



**Title of Project:**

Building Multilingual Communities of Practice

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**Project Summary:**

Service-learning has become a popular environment through which U.S. universities prepare students for civic life, and in recent years, deliver English instruction to a diversified public. This research forms part of a larger ethnographic study which documents the development of an innovative service-learning model, called *Conversation Café*, that aims to expand community access to English while supporting and implementing community languages.

The current research focuses on interactions in a relatively new social space, in which service-learning and applied linguistics converge. Conversation is the central activity in this service-learning program model. Participants in conversations are university students, who are fluent English speakers, and community members, who wish to practice English. Data has been gathered from surveys, journals, audio-recordings, and field observations over a three-year period. Employing a narrative approach (De Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2012), case studies illustrate both the value and challenges of a service-learning model framed as pluri/multilingual *community of practice* (Lave & Wenger, 1991). The study asks: 1) What discourses of identity and membership become salient? 2) What interactional moves contribute? 3) How can the findings be applied to the program, and how do they affect future applications of this program model to classrooms and increasingly diverse work environments? Ultimately, the study highlights the potential of community of practice as both a framework and an orchestrated social space that afford opportunities for participants to re-negotiate relationships with communities and their memberships in the diversified local and global contexts in which we all live and work.