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Teachers, teacher educators, and administrators can appreciate the challenges facing the adoption of new educational technology. Indeed, we are all aware that the indiscriminate transfer of methods used in the face-to-face classroom to computer-assisted language learning (CALL) and teaching does not work. From divergent pedagogical beliefs about technology’s role, to varied technical skill levels among teaching faculty, individual factors heavily influence technology adoption. Teacher Education in Computer-Assisted Language Learning: A Sociocultural and Linguistic Perspective presents the findings of a longitudinal research project by teacher trainer, researcher, and author Euline Cutrim Schmid. Through the development and research of the Teacher Education in CALL (TECALL) framework, she offers an in-depth analysis of sociocultural approaches to CALL teacher education at the intersection of second language teacher cognition and the integration of CALL technologies. The TECALL program takes eighteen months and consists of ten professional development workshops, a collaborative project with pre-service teachers, video-stimulated reflection, and individual consultations with an academic expert. The book describes the program in eight chapters, divided into three parts: Part One (Chapters 1-3) is a CALL literature review and outline of the theoretical framework; Part Two (Chapters 4-7) covers the TECALL professional development program’s research findings; and Part Three (Chapter 8) explores research implications.

The book begins with a synthesis of sociocultural research in CALL pre- and in-service teacher education, inclusive of the key influential approaches (e.g., experiential modeling, collaborative peer-assisted learning, etc.). The author frames her inquiry of TECALL through cognition research, an approach that connects beliefs to practice and has its roots in the personal experiences of, and
emotional responses to, individual contexts. Readers curious about the evolution of teacher education in CALL through a sociocultural lens will find a clear and compelling presentation of the literature.

Cutrim Schmid frames her research around seven experienced teachers’ adoption of interactive white boards. She focuses on interactive white boards for two reasons. First, they are relatively new in the language classroom domain with limited research on communicative-based approaches. Second, integration requires mastery of additional technology-based resources. The book will find a broad audience of practitioners with first-hand experience who can relate to the developmental stages involved in mastering this instructional tool.

Part Two, covering Chapters 4 through 7, transitions the reader into the research findings by exploring the participating teachers’ cognitive processes as they integrate interactive white boards, but not before delving into the literature for each component of the TECALL program. At times, this seemed redundant given the literature review in Part One. Regardless, this section should be of greatest interest to the practitioner. Each chapter concludes with reflective questions and suggestions for professional development activities to help teachers draw on personal experiences and to promote reflection on the differences between traditional and technology-enhance teaching environments. These activities are suitable for independent or guided reflective practice with pre- or in-service teachers.

In Chapter 4, Cutrim Schmid explores her role as a teacher educator in supporting teachers’ professional development through a dialogic process of strategic mediation using video-stimulated reflection (VSR). VSR aims to increase awareness of current practice by pairing a guided reflection activity with videos of the individual’s teaching. In one example, a participating teacher acknowledges that she uses a predominately teacher-centered approach with the white boards and shifts to include more learner-centered and communicative tasks. Cutrim Schmid designs the VSR professional development activity as an iterative process because, as she explains, “teacher educators are in a better position to provide strategic mediation when teachers are given multiple opportunities to externalize their emerging understandings of new concepts in the context of actual teaching” (p. 69). It seems intuitive that teachers need multiple opportunities to engage with a new technology, but Cutrim Schmid reinforces this idea by pairing the extended learning experience with expert guidance, or mediation, from the teacher educator. VSR is further explored in Chapter 6 as a tool to foster teachers’ autonomy through self-reflection.

Another key component to the TECALL program involves an extended collaboration between pre- and in-service teachers to develop effective lessons using the new technology. The program includes this activity based on the premise that the pre-service teachers have existing technical skills and current theoretical knowledge that can be complimented by the in-service teachers’ craft knowledge gained from their teaching experience. The practice of expert/novice teacher collaboration is incorporated into the TECALL framework. Chapter 5 concludes with an outline of best-practices to implement a collaborative project between
teachers to promote learning – an outline worthy of a close-read for those involved with practicums or co-teaching.

Chapter 7 addresses the final component of the TECALL program, which consists of a series of ten workshops throughout the lifecycle of the project whereby the participants learn about the technical and pedagogical aspects of the interactive white board within the language teaching domain. Cutrim Schmid analyzes the peer-to-peer interactions during the workshop sessions and provides evidence that these interactions promote learning through dialogic scaffolding. The book includes a descriptive overview of the professional development workshop series along with specific design features to support peer collaboration. Teacher educators delivering professional development workshops targeting interactive white boards or similar technology tools will find this section practical.

Part Three summarizes the main research findings and outlines implications for future TECALL initiatives. Cutrim Schmid concludes with five key principles to inform the design, implementation, and evaluation of CALL professional development programs, to include the following: 1) a sound theoretical base for teaching practice; 2) the embedding of professional development within the teachers’ classroom contexts; 3) the inclusion of reflective practice; 4) opportunities for peer collaboration; and 5) ongoing professional development support. The framework underscores the critical role of reflection in reducing the gap between beliefs and practice.

The thoughtful adoption of models to local contexts requires thought. At several points in the book, I was left thinking about the extensive resources invested in supporting the participating teachers’ development for this one teaching tool: multiple recordings of classroom instruction for VSR, the professional development workshops, the pre-service teacher practicum, and the tailored consulting. The author freely acknowledges the challenges to ongoing CALL professional development outside of a structured context (in this case a research project) and identifies the need to investigate strategies that promote sustainable TECALL programs, perhaps through peer collaboration. By the end of the book, the reader is fully cognizant of the shortcomings of one-off CALL professional development workshops. Successful TECALL programs allow expert educators to provide continuous support because teachers pursue unique developmental paths when adopting CALL pedagogical practices according to their context, beliefs, prior knowledge, and experience. The strength of Teacher Education in Computer-Assisted Language Learning: A Sociocultural and Linguistic Perspective is the presentation of the model, its theoretical underpinnings, and the findings, all in clear detail. Practitioners can select any of the approaches to explore further with consideration to their local constraints – a takeaway that nicely mirrors the core research findings in support of situated learning.