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A Handbook for Translator Trainers
A Guide to Reflective Practice

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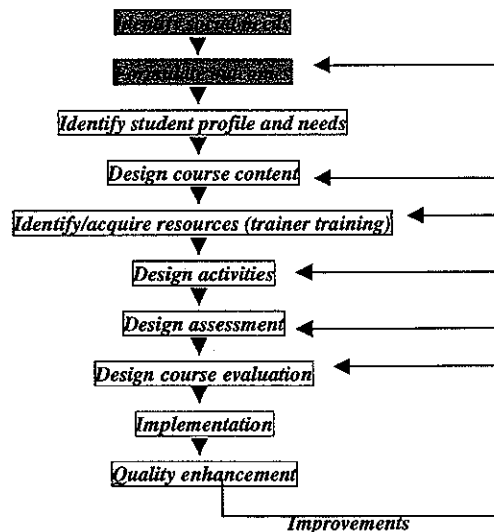


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2. Planning and Writing Objectives/outcomes



Summary and aims

This chapter deals with the outcomes of the training process. It may seem a little strange to start at the end, so to speak, but from the systematic approach to curriculum design used in this book, it is essential in designing any training process to establish first and foremost what we intend to achieve. By the end of this chapter, readers should be familiar with concepts such as teaching objectives/learning outcomes, **generic and specific competences**; **translation/translator competence**, and should be able to establish what professional translators of today need to know and to be able to do in order to fulfil their professional tasks in their own particular context; all of these concepts are useful in order to be able to describe accurately what the intended outcomes of a particular **programme or course** are, or should be. It is particularly important to stress that, although there are undoubtedly commonalities to the professional translator's situation and activity throughout the world, there are regional, national and cultural differences, as well as differences from one sector of the profession to another, which should be taken into account in the design of any specific training programme. This chapter will not, for that reason, actually propose one set of objectives/outcomes, but rather offer a broad framework within which teachers/trainers can design their own.

Curricular design and planning

In the words of Cannon and Newble,

the key to curriculum planning is to forge educationally sound and logical links between planned intentions (expressed as objectives), course content, teaching and learning methods, and the assessment of student learning while taking account of student characteristics. (2000: 142-143)

In the chapters following this one, we will take what has been described as the systematic approach (D'Andrea, 2003: 29-30) to curricular planning and cover each of the elements in turn, starting – as stated above – at the end, or rather the intended end, of the process: its **aim(s)**, and lower-level subdivisions of those overall aims, known as specific learning outcomes. The degree to which you are personally involved in this process as an individual teacher or trainer will depend to a great extent on the institutional and organizational context you are working in. In some university systems individual lecturers have little say in planning, particularly at the macro-level of overall course structure, but even at the micro-level of individual **modules**; in others, the design of modules depends almost exclusively on the individual lecturer, who may also have considerable say in the overall course design; in an **in-house training** context, you may be asked to design an entire short course yourself, or to run a course already designed in great detail by a training unit; in most contexts, there is some sort of academic planning committee or training unit which you can opt to join or may be appointed to at some point in your career.

In all of these cases, it is important for you to be aware of how decisions are taken, what your role may be in the process, and to be able to offer reasoned proposals when necessary. The more aware individual members of teaching staff or trainers are of how the curriculum has been designed, and perhaps more importantly, why it has been designed in that way, the more personally involved they will become in the process and the more effective a contribution they can make to the overall aims of the course.

Think of your own present context, and the courses you are responsible for. How have they been designed at different levels (overall course structure, individual modules...)? Who designed them? What has been, is, or could be your role as an individual teacher or trainer?

Teaching objectives/learning outcomes

It may seem extremely obvious that the first step in any design process is to establish what we intend to achieve by implementing it. It is, however, the case

that many training courses, especially those run in certain university systems and academic traditions, do not have explicit definitions of their intentions which can be referred to by both staff and students as a basic reference point. It has now for some time been recognised in most systems, as part of the general move towards improving student learning, that explicit intentions must be formulated for all courses. Early steps in this direction usually involved the writing of teaching objectives, i.e. what the teacher wanted the student to learn, with emphasis on teacher input. Currently, emphasis is being placed in many systems on learning outcomes, or what students will be able to do at the end of the course. Whichever point of view is prevalent in your context, it is most likely that courses are now required to be explicit and transparent about their objectives/outcomes.

Factors in defining intended learning outcomes (objectives)

Let us now move on to how we can go about defining our intentions, both at the level of overall aims and of lower-level subdivisions, i.e. specific learning outcomes/objectives. There are many different possible sources, depending once again on the context you are working in, these being a few of the most frequently important:

- social needs (often linked to the local or regional economy)
- professional standards (sometimes not expressed formally; in other cases, very clearly set out and broken down into component parts, as is the case of the UK National Standards by the Language National Training Organization: see full reference in further reading)
- industry's needs and views
- institutional policy (or corporate policy in the private sector)
- institutional constraints (national regulations or legislation; available training resources, etc.)
- disciplinary considerations (existing research and literature; common practice on other similar courses in your country or others)
- student/trainee profiles.

Think again of your own context. Which of the above are particularly appropriate as sources for planning learning outcomes? Are there others not mentioned here which you have to take into account? Which?

One of the most important of these factors is beyond doubt the socio-cultural and institutional context in which courses are to be offered. There

is clearly a large difference between a full undergraduate or postgraduate programme at a state university, where there are general educational considerations to be taken into account, and a professional development course organized by a professional association or a short in-house induction programme at a large language service provider, where such considerations do not come into play at all. Similarly, for example, universities in systems with a strongly academic tradition will not formulate their overall aims in the same way as those with a more vocational tradition. One might indeed question whether the former would actually be interested in translator training programmes as such at all! Quite a different matter is the training of future TS researchers, although in practice in many cases these two very different aims are expected of the very same undergraduate programme, yet another consideration influencing the definition of outcomes.

Which do you consider to be extra or special constraints on the overall intentions of your programme in your particular context? Think of institutional considerations (academic vs. vocational tertiary education or a public service, etc.) or resources, whether NLP, technical or other. We will return to these in Chapters 2 and 3. How do these constraints affect the aims of the programme?

As institutional factors will vary tremendously from one context to another, we will not attempt to go into detail on them here, limiting our considerations to current general tertiary education trends, but rather we will try to stress other factors which are more likely to be common to the many different contexts you may be planning training for. In this chapter these may be summed up essentially in two broad areas: professional considerations (standards and opinions from future employers), and disciplinary considerations (existing research and literature in TS regarding training). In the next chapter we will go on to look in depth at both student profiles and teaching staff. This does not mean that the other factors are less important. Indeed, on many occasions they will be determinant in the decision-making process, but it would be impossible for us to cover all possible scenarios here. For an interesting, if controversial, case study in the analysis of institutional policy and academic politics as an allegedly decisive factor in curriculum planning in Translation in Spain, for example, see Pym (2000).

Professional considerations

If our overall aim is to train professional translators, a logical starting point

would seem to be a description of what professional translators are actually required to do. This is one of the major starting points chosen by the **European Higher Education Area** in the **Bologna Process** currently underway to harmonize higher education throughout the European Union for the curricular design of higher education courses in general. Similar processes are taking place in higher education in other parts of the world, a point we will return to below in the section on competences or skills.

Based on your own experience or knowledge of the sector, write a brief description of what you believe professional translators actually do in their daily work.

You may have found that such a seemingly simple task is not in fact as easy to fulfil as it may initially appear! Many authors agree that the profession has become increasingly complex and disperse in recent years, most particularly – although not exclusively – with the advent of new technologies. Let us now attempt to outline the essentials of the current state of the translation profession, with all the precaution that such an enormous task warrants. Compare the different points made with your own description.

A fairly standard reply to the question “what does a translator do?” is found in the following careers guidance description by the UK Languages National Training Organization (LNTO, today the National Centre for Languages, CILT) in a 2002 leaflet:

Translators work with the written word. They convert documents from the source language into the language of the people who need to know and read the content of the translation (ie the target language) and the final translated document should read as clearly as it did in the original.
(<http://www.cilt.org.uk>)

This simple description is of course open to all kinds of criticism and comment. Let us examine some of them: the text assumes, contrary to much contemporary practice (multilingual documentation, for example), that there is always a source text. It further assumes that the source and target texts are both in entirely written mode, thus excluding a wide variety of new (and not so new) textual forms (audiovisual or multimedia texts of all kinds, including software, for example); and that the target text is always *needed* by the reader. Translation is described as taking place between languages; and the final dictum on the clarity of the target text and its relation to that of the “source language document” would be questioned by much professional practice (where source texts are often of poor quality and standard translation practice is to improve on it), and indeed falls

foul of some contemporary translation theory (where ease of reading of the target text is sometimes criticized as strongly domesticating). Perhaps a more useful and up-to-date description of the profession would take bi- and multilingual text production as its core element. This obviates (as do many authentic professional situations) the need for an actual source text as such; and allows for the inclusion of increasingly frequent multimedia text forms. It also avoids normative statements which may or may not be of application to specific professional situations.

Another way of approaching the current state of the field is through analysis of job advertisements and descriptions: let us consider the following job advertisement for translators in a large international language service provider or the official European Commission job profile for translators below.



SDL International, one of the leading localisation companies with offices globally, are currently recruiting high calibre, dynamic individuals for the following positions. SDL's clients include Microsoft, Corel, Disney, Kodak amongst other blue chip companies.

Permanent Spanish IT Translators – Ref. SP Uni2000

To be responsible for the translation of software, on-line help, Web Sites, documentation, games, as well as testing of localised products and linguistic advising in studio recordings.

The successful candidates should meet the following requirements:

- Spanish mother tongue speaker
- Educated to degree level, preferably with a qualification in Translation (English)
- High level of computer literacy
- Familiarity with translation memory tools such as Trados
- High level of interactive and communication skills
- Detail-oriented and quality-focused

In addition to a unique opportunity for career development in an international and very challenging environment, SDL offers a competitive salary, pension, salary continuation, life assurance and private medical insurance.

Please send your CV to:
Alison Cracknell, SDL International, Butler House, Market Street,
Maidenhead, Berkshire, SL6 8AA, Fax: +44 (0)1628 410505
Email: acracknell@sdlintl.com quoting the Ref Number.

Figure 2. Advertisement for a translator position in SDL International (reproduced with permission)

Translators with the Commission are required to translate, normally into their first language, texts of a political or legal nature that are frequently complex and encompass all the European Union's areas of activity (economic, financial, scientific, technical, etc.).

The **basic profile** we look for in our recruits is that of high-calibre graduates with an appropriate qualification in any scientific or arts discipline relevant for the work of the EU-institutions, and the capacity to adapt and evolve professionally to meet our basic requirements. These requirements are:

- an ability to grasp varied and often complex issues, to react swiftly to changing circumstances, to manage information and to communicate effectively;
- an inclination to show initiative and imagination, and to maintain a high degree of intellectual curiosity and motivation;
- a capacity to work consistently and under pressure, both independently and as part of a team, and to fit into a multicultural working environment;
- an ability to operate under administrative rules of the type applicable to a large public-service organisation.

In addition to these basic requirements, which apply to all Commission recruits regardless of their specialisation, our recruitment profile focuses on graduates who have – or are prepared to acquire – the **specific skills** set out below, and are willing to upgrade these and other skills throughout their term of employment.

Language skills

- Perfect command of all aspects and stylistic levels of the first language.
- Thorough knowledge of two or more other languages, preferably English, French or German, or – if only one of those – of that language plus one of the other official EU languages.

Thematic skills

- Familiarity with economics, financial affairs, legal matters, technical or scientific fields.

Translation skills

- A capacity to understand texts in the source language and to render them correctly in the target language, using the register and other language conventions that correspond to their intended purpose.
- A capacity to obtain rapidly and efficiently, in both source language and target language, the background knowledge (facts, terminology, language conventions) necessary to produce a translation of professional standard, even in less widely known fields. This includes the ability to use research tools and to become familiar with research strategies.

- A capacity to master computer-assisted translation and terminology tools, as well as standard office-automation software.
http://europa.eu.int/comm/dgs/translation/workingwithus/recruitment/translator_profile_en.htm

Finally, reflections by leading professionals and theoreticians add further elements to our analysis. An interesting description is that of Shreve in 2000, reflecting precisely on the evolution of the profession:

The profession of translation [can be seen as] a special kind of ecosystem moving through time, modifying itself under the pressure of influences emanating from its socio-cultural environment, and evolving successfully from one form into another. (Shreve 2000: 217)

The constant evolution evoked here is, I believe, essential to any description of professional activity in our age. Not in vain is one of the essential concepts of current education policy that of lifelong learning in recognition of the impossibility for educational institutions clearly to define the future needs of society in concrete terms, and thus the need to prepare trainees to be flexible, adapt and constantly learn new skills.

Shreve goes on to mention in his text the dispersion of the language industry (which, he claims, has replaced and subsumed the translation profession) into many different professional roles often taken on by graduates trained as translators: bilingual editors, multimedia designers, research and information specialists, cultural assessors, multicultural software designers, software localizers, terminologists, and project managers (Shreve, 2000: 228).

Similarly, Kingscott (2000: 227) speaks of “a growing fragmentation” of the field. He further identifies as changes in the profession and trends for future developments: the globalisation of communication; the increasing use of English as a “world auxiliary language”; the changing pattern in the importance of other languages; translation becoming part of documentation and no longer regarded as a separate activity; the steady expansion of the use of language technology; and finally the multimodal nature of much text production.

As we have seen, then, there is an enormous range of activities and hence of skills required, and yet, they all belong to what is broadly termed the translation profession. This is clearly a problem for training courses, except in the case of a minority of very specialized courses designed to train specialists in only one area of translation expertise. Generalist courses, the vast majority of training courses the world over, have to try to cater for this huge diversity in the current market, while at the same time foreseeing likely future developments students should be prepared for.

Compare the various activities described in the job advertisement and profile above and the comments by Shreve and Kingscott with your own description of translation activity in your context. Bear in mind that although there are common elements, your curricular design will depend largely on your own context, firstly in terms of aims and target employment market and secondly in terms of educational structures.

If we are to describe our overall aims in terms of what professionals are required to do and to know, we need to be able to systematize the common denominator of what translators actually do in their daily work. This question has normally been addressed in Translation Studies under the somewhat controversial term or concept of translation or translator competence, which we will now go on to examine.

Disciplinary considerations

The following is a brief summary of what some authors in TS have said about translation competence. It has no pretension to being exhaustive, choices having been made from the existing literature to illustrate the wide range of differing proposals which have been drawn up, in a range of geographical contexts. Those chosen are presented here in chronological order, showing how the debate has evolved, and how (some of) the proposals have mutually influenced each other.

Wilss (1976: 120) suggests that a translator should have three competences, in an interesting early description of translation competence for curricular design purposes. It is interesting because it outlines several points which are later to be developed by others:

- a) a receptive competence in the source language (the ability to decode and understand the source text)
- b) a productive competence in the target language (the ability to use the linguistic and textual resources of the target language)
- c) a supercompetence, basically defined as an ability to transfer messages between linguistic and textual systems of the source culture and linguistic and textual systems of the target culture.

Delisle (1980: 235), in the conclusion to his seminal work on translation pedagogy (see Chapter 1), identifies what he defines as four major essential competences: the linguistic, encyclopaedic, comprehension and re-expression competences. Roberts (1984: 172), also in Canada, offers the following five-point description:

- 1) linguistic [competence] (ability to understand the source language and quality of expression in the target language)
- 2) translational (ability to grasp the articulation of meaning in a text and to transfer it without deforming it into the target language, avoiding interference)
- 3) methodological (ability to document themselves on a given subject and to assimilate the corresponding terminology)
- 4) disciplinary (ability to translate texts in certain basic disciplines such as economics, computing, law)
- 5) technical (ability to use different translation aids, such as word processing, terminology data bases, dictaphones, etc.) [my translation from the French original]

It is interesting to note that Delisle himself (1992: 42) later accepts this version by Roberts, and underlines her substantial coincidence with Nord (1988/1991).

In one of the major works by the functionalist school of translation, not least because it is one of the first to be published in English, rather than German (see Chapter 1), Nord (1988/1991) claims that:

...the essential competences required of a translator [are] competence of text reception and analysis, research competence, transfer competence, competence of text production, competence of translation quality assessment, and, of course, linguistic and cultural competence both on the source and the target side. (1991: 235)

Pym (1992 and more recently in 2003) distinguishes between knowledge shared by translators and other professionals: grammar, rhetoric, terminology, world knowledge, common sense and commercial strategies; and what he calls "the specifically translational part of their practice", which is neither linguistic, nor common, nor commercial, but rather for him consists of two abilities:

- The ability to generate a target-text series of more than one viable term (target text₁, target text₂, ... target text_n) for a source text.
- The ability to select only one target term from this series, quickly and with justified confidence, and to propose this target text as a replacement of source text for a specified purpose and reader. (1992: 281)

Gile (1995:20) does not use the term translation competence, but does offer a description of what he terms "components of translation expertise": passive command of passive working languages; active command of active working languages; sufficient knowledge of subject matter of texts and speeches (elsewhere he uses the term "world knowledge"); knowing how to translate.

Hurtado (1996: 34) offers the following list of five subcompetences: linguistic competence in two languages; extralinguistic competence; analysis and synthesis; “translational” competence; professional competence.

Hatim and Mason (1997: 205) propose a model of, in their terms, “translator abilities”, based on Bachmann’s model of linguistic competence (1990), and the discourse perspective of the authors, in which three different areas of skills are contemplated: source text processing skills, transfer skills and target text processing skills.

Campbell, writing on translation into the second language (1998: 154) suggests a model based on three competences: target language textual competence, disposition, and monitoring competence, outlined after empirical research with a group of Arabic-speaking translation students working into English in Australia; the author himself recognizes the need to incorporate other elements into the model, which he considers provisional. In his conclusions, Campbell formulates four basic principles relating to translation competence models:

1. Translation competence can be separated into relatively independent components, and those components can be used as building blocks in curriculum design.
2. Translation education is a matter of intervention in the development of the various components of translation competence.
3. Students are likely to attain different levels of achievement in the various components of translation competence given the imbalance in their bilingual skills.
4. The assessment of translation quality is best seen as a matter of profiling the competence of learners, rather than simply measuring the quality of their output. (1998: 163)

Neubert (2000: 6) proposes the following classification, which he himself defines as “approximate”: linguistic; textual; specific subject area; cultural; and transfer competence. As additional and original points of interest, he further suggests that the competences are interrelated, and that the overall competence is characterized by its “complexity, heterogeneity, approximation, open-endedness, creativity, situationality, and historicity” (2000: 5).

In recent and ongoing research, the PACTE group at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona in Spain has developed a model of translation competence, drawing on previous work by Hurtado, Presas and Beeby, all currently members of the group, among others. The six subcomponents of translation competence are defined as:

- communicative competence in the two languages
- extra-linguistic competence

- professional instrumental competence
- psycho-physiological competence
- strategic competence and
- transfer competence, these last two being central and governing all the others. (PACTE, 2000:101)

This proposal is interesting in that, like Neubert’s, it establishes explicit interrelations between the different components, but differs in suggesting that these may be hierarchical in nature, situating transfer and strategic competence at a higher level than the others.

As we can see from this brief overview, although there is a level of agreement on some of the components of translation competence, particularly on the need for linguistic knowledge, there is an incredible variety of conceptual and terminological approaches.

Which, if any, of the descriptions do you consider to be most useful for the purpose of designing a training curriculum? Why?

Some of the controversy surrounding the concept of translation/translator competence lies with the term itself. We have already seen that some authors avoid it altogether, preferring “abilities”, “components of expertise”, or others. The concept itself is also used for multiple purposes. Campbell (1998: 6) suggests three main uses for the concept in TS:

- a) the development of psychological models of the translation process;
- b) the summative evaluation of the quality of translations as products (he is very critical of what has been done so far in this application);
- c) the training of translators.

And, indeed, different authors have used the concept in these different ways: some in an attempt to describe the actual translation process as an expert activity from a cognitive perspective, whilst others have used the term from an educational point of view in a way similar to that adopted frequently by curricular planners today in many parts of the world. It is probably the case that these different applications have unnecessarily complicated the debate surrounding competence.

Some criticisms (see Mayoral 2001a, for example) underline the fact that the catalogue of subcompetences, subcompetencies or components of the macrocompetence (note the range of terms!) has not been empirically proven. This criticism is undoubtedly pertinent if the authors using or proposing the

catalogue are claiming to describe the actual cognitive process of translating. If, however, they intend to provide a list of skills which a training course should provide, then the criticism would seem to be less well founded. Any direct or indirect observation (such as the one we have just carried out above) of the profession will quickly yield a series of skills which are currently required of recruits. Similarly, recent more formal surveys of employers have given information on what they expect translators to be able to do, thus providing empirical data, not on the cognitive process, but on the current demands of the sector. This procedure is in keeping with current curricular planning practice, and seems easily justifiable. Not to provide a detailed list of objectives as a starting point for the development of a training course on the grounds that insufficient empirical research has been carried out to sustain the proposal seems to me to be neglecting the very obvious point that translators are today enrolling on courses the world over, and that these courses can only work if they are clear on what their objectives are. Whether or not that list of objectives or intended outcomes uses the term "competence" seems secondary.

Taking into account the professional and disciplinary considerations above, I would suggest that the following is a useful list of areas of competence desirable in graduates from translation courses for the purpose we are interested in here, that of curricular design. The list may require completion with further elements in some contexts, depending on the role of training programmes, the areas may overlap on occasion to some extent, and each of the areas can of course be subdivided to differing degrees, depending on how specific our definitions of aims, objectives or outcomes need to be.

- Communicative and textual competence in at least two languages and cultures. This area covers both active and passive skills in the two languages involved, together with awareness of textuality and discourse, and textual and discourse conventions in the cultures involved.
- Cultural and intercultural competence. Culture here refers not only to encyclopaedic knowledge of history, geography, institutions and so on of the cultures involved (including the translator's or students' own), but also and more particularly, values, myths, perceptions, beliefs, behaviours and textual representations of these. Awareness of issues of intercultural communication and translation as a special form thereof is also included here.
- Subject area competence. Basic knowledge of subject areas the future translator will/may work in, to a degree sufficient to allow comprehension of source texts and access to specialized documentation to solve translation problems.
- Professional and instrumental competence. Use of documentary resources of all kinds, terminological research, information management for these

purposes; use of IT tools for professional practice (word-processing, desktop publishing, data bases, Internet, email...) together with more traditional tools such as fax, dictaphone. Basic notions for managing professional activity: contracts, tenders, billing, tax; ethics; professional associations.

- Attitudinal or psycho-physiological competence. Self-concept, self-confidence, attention/concentration, memory. Initiative.
- Interpersonal competence. Ability to work with other professionals involved in translation process (translators, revisers, documentary researchers, terminologists, project managers, layout specialists), and other actors (clients, initiators, authors, users, subject area experts). Team work. Negotiation skills. Leadership skills.
- Strategic competence. Organizational and planning skills. Problem identification and problem-solving. Monitoring, self-assessment and revision.

The concept of competences in higher education and training

We shall continue to use the term *competences* in the remainder of this book, despite the controversy in TS on the issue, for several reasons set out here. Firstly, we do not intend in any way to offer a model for the cognitive process of translating, limiting our concept of competence to that of intended learning outcomes, thus hopefully avoiding much of the confusion outlined above. Secondly, it does still seem to be the preferred term in TS. Thirdly, it is the preferred term, on the whole, in current higher education and training research, and particularly in the European Higher Education Area. Fourthly, it is a wider concept than that of skills, also often used in educational contexts. A recent EU working group progress report by the Basic skills, entrepreneurship and foreign languages Working Group for the implementation of Education and Training 2010 defends the choice in this way: "*Competence* was considered to refer to a combination of skills, knowledge, aptitudes and attitudes, and to include disposition to learn as well as know-how" (2003: 10).

Much, and perhaps nowadays most, translator training takes place at universities on undergraduate and postgraduate courses of different kinds. These major contexts thus merit some specific attention in the next few pages; many of the considerations put forward will also have some application to other training contexts (in-house training; professional associations' continuous education and professional development courses, for example).

There has been a recent move in European higher education, and also in other parts of the world, toward a new model of tertiary education, where the key elements are clear definition of aims and intended outcomes and more student-centred learning. This move, together with an attempt to harmonize European

curricula to facilitate graduate professional mobility with Europe and to make European higher education more competitive in the world, has led to a (hopefully) fruitful period of self-analysis and reflection in many tertiary education institutions. Clearly, translator training units, whether they be schools, faculties, departments or whatever, must take part in this overall movement and, indeed, have a great deal to contribute to the debate and analysis, for several reasons, not least of which is that as a discipline we have always shown a strong interest in training as a preferred area for research. It is the case that as an essentially vocational discipline, we have put much collective thought and debate into how best to train future professionals, which is not necessarily the case of other less clearly vocational fields.

The current debate also has a lot to offer TS. Let us consider here the concept of competences as part of this reform process, and see how it applies to our field, bearing in mind the brief discussion of the concept in TS above. Distinction is made between general, generic or transferable competences on the one hand, and subject area specific competences on the other. The first should be the aim of all undergraduate or postgraduate courses, the second only of those in their own field. The first form part of the tertiary education sector's mission to help individuals attain personal fulfilment and development, inclusion and employment; the second play a role more specific to their own respective fields.

With regard to this two-fold classification of competences, a striking idiosyncrasy of our field's is the way in which as a discipline we offer access to a very wide range of generic competences which I believe it is difficult to find today in other academic fields at university level. In this sense, if we take the list of generic competences as outcomes for undergraduate programmes drawn up as a basis for the work of the pilot Tuning project in the EU (see Figure 3 below), and compare it with the definitions of translation (hence subject-specific) competence above, we discover that our graduates are almost uniquely qualified as flexible, adaptable and highly employable citizens. This strong point of our training is something we should be aware of, as the incredible proliferation of translator training courses in numerous countries in recent years does now mean that many graduates from our courses will not work professionally as translators, thus implying that we could run the risk of training people with highly specialised competences which would not then be of use to them personally on graduation. The applicability of many of our subject area specific competences to other fields, that is their transferability, means that this risk is substantially reduced.

Overall aims

After our brief review of the professional, disciplinary and general higher education considerations, but most particularly taking into account your own input regarding your own professional, institutional or organizational context, you

<i>Generic competences (González and Wagenaar, 2002)</i>
<p><i>Instrumental competences</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oral and written communication in the native language Knowledge of a second language Capacity for analysis and synthesis Capacity for organization and planning Basic general knowledge Grounding in basic knowledge of the profession Elementary computing skills Information management skills (ability to retrieve and analyse information from different sources) Problem solving Decision making
<p><i>Interpersonal competences</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Critical and self-critical abilities Teamwork Interpersonal skills Ability to work in an interdisciplinary team Ability to communicate with experts in other fields Appreciation of diversity and multi-culturality Ability to work in an international context Ethical commitment
<p><i>Systemic competences</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capacity for applying knowledge in practice Research skills Capacity to learn Capacity to adapt to new situations Capacity for generating new ideas (creativity) Leadership Understanding of cultures and customs of other countries Ability to work autonomously Project design and management Initiative and entrepreneurial spirit Concern for quality Will to succeed

Figure 3. Generic competences as defined in the EU Tuning Project

should now be able to broach the writing of objectives or outcomes for the programme or course you are designing. Objectives or outcomes should be formulated for all levels of planning: for overall programmes or courses, for

individual course modules, for individual class sessions or **units** of teaching material. They can also be formulated with differing degrees of detail. It is standard practice to formulate firstly an overall aim, and then detailed individual outcomes. One might suggest, for example, that the overall aim of a full undergraduate course in translating at a state tertiary education institution is to train professional translators; that is of course an over-generalizing statement which in fact says very little. Notice also that it is formulated from the perspective of the teacher or the institution, rather than from that of the student. The overall outcome of such a programme could better be formulated thus:

On completion of the course, students will have acquired the necessary set of competences (knowledge, skills and attitudes) to be able to join the translation profession in any of its specialized areas in this country or abroad at a junior level.

Would this formulation be valid for your situation? If not, explain why and then write an alternative.

Writing clear learning outcomes is the first essential step to communication between teacher or institution and student, between trainer and trainee, so thought and care should be put into it. The basic rule is that outcomes should be easy for the student or trainee to understand; they will normally be written from the student's point of view, and in the future tense. Outcomes should also be realistic (achievable for students) and assessable (see Chapter 8). Remember that they are the basis for course content, teaching and learning methods and assessment of student learning. It is similarly important to remember that objectives/outcomes should give a clear indication of the level of achievement aimed at in each case.

For this purpose, most authors recommend some form or adaptation of Bloom's taxonomy of learning levels (1956), originally centred on the cognitive domain (and much criticized for this), but later extended by Bloom himself and other researchers to what they have called the affective, psychomotor, perceptual, experiential and interpersonal domains. We reproduce here, as an example, the "suggested words for outcome level statements (cognitive domain)" based on Bloom given by D'Andrea (2003: 35). Other authors offer similar suggestions; the lists are not intended to be exhaustive, but rather indicative of the kind of verbs which are appropriate for the textual genre "learning outcomes".

Level	Suggested words
Evaluation	Judge, appraise, evaluate, compare, assess
Synthesis	Design, organize, formulate, propose
Analysis	Distinguish, analyse, calculate, test, inspect
Application	Apply, use, demonstrate, illustrate, practise
Comprehension	Describe, explain, discuss, recognize
Knowledge	Define, list, name, recall, record

Figure 4. Suggested words for outcome level statements (cognitive domain) based on Bloom (D'Andrea, 2003: 35)

A more recent alternative taxonomy of learning outcomes, considered by many to be more appropriate is SOLO, or Structure of the Observed Learning Outcomes (Biggs and Collis, 1982), and consists of five different levels of response in ascending order of complexity in both quantitative (learning more) and qualitative (learning better) terms: prestructural, unistructural, multistructural, relational and extended abstract. Biggs himself proposes the following hierarchy of verbs to form curriculum objectives:

Phase	Level	Verbs
Quantitative	Prestructural	Misses point
	Unistructural	Identify Do simple procedure
	Multistructural	Enumerate Describe List Combine Do algorithms
Qualitative	Relational	Compare/contrast Explain causes Analyse Relate Apply
	Extended abstract	Theorize Generalize Hypothesize Reflect

Figure 5. A hierarchy of verbs for curriculum objectives (adapted from Biggs, 2003: 48)

The following are some examples of possible overall aims for different levels of planning.

- Overall aims of a professional development course on translation memory technology:

At the end of the course, participants will be familiar with the principles of translation memory technology, be able to use at least one of the most common commercial programmes on the market, and to appreciate its application to their professional practice.

- An introductory course module on legal translation:

At the end of the module students will be able to identify the most salient features of legal texts, situate translation commissions in their legal and social context, identify documentary sources for their translation, and produce translations of highly conventionalized legal texts from language(s) X into language(s) Y.

- A teaching unit midway through an introductory module to translation:
By the end of this unit, students will be able to identify documentary sources other than dictionaries of use to the translator, understand how to use them efficiently, and evaluate their accessibility and reliability in different translation situations.

Write the overall aim(s) for:
<input type="checkbox"/> An in-house staff development course on revision technique for newly promoted senior translators taking on revision of other translators' work for the first time as part of their professional remit. <input type="checkbox"/> A semester-long module on subtitling for a postgraduate programme on audiovisual translation. <input type="checkbox"/> A teaching unit on medical terminology to be included in the initial stages of an advanced level module on scientific translation on an undergraduate translation programme.

Specific learning outcomes

Moving on to more specific learning outcomes, let us return to our full undergraduate training programme as an example. I suggest above that, on the basis of the review of sources carried out, we can identify the following main areas of competence for translator training in the context of a general higher education institution:

- communicative and textual competence in at least two languages and cultures;

- cultural and intercultural competence;
- subject area competence;
- professional and instrumental competence;
- attitudinal (or psycho-physiological) competence;
- interpersonal competence;
- strategic competence.

It is in general recommended that around five or six and no more than seven or eight specific outcomes be formulated in each case and for each level of planning. Based on this, specific learning outcomes for the area of interpersonal competence on a full undergraduate programme, for example, might be:

By the end of the programme:

- *Students will be able to identify, describe and analyse the different interpersonal relations which intervene in the translation process;*
- *Students will be able to work cooperatively with the different professionals who intervene in translation activity (fellow translators, revisers, documentary researchers, terminologists, layout specialists, editors), identifying the potential difficulties involved in each situation, and designing strategies for dealing with them;*
- *Students will be able to work cooperatively as professionals with other actors involved, such as customers, initiators, commercial intermediaries (agencies, etc.), authors, users, or subject area experts, identifying the potential difficulties involved in each situation, and designing strategies for dealing with them;*
- *Students will be able to justify to others the decisions they have taken during translation, appraise those of others involved in the process and communicate their opinions in such a way as to avoid or resolve potential conflict;*
- *Students will appreciate the advantages and potential pitfalls of cooperative work, and be prepared to avoid or resolve conflict.*

<p>Comment on the applicability of these specific outcomes to your own context. Which are applicable? Which not? Why?</p> <p>Now choose another area of competence from the list above and write five or six specific learning outcomes for a full undergraduate programme. Try to bear your own context in mind when writing the outcomes.</p>

Remember that the outcomes we plan and write will be the basis for the remainder of our curricular design: course content (in the widest sense), teaching and

learning methods and the assessment of student learning. Following our systematic approach, the next few chapters will move on from here to examine the other elements involved in curricular design: students and staff; course content; resources; teaching/learning method and activities; sequencing; assessment of student learning and course/programme evaluation.

Further reading on professional standards

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Further reading on translation/translator competence

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Further reading on competence in general and learning outcomes

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