

Normalisation of CALL

Sophie Ioannou-Georgiou, Guest Editor

<yiansoph@cytanet.com.cy>

Technology and its applications in the language classroom has been a "hot topic" in the language teaching world for a number of years. As technological applications have developed and the field of Learning Technologies and CALL in particular, has matured, the language teaching and learning community feels it is time to take stock. At the same time we should pause and reflect on what our future as CALL practitioners and researchers will be.

The discussion presented below focused on the future of CALL and asked language teachers to focus on what they think this future will be.

The discussion was given impetus by Dr. Bax's vision of the future and his notion of "normalisation" of CALL, which he elaborated on in his article "CALL - Past, Present and Future" (2003). The article was made available to participants and can still be found at the IATEFL COMP-SIG website, courtesy of Elsevier Science Ltd.

<http://www.iateflcompsig.org.uk/media/callpresentpastandfuture.pdf>

Initially, the discussion tried to clarify where we are now in terms of CALL, whereas a thread of the discussion focused on whether normalisation is indeed what the future of CALL will be. Finally, based on experience of successful cases of CALL implementation, the participants tried to identify those factors which can function as stepping stones towards normalisation.

The discussion took place on the IATEFL Learning Technologies email list <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/IATEFLComputerSig/> and was fielded by Dr. Stephen Bax of Canterbury, Christ Church University College, UK.

Mark Warschauer's and Deborah Healey's (1998) article was also made available to the participants after permission by Professor Warschauer.

<http://www.gse.uci.edu/faculty/markw/overview.html>

Those contributors whose email addresses are listed welcome comments on their ideas. There are a number of contributors whom we have not been able to contact for permission to reproduce their messages. Since it would disrupt the continuity of the discussion to delete them, we reproduce them here with their full name and contact information removed, leaving only their first name and an asterisk "*" to designate such cases.

In the beginning of the discussion participants tried to establish where exactly CALL is situated at the moment in relation to its progress towards normalisation. Have particular institutions or countries reached normalisation of CALL? People were eager to hear about instances of normalisation but also find to out what colleagues around the world are doing as regards technology and language learning.

To: <IATEFLComputerSig@yahoogroups.com>
From: "Sophie Ioannou-Georgiou <yiansoph@cytanet.com.cy>
Subject: [IATEFLComputer Sig] "The Future of CALL" from Joanna Teague

G'day,

I enjoyed Stephen's paper and am about to download Mark's. What do you hope the future will bring for CALL?

Having moved into the world of LOTE (Languages Other Than English - MFL) I can see there are many possibilities for our move into Stephen's state of CALL normalisation. We aren't there yet at my university and I was wondering if anyone is working at a school/college/university where they have reached this stage yet? It would be good to hear about peoples' insights.

There are some wonderful examples of local schools who have negotiated laptops for all pupils, and with a wireless school they have moved into a stage of using computers as readily as we use pens or should I say mobile phones.

- Joanna

From: "Sophie Ioannou-Georgiou" <yiansoph@cytanet.com.cy>
Subject: [IATEFLComputer Sig] "The Future of CALL" from Joanna Teague

Hi Joanna

Normalisation sounds great. It is just the way I hope things will be for my classes sometime soon :) It's not like that right now, though.

Even at the very basic level we still have problems due to lack of PCs, printers, etc

and the problems we face due to lack of technical support when anything goes wrong. That's at the school where I work and the situation is the same in many, many primary and secondary schools I know.

Even at tertiary/higher institutions normalisation is lagging behind. Again we face lack of equipment. You have to reserve one of the few data projectors and then have to carry it yourself and hook it up etc. (no technical support, therefore much more intimidating and off putting for novice technology users).

But then again this is only one of the problems and one that we hope we'll soon resolve???

Sophie

From: "Simon Gill" <pangill@hotmail.com>

Subject: [IATEFLComputer Sig] "The Future of CALL" discussion

I am originally from the UK but live and work in the Czech Republic. I work in a teacher training college where our students are future teachers of English in the state school system. We don't have access to rooms with multiple computers, and nor do our students bring a laptop to class (very few of them could afford one, I'm sure), but we do have two classrooms equipped with a single computer with web access, each of which is hooked up to a data projector and screen. I am fortunate enough to have all my classes scheduled in one of the classrooms thus equipped and my HoD has just got a grant bid accepted which will extend this technology to all our classrooms.

What we are trying to do is to integrate the new technologies in an everyday kind of way, so that, for example:

- Lectures are routinely supported by PowerPoint, which we can send to the students via email
- Routine exercise types are provided via Hot Potatoes
- Other exercise types are done collaboratively, using Word as a simple interactive whiteboard and saving and emailing results to students
- Brainstorming sessions are recorded in Word and results emailed to students
- Student presentations and short talks are expected to be supported by PowerPoint
- Homework assignments are increasingly submitted and returned by email rather than in dead tree format

Our students are generally fairly clued in to the new technologies and I see the way ahead as being one which indicates to them ways in which technologies can be made to tie in with pedagogy in a way that doesn't imply a huge break with traditional approaches to teaching-and-learning but which clearly improves on them and can then function as a bridgehead from which we can explore further. The

availability of the new technologies in regular school classrooms here is something that hasn't really happened yet, but I like to think our students will be ready for it when it does. The feedback suggests they like this approach, but it's early days yet.

Hope this helps to advance the discussion!

Simon Gill, Olomouc, Czech Republic

From: "Valerie Bevan" <valeriebevan@hotmail.com>

Subject: Re: [IATEFLComputer Sig] Normalisation and the future of CALL

My computer informed me when I opened it this evening that I had 30 emails.

A good many of them were from participants in this discussion, but scattered among these were my secondary school students' latest CAE writing assignments (a competition entry in the form of an article on your favourite form of technology, incidentally) and sound scripts (modelled on those in Mark Powell's 'Presenting in English'). This work was begun in class time in the school's computer room, with the teacher as consultant, then emailed by students to their own computers for completion before being sent to me to be reviewed. I seldom actually correct written work now: I use the Insert Comments function in 'Word' to annotate my students' work (the annotations may be either recorded or in text form), and they make the corrections or improvements on the basis of my hints or suggestions. (They can contest these, if they wish, either in conversation at school or, out of school hours, by using Messenger.) Some of these comments do take the form of grammatical explanation, I confess: my students produce a lot of written work in the course of their study of other subjects, and their English is frequently corrected without explanation by their other teachers, so they see it as my job to help them understand why changes are recommended.

The final draft of a piece of work is, with the student's permission, published, not yet regularly on a website (though occasionally my students contribute to discussions on one of the BBC's message boards) - but on classroom noticeboards. I work in a school, remember, and classily formatted articles, reviews, notices etc are very much approved of. Students are encouraged to read each other's work and note, for example, especially felicitous phrases or persuasive arguments, and being a competitive lot, they actually do so.

In the context of my lessons in English for Science and English for Maths, I use a lot of pedagogic websites, ranging from the BBC's Bitesize Revision materials to a variety of sites lovingly prepared by enthusiasts (often using Hot Potatoes) which offer learners various levels of interactivity. Work on these is incorporated into classes which also involve non-computer-based activities, the computer lab being within easy reach of all our classrooms. But although students are prepared to use these sites at my instigation, they are never as impressed by them as I am, and seldom use them on their own initiative. Whereas the first time they open an

annotated composition, and discover that floating the cursor over the apparently highlighted text throws up a comment - a function that none of them is ever aware of though it is part of a familiar program - they are genuinely delighted. And since taking their work from draft to draft with these prompts is far less onerous and more fun than manual rewriting, the procedure can be made a matter of course. I haven't read Chen's 1997 study, cited by Warschauer and Healey, but I guess my experience is in line with their finding that students who receive 'more detailed and personalized error feedback improved their writing more than those who received only generalized feedback'. And the advantage of this kind of feedback is that it doesn't mar the text!

Apart from 'Word', the other two programs that I would not be without are Wida Software's Storyboard and Gapmaster, which make it possible to complement textbook exercises easily and quickly with exercises based on literature or up-to-the-minute texts from the media, illuminated with pictures or diagrams and backed up with audio or video clips, and to use individual students' work as input for whole class activities. These activities are frequently done as pairwork, sometimes with two students working on the same exercise, sometimes with one student doing the exercise and the other providing input by conveying information derived from a website or elsewhere.

At least in the ways I've described, the use of computers is integrated into class teaching in a way that constructively engages students' interest and appears to encourage, rather than stifle, communication, albeit it within the context of examination preparation.

There were, however, voices of opposition, who questioned whether normalisation should be the aim towards we should be striving for. A discussion thread was developed debating whether normalisation should be the future stage or CALL or not.

From: Diana* (Unconfirmed address)

Subject: Re: [IATEFLComputer Sig] Normalisation and the future of CALL

Dear All,

I'm new to the normalisation of CALL debate but I've been developing some thoughts on this through my own teaching and learning experiences.

Firstly, let me say that I'm often exasperated and impatient with methodology theories and endless ELT 'research' into the what I perceive as the nether regions of 'whys, hows and wherefores' of language learning and teaching strategies. I point this out so you'll realise there are some gaps in my knowledge of CALL normalisation.

As a 'hands-on' teacher who is an advocate of CALL applications (to a degree) I'd say that normalisation probably isn't on the cards for several reasons. The first is the learning curve involved for many teachers in order to implement CALL. Secondly, my feeling is that CALL can and does stand between (interfere with communication between) teacher and learner, in a classroom setting. Thirdly, and already mentioned, are 1) expense of computers & software; 2) limited access to computers & software even when they are available.

Even when availability and access are not factors, it is still more of a chore to do many things on computer as opposed to interacting with real people, using hand-holdable materials or passively learning by listening or watching from a greater distance than what CALL allows. For example, how many of you find it easier to read a book, magazine or newspaper online as opposed to sitting down with the 'antique' version? Is it easier for you to listen to radio broadcasts on the computer or while sitting in a chair in your living room or do you prefer coping with headphones/speakers from your computer? How about television? Do you prefer to watch programmes on the old box or on the computer? Even with wireless access these things still require one to be near the computer, if not actually still looking at a screen. In addition to that, even speedy bandwidth requires a wait time for upload and frequently interrupts the stream (of video and sound) due to the vagaries of the Internet itself.

I teach in Germany and have become a real fan of the magazines *Der Spiegel* and *Stern*. I've tried reading them online and it's a chore. I prefer trying to read them in print form. This method is much more useful to my learning because I can stick at reading them longer than I would be able to do sitting at a computer. I find it difficult enough to read in another language so why should I add further impediments to my learning by using the computer when an easier alternative is available to me?

This brings up some seemingly esoteric concerns which, to my mind, should be factored into this debate as well. One example is the unmentioned (to my knowledge) invisible screen refresh which can tire even the most dedicated pair of eyes. In normal human interaction we can break eye contact (for a breather) and still get the full benefit of communication in L2. We can't do that on a computer. There are other examples but things like these are never mentioned in the rush toward uses of new technology in language learning.

Ease of use isn't the only factor either. How do CALL applications help anyone to do what will actually be required in daily life: interact with real humans, often reading their lips, deciphering regional accents, reading body language and facial expressions as clues to understanding what's being said in L2? How can CALL applications help learners to formulate answers on the fly and get practise in contributing to a randomly developing conversation? What about handling and responding to unexpected feedback in conversation? Computers and any possible development of CALL applications are unlikely to be able to fill these gaps anytime

in future.

Therefore, I ask why should we be striving toward normalisation of CALL? Isn't 'restrictive' CALL a better option all round? As an adjunct, imo, CALL is essential for such things as extra grammar practice, vocabulary learning, quizzes, writing practice, etc. I use various software to make my job easier and to help my students learn. I also use software to help with my own learning of languages but it would never be a substitute for around 80% of what I can get in a course having f2f interaction (minus the computer between us) with a human teacher.

Diana*

From: "Sophie Ioannou-Georgiou" <yiansoph@cytanet.com.cy>
Subject: [IATEFLComputer Sig] Normalisation and the future of CALL

Hi Diana

You ask "why should we strive towards normalisation"?

Cause this is where the rest of the world is heading towards. Computers will (if not already) be used seamlessly in our lives.

Don't get me wrong. I'm a book lover. I even pay a lot of money to get the special bound ones :) I even love the smell of books! But. . . there are other things happening around me too.

Books are still going strong. In a recent survey in a Hong Kong University which turned its library into an e-library, it was shown that the vast majority of students still preferred paper-material.

But . . . life (shopping, searching for info, studying) and communications are really changing and it is our duty to help our students feel comfortable with new technologies, if they will be competitive members of modern society.

People will still have their own preferences but they will have to be able to function either way. It is the future - we can't avoid it.

Sophie

From: djn@dennisnewson.de
Subject: Re: [IATEFLComputer Sig] Normalisation and the future of CALL

Sophie,

Isn't that a little bit over the top as a claim? What about schools in great chunks of South America and Africa - and Russia, too, friends tell me.

Computers may be used seamlessly in our lives - certainly not in theirs.

Dennis

From: "Sophie Ioannou-Georgiou" <yiansoph@cytanet.com.cy>
Subject: Re: [IATEFLComputer Sig] Normalisation and the future of CALL

Hi Dennis

Yes, we still have a long way to go BUT Diana asked why should we strive towards normalisation. And I answered cause that's where we are heading.

Life, sooner or later (depending on where you live), will include seamless use of computers, the Net, CMC, etc. I think there's no turning back. So, if we want to help our students deal with this kind of society, we should start from when they are at school.

Sophie

From: Dr Elizabeth Hanson-Smith <ehansonsmi@yahoo.com>
Subject: [IATEFLComputer Sig] Re: Normalisation and the future of CALL

Dennis--

I wouldn't be so pessimistic. If you join the SANTEC network of African educators, you will find a huge effort being made in Africa to "normalize" along the lines we have been talking about. The first African university degree programs to be offered on line were a collaborative work among three countries, for instance. I see many hopeful signs on that continent. <http://www.santecnetwork.org/> Membership is free:

"Any individual or organisation anywhere in the world with an interest in educational technology and eLearning in developing environments - with an initial focus on Southern Africa - is welcome to join."

Cheers--

--Elizabeth

From: Diana* (Unconfirmed address)
Subject: Re: [IATEFLComputer Sig] Normalisation and the future of CALL

Hi Sophie,

I agree with Dennis, he has a valid point. There are significantly large areas of the

world where normalisation isn't feasible or even possible. For the teachers teaching in those areas this discussion wouldn't have much practical application at all.

I take your point about where the world (appears) to be heading, in terms of using technology but I would disagree that we'll see a pervasive influence in language classrooms anytime soon. In fact, this statement from you proves one point I made:

>>In a recent survey in a Hong Kong University which turned its library into an e-library, it was shown that the vast majority of students still prefer paper-material.<<

It's still loads easier to use many materials without computer intervention. I think we have to respect that in our calculations on what sorts of e-learning are possible, or even desirable, in the language classroom.

While the use of computers is undeniably extensive in terms of shopping, information collection and research, I don't have the belief that it's our duty to help our students feel comfortable with new technologies. Well, I should say, not from my perspective. I'm a language teacher and my duty is to help my students learn a language. Insofar as computer applications can contribute to this in a positive way, then I would use them but never simply because 'everyone else might be doing it'.

I think many language teachers who see themselves still teaching in 10 years will be expected to use 'some' e-learning applications but, as Dennis points out, certainly not all teachers everywhere.

My question was why should we advocate normalisation. I understood 'normalisation' to mean the maximum possible use of computer technology in the classroom. If I've got that wrong, please correct me. I believe there is a place for some software applications in language learning and I wasn't saying we shouldn't explore how we can use it. I was merely questioning what I understood to be a drive toward what I understood as 'normalisation'.

Diana

From: "Stephen Bax" <s.bax@cant.ac.uk>
Subject: [IATEFLComputer Sig] Normalisation as a local phenomenon

I agree with Diana in many respects.

For example, I reckon that the technology itself is a crucial reason why normalisation does not occur in many contexts - but even in this area, things are changing faster than I expected.

For example, in my institution some labs have ordinary tables which pull up to reveal monitors and keyboards. So teachers could use the Internet/CALL software

at any point in a lesson far more easily than before. It hasn't happened yet, because of other factors (such as timetabling) but the technology at least is moving in the right direction!

I also agree with Sophie that normalisation is inevitable in the long run for all of us, but in the shorter term, as we move towards that day, I think that it is useful to see it as a local and patchy process. This means that CALL may become normalised for one teacher in one class while not for the next, depending on that teacher and those learners as well as such things as computer access.

Stephen

From: "Sophie Ioannou-Georgiou" <yiansoph@cytanet.com.cy>
Subject: Re: [IATEFLComputer Sig] Normalisation and the future of CALL

Hi Diana

There are many issues here which take discussion:

> For the teachers teaching in those areas this discussion wouldn't have much practical application at all.

Sophie: I'm not sure about this. Instead, I think they will benefit, if they are on the list so they know what's going on and when they DO get the technology they will have an idea of best practice instead of reinventing the wheel. Perhaps they would benefit more if we share how we actually work in our classrooms.

> I take your point about where the world (appears) to be heading, in terms of using technology but I would disagree that we'll see a pervasive influence in language classrooms anytime soon.

Sophie: The way technology influences our classes depends partly on us as well.

> While the use of computers is undeniably extensive in terms of shopping, information collection and research, I don't have the belief that it's our duty to help our students feel comfortable with new technologies. Well, I should say, not from my perspective. I'm a language teacher and my duty is to help my students learn a language.

Sophie: I don't see myself just as a language teacher but as an educator. I cannot ignore other important factors and simply focus on language. Everyday I deal with student attitudes, feelings, worries, learning styles and strategies - all because we care about the individuals as a whole. E.g. when I train teachers, I don't just focus on training for there-and-then but also try to include them in Communities of practice and professional associations and start them in their road of continuous professional development.

>Insofar as computer applications can contribute to this in a positive way, then I would use them but never simply because 'everyone else might be doing it'.

Sophie:

It's not like that. It's not because my neighbour bought a fancy car or mobile phone or an expensive dog and I have to copy. The 'everyone' you are talking about is society - life itself. Can we afford to ignore it? Is it to our students' benefit to ignore it? I thought we are trying to teach communication skills (that's what language is for, right?) My teacher taught me how to write letters, I now have to teach that AND how to write emails. I was taught how to make a phone call. I now have to teach that AND how to use a chat room and videoconferencing. Ignoring these ways of communication will, to my opinion, disadvantage our students.

> My question was why should we advocate normalisation. I understood 'normalisation' to mean the maximum possible use of computer technology in the classroom. If I've got that wrong, please correct me.

Sophie: perhaps we have a misunderstanding there. I take normalisation to be seamless use of computers, natural use of computers, just as we would use other teaching tools (and not for the sake of the tool). Normalisation is integration of computers in our teaching. It doesn't, I think, mean maximising its use. Here is a quote by Bax:

". . . an integral part of every lesson, like a pen or a book. Teachers and students will use them without fear or inhibition, and equally without an exaggerated respect for what they can do. They will not be the centre of any lesson but they will play a part in almost all. They will be completely integrated into all other aspects of classroom life, alongside coursebooks, teachers and notepads. They will almost go unnoticed."

Obviously, we have a long way to go . . . :))

Sophie

From: "Stephen Bax" <s.bax@cant.ac.uk>
Subject: Re: [IATEFLComputer Sig] Normalisation and the future of CALL

Diana - you said:

"My question was why should we advocate normalisation. I understood 'normalisation' to mean the maximum possible use of computer technology in the classroom. If I've got that wrong, please correct me."

I wouldn't presume to say you were wrong, but in fact that was not what I meant by normalisation. I meant that the computer (probably in a very different shape and size from what we mean now) is used so automatically - in ways which really

enhance the learning at that particular moment - that we don't even notice it. Just as a pen or whiteboard are 'normalised' technologies. We are not there yet!

That doesn't mean we are aiming to maximise the use of computers, just we are aiming to 'put them in their place', maximising the benefit learners can get from them. While they are still seen as Magic Panaceas or Magic, they cannot have this role.

Stephen Bax

From: Pete MacKichan pete2006@e-lang.co.uk
Subject: [IATEFLComputer Sig] Re: Normalisation and the future of CALL

Hi

Reading Steven's paper I was reminded of some discussion that took place on the Neteach-L list in early 1998 (or was it 1999?) about whether "Call is dead". Anyway, back then I was not convinced that 'computer as tool' was necessarily CALL, and (sadly) I find I haven't really changed my view that greatly (or refined it much beyond the following fairly inarticulate ramblings - it's been a long week).

My main problem with 'normalisation' is that I don't think using IT in an educational setting is CALL (ubiquitous or not). For example, when I teach EAP in the UK my learners research essay topics using the Internet, submit their essays by e-mail as word documents, prepare PowerPoint presentations, and so on. I don't consider this to be CALL -they are just doing things that most UK graduate students do.

In my view CALL is when the use of computers in language learning brings an added value. While the submission of an essay in electronic format is not, in my view, CALL, correcting it by using a set of marking macros which link to an online grammar resource, might be. Or, getting my learners to write a blog reflecting on their learning is not really CALL, whereas using a blog in a new way, for example a role play blog, might be.

While Stephen's table makes it clear that Integrated CALL involves 'any task as appropriate to immediate needs', I think that when it comes to 'normalisation' the main focus is likely to be on 'computer as tool', simply because it is cheaper/easier to implement. Producing any kind of CALL materials for a group of learners remains difficult, time-consuming & expensive. As CALL becomes 'normalised', how much funding will there be for this? Will this element become 'normalised' too, or will it be strictly 'anorak land'.

And I think that there is a danger that this 'normalised' CALL will be technology-led. Many institutions have bought into virtual learning environments which have not been designed with language learning in mind. Often, once an investment like

this has been made, there is a strong expectation that it will be used. While hammering a square peg into a round hole is usually possible, it does take up a lot of energy that could/would probably have been better spent in other ways.

And I also wonder how much control teachers will be allowed over those tools. For example, will I, in my networked classroom, be allowed to change the setup of the class set of laptops? For example, to replace Internet Explorer with Firefox and install an extension which enables an on-line dictionary search? I rather doubt it - IT rich environments tend to be maintained in ways that would make this difficult.

Finally, debates about the future of CALL always seem to foreground higher education. I wonder how much of Stephen's analysis can be transferred to Business English. I think CALL is more likely to become 'normalised' there earlier than in HE (if indeed it is not already), but I think the ways CALL is used in large companies might be a little different. I would be very interested in hearing comments from the corporate sector.

Cheers,

Pete

From: "Stephen Bax" <s.bax@cant.ac.uk>
Subject: [IATEFLComputer Sig] Re: Normalisation and the future of CALL

There is so much of interest coming up in recent postings that it will take me a few weeks to digest! But a few thoughts spring to mind:

Pete wonders whether the discussion of normalisation is essentially driven by Higher Education.

I do work at university level, but my concerns and thinking come from experience in other contexts too. In my paper there is an example from a language school and much of my research has been in developing countries.

Example: A language teaching centre in Sudan has a suite of computers and is gradually moving towards normalisation. One reason for this is that the Director has included the use of computers as an element for all classes.

This reminds me of when I started using CALL as a teacher (in Singapore, on old BBC computers) when the Director said to all of us that we MUST use computers once a week. . . . general panic and shouting . . . long discussions with a support person . . . trial and error . . . and I gradually came to see how to use computers and it all became pretty normalised in my own practice and also throughout the school. I am now grateful to that man, though I wasn't at first!

So one key factor is for the management to integrate it into the syllabus calmly but

firmly, but then (important) to support teachers when they call for help. Does that sound too harsh?

The alternative is the technology-led approach which Pete describes, or rather a technology-only approach where we see many institutions with fantastic technology which teachers simply do not use.

That is the opposite end of the spectrum from my enthusiastic Sudanese friends who struggle with daily power cuts but are really making things work. . . which shows that having top-quality technology may not be the deciding factor.

Stephen

From: Peter* (Unconfirmed address)

Subject: [IATEFLComputer Sig] The normalisation of CALL

It seems to me that if the syndrome of 'once a week in the computer room' is what distinguishes inefficient CALL from the ideal of 'normalised CALL', then the greatest obstacle to progress lies in the convenience of the technology. There is no other reason for trotting off to the temple of Gates on the fifth (or whichever) day of the academic week.

If computers were completely invisible in the classroom, until called upon, then their use could be dovetailed into a lesson plan effortlessly. The technology for 'hardware' that takes up no space largely exists already. We have touch-sensitive screens that act as keyboards, voice activated command systems, wireless information transmission and 'head-up' displays (as used by fighter pilots) that serve as virtual monitors. When technology at this level becomes so commonplace that it is widely affordable, the weekly pilgrimage will become unnecessary and the big, white, whirring boxes will be packed off to the museum.

It is also likely that developments in artificial intelligence and increases in computing power will give us realistic (holographic or robotic) interlocutors that are increasingly human-like in their ability to communicate. Programmes based on these technologies will clearly be able to take over a lot more of the teacher's current role. The extent to which they do so will depend on a cost-benefit assessment of their performance compared to human instructors. It is a mistake to imagine that they will always be inferior to us in the roles of tutor and interlocutor.

The fact that this science fiction technology has been very much slower coming than most people assumed 30 years ago, doesn't mean that it won't come. When it does come we will probably find that many of the current assumptions underlying concepts of 'normalised' computer use will be significantly altered. Presently, we are chasing a moving target.

For this reason, I think it is far more useful to aim for the pragmatic integration of

today's technology with today's language lessons than to concern ourselves with the evanescent prospect of 'normalisation'.

Peter*

From: "Stephen Bax" <s.bax@cant.ac.uk>
Subject: [IATEFLComputer Sig] Re: The normalisation of CALL

Peter* writes:

"For this reason, I think it is far more useful to aim for the pragmatic integration of today's technology with today's language lessons than to concern ourselves with the evanescent prospect of 'normalisation'."

In a sense, what we need is a long-term aim and a set of short-term actions in order to reach it. For me 'normalisation' is the long-term aim, which we can reach by a series of short-term local actions of the kind Peter is referring to, doing exactly as Peter says, namely discovering pragmatic (and context-sensitive, and learner-centred) integration of today's technology with today's lessons.

So, Peter, I don't see the idea of normalisation as being incompatible with what you are doing and saying. I suspect we agree more than we disagree!

Stephen

Apart from the debate on normalisation, a thread of the discussion revealed some of the participants' concern as to whether previous CALL methodologies would now be considered outdated and, consequently, become marginalized in language instruction. The arguments made pointed towards the usefulness of other modes of CALL implementation, such as Restricted CALL, and how they can be particularly useful to certain types of learner or at certain stages of language learning/instruction.

From: Geoff Taylor <gtaylor@btInternet.com>
Subject: Re: [IATEFLComputer Sig] "The Future of CALL"

Hi

In this email, (1) I summarise Stephen's article a little, (2) I relate the article to the arguments of Donald A. Norman, (3) I comment on the lack of advocates for language systems oriented CALL.

To summarise the argument, as I see it:

Bax looks at Warschauer and Healey's (1998) well-known 3-phase (historical) model of CALL - Behaviouristic/Structural, Communicative and Integrative - and goes on to advocate a new taxonomy encapsulating three distinct (not essentially historical) approaches to CALL: Restricted, Open and Integrated.

Restricted CALL is essentially the old CALL accuracy-oriented language systems, where the computer stood in for the teacher.

Open CALL is the new communicative CALL, using CMC technologies. Both of these are mainly limited to infrequent, discreet sessions in designated computer rooms.

By contrast, Integrated CALL integrates language, skills and communicative work, and occupies a small part of every lesson, using ubiquitous, unremarked computing resources.

Bax suggests that most of us are currently using Open CALL but our aim should be to attain Integrated CALL, a state of 'normalisation', in which the technology is invisible and truly integrated. It "does not yet exist to any significant degree, but represents instead an aim towards which we should be working" (Bax 2003:22).

I would comment that this view of the normalisation of technology is very much echoed - in the wider context of all technology users - by the thesis of Donald A. Norman (*The Invisible Computer*, 1998) Chapter 2 of which is accessible online at <http://mitpress.mit.edu/books/NORVH/chapter2.html?isbn=0262140659>

Bax (2003:19) disagrees with Warschauer that the 'once a week' model has already been superseded, claiming that it "still prevails in most institutions throughout the world". In the case of teachers at my school, St Clare's, at least, he is pretty much right. It is currently the norm, institutionally imposed through timetabling, and because of the nature of the existing resources: many classes and one computer lab full of non-portable computers (only enough for one class at a time).

On a related but slightly different topic:

I'm cheered to see that Bax doesn't chuck out the (Restricted CALL) baby with the (Integrated CALL) bath water. He says (2003:22) that Restricted CALL activities are "still valuable in their place".

As someone involved in the running of one of these computer labs and who has developed and/or authored a lot of 'Restricted CALL' material, I have long felt that too much emphasis has been put on Open CALL (CMC-oriented CALL). Perhaps as a reaction to previous trends, the pendulum has swung too far in the other direction.

Maybe it's partly a learning styles thing. Without wanting to cause offence, could it be that the more prominent, more vocal advocates in CALL nowadays are 'people' people, and the more geeky software guys have fallen largely silent?

When I think of my colleagues, for example, some of them always like to work on developing teaching materials, etc, in tandem with other people. They don't like to work alone. They resist learning systems on their own, via trial and error, but always want to be shown and talked through everything by someone else. By contrast, I like to try and hack things myself, or look things up in discussion forums, etc, and only if I get really stuck, I'll ask for help directly.

In language learning, with so many generally agreed language 'systems' in whatever language you're focussing on, surely a lot can be done using 'pre-recorded' voices, as it were, in material like software programmes.

When I use the equivalent of 'Restricted CALL' resources myself, e.g. learning to use Macromedia Flash from a training CD-ROM, the mind(s) of the writers or developers are exposed to me, or I inhabit their minds, and that is a resource I can benefit from. I use their explanations and closed quizzes to my own ends. Their quizzes put me up against myself - my own grasp of the system.

So I think lots can be done using 'virtual' people giving pre-recorded messages (for example, EFL materials writers talking through their books, CALL developers talking through their software, etc), without needing to collaborate or chat about it all the time with 'real' people. Of course, collaboration and checking the viability of more controversial items via teamwork and Communities of Practice, etc, is a vital resource, but only as a part of the learning package.

Anyway, I guess in summary, I welcome Bax's Integrated CALL. But I'll miss the geekier aspects of computing. People like us will have to move on to something else for our technology kicks. . .

Thanks for listening.

--

Geoff Taylor
gjtaylor@btInternet.com
CALL Coordinator, St Clare's, Oxford, UK
<http://www.stclaresoxfordonline.fsworld.co.uk>

From: "Stephen Bax" <s.bax@cant.ac.uk>
Subject: [IATEFLComputer Sig] Re: The value of Restricted CALL

Thanks for Geoff's comments.

Just to pick up one point. I agree with him about the place of Restricted CALL software, as I feel that many students like, and can benefit from, relatively old-style activities such as grammar multiple choice quizzes at various stages in their learning. These are part of the mix and, as long as the learner is getting chances

elsewhere to communicate, then that is fine.

I am against the strain of dogmatism which seems to accompany CLT and which implies that every single thing we do must fit a mould - e.g. everything must be 'authentic', everything must involve pairwork, everything must involve communication. All of these can be beneficial, but learners are all different and they need other things too - when I am at a certain point in my learning, a grammar exercise can clarify something, for example.

So too with CALL - the danger of seeing things in rigid stages (e.g. that Restricted CALL activities need to be thrown out because we are now beyond that stage) is that we risk losing activities which can help some learners at some stage. So we need to have a more eclectic and open-minded approach to CALL materials and their possible benefits.

Stephen

From: "garymotteram" <garymotteram@hotmail.com>
Subject: [IATEFLComputer Sig] Re: Normalisation and the future of CALL

Hi All

I'm going to follow Stephen's point and make a short contribution about the issues that I think are important in both Stephen's analysis of the current state of CALL development as well as the better known ideas of Warschauer and Healey (1998). I'll bring the idea together in an example of my own current experience.

As someone who is currently trying to get at the rudiments of Chinese and who is unable to communicate in any but the most basic forms, in pretty standard situations, I have this to offer. Perhaps we can see my early struggles with the language as restricted and I'm certainly using a lot of behavioural techniques to try to get my head around the basics. I'm using rote learning, repetition and flashcards. I am thinking of producing a piece of software to help me with this task, something that would flash Chinese characters on the screen and then provide me with pinyin and a pronunciation.

As the course develops, I am also trying to be more 'open', more 'communicative' in my attempts at using the language both with classmates and on the odd occasion when I get to use it in public. As I get a basic reading skill, I might be able to start looking at Chinese newspapers online or at some of the educational websites that I'm interested in.

I hope that eventually I can get to a stage where I can be more integrative and more normalised in my language use and make use of ubiquitous computing to communicate effectively in Chinese. I might, for example, start being able to email my friends in Chinese, or make use of a Chinese chatroom.

I could go on by beginning to bring in issues of SLA and TBL, but I'll stop there for now :-)

-- Gary

From: "Sophie Ioannou-Georgiou" <yiansoph@cytanet.com.cy>
Subject: Re: [IATEFLComputer Sig] "The Future of CALL"

In response to Geoff's comments on Integrated versus Restricted CALL, I'd like to add that his preferences might be just representing his learning styles.

As we now try to cater both for intrapersonal and interpersonal multiple intelligences, different styles of CALL might work for different learners.

That's why I also agree with Stephen not to 'trash' restricted CALL. In the same way that we have developed FL methodology while trying to take advantage - and not ignore - past knowledge, we should also proceed with CALL.

Everything has a role to play, if we know how to use it - that's where training comes in.

Sophie

Another issue raised was the need for appropriate software. Participants were concerned that lack of appropriate software would inhibit progress towards normalisation.

From: Robert O'Dowd <dfmrod@unileon.es>
Subject: [IATEFLComputer Sig] "The Future of CALL" discussion

Hi everyone,

I really enjoyed Stephen's paper and, although I felt he was a little hard on Warschauer who wrote that paper a long time ago, I find the issue of having a seamless 'normalisation' of CALL very relevant.

While not having the hardware to fully integrate CALL into the classroom is one problem, I find that not having the software that supports classroom interaction is another one, which is often forgotten about. I find that most CALL activities are aimed at the self-access market and are not intended for teachers to use as part of their classes. There seems to be a definite lack of materials which support student-student interaction or teacher-led classroom activities.

Would others agree with this? I would be curious to know how you all bring CALL into your daily classrooms as opposed to using it for homework / outside of class

research tasks.

Best, Robert
Universidad de León, Spain
<http://www3.unileon.es/personal/wwdfmrod/>

From: "Sophie Ioannou-Georgiou" <yiansoph@cytanet.com.cy>
Subject: Re: [IATEFLComputer Sig] "The Future of CALL" discussion

Hi Robert

I certainly agree with you. Having the right software is my second biggest problem. A lot of the time I'm disappointed by what is available and have to work hard to make existing software work for me (devising my own tasks to supplement the software, etc.).

Sophie

From: Clive* (Address unconfirmed)
Subject: Re: [IATEFLComputer Sig] "The Future of CALL" discussion

Hi everyone

Perhaps software that supports classroom interaction is a contradiction in terms. If you are using 'software', are you not looking at a computer screen? If you are looking at a computer screen, I presume you are not looking at someone else, unless you are using, say, video conferencing. And if you are not looking at, or at least not talking or writing to someone else, you are not interacting. As Robert has shown in his cross-cultural work, video conferencing is, of course, interaction, but it is distance interaction not classroom interaction. You could say, that chat rooms can support classroom interaction - as Sophie's work has illustrated, by providing 'rehearsal potential' for subsequent physical f2f communicative activities. Chat and VC are both, of course, software but are they the kinds of software you mean when you say the 'right' software?

Or are you thinking of some kind of dedicated language learning (typically self access) software which has student to screen interactivity? To require such software to provide for the physical interactive classroom would be somewhat pedestrian, would it not? I am not sure what would be expected. Perhaps a pop up box which suddenly says, 'now get into pairs and solve this 'on screen' problem? Or 'now describe this garden to your partner who has a picture of a different garden and then click on the differences'. But if it is f2f, then surely the teacher needs to be a face, too.

Perhaps, we need, rather than software, a published teacher's book that

accompanies self access software (even CD ROM dictionaries), providing ideas for exploiting the materials for interactive purposes.

Clive

From: Robert O'Dowd <dfmrod@unileon.es>

Subject: [IATEFLComputer Sig] classroom software and normalisation

Clive* wrote this interesting post:

"Perhaps software that supports classroom interaction is a contradiction in terms. If you are using 'software', are you not looking at a computer screen? If you are looking at a computer screen, I presume you are not looking at someone else, unless you are using, say, video conferencing."

I don't really agree that this has to be a contradiction, although I admit that considering the way most software is produced at the moment, it is indeed a contradiction. Most software, at the moment, is intended for student-computer interaction, be it listening exercises, grammar drills or whatever. But I do believe that there is a need for software which is able to take on more of the role of textbook in language classes - providing input and content, but also providing stimulus for teacher-student and student-student interaction.

Clive mentioned this option in his post:

"Perhaps a pop up box which suddenly says, 'now get into pairs and solve this 'on screen' problem? Or 'now describe this garden to your partner who has a picture of a different garden and then click on the differences'. But if it is f2f, then surely the teacher needs to be a face too. Perhaps, we need, rather than software, a published teacher's book that accompanies self access software (even CD ROM dictionaries), providing ideas for exploiting the materials for interactive purposes."

That is one possibility, but I think there are many more. I am working on 'classroom software' for German secondary school EFL learners at the moment with Cornelsen publishers. So far, we have come up with 2 CD ROMs (with teacher's manual) which are intended to be used by the teacher in classes or at home by the students on their own. Log into English provides learners with a series of tasks related to themes stressed in the school curriculum such as the media, intercultural communication as well as film and video analysis and provides both the tools and multimedia resources necessary to carry them out. The tools available on the software to enable students to carry out and present their projects include the complete Oxford learners' dictionary, a grammar reference, a word processor, a mindmapping tool, an audio recording function and 'templates' for presenting project work. The resources available include audio files, film extracts, authentic texts and articles, websites, music videos as well as interactive questionnaires and surveys.

This is of course one way of integrating CALL more into the classroom. Of course, it depends on what degree of computer access is available in the schools and whether teachers feel comfortable organising their normal class time around a piece of software as well as their textbook, but this might be one further way of 'normalising' CALL.

Best, Robert
Universidad de León, Spain
<http://www3.unileon.es/personal/wwdfmrod/>

A very important part of the discussion looked at what factors would be essential in order for CALL to move towards normalisation. Participants looked at examples of normalisation, or success stories of technology implementation, in order to identify possible factors which may have led to this development.

From: "Sophie Ioannou-Georgiou" <yiansoph@cytanet.com.cy>
Subject: [IATEFLComputer Sig] "The Future of CALL" - equipment

I believe access is the first step to normalisation. About 4 years ago I collaborated on a project with a primary school in Seattle. This was 4 years ago and the children in my partner school - all of them - had their own laptops which had been purchased by the school.

I cannot help thinking that those children and those teachers must be miles ahead in the road towards normalisation. . . .

Sophie

From: "Stephen Bax" <s.bax@cant.ac.uk>
Subject: [IATEFLComputer Sig] Normalisation and the future of CALL

For me, a key aspect of normalisation is how an educational institution, or even a whole educational system (e.g. in one country), can reach a stage where CALL starts to be effective enough - so that more and more teachers and students start to use it naturally and as an integral part of their learning and teaching. This is the sort of 'tipping point'.

More precisely, what are the factors which can lead to that point, because if we can identify them, then we can hope to create them in other settings and therefore increase CALL's effectiveness?

An example: a Middle East country (which I will call X) where I worked some six years ago received millions of dollars (Canadian, as a matter of interest) to buy

computers for its schools. The Minister of Education spoke to me excitedly about this and assured me that all teachers and students would soon be using the Internet daily and with huge benefit. I felt that there was something missing. . .

Last year I went back to do a study of aspects of the country's schooling, and found not one computer being used regularly in language classes. In fact most were under lock and key, occasionally used to teach computing.

What went wrong? There had been training. But one thing at least which seemed to me to be missing was the decision to integrate the use of computers into the syllabus.

Sophie said in a recent posting that in her case access was the key, and it is true that in country X the headteachers tended to treat the computer labs as secrets, too precious to leave open, but they did have access in theory - just no will to take advantage of it

In my experience, a crucial element is the top-down decision to include CALL in the timetable, and then to support teachers who need it. This did not happen. But of course there were other reasons.

So, some questions:

A) Do you have any mini case studies you could offer to illustrate the importance of one or more factors in leading to normalisation?

B) What can CALL professionals do in order to lead an institution, or even a government, to the successful implementation of CALL in a particular setting?

Thanks - looking forward to your views.

Stephen Bax

From: Ton Koenraad <ton.koenraad@hvu.nl>

Subject: FW: [IATEFLComputer Sig] Normalisation and the future of CALL

Hi All,

In reaction to Stephen's call for suggestions on implementation issues, I suggest a study done by a Dutch association 'ICT in Schools', titled 'Four in balance' which IMO provides a useful framework for developing local strategies on implementing educational technology (in general). It is the last download on a page I keep on a EU-project I coordinated.<http://www.koenraad.info/Pronett>

Cheers Ton

From: Patricia Thornton <thornton@kinjo-u.ac.jp>
Subject: Re: [IATEFLComputer Sig] Normalisation and the future of CALL

Stephen Bax <s.bax@cant.ac.uk> wrote:

- > A) Do you have any mini case studies you could offer to illustrate
- > the importance of one or more factors in leading to normalisation?

In my opinion, one of the factors for normalization is personalization. For technology to be truly integrated into the learning process, the learner must have easy access, feel comfortable with the use of the tool, and develop a sense of ownership of the technology. I wonder to what extent this is possible with institution-owned computers. And yet, many of us teach in settings where requiring students to purchase a particular computer is impossible. In his article, Bax mentioned that the computers of the future are likely to look very different from today's desktop or notebook PC.

I have been teaching English in a Japanese university for the past 11 years. CALL (with desktop PCs) has never been integrated into the English curriculum in a meaningful way and remains an activity that students do in a designated computer lab. However my colleague and I have been researching the use of mobile phones and other portable computing devices in education (especially language education) in Japan. We still find that only about 70% of our university students have occasional access to PCs at home but 100% constantly carry and maintain their Web-enabled mobile phones. So, students have constant access to the Web with a device with which they are intimately familiar. Additionally, almost 100% of language students purchase electronic bilingual dictionaries which have an increasing number and variety of resources. These days, when I assign small-group project work in my seminar class, I see students immediately take out their electronic dictionary to use as a language resource and I sometimes see students looking up information on the Web using their mobile phones. It seems that just-in-time access is part of the picture. In previous years, students would wait until later to look up information (if they remembered).

Of course these are resource-based materials rather than dedicated CALL software. My colleague and I have experimented with sending vocabulary lessons via mobile phone email, making video and Flash language-learning materials that can be viewed on mobile phones, and having students participate in online discussions using their mobile phones. Japanese students respond favourably to all these activities and report not being bothered by small screens and small keypads.

So, I think CALL will be truly integrated when we can supply appropriate and high-quality CALL activities on computing devices that students already own and feel comfortable using.

Patricia Thornton

Department of Language and Culture
Kinjo Gakuin University
Nagoya, Japan

From: djn@dennisnewson.de

Subject: Re: [IATEFLComputer Sig] "The Future of CALL" discussion

I recall at a fairly recent IATEFL Computer SIG workshop in Saffron Walden, where we were taught, amongst other things, to devise a Hot Potatoes exercise, use online resources to answer questions etc. that, in other activities, we were required to turn our backs on the monitors and talk to each other - even play a kind of musical chairs where a sentence was keyed into a PC and we then moved round to the left until we had left a message on all (or most) PCs - i.e. a mixture of PC use and face-to-face interaction with real human beings.

As an interested outsider with no expertise and precious little experience in CALL, the notes I would make for myself would be:

1. Remember we are talking about Computer ASSISTED LL. Other resources, including people, are available in this model.
2. Ideally, whatever CALL resources are available they should be accessible at all times, not need wheeling in from a storeroom or from the cellar. CALL should be central to the LL process, not an optional extra - "If you are good, on Friday afternoon you can access the Internet."
3. First comes the pedagogy - this is how I believe languages are learned or how learning is facilitated - then come the hardware and software - "These are my pedagogical aims, how can CALL contribute?"
4. A very influential first step is if all teachers are PC and Internet empowered. If I were Minister of Education somewhere I'd get Bill Gates to give all teachers a laptop, HP to give them a printer and the local telephone company to give them a free broadband connection. I'd leave the much more expensive business of equipping all schools to my second term of office, if I were re-elected.

Dennis

From: "Joanna Teague" <Joanna.Teague@

Subject: [IATEFLComputer Sig] Re: Normalisation and the future of CALL

Stephen asked: "Do you have any mini case studies you could offer to illustrate the importance of one or more factors in leading to normalisation?"

One of my roles is to strategically plan how we are going to reach this stage of

normalisation at my university. We teach 7 languages. Stephen's stage of normalisation is, therefore, very much on my mind.

In order to prepare for this I visited 7 universities which looked like they were doing a good job in this area. They ranged from the very modest to a GBP 1.2 million Language Centre. I asked language teaching staff, support staff (Centre staff and technicians) and language students what worked for them? Of course more money didn't equal more effective or more frequent use of the new technologies.

The following factors seemed to key:

- Teaching staff had paid time to train with the new technologies so that they gained in confidence as well as skills.
- Enthusiastic teachers stimulated their colleagues to investigate the use of these new technologies.
- Teaching staff could always turn to a technical support person to work collaboratively on a new project or maybe just for additional confidence when they started to use the new tools with their learners.
- A technical officer was sent on a CELTA course so that he could gain an insight into the needs of the teaching staff and work more collaboratively.
- All teaching staff were involved in evaluating and deciding which equipment was purchased.

These are some of the more successful stepping stones which came out of my investigation and I'd be keen to see if they resonate with anyone on this list.

:-) Joanna

From: Sophie Ioannou-Georgiu
Subject: Re: [IATEFLComputer Sig] Re: Normalisation and the future of CALL

Hi Joanna

Thanks for sharing these factors with us. I have always been an advocate of: equipment, training and technical support. I'm very glad that your survey has proved these to be very powerful factors.

I believe they are very much interrelated and that technical support is very important in order to give teachers the confidence (even with little things), to save them time and to generally keep things running smoothly.

In primary schools in Cyprus (I refer to primary schools cause in terms of equipment and access, I think they are a step ahead than secondary) teachers are expected to maintain computers. There is from nothing up to minimal technical support. If anything goes wrong, you might have to wait for anything from a week to a month to get it sorted. It is demotivating to say the least. . . .

Thanks again Joanna.

Sophie

From: "kathypnz" <kparker@orcon.net.nz>

Subject: [IATEFLComputer Sig] Re: Normalisation and the future of CALL

Stephen asked what factors lead to normalisation and I agree with Joanna that training and support are important. At the school I usually work at (I am researching CALL this year) we have one teacher who has been released to lead the school in "normalising" the use of technology in the classroom. A large number of us do voluntary training after school with probably 30 people recently finishing their ICDL (International Computer Drivers License). Other teachers offer courses in fields they know about and we pick and choose what we want to learn. Alongside this is the provision of about 7 full computer labs and about three half class labs (740 computers in a school of 2200). We have just had a self access lab built for our ESL department with 15 secondhand computers. There is a move to try and get networked computers into every classroom and most teachers now have a laptop.

All students learn to use computers in their first year at school and almost all subjects integrate some computing into their teaching. Probably 95% of students have computers at home and are reasonably proficient.

Despite this enormous effort there is no normalisation yet. A few teachers are very keen and try to create on-line activities but their efforts are sometimes in vain because the labs are booked or the computers are broken (we have one fulltime and two part-time technicians) or the students simply play rather than seeing this as serious learning. Another problem we have encountered in ESL is finding worthwhile sites or software which relates to the syllabus we are teaching. Even the very best sites (which are expensive) tend to go into the same pattern of work and cannot keep students attention. Integrating the work becomes a timeconsuming exercise for the teacher.

Despite this, I still believe it is worth persisting because we do have small successes which show what is possible. Students now regularly edit their writing on line and they are not frustrated by the process because it doesn't require them to constantly rewrite the entire essay. Newly arrived students can be given "time out" doing work that helps them catch up with the rest of the class. Research is now interesting and much more challenging. Students, reluctant to speak in class, can speak English in private without feeling stressed.

I believe "normalisation" will never arrive until every student has a computer available to them in the same room and until teachers are given time to set up their own virtual environments (this is the next step planned for our training). I am certain technology will never replace f2f but it has advantages we need to exploit.

All three modes are useful in the right place but until teachers are freed from the worry of access and technical competence, progress will be limited.

It is interesting that videoing is now completely normalised in our English Departments but it occupies a smaller part of the curriculum than it did in the days when we all got very excited about it. Perhaps this is what will happen when computers become just another colour of "chalk".

Kathy Parker

From: WANG Wei <beiwaicall@126.com>
Subject: [IATEFLComputer Sig] "The Future of CALL" discussion

In China, we observe diversely different situations, ranging from the most cutting edge hi-tech infrastructure + software + network + connection, to a call for donations to buy books and basic stationery for school children. Normalisation in the way which is now being discussed feels a long way away.

Until computers, computer software and Internet connection are as affordable (not necessarily as cheap) as, say books and pencils, many people in this world will probably continue to view them with awe and treat labs as secrets. This, as my leaders may say, has relatively little to do with open-mindedness; it has more to do with resources available for the acquisition, maintenance and training.

Everything costs. Normalisation viewed from this point of view seems very much an economic or fiscal issue.

Until computers are commonplace and seamlessly integrated into our daily life, the teachers (and others) will continue to feel the gaps between what is expected of the machines or the programmes and what technology can actually do, between what they have access to and what others have, between what they are given by the administration and what they ask for. Normalisation viewed from this point of view seems very much a social and administrative issue.

Until computers and computer programmes become intuitive and easy to use (like a fool-proof camera with which one can learn with a look-and-press type of instruction to complete the operation of still image acquisition), teachers and students will have to deal with their learning curves before they can achieve effective use of technology for learning (language, or maths, or physics, etc.). Normalisation viewed from this point of view seems very much a technology vs. literacy issue.

Now it's beginning to sound like putting the future of CALL into the hands of economists, business tycoons, political leaders, or engineers & scientists. I wonder (echoing Stephen's second question in his first message)

"What can CALL professionals do in order to lead an institution or even a government to the successful implementation of CALL in a particular setting?":

Say, I have been longing for a CALL lab for quite a while for a CALL course I am assigned to coordinate in my university. What strategies would you recommend to persuade the leadership to consider seriously the propositions on, say, changing the physical layout the lab, or allowing students to have free access to the machines, the Internet, and the university LAN?

Can anyone offer some success stories, please? Especially from developing countries, like China.

wang wei
from Beijing, China

From: "mila" <mila@solaris.ru>
Subject: Re: [IATEFLComputer Sig] Normalisation and the future of CALL

Dear all,

I am from Russia. My project on research of the degree of implementation of computers shows that sometimes access to computers does not always mean love or willingness to implement technology everywhere.

One more thing. Quite a lot of Russian students are very good at computer implementation and Internet resources in particular and, what is more, they prefer it to anything else more often. All our student teachers take for granted that their future teaching will be connected with CALL.

regards,

Liudmila Devel
St.Petersburg State University
St.Petersburg Russia

Finally, there were efforts to summarise the discussion and take stock of everything said . . .

From: "martin barge" <martinbarge@yahoo.co.uk>
Subject: Re: [IATEFLComputer Sig] "The Future of CALL" discussion

Hi folks,

This debate is fascinating, because so many points of view are being put forward, illustrating the multiple dimensions of our conceptions of CALL, our experiences of

CALL and our attitudes to CALL.

For example, Diana* argues that computers can provide useful extra practice exercises, but can "never be a substitute for. . .f2f interaction. . .with a human teacher". Clive* looks at the limited scope for interaction/interactivity in CALL environments, arguing for more teachers' books to help us exploit software "for interactive purposes". Patricia Thornton makes very interesting points about the necessity of learners owning and feeling comfortable with computing devices before CALL activity can become effective. Gary Motteram provides a good illustrative example of the different roles computers might make in the learning process, from the drill and practice tutor type role in the early language acquisition stage, through to using more "ubiquitous" computer applications in order to communicate during later stages in the language learning process.

Sophie makes the point that using computers in our teaching practice is equipping our learners with more than just language skills, by also aiding their professional skills development. That current educational practice must adapt to the real technological world in which we live. Thus, just as she was taught to write letters, so she must now teach her learners how to write emails. . .use a chatroom and use videoconferencing.

Joanna Teague refers to a range of technological facility, from expensively equipped state-of-the-art institutions, to those with very few computer resources.

This variety of perspectives is informative in itself, showing that the ways we apply CALL to our practice is highly shaped by, among other things, our individual experiences of CALL; the characteristics of the learners we are dealing with; the physical contexts in which we work (and have worked); and perhaps our personal feelings about computers in general. I guess this will all impact on the rate at which, and extent to which, CALL will become 'normalised'.

Martin.

From: "Sophie Ioannou-Georgiou" <yiansoph@cytanet.com.cy>
Subject: [IATEFLComputer Sig] "The Future of CALL" - equipment

Thanks to everyone for a very stimulating discussion!

It was an opportunity to get a glimpse of CALL around the world. We've heard from colleagues in Germany, Russia, the UK, Australia, the Netherlands, the Czech Republic, Japan, New Zealand, China, Cyprus, Greece, Poland, the US, Turkey and Hungary.

In trying to decide what the future of CALL is, we defined our present situations and we found that CALL varies greatly from country to country and even from school to school.

We have colleagues in the first stages of CALL implementation. We have colleagues who are instilling change and planting the roots of CALL by training the future teachers in areas where schools are still waiting for CALL to arrive, and we have colleagues that are already moving to a new stage like Patricia who works with mobile phones.

In trying to move forward, we agreed that we do not disregard the past. Everything has its place and there are uses for 'Restricted CALL', 'Open CALL' and 'Integrated CALL'.

We saw a wide variety of teacher perspectives towards CALL and we discussed normalisation and - I believe - most of us accepted it as the future stage or what we are aiming at in the relatively near future (we had glimpses of the more distant future, too - thanks Peter). For the purposes of this discussion, we adopted Stephen Bax's definition of normalisation: "an integral part of learning and teaching".

According to this definition, normalisation is achieved when computers become:

". . . an integral part of every lesson, like a pen or a book. Teachers and students will use them without fear or inhibition, and equally without an exaggerated respect for what they can do. They will not be the centre of any lesson but they will play a part in almost all. They will be completely integrated into all other aspects of classroom life, alongside coursebooks, teachers and notepads. They will almost go unnoticed."

In trying to identify factors which could help us towards normalisation of CALL, we arrived at the following:

- need for software and hardware
- easy access to the technology
- 'top-down decision to use computers'
- provision of support (lots of support)
- technical support should be aware of EFL methodology
- personalisation of technology (learners are comfortable with it /sense of ownership)
- teachers should be "PC and Internet empowered"
- training for teachers
- involvement of teaching staff in decisions of implementation
- some help with suitable material for integrating CALL into teaching (or teachers setting up their own virtual environments)

We saw these factors within the wider framework of:

- Normalisation as an economic issue.
- Normalisation a social and administrative issue.
- Normalisation as a technology v.s. literacy issue.

Finally, we all seem to agree that there is still a long way to go - for all of us. But most of us sound persistent and optimistic. If I may quote Stephen on seeing normalisation "as a local and patchy process", I think we are all busily working in smoothing out our own little patch. A few years from now, it would be great to meet again and have another look at our CALL Quilt.

Thanks everyone

Keep up the good work!

Sophie

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