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# **An Attempt to Describe The Impact of Using Computer Technology on Learning General Culture**

**A case study of the first year students at  
the department of English, University of Batna -  
Algeria-**

*A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for  
The degree of “Magister” in Language and Civilization at Biskra University*

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## **DEDICATION**

This work dedicated to my dear parents, **Mr. LAHOUAL NABIL** and **Mrs. CHELIHI ABLA** for their high skilled instruction during my studies at the lycée.

In loving memory of my grandfather “**MOUSTAFA BENBOULAI**D”

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I also wish to thank all **teachers** and **students** of **Batna** University.

## ABSTRACT

This study aims to highlight and describe the impact of using computer technology on learning General Culture and the possibilities that can be adopted and used to boost and stimulate students for an effective learning; the subjects of the study are the students of first year at the department of English, Batna University.

In the process of researching and writing this dissertation, we have conducted a literature search based on the descriptive method and results interpretation which have been carried by the submitted questionnaire and interview.

The work is divided into two parts;

The first one is the literature review that understands three chapters respectively dealing with:

- The definition of computer technology, its component and the operating systems;
- The description of the syllabus of general culture and the choice of the module as a case study;
- The approach of computer assisted learning to support general culture learning, the needed computing skills and the use of the adequate programmes and applications for a better assimilation.

Whereas the second part is a fieldwork study that comprises a chapter

Including:

- Data analysis and interpretation of the obtained results of the questionnaire and the interview submitted to teachers and students, and finally some recommendations and suggestions that might support the goals and objectives of our hypothesis.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CAL	Computer Assisted Learning
CALL	Computer Assisted Language Learning
CAT	Computer Assisted Teaching
CBA	Competency Based Approach
CBL	Computer Based Learning
CBT	Computer Based Teaching
CPU	Central Processing Unit
CT	Computer Technology
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
E-learning	Electronic Learning
ESFL	English as a Second Foreign Language
ESP	English for Specific Purpose
FL	First Language
GC	General Culture
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
OS	Operating System
PC	Personal Computer
SL	Second Language
TOEFL	Test of English as a Second Foreign Language
VDU	Visual Display Unit
VLE	Virtual Learning Environment

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Actually computer technology is integrated as a supporting didactic tool in the majority of the Algerian Universities at the departments of English. This integration not only motivates teachers but also helps them teaching their courses in an enthusiastic way due to the fastness of the computer in transmitting information easily as well as for the fantastic support of the machine's multimedia features that help the learners understand huge amounts of data through audiovisual presentations, illustration and motion in a short period of time.

For first year students of English at Batna University, learning General Culture is very interesting but the variety of this module entails some hurdles in lectures and examinations in terms of retaining or retrieving specific details such as remembering events, dates and names of persons or places.

This kind of situation reflects the learners' boredom and monotony towards modules with vast contents in general and toward General Culture in particular. As an alternative we conducted a study based on a method which encourages the use of computer technology as a supporting tool for students, to assess their capacity of learning General Culture in an optimal way.

We opted for a work which relies on the descriptive method that is highlighting the impact of computer technology on learning General Culture. The result of this study is interpreted by the interaction of the learners and the teacher through and with computer technology as a means of communication and a research medium, as well as gauging their computing skills which are the prerequisite for better understanding of the module of General Culture.

Our sample comprises one hundred (100) students divided into five groups of twenty students chosen randomly among first year students of English at Batna University -Algeria-

## **1. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Most students find themselves unmotivated toward learning materials with vast contents, particularly first year students of English at Batna University when learning General Culture. They always face hurdles during lectures in terms of information largeness that soon lead them to a feeling of boredom and lack of interest.

## **2. HYPOTHESIS**

Nowadays Computer technology is considered as a motivating tool. We suppose this can be a way-out for students to learn better.

**Effective learning of General Culture may be better achieved if computer assisted learning is used as a supporting means by first year students of English at Batna University.**

### **3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The main objectives of the study are:

- A.** To assess students' level of comprehension of General Culture and the way computer technology may encourage and motivate them to learn efficiently;
  
- B.** To help students acquire the needed information technology skills (IT skills) which are indispensable for handling functions of personal computer for learning;
  
- C.** To compare the teachers' behaviour towards the use of Computer technology in assisting lectures with the traditional teaching method.

## **4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN**

### **4.1. Choice of the method**

We believe that the descriptive method would be more adequate for this research;

We have chosen this method because the work is mainly based on definitions, descriptions and comparison; moreover, the objective of this study aims to highlight the impact of Computer Technology, as long as the research aims at generalising from a sample of subject to a whole population of subject, and of course the study intends to be rigorous in the control of variables. We have to mention that experimentation is possible to be carried out.

## **4.2. Subjects of the study**

To obtain information regarding the use of computer technology at Batna University, department of English, we will deal with a sample of one hundred students chosen randomly from the following population:

-The first year students of English, department of English, (100 students)

Batna University, because it is difficult to work on the whole population (approx. 450 students), randomisation was the strategy to choose the sample:

“each individual in the population must have an equal chance of being selected” Brown (2001:72), which reduce the effect of bias and improve objectivity.

-Five (05) Teachers of General Culture at the department of English, University of Batna



### **4.3. Data gathering tools**

For this research, we utilised the questionnaire and the interview because they are the most important tools to gather and collect a considerable amount of data with a minimum of time and effort as well as for their usefulness to provide a clear view of the investigated problem, but at the same time they are not always reliable tools of search: complacency, telling lies to please the teacher researcher are noticed. Students' will of cooperation is the most important factor.

# **Part One: Theoretical Aspect**

## **Chapter One: OVERVIEW OF COMPUTER**

### **TECHNOLOGY**

#### ***INTRODUCTION***

#### **I.1. DEFINITION OF COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY**

##### **I.1.1. A BRIEF HISTORY OF COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY**

##### **I.1.2. DEFINITION OF HARDWARE**

##### **I.1.3. DEFINITION OF SOFTWARE**

#### **I.2. DESCRIPTION OF THE EXISTING OPERATING SYSTEMS**

#### **I.3. THE NEEDED SKILLS TO USE COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY**

#### ***CONCLUSION***

# **Chapter One: OVERVIEW OF COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY**

## **INTRODUCTION**

In this part we will try to make an overview of the different sorts of computer technology and the appropriate devices that can be used for learning as well as being familiar with some definitions and terms that will be used in the coming chapters. We also will explain the relations and the interaction of the various physical components of the computer technology with the virtual programmes which probably might seem vague due to the complexity of their technical aspect.

## **I.1. DEFINITION OF COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY**

During the last decades the world of technology opened up brand new communication possibilities. Wide range of digital machines supported different domains to optimise the results, this high edged science allowed people to gain time especially for learning.

Among the human's best discoveries was the creation of computer technology; continuous researches, contributions and operating systems updates played a crucial role in making the digital medium accessible for a major category of students and users. According to Raymond Kurzweil computer technology can be perceived as our memory extension.

“A computer can remember billions of facts with extreme precision, whereas we are hard pressed to remember more than a handful of phone numbers”

**(Raymond Kurzweil 1990)**

The involvement of the technology in the academic field gave birth to a new learning and teaching method known as C.A.L (Computer assisted learning). Widely used in the developed countries this new learning approach was adopted in all universities to motivate students for a better knowledge acquisition, with a rich variety of technological devices that are recommended by hardware and software developers with some specific programmes, electronic dictionaries, desktop computers or laptops or some basic components as data show, digital screen caption, scanners or digital video and audio recorders and players.

### **I.1.1. A BRIEF HISTORY OF COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY**

Computer technology means a programmable machine with a two principle characteristics: hardware and software.

The first teaching machine was invented (1934) by Sydney L. Pressey, but it was not until the 1950s that practical methods of programming were developed. Programmed instruction was reintroduced (1954) by B. F. Skinner Harvard University and much of the system is based on his theory of the nature of learning. As programming technology developed, so did the range of teaching machines and other programmed instruction materials (Columbia encyclopaedia).

### **I.1.2. DEFINITION OF HARDWARE**

The word “hardware” stands for a set of electronic components that comprises a computer case with power supply, a motherboard, a processor with a heat sink and fan, a memory card, a mass storage device, a keyboard and mouse for input and of course a monitor for output.

The motherboard or mainboard is the primary circuit board within a personal computer. Many other components connect directly or indirectly to

the motherboard. Motherboards usually contain one or more CPUs, supporting circuitry like the central processing unit (CPU), is that part of a computer which executes software program instructions temporarily.

A PC's main memory or also called the primary store, is a fast storage that is directly accessible by the CPU, and is used to store the currently executing program and immediately needed data whether mass storage device or hard drive stores programs and data permanently even when the power is off; they do require power to perform read/write functions during usage.

The video card - otherwise called a graphics card, graphics adapter or video adapter - processes and renders the graphics output from the computer to the computer display, also called the visual display unit (VDU), and is an essential part of the computer.

### **I.1.3. DEFINITION OF SOFTWARE**

“Software” is a term for the different kinds of programs used to operate computers and related devices.

Technically, “software” stands for a set of applications and programmes that run through “hardware” (electronic components), it is called as such because it has a virtual activity that needs an electronic container to perform a task.

Generally “Software” is the binary language which consists of instructions that tell the computer what to do and how to behave through the already stored or pre-stored digital codes to finally have the possibility to use the computer technology for a general or a specific need.

The domain of software is divided into two main fields, the operating systems and the programs/applications (The terms "application" and "application program" are synonymous). “Systems software” includes the operating system and all the utilities that enable the computer to function;



“applications software” includes programs that allow users perform tasks like word processing, calculation and digital manipulation either for the sound or the image.

We can understand from the above definition that the field of software understands two distinct categories, a primary one that rules the secondary one , in other terms it is a programme on a programme.

We can take the example of “WINDOW XP” which is an operating system that its installation on a PC is crucial to use the rest of the programmes like Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint and so one and so fourth.

## **I.2. DESCRIPTION OF THE EXISTING OPERATING SYSTEMS**

Nowadays, the use of the computer is world wide spread, but the use of the machine might vary from a user to another in terms of operating systems choice.

The most known Operating System is probably “WINDOWS” and its ameliorated versions that offer a wide range of programmes easy to be used even for beginners due to the graphical facilities; whether “MacOS” is only designed for a special computer called “Macintosh” and can not be installed on a common machine, more powerful and fast but with poor graphical interface and very expensive when compared to Windows.

The two giants occupied for years the world software market monopoly and their operating systems were full of restriction. This case does not last for long, after a digital awakening some researchers encouraged and

contributed to the creation of the so called “open source software”, which mostly is charge free, allowing users to use, change, improve and distribute.

The success story started with “LINUX” and its versions; it was initially developed by “Linus Benedict Torvalds” a second year student of computer science at the University of Helsinki, and then ameliorated by Richard Stallman (the father of the GNU project). Later public involvement open up a new horizon for more efficient operating systems depending on the specific need. For an arbitrariness matters, the choice of the operating system is directly related to the task or the work that the users want to perform.

### **I.3. THE NEEDED SKILLS TO USE COMPUTER TECHNOLOGY**

Actually in Algeria C.A.L.L centers (computer assisted language learning) are being installed across the majority of the universities, but for many students and teachers the use of this kind of support necessitate

a complete pedagogical program to help them mastering basic function of such a means since familiarity does not equal proficiency.

“Schools and teachers are asked to integrate Information and Communication Technology (ICTs) in their everyday practice. It is often argued that technology in education will make schools more productive and efficient, will improve teaching and learning, will provide authentic and engaging learning experiences, and will better prepare students for the workforce”

**(Brown, 2001)**

Both teachers and students that possessed computing skills do not know how to apply these skills in learning and teaching situation. According to the American Web-Based Education Commission they mentioned that

training helps teachers transform lifeless equipment into useful tools. Creating high-tech educational tools without training teachers to use them would be as useless as creating a new generation of planes without training pilots to fly them.

“...We must train the nation’s teachers—and the principals and administrators who lead them—or investments in high-tech educational resources will be wasted...”

Teachers are the key to effective use of web-based tools and applications, but first they must become skilled at using them. It is the teacher, after all, who guides instruction and shapes the instructional context in which the Internet and other technologies are used. It is a teacher’s skill at this, more than any other factor that determines the degree to which students learn from their computing and Internet experiences.

Teachers must be comfortable with technology, able to apply it appropriately, and conversant with new technological tools, resources, and approaches. If all the pieces are put into place, teachers should find that they are empowered to advance their own professional skills through these tools, as well.

We have to precise that the key strength of a successful academic results is firstly a good teaching to achieve better learning; thus training the trainers in terms of computing remains very important.

As mentioned in this citation “Technology is just a tool. In terms of getting the learners working together and motivating them, the teacher is the most important.”

**(Bill Gates 1999) American Businessman Quotes**

## ***CONCLUSION***

In this chapter we highlighted the general definitions of the computer technology and clarified some terms that are slightly obscure for the reader as well as discussed the needed computing skills for both teachers and students for using the tool in an adequate way for a better learning. This chapter also helps to understand the forthcoming chapters. We also stated objectives for both learners and teachers that must be followed since computer technology is actually the most important tool where education tremendously lies on.

## **Chapter Two: LEARNING GENERAL CULTURE**

### ***INTRODUCTION***

#### **II.1. THE CHOICE OF GENERAL CULTURE**

#### **II.2 THE SYLLABUS OF GENERAL CULTURE IN THE ALGERIAN UNIVERSITIES**

#### **II.3. THE SITUATION OF THE MODULE AT THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH BATNA UNIVERSITY**

#### **II.4 HOW CAN GENERAL CULTURE BE BETTER LEARNT?**

### ***CONCLUSION***



## **INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter we will expose the ideas that pushed our thoughts for choosing the module of general culture; we will also describe the situation and the way this former is being taught in the Algerian Universities in general, and at the department of English, Batna University in particular.

### **II.1. THE CHOICE OF GENERAL CULTURE**

Our choice of General Culture as subject study was chosen for purpose, its content understands a wide range of topics including history, literature, civilisation, mythology and miscellaneous information.

General culture is known to be the field of general knowledge which everything can be taught or learnt from, but in the Algerian English Licence programme, general culture is taught as a full time course with 60 hours a

year including civilisations courses; “Teaching civilisation in general implies the teaching of certain disciplines. The boundaries of this field are clumsy and unskilfully limited” **(Martinez 1996:102)**

We understand from Martinez quotation that teaching civilisation require other supportive materials to aid in instruction since the field of civilisation is limited in terms of information update but paradoxically very large in its content, this is why he recommended the instruction of other disciplines.

The variety of this module needs an appropriate teaching approach to support teachers during their courses, firstly to reduce the hurdle which students suffer from in terms of lecture comprehension, information retrieval whether during classroom sessions or examinations because modules that include large information require longer course sessions; “The objectives

have been set for him and he has only a fixed, and often inadequate, amount of time to reach the objectives...” (D.A. Wilkins, 1974, p 44).

According to D.A Wilkins statement, the allotted time for the instruction is not sufficient to aid students understand lectures with large contents, especially in the field of civilisation. Hence our preference of opting for General Culture as a part of the investigation has not been randomly chosen, the intention is the use of computer technology as a supportive tool to both teachers and students

through its fastness in terms of multimedia features to optimise learning and teaching procedures; “Educational instruction by means of materials that use the senses of sight and hearing stimulate and enrich learning experiences”

**(Hawkrige 1983)**

Hawkridge as well encouraged learners and teachers to use materials that use multimedia features to stimulate and enrich learning and teaching, because the use of such a media increasingly enhances the learners' capacity of understanding modules with vast amount of information.

## **II.2 THE SYLLABUS OF GENERAL CULTURE IN THE ALGERIAN UNIVERSITIES**

We must precise that the module of general culture is taught differently across the Algerian universities, in Constantine for instance, the module is an introduction to civilisations mainly British and American with some Greek and Roman Mythology, while in Algiers it is taught as a course that combines oral expression exercises and some computing elementary principles.

We notice that the general culture, as its name indicates, is not a specific module but a module where all domains can be taught or learnt through, hence the syllabus' contents of such a course might seem easy to

learn since it is an overview including some definitions and general information, but in reality students of English at Batna University, department of English are experiencing the contrary, we also have to precise that the main hurdle is their weak language mastery.

As mentioned above, the syllabus of General Culture is taught differently from a University to another, the contents of this module are slightly different but the courses are dealing with the same topics that were designed by the Algerian Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific research.

### **II.3. THE SITUATION OF THE MODULE AT THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH BATNA UNIVERSITY**

Since my experience as a teacher of General Culture at Batna University, I can describe the situation of this latter at the department of English in details in terms of syllabus design, teaching methods and time allocation. The allotted time does not exceed 60 hours a year, which

represents a major obstacle for teachers, because first year students of English, as mentioned in the previous section, do not master English language to that extent they can learn courses, thus, teachers find themselves teaching additional data such as grammar or vocabulary instead of teaching General Culture thoroughly.

Moreover, English language in Algeria is the second foreign language after the French language, and this order may vary depending on persons whom mother tongue is not Arabic the main concerned population are principally the Berber students.

It is not only the case of students at Batna University but also the case of other students in the Algerian Universities like, Algiers, Tizi-Ouzou, Oum el Bouaghi, Batna, Khenchla, Bejaia, Blida, Sétif and Biskra.

At first glance the programme of General Culture seems short, but the contents of this module are much varied as the word general point to. Updated materials are continuously added to the programme and the teacher must adapt himself or herself to this situation. Computer technology

integration in the Algerian Universities is the perfect example that demonstrates both students and teachers need to acquire computing skill, at least to be familiarised with this new learning tool, but in Algeria such a strategy require some measures to be followed and the most important one is the linguistic aspect that constitutes a primary objective that must be reached since the priority at the department of English is, first of all, learning English language.

#### **II.4 LEARNING ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN ALGERIA**

The process of learning English language in Algeria may vary from a region to another due to language interference, Berber populations for instance acquire this language differently because the position of English depends on the languages which have been previously learnt or mastered, and hence the order can switch to: Berber, Arabic, French, English.

Learning English language with digital media enables students to have highly customized learning experiences based on their background, individual talents, age level, cognitive style, interpersonal preferences.

"What I see as the real contribution of digital media to education is a flexibility that could allow every individual to discover their own personal paths to learning. This will make it possible for the dream of every progressive educator to come true: In the learning environment of the future, every learner will be 'special.'"

**(Papert 1997)**

Learning English language in Algeria might be a third foreign language because Arabic can be the first foreign language and not as mother tongue.

This is why we ought to know the ethnic origins or the cultural background of the students to choose the adequate teaching and learning methodology because learners usually learn the sounds and vocabulary of their native language through imitation while in a foreign language, learning is a superficial and often based on language association and translation.

“Learners are able to acquire a particular language because all intelligible languages are founded on a “deep structure” of



grammatical rules that are universal and that correspond to an innate capacity of the human brain”.

**(Noam Chomsky 1986)**

According to Noam Chomsky’s view we understand that stages in the acquisition of a native language can be measured by the increasing complexity and originality of a learner’s utterances. Students learning a foreign language may overgeneralise grammatical rules and say, for example, “goed” instead of went, and this kind of error is common for first year students of English at Batna University.

Students learning a foreign language pass through some of the same stages, including overgeneralisation, as learning their native language. However, learners rarely become as fluent in a foreign language as in their native tongue.

The cognitive approach, increasingly encouraged by experts in language acquisition, emphasises conversation, immersion, and other

techniques intended to simulate the environment in which most students acquire a foreign language.

## **CONCLUSION**

We have described in this chapter our choice of General Culture as a subject of study and the situation of this module in the Algerians Universities in general and at Batna University in particular, we also highlighted the students' strengths and weaknesses toward English language and its mastery as well as focusing on the major obstacle that often lead students to academic failure and which is the linguistic constraint.

# **Chapter Three: COMPUTER ASSISTED LEARNING OF GENERAL CULTURE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **III.1. COMPUTER ASSISTED LEARNING**

### **III.2. APPLICATIONS AND PROGRAMMES USED IN COMPUTER ASSISTED LEARNING**

### **III.3. E-LEARNING AND INTERNET IN THE ALGERIAN UNIVERSITIES**

### **III.4. SITUATION OF COMPUTER ASSISTED LEARNING AT BATNA UNIVERSITY**

### **III.3 COMPUTER ASSISTED LEARNING VS CLASSIC LEARNING**

#### **III.3.1. ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF THE COMPUTER ASSISTED LEARNING**

## **CONCLUSION**

## **Chapter Three: COMPUTER ASSISTED LEARNING OF GENERAL CULTURE**

### ***INTRODUCTION***

In this section we will identify the role that plays computer technology in supporting both teachers and students in teaching and learning situation. We also will describe the use of internet in the Algerian universities and discuss the future project of e-learning and the worldwide collaboration.

### **III.1. COMPUTER ASSISTED LEARNING**

Computer-assisted learning (CAL) is an approach to language teaching and learning in which computer technology is used as an aid to the presentation, reinforcement and assessment of the material that will be learnt,

usually including a substantial interactive element involving the instructor and the learner.

“Computer assisted learning for teachers and students, opens a way to a new, more powerful and effective learning. A pedagogical switch, from teacher-centred to learner-centred education. Pedagogy had to do with optimising the transmission of the information. What we now find is that learners don't want optimised, pre-digested information. They want to learn by doing-where they synthesise their own understanding-usually based on trying things out”

**(John Seely Brown)**

According to John Seely Brown statement, the digital explosion not only played a crucial role in the development of new learning and teaching techniques but also opened the way for new communicative possibilities to

both teachers and students, whose behaviors have slightly switched from teacher-centred to learner-centred education.

The example is clearly revealed in The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language: 4th Edition.2000 with the word “Edutainment” which means the act of learning through a medium that both educates and entertains through any of various media, such as computer software, that educate and entertain.

Etymologically “edutainment” is a combination of:

(Edu) cation + enter (tainment)

The computer assisted learning gave birth to a brand-new teaching and learning technique, for many learners it is seen as an academic renaissance where education has joint fun, and of course when it is fun, learning is likely to become an entertainment.

The outcomes not only advantage students but also teachers because of their position as the first frontline in making this new approach achieve best. The aid of such technology allow for gaining time whether for the course presentation or during exposes and researches.

It is widely shown that most of universities handle majority of their examinations with computer technology, for instance, the exam of T.O.E.F.L. (Test of English as a foreign language), actually, relies on two methods:

- An electronic one involving the PC's as a main tool that facilitates the examination's procedures and allows even disabled students participating and neglecting their handicap;
- The second is a paper-based one which relies on the traditional and classic method of examining and testing.

## **III.2. APPLICATIONS AND PROGRAMMES USED IN COMPUTER ASSISTED LEARNING**

C.A.L.L centres in Algeria are integrated gradually in the universities, and the most known programme that supports the C.A.L.L. centre is “info-lab” which involves both teacher and learner through an audiovisual interaction. This software enables teachers to design drills, quizzes, exercises and courses, as well as emphasising their course presentation. This software also has a multitask features, after being installed on all the stations we need to create an account through the server that commands the rest of the machines which will be used by the teacher whereas client accounts will be used by the learners, this kind of installation works only through a networked connection since the aim of such technology is mainly for communication and interaction.

Among other programmes used for teaching and learning we can mention the well known Microsoft office family like: Word which is mostly



used for word processing and PowerPoint which is the most efficient tool for presentation, and of course the Flash software which opens brand new possibilities for teacher/learners in terms of interactivity.

Once again we must precise that computer technology can not replace the teacher; it will only accentuate his communication skills as well as helping students gain significant time for efficient learning outcome.

### **III.3. E-LEARNING AND INTERNET IN THE ALGERIAN UNIVERSITIES**

E-learning means learning in an environment where computer capabilities are enhanced, the letter “E” stands for electronic since the process of learning or teaching lies on a computer technology interface rather than paper based.

E-learning became a wide spread phenomenon it allowed the exploitation of multiple technologies that are involved in the most known distance learning.

This brand new learning environment is mainly characterised by efficiency in knowledge acquisition which is considered as a revolutionary approach that encourages learning through internet access regardless of their places or position and allowing them attending courses away from the actual traditional classroom or amphitheatre moreover it gives the possibility for disabled and handicapped persons to learn in an equal opportunity.

E-learning emerged at the same time that computer was developed. On the one hand, we can consider this approach as a simple updated version of the classic correspondence courses. On the other hand, the improvements in computing and internet in the last decades made this method of distance learning popular. Meanwhile several types of educational programs were designed especially for this new learning medium.

Indeed E-learning and distance learning are quite the same things but we can slightly distinguish some differences in term of instruction attendance, for instance the separation of the student from the instructor and the class room is seen as correspondence whereas E-learning is part of the classroom environment.

Nowadays personal computers are gradually becoming more and more available, the initiative of our ministry of higher education and scientific research in integrating computer assisted learning in the classes is a tremendous will due to all the outcomes that will be generated through such integration.

Except the university of Telemcen that encouraged students at the department of English through an experimental courses that enabled audiovisual conferences and cooperation with American universities, E-learning in Algerian universities is unfortunately quasi inexistent. It is the bitter reality but still the features of this distance learning have opened the

way to aid, instruct and test learners all over the world despite the geographical constraints.

#### **III.4. SITUATION OF COMPUTER ASSISTED LEARNING AT BATNA UNIVERSITY**

Actually at the department of English, University of Batna, students have the opportunity for achieving better learning if they adapt themselves to the new technique which is computer assisted learning. The use of the technology is simple since it is an electronic communication that enhances the relation teacher/learners which include asynchronous platforms such as email, forums and discussion boards, and synchronous such as real time conference or presentation which can avoid the situation of the unanswered question whether for the time limit during lectures or the teacher's lack of resources.

The use of Computer assisted learning in Batna University may appeal to students for the relative lack of formality it also allow them have wide

choice while completing their learning activities since the formal aspect of the classroom is bypassed, majority of the students will have the chance to participate during lecture sessions without being interrupted by the most active ones.

### **III.3 COMPUTER ASSISTED LEARNING VS CLASSIC LEARNING**

Many views diverged on the idea of adopting the use of a machine such as computer technology capable of assisting teaching and motivating learning but the concept was countered by the resistance of the traditionalists within the education field. Some of them were affirming that the values of education rely only on the teacher as an essential backbone of the educational process and not on the machine as primary element of teaching.

This confrontation created some speculations that led the early degrees being considered inferior to traditionally obtained degrees, which is entirely erroneous. This Kind of academic discrimination does not lasted for a long period; in recent years this has changed considerably. The advance in

computing and the over-generalisation of the technology and the possibility to create virtual classrooms and a virtual learning environment (VLE) have progressively wrecked this no-sense resistance.

The scholar Sidney L. Pressey was the predictor of such a digital advance he was among the pioneers of this awakening, his efforts on the promotion of the teaching machine lead him to blame the educational system to not encourage a research involving the designing of a machine which let students drill and test themselves; he mentioned that educators failed to grasp the value of automating the processes of teaching and learning.

Nevertheless, Pressey's passionate commitment to automating education remained firm, and his vision of the school of tomorrow unchanged he predicted:

"Within the next twenty years, special mechanical aids will make mass psychological experimentation commonplace and bring about in education something analogous to the Industrial Revolution...There must be an "industrial revolution" in education in which educational science and the

ingenuity of educational technology combine to modernize the grossly inefficient and clumsy procedures of conventional education." (**Sidney L. Pressey 1924**)

There are some obstacles to overcome said Stephen Petrina:

"The intellectual inertia and conservatism of educators who regard such ideas as freakish or absurd, or rant about the mechanization of education..."

(**Stephen Petrina 46:4, 503–531**)

### **III.3.1. ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF THE COMPUTER ASSISTED LEARNING**

According to Seymour Papert education based on instruction deprives from discovering which may turn learners unmotivated towards pre-digested information.

"The scandal of education is that every time you teach something, you deprive a child of the pleasure and benefit of discovery"

(Papert, p. 68)

Computer based learning can be the supporting didactic tool to more efficient classroom procedure and increase conventional teaching methods.

According to Don Tapscott, Computer Assisted Learning generated eight shifts in education;

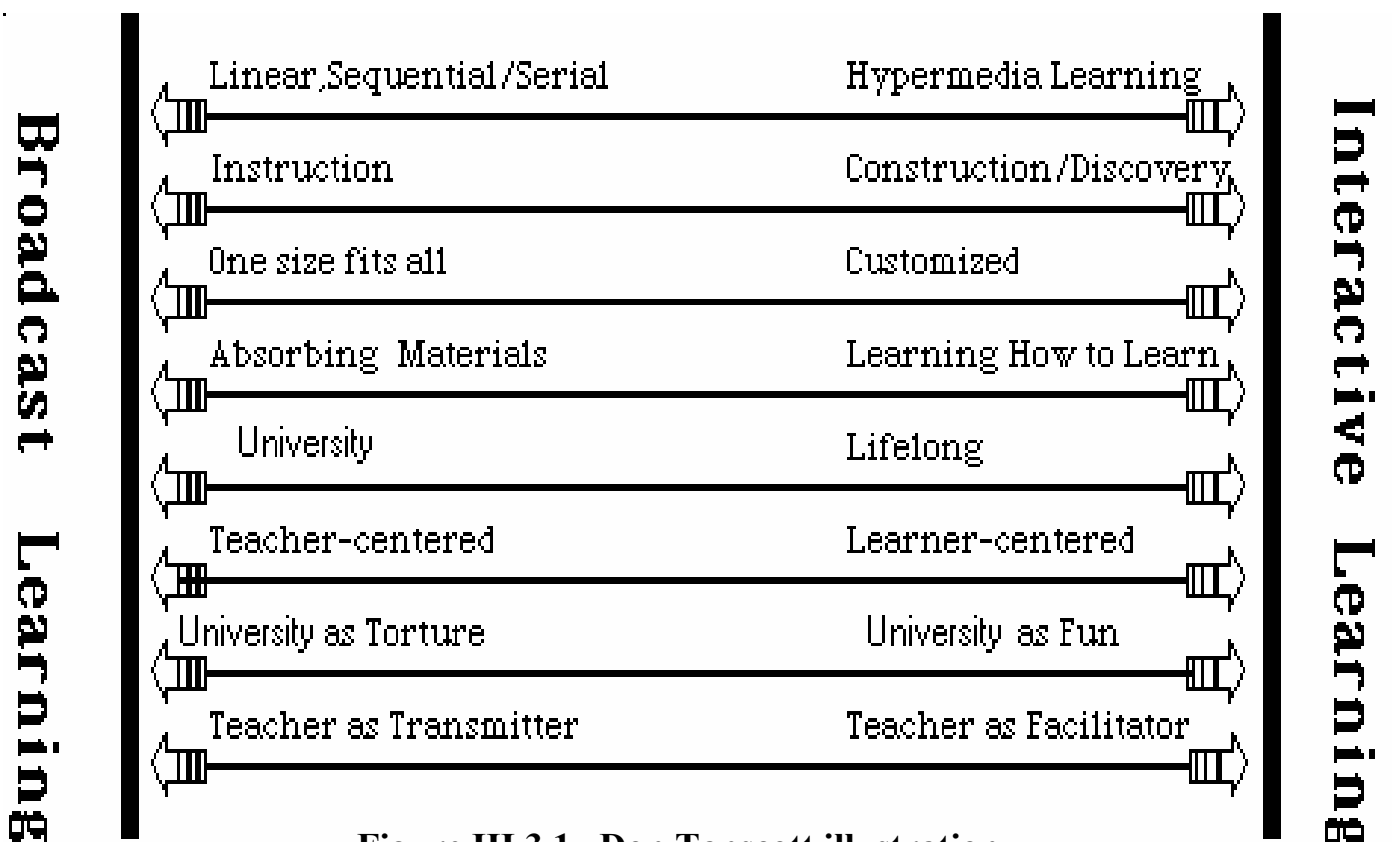


Figure III.3.1. Don Tapscott illustration



## **1. From linear to hypermedia learning**

Traditional approaches to learning are linear. Books, novels, texts are linear as well and most textbooks are written to be tackled from the beginning to the end;

## **2. From instruction to construction and discovery**

Universities can become a place to learn, rather than a place to teach. Optimising the transmission of the information is more interesting to students than assimilating pre-digested information. Learning environments are designed by teachers and also can be designed whether in partnership with the learners or by the learners themselves. This approach is described by instructors as the constructivist approach.

Constructionists argue that people learn best by doing rather than simply being told. The evidence for constructionism is credible. The enthusiasm that learners have for a fact or concept they discovered on their

own is much more likely to be meaningful and retained than the same fact simply written out on the teacher's blackboard;

### **3. From teacher-centred to learner-centred education**

Digital media enables focusing on individual learning experience rather than on the transmitter. In addition, it is clear that learner-centred education amplifies the students' motivation to learn.

Learning and entertainment can converge. Learner-centred education does not imply the teacher is playing a less important role. A teacher is much valued in learner-centred. For instance, no one would suggest that the best way to play piano is best in the discovery mode except for some gifted persons of course. The new media provides a vehicle to facilitate the learning process more on the student.

Software programs use extensively stimulates students to search, discuss, debate, and even collaborate on projects. Effectively they become more active.

#### **4. From absorbing material to learning how to navigate and how to learn**

Education becomes more interesting with computers, students learn how to synthesise not only analyse and furthermore they can keep information throughout mental images.

Learning how to learn is the newly adopted approach at the universities in the developed countries;

#### **5. From University or school to lifelong learning**

Life is divided into two periods, the first one is when we learn and the second one is when we work. For the new generation of students looking forward to the world of work has changed as well. Today many can expect to reinvent their knowledge base constantly for a wide work opportunity. Learning became the same, continuous and lifelong process.

#### **6. From one-size-fits-all to customised learning**

During the last century, socialist regime encouraged mass education where teaching was quantitative rather than qualitative but nowadays,

universities and colleges are offering more customised and tailored courses for students. The approach is best known as competency based approach.

Papert believes that an appropriate pedagogy for this customised learning will result “Optimal Learning”, this is why the concept of one classroom-fits-all model shared by students and teachers is not adequate to learn efficiently.

He suggested:

"Socialization is not best done by segregating children into classrooms with kids of the same age. The computer is a medium in which what you make lends itself to be modified and shared. When kids get together on a project, there is abundant discussion; they show it to other kids, other kids want to see it, kids learn to share knowledge with other people much more than in the classroom”

**(Papert, 1997)**

## **7. From learning as torture to learning as fun.**

In fact the word torture is an amplification, but for many students attending long sessions is boring and often lead to uninteresting. Teachers who are trying to integrate computer technology as an everyday tool in their classrooms argue that learning and entertainment should be unified to motivate learners, studies become entertainment.

From this point of view, the best entertainer becomes the best teacher. Adopting digital media and teaching software, the student will be taught while he/she is thinking he is entertained and doing so enhances enjoyment, motivation, and learning.

## **8. From the teacher as transmitter to the teacher as facilitator.**

Actually teachers consider computer technology as a facilitator and not as a machine that will replace them whereby learners can be capable to construct their own knowledge. The outcomes of this means are important because students will not only learn but also acquire new skills such as collaborative research, analytic perception, well organised presentation, and

communicative competence. Thus learning would switch from broadcasting to interactivity. The eight shifts of learning according to Don Tapscott are the results of the digital revolution which enhanced the way teachers and learners interact through the use of computer, this high edged technology opened up new possibilities and can be considered as a catalyser to knowledge acquisition, it also revolutionised the instructional techniques and rendered teaching and learning situations much appreciable and turned it form a strict, rigid and formal state to a more flexible, funny and interesting one.

### ***CONCLUSION***

In this chapter we have exposed the differences and the similarities between the traditional and the computer assisted learning as well as discussed the advantages and disadvantages of using such technology in terms of better learning achievement and teaching improvements. We also emphasised the important shifts that computer assisted learning might generate.

# **PART TWO: FIELD WORK**

## **Chapter Four: DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

### *INTRODUCTION*

#### **IV.1. STUDENTS' QUESTIONNAIRE**

#### **IV.2. TEACHER'S INTERVIEW**

### *CONCLUSION*

## **Chapter Four: DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

### ***INTRODUCTION***

This chapter shows in detail the results of our investigation in the field work which was supported by the use of the questionnaire and the interview by both students and teachers at the department of English, Batna University, Algeria, during the academic year 2006/2007. The goal was to know their opinions and attitudes towards the use of computer technology as didactic support to achieve a better learning.

To interpret easily the results we chosen a sample of one hundred (100) students among the population of first year students (450 approx.) , to convert directly and easily to the percentile.



## IV.1. STUDENTS' QUESTIONNAIRE

**Q1: Have you been taught a computing course before entering the university?**

<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>24</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>100 student</b>

**Table IV.1.1 Computer technology skills**

This question tries to guess the students' computing skills to help us identifying those who might see this aid as obstacle due to their unfamiliarity; hence, we had the possibility to offer the same computing facilities to all students and avoid students' uninteresting mood to finally work in a cooperative atmosphere. The table **IV.1.1** shows precisely that the 2/3<sup>rd</sup> of the population never took a computing course which is an alarming reality for graduate students.

**Q2: Have you ever used or have been in touch with computer technology?**

<b>Never</b>	<b>Rarely</b>	<b>Sometimes</b>	<b>Often</b>	<b>Always</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>43</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>100 student</b>

**Table IV.1.2 Computer technology familiarity**

This question was designed to quantify in detail the number of students who either used or not the personal computer; it is also a question to justify the previous one which might allow us having an idea about their computing fluency. The table **IV.1.2** is a detailed indicator that shows the students' computing level, as revealed, the majority are computer illiterate with a percentile of 43%, whether the rest show that they used the technology at least once in their life.

**Q3 Have you conducted an academic research or an expose with the aid of computer or/and internet?**

<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>39</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>100 student</b>

**Table IV.1.3 the use of computer technology for learning**

We submitted this question to target students that have conducted an academic research with computer technology and to encourage them helping those who are trying to acquaint themselves with it. Like the previous results, a high ratio (61%) of first year students shows that they have never used computer technology for learning.

**Q4: How do you find yourself towards handling computer technology?**

<b>Week</b>	<b>Beginner</b>	<b>Intermediate</b>	<b>Advanced</b>	<b>Expert</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>46</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>100 student</b>

**Table IV.1.4 Computer technology experience**

This question might be considered as an indirect question to the previous 2<sup>nd</sup> question (see **IV.1.2.**). The aim of submitting such a question is to guess to what extent participating students are willing to cooperate honestly, it also allow us to have a clear view about their experience in the field of computing. As the table mentions the results are quasi the same when

compared to the table **IV.1.2.** Although we notice a difference of 2% in the case of “expert”, and 13% in the case of “beginners”, probably because students did not made the relation between the questions **IV.1.2.** and **IV.1.4.** .

**Q5: If you have never used computer technology what is/are the reason(s)?**

The results of this question were replied by some answers instead of percentiles; we will cite the most frequent ones

**The technology is still expensive;**

This was the most recurrent answer, indeed we believe that possessing a computer might not be probable because of its expensiveness but we strongly think that the access of such technology is possible in the cybercafé hence the constraint can be bypassed.

**There is no access to such technology were we lived;**

This answer was mostly given by students living in the rural regions where internet access was not doable, we realise that they are hardly associating the

use of computer with the use of internet, we already mentioned in the theoretical part that learning with computer technology does not necessarily require a connection to the world wide web, using some software to learn can be done offline.

**Too complex for us;**

According to us, this argument, initially, is wrong since they have shown their ability to learn and acquire new skills, we should remember that they are students at the University and no more pupils at the middle school.

**We have not the chance to learn how to use computers;**

This answer reflects their fragile familiarity towards using computer to learn, probably their real weakness in computing is not caused by a lack of practice but due to their fear of the complexity of the technology which can be overcome

**We had not the opportunity to practice although we had some computing courses;**

This reply reveals that students who have been taught the computing basics know the theoretical facet of the technology but not the way it must be used appropriately for efficient learning.

**Q6: Have you any difficulty in the following skills:**

<b>Listening</b>	<b>Speaking</b>	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Writing</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>28</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>100 student</b>

**Table IV.1.6 Measuring students' four skills**

This issue was given to students to perceive their level of mastering the well-known “four skills” since English in Algerian universities is taught as a foreign language, we consider that apart from mastering computer skills, there are other existing hurdles that must be overcome, and among them the

linguistic obstacle which is the most important factor in learning and teaching.

The results in the table **IV.1.6** clearly show that majority of students 47% have a significant difficulty to speak thus the most important priority resides in making learners communicate easily. The second constraint is their listening skill which might prevent them from understanding 28% of the whole population's sample. Whether the results of measuring reading and writing skills demonstrate respectively 12 and 13 % . Although it seems less alarming when compared to the listening and speaking, but still it remains a barrier during instruction.

**Q7: As fresh university students, how do you perceive the module of General Culture?**

We had many replies to this question and we noticed it was answered the same way the fifth question of the questionnaire, so we preferred to comment each answer instead of gathering the results in a table



**“It seems interesting”**

This was the first impressions students showed in the beginning of the first semester 2006/2007, it reflects their enthusiasm since it is their first year at the university

**“We are learning many things”**

This response confirms the students’ difficulty of retaining large amounts of information being taught in the module of general culture.

**“It is an introduction to further modules”**

This was the reply of students who are helping themselves with the already graduated ones who share views, documents and courses. This answer was mainly given by motivated students willing to take advantage and advice from the experienced and former graduates.

**“We can not answer, everything is new for us!”**

We believe that students who answered as such are perplex and wondering if the contents of the module of general culture are likely to be similar with things they have studied or seen during their academic path.

**Q8: Do you like the module of General Culture?**

<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Undecided</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>74</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>100 student</b>

**Table IV.1.8 Gauging students' motivation**

Although the question was designed to gauge the students' motivation we keep in mind that the results of the question might be influenced with the lecturer's behaviours and the teaching techniques and approaches adopted during the instruction. 74% of the students have shown interest for the module while 14% are distinctly not enthusiasts, we wanted to know more about their opinions so we asked for the motive that pushed them to say so, the reason was their lack of language mastery. Concerning the 12% of no replies we noticed that the students have some difficulty to participate and communicate, it is a matter of timidity.

**Q9: Are the courses of General Culture easy or hard to understand?**

<b>Hard</b>	<b>Easy</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>58</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100 student</b>

**Table IV.1.9 Evaluating students' understanding**

We chosen this question to have a general overview of the students' level of understanding, it can be considered as reaction to the already taught chapters.

In fact this question is difficult to know the real learners' understanding but we think that the answer would reveal at least their self assessment. We can see that 58% of the population's sample think have some difficulties to understand the courses of general culture while the remaining 42% are able to follow the lecture easily. The results of this question **Table IV.1.9** show that the students are learning the module differently but the majority have

some understanding constraint; the reason is probably the liberal and flexible approach used at the university which differs from the previous one used in the lycée.

**Q10: What were the hurdles you faced during the 1<sup>st</sup> examination of General Culture?**

The question is submitted to serve as an exam feedback, the replies were numerous and our analysis is based on interpretation instead of criticism. For arbitrariness matters we will focus on the students' self-evaluation.

**“The time allotted for the exam was not long enough”**

This answer is probably the most known one by the teachers. This kind of reply is a cliché that students reproduce after each examination.

**“We have not revised all the chapters”**

Among the population's sample we found some students who discovered some of the failure's factor which is the lack of revision.

**“We do not understand all the English words during the lectures”**

This answer shows evidence of the weak linguistic skill of the learners which affects negatively the way they learn the module of general culture and may prevent them from assimilating its content properly.

**“Remembering various details of the courses is complicated”**

The reply clearly demonstrates the obstacle faced by the students in remembering specific information; data retrieval might be complicated during examinations.

**Q11: Have the computer and internet positively contributed to your academic researches / exposes?**

<b>Yes</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>No</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Still not using the computer technology</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100 students</b>

### **Table IV.1.11 Computer advantages**

This question was designed to know if computer technology has contributed to reinforce the learners' acquisition as well as guessing if whether or not they have adopted the tool and its features as a facilitating medium for better achievement. The percentages of the **Table IV.1.11** show a majority of 65% who replied "yes" noticed amelioration in their course comprehension and 12% are still thinking that using computers is a waste of time while 23% have not yet tried to learn general culture courses with the support of the personal computer.

**Q12: Taking into account the e-courses you have taken during the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester, have you noticed any amelioration in terms of retaining and retrieving information?**

<b>Yes</b>	<b>77</b>
<b>No</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Undecided</b>	<b>14</b>

<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100 student</b>
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**Table IV.1.12 Learners' information retrieval**

The question aims at revealing the positive aspect of the technology in terms of helping students retain large amount of information in a short period of time. The results clearly reveal that 77% confirm that they have been helped by the computer for retaining and retrieving which is a large majority whereas 9% of them maintain their negative opinion concerning the aid of the machine and finally 14% are still undecided.

**Q13: Do you think using computer technology and/or internet facilitates learning or encourages laziness?**

<b>Facilitates learning</b>	<b>81</b>
<b>Encourages laziness</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Undecided</b>	<b>8</b>

<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100 student</b>
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**Table IV.1.13 Computers disadvantages**

We submitted this question to find out the reasons that pushed students to be against the use of computer technology and to know the motives that might discourage them to use such a technology.

If we refer to the **Table IV.1.13** we notice a high percentage of 81% who do believe that computer is an efficient aid to learn but the remaining still argue that the technology does not help because it may prevent from learning since the machine is not always present while the revision or even during the courses and above all it is still expensive. Among the questioned population

- 70 -

we can see a minority of 8% that remain undecided

**Q14: In terms of method preference, do you like the classic or the computer assisted teaching?**



<b>Classic</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Computer-assisted</b>	<b>81</b>
<b>Undecided</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100 students</b>

**Table IV.1.14 Classic Teaching versus CAT**

The objective of this query is to divulge if students are ready to adapt themselves to a new teaching approach and to guess their will to acclimatise their learning behaviour to get prepared for the digital acquisition switch.

The **Table IV.1.14** proves that first year students of English at Batna University prefer the computer assisted teaching instead of the classic or traditional one 81% have answered so.

**Q15: During the 2<sup>nd</sup> General Culture examination did you faced the same 1<sup>st</sup> examination hurdles?**

<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>33</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>100 students</b>

**Table IV.1.15 Data recall amelioration**

This question highlights the major obstacle in which learners might face some hurdles since the examination is the most valuable means to measure their level of understanding. We also have chosen to submit this question as a comparative feedback to the previous examination where students have shown a lack of concentration since it was their first experience. In the above table results demonstrate an overwhelming majority of 2/3<sup>rd</sup> (nearly 70%) agree that they overcame the difficulties which have been faced during

- 72 -

the first semester examination because they have used computer technology and internet resources to solidify their knowledge.

**Q16: Has the use of computer technology entailed a waste or a gain of time when revising?**

<b>Waste of time</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Gain of time</b>	<b>86</b>
<b>Undecided</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100 students</b>

**Table IV.1.16 Learners' CAL feedback**

It is clear from the above table that most of participating learners consent on the fact that computer based learning supported them during their revision with its fastness and multimedia features because as mentioned in the theoretical part of this work, relying on means that use the senses of sight and hearing stimulate and enrich learning as well as reinforcing the human memory for data recall.

**Q17: If any, what is the impact of using computer on the comprehension of other modules?**

<b>It played a major role</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>It is only one of the motivating tools</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>None</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100 students</b>

**Table IV.1.16 Impact of CAL**

Concerning this question the replies are self-explanatory and the proportion is shared into three groups; 58% have said that using computer technology had a positive impact on the comprehension of other modules whereas 18% think that it has not helped although it is a motivating didactic aid and the remaining ones are still arguing the uselessness of the computer for teaching or learning.

**Q18: Do you think integrating a computing module will enhance effectiveness in learning?**

<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>66</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>100 students</b>

**Table IV.1.18 Learning effectiveness**

We decided to ask this question to identify the learners' opinion towards the integration of computing courses as a complete module in the licence programme. As the **Table IV.1.18** shows most of them 66% are enthusiast to increase their computing skills for a better and effective learning while 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the population's sample are against an additional module but they converge on the fact of having a compulsory course instead of a full time module.

According to this table, we also notice that the results clearly demonstrate and prove the hypothesis we submitted in the beginning of this paperwork .

## **IV.2. TEACHER'S INTERVIEW**

In this section we will try to interpret the results of the submitted interview which have been given to teachers of General Culture at Batna University department of English. This structured interview has been answered during the academic year 2006/2007 by five teachers, three of them were full time teachers whereas the remaining are part time teachers.

**Q1: How many years have you been teaching the module of General Culture at the department of English?**

The question aims at gauging their experience at the University as well as guessing their status and qualification. According to their replies most of them have more than five years of experience which is more valuable for our investigation in terms of instruction practice.

**Q2: How do you find the syllabus of General Culture in term of topic variety?**

We have designed this question to know their opinion concerning the contents of the module of general culture and the variety that might entail some hurdles to their students. As expected, the unanimity confirm that this module is rich and characterised by its information largeness.

**Q3: What are the most frequent obstacles you face during your teaching sessions?**

The aim of the submitted question is to find out the most recurrent difficulties that impeach teachers reaching their goals in making most of students successful in their understanding. Majority of the answers focused on the students' weak mastery of English language which is considered as the most important obstruction for the instruction of the module's courses.

**Q4: How do you describe the level of your students in term of English language mastery?**

<b>Weak</b>	<b>average</b>	<b>excellent</b>
3	2	0

**TableIV.2.4 Students' Mastery of English Language**

This question was asked to confirm the previous one since we already know that students learn English as a second foreign language and most of them showed a lack of communicative skills either in listening or speaking.

**Q5: How do you describe your computing skills?**

Since our work deals with a variable including the use of computer technology, we decided to measure the teachers' aptitude of using this machine. The replies of this question show that 3/5<sup>th</sup> of them use the personal computer only for word processing and spread sheets.



**Q6: Have you ever asked your students to prepare an expose or a research with computer technology?**

<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
4	1

**TableIV.2.6 CT integration**

According to the above table we clearly notice that most of teachers know the entailed advantages of what a computer technology may bring to students in terms of data presentation and learning enhancement.

**Q7: Do you think computer technology would help you teaching efficiently?**

<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
5	0

**TableIV.2.7 CT support in Teaching**

As it is clearly stated above, teachers unanimously agree on the fact that being supported during instruction by a digital machine would intensify

learners' motivation and amplify their will to learn more since it is based on audiovisual means which is a brand new approach relying on interactivity instead of the classic linear one.

**Q8: Do you use internet to prepare your courses?**

YES	NO
3	2

**TableIV.2.8 Teachers' Internet Use**

This question deals mainly with the teachers' behaviour towards the use of internet as a source of knowledge and data update since teaching the same contents of any particular module would create a boring atmosphere during course sessions caused by the routine. Hence, we ought to encourage teachers take advantage of internet to enrich their course presentation.

**Q9: Have you participated in a "E-learning" programme?**

YES	NO
0	5

**TableIV.2.9 Teachers' E-learning experience**

This kind of situation reveals the real situation of e-learning in the Algerian universities in general and at Batna University in particular. Although the e-learning is world widespread phenomenon, Algerian teachers still have not experimented such an educational technique. The table clearly proves that none of the participating teachers have tried this approach.

**Q10: Can you describe the difference between the classic and the computer based teaching?**

For many teachers this question can be seen as a confrontation of teaching techniques but the most evident reality of such an analysis is not the difference but the similarity and the complementarily outcomes for achieving better teaching. The replies of this question converged to corroborate traditional teaching with the computer based one, consequently there is no difference according to teachers except in acquiring the necessary computing skills to develop and design specific materials for teaching.

**Q11: According to you, how can we increase the learners' communicative skill?**

This is surely one of the most fundamental teachers' ambitions to improve all of their students understanding and communication. The answers of this question were numerous and varied, but the most frequent ones encourage the intensiveness of the oral expression practice.

**Q12: If you have the possibility to opt for an instructive aid apart from computer technology what would you recommend?**

The question seeks information about the teachers' recommendations concerning the use of didactic supports other than the computer technology. Most of them strongly suggest the use of electronic dictionaries to help students learn or translate the difficult words instead of interrupting the course presentation.

**Q13: According to you, what are the disadvantages of using computer technology as a didactic tool?**

We submitted this question to perceive the disadvantages that computers might produce on learners'. According to teachers the argument was: encouraging learners' laziness, the case of using a calculator instead of the mental effort is the perfect example.

**Q14: What do you suggest for an efficient teaching?**

The question can be taken as a reference to support our suggestions and recommendations section. The teachers' replies strongly encourage the formation of students into small groups considering both students' level and capacity of understanding to avoid discouraging motivated ones, as well as extending the allotted time for the module of general culture with some make up sessions.

## **SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **INTRODUCTION**

This section is the most important part of our research since it might be considered as the alternative of the already mentioned problem which states that most students find themselves unmotivated toward learning materials with vast contents, particularly first year students of English at Batna University when learning General Culture. They always face hurdles during lectures in terms of information largeness that soon lead them to a feeling of boredom and lack of interesting.

According to what we have discussed in the previous chapters our analysis and interpretation allowed us to propose some suggestions and recommendations for effective learning of General Culture which perhaps might be better achieved if computer assisted learning is used as a supporting means by first year students of English at Batna University.

We have summarised our suggestions and recommendations into the following:

### **1- Suggestion of some teaching techniques**

- Undoubtedly the use of computer technology will stimulate and enhance learning and teaching experience.

-Teachers and students' interaction through blogging or the use of forum on internet can provide opportunities for students to develop collaborative skills as well as having the opportunity to communicate in a more equal way without the domination of confident individuals.

-The Creation of a non-threatening environment will boost the active participation of the students.

-Splitting students into small groups, and assembling the advanced learners with average ones for optimal learning outcomes.

## **2-Proposal for a computing curriculum**

-The most imperative condition to help students using computer technology and master its use adequately is the integration of a computing module in the Algerian English licence programme.

- Promoting e-learning at the department of English with the aid of the C.A.L.L. center and allow students access internet within the university.

## **3- Teacher training**

- To help teachers make of the computer technology a successful supporting tool, training them to acquire the computing skills is necessary to reach a better teaching achievement because familiarity with the computers and the programs does not equal proficiency.



## **GENERAL CONCLUSION**

The aim of this study is to explore first year students' weaknesses to learn the module of general culture and the major hurdles that might prevent them from a successful learning outcome, therefore our suggestion of using computer technology as a didactic tool, perhaps, can be seen as an alternative to the issue. After conducting a research based on description and data analysis of the submitted questionnaire and interview, the results clearly reveal that teaching with techniques based on the stimulation of the senses of sight and hearing and which simultaneously allow the interaction of learners and teachers, enriches learning and teaching experiences and enhances knowledge acquisition.

Indeed computer can be a solution but we have to precise that the use of the machine is not the only way out to boost and motivate students learn efficiently because the most important element in instruction is ,and remains, the teacher whose role is undoubtedly essential.

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## **APPENDICES**

**Appendix 1 TEACHERS' INTERVIEW**

**Appendix 2 STUDENTS' QUESTIONNAIRE**



# Students' questionnaire

*Dear student,*

You are kindly requested to answer this questionnaire which aims to collect your views, opinions, learning experience and recommendations towards the use of computer technology as a didactic support for better learning achievement. I will be very thankful for your precious help which will be a tremendous contribution to my M.A. research entitled as:

***“An attempt to describe the impact of using computer technology on learning General Culture”***

(A case study of the first year students at the department of English, University of Batna -Algeria-)

As mentioned, your answers are crucial for the research fieldwork since the results will be interpreted, analysed and revealed in my dissertation as part of the investigation; however your personal details remain confidential.

Once again thank you so much you for your kind cooperation.

*BEST REGARDS*

**Mr. Charif BENBOULAI**D

# Personal information

FIRST NAME:

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MIDDLE NAME:

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FAMILY NAME:

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\* To answer put a cross (X)

**Q1: Have you been taught a computing course before entering the university?**

YES	NO

**Q2: Have you ever used or have been in touch with computer technology?**

Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always

**Q3 Have you conducted an academic research or an expose with the aid of computer or/and internet?**

YES	NO

**Q4: How do you find yourself towards handling computer technology?**

Week	Beginner	Intermediate	Advanced	Expert

**Q5: If you have never used computer technology what is/are the reason(s)?**

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**Q6: Have you any difficulty in the following skills:**

Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing

**Q7: As fresh university students, how do you perceive the module of General Culture?**

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**Q8: Do you like the module of General Culture?**

Yes	No

**Q9: Are the courses of General Culture easy or hard to understand?**

Hard	Easy -

**Q10: What were the hurdles you faced during the 1<sup>st</sup> examination of General Culture?**

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**Q11: Have the computer and internet positively contributed to your academic researches / exposes?**

YES	NO

**Q12: Taking into account the e-courses you have taken during the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester, have you noticed any amelioration in terms of retaining and retrieving information?**

YES	NO

**Q13: Do you think using computer technology and/or internet facilitates learning or encourages laziness?**

<b>Facilitates learning</b>	
- 99 -	
<b>Encourages laziness</b>	

**Q14: In terms of method preference, do you like the classic or the computer assisted teaching?**

<b>Classic</b>	
<b>Computer-assisted</b>	

**Justify?**

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**Q15: During the 2<sup>nd</sup> General Culture examination did you faced the same 1<sup>st</sup> examination hurdles?**

<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>

**Q16: Has the use of computer technology entailed a waste or a gain of time when revising?**

<b>Waste of time</b>	
<b>Gain of time</b>	

**Q17: If any, what is the impact of using computer on the comprehension of other modules?**

<b>It played a major role</b>	
<b>It is only one of the motivating tools</b>	
<b>None</b>	

**Q18: Do you think integrating a computing module will enhance effectiveness in learning?**

<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>

Thank you so much for your cooperation!

# Teachers' interview

*Dear colleague,*

You are kindly requested to take part in this interview which aims to collect your views, opinions, teaching experience and recommendations towards the use of computer technology as a didactic support for better learning achievement. I will be very thankful for your precious help which will be a tremendous contribution to my M.A. research entitled as:

*“An attempt to describe the impact of using computer technology on learning  
General Culture”*

(A case study of the first year students at the department of English, University of Batna -Algeria-)

As mentioned, your answers are crucial for the research fieldwork since the results will be interpreted, analysed and revealed in my dissertation as part of the investigation; however your personal details remain confidential.

Once again thank you so much you for your kind cooperation.

*BEST REGARDS*

**Mr. Charif BENBOULAI**D





**Q1: How many years have you been teaching the module of General Culture at the department of English?**

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**Q2: How do you find the syllabus of General Culture in term of topic variety?**

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**Q3: What the most frequent obstacles you face during your teaching sessions?**

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**Q4: How do you describe the level of your students in term of English language mastery?**

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**Q5: How do you describe your computing skills?**

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**Q6: Have you ever asked your students to prepare an expose or a research with computer technology?**

**Yes.....** **No.....**

**Q7: Do you think computer technology would help you teaching efficiently?**

**Yes.....** **No.....**

**Support your answer:**

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**Q8: Do you use computer technology or internet to prepare your courses?**

Yes.....

No.....

**Q9: Have you participated in a E-learning programme?**

Yes.....

No.....

**Q10: Can you describe the difference between the classic and the computer based teaching?**

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**Q11: According to you, how can we increase the learners' communicative skill?**

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**Q12: If you have the possibility to choose an instructive aid apart from computer technology what would you recommend?**

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**Q13: According to you, what are the disadvantages of using computer technology as a didactic tool?**

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**Q14: What do you suggest for an efficient teaching?**

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Thank you so much for your cooperation