



## Can CALL or TELL Replace Teachers

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## New Era in Language Learning

Information Revolution has brought sweeping changes into the lives of people and English language learning sector is no exception. Technology and language learning have a long history. Computers have been used for language teaching since the 1960s. The fifty plus year history can be roughly divided into three main stages: behavioristic CALL, communicative CALL and integrative CALL. Each stage corresponds to a certain level of technology as well as a certain pedagogical approach. CALL enables student-centered lessons that allow the learners, learn on their own, using structured and unstructured interactive lessons. These lessons carry two important features: bidirectional (interactive) learning and individualized learning. CALL is not a method; it is a tool that helps teachers facilitate language learning process. It can also be used as remedial to help learners with limited language proficiency.

In recent times, the impact of ICT coupled with CALL and TELL is being felt significantly in the field of education. It is believed that it has made language learning innovative, interesting, and effective. Computers as tools, potentially facilitate learner autonomy more efficiently. The modern digital language laboratory which uses computers with internet connectivity has evolved to its present stage as a result of two simultaneous advancements: Technological and Pedagogical.

In ACTFL's volume on 'Technology Enhanced Language Learning', Margaret Krassen (1997 266) writes that *Integration of technology entails not only the use of the computer in the classroom but also its use to support curriculum goals...it can help educators see the potential that technology offers in addressing the whole range of curricular objectives, from the low-level to the higher-level goals of their discipline.*

## Can Technology Do Better Than Teachers ?

In our academic discussions about Multimedia Language Labs , the often asked question is - Will technology replace teachers? The answer is 'NO'. In fact, in the last ten years, digital

developments opened up lots of new opportunities to English teachers, which can really benefit learners of English. Undoubtedly, Digital technology can never play the role of the teacher but it could be the teacher's assistant, playing a supportive role which can make a valuable impact on learning outcomes. Technology can do things that a teacher couldn't do – whether it's lack of time, or resources – and could add real value to the classroom. It's important, for teachers to understand that a positive, proactive relationship with technology can help them and their learners. Hence, teachers need to befriend technology and develop their ability to understand and critically assess digital learning tools in order to identify, those which are appropriate and beneficial to their students.

### **HOW - TECH can Help A Teacher**

Current installations are generally Multimedia based Language Labs that could help learn and enhance language proficiency by sharing the course materials within a second, where the teacher and the students are involved effortlessly .Interactive computer network allows students to test the results of learning, without the risk of being punished for any mistake that he may commit while learning. It permits the student to have his or her own pace of learning and monitor and evaluate their own performance, if they are doing individual practice. The computer enhanced class room environment encourages not only the bright students but also the slow learners, as they can sit with computer whenever and as long as they like. The difficulty experienced by the slow learners in a conventional class room is easily eliminated by using computers, internet, websites and so on. It offers a high degree of flexibility in the learning of second language. It makes the teaching and learning of English an infinitely enjoyable experience.

Space to oneself, self-pacing, exemplified pronunciation, recording for comparing with the best, speaking tests, effective monitoring and archiving for evaluation are the unique features of a multimedia lab. All the four language learning skills (LSRW) are given importance and learners are provided with ample opportunities to practice by listening to the audio programmes and watching the video clips .The laboratory's collection is designed to assist learners in the acquisition and maintenance of aural comprehension, oral and written proficiency, and cultural awareness.

The following eight conditions for optimal language learning through the use of CALL are outlined in Egbert & Hanson-Smith's (1999) classic book-*CALL environments: research, practice, and critical issues* .

- Learners have opportunities to interact with each other and negotiate meaning.
- Learners interact in the target language with an authentic audience.
- Learners are involved in authentic tasks.
- Learners are exposed to and encouraged to produce varied and creative language.
- Learners have enough time and feedback.
- Learners are guided to attend mindfully to the learning process.
- Learners work in an atmosphere with an ideal stress/anxiety level.

### **How Technology Complements Teaching**

Many people feel that CALL, in the language lab , is a self learning activity. It is true only to some extent .The practical impact of CALL in the lab can be achieved only when teachers initiate and execute the language lab operation with a positive attitude, good knowledge about the CALL materials and appropriate methodology. This necessitates that they be receptive in their attitudes to the technology. In this case, a positive attitude indicates a higher level of knowledge and vice versa. But a possibility that the higher level of knowledge in technology use contributes to having positive attitudes cannot be ruled out as well. Hence, both the components of attitude and knowledge are complementary. In this respect, it is imperative that in introducing and gradually integrating multimedia technology in the English Language Classroom, a consideration of teachers' attitudes and knowledge is essential to ensure that the CALL enterprise will achieve the potentials it deserves. And this requires time, concentration and support, involving long term viable efforts.

Therefore, CALL is not a substitute to classical method of language teaching. It only supplements the basic training system. The teacher is not a dispensable commodity. He /she is very much in the scene. They have to have complete knowledge about the needs and nature of the materials of the lab and in-fact, carry a huge responsibility in the effective conduct of language lab sessions . Making students sit before the computers in the language lab to learn

language or communication skills will not do .The machines alone will do nothing without properly constructed material. What the machines have forced us to do is to think out very carefully the objectives of language teaching and to plan our classes, to take advantage of all the technical facilities we now have. But the benefits of the thinking are not yet well enough known and applied. Too few people know how the job has been and can be carried out, and until the people who have the experience, spread their knowledge wider, we are unlikely to make progress.

*The success of computer technology programmes depends on the attitudes of teachers. Teachers' attitudes towards multimedia technology influences students' attitude towards technology (B. Roby, 2006). Unless we identify teacher's attitude towards multimedia technology, we cannot expect the teachers to effectively support the integration of technology into the curriculum. (Meskill, 2000, Woodrow 1991)*

We need to know how to incorporate the computer in the curriculum and to assist teachers in an effort to become the best educators. And say that the effectiveness of the language lab directly depends on the teacher's creativity by selecting challenging activities to students exploiting myriad sources available with technological tools increasingly available in educational contexts around the world, it's not difficult to build a technology rich environment that can make language learning autonomous, stress free, faster, easier, secured, interesting and above all motivating .

*“Introducing multimedia technology into the second language learning classroom does not guarantee the expected results in learning. While software and hardware may be in place, the 'human ware' must be in position too.” (Warschauer and Meskill, 2000)*

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