

Chapter 7

Computer-Assisted Language Learning and Design for Learning: Potential Synergies

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ABSTRACT

The learning context has gradually become more technology-rich and learner-centered along with the learning process, which is extensively regarded as configurative and dynamic. This has brought about significant shifts in educational practices. This shift has a crucial impact both on the field of computer-assisted language learning (CALL) and on the approaches to educational design, giving way to the emergence of design for learning. This chapter is an attempt to explore potential synergies between CALL and design for learning, which is thought to strengthen the CALL practices and make an effective base for CALL design.

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INTRODUCTION

Advances within the field of education boosted through re-thinking and re-designing pedagogies along with the concomitant developments in technology have shaped the current view of instructional activities in almost every area of education, with second language (L2) learning and teaching being no exception. One notable outcome of these advances is to integrate computer and internet tools into the educational settings, leading to the advent of Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL).

Increasing popularity of TEL with its emphasis on learner-centred, technology-rich and continuously-changing learning environments has resulted in the development of new theoretical approaches to educational design which refers to a “set of practices involved in constructing representations of how to support learning in particular cases” (Goodyear, 2005 p.82). One of the recent approaches to educational design is *design for learning* (or sometimes called *learning design*) that describes “the process by which teachers and others involved in the support of learning arrive at a plan or structure or design artefact for a learning situation or setting” (Beetham & Sharpe, 2013). What distinguishes *design for learning* approach from the other instructional design¹ approaches is pertaining to its heavy emphasis on re-configuration of the learning environments, reflection on the process and re-design of the existing design in new contexts (Sun, 2016).

At the heart of TEL, also lies Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) (Fotos & Browne, 2004). CALL is regarded as one of the most vigorous areas of education in terms of the application of learning technologies (Thomas, Reinders, & Warschauer, 2012). In parallel with the developments in and wide availability of computer tools, the field of CALL has evolved substantially over the past few decades in particular. This evolution from simpler forms of modest integration of technology tools to the heavy emphasis on the use of technology as a versatile tool enhancing collaborative learning has brought about significant changes in CALL pedagogies (Sun, 2017; Thomas et al., 2012). Considering the underlying pedagogical approaches, scholars have proposed various phases of evolution of CALL. These phases range from behaviourist CALL representing early practices to social CALL signifying the shift towards constructivist pedagogy that incorporates participative learning (Bax, 2003; Sun, 2017; Thomas et al., 2012; Warschauer & Healey, 1998).

The progress made in CALL is also reflected in numerous studies conducted in various research settings (Gu, Zhu, & Guo, 2013; Kost, 2011; Rosell-Aguilar, 2007; Şahin Kızıl, 2015; Vovides, Sanchezalonso, Mitropoulou, & Nickmans, 2007). A closer look at the recent CALL literature points out a discernible tendency among researchers towards social CALL. Most of the research in this line reports on the experiments with individual computer/internet tools, along with the studies, though

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