

# **Introducing IT in Translator Training**

---

**Experiences from the COLC project**

# COLC project

- Computing for Language Careers  
(Information Technology for Translators)
- Started in January 2001 and ends in June 2004
- Funded by
  - European Social Fund
  - Finnish Ministry of Education
- Over 100 students (out of 330) have taken at least some courses in 2001-2003
  - 2/3 of them women (85% of all students women)

# Background

- Changes in the translation market
  - Work: commissions by email, internet, eDictionaries, TM tools, electronic corpora & concordance software, etc.
  - Job descriptions: localization, technical writing, etc.
- Final report of the Finnish POSI\* committee (2000):  
**Employers** on the public as well as private sector, **translation agencies** and **translators themselves** all agreed that one of the things urgently needed on the market are better computing or IT skills.

\* Practice-oriented curriculum for the training of translators and interpreters

# Aims

- To improve undergraduate training in Savonlinna
  - updating curriculum
  - adding a new minor subject: IT for translators
- Emphasis on the information and translation technological skills
  - addressing both aspects of the changes in the market:
    - teaching translation tools
    - giving relevant background to working in localization, etc.

# Aims (continued)

- Training the trainers
  - opportunity for staff to update their knowledge
  - integrating e.g. translation tools into ”normal” translation classes
    - building and using translation memories and termbases in special field translation

# COLC studies

- All students can choose COLC as a minor subject
- Studies consist of basic and subject studies  
30 ECTS + 30 ECTS
- Students can also choose individual courses
- Teachers:
  - COLC staff members
  - Outsourcing => hiring experts

# Basic studies

- Introduction to localization
- Basic computer skills (for translators)
- Graphical user interfaces
- Introduction to software engineering
- Software documentation
- Translation memory tools and term databases
- Corpus linguistics and corpus-aided translation

# Subject studies

- Introduction to programming
- Databases
- **Localization in practice**
- Software testing
- Working with text and hypertext
- **Project management**
- **(Additional) Tools for translators**
  - Creating web pages and Image editing

# Feedback from staff (n=14)

- All graduates should know the basics of translation technology
- Key courses should be integrated into curriculum
- All agreed that project has improved the school profile
- 12 of 14 have participated in training sessions
  - PowerPoint training has been the most popular (22)
- 9 of 14 have **NOT** familiarized themselves with the tools in the Translation Lab

# Feedback from students (n=40)

- Integrate key courses into normal curriculum
- Basics computer skills, TM Tools and Corpus-aided translation should be compulsory for all students
- More information about courses to make them sound less frightening and forbidding
- If project does not continue, it'll be a big loss for the School of Translation Studies
- Computers at the Translation Lab well equipped

# Challenges

- Integration
- Finding instructors
- Knowledge transfer
- Attitudes of teachers
- Attitudes of students

# Implications

- Material gains: hardware and software
  - Industrial partners have been really co-operative
    - most applications free of charge or with minimal costs
- Better visibility and higher profile in the area and in the field at large
- More attractive to potential students
- Increased choices in the curriculum
- Spin-offs: continuing education for translators
  - KÄTTÄ project – <http://skk.joensuu.fi/en/katta>  
Project of Continuing Education for Language Professionals

# Future in Savonlinna

- Transitory phase: new project (if approved) combines the best practices of two current projects:
  - COLC
  - Audiovisual communication for translators and interpreters
    - journalism, new media, subtitling, dubbing, distance interpreting (videoconferencing), etc.
- New project would include common compulsory courses + two alternative packages to choose from:
  - Translation in IT
  - Translation in AV media

# Future in Savonlinna

- Degree reform in 2005 (current estimate)
  - BA/MA should include compulsory courses of the new project
  - separate, specialized Master's programme  
"Translation and communication technology"
    - optional elements of the new project

**Thank You  
for your interest!**

---

**Questions or Comments?**

**[hannu.jaatinen@joensuu.fi](mailto:hannu.jaatinen@joensuu.fi)**

**[riitta.jaaskelainen@joensuu.fi](mailto:riitta.jaaskelainen@joensuu.fi)**

**<http://savonlinnakampus.joensuu.fi/kt/english>**