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2011 Innovative Course Development Grant Report

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Date Submitted: May 9, 2012

Title of Grant Award: 2011 Innovative Course Development Grant

Project Goal: Developing online self-assessment tools for a Spanish translation course

When Implemented: Winter 2012

Brief Description of the Project (as described in the proposal):

Originally designed to be delivered in a traditional classroom setting, Span 312 aims for students to become knowledgeable in translation theory and to develop technical skills in written translation. Students need additional translation practice than the traditional classroom setting allows thus acquiring the technical skills required in making precise and accurate translations. The course is based on 11 short chapters of a textbook on translation, *Meaning-Based Translation: A Guide to Cross Language Equivalence*, focusing on the American School of translation and 2 chapters of another textbook, *Introducción a la traductología*, focusing on the Canadian School of Translation. Students struggle not only with the theoretical concepts of translation, but also with performing the translations themselves in the class period allowed by the traditional classroom setting. This struggle only intensifies when the course requires that the student perform accurate translations as there is so little time for practice and feedback in class. This project proposes to ease these struggles by developing (a) a set of advanced translation exercises with detailed corrective feedback for each translation concept discussed in the chapter, (b) a set of self-guided exercises with step-by-step explanations and feedback for each chapter, and (c) an advanced translation exercise component featuring the lexicon in the diverse areas of Public Services to include Social Services, Medical, Business and others with the respective self-assessments and exercises.

These exercises will be delivered using online format. Currently, this course has been offered in the traditional classroom setting with only with the minimal use of Blackboard (posting of syllabi, announcements, assignments and grade postings). Developing these exercises will also enhance the instructor's skill in the use of online technology for teaching and developing materials.

How the Project was Implemented (including how it differed from the original plan):

The proposed enhancements would include the following (in addition to the above components):
(1) Using an online format, develop exercises in order to review theoretical concepts introduced in the textbooks with additional translation exercises and test theoretical comprehension – *this will help students to gain the necessary understanding of translation*

- theory and the lexicon associated with translation which they lack.*
- (2) Develop self-assessment quizzes with detailed corrective feedback for each chapter. *This will ensure student comprehension of translation theory and concepts covered in class, a necessary basis for the accompanying exercises.*
 - (3) Develop self-guided exercises modeled on the exercises in the textbook with step by step explanations and feedback (answer keys) – *this will aid in the acquisition of the necessary technical skills for written translation*
 - (4) Build 5 online quizzes for each chapter as study enhancements (theoretical concepts, exercises) – *this will ensure consistency in covering and testing the course materials*
 - (5) Develop a comprehensive online review for the final (based on previous self-assessments and exercises) – *this will help students prepare for the final and ultimately enhance student comprehension and performance.*
 - (6) *Added a list of terms to be translated in the areas of Social Services.*

Results of the Project:

The Summer stipend generously funded through this Innovative Course Development Grant enabled me to design 12 learning modules, five quizzes, a terminology list focusing on Social Services and 4 corrected translations. Self-assessments were developed with detailed corrective feedback and the self-guided practice exercises will increase the students' performance in this class while at the same time helping them to become more comfortable using online materials and taking online classes.

There was considerable improvement in the students' midterm and final exam scores. For example, the Spanish 312B course taught in a traditional face-to face setting during the Winter 2009, the midterm exam average score was 75% and the final exam average score was 73%. Whereas in the Spanish 312B course taught in an enhanced online format during the Winter 2012 the midterm exam average score was 85% and the final exam average score was 80%.

Moreover, this faculty member developed a survey whereby students were asked about their experience using the online learning modules. Of the 24 student responses, 96% of the students agreed that the learning modules helped them "prepare for the midterm and final exams" and that "the faculty member's effective teaching performance was enhanced with the use of the learning modules as a tool." Also those student responses demonstrated that 100% of the students agreed that "the practice exercises were helpful in understanding the theory covered" and that "the modules as a tool enhanced their performance in class." Overall, the learning modules in an online format were an effective teaching tool.

Additional Comments (Lessons Learned, Insights, Future Plans, etc.):

Given the enthusiastic response thus far on the part of the students, I anticipate this being a regular teaching approach that can also be applied to other courses. I will, however, re-format the modules to cover two chapters at a time rather than four or five as they now appear. I also plan to present this approach at an upcoming conference on translation to be held at San Jose State.