

Dear Reviewer,

Thank you for your interest in writing a Learning Technology Review for the *CALICO Journal* (CJ). If you have been invited to review a particular resource, you will find information below to guide you in writing your review, which you will notice is divided into a General Description (1/3 of the review) and Evaluation (2/3 of the review). We encourage you to read published reviews in the journal's open-access archives before submission (<http://www.equinoxpub.com/CALICO>). Note that contextualizing your review within a broader discussion of language learning is key, meaning that references should be included and are particularly useful in the Evaluation section.

Your review should be no more than 3,000 words (including all text, references, entire review, bio statement) and with 3-4 figures. For figures, please include them on separate pages at the end of your review, but refer to them in the text of your review (e.g., Figure 1). For each figure, be sure to introduce it in the text; either before or after the figure, discuss what you would like readers to notice in the image. For the figure caption, use descriptive language that focuses readers' attention on key features. You can also include text boxes and arrows in the figures to guide readers' attention. For screen captures and all images, capture the highest resolution and quality image as possible. Provide all figures again as separate files; for formats, consult the general Guidelines for Submission document.

Please do not include an abstract in your review. The keywords need to pertain to the learning technology resource or tool.

If you have any questions, please contact the Learning Technology Review Editor, Catherine Caws ([ccaws@uvic.ca](mailto:ccaws@uvic.ca)).

## Learning Technology Review Outline

Name of product:

Name of reviewer and affiliation:

### PRODUCT AT A GLANCE

(Note: Please fill out the table below in point form summary and only cover applicable points.)

<b>Product Type</b>	(e.g., app, resource, tutorial, game, simulation, concordancer, facilitative tool, assessment, instructional management, authoring, devices)
<b>Language(s)</b>	
<b>Level</b>	(beginning, intermediate, advanced; child, adolescent, adult)
<b>Activities</b>	(e.g., games; database building; multiple choice, fill-in exercises; interactivity; pronunciation, dialog repetition; listening comprehension; transcription; vocabulary learning or reading)
<b>Media Format</b>	(e.g., online accessibility, app, download, DVD/CD)
<b>Operating System(s)</b>	Operating systems, browsers, mobile devices
<b>Hardware Requirements</b>	(CPU) (x speed) (e.g., sound card, microphone) (e.g., x colors; screen resolution)
<b>Supplementary Software or Hardware</b>	(e.g., QuickTime, ver. x; WWW browser, ver. x, Plugins; gesture-based or touch screen devices)
<b>Documentation</b>	(e.g., User's Guide, Teacher's Guide)
<b>Price</b>	(Single user, Multiple copies, Site license, Distribution Rights)

### General description (one third of review)

In this section, please describe in paragraph form:

- Summary of features
- Background information
- Advertising claims, previous reviews
- Documentation: On-line help, printed manuals

## **Evaluation (two thirds of review)**

### **Technological features**

In this section, please discuss in paragraph form:

- Simplicity of installation or access (e.g., adequacy of instructions, trouble free, easy to uninstall)
- Speed of program, tool, or resource operation (e.g., where are the delays: at startup, loading videos, web page loading?)
- Reliability of operation (crashes & stalls)
- Platform compatibility (PC/Mac; OS/Browser versions; mobile devices)
- Screen management (esthetics, navigational transparency)
- User interface (ease of use, operational consistency, online help)
- Exploitation of computer potential (effective use of technology such as speech recognition, speech synthesis, intelligent response handling, student record keeping, adaptability based on user profiles, www connectivity, sound, graphics, video, etc.).

### **Pedagogical or authoring features**

This is essentially a matter of determining and evaluating what students, teachers, or materials developers do when they use the program/resource/tool, and how well it is designed. Judgments here must always be made relative to activity type. You may be personally opposed, for example, to the use of structuralist grammar exercises, but, in evaluating these, you cannot criticize them for not being collaborative in nature. You have to judge such exercises relative to how well done they are as a structuralist activity. (The appropriateness of activities is a separate issue, dealt with under Teacher Fit). Broadly speaking, activities that are provided in the software/tool or could be created by authoring tools can be classified into these major types:

1. Instructional (e.g., tutorials, videos, drills, text reconstruction, speaking)
2. Facilitative (e.g., dictionary, database, verb conjugator, spell/grammar checker, authoring system)
3. Collaborative (e.g., games, simulations, discussion forums, peer group writing)
4. Interactive (e.g., speech recognition, interactive video, interactive or wearable technologies)

For authoring tools, the review in this section may need to discuss the resource from both the materials developer/teacher's point of view and the learner's experience.

Obvious activity features to consider are

- Linguistic focus (e.g., discourse, syntax, lexis, morphology, spelling, pronunciation)
- Language skills (e.g., reading, listening, writing, speaking, translating, summarizing)
- Pragmatic focus (e.g., information gathering, authentic tasks)
- Cultural focus (e.g., literature, film, pop culture, daily life, cultural history)
- Supplementary/Complementary/Central relationship to the curriculum

### **Teacher/materials developer fit (approach)**

An assessment of teacher fit primarily involves looking at the theoretical underpinnings of student activities in the program, and judging how well they conform to accepted theories of cognitive development, second language acquisition, classroom methodology, and current learning technology expectations. A materials-developer fit examines how well a tool allows a developer to create materials that align with their pedagogical vision. The review also discusses technological skills teachers likely need to optimally use the resource, the time likely required for materials creation, or the amount of creativity they can apply. How flexible and adaptable is the resource and to what extent can it be modified by the by the instructor?

Referring to relevant theories or findings from the literature adds depth and critical thinking to this section. Including the linguistic accuracy (e.g., grammaticality, authenticity, typos, etc.) and the appropriateness of sociocultural representations (e.g., stereotypes, gender bias) also contribute to how well a program, tool, or resource meets teacher expectations.

Teacher fit is the most critical parameter of the evaluation, for it determines the pedagogical soundness and appropriateness of the program or the material/activities that can be developed. No matter how technically brilliant a program may be or how rich the activities it provides, if its methodology is dubious, if it fails to adhere to its avowed instructional approach, or if it pays insufficient attention to linguistic accuracy or sociocultural authenticity, then it will be of limited usefulness.

Not surprisingly, the assessment of teacher fit is the most difficult parameter to determine. Partly, this is because developers do not always explicitly state the theoretical/methodological assumptions underlying their program/tool/resource, thereby obliging a reviewer to extract them by implication. On the other side of the coin, producers are very much aware of what methodological approaches are currently in favor (e.g., communicative, learner centered, constructivist, experiential, post-method) and label their products accordingly, whatever the truth of the matter may be.

### **Learner fit (design)**

In considering learner fit, you are in essence defining the intended user of the program, tool, or resource. In doing so, you are also determining the extent to which it is appropriate for, or can be adapted to, the needs of particular kinds of students. Properties affecting learner fit include:

- Linguistic level (e.g., in grammar and vocabulary) and its adaptability and expandability
- Response handling (e.g., error correction, feedback, instructional guidance)
- Adaptation to individual learner differences and different contexts (e.g., age, interests, learning goals, LSP, heritage language learning)
- Learning styles (e.g., field-dependent/ -independent learning, deductive/ inductive reasoning) and strategies (e.g., monitoring, rehearsing, planning, repetition)
- Individual/Group work
- Learner control (e.g., sequencing, content, operating parameters)

If any usability testing has been conducted with the program/tool/resource, then discussing it here would be appropriate.

## **Summary**

Briefly summarize your review, focusing on the main take-away points.

## **References**

References should adhere to the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, 6th ed. (2009).

## **Producer details**

Developer/distributor

Address

Contact information: Phone, Email

URL

## **Reviewer information**

Biodata (50 words) and email

## **Figures**

Please include figures at the end of your review, but refer to them in the review (e.g., Figure 1).