I am delighted to write the foreword for the *Handbook of Research on Computer-Enhanced Language Acquisition and Learning*, as its scope and content provide educational institutions and commercial computer software enterprises with practical information from the field of language learning for the successful implementation of computer technology. People have been experimenting with the uses of computer-assisted language learning (CALL) since the beginnings of computing. Wonderful and important mainframe-based systems, such as PLATO, were created and used to teach languages to significant numbers of students. Yet, these systems were reserved essentially for those elites that had access to these large and expensive systems. CALL, like other forms of technology-supported learning, has only truly captured the imagination of the language teaching profession since the advent of the microprocessor which began to democratize access to computing. Thus, CALLas, a major field of endeavor for "the masses," has been in existence for only a very short time: less than three decades. It is such a new field!

From the very beginning of the microprocessor revolution, computing for all appeared to become a reality and the critical mass of people involved in the field multiplied exponentially, thus hugely increasing the intellectual commitment to the field. Such increasing intellectual commitment is demonstrated by the authors of the 30 chapters who contributed to this handbook.

Many of the authors invested in personal computers and hurried to produce the ultimate piece of language-learning software. Some wrote their own code (usually BASIC but sometimes Pascal or even machine language), others had to wait for the freedom afforded by the invention of Hypercard and systems like it. These were days of great hope and great ambition. There were also days of great frustration for two apparently contradictory reasons.

On one hand, the potential of the technology had outstripped the thinking processes involved with its application to language-teaching and learning. This often resulted in software which entrenched outdated teaching and learning paradigms. People argued that this was better than nothing. On the other hand, paradoxically, the technology was not sufficiently advanced to satisfy the hopes and aspirations of imaginative theoreticians of language learning who had been dreaming of the days when affordable computing would become available. Having theorized these systems, they were now keen to turn theory into practice, but were unable to do so because of the limitations of the technology.

The field of CALL/CELL/TELL is now maturing and heading toward a better balance between technology and thinking. While the technology is still developing faster than our thinking processes and we are still driving forward while, we are, inevitably, looking in the rear-vision mirror. We learned to recognize and deal more effectively with the dissonance between the speed of technological development and the speed of our thinking. This handbook provides some documentary evidence that, while dealing with the dissonance between the speed of technological development and the speed of our thinking, there is something genuinely to be gained in using technology in language learning. Technology and
our thinking process not only co-exist side by side, they also intersect in many interesting ways so as to inspire new thinking process and new ways of using technology alike.

This handbook contains a number of reports which provide us with information on how some of the tools that we had been waiting for reduced the frustrations of the past and, how they provided us with wonderful opportunities for thinking differently and imaginatively about the teaching and learning of languages.

The handbook of research on computer-enhance language acquisition and learning abounds with descriptions of how CALL practitioners from all over the world have taken advantage of these opportunities in remarkably different, yet eminently practical, ways to the clear benefit of the language-learning enterprise as a whole. It offers practical knowledge derived from implementation of technology based on theories of second language acquisition, multimedia learning, and theories from cognitive psychology. Its multi-disciplinary approach is most welcome. It represents an original and important contribution to the state of the art. It will help to build the future of CALL while, at the same time, provide a valuable historical record of the state of play in the early 21st century.

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