

Title:

Addressing Employability and Enterprise Responsibilities in the Translation Curriculum

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Abstract

This paper discusses 'employability' in Translation Studies in the UK. After a review of current practice and developments, I suggest an adapted working framework that can be applied by Translation and Interpreting Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). I will argue that no single prescribed model can be applied to all institutions but that a holistic and collaborative approach is needed for a realistic implementation of employability practices in the curriculum.

The context of the research on which the paper is based is the current conversations between HEIs and industry stakeholders. Efforts have been made to bridge the gap, but, according to recent studies, graduates still seem to be lacking certain professional service provision skills that are needed in industry. Employment has become a major concern in Higher Education as few will have a job for life given the current economic environment. Hence, graduates today are better placed if they have been encouraged to develop flexibility and adaptability. HEIs must thus now also address employability skills which, as the paper explains, have come to mean more than just finding employment. The research reported in the paper derives from an evaluation of the University of Portsmouth's Master in Translation Studies where employability and enterprise skills are embedded, and are examined critically in the light of the new context.

Keywords: Employability, entrepreneurial skills, translation curriculum, translation competences, labour market

Employment and Employability

Employment is a major concern in UK Higher Education and is measured annually via the DLHE (Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education). This is a national indicator of employment of graduates six months after graduation. What is more difficult to grasp and measure are issues of employability, the trajectory towards that final statistic.

The last decade has seen extensive consideration of the question of employability in the British Higher Education context (Yorke and Knight 2006; Yorke, 2006; Dacre and Sewell 2007; Cole and Tibby 2013; Hepworth, Beaumont, Halligan and Allanson 2015). At the European level, one of the main goals of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA, 1999) from the very start has been to incentivise employability. However, the way in which it is embedded in education still concerns stakeholders, from employers, students and academics to Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and governments. The term itself is also still understood differently by the various stakeholders as it is very frequently interchangeable with that of 'employment' which is governed and affected by the different world contexts, such as states' economies, domestic education agendas and societal needs. Furthermore, even if common goals towards achieving employability have been defined, the reality of how these goals are applied in practice is very different across countries. So, whilst employment can be measured and quantified to some extent by DLHE, employability entails a series of skills that go beyond the aim of becoming part of the labour market.

It is not my intention to review all of the details of the Bologna processes here but to highlight what is understood by the term 'employability', as it has become a buzzword in education. One of the main goals of the Bologna process was indeed the implementation of a quality education system connected with research and lifelong learning to ensure graduates' employability across Europe. This aim highlighted the necessary link between European education systems and the ultimate goal of a graduate in the current economic climate: the securing of employment, especially after the global economic recession that started in 2008 (European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, 2010, 2012, EHEA 2015). The Bologna Follow-up Group (2009, 9) continued to define employability as the ability to gain initial employment, to maintain employment, and to be able to move around within the labour market.

These EU discussions make employability almost interchangeable with employment but both the Bucharest Communiqué (2012) and the Yerevan Communiqué (2015) move the discussion

forward. The former stresses the importance of professional development, innovation and research potential of graduates; the latter recognises that constant changes in the labour market call for the ability to develop new competences and skills. Here, we see an emphasis on the skills needed to adapt to the demands of the ever- changing market place, not just whilst in education but also during our working lives.

These developments reinforce the idea that employability does not only entail the means of finding a job but also of developing a set of skills, attitudes and aptitudes that evolve through our lives and these are precisely the areas that HEIs currently can focus on. The term resonates with the following definition of ‘lifelong learning’ by Aspin and Chapman (2001):

Lifelong learning offers people the opportunity to bring up to date their knowledge of activities which they had either previously laid aside or always wanted to try but were unable; to try out activities and pursuits that they had previously imagined were outside their time or competence; or to work at extending their intellectual horizons by seeking to understand and master some of the recent cognitive advances, that have transformed their worlds.

Given this position and understanding, what does employability encompass and how does it relate to lifelong learning and skills? Cole and Tibby (2013, 5-6) offer us a starting point:

- It is a lifelong process and it applies to all students whatever their situation, course or mode of study
- It is complex and involves a number of areas that interlink
- It is about supporting students to develop a range of knowledge, skills, behaviours, attributes and attitudes which will enable them to be successful not just in employment but in life
- It is a university-wide responsibility
- It is about making the components of employability explicit to students to support their lifelong learning

And what employability is not:

- It is not about replacing academic rigour and standards
- It is not necessarily about adding additional modules into the curriculum
- It is not just about preparing students for employment
- It is not the sole responsibility of the Careers Department (if there is one)
- It is not something that can be quantified by any single measure. For example, in the UK the DLHE survey is a measure of employment not employability

Cole and Tibby’s categorisation is useful and we can see in their widening of the discussion that they are concerned to counter reticence about focussing overly on employment issues in HEIs. Moreover, there seems to be a continuing suspicion within academia that a neo-liberal agenda might affect the independence of universities (see Molesworth, Nixon and Scullion (2009) for a full discussion).

Overcoming such critical perceptions is particularly important in the education of translators and interpreters. Applying the academic rigour taught in the translation classroom can also be compatible with addressing professional skills, such as business and marketplace skills. The curriculum is taking over aspects of training traditionally left to employers and not all translation departments are equipped to address the challenge (see OPTIMALE (Optimising Professional Translator Training in a Multilingual Europe) 2010-2013 later; and Orlando 2016).

Furthermore, employability, as mentioned earlier, has to be necessarily seen as a holistic process and not simplistically as a record of employment since this is only in fact a single piece of the employability jigsaw. Here, by holistic we mean fluid conversations and collaborations with all stakeholders (Sampath, 2015). There are indeed institutions who addressed and implemented employability skills in their curricula long before the Bologna process, but there are also programmes of study where learners are still oblivious to what professional translation practice entails, perhaps due to the lack of strong links with industry. It is also true that curriculum enhancements alone, such as the one showcased later on in this paper, can only help to address the needs of one particular set of learners in a given context and they may not be applicable to programmes where institutional or national constraints prevent the changes. As Kelly identified (2005, 22), curriculum design is affected by contextual factors and needs such as 'social needs, professional standards, industry's needs and views, institutional policy, institutional constraints, disciplinary considerations and student/trainee profiles', so one model does not necessarily fit all.

In recent years, higher university tuition fees in the UK have meant that students expect value for their investment and more professional and career enhancing activities in their degrees. More and more institutions are adopting new employability activities in the curriculum that simulate professional practices in an effort to connect formal learning with industry trends and the topic is also being actively discussed in translator training (Calvo, Kelly and Morón 2010; Chouc and Calvo 2011; Peverati 2013; Rodríguez de Céspedes 2014, 2015, 2016; Massey and Ehrensberger-Dow 2014; Santafé 2014; Thelen 2014). Despite this evidence, Language Service Providers (LSPs) still confirm that, generally speaking, graduates are not fully prepared for the translation profession and that HEIs and LSPs should collaborate further to bridge the so-called gap existing between academia and the labour market.

Current practices: the case of the University of Portsmouth

The MA in Translation Studies at the University of Portsmouth is part of the European Master's in Translation (EMT) network. The EMT group set out a reference framework of translation competences with translation service provision at its core to address the focus on employability in the field. By 'competence', the EMT expert group identified 'the combination of aptitudes, knowledge, behaviour and know-how necessary to carry out a given task under given conditions' (Gambier 2009, 3). Out of the six competences identified (language, intercultural, information mining, technological, thematic and translation service provision), the last one (translation service provision) is deemed to enable graduates to make a successful transition into the profession as it gives them the tools to be able to enter the market place. It is a combination of all these competences that count towards the employability skills needed in the curriculum. Translation service provision skills involve the following: addressing the social role of the translator and being able to meet certain professional requisites such as being aware of and adapting to market needs, being able to meet clients' needs, demands and deadlines, being able to market one's own services and negotiate working conditions (invoices, contracts), or even knowing how to plan and manage work and living conditions, including Continuous Professional Development (CPD). These service provision employability skills are discussed further in the case study below.

The University also participated in OPTIMALE (a collaborative EU- funded project (2010-2013). The project identified current and emerging trends within the European translation industry which can guide HEIs in embedding the necessary professional skills in the curriculum. The project's employers' survey main aims were:

- To determine current and emerging competence requirements within the European translation industry, i.e. identify the competences that employers seek when looking to employ new staff.
- To provide input for further analysis and discussion during eight "regional" workshops bringing together academics involved in Master's degree translator training programmes and industry players from across Europe.
- To provide a pan-European snapshot of specific competence requirements for graduates seeking employment in the industry and for programme directors seeking to improve the employability of their graduates in the translation professions.

OPTIMALE (2012,10)

The survey was distributed to 535 industry respondents to identify the skills and competences that employers were looking for. The top 10 essential skills identified were (in order of importance): ability to produce 100% quality translation, ability to identify client requirements, experience in the field of professional translation, ability to define and/or apply quality control procedures, a university degree in translation or related fields, awareness of professional ethics and standards, ability to use translation memory systems, ability to consolidate client relationships, ability to define sources required and ability to lead complex projects and to produce estimates. As can be seen from the survey's results, business and industry practices are very much at the top of the market agenda.

Initiatives such as the EMT network and the OPTIMALE project indicate that synergies and links between academia and the professional world are developing, creating opportunities for collaboration that can influence curriculum design to include employability needs arising from societal and market needs. But these have only been two driving initiatives of European-based examples, and new workshops and seminars revolving around the theme of professionalization and links between academia and industry are frequently being announced in the UK.

The University participated in two other events: "Future-Proofing the Profession: Equipping the Next Generation of Translators"¹ (July and October 2014) dealing with the same issues. Results from a survey distributed to 380 respondents in the UK (a majority of freelancers (74%), but also in-house and academic staff) revealed that the area where they felt that respondents were least sufficiently equipped were business skills (149 respondents) and interpersonal skills (78 respondents).

There were also a series of recommendations to all stakeholders (ibid, 4):

- Increase cooperation between academic institutions, professional associations and employers/users of translation service providers through regular contact and joint projects.
- Work collaboratively to provide continuing professional development opportunities to improve specialist domain knowledge and technological, interpersonal, intercultural and professional skills, for both recent graduates and established translators.

¹ Collaborative project between the EU Directorate General for Translation, the Chartered Institute of Linguists and the Institute of Translation and Interpreting.

- Increase support for newly established translators through formal and informal contact with experienced practitioners, particularly through mentoring programmes and internships.
- Facilitate access to reliable and comprehensive information on training opportunities and resources
- Engage with business, industry, government and other translation users to support informed commissioning of translation services.

The recommendations above suggest that responsibilities in the training of future professionals need to be shared between academics, professional associations and employers. Only by working together will academia and industry bridge the gap.

The 14th Portsmouth Translation Conference “From Classroom to Workplace” (8 November 2014) was conceived to do precisely that, as it brought together translator trainers, academics, translation professionals, industry stakeholders and students from all over Europe in a dialogue about how translation students become translators and the relationship between professional practice and the academic environment. The papers and workshops given at the conference delved into many areas of employability and it was the driving force and incubator for the inception of this special issue.

The work carried out at the University of Portsmouth in the last few years has also been informed by parallel initiatives, such as the ELIA (European Language Industry Association) exchange network, a partnership between industry and academia, that was created in 2012 as ‘a response to the increased awareness that graduates from translation programmes are, from the employer’s point of view, not equipped with the skills necessary to become part of a productive team without significant training provided by the employer’ (n.d).

In 2016, the international industry associations ELIA, EUATC (European Union of Associations of Translation Companies) and GALA (Globalization & Localization Association), with the support of the European Commission’s Directorate-General of Translation through the LIND project and the EMT university network, produced the survey “Expectations and Concerns of the European Language Industry”, where 445 responses were received from 35 countries. The survey highlighted the importance of honing, in translation-related professions, organisational skills, interpersonal skills and generic information and communication technologies skills supported by formal degrees, communication and language skills and the ability to work in a team.

However, despite all the conversations among stakeholders and the move towards updating and enhancing academic curricula to improve employability skills, we seem to keep asking ourselves the same questions: what is exactly our role as academics when preparing the

next generation of professionals? Whose responsibility is it to prepare budding professionals? How can the Translation and Interpreting Department (which is not a business skills training unit) go about providing this necessary aspect of education?

It is clear from some of the most recent graduate, undergraduate and employer surveys carried out in Europe and in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region that these questions still need further exploration, always under the premise that formal academic training should not be subordinated, but rather complemented, by employers' input (see Schnell and Rodríguez in this issue for a detailed analysis and discussion). They report that, in their employer survey, 50% of Spanish employers in the translation sector rated entrepreneurial activity and innovation with creativity as two of the desired skills in graduates. Henter (2016) found out that in her graduate survey only 14% out of 155 participants (mainly from the UK and Spain) had acquired the business skills needed to become a freelancer; whilst Álvarez-Álvarez and Arnáiz-Uzquiza (in this issue) highlight that '50 % of participants declared that professional competences, among others, are essential and should be integrated more in-depth in translation curricula' in Spain. Al-Batineh and Bilali (in this issue) analysed Translation programmes from the MENA region and found out that 'the number of courses offered in both undergraduate and graduate levels related to professional and instrumental competence is small'. Ruiz Rosendo and Diur (in this issue) also confirm that many interpreting graduates do not have the necessary skills to pass the exams to work for the United Nations.

An Employability framework for Translation and Interpreting Studies

The second part of this paper reports on a framework adapted from Cole and Tibby (2013) of the Higher Education Academy which served as a reflective exercise for our institution to embed employability skills in the curriculum and facilitate the transition of Translation graduates into the workplace. Our planning was also informed by our participation in the networks and projects discussed earlier. The process comprises a full cycle of four stages that are interlinked (based on Kolb's Experiential learning framework, 1984).

Stage 1. Discussion and Reflection

At this initial stage, an institutional analysis was needed to see what areas of employability were catered for and which ones had to be explored. Liaising with career and employability

departments was necessary. Over a series of years and many meetings, the team compiled a series of desired practices and activities. It was felt that employability skills could be embedded in the curriculum via:

-Integrating simulated professional practices in the classroom and through real translation projects and commissions (see Vandepitte 2009; Way 2009, 2016; Thelen 2014; Santafé 2014; Massey and Ehrensberger-Dow 2014; Kiraly 2016). This can also be done by incorporating units that hone attitudes, professional skills and mindsets to enable the move into the professional world (Rodríguez de Céspedes 2014, 2015, 2016) see details of case study under ‘Stage 3’ section.

-As an extra-curricular activity by inviting professional translators and academics from other institutions to give seminars or workshops on current practices and research.

- As co-curricular activities by including internships and work placements. Initiatives such as LIND-Web (Language Industry Web platform), Agora (EU initiative) and EGPS² (European Graduate Placement Scheme) are a testament of the application of employability skills by exposing students to real-life practices before they finish their studies.

The integration of all of the above provides and facilitates a well-rounded set of employability skills that can be applied to the whole programme of study, or a specific unit.

Stage 2. Review Mapping

Having identified these curricular initiatives, we moved to the review mapping stage when specific features of employability were addressed and needs or gaps in the curriculum identified. These were the identification of soft skills such as personal development, self-efficacy (a person’s perception of their ability to reach a goal) and emotional intelligence, essential for success in working relationships. However, how could these be incorporated into the curriculum?

We decided to focus on honing entrepreneurial skills in the translation student, based on the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA 2012, 8) definition of enterprise skills

² The EGPS scheme is explained in detail in this special issue

in education as ‘the application of creative ideas and innovations in practical situations’. We felt that this was an essential aspect of employability in a market which, according to research, will be increasingly freelance (Pym et al, 2012; Rashid, 2016). We then began to appreciate that enterprise is actually a step beyond employability and requires additional skills:

There is unquestionably an overlap between the broad set of skills which contribute to graduate employability and the characteristics of enterprise (...) but they are not identical. Enterprise education can enhance careers education and student employability by enabling students to be more opportunity-focussed, self-aware and attuned to the business environment, for example. Entrepreneurship is part of a wide range of enterprising graduate career options which include freelancing, portfolio careers, and running a part-time business. (QAA 2012, 9)

How could we enable our students to find their niche in preparation for employment? What value was added to their profiles so that they stand out to employers whilst gaining the necessary skills and confidence to launch their careers? We teamed up with the Enterprise team at the University to provide students the guidance needed whilst still studying (see case study later; Lawrence 2013; Young 2014; Owens and Tibby 2014 for further discussions and examples of effective use of entrepreneurial skills in education).

A perceived gap in the curriculum also related to practical experience. Thus, we looked for opportunities to incorporate work placements and internships, using our external collaborators to source these. We worked with translators’ associations and institutes and collaborated with academic colleagues inside and outside the department in order to provide the students with real-life tasks (for a similar example, see also Way 2016 where translation students take on real translation commissions from the Law Faculty).

We sought ways to give value to all of these practices and turned to HEAR (Higher Education Achievement Report, n.d) which recognises voluntary work carried out whilst in Higher Education. This form of work experience can then be recorded in the student’s CV, an asset when looking for employment.

Stage 3. Action

Professional Aspects of Translation

The unit ‘Professional Aspects of Translation’ has been part of the MA Translation Studies since the year 2000. It was initially conceived to address the need of including industry practices, expertise and know-how in the translation curriculum and to equip students with the necessary tools to transition into the professional world. The unit is still offered as an option to campus and distance learning students from all over the world and was revised in 2013 to reflect changes in the profession and the market. It is an option rather than a compulsory unit given the diverse background of our student cohorts- some are already in employment as freelancers whilst others have no industry experience. It represents an example of a unit

embedded into the curriculum that is supported by extra-curricular activities as we will see later.

The unit includes input from a wide range of practitioners through recorded and live in-house presentations and seminars. Students also have access to a wide range of support from the Careers Office. The University's Student and Graduate Enterprise Team leads the learning activities related to self-marketing, business start-up, job application and job search. Students have access to all these services up to five years after graduation including receiving help with writing CVs and mock job interviews. Learning is also promoted through exposure to a range of representatives from the professional world of translation, sustained and promoted by appropriate reading and evaluation, including self-evaluation, and by further development of skills, in particular, research skills for translators.

There is also collaboration with industry stakeholders, the Institute of Translation and Interpreting (ITI), and translation experts, professionals and academics, who are invited as guest speakers. Some of the topics covered in the unit relating to business and soft skills are: preparing and setting yourself up in business as a freelance translator (taxes, invoicing, market requirements, etc.); Continuous Professional Development (CPD) as a means of career progression; how to write a successful CV for a specific context, networking, creative job searches and entrepreneurial skills in translation. Much of the content in the unit is informed by the crucial interaction with LSPs and translation experts enabling the application of industry practices in the curriculum.

Application of Entrepreneurial Skills

Many of our postgraduate students go on to work for translation companies after graduation, but most of them lack the necessary confidence to launch their careers as freelancers immediately after graduation, therefore entrepreneurial skills are developed within the course to fill this gap. According to the European Commission (2016), 'entrepreneurship in Education is about inspiring entrepreneurial potential. People need the mind-set skills and knowledge to generate creative ideas, and the entrepreneurial initiative to turn those ideas into action'. Thus, what does the process of incorporating these skills entail?

'Professional Aspects of Translation' enables students to build the necessary confidence to set up as a freelance translator and to be aware of market expectations and needs. Students prepare

a self-awareness SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis indicating the following:

- Strengths, in relation to skills, experience, knowledge areas, technical competence, positive personality traits, etc.

- Weaknesses, by identifying major negative characteristics against the above conditions.

- Opportunities for establishing a translation business and selling services: current work situation, possible markets, potential clients and other starting points.

- Threats, by listing threats to the establishing of a translation business and selling services such as possible competition for markets, potential clients, and any elements that can block aspirations.

Students can review their SWOT analysis as they progress through the unit as it will underpin many of the decisions that they make in other areas of the course in terms of the content that they include in their CVs, Business Plan and Continuous Development Plan (as part of their final assessment). We also use a Personal Business Model Canvas whereby the individual identifies existing key partnerships, networks and activities that can lead to successfully launching their careers. The students are asked to reflect on who they are and what they have (key resources), who helps them (key partners), who they help (potential customers) and how they help (value provided), how they interact (customer relationships) and finally how they make themselves known and how they deliver (channels). There is a particular emphasis on the value that they, as new professionals, will provide and who will benefit from that value. We are not referring to the actual activity of translating documents here but the value added to this activity- what is the problem that you are trying to solve via translation and who will benefit from this? We are asking students to spot opportunities that will lead them to find their niche with an entrepreneurial spirit that will hopefully stay with them for life.

From the start, we offer help and guidance and place particular attention on the aforementioned points but also on the means needed to set up as a freelancer: VAT and tax requirements, invoicing and other administration issues, market requirements and marketing services (website, branding and effective use of social media), negotiation (rate, deadlines and conditions of work) and dealing with complaints. A Careers Advisor is involved in the marking of CVs and covering letters targeted to a real company as we ask students to find a real job advert appearing in a professional journal or website. Colleagues from the Enterprise team help

individuals who are ready to launch their careers in setting up their freelance business via an extra-curricular programme ‘RouteToStartup™’ that develops service or business ideas towards enterprise effectiveness.

As part of the unit, students also write a business plan and a CPD plan with particular attention to upgrading their knowledge in the use of new technologies. The CPD plan includes a five-year outline of career goals and potential income. The ITI recommends 30 hours of CPD (five days) per year to its members, so we advise that students use this parameter as a guide. As outlined earlier, the individual SWOT analysis and Personal Business Model Canvas inform students of their own current skills and attributes and helps them in identifying other particular needs and to boost self-confidence. Key areas that are addressed are: how to gain experience, how to set up business, how to build saleable expertise and how to market professional services. Acquiring business skills tends to be one area needing development, but students also include key content to do with improving language, translation, subject and technology skills.

Although there are private courses that provide training on setting up as a freelancer, by adopting the employability and enterprise skills mentioned above in the curriculum, students can have a head start to launch their professional careers before they leave academia. The goals of this unit are hence threefold: (1) to enhance self-confidence and awareness of potential career paths starting from the initial stages as described in their personal SWOT analysis; (2) to consequently develop a clear planned professional pathway (five-year CPD plan); (3) to ultimately implement the aim of helping them transition into employment. All of these elements form part of the unit learning objectives and are also part of the assessment so they are formally incorporated in the curriculum.

Stage 4. Evaluation

This final stage links to the first stage of reflection. Once the changes have been applied and put into practice, formal feedback from students, colleagues and external stakeholders are treated as performance indicators to see what has worked.

Students have taken on internships where they have carried out different roles in the UK and abroad because of our networks. These have led to successful outcomes in the form of job offers. For example, four translation companies in the county of Hampshire have recruited students directly from us since the year 2000 and we use them as sounding boards for developing new curriculum initiatives. Job opportunities, internships and placements are announced via the MA course site and course social media to keep learners aware of updates. In the period 2014-2015, the DLHE, one of the most tangible performance indicators of employment, not employability, shed the following data: out of 65% respondents of the student cohort, 100% of our alumni surveyed that year were holding professional or managerial posts.

In the case of the unit 'Professional Aspects of Translation', we have now had formal qualitative feedback for the last two years from students who have rated the unit highly in terms of gaining further knowledge in professional business practices and market needs. The course external examiner commended the course for its pioneering content in terms of preparation for the profession (employability skills) in the periods 2014-2015 and 2015-2016. Some students have been offered employment in translation companies and others have launched their freelance careers as a result. Although we do not currently hold exact numbers given that our graduates are located all over the world and do not necessarily maintain contact with the University after graduation, 23 alumni of the MA Translation Studies responded to an online survey conducted by the EMT steering working group on student employment and the future of the profession (March 2016). Out of the 23, 12 indicated that they were self-employed language professionals and the rest were working in companies or the public sector. These pieces of evidence are admittedly performance indicators of employment. It is, however, acknowledged that not all students feel prepared for the jump into the professional world as some may need to gain further specialisation so we may not see immediate results of the employability and enterprise skills that they have learnt from the course. The following testimonials from postgraduate students highlight some of the benefits of taking the unit:

"I would not be exaggerating if I said that what I got from this unit so far is much more rewarding for me as a will-be translator than any other unit, I used the cv and the cover letter

for this assessment to apply for real jobs and for the first time in 5 months I got 5 replies from companies”

“I've only been doing this unit since January but have already gained so much valuable insight into the translation profession and feel like I have clear goals and pathways.”

“I used the CV and cover letter to apply for a few jobs and have been given an interview. Although there's still a bit to go, I'm just so pleased (and shocked!) to have got this far. Especially since I wouldn't even have considered applying before if we didn't have this particular assessment task”

“This is an excellent course pointing us out to very good resources and directions.”

The next step will be to obtain data from alumni directly via questionnaires in order to quantify the number of students who have gained the necessary confidence to move into freelancing and into company roles as a result of taking the unit which, as evidenced in this paper, incorporates the so-called professional service provision including enterprise and employability skills.

Further research is also needed to fit these skills into the bigger picture of today's translation industry and training. This paper does not cover, for example, the impact of new technologies and automation in our society and the profession (see for example Frey and Osborne, 2017; Pym 2011, Pym et al. 2012 and Pym, Orrego-Carmona, and Torres-Simón 2016) but it would be interesting to explore how HEIs are addressing the rise of new technologies in terms of employability and industry needs.

Conclusion

This paper has taken a Eurocentric stance on the status of employability skills in the translation curriculum. The unit ‘Professional Aspects of Translation’ showcased here might not be immediately transferable to other world contexts without some adaptation. However, the employability framework provided serves as a starting point to reflect on the activities that can be incorporated in the classroom and how employability responsibilities can be addressed in a full organic cycle consisting of four interlinked stages. The role of HEIs has evolved as employability skills are asked for by students, central governments and beyond.

As every institution has to deal with differing environments, a holistic approach to enhancing employability skills in the curriculum is needed. Collaboration between academic networks and industry stakeholders needs to be underpinned by formalised approaches. Matching students’ budding professional abilities to local job markets that constantly change is a challenge, especially where and if the status of the profession itself is undervalued. Developing lifelong learning skills such as flexibility and adaptability together with self-efficacy are crucial in today’s translation profession.

Most Translation and Interpreting Studies programmes cater for core translation academic skills but graduates need to also be provided with the tools (employability skills) to transition into the labour market in order to be employable. These include the so-called soft skills and other service provision skills mentioned in this paper. This is particularly true in the case of graduates who are thinking of becoming freelancers as they need to be equipped to approach their careers with an understanding of entrepreneurial and start up skills. It is clear that our role as trainers and educators has now evolved as the curriculum is taking over aspects of training traditionally left to employers. We need to work collaboratively within and outside our institutions to provide the skills needed at a professional level, but it is also our duty as educators to inspire and question beyond the campus and give back to society.

Formal feedback from students, external bodies and employers will improve areas that need refining in the curriculum and it will also help disseminate best practices within the institution and outside the institution.

Ultimately, employability skills should not only be incorporated in theory but also in practice in the form of realistic and applicable learning objectives and assessments. These can

be achieved as long as HEIs and national education boards support curriculum developments and there is a timely frame in which to apply them.

We can hence conclude that responsibilities in the training of future professionals need to be shared and learners can also take an active role by becoming entrepreneurial. With the right amount of institutional support, employability and enterprise skills can be embedded in the curriculum but only by working together will academia and industry genuinely bridge the gap.

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