REVIEW OF *WORLDCALL: SUSTAINABILITY AND COMPUTER-ASSISTED LANGUAGE LEARNING*

WorldCALL: Sustainability and Computer-Assisted Language Learning

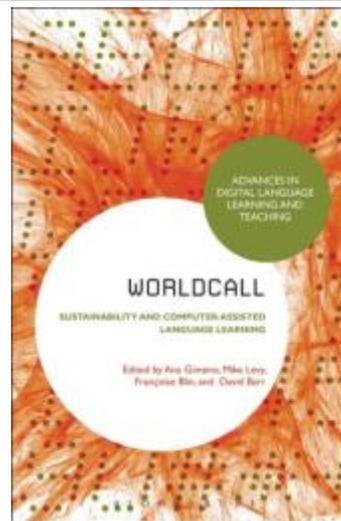Ana Gimeno, Mike Levy, Françoise Blin, & David Barr (Eds.)

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This is the latest collection of selected papers from WorldCALL, the conference of the worldwide professional association for teachers and learners interested in computer assisted language learning (CALL). In keeping with their long-standing emphasis on equity and access, the association's fourth conference, held in Scotland in 2013 and from which the volume's 18 papers are drawn, took as its theme *Sustainability and Computer-Assisted Language Learning*. Gimeno and Barr state in the Foreword that this theme was selected to reflect the conference's "focus on the future direction and development of CALL" (p. vii). This focus on sustainability, not only evident in the subtitle of the current volume but also clearly demonstrated in each of the book's five sections, is incredibly timely, as notions of sustainability have gained significant currency across education at all levels in recent years.

A report commissioned by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development on the development and use of open educational resources (OERs) in higher education states that "sustainability might be defined as the ability of a project to continue its operations.…However, we cannot place value on the simple ongoing machinations of a project and staff who produce nothing of value…the definition of sustainability should include the idea of accomplishing goals in addition to ideas related to longevity" (Wiley, 2007, p. 5). It appears that the contributors to *WorldCALL: Sustainability and Computer Assisted Language Learning* have heeded the call for a greater focus on the accomplishment of goals and longevity of CALL projects and research.

Both economic sustainability and social sustainability issues have risen to the forefront of discussion, not only in the integration of language learning and technology, but also across society generally. In the CALL context, there exist concerns relating to the funding of CALL projects, which often rely upon seed funding for development but are underfunded (or not funded at all) when it comes to continued use, training, and support. Furthermore, CALL projects frequently rely on a key person, a *champion* of the activity or platform, and while such key individuals can be initially crucial in promoting and pioneering innovations in CALL, the sustainability of CALL projects can be jeopardized when a single person is relied upon to provide all of the passion and expertise. The chapters in this volume address these varied issues of sustainability in a number of theoretical, methodological, and practical ways. In the year that we

celebrate the 20th anniversary of *Language Learning & Technology*, and reflect upon two decades of mainstream access to the internet in many areas, it is fitting to examine not only the sustainability of individual CALL projects, but also the sustainability of how research is carried out and disseminated in the field as a whole. Thankfully, this volume does both.

WorldCALL: Sustainability and Computer-Assisted Language Learning seeks to answer the question of how CALL technologies and techniques can be implemented in a sustainable, repeatable way. The volume promises samples of CALL research and practice from around the world, and includes chapters based on research conducted in Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile and Easter Island, Germany, Greece, Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, New Zealand, Poland, Spain, and Sweden. While there is a heavy (and to be expected) emphasis on English as a Second or Foreign Language, other modern languages including French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, German, Russian, Korean, Indonesian, Japanese, and Chinese are referred to. The majority of chapters focus on university ESL students and pre-service or in-service teachers, although Chapter 18 also features digital video stories of secondary students.

In its focus on ways to ensure that CALL technologies, pedagogies, resources, and technologies remain sustainable, the volume covers a variety of methodological and theoretical perspectives. The methodologies utilized include online and face-to-face interviews, the analysis of lesson plans and teaching materials, online and paper-based questionnaires and tests, reflection reports, content analysis of online productions, eyetracking, and pre- and post-surveys. A range of theoretical frameworks are also employed, including concepts of normalization, Hong's (2009) spherical model of L2 teachers' integration of CALL, chaos theory, Gibson's (1979) theory of affordances, CALL ergonomics, CALL development and agile methodology, Hubbard's (1988) integrated framework for CALL courseware evaluation, task-based research, Robinson's (2001) triadic componential framework, and the New London Group's (1996) multiliteracies. The breadth of methodological and theoretical perspectives alone makes *WorldCALL* a valuable volume, particularly for postgraduate students seeking an introduction to research in the field.

While the majority of the chapters report on empirical studies and individual projects, the central chapters, Chapter 7 and Chapter 8, provide useful overviews of theories and methods for research and projects, respectively. These methods include usability tests, the analysis of learner personas, and eyetracking, a method reviewed in more detail in Chapter 16.

The book draws upon Gunn's (2010) definition of sustainability in relation to e-learning products and systems as being developed by one or more higher education institutions, having passed a proof of concept stage, having produced evidence of potential, and having a support model, in order to introduce a wide variety of chapters on areas as diverse as teacher education and CALL, normalization of CALL, CALL systems, Mobile-assisted Language Learning (MALL), and innovation in CALL (the five parts which make up the book). The editors point out the importance of recognizing not only communities within individual institutions, but also developments in the wider world, where commonalities among developers and users exist. By providing such a comprehensive overview of CALL innovations, *WorldCALL* certainly contributes to this cause. The impressive breadth of the volume allows language teachers like myself to establish connections between projects at our own institutions and the lessons learned at others.

Passionate; informed; and, importantly, interconnected teachers (rather than isolated champions), play a key role as members of communities of practice, enhancing the sustainability of CALL innovations. As such, it is fitting that Part 1 focuses on teacher education and continued professional development. In Chapter 1, Haines examines the affordances teachers perceive computer-mediated communication as having for student learning, providing important implications for sustainable professional development. This theme is built upon by Anjos-Santos and Cristovão in Chapter 2, which surveys the development of digitally-based pedagogies for pre-service and in-service teachers, addressing challenges inherent in the

fluidity and heterogeneity of digital literacy practices and recommending a genre-based approach to the planning of didactic sequences. This chapter provides a particularly useful characterization of the type of disposition teachers require in order to successfully engage with digital technologies and language practices. In Chapter 3, Kleban and Bueno-Alastuey explore how pedagogical knowledge can be developed via telecollaboration and highlight the importance of telecollaboration for providing a dialogic space to facilitate not only discussions of CALL, but also traditional pedagogic skills. The promotion of collaborative reflection using Wikis and VoiceThreads is the topic of Chapter 4 by Priego, which tackles issues such as mode choice. Chapter 5, by Morales and Windeatt, draws upon the useful concepts of a community of inquiry and teaching presence to explore how language teachers become effective users of CALL. Importantly, chapters in Part 1 involve CALL not only as a subject but as a means of teacher training.

Part 2 focuses on what is often considered a main goal of CALL, that of normalization. Bax's (2003) concept of normalization as technology becoming invisible, hardly recognized as technology, is invoked in the first chapter in this section, by Martins and Moreira. Building upon the previous section, this chapter explores the factors that influence CALL integration, considering teachers' digital literacy and institutional environments, among others. Importantly, this chapter distinguishes between the influence of institutional factors inside the classroom during teaching and outside the classroom for preparation. Blin, Caws, Hamel, Heift, Schulze, and Smith turn the focus in Chapter 7 to CALL research itself, positing that "research into interactions in CALL can be enriched and rendered more sustainable by applying principles and methods that are specifically adapted to complex dynamic systems that take into account the various affordances and constraints of such systems" (p. 119). Unsurprisingly, all of the chapters deal with issues of sustainability in relation to CALL, although to varying degrees and, interestingly, in a variety of ways. Some of the chapters in this book explore not only the sustainability of CALL itself, but the sustainability of research on CALL (e.g., Chapter 7, which examines sustainable interaction-based research in CALL). In terms of the sustainability of CALL projects, Ward memorably comments in Chapter 8 that "It is important to ensure that there is a real, underlying need for the CALL resources and not just a 'need-to-test-a-theory' motivation behind the project." (p. 132). This particularly valuable chapter at the heart of the book examines sustainable OERs, sustainable software, and sustainable CALL and offers possible solutions to sustainability issues drawing upon development methodologies (similar considerations in relation to MALL are presented in Chapter 14).

Having examined the individual and social factors involved in developing and normalizing CALL, Part 3 turns its attention to CALL systems. Here, sustainability is also operationalized in terms of equal access for all, including students with special needs (e.g., Chapter 9 by Bañados), the sustainability of online communities via economization of language (White in Chapter 10), and the sustainability of learning for individuals (e.g., the self-regulated learning described by Ishikawa, Akahane-Yamada, Kitamura, Smith, Tsubota, and Dantsujiin in Chapter 11). This section includes chapters on blended learning, online communities of practice, and out-of-class CALL activities. Parts 1, 2, and 3 combine to form a strong argument for the approach the editors advocate in the conclusion: namely, that "designing for sustainability" should be "at the core of both teacher education and language learning programmes" (p. 327).

Part 4 explores sustainability in specific relation to MALL, differentiated from both CALL and mobile learning in Chapter 14. Chapter 12 by Ma presents evidence of students' MALL experiences and perspectives, while Steel examines application design for individual, sustainable MALL in Chapter 13. In Chapter 14, Kim presents a diagrammatic framework to define sustainable MALL, encompassing learner factors and pedagogical aspects. Plana, Gimeno, Appel, and Hopkins report on a sample study using WhatsApp to improve reading skills in Chapter 15. This chapter concludes with a section specifically addressing considerations regarding sustainability in relation to mobile learning, including issues of access and cost. Given the growing use of mobile devices that combine the flexibility and portability of

mobile phones and handheld tablets with the higher computing capacity and communicative affordances such as a full keyboard traditionally associated with computers, it will be interesting to see whether these fields converge and overlap even more in the future.

The final section, Part 5, takes the next step towards the future of CALL, examining innovations in both CALL research, such as eye-tracking in Chapter 16 by O'Rourke, Prendergast, Shi, Smith, and Stickler; text analyzers in Chapter 17 by Roubou; and project design, such as the development of digital stories via handcrafted video clips in the final empirical study in the collection, Chapter 18, by Wilden and Matz. This chapter highlights the importance of recognizing students' extant media habits and Web 2.0 participation. Notably, there is considerable possibility of overlap of CALL research and project design methods, with scope for teacher-researchers to utilize research tools to enhance teaching and learning, and to use learning and teaching tools to collect data. Importantly, O'Rourke et al. make the argument that demonstrating the sustainability of both CALL applications and research relies on evidence—evidence that this volume provides an abundance of, as well as guidance on how to create even more sustainable projects and research going forward.

In summary, *WorldCALL: Sustainability and Computer-Assisted Language Learning* is a welcome addition to the field, packed with fresh ideas and novel approaches. It is possible to read *WorldCALL* from cover to cover (as I did, and as I would recommend any teacher or scholar new to the area, wishing to obtain a comprehensive overview of the state-of-the-art do) or to select a part or even an individual chapter for reading in isolation. Reading through, I rapidly found sections that I wished to recommend to specific colleagues. While CALL projects and, as a result CALL research, often suffer issues of sustainability, resulting in small sample sizes and a lack of longitudinal studies, collected volumes help to overcome this limitation to a degree. Furthermore, many of the included chapters make sensible, evidence-based, and practical suggestions to improve the sustainability of both CALL projects and CALL research. In turn, this should increase the scale of projects as communities of practice grow, and increase the number of longitudinal studies possible as more projects are able to continue running, according to Gunn's (2010) definition of sustainability. The theme of this collection signals a maturing of the field, and its content is impressive in its scope.

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