

## КРУГЛЫЙ СТОЛ ИКТ В ОБРАЗОВАНИИ

### COMPUTER ASSISTED LANGUAGE LEARNING (CALL)

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As the developed world is rapidly moving from the industrial age to the information age, all the activity and growth of society is based more on the exchange and interpretation of information and the development of knowledge. In such a society, it is assumed that the ability to read, write, and communicate effectively over computer networks is becoming essential for success in almost every sphere of life.

Given these circumstances, the questions might arise as “what is the role of informational technology and its impact on learning and teaching in the language classroom?” Nobody can deny that the role of computers in language teaching has changed greatly in the last 20 years. Earlier, computers were used principally for drills and exercises. Now a blend of technological and pedagogical developments allows better integrating computer technology into the process of language learning. Multimedia programs including speech-recognition software can create almost ideal environments for language practice, concordancing software and huge language corpora provide students with the means to investigate language use in authentic context. And the Internet gives lots of opportunities to communicate in the target language, get access to textual and multimedia information and publish for a global audience.

As lots of technological tools are becoming increasingly available in educational contexts all over the world, there is a great variety of their applications in administrative and teaching tasks. There are three main types of practical uses of up-to-date technologies for teachers: *administrative* (when the teacher uses the computer for organizational and administrative functions, such as record keeping; word processing, e-mailing parents, etc), *blended* (when the teacher uses computers together with students thus combining face-to-face (f2f) communication with computerized tasks) and *distance* (when the teacher uses computers to provide distance learning, where learners meet only virtually). Distance courses increase the use of the computer as a communication tool and a source of information about the various multimedia functions that are increasingly accessible on the Internet.

At the same time each technology plays a different role in students' learning. Instead of trying to describe the impact of all technologies as if they were the same, researchers should think about what kind of technology to use in the classroom and for what purposes. In general, two main distinctions are made. Students can learn "*from*" computers—where technology is generally used as a guide or a tutor and serves to increase basic skills and knowledge; and can learn "*with*" computers—where technology is used as a tool that can be applied to a variety of goals in the learning process and can serve as a resource to help develop higher order thinking, creativity and research skills.

Before discussing the advantages and disadvantages of using computer technologies for learning languages, it is important not to refer to them as if we were considering a single, homogeneous tool because different technologically based tools provide different advantages for learning a second language. There isn't one technology which suites best for language study, but a set of technological tools that can be applied for the abovementioned purpose. To be more precise, there are two important technological platforms that provide tools to assist language learning in order to increase interactivity: 1) CD-ROM applications (software) and 2) the Web and Internet communications sometimes referred to as CMC (computer mediated communication). If we think for a moment of multimedia CDs or DVDs, it is obvious that learners get lots of benefits such as an instant feedback, possibility to repeat words and phrases as often as they want in the course of practice, access to the disks where and when they want. Adding the Internet to this mix, especially both synchronous (real time) and asynchronous (deferred time) communication such as voice chat, curricular collaborations, and Web-based media projects provides great opportunities for communication with native speakers and peers, the negotiation of meaning, authentic audience and authentic tasks, etc. But despite all these advantages mentioned above, there are still some difficulties especially for teachers: 1) *Time and learning curve* (problems with the technology and with students' use of the equipment; necessity to refresh the materials and skills rather frequently); 2) *Differential access* (sometimes absence of good access to equipment and to the Internet); 3) *Equipment failure and software incompatibility*; 4) *Cost* (providing equipment, facilities and adequate support staff is very expensive).

So, Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) reflects the idea that nowadays there are as many ways to use computers and the Internet as there are traditional methods of teaching, and it is becoming increasingly difficult to find classrooms that do not somehow use modern technologies, even if it is simply a student who is e-mailing a teacher about next week's test.