Chapter 9
CALL in Service-Learning:
Innovations to Foster Second Language Development

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ABSTRACT

Results from second language acquisition (SLA) research have shown that an L2 is best acquired when learners have opportunities to use L2 grammar and vocabulary in a manner that is meaningful and relevant to their lived lives. One promising approach to L2 instruction that appears to achieve this end is service-learning. As service-learning is an emerging field of study, there is a need for descriptions on how CALL-based technology can be implemented and evaluated in a service-learning classroom. The first part of this chapter describes service-learning and how CALL-based technology is used to achieve service and learning objectives and TESOL CALL standards. The second part of this chapter describes five CALL-based activities used by service-learning instructors to help their students meaningfully engage with each other and the content. The third part concludes the chapter by offering advice on how teachers could effectively implement CALL-based technology in service-learning classes.

INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes three units of study in which CALL-based activities were implemented in a service-learning course designed for English language learners at an intensive English program preparing students for graduate school. This chapter is organized into two parts. The first part defines service-

learning, highlighting the role of CALL in its implementation. The second part describes three units of study designed to achieve curricular objectives for service-learning. For each unit of study, the authors provide descriptions for the following: (1) unit of study, (2) a rationale for unit of study, (3) assessments used to measure outcomes, (4) challenges and limitations, and (5) future refinements.

BACKGROUND

This section defines service-learning and describes the rationale for its implementation in second/foreign language learning institutions, especially at intensive English programs (IEPs). Service-learning is a form of experiential learning (i.e., learning by doing) in which learning is a product of reflection. Sigmon (1979) states that service-learning is characterized by a balance between learning and service. Furco (1996) distinguishes service-learning from other forms of experiential learning (e.g., volunteerism, fieldwork) by asking two questions: (1) Who benefits from the service? The provider or the recipient? (2) What is the focus? The service provided or the learning? Therefore, service-learning balances the *beneficiary* (the service provider and receiver) and *focus* (service and learning). Volunteerism, for example, has as its focus the recipient and service, while internships focus on the provider and obtaining skills, experience, and money (if a paid internship).

Service-learning has three interrelated parts: (1) pre-service, (2) while-service, and (3) post-service. In the pre-service stage, students conduct research on issues (social problems) related to a service opportunity. For example, students conduct research on homelessness or food insecurity prior to volunteering at a food bank or homeless shelter. They define the problem, investigate its causes and effects, and what is being done to mitigate the problem. When investigating solutions, students focus on how the organization for which they are volunteering is part of the solution to the problem. Note that during the pre-service component, students practice academic skills, such as building definitions, understanding cause-effect, and thinking critically about problems to find solutions. They also learn to synthesize source materials to inform their understanding of the problem. Throughout this process, students use a variety of technologies to communicate and collaborate.

When students volunteer, they are expected to not only do their service, but to take the opportunity to interact with members of the service organization. In the pre-service stage, it is hoped that students acquire background knowledge and language to confidently discuss their service and ask relevant questions to the volunteers and staff. Once students have completed their service, they move on to the post-service stage, where they are asked to reflect on their learning and service. This can be done through group discussions, observation journaling, presentations (e.g., student-produced documentaries, Pechakucha presentations, Powtoons, narrative PowerPoint presentations, etc.), class publications (e.g., online blogging), and reflection papers to list a few. At this point, the focus is on reflecting between what was learned in the pre-service stage and what was experienced and gained (e.g., new skills) during the service. Finally, they are asked to synthesize their learning and service-learning experiences to create new knowledge, which is shared through journaling and journaling.

Rationale for Implementing Service-Learning

This section examines the justifications for including service-learning into a second language learning curriculum. First, service-learning promotes the development of interactional and grammatical compe-

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