



CALL AS THE MEANS FOR APPROPRIATE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

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Annotation: This article focuses on one perhaps lesser-known approach to using technologies in the classroom that was created in 1990s and that is especially useful for ESL/EFL teachers to consider. The model is described; its significance is explained and provided with activity ideas that teacher educators can use when incorporating the model into professional development workshops or in-service trainings.

Key words: ESL/EFL, CALL, TELL, SLA, Determinist position, Instrumental position, Critical position, Warschauer's model, technophobe, technophile, instrumentalist, critical. The mid-to late 1990 was an exciting time for those concerning with incorporating new technology into teaching of English as a second or foreign language (ESL/EFL). Commonly referred to as Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL), or sometimes with the broader term Technology-Enhanced Language Learning (TELL), the field took huge leaps forward during these years. Up until this point, the many ways of researching and applying CALL were hit or miss and included little reflection about differences in methodology. Correspondingly, the literature on CALL was characterized by *cross talk*-miscommunication among researchers and practitioners without a clear understanding of the different assumptions. A few researchers and users of CALL took note of the situation and began to make sense of the cacophony, which helped to push the field forward (Chapelle 1995, 1997; Salaberry 1999). One central way that order was brought to the field of CALL in the 1990s was a push for technology to be introduced into the language classroom and evaluated according to Second Language Acquisition (SLA) principles that were known to create effective learning environments. These principles improved student language learning by providing opportunities for genuine social interaction, the performance of authentic tasks, and the creative use of language; in addition, teachers focused on the learning process and learning strategies, appropriate feedback and time to carry out tasks, and support for learner autonomy (Egbert and Hanson-Smith 1999).

However, many of us who organize CALL teacher training courses and workshops notice that pre-service and in-service teachers approach the use of technology with a variety of strong assumptions. Importantly, if these assumptions are not identified and addressed, they impact the way that the teacher trainees interpret the importance of SLA principles when using language technologies. Therefore, there is a critical need to make sense of these initial assumptions when designing professional development courses for pre-service and in-service teachers. One way to accomplish this is to adopt *Warschauer's (1998) framework*, which explains the vastly different perspectives with which researchers in language technology approach their work, and provides a needed bridge between varying sets of assumptions. Although Warschauer was describing researchers' perspectives, the framework easily lends itself to help novice teachers identify their own

approaches to instructional technology and to thoughtfully explore and consider other approaches, hopefully leading to a well-informed and productive use of technology in the classroom.

Warschauer's model Warschauer suggested that researchers working in the field of language technology approach their work from very different positions. These differences have a profound influence on the assumptions that they make and the conclusions they draw. Warschauer identified the three positions as (1) determinist, (2) instrumental, and (3) critical.

Determinist position

According to Warschauer (1998), a determinist position associates the mere presence of computers with successful language learning. In other words, technology has a "magic" effect on learning, and simply including it will determine a more positive outcome for any activity. Researchers who approach their work from this position are quick to draw positive conclusions about the impact of the technology and are likely to ignore the many complex and intervening factors surrounding technology use. There are a wide range of activities that can be followed by the determinist position and can be successfully accepted as a productive lesson outcome. The following one can be identified as the beneficial classroom activities:

The name of the activity is "Learning Stations", which is especially aimed for elementary and intermediate level students and last for 15-20 minutes. The aim of the activity includes to allow teachers to engage students of different learning styles in active learning and practice all four skills as well as meeting students needs more effectively. To organize this activity a teacher needs a laptop to make a table in order to control the attendance and outcomes of students during the whole process. It can be followed by ordered steps which are following by each other:

Step 1: the amount of time, the number of students should be considered and planned how many learning stations to set up;

Step 2: after deciding which stations to set up, the teacher divides the class into groups according to the number of stations. For example, if there are four learning stations, the teacher divides the class into four groups. In this stage it is important to remember that groups should be created according to the level of students. It is recommended to form one group of students with a lower level where students work with the teacher while the other groups can practice in groups without teacher's assistance.

Step 3: teacher gives each group a name. For instance: green group, red group, yellow group and teacher group.

A green group is formed of students with a high level of students where students can practice on their own. The teacher prepares extra open-end questions in each station in case the green group finishes practicing earlier than other three groups.

Yellow and red groups are formed of students who may need a little guidance and clarification of instructions. The teacher group is formed of students with a low level where teacher assists most of all.

Green	Yellow	Red	Teacher
Tom	Bill	Harry	Ms James
...	

Station 1: Game speaking.

Students practice speaking by playing the board game: rolling a dice and taking turns to answer the open-end questions using taught vocabulary list on the screen.

Station 2: Listening.

Students listen to the recording twice and fill the gaps. They can discuss and compare their answers in the group if they have extra time.

Station 3: Reading.

Students read the text and answer the questions in the group.

Station 4: Writing.

Students practice writing using the taught vocabulary which is shown on the screen via projector in the classroom.

Step 5: the teacher plans learning station schedule to refer to students to their directions on how to rotate from one station to another. It is important to remember to signal students using “attention getters” when it is time for rotating from one station to another.

As the learning stations strategy allows students to practice particular vocabulary and grammar structure, it is essential to pre-teach vocabulary and grammar structure beforehand.

Stations	10:00-10:05	10:05-10:10	10:10-10:15	10:15-10:20
Speaking	Green	Yellow	Red	Teacher
Listening	Teacher	Green	Yellow	Red
Reading	Red	Teacher	Green	Yellow
Writing	Yellow	Red	Teacher	Green

It should be followed by the given table and students will be allowed to know their timers with the help of projector provided in the classroom.

Instrumental position

Those who hold the instrumental perspective believe that technology is just a tool that is not capable of bringing about positive learning results in and of itself. Rather, the result depends on how well the technology is incorporated into the lesson, how well it supports the objectives, and how well the computer-based activities are managed. Thus, although technology can be instrumental in bringing about effective language learning, it all depends on the abilities of the teacher to implement CALL in the classroom.

The effective use of digital learning tools in classrooms can increase student engagement, help teachers improve their plans, and facilitates personalized learning. It also helps students build essential 21st-century skills. Still, it is important to note that technology is a tool used in education and not an end in itself. The promise of educational technology lies in what educators do with it used to best support their students’ needs. Teachers want to improve student performance, and technology can help them accomplish this aim. Technology provides students with easy-to-access information, accelerated learning, and

fun opportunities to practice what they learn. It enables students to explore new subjects and deepen their understanding of difficult concepts, particularly in STEM. Through the use of technology inside and outside the classroom, students can gain 21st-century technical skills necessary for future occupations.

Educational technology can foster collaboration. Not only teachers engage with students during lessons, but students can also communicate with each other. In collaborative activities, students can share their thoughts and ideas and support each other. At the same time, technology enables one-on-one interaction with teachers. Students can ask classroom-related questions and seek additional help on difficult-to-understand subject matter. At home, students can upload their homework, and teachers can access and view completed assignments using their laptops.

Critical position

The critical position regarding technology and language learning indicates that a learning environment is its own ecosystem and that any addition to the ecosystem, such as instructional technology, brings about a slightly or radically different learning environment. These subtle or obvious changes are often sociocultural; there may be shifts in power, identity, or communication patterns, or changes in relationships between individuals and groups. For example, a teacher may notice that when students hold a class meeting through an online discussion board (rather than face-to-face), there are changes in power, identity, and relationships. Quieter students may lead or even dominate the online discussions, and students with stronger reading-writing proficiency have the advantage in a text-based environment, in contrast to the advantage in face-to-face settings for those with stronger listening-speaking skills.

Application of Warschauer's model to professional development

Warschauer dismissed the determinist approach, recognized the value of the instrumental approach, and encouraged researchers to adopt a critical view of technology. However, the utility of Warschauer's model was how it organized the numerous disparate voices and brought clarity to the many different perspectives that ESL/EFL teacher educators encounter in their CALL workshops or in-service sessions. A variation on this model helped teacher educators to identify their own and other's positions and responded by making informed decisions regarding appropriate activities for professional development, that variation was based on one minor adaptation that associated the determinist position with two extreme assumptions potentially held by teachers who were entering the field of ESL/EFL. In other words, ESL/EFL teachers may be predisposed to believe that the mere presence of technology will bring about not only positive results in their classrooms, but also negative results. Therefore, a teacher who takes up the determinist position may be a *technophile* (a lover of technology, certain that it will fix any instructional problems), or a *technophobe* (a hater of technology, certain that it destroys instruction). In addition, a teacher may hold the instrumental position (viewing technology as a neutral tool, certain that its success or failure is entirely dependent on the instructional choices that are made), or a critical position (viewing technology as capable of impacting classrooms in deep, subtle and unpredictable ways, certain that sociocultural elements should be considered when using and evaluating technology use).



The main reason why these positions matter is that ESL/EFL teachers are familiar with and knowledgeable about relevant language technologies and they are willing to consider incorporating them into construction. Additionally, they are capable of posing a full range of questions about the impact of technology on language acquisition and sociocultural factors. Therefore, there are three objectives when conducting professional development activities for ESL/EFL teachers in the area of CALL:

1. To present positive experiences with spotlighted technologies (both familiar and novel) to foster imagination and innovation in using them to teach language
2. To provide rich experiences and knowledge of SLA principle-driven uses of technologies to teach language
3. To foster critical consideration of both obvious and subtle sociocultural impacts of technology on learners, teachers, and the community

A teacher starting from one of the four positions (technophile, technophobe, instrumental, and critical) has a very different path to these three objectives than a teacher approaching from a different position. Therefore, an essential first step is to have teachers clearly identify their assumptions about technology and teaching, which we do by administering the eight-question survey that is described below:

Instructions: please circle the statements that best describe your beliefs about the use of technology for language learning.

1. I am nervous about the idea of using technology for language teaching.
2. The fear that the technology might not work during class would definitely prevent me from using computers in the classroom.
3. It is likely that the latest technologies are capable of fixing most problems in the language learning classroom.
4. Teaching that incorporates educational technology will always be superior to teaching without technology.
5. Teachers who plan well for technology use are easily able to control the effects of technology on learning.
6. It is easy to predict the impact of technology on learning, classrooms, teachers, and learners.
7. I believe that the use of technology in the classroom could bring about unintended consequences for which I had not planned.
8. The most significant impacts of technology in my classroom might be changes in students' identities, their relationships to others, and the power dynamic among individuals.

After teachers completed the survey, the model was explained and shown how the survey responses corresponded with the four assumptions about CALL: technophobe (1 and 2); technophile (3 and 4); instrumentalist (5 and 6); and critical (7 and 8). Then the teachers responses were discussed and prepared the appropriate whole group and individual activities for professional development.

1. Those who were technophiles benefited from observing and discussing cases where the use of technology did not bring about English learning or had a negative impact on learning or on sociocultural interactions.
2. Those who approached technology from a technophobe position require activities that revolved around growing comfortable with technology, learning to use it in



authentic contexts, and experiencing the positive impact that technology can had on English learning, impacts that could outweigh the challenges.

3. Those who viewed technology from an instrumental position had the benefit of assuming that instructional factors mattered; the central area of focus for them was experiencing and learning about significant impacts on sociocultural factors in addition to or in combination with language development.

Those who had adopted a critical view of CALL benefited from fostering further critical consideration of the impact of technologies on second language acquisition and sociocultural factors.

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