CALL Integration: A proposal for in-service CALL training program for EFL faculty at Saudi Arabian Universiteis

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Introduction

Teachers have been using a variety of tools and equipment such as video, audio, television, overhead projector, and others for a long time in order to enhance teaching and learning. However, today's technology is considered to have more powerful impact than in the past. Today's technology can enhance and promote instruction, increase student achievement, and better inform and promote society (Blanco, 1996). Preparing today's teachers to meet this challenge and to be technologically literate puts more pressure on educational institutions to use and integrate technologies into their academic and training programs. Sophistication and rapid changes in technology have brought about another challenge for teachers in all areas to learn how to keep up with and integrate such technology into their classrooms. Barksdale (1996) emphasized the fact that teachers should make technology an integral part of their teaching and that colleges should prepare pre-service teachers to integrate technology into their work. To do so, teachers must be

provided with adequate and appropriate training and support in using technology in order to enable them to use and integrate such technology into their teaching.

In order to encourage and motivate teachers and faculty members in using and integrating technology, Blanco (1996) recommended that schools should provide them with computers and should wire offices with telecommunications capabilities for electronic mail and access to the internet. Schools and institutions should provide Incentives and release time to allow teachers to attend conferences and demonstrations in technology and technology-related issues, and colleges should establish a system in which the use of technology should be one component of the promotion tenure process.

Saudi Arabia is one of the countries that are trying to integrate technology into their educational systems in general and in EFL instruction in particular. However, a previous study for the author of this paper showed that the use of technology by EFL faculty at Saudi government-funded universities is both minimal and superficial. A part from the use of drill- and-practice software, only few teachers used CALL to teach English. Lack of training was an important factor to inhibit teachers from using CALL in EFL instruction. The findings indicate that almost half of the respondents did not receive any CALL training from their universities or department. In spite of all these, the study showed that faculty members generally hold positive

attitudes toward the use of computers for EFL instruction (Al-Kahtani, 2001). This indicates that positive attitudes toward CALL by themselves do not guarantee the use of technology for teaching in the absence of training support.

Purpose of the training program

The present paper proposes a new training program for EFL faculty members at Saudi universities based on information gathered by the author over several years. The project was chosen because Saudi universities are still facing technical problems that prevent them from using available software and hardware effectively in EFL instruction. The previous study listed several factors contributing to the limited use of CALL at Saudi Arabian universities including large number of students, resistance to change, limited Internet bandwidth, heavy course loads, lack of student typing skills, lack of CALL materials, and bureaucracy. However, the most significant factor is that the majority of faculty have little or no training in the use of CALL for EFL instruction. The author experience with teaching CALL at King Saud University in particular and the experience gained from studying CALL at the United States are of great value for developing a plan for training EFL faculty at Saudi Arabian universities in CALL use and integration in EFL instruction.

Target audience

The main target audience of the CALL training program is EFL faculty members already in service at Saudi universities. With

some modification, this training program can be suitable for new teachers in pre-service training programs and for EFL teachers in public and private schools. The goal, however, is to use this program for EFL faculty members at Saudi government funded universities.

Use of technology in EFL instruction

Literature review

Kinnaman (1995) stated that "Teachers and technology each have vitally important, but different, roles to play in education."(P.96). Kinnaman also indicated that "Together, good teachers and good technology form the basis for substantial, lasting educational improvement"(p. 98). Moreover, Donlin (as cited by Milone, 1996) said, "Multimedia authoring and other aspects of technology are not the be-all and end-all for either students or teachers. They are a natural extension of the curriculum that augments instruction" (P. 22).

In order to keep this equity between good teachers and good technology tools, teachers should be trained in using and integrating technology into their teaching. Schmidt, 1995 surveyed faculty who were still not using or integrating technology into their work and found that they did not use technology due to a lack of knowledge in operating them despite their awareness of the technology impact on education. This holds true when we know that in a country like Saudi Arabia, for

instance, most computers in schools and learning institutions are only used for text processing because of operating problems. While lack of training was found to be the highest ranked barriers that prevented teachers from using computer and its related technology, Lack of access and lack of time are the second and the third highest respectively (Schmidt, 1995). Teachers may not realize how easy, interesting, and helpful technology tools are in facilitating the learning process unless they are provided with the experience through training. McEwen (1996) recommended constructing training programs for teachers in such a way they learn technical skills as well as how to effectively present microcomputer software skills. McEwen's study revealed that instructors have tended most frequently to apply the same methods in using computers in their classroom as the way they were taught, Therefore, McEwen recommended that teachers should be provided with proper training that would provide them with the appropriate technical and instructional support. In fact, some instructors lack the necessary skills in using technology in their classroom due to the poor preparation in college. However, providing them with in-service training programs has proven to be effective. Teachers at Roseburg High School in Oregon were provided with in-service training in how to use multimedia presentation "Who then use what they have learned to develop multimedia lessons or guide their students' efforts" (Milone, 1996, p. 22). In fact, they use VHS video, computer

graphics, computer animation, digitized still photos, recorded sound, and music for different applications in their classrooms.

In the future, Kalmbach (1994) predicted that it will be very hard to access information in a traditional way due to the massive amount of information available electronically. Such predictions should alert educators to use the available technology for personal and professional use. Teachers are expected to accept the challenge and improve their teaching styles by applying technology into their classrooms by shifting from a traditional role to coaching and facilitating the learning process.

1. Internet use

The Internet has revolutionized and expanded educational resources, it has allowed educators, students, and researchers to go beyond the school walls to access and share information all over the world. Because of the capability of instructional technology to navigate and to link other applications, teachers will not be limited to school resources but can link to other locations in the Internet. In addition to Internet resources such as gopher, ftp, telnet, and electronic mail, teachers can use the World Wide Web browsers such as Netscape and Internet explorer to perform searching, linking, and navigating around the web with enhanced graphics and sound capabilities.

As for EFL teachers, I believe they can also get many benefits from the Internet. They can access online similar

courses before they set up their syllabi. This will help them to have a look at different teaching approaches and philosophies of teaching EFL courses. Teachers can also benefit from distance education if they have advance technology (e.g. satellite dishes, computers, modems, and telephones) to deliver their instruction through in order to reach far more audience and attract more students from different parts of the world. Such technology allows students to interact with teachers and students from the rest of the world. Moreover, EFL teachers using electronic mail can exchange ideas about teaching, methods of enhancing learning, and seek their colleague's feedback. Thus, the Internet and its related technology asynchronic (e.g. email) and synchronic (e.g. chatting) can create a very positive environment for teaching in general, and teaching EFL in particular. With these technologies and others such as multimedia software, laser disc players, and CD-ROMs, language teaching and learning would be more exciting than that of traditional settings. Email and chatting in particular would help bridge the gab between EFL and ESL settings. EFL and native speakers of English can communicate in ways similar to that of the target language context.

2. CALL use

Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) is another technological device that I count very important in the teaching of English. Besides learning software applications, CALL has recently developed to include other technologies like the E-mail

and the Internet. If the use of the E-mail and the Internet would help develop skills such as reading and writing, CALL would be important for both written and oral skills. In his book, Computer-Assisted Language Learning, Michael Levy speaks about the Oral Language Archive (OLA) that was initiated by Carnegie Melon University in 1994. This Archive's goal says Levy "is to establish a collection of digitized sound recordings for foreign language learning that is accessible from around the world via the Internet" (P.37). Such project would help EFL teachers to expose their students to authentic sound segments in any target language.

In support of the previous argument, Kizzier (1995) said, "Technology has provided teachers with increasingly powerful tools to enrich the learning environment. Not only are new technologies being developed, but also old educational technologies, such as videotape and overhead devices, are being integrated with powerful information technology"(P.12).

3. Multimedia use

Applying new technology as teaching toots is not limited to one field or one level, but rather is very inclusive. Perreault (1995) indicated that "Multimedia technology is a tool appropriate for all levels of education. It provides the mechanism for integrating a variety of media into the curriculum and for providing an interactive learning environment where students can advance at their own pace"(p. 62). The new

technology changed the teachers' roles from a teacher to a facilitator, especially when teaching students with special needs. Perreault added that technology is used as a catalyst to help teachers see their roles differently.

4. Softwaer and hardware use

In addition to training and other technical issues needed by all instructors, it is equally important that teachers' training programs prepare them for using and selecting appropriate software and hardware. The selections of any software should be compatible with the hardware they have at their schools and the subject matter they need to teach. They also should be able to perform a need analysis to see what software package(s) suitable for their students and that consistent with the course goals. Because of the dramatic and rapid change in technology, EFL teachers should be prepared to keep up with changes and demands of technology. The method of teaching computer applications they use in classroom should enable their students to apply what they learn when exposed to newer or upgraded versions of the same technology in the future. In order for this to happen, they should attend training sessions, become actively involved in professional organizations, subscribe to professional and related journals and publications, learn new applications, ask questions, and share information with colleagues.

5. Authorware use

As the technology becomes more advanced, commercial software, however, will not be as attractive. Instead of buying commercial programs to use with their students, teachers are provided with authoring systems that help them design and tailor their programs to fit into their exact needs for their subject matter as well as for their students. These authoring programs are now more user friendly and require only little knowledge in computers and no knowledge in programming. Teacher needs only to be concerned with the content. An extremely important feature of these authoring systems is the capability of tools to incorporate hypermedia and hypertext into presentations. Importing objects from other applications is another important feature. Teachers can insert objects such as clip art or movie clips created in other application programs to their presentations. Such tools can demonstrate situations that might be impossible to do in real life situations or learn about in written formulas and theories. EFL students, for example, can actually see an experiment in action using animated presentation. These uses and others make it imperative for technology to be central to teacher's education programs. preservice teachers must have educational experiences throughout their preparation program that model how computer-related technologies can be used for instructional and learning purposes.

Factors affecting CALL use and integration at Saudi Arabian univesities

At one time it was believed that making computers available to EFL teachers was enough to encourage their use in EFL instruction. Graus (1999) reminds us that the availability of computers should not be considered the " be all and end all" of integrating CALL into language learning programs. Other factors that must be considered include the type of access to technology, resistance to change, lack of time, lack of suitable software, lack of technical support, lack of information sharing among users, and most of all, lack of training. Some EFL faculty at Saudi Arabian universities relied on the help of colleagues to learn CALL, while others learned CALL while studying at overseas universities. If CALL technology is to be integrated into EFL instruction, teachers must participate in hands-on training sessions. The training should be thorough enough so that the EFL instructors will be able to use the technology independently.

In addition to the overt factors mentioned above, covert factors (cultural, social, and religious) held by faculty, administrators, and students exert a strong influence on how CALL is used at Saudi Arabian universities. The fowllowing are the chief concerns expressed by EFL faculty at some Saudi universities: a)CALL software contain mateiral that is viewed as "morally offensive" including discussions of suuch taboo subjects as drinking alcohol and boyfriend/girlfriend relationships, or

depictions of women wearning inappropriate clothing such as short-sleeved dresses, swimsuits, etc.; b) the Internet contains a large mount of material that conflicts with Saudi religious and cultural beliefs; c) the fear of foreign influences taking over local cultural beliefs causes some sutdents and teachers to question the use of CALL technology even when its content is considered culturally acceptable. These covert issues can negatively impact the use of CALL and must be dealt with when integrating CALL in EFL instruction.

The proposal of a CALL training program for EFL faculty at Saudi Arabian universities

The program proposed is a one-semester long in-service CALL training program designed for EFL faculty at Saudi Arabian universities. The length of the program is 2 classes a week for a period of 13 weeks. The program stages, subjects, and time blocks are designed based on the research recommendations and the CALL teaching experience of the author. One goal of the program is to introduce EFL faculty to CALL and its impact on improving EFL learning, and a second goal is not directly related to language teaching. That is, to enable faculty to use computer software in their office work, such as word processing, surfing the net, and use of email. It will be divided into four stages: introductory, skill, CALL, and evaluation stages. Trainees will have to go

first through the introductory and the skill stages and then through the CALL and evaluation stages.

Program requirements

The following requirements will be of essential importance to the CALL training program:

1- Trainers: Qualified trainers who have knowledge in computer skills and applied linguistics. They must have practical experience in using technologies in EFL instruction.

2- Computer lab: The lab should be equipped with up to date computers, a smart board, a data show projector; two printers, and one scanner. Headphones or ceiling speakers are also needed.

3- Adequate CALL software: CALL software should be evaluated compatible with hardware available in the computer lab. For the training program, CALL software should cover all language skills and range in complexity where they are not boring or overwhelming.

4- Internet connection: Local and global connections are of essential importance for the success of the CALL training program. Trainees need to communicate with colleagues and other teachers through the Net.

5- Technical support: A professional technician must be readily available in the computer lab. to maintain equipments and solve technical problems. Senior students

from the computer science departments in each university can be hired to serve this purpose.

Design of the CALL training program

The structure of the program is based on the experience gained from designing and teaching other CALL courses at Saudi Arabian universities and elsewhere. The whole training course is divided into four stages: Introductory, skill, CALL, and evaluation stages. In the introductory stage of the program trainee will be learning subjects related to different type of teaching and learning aids and the importance of integrating new technologies into EFL instruction. In this stage, trainee will also be introduced to computer components and devices. The skill stage of the training program provides trainee with hands -on exercises covering a variety of essential computing skills. The primary objective of this stage is to remedy the problem that some faculty members at Saudi universities do not know how to operate a computer, let alone how to integrate it into EFL instruction. Some of the skills such as the typing skills can be practiced after the class time. Without learning these essential computing skills, faculty will not be able to integrate CALL into their teaching. The CALL stage provides the faculty with a cognitive perspective of CALL instruction. They are introduced to EFL learning websites, synchronous and asynchronous communication mediums, strategies of using search

engines, history of CALL, and selected CALL software. In the last stage, the trainees are asked to evaluate EFL learning websites and chose the most appealing ones. They are also asked to evaluate some selected CALL software in terms of their contents, user-friendliness, and the nature of the interaction they offer. ICT4LT evaluation forms in appendices (A & B) are to be used for CALL software and page evaluation. The purpose of evaluating CALL software is for the trainee to put themselves in the position of the users. They must consider who the intended users are and how they are likely to use them. Many of the criteria that apply to CALL software also apply to websites that contain EFL learning materials. The content of the CALL training program is explained in more details in the following table.

Table 1: Content of the CALL training program

Stages	subject	Objective	Time block
Introductory stage	**Introduction to teaching and learning aids:** 1- Traditional aids. 2- New technologies. 3- Benefits of instructional technologies.	**Participant will be able to:** • Identify the difference between traditional and new teaching aids and the arguments for using them in the language classrooms.	Week 1 2 classes
	Computer components: 1- Input devices 2- Processing 3- Output devices 4- Operating systems and computer applications	**Participant will be able to:** • Identify key computer components and its devices. • Open and close different type of computer applications.	Week 2 2 classes
Skill stage	**Essential Skills:** 1- Practicing typing skills. 2- Saving and printing texts using MS word. 3- Practice on surfing the Net. 4- Practice on searching the Net. 5- Digitizing hard copy information. 6- Creating a World Wide Web site. 7- Opening an email account for every trainee. Practice on sending and receiving messages.	**Participant will be able to:** • Master key computing skills necessary for CALL use.	Week 3,4,5, &6 12 classes
CALL Stage	**Introduction to the Internet:** 1- What is the Internet? 2- Strategies of using search engines. Asynchronous and Synchronous communication mediums.	**Participant will be given:** • A cognitive perspective of Internet use in EFL instruction.	Week 7&8 4 classes
	Introduction to CALL: 1- What is CALL? 2- History of CALL 3- Visiting some selected English learning websites. 4- Discussion lists on teaching EFL 5- CALL software 6- Using MS Word for EFL teaching. 7- Using MS Power Point for EFL teaching	**Participant will be give:** • A cognitive perspective of CALL use in EFL instruction.	Week 8,9,10 & 11 12 classes
Evaluation stage	**Evaluation:** 1- Evaluating EFL learning websites. 2- Evaluating CALL software.	**Participant will be asked t:** • Evaluate CALL software and websites for use in EFL instruction.	Week 12 &13 4 classes

Conclusion

It is no secret that EFL instructors at Saudi Arabian government funded universities have limited experience in the use of CALL and its integration into EFL instruction, and that they need to gain more experience before they can make CALL a part of their everyday teaching methods. A lack of detailed, effective in-service training programs for developing simple computer skills or knowledge in the use of CALL materials and techniques exists at most of the country universities. Some EFL instructors relied on the help of colleagues to learn their skills, while others learned them while studying or teaching at overseas universities. If CALL is to be integrated into EFL instruction at Saudi universities, faculty must participate in hands-on training programs. The training should be through enough so that the EFL instructors will be able to use CALL independently. This proposal presents a complete CALL training program for EFL instructors at Saudi universities utilizing successful experiences implemented in other schools. The program is consisting of four modules. The first module is dedicated for familiarizing the faculty with the concept of integrating CALL into EFL instruction. The second module covers a variety of essential computing skills. The third and fourth modules provide faculty with cognitive perspectives of CALL instruction and evaluation. If this proposal is to be actually implemented in Saudi universities, a number of requirements must be fulfilled. Some of these requirements are:

availability of suitable hardware and software, professional trainers, and interested participants.

It is my hope that this in-service CALL training program will help university administrators in their attempts to integrate CALL into EFL instruction.

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Appendix- A: ICT4LT Project: CALL Evaluation Form

You may begin by asking the following questions:

- Does the software offer anything extra that cannot be done in more traditional ways, e.g. with pencil and paper or chalk and talk?
- Do you intend to use the software for whole-class teaching?
- Do you intend to use the software in a computer lab or in a self-access centre?
- How do you intend to *integrate* the software into your teaching?

Title of software package / program:	
Criterion	Rating
Is the level of language that the program offers clearly indicated?	Yes/No
Is it easy to start the program?	Yes/No
Is the user interface easy to understand? (For example, is the screen layout clear and easy to interpret?)	Yes/No
Is it easy to navigate through the program?	Yes/No
Are icons that are used to assist navigation (e.g. back to the homepage, exit) clear and intelligible?	Yes/No
Is it always clear to the learner which point s/he has reached in the program?	Yes/No
Does the program include scoring?	Yes/No
If a scoring system is used, does it make sense?	Yes/No
If a scoring system is used, does it encourage the learner?	Yes/No
Is the learner offered useful feedback if s/he gets something wrong?	Yes/No
If the learner gets something right purely by chance, can s/he seek an explanation in order to find out why the answer is right?	Yes/No
Can the learner seek help, e.g. on grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, cultural content?	Yes/No
Does the program branch to remedial routines?	Yes/No
Can the learner easily quit something that is beyond his/her ability?	Yes/No
Are the grammar and vocab used in the program accurate?	Yes/No
Does the program offer cultural insights?	Yes/No
If the program includes pictures, are they (a) relevant, (b) an aid to understanding?	Yes/No
If the program includes sound recordings, are they of an adequate quality?	Yes/No
If the program includes sound recordings, are they (a) relevant, (b) an aid to understanding?	Yes/No
If the program includes sound recordings, is there a good mix of male and female voices and regional variations?	Yes/No
Can the learner record his/her own voice and play it back?	Yes/No
Does the program make use of Automatic Speech Recognition (ASR)?	Yes/No
If the program makes use of ASR, is it effective?	Yes/No
If the program includes video sequences, are they of an adequate quality?	Yes/No
If the program includes video sequences, are they (a) relevant, (b) an aid to understanding?	Yes/No
Is the program relevant to your national / regional / departmental programme of study?	Yes/No

Appendix- B: ICT4LT Project : Website/Web Page Evaluation Form

URL of website / Web page:
Questions to ask
Does the site contain what you expected, e.g. as indicated in its title or URL?
Who created the site?
What are the credentials of the author(s) of the site?
Who is the site aimed at? Is it, for example, aimed at adults, native speakers, older students of a language, young learners?
When was the site created?
When was the site last updated?
Is there a contact name or contact address at the site?
Is the site easy to access and quick to download?
Is the server on which the site is located up to the job of delivering its content at any time? For example, does access slow down at peak times?
How easy is it to navigate the site? Can you easily get back to the site homepage?
Does the site contain useful links to other sites?
If the site contains links to other sites, do they work and do they contain what you expected?
If the site contains links to other sites, are they valuable additions or potential distractions?
Does the site contain an appropriate mix of text, images, sound and video?
How useful is the site for the provision of materials for offline computer-based or paper-based tasks?
How easy is it to turn the site contents into useful offline activities? For example, you may wish to download a whole page or selected parts of it for offline use.
How easy is it to differentiate the contents of the site for younger or older learners and for learners of different abilities?
Do you need plug-ins to access certain features of the site, e.g. in order to view certain documents or to play audio and video sequences?
Is there a copyright or "terms of use" message at the site, indicating clearly any restrictions on the way in which you may use the materials it contains?

Source: ICT4LT project 2005. Available at (http://www.ict4lt.org).