

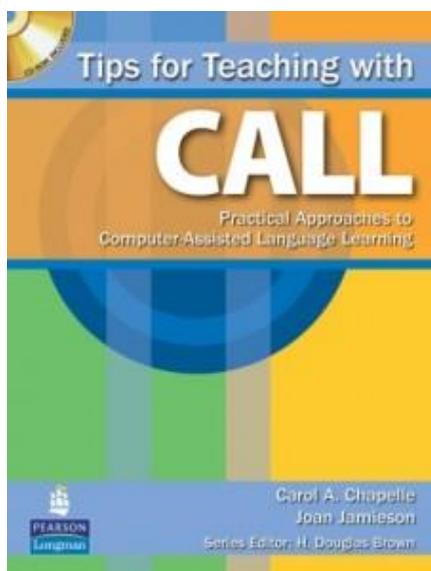
A Review of “Tips for Teaching with CALL: Practical Approaches to Computer-assisted Language Learning”

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Carol A. Chapelle and Joan Jamieson. (2008). Pearson-Longman.

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Many educators are interested in incorporating technology into their teaching methodology in order to support their learners and provide them with more opportunities to learn English. However, some teachers are still apprehensive about technology and need practical techniques for using CALL (Computer-Assisted Language Learning) with their students. Furthermore, they need to know *how* as well as *why* learners can benefit from CALL.

Chapelle and Jamieson’s book *Tips for Teaching with CALL: Practical Approaches to Computer-assisted Language* provides the answers to these *how* and *why* questions by suggesting practical techniques and tips as well as the rationale for using CALL activities with students. The authors manage this through discussing websites, software and the practical techniques. They also raise awareness of the rationale behind such techniques through reference to applied linguistics research related to the CALL materials.

In the book emphasis is placed on four key language learning theories:

- Language learners should learn structures and vocabulary that is just a little above their current knowledge (Krashen, 1982)
- Learners need to notice language in context in order for it to be learned (Thornbury, 1999)

- In order to develop communicative competence, learners need to interact with peers (Bachman, 1990)
- Learning strategies and learner autonomy are necessary for language learning (Wenden, 1991)

These theories underpin the pedagogic tips and technology suggestions within each chapter. Chapelle and Jamieson believe teachers play a crucial role in the management and provision of CALL opportunities both in and out of the classroom. They note that this is because, when used properly, CALL materials serve as teaching aids that facilitate opportunities for language learning. They also believe that Internet-based resources such as dictionaries, tutorials and online libraries have great pedagogic value because they can perform functions similar to those teachers perform in class and through textbooks.

The introduction "What is CALL?" provides a clear explanation of what CALL is and how educators can guide and facilitate language learning using computers. It usefully contextualizes the eight efficiently organized chapters of the book outlined below:

Chapter 1 focuses on CALL materials for vocabulary learning such as [Vocaboly](#), [Wordsmart](#) and [Gerry's Vocabulary Teacher](#).

Chapter 2 concentrates on grammar and introduces websites such as [ESLgold](#) and [Chemnitz Internet Grammar](#), and the software such as [Understanding and Using English Grammar](#).

Chapter 3 looks at reading supported with CALL materials on the websites such as <http://www.eslreading.org/> and adult learning activities and the software such as Longman English Interactive 3 and Issues in English.

Chapter 4 deals with writing and uses materials from *Easy Writer*, [Linguistic Funland](#) and other websites and software.

Chapter 5 addresses listening and introduces the readers to leading websites such as [Randall's ESL Cyber Listening Lab](#) and [ELLLO: English Language Listening Lab Online](#), and the software such as [Rosetta Stone](#).

Chapter 6 explains activities that can be used for speaking and discusses text-to-speech applications and other related software including [Better Accent](#).

Chapter 7 is concerned with how communication tools can help students learn English. Tools such as [Windows Messenger](#), [Nicenet](#) and forums such as [Using English](#) are looked at in this chapter.

Chapter 8 considers how technology can be used in content-based instruction and learning.

These chapters are not simply a list of useful websites and software. The reader is provided with pragmatic summaries about current research in the different subject areas as well guidance for teachers about what they can do to facilitate learning. For example, under the heading 'What the research says' (Chapter 4, p101) we are informed that learners should learn writing by focusing on language that is required for accomplishing specific purposes (Swales, 1991). The 'What the teacher can do' section then provides an example of how teachers could apply this idea using [Click into English](#) software to support their learners writing an opinion essay. Each chapter includes further advice under clear headings such as 'Help learners develop strategies for listening online' (p.145) and 'Encourage learners to use online help during communication' (p.187). This advice helps guide the teachers decision making when selecting CALL for the activities they are planning to do.

A useful CD-ROM accompanies the book and uses images and video clips to illustrate its contents through demonstrations of learners using CALL software and simulations that guide them through authentic CALL materials. The demonstrations are in real-time video and show how learners do the activities. They also give an indication as to how learners might perform in an activity. Both demonstrations and simulations run parallel with chapters presented in the book.

Tips for Teaching with CALL is a useful introduction to CALL and offers easy-to-follow tips and techniques. It also provides clear explanations of current research theories about CALL pedagogy and learning. Personally, I would have liked to have seen the inclusion of Web 2.0 technology in Chapter 4 on writing. Throughout the book, two of the learning tenets that

Chapelle and Jamieson advise teachers to encourage learner interaction and collaboration. The interactive nature of Web 2.0 technology has these tenets built in to authentic real world activities such as blogging and wikis.

In order to remain relevant, another chapter on online teaching and learning, which discusses the use of tools such as [Livemocha](#), [SymbalooEDU](#), [Moodle](#) and other personal learning environments, is also necessary. The pace of change in e-learning and CALL also means that many excellent integrated skills websites/tools such as [English Central](#) are not included in the book. Nor is anything about mobile learning and virtual learning ([Second Life](#)).

Writing a book on such a vast and rapidly growing subject area is challenging because whatever is included is likely to date very quickly. However, *Tips for Teaching with CALL: Practical Approaches to Computer-assisted Language Learning* helps increase language teachers' awareness of CALL materials and activities. It also provides an excellent foundation in CALL methodology and materials design. It is a worthwhile addition to any ELT library and an excellent resource for teachers seeking an introduction to the subject.

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About the Author

Chris Harwood has taught EFL and EAP for over 15 years in Japan, Thailand, Austria, England, Egypt and now in Singapore. His research interests include learner autonomy, collaborative learning and CALL. He is currently researching how to integrate e-learning platforms into university English language departments. Chris lectures in Business Communication at the National University of Singapore.