

## Chapter 15

# Integrating Technology on Initial Training Courses A Survey Amongst CELTA Tutors

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### ABSTRACT

*Teacher trainers/educators play a key role in the process of normalisation, as defined by Bax (2003), in the training of foreign language teachers to use technology as a regular part of their practice. This study explores teacher trainer attitudes towards adopting technology, their readiness to use it on teacher training courses, and their current levels of comfort in integrating it on Cambridge CELTA courses, a pre-service course currently followed by approximately 12,000 candidates annually. The results and discussion will stimulate some reflection as to what degree such courses are responsive to the objective of integrating technology in the training of foreign language teachers.*

### INTRODUCTION

Normalisation, as defined by Bax (2003) is a “*concept [...] relevant to any kind of technological innovation and refers to the stage when the technology becomes invisible, embedded in everyday practice and hence ‘normalised’.*” As he points out, we if still feel compelled to have a special

term for it, in this case “CALL”, it cannot have reached the stage when it is *‘taken for granted in everyday life’* (Bax, 2003) as we do with other resources which have been fully normalised such as coursebooks, overhead projectors or using DVDs.

Recent discussions on Twitter (a micro-blogging tool increasingly popular in the EFL community) and various blogs (Dudeney, 2009)

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have been addressing the very same question. The IATEFL Learning Technologies Special Interest Group's Pre-Conference Event (PCE) at the annual conference in Harrogate, UK, in April 2010 (IATEFL Learning Technology Special Interest Group, 2010) explored similar paths and was, in part, the stimulus for this survey. The discussions during that day mentioned 'normalisation' as a processes related to teachers at various stages of engagement with educational technology (Bax, 2003).

Technophobia, lack of confidence or knowledge in teachers, financial constraints, lack of resources, administrative issues, and negative attitudes in teachers as well as educational leadership were amongst the many issues creating obstacles in the process of reaching a normalised stage.

However, there was no mention of the crucial role of those who are involved in the training of teachers and the degree to which current courses around the world cater for the integration of technology into the teaching of foreign languages.

This study aimed to address that with the following questions:

1. What is the degree of familiarity of teacher educators with new technologies and to what degree are they prepared to help teachers reach the state of normalisation mentioned in Stephen Bax's article?
2. To what degree are they willing to be agents of change on their courses producing a new type of teacher who would be more comfortable and confident in using technology as a normal part of their lesson preparation and design?
3. Finally, what are their attitudes towards the integration of new technologies into their syllabuses, exemplifying their use through their own practices of teacher training while making use of them?

## THE SURVEY

A questionnaire was designed to explore the questions posed above.

The questionnaire (Constantinides, 2010) was published on the web using *SurveyMonkey* (<http://www.surveymonkey.com>), an online application that allows data collection, processing and the creation of statistical charts. The link to the survey was sent to all tutors on the email list managed and moderated by Cambridge ESOL (2010).

Overall, it was felt, that the answers collected might be indicative of CELTA tutors familiarity with uses of technology for teaching and training teachers of foreign languages; their readiness to introduce the uses of educational technology to their trainees in an integrated way and their attitudes towards the use of such tools as a normal part of CELTA courses.

## RESPONDENT PROFILE

The respondents were all Cambridge CELTA tutors and assessors (many of whom are also tutors). They responded to the survey anonymously to encourage more participation.

Although not confirmed by Cambridge ESOL<sup>1</sup>, one can speculate on the total number based on numbers in the assessors' list (280). 92 individuals (tutors and, I presume, assessors) participated in this survey and completed the majority of the questions. Many of them work exclusively for one course provider but a high number are free-lance and travel from country to country, wherever courses are offered.

The decision to address the survey question to Cambridge CELTA tutors from all over the world was made for the following reasons:

- They constitute a sizeable population
- They are engaged in training primarily novice teachers, although not exclusively.

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