

Preface

INTEGRATING COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNING AND TEACHING

We are living in a world of ever-increasing communication between people speaking different languages and with more efficient use of e-resources. Computer-assisted foreign language learning is a process of doing this, amongst many others. This book, *Computer-Assisted Foreign Language Teaching and Learning: Technological Advances*, offers a unique way for budding foreign language teachers to gain the skills they need to succeed in their teaching with Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) context/Web 2.0 environments/an e-learning dimension. Good practices in e-learning and research in a variety of languages, such as English, Chinese, French, Italian, German, Spanish, Japanese, Portuguese, etc., are presented, thus offering insights and implications for all.

The chapters cover CALL overview theories, technologies, and trends; CALL, teachers, and learners; Collaborative learning; and CALL course design. The chapters in this book compare traditional and virtual classrooms, e-learning resources, and using Web 2.0 tools as open platforms for social learning. These chapters report on original research or present an original framework that links foreign language teaching, experiments, and testing practices that utilize the most recent and most widely used e-learning. The chapters present results of surveys with empirical data on actual language teaching outcomes with pedagogical procedures and implications. Commentaries that discuss interesting opinions on issues related to foreign language teaching and e-learning are also included.

The primary objective of this book is to inform and share the most up to date research and good practice in the field of using e-learning in foreign language teaching. It will offer all linguistic scholars, language teachers, language policy makers, and students a better understanding of the importance and influence of e-learning in second language acquisition and learning outcome in contemporary globalism. The secondary objective is to provide a foundation for other similar books on the subject. The book meets the needs of readers because there are few reference/resource materials available on the subject that: 1) go into a wide range of languages being taught regarding how e-learning affects foreign language learning today from both teacher and learner perspectives; and 2) tie together all the major technologies and methodologies applied within those contexts.

HOW THIS BOOK IS ORGANISED

The chapters in this book have covered three key areas: (1) collaborative learning, (2) CALL, teachers, and learners, and (3) CALL course design.

Collaborative Learning in CALL

In chapter one, “A Wiki Platform for Language and Intercultural Communication,” Wang, Zou, and Xing present an e-learning project between English students learning Business Chinese in the UK and Chinese students learning English in China via a wiki platform. The study suggests that the enhanced learning outcome results from the collaborative learning between native and non-native speakers, from the increased student engagement online, and from the authentic intercultural communication.

In chapter two, “Engendering Interaction, Collaboration, and Reflection in the Design of Online Assessment in Language Learning,” Wang and Chen reflect upon situated online assessments in complete online mode as opposed to blended learning with campus-based learning supported by online components. Based on the implementation at Griffith University, Australia, the framework for the design, the interaction thus engendered, and the effects of collaboration are explored.

In chapter three, “Practising Language Interaction via Social Networking Sites,” Orsini-Jones, Brick, and Pibworth report on students’ novel ways of interactions via social networking sites. Apart from bringing out the positive features and learning potentials of these sites, this study pinpoints some problematic aspects of Web 2.0 tools, which illustrate language practitioners’ dilemmas on these global ubiquitous platforms.

In chapter four, “Scaffolding Role of Computer-Supported Collaborative Learning Environment on Collaboration and Academic Literacy: Possibilities and Challenges,” Zhao discusses collaborative learning in a business English teaching context. The findings suggest that the designed CALL environment can enhance Chinese tertiary students’ collaborative learning and academic literacy development.

CALL, Teachers, and Learners

In chapter five, “Language Economy in Computer-Mediated Communication: Learner Autonomy in a Community of Practice,” by White, the author addresses the research topic to theoretical as well as applied linguists. It is argued that reduced forms, especially the ellipsis used in an Internet Chat text discourse, is evidence of user autonomy in a community of practice.

In chapter six, “Facebook Comparison Research: Faculty and Student Perceptions of Social Media for Foreign Language Courses,” Terantino discusses practical implications and potentials for the use of Facebook in foreign language learning and teaching, based on surveys of faculty and students in a university setting. This chapter shows interesting and positive findings.

In chapter seven, “Learner Engagement in Computer-Mediated Chinese Learning,” Guo and Guo present a study on how to engage Chinese as a Foreign Language learners to develop listening and speaking skills with online activities. This chapter explores the effective ways to integrate CALL into the teaching of Chinese in Higher Education in the UK.

In chapter eight, “Students in the New Millennium: How Much do We Know about Them?” Wu discusses students’ perceptions of using new technologies in language learning in order to understand language learners in the new information age. He indicates that language teachers should focus on individuals when using technology in language teaching.

In chapter nine, “Using a Virtual Learning Environment to Promote Autonomous Language Learning for Chinese Students,” by Jordan and Coyle, the authors present an empirical study on how a Virtual Learning Environment provides a platform for Chinese students to improve their learning autonomy in taking tutor-monitored, self-selected quizzes.

CALL Course Design

Sun, Chen, and Olson present a case study of developing an online programme in Mandarin Chinese in chapter ten, “Developing and Implementing an Online Chinese Program: A Case Study.” They focus on virtual language classroom and its instruction. Via the case study in Chinese, the chapter proposes a prototype for instructors to develop and implement fully online entry-level language classes, as well as to provide guidelines and recommendations for their reference as they redesign traditional face-to-face language courses to fit the online modality.

In chapter eleven, “Designing Language Learning Software,” Turel and McKenna examine the principles and guidelines that should be borne in mind when designing and developing (interactive multimedia) language software for foreign language learning. They suggest a six-stage approach towards language learning software design and development. It is argued that each stage is vital to the design and development process for cost-effective software, and a wide range of principles and guidelines need to be borne in mind at each stage in order to design and develop effective language learning software.

In chapter twelve, “Getting Smart about Split Attention,” Mancilla focuses on second language (L2) listening and note-taking tasks performed by international students in university settings, guided by Cognitive Load Theory (CLT) and the split attention effect. It reviews existing studies that provide insight into the Echo Smartpen™ by Livescribe as a mobile e-learning tool for alleviating the split attention effect, and enhancing the encoding and external storage functions of note-taking for L2 learners.

Watson and Miller, in chapter thirteen, “Computer-Based Perceptual Training as a Major Component of Adult Instruction in a Foreign Language,” look at adult learners of English and describe a training programme for perceptual skills. The chapter demonstrates how the Speech Perception Assessment and Training Program for ESL (SPATS-ESL) is likely to contribute to continuing improvement in pronunciation and to an increasing vocabulary.

In chapter fourteen, “e-Assessment for Learning: Gaining Insight in Language Learning with Online Assessment Environments,” by Van Maele et al., the authors illustrate how e-assessment of oral proficiency in the foreign language can be designed and conducted in ways that enhance the students’ learning experience. Referring to the authors’ experiences with the WebCEF and CEFcult assessment platforms, it is shown how a variety of technical functionalities of these two online tools create a supportive environment for a pedagogical approach known as assessment for learning.

In chapter fifteen, “The Use of VLE for Monitoring Independent Language Learning in Large Cohort Provision,” Franc and Morton present a case study of French studies at the University of Manchester, UK. The chapter explores the ways to enhance new technologies to address student engagement in independent learning and lifelong learning skills. It also examines the effect of e-learning on intrinsic motivation in relation to feedback.

In chapter sixteen, “Computer-Assisted Pronunciation Training Assessment (CAPTA) Programs: Requirements, the Current State of Affairs, and Challenges for the Future,” the author, Tsurutani, first discusses the need for CAPTA programs in dealing with L2 phonological errors, and then moves on to review the capacity that such programs have achieved up to date. The chapter contributes to our understanding of the current criteria and goals for developing CAPTA programs, that is, to achieve “Comfortable intelligibility rather than perfect accuracy.”

The book will be useful to anyone who is interested in teaching a foreign language with the use of CALL and particularly for the following three groups: 1) for all foreign language teachers who would like to be informed about the trends in e-learning in the field; it targets language teachers who are thinking

to use e-resources to improve themselves and make their language teaching more interesting; 2) for all who are interested in the theories of using e-learning in foreign language teaching and its implications for second language acquisition; and 3) for educational organizations or higher education institutions developing e-learning into their existing syllabi. It will also attract language learners who are using e-learning resources to improve their language proficiency. The audience of this book will not be limited by demographic or geographic considerations, but will be widespread, with potential appeal to educational organizations, colleges, and tertiary institutions pursuing high standard language teaching. We hope the readers will enjoy this book.

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