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E-learning and employability in translator training: Introducing e-portfolio and personal development planning at the University of Vienna

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Abstract

This paper takes a look at employability in higher education. It presents case studies illustrating efforts to increase the employability of graduates of the BA and MA programmes of the Centre for Translation Studies at the University of Vienna. Measures on the curricular and planning levels encompass defining learning outcomes oriented towards professional requirements and encouraging didactic approaches, including e-learning, that promote transferable and translation technology skills. Measures at the teaching level include individual and group reflection processes about what relevant skills are and how they are acquired and introducing personal development planning and professional orientation to future graduates. The method and tool used for these latter purposes is the e-portfolio. The paper will also take an outlook at further steps and the required preconditions at curricular level.

Introduction

> "Students of the BA programme Trans-cultural Communication at the University of Vienna acquire basic knowledge of research methods and results as well as practical skills required for professional activity in trans-cultural communication. Trans-cultural communication is characterised by dealing in a professional manner with linguistic and cultural diversity in all areas of society. Graduates of the BA Trans-cultural Communication are practice-orientated experts in international multilingual communication."

Reading this text drawn from a curriculum description[1], employers might be asking themselves: Now, what exactly does that mean? Students might be asking themselves: How can I explain

[1] See http://public.univie.ac.at/index.php?id=18424 for the German curriculum.

better what I have learned, what skills and competences[2] I possess? There is a long way to go from drafting a curriculum to getting students out there into jobs, and employability is what is needed.

Employability

In the context of the Bologna process[3], employability is a competency that is defined as "a set of achievements—skills, understandings and personal attributes—that make graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations, which benefits themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy"[4]. Let us have a closer look at what this definition tells us we are to prepare our students for.

Firstly, it talks about achievements—skills, knowledge and personality features—that are central to employability. In the report these are grouped into three categories: subject specific knowledge
and skills, generic or soft or transferable skills, and certain personal characteristics. Then, the definition talks about gaining employment. This requires that our students be able to market their sets of achievements. Next, they are to be successful in their chosen occupations. This specifies that employability is not to be interpreted exclusively in relation to certain professional profiles but as a general quality of getting and keeping a desired job.[5] In the case of the BA programme described above there aren't even such clearly defined job profiles. This is where transferable skills and personal characteristics come into play. And, finally, all of this is to benefit not only the workforce, community and economy but the employees themselves. This points us towards the necessity of setting personal and professional goals.

We have now determined that employability is a complex competence that rests upon 4 pillars:

1. Knowing both your subject specific and generic skills as well as your personal characteristics
2. Promoting transferable skills to ensure employability independent of specialised job profiles

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2 A competence can be described as a set of skills, knowledge and attitudes that enables Individuals to carry out complex tasks. While definitions of competency may vary, it is generally agreed that a skill is but one building block of competence. The OECD Project DeSeCo "Definition and Selection of Competencies" (2003) distinguishes 3 levels of granularity: individual skills are grouped into specific competences, which are again clustered into 3 key competence groups. For a discussion of translation competence classifications see Kelly (2005:26-33).

3 The purpose of the Bologna process is to make academic degrees and quality assurance standards more comparable throughout the European Higher Education Area. One of the action lines is dedicated to lifelong learning. See http://www.boloana-bergen2005.no/b/BFUG_Meetings/040309Dublin/BFUG2_3.pdf for an overview.

4 See "Employability in the context of the Bologna Process", 2004 Report of the Bologna Follow-Up Group.

5 Knight (2004), for example, has shown that the divide between "academic" skills those promoting employability is a fictitious one.

3. Setting yourself personal and professional goals based on your skills and preferences
4. Professionally communicating your competences to potential employers

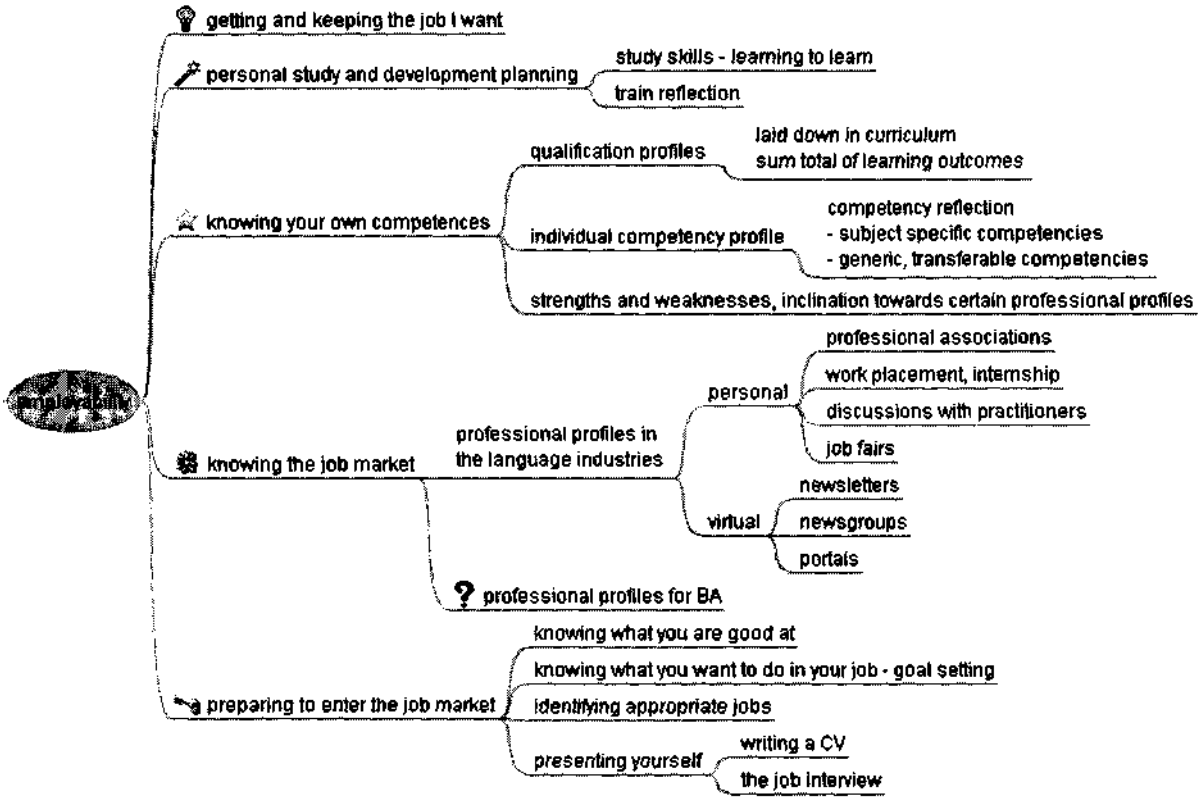

Image 1: Employability – a student view

Transferable skills

Translation skills are well represented and extensively trained in translation study courses. Take communicative skills as an example. We teach a bundle of skills such as knowledge of and skills in written vs. spoken mode, target group orientation, expert-layman communication, multimodal text production, or inter-cultural communication. We are training them repeatedly and students know how to shape these kinds of communication by using adequate methods and appropriate tools. Communicative competence is well developed in a translation studies programme.

That is not necessarily the case with transferable skills. Let us have a closer look at what these are. Transferable skills are typically grouped into personal, interpersonal or team skills, and methodological skills. Personal skills include the motivation to learn and continuously improve

one's own capabilities, the ability to learn and work autonomously, including reflective skills and needs analysis. Team skills include working co-operatively, leadership skills, conflict resolution, and communication and presentation skills. Methodological skills are transversal and required in both categories. They include organisational and management skills and the employment of tools and techniques. As is true for subject specific skills, transferable ones are not typically acquired within one term. However, some of them are not addressed directly in study programmes and others are taught in isolated courses and are not followed up on.

We have now established 3 central groups of transferable skills as well as the fact that, just like subject specific skills, they need be taught reiteratively and in context in order to develop. These 3 key competences[6] are:

1. personal skills
2. interpersonal skills
3. methodological skills

Translation management and technology

Translation technology and management skills are methodological skills that ought to be mastered by any translation graduate.[7] Translation memory usage and management, terminology extraction and management, translation and language resources management, and corpus building and exploitation promote efficiency, quality, and co-operation in teams. While it is a fact that these skills belong to the subject specific category, it also has to be stated that they share the fate of other types of transferable skills: quite frequently they are taught one-off in isolated classes and are not integrated into regular translation classes or projects.

Subject specific skills

On the other hand, we find that a number of skills unanimously categorised as "subject specific" skills in translator training are actually transferable to and regarded as transferable skills in other (work) contexts. The EU Tuning project, for instance, has formulated generic competences (defined as learning outcomes) for undergraduate programmes. These are categorised into systemic competences (corresponding roughly to what we have called personal skills before),

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[6] DeSeCo calls these 3 groups the "key competences" of acting autonomously, interacting in heterogeneous groups, and using tools (language, knowledge, technology) interactively.

[7] Compare the profile for translators working for the European Commission at http://europa.eu.int/comm/dgs/translation/workingwithus/recruitment/translator profile en.htm

interpersonal competences, and instrumental competences. A number of competences enumerated there fall under our known headings of linguistic competence (example: oral and written communication in the native language, knowledge of a second language), inter-cultural competence (example: understanding of cultures and customs of other countries, appreciation of diversity and multiculturality), or information and knowledge management (examples: research skills, ability to retrieve and analyse information from different sources, basic general knowledge).

As we can see, definitions of subject specific vs. transferable skills are not as clear cut as they might appear at first glance. In any case, educational institutions are challenged to take a closer look and define what relevant skills are and ensure they are provided for at the curricular, module, and course level.

Reflection

As just hinted, reflection is employed during the processes of designing a curriculum or an individual course, whereby pre-conditions or entry levels are set, learning goals are established, appropriate learning activities and tools are selected, and achievement is measured.

On an individual student level, the learning process is composed of the same 4 steps: stock-taking, goal-setting, aligning activities, and evaluating and evidencing the outcomes. However, if untrained in this technique, learning will occur incidentally in students, and they may remain unaware of the full scope of learning they have achieved. Or, looking at it from the other side of the process: Students will be incapable of shaping and actively experiencing their knowledge acquisition process and will, therefore, be unable to benefit fully from a learning situation.

Reflection, employed as a learner-centred instrument, enables students to develop self-awareness and to formulate learning and development goals that reach beyond the assessment at the end of term. It will motivate them to apply themselves, work harder, focus, and learn deeper.[8] This kind of reflection takes students from learning to pass exams towards learning for building the 4 pillars of employability.[9] Naturally, such a reflection about the learning process needs to be initiated and trained.

Reflection can be introduced into teaching in a number of ways. By asking the right questions teachers can start thinking processes in students. On a course level, reflection about learning

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[8] For a brief and concise introduction of learning styles and approaches, including deep learning, refer to Kelly (2005:47-50).

[9] See Chesterman (1997) and Kiraly (2000:32-33) on consciousness-raising and reflection activities in translator training as a key element in moving from conscious awareness of problems and rules to the automatic, intuitive action of experts.

content and learning outcomes can be initiated at the beginning of term or even before the course starts. Have your students discuss their expectations of the course, and it will help you to fine tune teaching to their needs. Reflection in groups helps to introduce this approach by reducing the effort each individual has to make, and it improves motivation and team spirit.

Also, reflection need not end when the individual lecture or course is over. If well guided and repeatedly trained, reflection will develop into a sustainable process and competence. Experience in reflecting leads individuals to reflectiveness, i.e. reflective thought and action, which is at the heart of the key competences and of employability. Reflectiveness involves the use of meta-cognitive skills, thinking about thinking. However, it is not only about how individuals think, but also about how they relate their thinking to previous thoughts, feelings and social relations, i.e. how they construct knowledge. Reflectiveness also implies a critical stance and creative abilities. It requires individuals to take different perspectives, make their own judgements and take responsibility for their actions.

Students who are reflective follow up such meta-cognitive thought processes with practice or action. They are in a position to set their own personal and professional goals in due time. They are able to recognise skills gaps and training needs that may require them to gain experience outside the university and take action accordingly. They are then also in a position to overcome a lack of predefined professional profiles and make their way onto the job market. This process is referred to as personal development planning (PDP).

We can now make 4 statements about reflection:

1. Reflection is both a skill and a process.
2. Reflection is the basis of key competences.
3. Reflection ought to be trained as a learner-centred approach throughout a study programme, both as an individual and a collective process.
4. Reflection is a skill needed in personal development planning.

Personal Development Planning

Unlike personal development planning, personal study planning has been the norm in the Austrian university system. There is even a thing called "individual study course" where students compile their own study course according to their goals. On a more general level, access to study courses was basically unrestricted and students were free to study the subject(s) they were interested in. While the required courses were laid down in the curriculum, the order in which they are followed was basically up to the students. This is not the case any longer.

The sequencing of courses and modules of a study programme is being streamlined by more clearly defining prerequisites and learning outcomes. This is done to create a more homogeneous level of pre-knowledge in students and to enable more effective teaching. On the other hand, learning goals laid down at the curricular level necessarily need to remain broad. These 3 organisational levels of learning require thorough planning to ensure that in the end the outcomes of all levels will be achieved. While the division into modules relieves students of an organisational burden, it may blur their vision for the larger picture and encourage a more passive attitude. This problem can be countered by introducing personal development planning.

Personal development planning is "a structured and supported process undertaken by an individual to reflect upon their own learning, performance and/or achievement and to plan for their personal, educational and career development".[10] It becomes clear at this point that, while also supporting students in their learning process, personal development planning goes further than that and aims directly at employability. PDF involves 4 kinds of action: firstly, planning your goals and intentions for learning or achievement; secondly, aligning your actions and intentions; thirdly, recording your thoughts, ideas, and experiences in order to understand and evidence the process and results of learning; and fourth, reflecting, i.e. reviewing and evaluating experiences and the results of learning.

We have seen that PDP supports students both during their studies and in planning their careers, and that it encompasses 4 types of co-ordinated action:

1. Planning goals
2. Aligning actions and goals
3. Recording evidence of achievements
4. Reviewing and evaluating results of learning

What's e-learning got to do with it?[11]

To put it in a nutshell: E-learning can be used to promote transferable skills. Depending on the definition we look at, e-learning may encompass a number of activities which typically include managing learning, learning activity itself, and assessing learning. At the University of Vienna, the concept of e-learning is understood in this broad sense. At the Centre of Translation Studies, this

[10] Compare http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/ourwork/learning/pdp

[11] For an introduction see Pym et al (2003) on e-learning in translator training.

broad definition includes not only usage of a learning management system (LMS)[12] but also of online translation technology and management tools for activities in between classes.[13] As for the didactical component, a blended learning approach, i.e. an interaction of classroom and online activities, has been adopted. While distance learning is not an aim here, blended learning, nevertheless, supports the inclusion of working students (who make up some 50% of our student population), work experience of course being a plus with regard to employability.

E-learning is a flexible framework that allows for a variety of didactical approaches known from traditional translator training. It supports beginners' and transmissionist scenarios, such as making lecture notes available, as well as advanced didactic scenarios. Successful learning in the latter case rests not only on teachers' didactical but also on their media competence. While including some groups, attention has to be paid to not excluding others through the increased use of technology. Basic training and access to PC labs is and needs to be provided to level out disadvantages, and the necessity to provide more training here corresponds with the ever expanding use of using technology in the language industries. Distributing work and collecting assignments via the LMS, by using either a mailing system or an assignment functionality, also simulates the professional practice of using online translation portals.

E-learning has yet another contribution to make to employability. As the learning management system supports collaborative teaching and learning, for instance in language or project groups, personal and interpersonal skills can be trained. These activities are supported by group management and file-sharing functions as well as communicative tools like fora and chats.[14]

In this section we have seen that e-Learning at the Centre for Translation Studies[15] promotes employability:

1. by promoting general ICT competence;
2. by building specific translation technology competence; and
3. by enabling group processes, hence improving interpersonal skills.

E-Portfolio

[12] At the Centre of Translation Studies, Blackboard Vista and Moodle are being used.
[13] For example MultiTerm Online for terminology work, project::open for translation management, digital language resources available for download from the server.
[14] The point of collaborative knowledge building in learning communities has been emphasised by Kiraly (2000:32-33 and 36-38). To start a learning community of students and teacher, learning goals as well as learning methods and evaluation modes might be jointly determined by these actors.
[15] See the e-learning website of the Centre for Translation Studies at http://public.univie.ac.at/index.php?ld=12911

An e-portfolio is not only an electronic tool. In is also a method for planning, reflecting, documenting, and evaluating learning processes and products.[16] It is a learner-centred approach that promotes the reflections skills needed for personal development planning while at the same time allowing to present skills profiles and evidence in a professional manner.

The idea is that students plan their development goals, reflect on their learning, e.g. by writing weblog diaries, collect evidence of their achievements (both informal evidence such as pieces of work, and formal such as certificates), and select and present those pieces of evidence that best reflect their learning progress. As you will be able to see from the case studies, at the Centre for Translation Studies, e-portfolios are employed as a learning process tool, for professional development planning, and as a presentation tool (see image below for an example).

We can see that an e-portfolio, which is both a method and a tool, combines all elements conducive to employability:

1. It promotes reflection on what relevant skills are and how they are acquired.
2. It allows for the collection of formal and informal evidence of learning.
3. It is an excellent tool for making skills profiles and evidence visible to potential employers.

[16] Compare Beetham (2004), who distinguishes 4 dimensions: assessment, learning, presentation, and professional development.

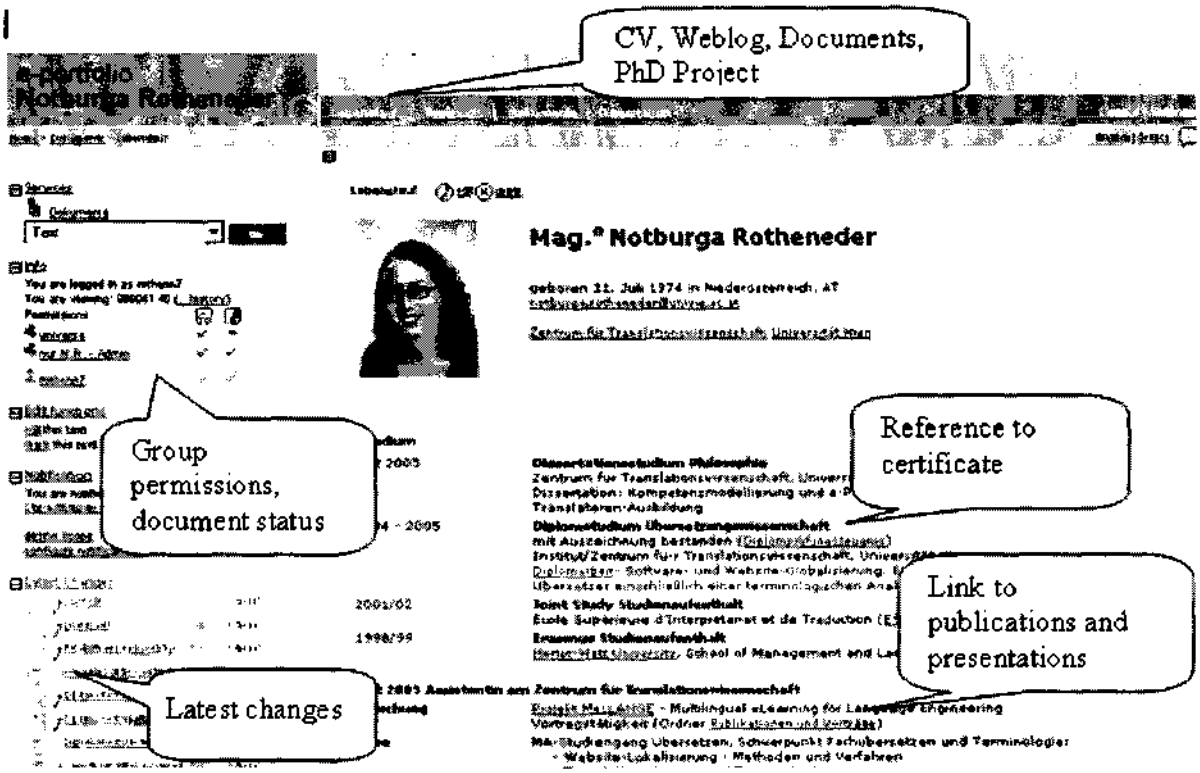

Image 2: e-portfolio[17]

Case studies

Having established basic concepts related to employability and general examples of promoting transferable skills through e-learning, let us now look at some case studies providing specific examples of how we promote reflection and translation technology skills, e-portfolio employment, and personal development planning.

The individual cases will look at who are the teachers and the students, at the goals and methods, and the relevance for learning and employability.

Case *1: e-portfolio and reflection—the spoken comprehension and text competence course (BA)*

The teacher: She is an experienced translator and interpreter, experienced teacher, trained in e-learning didactics.

[17] See http://e-portfolio.factlink.net/p/1202

The students: They are first and second year students
The goals: The primary goal is to train spoken comprehension and text production. Training reflection and community-building are further goals.

The methods: (The methods geared towards spoken comprehension and textual competence are not mentioned here.) The course is started by a reflection on what students expect of the course, which is related to the learning outcomes pre-defined by the teacher. As reflection tool, an open source e-portfolio and community tool (an installation of Elgg at the University of Vienna) is used. Good texts are stored in the e-portfolio, they are visible to the community, i.e. other registered members, both students and teachers, from the University of Vienna. Through participating in the discussion about the learning outcomes, a learning community of students and teacher is fostered, and motivation increases. The group aspect is strengthened through the e-portfolio, where students make achievement visible to a larger community.

Relevance: Students experience group processes, train reflection and ICT skills through the use of a social software and make achievement visible.

The reflective portfolio method of collecting pieces of work and selecting good examples is employed in other BA courses as well, e.g. by a Czech teacher and German teachers who have didactic training in German as foreign language. The spoken comprehension and text competence course adds the ICT and community aspects.

Case 2: *e-portfolio, reflection, and PDP—the professional orientation course (BA)*

The teacher: There are 2 teachers in this course: One is an experienced teacher and one is a young teacher trained in e-learning didactics.
The students: Students in the BA programme Trans-cultural Communication who are to graduate soon.
The goals: The goals are to take stock of competences and to professionally communicate about competences, both in spoken and written mode, to potential employers.
The methods: A mix of methods is employed: classroom teaching (discussion-based lecture), workshops, invited guests, individual and group exercises, spoken and written communication, reflection and practice, online exercises.

Teacher 1 gives a lecture on professional activities for BA graduates. She reviews professional competences and explores how students can talk about them to people outside the profession. The lecture carried out in an interactive way. The students have a say in the teaching method

(lecture vs. discussion) and examination mode (multiple choice vs. role play presentation), both being possible. This term, the students have opted for the discussion format and, largely, for the exam consisting in oral presentations, like simulating a job interview.

Teacher 2 does a voluntary part focussing on transferable skills and e-portfolio. This part is started by a workshop on technical aspects of the e-portfolio. I the course of the workshop a first draft CV is created and students learn how to use the portal which is an altered e-portfolio. The workshop is followed up by work on the individual e-portfolios and by a forum posting in the portal in which students present their strengths (5 characteristics that describe me). Students comment on their peers' postings and the teacher classifies the characteristics in terms of transferable skills.

The next workshop is done by an invited guest, a trainer from the University of Vienna career service. She presents a brief input on key competences which is followed by a group activity during which groups of 4-5 students reflect on different competences, such as self-competence, capacity to act responsibly, capacity to act independently, intercultural competence, problem solving capacity, readiness to learn and improve oneself, capacity to co-operate, communicative competence, capacity to work in teams. They are asked to discuss how the competence is recognised, in what situation it is employed, and what tasks are solved by using it and to present their findings to the class using a flipchart. During the presentation the trainer inquires about the group processes observed during the exercise, e.g. how did the group decide who was to write/present, was there a group leader, etc. She also asks the presenters how they felt during the presentation, gives feedback and encourages the other students to give feedback on the presentation as well. The workshop is followed up by an individual worksheet activity: In what situations did students use the discussed skills.

A new topic is presented every week for discussion in the forum. Students are guided to literary and web resources and are asked to record their personal experiences and evidence in their individual e-portfolio in the form of weblog entries or worksheets.

At a later point during term time former graduates working in trans-cultural communication (in marketing, multinationals, as translators, etc.) are invited to discuss with the students. They are asked to prepare 5 questions: What is your job? Did you aim for this job/how did you find this job? What competences acquired during studies are you using? Which new things did you have to learn? What is your advice to future graduates? Students are asked to prepare by thinking about their strengths and weaknesses, what job openings corresponded to their interests, and about things they want to find out from the practitioners. The meeting puts students in a position to check their ideas and interests against the reality of job life and identify possible gaps in their skills profile that they will need to fill in.

At this point students have thought about their competences, strengths and weaknesses, jobs they would like to take. This gives them a basis on which to edit their CV. They will get to know the standardised Europass CV[18] but are free to choose their preferred format. They are also reminded that work samples, also called artefacts in e-portfolio jargon, tell employers more about their achievements than certificates and abstract learning outcomes. The edited CVs are then assessed by the career service and feedback is given in the last course session.[19]

Relevance: This course aims directly at employability by training reflection on competences and strengths and weaknesses, needs analysis, evidencing achievements, professional orientation, goal-setting and planning further training.

Case 3: *localisation, reflection and team skills—the website localisation course (MA)*

The teacher: A young teacher trained in e-learning didactics and localisation training.
The students: Students in the MA Specialised Translation and Terminology, 10-15 persons, little or no pre-knowledge of localisation, some translation experience, translation memory course as prerequisite.
The goals: Students acquire basic knowledge about localisation issues and processes, and roles and localise a website as a group project. Overview and selection of resources, reflection skills, summarising and categorising information (knowledge creation), self-assessment, confidence in one's abilities.

The methods: Presentations, reflection on pre-knowledge and gaps, exercises, group project. The 90 minute face-to-face sessions take place every other week. Exercises are done online in the time in between sessions. During the group project, students are free to meet in person in between classes. Basically, a constructivist approach is used. Experience has shown that theory presented at course start is not well comprehended and that the localisation project is what students enjoy most. Therefore, the theoretical input by the teacher is kept short. Rather, the students are asked to construct knowledge themselves through reflection, discussions and group exercises. Individual component activities of the localisation process are dealt with at first. Students themselves explore these topics in groups and present their findings, either face to face or on the LMS, to their colleagues who inquire about items they haven't fully understood, causing

[18] See http://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/europass/home/hornav/Downloads/navigate.action?locale id=1 for samples.

[19] The specific e-portfolio used here is a backed by a CMS engine that enables versioning so students can go back to previous versions of their CV. It also allows for a sophisticated rights management based on user groups. See http://www.factline.com/216915.0/ for a description of the factline e-portfolio.

their peers to research again and specify the matter.[20] The group project typically involves all the component activities which are explored in a concrete situation and all the detail necessary for the project.

The course is started by an introduction on localisation including some examples and an HTML exercise. The first unit is also used for getting to know each other and for students to report on any previous experience they have in localisation. The teacher presents the intended learning outcomes and stresses the goal of working together as a group. This unit is followed up by an assignment of researching the localisation sources provided on the LMS and stating 3 things the students already know about localisation or are capable of doing and 3 things they do not know or cannot do yet. Items stated here typically fall into one of 3 categories: source text website (structure, cultural elements, what parts to localise), technological issues (extracting localisable items, graphics localisation, translation memories usage, terminology management, recompiling the website), and project management issues. These three broad topics are taken up in the next face-to-face session.

The next face-to-face session is dedicated to creating a supportive learning environment. It is started by reflecting about how people learn: learning by researching, by reading, by writing, by teaching, by doing. The choice of working on (perceived) weaknesses vs. working on strengths is presented. It has been observed that students tend to overestimate their weaknesses and underestimate their strengths or skills and knowledge they already possess. In any case learning on all topics will take place since the chosen topic will be presented to the other groups who will need to use their peers' results. The teacher stresses the competences already present: knowing the translation process and being able to apply basic principles to a new situation, being capable of researching, previous experience of individual students in localisation. It is also stressed that this is a situation where making mistakes is not a problem but a chance. During the second part of the session, students deal with the 3 broad topic groups identified from the online exercise. Students join a topic and brainstorm on it in the group. They identify what falls under the topic, what they as a group know already about these issues, what they still need to learn, and where they can get more information. The findings are presented to the class and are discussed together.

In the following online phase the groups put their results on the learning platform so they can be commented on in detail by fellow students and teacher. The teacher gives them hints on follow-up research and next steps to take in the group until the next classroom session. The groups are also encouraged to demand information they require in their group from the other groups.

[20] This approach is called "learning by teaching".

In the initial phase, team building is an important task of the teacher. He or she also has to guide and intervene, to encourage the students to trust in their abilities and to put them on track generally speaking. When the groups start to work together in a more self-organised and autonomous way, teacher intervention can be gradually reduced and shifted from instructing to supporting and supervising.[21] Students are at first irritated by the complexity of localisation and by their gaps in skills and knowledge. Confidence and trust is improved by working on individual skills, whereby the teacher draws on prior knowledge of students who present their knowledge and assist in teaching their peers. Motivation and team spirit are boosted while students work together on the project. The final result is usually quite impressive.

The guided reflection is emphasised at the beginning of term. Following every classroom session, a student summarises what has been done in class and posts the summary in the forum. All students are asked to record individually after each class what the have learned. The last session is used to look back at the project to identify sticky points as well as things that worked well. Students identify their learning progress and compare it to the learning outcomes set out at course start.

Relevance: The instruction approaches of learning by teaching, reflecting, and scaffolding allow students to recognise their prior knowledge and encourages them to approach the localisation project in a confident manner. By looking back at their learning process at the end of term they recognise that they are able to apply previous knowledge and methods to solve complex tasks, which is a typical work situation.

Case *4: slow and fast learning—the translation and quality management course*

The teacher: An experienced practitioner (freelancer) who is working with professional organisations in further training and quality assurance.
The students: Students in the MA Specialised Translation and Terminology.
The goals: Students find out what professional role suits them (freelancer, project manager, employed translator); knowing the requirements of the European quality standard EN 15038; carrying out a translation project under real-life conditions.
The methods: strengths and weakness analysis (by students and by another person), basics presented in class, supplemented by individual exercises, group translation project.

[21] This approach is called scaffolding. Compare http://en.wikipedla.org/wiki/Instructional_scaffolding and http://projects.coe.uga.edu/epltt/index.php?title=Scaffolding

The course is started by the strengths and weakness analysis. Then, the teacher discusses skills needed in different roles and how they can be observed. She continues with practical exercises of creating forms for documenting the translation process, creating a proposal and an invoice, calculating the translation quantity required for achieving a certain target income, etc. A lot of room is reserved for discussion in class. This part is followed by group building and the choice by students of their roles in the project.

The project is a simulation as close as possibly to real-life conditions. A defective source text is taken from a real project. Students only know as of when to expect the request for quotation and need to wait for it. As in a real job, they have to react by writing a proposal, fitting the work into their busy university schedule, and carry out and document all tasks, including proofreading and other quality assurance measures. A major priority is the timely delivery of the target text to the "customer". In the follow-up session, open questions are solved and experience is shared between groups.

Relevance: Slow, analytical, systematic learning is followed by fast, real-world learning in a translation project.[22] The translation job requires the integration of all skills and roles in the translation project under close to real conditions.

Case *5: translation memory and terminology management, team skills—the TM and terminology courses (MA)*

The teachers: There are 2 teachers. Both are experienced practitioners and trainers (one is a translation services provider, the other is a freelancer). Both are experts in their respective fields.
The students: MA students in the Specialised Translation and Terminology course; no prerequisites required
The goals: To professionally use TM and terminology management tools; to be able to develop, reason and implement terminology strategies in a group project.

The methods: Collaborative teaching: Both teachers teach at the same day and time but in different weeks. The courses can be taken individually but the learning is deeper if both courses are taken in the same term. The basic skills and methods are acquired in class. Exercises are carried out in the online phases. Both teachers cover professional profiles and activities. They are available for support during online phases.

[22] Compare Robinson (2003) on the balance of slow (conscious) vs. fast (subliminal) learning and a variety of teaching methods to cater for different learning styles.

Teacher 1, at the beginning of term, teaches TM usage, basic MultiTerm usage, software localisation tools, and does smaller projects. Teacher 2 carries out advanced terminology projects in groups during the second half of term. Projects are presented and discussed at the end of term.

Relevance: Key technology skills are taught in realistic scenarios by experts in the field. Professional profiles are covered and working in teams is trained.

Conclusion from the cases

The cases have demonstrated the practical application of teaching strategies identified as being conducive to employability. Reflection about pre-knowledge, expectations and learning goals is a didactic approach that is relevant at all stages, in the BA and MA. It is particularly useful when new tasks and complex processes are involved. Another strategic principle is that of collaboration, both in the form of collaborative teaching and through group work. It enables students to integrate different perspectives and engage more deeply in learning. Personal development planning is not fully developed but started by looking retrospectively at competences acquired during in the BA programme and in other learning situations. It is also implemented by creating a professional CV in the form of an e-portfolio which is corroborated by certificates and concrete work samples. Catalysts and early adopters of these teaching methods are subject field specialists as well as experienced and didactically trained teachers. Practitioners are well qualified to recreate realistic learning situations.

Interim results

The case studies are showing some promising individual initiatives. On a curricular level, too, a number of steps have already been taken.

Co-operation has been intensified with university and professional partners. A Ceepus mobility programme has been created[23], the Centre for Translation Studies is participating in the Master Européen en Traduction Spécilisée (METS), and a joint European Master in Translation Technology is to start in 2008 (partners: Vienna, Paris 7, Pompeu Fabra Barcelona). E-learning content for translation technology has been developed in the Leonardo da Vinci MeLLANGE project.[24] Training initiatives are undertaken with the professional associations in Austria (with the

[23] e-bologna for Translation Studies Programmes in Central and Eastern European Countries, see description at http://www.ceepus.info/public/network/network_info.aspx
[24] See project website and description of EMTT at http://mellanae.eila.jussieu.fr/

translators' section in the economic chamber and the Universitas translators' association) and abroad (e.g. the Localisation Industries Standards Association - LISA).[25]

The curriculum compliant with the Bologna requirements, established in 2003 already, has been revised. Among others, modularisation has been improved, a project module has been introduced, and learning outcomes have been described in terms of competences. As mentioned above, professional competence has been integrated into the curriculum through teachers who are practitioners and experts, namely in the areas of translation and quality management, translation technology, technical writing, and proofreading.

Efforts have been invested in implementing an e-learning strategy. Currently, 53% of all courses are supported by e-learning methods. The Centre for Translation studies organised its own training of the trainers to reach out to teachers and to enable exchange of didactic ideas among colleagues. This strategy has proved worth its while. Both students and trainers are being supported by e-tutors, who have received technical and didactic training, both in-house to draw on existing experience and by the Centre for Teaching and Learning. At the beginning of the winter term 2007, for the first time all new students have received initial training in a beginners' course.

Outlook

Good work has been done, but more challenges still lie ahead. The outlines laid down in the curriculum want to be filled with life. The diploma supplement is waiting to be introduced. Module cohesion can still be improved. Often, modules are just a conglomeration of individual courses where the added value not immediately visible. Transferable skills can bring that added value at the module level. Such a fine-tuning of learning outcomes requires a co-operative process among teachers moderated by the study programme directors. Inspiration can be taken from cases as those presented above - there is plenty of expertise in collaborative teaching, learner-centred, reflective and blended learning approaches that we can tap into. This may require teachers to review their roles and move towards tutoring instead of lecturing and sharing their expertise instead of keeping it a secret. It also means improved time management by the individual teacher and requires creativity and flexibility in interpreting contracts at the administrative level. This may sound a bit much to ask, but a good number of teachers have taken the effort do not complain about more work but benefit from sharing work and ideas.

[25] See http://www.lisa.org/events/2007lessius/final.html for the Teaching Localization for Global Business Readiness Forum

All in all, the challenge lies in creating sustainable quality by transferring best practice, effective teaching methods, and transferable and technology skills from the individual course to the curricular level. The goals and methods need to be made transparent so that, at the same time, students are able to relate learning to employability and assume responsibility through personal development planning.

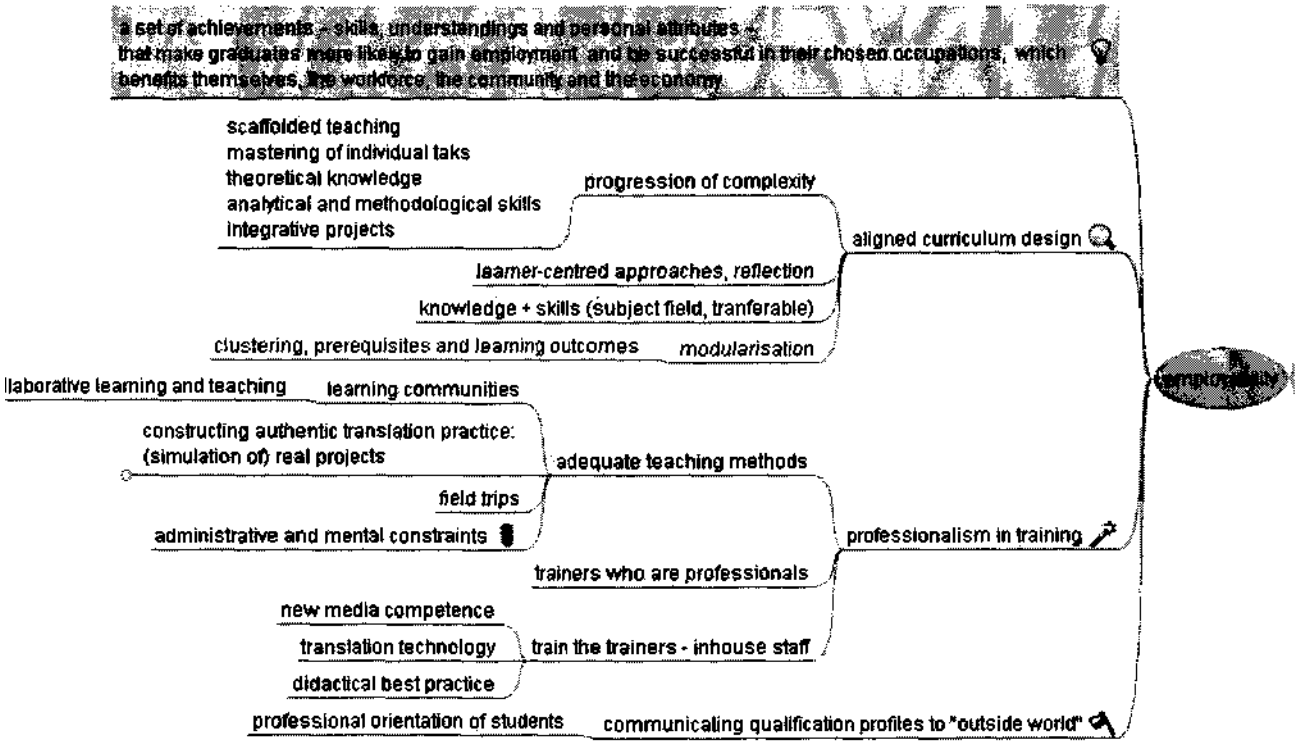

Image 3: Employability – a curricular view

Conclusion

In a fast-paced globalised knowledge society the question of how to prepare future graduates for the job market cannot be ignored by universities. Teaching needs to enable students to understand professional requirements, offer teaching that reflect those requirements, and support students in developing and pursuing career paths. Personal development planning (POP), development of translation technology and transferable skills, and career coaching are adequate measures to this end. The e-portfolio is an excellent tool for training reflection, both about what relevant skills are and how they are acquired, and also serves to make skills profiles and evidence of achievements visible to potential employers.

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