Toward a Model of Active and Situated Learning in the Teaching of Computer-Aided Translation: Introducing the CERTT Project

Lynne Bowker and Elizabeth Marshman
University of Ottawa, Canada

Abstract

With technologies becoming more widely and firmly established in the language industries, translator education programs must produce graduates who are knowledgeable about and comfortable with today's translation tools. How then can translator education programs meet future translators' and employers' needs with limited time and resources? One strategy is to adopt a more holistic approach, which seeks to integrate tool use across different elements of the program, including within "core" technology courses, in practical translation and other courses, and as part of independent study activities. Achieving this goal, however, is not without challenges, and it requires an investment of time and effort on the part of both educators and students. In 2007, a new translation technology education initiative was launched at the University of Ottawa's School of Translation and Interpretation (UO-STI). This initiative is centered around the Collection of Electronic Resources in Translation Technologies (CERTT) project. Motivated by a desire to improve the way in which technology-related knowledge and skills are taught to translators, the CERTT team has developed a framework to assist educators and students in exploring and using a range of over thirty computer tools and resources for translators. This centralized collection of tutorials, exercises, corpora, sample files for use with tools, and other related resources is currently being integrated into LinguisTech, which is an online portal

and translator's toolbox intended to supply information and access to a range of language technologies to translation students across Canada, as well as to certain other users. This article describes some key challenges associated with teaching translation technologies and presents the underlying philosophy and framework of the CERTT project, explaining how CERTT seeks to address them. It also briefly reports on the experience of the first four years of teaching with CERTT at UO-STI.