to as community service learning, community-based learning, etc.) is an educational approach in which 'serving', 'reflecting', and 'learning' are basic concepts. Students serve society by engaging with a community. Meanwhile, they reflect in a structured manner on their experiences. In this way, they learn on an academic, civic, and personal level.

Service learning differs from community service or volunteerism in that service learning is incorporated with course academics and critical reflection to strengthen students' learning from community service, thereby reaching a certain educational goal. While community service or other forms of volunteerism are mainly designed to benefit community partners, service-learning seeks mutual benefits. Thus, service-learning projects not only target community needs but also tailor to student learning needs by allowing them to implement learned classroom knowledge and skills in real-world practice (Abbott & Lear, 2010; Chang, Lee, & Oh, 2022).

There are different forms of service learning. Traditional service learning is where there are no online components, as both learning in class and service are implemented onsite. With the spread of online learning facilities, online service-learning (eService-Learning) has emerged, where all or some of the service-learning courses occur online. The first type is eService-Learning with online course instruction and onsite service. The second type is eService-Learning with onsite course instruction and online service. The third form is eService-Learning with a hybrid form and a mixture of onsite and online service and course instruction. The last type is eService-Learning, also referred to as extreme

service learning, with online service and learning (Stefaniak, 2020; Faulconer, 2020). Thus, many useful technological tools can be employed for elevating the application of service learning 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. (EASLHE 2020).

Berger Kaye (2011) presented five phases for implementing service learning. These phases are:

- Investigation: This phase includes an assessment of students' interests, skills, and talents and a social analysis of the addressed issue. This necessitates collecting information about the identified need through action research employing media, interviews with experts, surveys of varied populations, direct observation, and personal experience.
- Preparation: This includes the continuous acquisition of information about the questions or community needs under investigation, the identification of groups already working towards solutions, and the preparation of a plan with decisions on roles, responsibilities, and timelines.
- Action: This includes the implementation of the plan that might employ one or more types of service learning: direct service, indirect service, advocacy, or research.
- Reflection: This is regarded as the connector between each stage of service and as a summative intention addressing any essential question or inquiry about the total experience. Reflection always includes cognitive and affective aspects, informs the progress of the process, and utilizes a variety of multiple intelligences.
- Demonstration: Students showcase what and how they have learned; their demonstrations capture the totality of the experience. The students document all parts of the process, so there is a comprehensive ability to tell the story of what took place in each stage and include key informative reflections. The integration of technology should be expected and included in this phase.

As mentioned in the action phase, there are four types of service learning: direct, indirect, advocacy, and research. Resch et al. (2020) and Krut (2024) distinguished between these types as follows:

- Direct service: The most "in-person" form since students work directly for or with individuals who benefit from their service. This

is a very rewarding type, as students can see the results of their service immediately and may receive positive feedback right away. Examples include visiting a senior center, tutoring younger children, supporting students with disabilities, etc.

- Indirect service: Students provide a service without being directly involved with those being served. Schools and classes can easily be involved in indirect service, as it does not necessarily demand students leave the school grounds. Examples include fundraising to donate money to disaster relief, planting a community garden, etc.

- Advocacy: It is about speaking up and informing the community about the need to help solve a problem and make a difference. While it may look different from direct or indirect service, advocacy integrates the powers of communication and community to inspire action. Examples include writing letters to public officials, creating and displaying posters to discourage bullying, designing and hanging up signs to convey an important message, posting on social media channels to share information about issues, etc.

- Research: Students can engage in research, or gathering and reporting on information, to benefit their community as a type of service. Examples include conducting a survey to better understand "trash habits," conducting an oral history project, etc.

Regarding the incorporation of service learning into the English language curriculum, it provides the opportunity for genuine interactions and language practice. Students have an opportunity to use English to read, speak about topics, write reflections, and participate in discussions about relevant issues in their own communities. Service learning also offers students hands-on experience through which they address varied needs, reflect on their values, and develop new perspectives. Students can use English to communicate their ideas, thoughts, and feelings about the experience and what it means to them (American English, 2024; Harpine, 2024).

Of course, not every service project serves the needs of ESOL learners. Minor (2001) described a good rule for applying service learning to language learners: it is important to provide meaningful language contexts and make sure the activities that the students are engaged in involve personal interaction with others. Jacoby (2015) and Steinke (2024) stated that implementing service learning in the ESOL classroom benefits students in two ways: it enhances students' language skills by providing real-life, relevant speaking opportunities, and it assists students

in overcoming culture shock and depression by engaging them in their communities.

Many previous studies were conducted to investigate the use of service learning for supporting learners' language skills. For example, Sun and Yang (2015) integrated service learning with oral communication training in an EFL speaking class by having each student prepare two YouTube videos in which they made informative presentations about the university in English to international students on campus. A Facebook community was used as a platform for students to share their videos with international students and peers. The results indicated that the service-learning projects fostered EFL students' public speaking skills (e.g., idea and content development, and pronunciation) and boosted their speaking confidence. Cho and Gulley (2017) also explored the impact of engaging TESOL graduate students in service-learning. It was found that service-learning gave students hands-on experiences that helped them translate theory into practice, thus making their learning authentic, creative, and meaningful.

In addition, Pazmino (2019) examined the significance of service learning as a teaching methodology in foreign language acquisition. The data were collected through administering language skills tests and semi-structured interviews. The findings revealed that oral language proficiency increased for students that had taken the service-learning program; however, students showed no significant development in listening, reading, and writing. Simsek (2020) assessed the effect of a 20-hour peer-tutoring project on the teaching beliefs, community service attitudes, and personal and professional development of Turkish EFL teacher candidates. The results revealed a considerable change not only in their teaching perspectives from the behaviorist to constructivist paradigm for knowledge acquisition but also in their community partnership approaches from the unidirectional to reciprocal pattern. Similarly, McNatt (2020) emphasized that learners' engagement in service-learning projects can positively influence their interpersonal oral communication confidence and skill development.

Moreover, Bataineh and Obeiah (2022) examined the impact of service-learning training on EFL teachers' writing performance. The findings revealed that the service-learning group participants' writing performance, both overall and on the sub-skills of focus, conventions, word choice, organization, and development, was higher than that of their control group counterpart. It was indicated that service-learning training enhanced the participants' interaction and changed them from passive reception of knowledge to active engagement, collaboration, and

ownership of their learning. The participants' interactions promoted their awareness and provided them with various viewpoints for their essay writing. In their collaborative writing teams, each participant was in charge of his own part of the essay in a collaborative atmosphere and with collective dedication, as they were like scaffolds for one another in the process as well as in the final product. Moreover, Mamac and Chalk (2022) used a service-learning project of psychology students studying an English listening and speaking course. The results demonstrated that the students improved their speaking and listening skills in the English language through constant negotiations with the stakeholders and oral academic reports conducted in English.

Despite the significant role of service learning in improving language learning and communication skills, research has revealed some challenges associated with its integration into higher education curricula. For example, Al-Murshidi (2020) and Yusof et al. (2020) reported that students might face some difficulties in terms of fixing their work schedule with that of their course timing that might hinder their engagement in service learning. In addition, a gap in understanding might exist between theory and practice. It was also mentioned that incorporating service learning into the curriculum might diminish the academic content addressed in the course. Furthermore, because the service-learning experience is less predictable, instructors are often concerned that they do not have as much control over learning that takes place outside the classroom.

Based on the previously mentioned review of literature, it can be concluded that despite the crucial importance of productive language abilities, they are a real challenge for language learners since speaking and writing are activities requiring the integration of many subsystems, which makes their mastery a formidable task for EFL learners. Numerous advantages of service learning for English language development were stated in the literature, including students' improvement in their different language skills, satisfaction, motivation, and confidence in language use, enhancement of sensitivity and empathy, reduction in stereotypes, increased sense of closeness and solidarity with the community, bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and real-world application, and cultivating a deeper sense of civic responsibility. Thus, the current research attempted to investigate the incorporation of service learning in higher education to improve students' EFL productive skills and collaboration in service learning.

Context of the problem

Communicating effectively by mastering productive skills is one of the crucial purposes of English language learning. Reviewing literature and previous foreign as well as Egyptian studies (Ahmed, 2010; Tanyer & Susoy, 2019; Muamaroh, Mukti, & Haryanti, 2020; Saleh, 2021; Abdelreheem, 2023; Arochman et al., 2023; Emam, 2023; Riswanto, Teferi, & Abdel-Al Ibrahim, 2023; Arochman, 2024; Islam and Roy, 2024) revealed that EFL learners encounter multiple challenges with the productive skills of the language. They struggle to keep up with the advanced assignments, quizzes, midterms, and finals. They are also embarrassed due to the difficulty of seeking out opportunities for practicing English. Additionally, memorizing the rules of syntax, vocabulary, pronunciation, punctuation, and other linguistic forms. is not sufficient for students to become competent speakers or writers. These challenges are in line with the researcher's experience teaching basic education students in the English section of the Faculty of Education. Those students have weaknesses regarding their EFL oral and written performance skills.

Language learners should be offered enough opportunities to practice the language as they are learning through placing them in context-rich situations and allowing them to experience real-life situations. Service learning is highly recommended to be adopted as an approach for supporting students' academic learning while engaging them in real collaborative community experiences. Therefore, the current research assesses the use of service learning for improving EFL oral and written performance skills for students at the Faculty of Education.

Statement of the problem

Based on the previous review of literature, related studies, and the researcher's experience, the research problem was determined as follows:

"Fourth-year basic education students in the English section of the Faculty of Education often face numerous challenges in developing their EFL productive skills (oral and written performance), and they need to enhance these skills by participating in a collaborative learning environment. Accordingly, the current research attempted to investigate the effect of using service learning on improving those students' EFL productive skills and collaboration".

Questions

The research answered the following questions:

1. What are the EFL productive skills necessary for fourth-year basic education students in the English section of the Faculty of Education?

2. How can service learning be used to improve students' EFL productive skills and collaboration?
3. What is the effect of service learning on improving students' EFL oral performance?
4. What is the effect of service learning on improving students' EFL written performance?
5. What is the effect of service learning on improving students' collaboration in service learning?

Purpose

The present research aimed at assessing the effect of service learning on improving EFL productive skills and collaboration among the fourth-year basic education students at the Faculty of Education, Mansoura University.

Delimitations

The research was delimited to the following:

1. A group of fourth-year basic education students (N = 20) in the English section of the Faculty of Education, Mansoura University, in the second semester of the 2023-2024 academic year.
2. EFL written performance skills needed for students to master (namely, content, style, grammar, and mechanics).
3. EFL oral performance skills urgently required from the target students (namely, pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, comprehension and body language).

Operational definition of terms

EFL productive skills: Learners' ability to actively produce the language in communication to convey meaning, thoughts, and feelings through speaking or writing. Speaking involves students' skill of articulating words and phrases with proper pronunciation, constructing well-grammatically coherent sentences, and keeping a fluent style to successfully engage in communication. Similarly, writing refers to expressing language in a written form, requiring a learner to have mastery of vocabulary, grammar, mechanics, and cohesion and coherence to convey accurate meaning.

Collaboration: A crucial twenty-first century skill referring to an evolving process whereby individuals actively and reciprocally work together to achieve a common goal. It entails demonstrating the ability to work effectively and ethically within teams, being flexible and willing to exert effort to reach the shared goal, and appreciating others' contributions.

Service learning: An approach that links community service and formal academic study. It is a learning experience first and a service experience second as students go out into their communities and apply what they learn in class to help others, and then bring what they learn in their community service back into the classroom for demonstration and reflection to enhance their learning. Research emphasized that academic service-learning supports students' mental wellness, enables students to promote and assess their leadership skills, boosts their communication skills, strengthens community awareness, and enhances their academic performance in the classroom. The service-learning implementation process consists of five phases: investigation, planning, action, reflection, and demonstration.

Hypotheses

The present study tested the following hypotheses:

1. There is a statistically significant difference at ($\leq$ 0.05) level between the mean ranks of the experimental group pre-post administrations of the EFL oral performance test in favor of the post administration.
2. There is a statistically significant difference at ($\leq$ 0.05) level between the mean ranks of the experimental group's pre-and post-administrations of the EFL writing performance test in favor of the post administration.
3. There is a statistically significant difference at ($\leq$ 0.05) level between the mean ranks of the experimental group's pre-and post-administrations of the collaboration scale in favor of the post administration.

Method

- **Participants**

The participants of the research were twenty fourth-year basic education students in the English section of the Faculty of Education, Mansoura University. Those students were selected based on their desire to actively participate in the experimental treatment, as they showed enthusiasm and motivation for the research after a discussion was held about the nature of service learning and how it can help enhance their language proficiency. The age range of the students was twenty-one to twenty-two years old, and they all had similar backgrounds in the English language because they had begun receiving EFL instruction in the first year of primary school.

- **Design**

The research adopted a quasi-experimental design using the pre- and post-administration of the instruments to one research group to investigate the effect of service learning on improving students' EFL productive skills and collaboration.

- **Instruments**

The following instruments were designed and used to achieve the purpose of the current research:
    A. An EFL productive skills checklist
    B. An EFL oral performance skills test.
    C. An analytic oral performance skills rubric.
    D. An EFL written performance skills test.
    E. An analytic written performance skills rubric.
    F. A collaboration in service-learning scale

A detailed description of each one of these instruments is presented in the following section.

A. The EFL productive skills checklist

Based on reviewing literature and previous studies related to EFL productive skills for students in the advanced level, a checklist was prepared and presented to a group of TEFL specialists to identify the most important oral and written performance skills for the target participants. Based on the jurors' opinions, the final list of skills was constructed (Appendix A). The main skills of oral performance included pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension and body language; while the major skills of writing performance involved content, style, grammar, and mechanics.

B. The EFL oral performance test

An EFL oral performance skills test was designed for: determining the participants' pre- and post-EFL oral performance levels and, thus, examining the effect of service learning on improving the target skills. The test consisted of two main questions, each assessing the five target EFL oral performance skills: pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension and body language. The questions were as follows:

- Question one: an interview with each student about his/her personal life, friends, interests, role model, and social activities.

- Question two: commenting on a quote by Albert Einstein, *"Only a life lived for others is a life worthwhile,"* illustrating how s/he can be beneficial to his/her surrounding community.

To establish the validity of the test, it was submitted to a number of TEFL professors to assess the questions in light of their appropriateness for the level of the students, their ability to measure the target skills, and the clarity of the questions and instructions. The jury commented that the test questions are appropriate to the students' language level and would properly assess the target EFL oral performance skills.

The internal consistency and reliability of the EFL oral performance skills test were established through the test pilot administration to twenty students, other than the main research participants. *Firstly*, the internal consistency was estimated by calculating the correlation coefficient between the score of each skill and the total score of the oral performance test; the results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

The correlation between the score of each skill and total score of the oral performance test

Skills	Correlation Coefficient	Sig.
Pronunciation	0.538	0.05
Grammar	0.623	0.01
Vocabulary	0.585	0.01
Fluency	0.663	0.01
Comprehension and body language	0.658	0.01

Table 1 illustrates that the correlation coefficients are positive at either 0.01 or 0.05 levels, which supports the valid internal consistency of the EFL oral performance skills test. Secondly, the reliability of the EFL oral performance test was established by getting the value of Cronbach Alpha (α), which was 0.727. As a result, the reliability of the test was proven, justifying its usage as a research tool. The test in its final form is presented in Appendix B.

The test time was also determined by dividing the total time required by the 20 pilot participants to finish the test by their number. Thus, $160/20 = 8$ minutes (plus an additional 5 minutes for the test instructions)

was the mean time. As a result, it was decided that 13 minutes would be deemed an appropriate amount of time for the students to answer the oral performance test.

B. The analytic EFL oral performance skills rubric

In order to score the EFL oral performance skills test, an analytic scoring rubric was designed based on the five target skills. The scoring rubric included a 4-point scale ranging from 1 (the minimum score) to 4 (the maximum score), and it was applied to each of the two test questions. Thus, the score for each skill was 8 and for the total test was 40. The rubric was presented to a group of TEFL specialists to assess its validity in light of its accuracy, clarity, and appropriateness for assessing the target skills. Based on the jurors' comments, the rubric is linguistically clear, and it properly covers the EFL oral performance skills under investigation.

To estimate the inter-rater reliability of the rubric, the multi-observer method for the same student's performance was utilized. A co-rater had to cooperate with the researcher to assess the oral performance skills of twenty students who were not the basic research participants. Using the "Cooper" equation, the raters' estimations' coefficient of agreement was calculated as follows:

Percentage of agreement = (the number of times of agreement / the total number of performances) χ100.

The mean agreement coefficient between the two raters was found to be 80%, indicating a high degree of agreement. This suggests that the test and its scoring rubric are reliable assessment instruments. The final form of the rubric is presented in Appendix C.

C. The EFL writing performance test

The EFL writing performance skills test was prepared to determine the students' pre- and post-writing levels, thus investigating the effect of service learning on improving students' writing performance. The test consisted of one question where the students were asked to write an essay about "modern technology" to assess the four EFL writing performance skills: content, style, grammar, and mechanics.

To establish the validity of the test, it was submitted to a number of TEFL specialists to evaluate it according to its clarity and appropriateness to the level of the students and to measuring the target skills. The jury comments indicated that the test is appropriate to the students' language level and would properly measure the target writing skills.

The internal consistency and reliability of the EFL writing performance test were estimated through the test pilot administration to 20 students, other than the main research participants. ***Firstly***, the internal consistency was estimated by calculating the correlation coefficient between the score of each skill and the total score of the writing test; the results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

The correlation between the score of each skill and total score of the written performance test

Skills	Correlation Coefficient	Sig.
Content	0.495	0.05
Style	0.601	0.01
Grammar	0.766	0.01
Mechanics	0.727	0.01

Table 3 shows that the correlation coefficients are positive at either 0.01 or 0.05 levels, which proves the valid internal consistency of the EFL written performance skills test. ***Secondly***, the Cronbach Alpha (α) value of 0.705 was obtained to ensure the reliability of the EFL writing performance test. Consequently, the reliability of the test was established, allowing it to be used as a research tool. The test in its final form is presented in Appendix D.

The test time was also estimated by calculating the total time taken by all the pilot participants to complete the test and dividing it by their number (20). The mean time was, then, obtained as 800/20 = 40 minutes (+5 minutes for test instructions). Thus, it was found that 45 minutes would be regarded as an appropriate time for the students to complete the writing test.

D. The analytic EFL writing performance skills rubric

An analytic scoring rubric was prepared based on the four target writing skills to score the EFL writing performance of the students. The scoring rubric included a 4-point scale ranging from 1 (the minimum score) to 4 (the maximum score), and it was applied to the test essay question. Thus, the score for each skill was 4, and for the total test, it was 16. The rubric was submitted to a group of TEFL specialists to assess its validity in light of its accuracy, clarity, and appropriateness to score the target skills. Based on the jurors' comments, the rubric is linguistically

clear, and it properly covers the EFL writing performance skills under investigation.

The "Cooper" equation was used to estimate the inter-rater reliability of the rubric through the multi-observer method. It was found that the mean agreement coefficient between the two raters was found to be 87%, which is a high degree of agreement. This suggests that the test and its writing scoring rubric are reliable assessment tools. The final form of the rubric is presented in Appendix E.

E. The collaboration in service-learning scale

Students' collaboration within service-learning teams was assessed through designing and administering a collaboration scale. The scale was adapted form Dumlao (2008), it is a 4-point scale (rarely, sometimes, often, always) reflecting how often each student applies the collaboration-based statements. The scale consists of 30 items addressing both a collaborative mindset and the use of specific team-oriented communication skills. Those items are clustered around the following five categories:

- Category 1: Join "with" others (Take a relationship mindset with all your interactions).
- Category 2: Control the process, not the person(s) (Often difficulties can be alleviated or minimized with effective communication that is clear, inclusive, and team-oriented).
- Category 3: Use constructive, productive communication to build a supportive work climate.
- Category 4: Be firm with goals but flexible in how they are achieved.
- Category 5: Assume there is a solution for every challenge.

To establish the validity of the scale, it was presented to a number of TEFL professors to assess its items in terms of clarity and appropriateness. The opinions of the jurors showed that the scale is comprehensive and appropriate to evaluate students' collaboration in service-learning teams. The reliability of the scale was also measured by obtaining the value of Cronbach Alpha (α) for calculating the variance of the scale items to highlight the extent to which the scale items relate to each other and the correlation of each item with the total score of the scale. It was found that the reliability coefficient for the total scale is 0.897, which emphasizes that the collaboration scale is reliable and can be used as one of the research instruments. The final form of the scale is presented in Appendix F.

Additionally, the time needed to complete the scale was calculated by dividing the total amount of time spent by all the students in the pilot administration by their total number (20). It was found that giving students instructions for five minutes on top of the 20 would give them an adequate twenty-five minutes to respond to; the scale.

The service learning-based treatment

Based on reviewing literature and previous studies related to EFL oral and written performance, collaboration, and service-learning, the experimental treatment was constructed basically for improving students' EFL productive skills and collaboration. The following section highlights the service-learning treatment in light of its objectives, content, materials and media, strategies, and evaluation techniques.

Objectives

The target objectives of the service-learning-based treatment were identified as follows:

- Improving 4th year basic education students' oral performance skills, which are:
  - ✓ Pronunciation
  - ✓ Grammar
  - ✓ Vocabulary
  - ✓ Fluency
  - ✓ Comprehension and body language
- Improving students' EFL writing performance skills, which are:
  - ✓ Content-related skills (writing a clearly defined topic sentence, writing specific supporting sentences, writing an appropriate conclusion, and relevancy and adequacy of content).
  - ✓ Style-related skills (cohesion, coherence, word choice and quality of expression, and variety of sentence structure).
  - ✓ Grammar (verb tenses and correct use of articles, phrasal verbs, prepositions, etc.)
  - ✓ Writing mechanics (spelling and punctuation).
- Improving students' collaboration in service-learning teams.

Content

The content of the service-learning treatment is mainly task-based, it was designed based on adapting service-learning standards and indicators (Appendix G) developed by Berger Kaye (2010). The treatment was presented in ten sessions, including an orientation session. A guide was also prepared to clarify the how to proceed within the sessions (the and the sessions are presented in Appendix H). Throughout treatment, the four language skills were addressed with a special focus on practicing speaking and writing. Each session was organized into six main steps (objectives, materials, warm-up, presentation, practice, and assessment). Table 3 illustrates the phases of service-learning (investigation, planning, action, reflection, and demonstration) implemented throughout the sessions, as follows:

Table 3

Phases of service-learning implementation

Phase	Duration	Goals	Strategies/techniques
Orientation	One session	• Presenting the objectives of the treatment. • Introducing the concept of service learning, its importance, and how it might help students improve their language skills.	• Discussion • Using examples and visuals.
Investigation	Two sessions	• Forming teams. • Collecting information about the needs of the surrounding community. • Taking a decision about which needs to be addressed. • Deciding where to apply the service hours.	• Brainstorming • Discussion • Conducting online search, interviews, surveys, and observations to collect data and analyze the underlying needs. • Oral presentations • Journal writing
Planning	One session	• Acquiring new information through varied means and methods. • Collaborating with community partners. • Preparing a plan with decisions on roles, responsibilities, and timelines. • Being ready to provide meaningful service.	• Online search • Discussion • Essay writing (journal) • Poster design • Portfolio
Action	Two community visits + two zoom meetings/sessions	• Implementing the plan with two types of service learning: direct service and advocacy. • Using the previously learned and newly acquired academic skills and knowledge to offer unique learning experiences.	• Report writing • Oral presentations • Discussion • Portfolio • rubrics

Phase	Duration	Goals	Strategies/techniques
Reflection	Two sessions	• Informing the progress of the process. • Describing what happened and examining the difference made. • Discussing thoughts and feelings, considering project improvements. • Encouraging questions and comments from the instructor and peers. • Receiving feedback.	• Role play • Presentations • Discussion • Journal writing • Self-assessment • Peer assessment • Portfolio • rubrics
Demonstration	Two sessions	• Showing what and how students have learned. • Writing summative reports summarizing the major events and explaining how they were professionally and personally affected by this kind of service. • Creating a Facebook page that helps others learn from students' experiences. • Making presentations and performances.	• Discussion • Journal writing • Oral presentations • Portfolio

Materials & media

The proposed service-learning treatment employed various materials and media, such as handouts, PowerPoint presentations, videos, pictures, online materials, the Zoom app, and Facebook.

Evaluation

Multiple methods were used for evaluating students' EFL productive skills. For example, students were encouraged to use peer and self-assessment tools and scales to reflect on their learning at the beginning, during, and after the service-learning task. In addition, rubrics were applied to different tasks of service learning for evaluating reflective journal writing and oral presentations in addition to evaluating collaboration within the service-learning teams. Moreover, each student kept and developed a portfolio with a collection of planning materials, schedules, work results, reports, presentations, visualizations, and different forms of audio-visual documentation, which, as Resch (2018) indicated, would document the learning and reflection process.

Experimental procedures

Pre-administration

The experiment started with pre-administering the research instruments (the EFL oral performance test, the EFL writing performance test, and the collaboration scale) to the main students of the research

group at the beginning of the second semester of the 2023/2024 academic year, to assess their actual levels regarding the target variables.

Implementation

An orientation session was implemented to help the research group students become familiar with the service-learning treatment, its objectives, content, media, strategies, and the phases of each session. The students then studied the main nine sessions addressing the five phases of service learning: investigate, plan, act, reflect, and demonstrate, as previously illustrated in Table 3. Throughout the process of implementation, the students were collaboratively engaged in performing three types of service learning: direct (tutoring and supporting pupils with special needs), advocacy (writing letters, reports, presentations, posters), and research (surveying). Consequently, the following service learning projects were fulfilled by the collaborative teams.

- Visiting an orphanage in the city, tutoring young children, and supporting orphan students with special needs.
- Visiting a primary school that needs proper attention for their children and providing reports and presentations highlighting the importance of some necessary developments to that school.
- Visiting a rural area which needs development and making a list of their most needed things, then writing a formal letter to the government demanding the required facilities.
- Designing pamphlets and posters involving innovative English slogans and practical tips for improving the English language skills.
- Surveying and writing reports about the problems students encounter at the university.
- Organizing a public speaking event about their service-learning stories

Furthermore, students were engaged in multiple techniques and tasks designed for integrating the four language skills, with particular attention to enhancing their oral and written performance, while collaborating within their service learning teams. The Zoom application was used while the students were doing the service tasks in the action phase to communicate with the instructor about discussing and answering any questions. In addition, Facebook was used as a community for students to demonstrate their language products.

Post-administration

After finishing the experimental treatment, the research instruments were administered to students of the research group to examine the effect of service-learning on improving students' EFL productive language skills and collaboration. Then, the obtained data were analyzed using the appropriate statistical techniques, the results were interpreted, and consequently, the conclusion and proposed suggestions and recommendations were provided, as illustrated in the following section.

Results
Testing the first hypothesis

Wilcoxon signed-rank test for dependent samples was used to test the first hypothesis, which is "there is a statistically significant difference at (≤ 0.05) level between the mean ranks of the research group's pre-and post-administrations of the EFL oral performance test in favor of the post administration." Results are shown in Table 4.

Table 4
Comparison between the research group's pre-post administrations of the EFL oral performance test

Skills	Ranks	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Z Value	Sig	d	Effect level
Pronunciation	Negative Ranks	0	0	0	3.972	0.01	0.628	Large
	Positive Ranks	20	10.5	210				
Grammar	Negative Ranks	0	0	0	3.958	0.01	0.626	Large
	Positive Ranks	20	10.5	210				
Vocabulary	Negative Ranks	0	0	0	3.986	0.01	0.630	Large
	Positive Ranks	20	10.5	210				
Fluency	Negative Ranks	0	0	0	3.953	0.01	0.625	Large
	Positive Ranks	20	10.5	210				
Comprehension & Body language	Negative Ranks	0	0	0	3.951	0.01	0.624	Large
	Positive Ranks	20	10.5	210				
Total	Negative Ranks	0	0	0	3.929	0.01	0.621	Large
	Positive Ranks	20	10.5	210				

Table 4 illustrates that the estimated Z-value is significant at 0.01 level for each particular skill and for the total oral performance level. This proves the statistically significant difference between the mean ranks of the research group's pre- and post-administrations of the oral performance skills test in favor of the post-administration due to the use of service learning. In addition, based on using Field equation ($d = Z / \sqrt{n}$ (Field, 2009, 550) for estimating the effect size, Table 4 also clarifies that the values of "d" emphasize the large effect size levels (all are greater than 0.5) of service learning on improving each of the five main oral performance skills and the overall performance. Thus, these results led to accepting the first hypothesis.

Testing the second hypothesis

The second hypothesis states that " there is a statistically significant difference at (≤ 0.05) level between the mean score of the experimental group pre- and post-administrations of the EFL writing performance test in favor of the post administration." The results of using Wilcoxon signed-rank test for verifying this hypothesis are presented in Table 5.

Table 5

Comparison between the research group's pre-post administrations of the EFL writing performance test

Skills	Ranks	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Z Value	Sig	d	Effect level
Content	Negative Ranks	0	0	0	4.02	0.01	0.635	High
	Positive Ranks	20	10.5	210				
Style	Negative Ranks	0	0	0	3.88	0.01	0.613	High
	Positive Ranks	20	10.5	210				
grammar	Negative Ranks	0	0	0	4.011	0.01	0.634	High
	Positive Ranks	20	10.5	210				
Mechanics	Negative Ranks	0	0	0	4.00	0.01	0.632	High
	Positive Ranks	20	10.5	210				
Total	Negative Ranks	0	0	0	3.94	0.01	0.623	High
	Positive Ranks	20	10.5	210				

Table 5 shows that all Z-values of the four skills and the total test are significant at 0.01 level, which supports the statistically significant difference between the research group students' mean ranks in the pre- and post-administrations of the writing performance test in favor of the post-administration. Additionally, the values of effect size (d) emphasize the large and significant effect of service learning on improving students' EFL writing skills. Therefore, the second research hypothesis is accepted.

Testing the third hypothesis

To verify the third hypothesis, which addresses the statistically significant difference level between the mean ranks of the research group's pre- and post-administrations of the collaboration scale, Wilcoxon signed-rank test for dependent samples was used, and the results are presented in Table 6.

Table 6

Comparison between the research group's pre-and post-administrations of the collaboration scale

Collaboration	Ranks	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks	Z Value	Sig	d	Effect level
Total	Negative Ranks	0	0	0	3.93	0.01	0.621	Large
	Positive Ranks	20	10.5	210				

Table 6 shows that the Z-value of the collaboration scale is significant at 0.01 level, which supports the statistically significant difference between the research group students' mean ranks in the pre- and post-administrations of the collaboration scale in favor of the post-administration. Moreover, the value of effect size (d) stresses the significant effect of service learning on improving students' collaboration. Thus, the third and last hypothesis is verified and accepted.

Discussion

The current research examined the effect of service learning on improving EFL productive skills and collaboration for the fourth-year basic education students at the Faculty of Education, Mansoura University. Based on reviewing literature and previous research, it was found that students face many challenges in developing productive skills due to a lack of real exposure to practice opportunities. As a result, students' English competence is low, especially when it comes to speaking and writing. The service-learning approach was used in the current research to provide students with context-rich situations through

which they can improve their oral and written performance skills. The quasi-experimental design using one research group was adopted for achieving the research purpose via the pre- and post-administrations of an EFL oral performance test, an EFL writing performance test, and a collaboration scale as research instruments.

The previously mentioned statistical results revealed that the research group students' post-levels of oral and written performance and collaboration were superior to their pre-levels. In addition, all "d" values for the effect size were greater than 0.5, which supports the impact of service learning on improving the EFL productive skills and collaboration of the target students. Such results are consistent with Sun and Yang (2015), Cho and Gulley (2017), Pazmino (2019), Simsek (2020), Bataineh and Obeiah (2022), and Mamac and Chalk (2022). Those studies indicated that using service learning fosters EFL students' public speaking skills and oral language proficiency in general. It provides authentic learning opportunities and engages students in hands-on experiences. It was also emphasized that service learning develops their writing performance, both overall and on the sub-skills of focus, conventions, word choice, organization, and development, while establishing a collaborative atmosphere where the students are actively engaged and responsible for their learning.

During the training, the participants were afforded a conducive environment for both individual and collaborative learning. Each of the service-learning tasks not only supported students' language proficiency but also helped them develop a sense of social responsibility and cultural awareness, which are essential elements of modern education. After completing the treatment, it was found that students were more connected to others within the faculty. Additionally, they felt more appreciated and connected within the larger community.

Consistent with previous research (e.g., Murshidi, 2020; Yusof et al., 2020), the students faced some challenges, including their initial resistance to doing community service, which led to the small number of current research participants. Initially, when the students were introduced to the concept of service learning, they were hesitant. The idea of adding extra service hours to their already busy schedules overwhelmed them. The instructor convinced, then, them that such experiences were real field trips that would foster the quality of their learning. This put them at ease, and once the students began volunteering, they became so involved that five of them put in more service hours than required. Furthermore, they

showed doubt that their language skills were at an acceptable level for helping others, but practicing writing tasks, oral presentations, and doing role play during class helped them gain confidence.

Throughout the treatment, the students were engaged in multiple language learning activities. They also had varied opportunities for conducting peer and self-assessments. This created meaningful interaction with peers, which allowed them greater exposure to ideas and perspectives on the processes of producing the required oral or written output; this was instrumental to their progress over the the treatment. This was also supported by students' reflections, as they reported that service-learning seeks to work for the good of all, and it not only improved their attitudes towards speaking and writing but also fostered their growth and reflection in authentic learning contexts. Using journals for reflection and documenting their service-learning journey enabled them to practice vocabulary, grammar, and other writing skills introduced throughout the treatment. Accordingly, the previously mentioned statistical results and discussion, along with students' reflections, prove that service learning is effective in improving students EFL oral and written performance as well as their collaboration within their service learning teams.

Conclusions

The current research investigated the effect of service learning on improving students' EFL productive skills and collaboration. The statistical analysis of the research data emphasized the large effect of service learning on improving the EFL oral and written performance and collaboration of fourth-year basic education students at Mansoura Faculty of Education. As a result, the following conclusions are highlighted:

- Enhancing EFL productive skills is crucial for learners' social and professional interactions, enabling them to communicate effectively and express themselves in various situations.
- Engaging learners in collaborative teams fosters' their oral and written performance skills.
- Service-learning fosters EFL students' speaking and writing skills, and language proficiency in general.
- It provides students with authentic learning opportunities and actively engages them in hands-on experiences.
- It helps students be more connected to the community and develops their sense of social responsibility and cultural awareness, which are essential elements of modern education.
- Reflection in service learning links classroom content with student service experience to strengthen students' learning and insights and

develop a deeper understanding of the curriculum outside of the traditional classroom environment.

- Reflection promotes personal development by enhancing students' self-awareness, their sense of community, and their sense of their own capacities.

Recommendations

Based on the research results and discussions, the following recommendations are presented:

- Improvement of learners' EFL productive skills should be given full attention due to the fact that effective speaking performance affects students' success in their academic and professional lives.
- Service learning should be incorporated into EFL curricula to ensure students' English proficiency development through authentic experiences and real-life situations.
- Teachers should be properly trained on engaging service-learning projects to connect community service to students' academic study.
- Peer and self-assessment techniques should be integrated into the EFL teaching and learning process.
- Reflective activities should be used to promote students' deeper understanding of the course and improve their higher-level thinking and problem-solving abilities. and students' ability to learn from experience.

Suggestions for further research

The following research suggestions are presented based on the research results and recommendations:

- The effect of service learning on promoting students' EFL receptive skills.
- Using service-learning collaborative projects for developing students' community engagement and self-confidence.
- Assessing the impact of using service-learning projects on developing pre-service teachers' teaching skills and beliefs..

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