

**EUROCALL 2010**  
**EACEA Pre-Conference Workshop**  
**“Quality Indicators in CALL EU funded projects”**

**Bordeaux, France, September 10<sup>th</sup>, 2010**

Language learning and ICT experts have concluded that the emotional engagement of users, both teachers and students, is the main success factor for Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) initiatives.

Representatives from 20 CALL projects funded by the European Union's Lifelong Learning Programme managed by the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) have participated in a workshop focusing on Quality Indicators on Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) projects.

The IT revolution has also brought about a revolution in education and training, as new technologies have enabled new and accessible communication which has had a profound impact on learning processes and has led to innovative learning approaches such as the use of social networks or virtual worlds. This trend is especially notable within the field of language learning, where new IT technologies have allowed for increased interaction between teachers and learners: key factors for the acquisition of language competencies.

Nonetheless, new technologies are being developed at faster and faster rates, and the incorporation of these new tools in sound pedagogic approaches for language learning requires further reflection on which approaches are working and which are not.

This is why the EACEA decided to bring together both ICT and language learning experts and practitioners to explore such issues in a workshop and reflect upon the current state of play.

The workshop, promoted by the EACEA was held in the framework of EUROCALL Conference, the biggest annual event on e-learning and languages field, hosted and organized in 2010 by the Université Montesquieu in Bordeaux (France).

Project managers, experts and practitioners agreed by the end of the workshop that the success of CALL initiatives depends on the degree of **motivation and engagement** that the proposed method or approach can achieve with users, both teachers and students.

In order to achieve such engagement and motivation, the **attractiveness and acceptance** of the proposed approach by the target users should be considered as a priority, taking into consideration **usability** – readiness and ease of use – and **cultural appropriateness** in terms of contents and technology level, tailored to the target users' needs and skills. Such approaches should always be firmly embedded within a **sound pedagogic framework** where IT tools are defined strictly according to predefined pedagogical aims and objectives.

Furthermore, experience shows that those initiatives which allow for the different profiles of learners to choose their own language learning paths work best. To maximize the impact of CALL strategies on learners' skills, specific attention should be paid to **learner autonomy** by developing learners' 'learning to learn' competences, training teachers to adapt their methods and combining learner autonomy and interaction to develop communication skills.

CALL strategies should also allow the delivery of **bi-directional feedback and interaction** between teachers and students, key to the acceptance of such methods, as they empower both users alike. This

should be achieved by the provision of regular guidance and feedback to learners during the learning process, and the self-evaluation of activities and learning progress. The importance of tutoring should therefore not be neglected in this process.

Practitioners and experts also stated that the capacity of the tool or method to be **upgraded, adapted or transferred** is pivotal for sustainability and long term expectations of users. Technology-based activities cannot be linear and should be designed to allow learners to choose their learning path, to integrate different technologies and respect their level of progress.

**Interconnectivity** of tools or methods to other available resources and tools is also highly valued by students, who are more likely to embrace methods and tools that have become socially ingrained, such has been the case with the advent of social networks.

As for the pre-requisites for the successful engagement of users with CALL processes, different levels of **digital literacy** will be required from users depending on the method used. However, simple guidelines and reasonable learning timeframes for the mastering of the technology are also needed if proper engagement and reduced drop out levels are to be attained. The **role of teachers and trainers** is key as they must develop ICT activities within the pedagogical framework, define the pedagogical aims of ICT tools and finally monitor and supervise the whole learning process.

Ultimately, experts and practitioners concluded that innovation should be approached in line with the existing pedagogical framework and learners' needs. In the field of ICT, **innovation** should not be a disparate quest for the newest technologies but should bring innovative and motivating strategies to language teaching.

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