

## **Bridging the Academic and Professional Gap in Translator Training at Imperial College London**

**ITI 21<sup>st</sup> Birthday International Conference**

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# Presentation Outline

- Introduction to the MSc Trans at Imperial
- Academic Training vs. Professional Reality
- Bridging the Gap at Imperial
  - “Getting Started in the Translation Profession” Week
  - Professional Development Workshops
  - Team Projects in the Translation Technology Module
- The ICTC and Student Mentoring
- Possible Future Developments

# Introduction to the MSc Trans at Imperial

- Presently in its sixth year
- Provides training in Scientific, Technical and Medical Translation in a very wide range of languages, with strong emphasis placed on translation technologies
- Strives for a balanced mix of translation theory and practice
- A range of professional development workshops and seminars has been introduced alongside the existing academic programme

# Academic Training vs. Professional Reality I

- According to Kiraly (2000:31), translator training has traditionally focused on the transmission of translational expertise, whilst paying little attention to the student's need to be introduced to the professional aspects of translation
- Mossop (2002) has proposed that “*Translation schools are inherently limited in what they can do to prepare students for the workplace*”

## Academic Training vs. Professional Reality II

- We argue that realistic demands can and should be placed on translation courses to better prepare students to meet the demands and challenges that face them when they leave the course and launch a career in the translation profession
- Translation courses like the MSc Trans need to incorporate professional development features within the existing academic pathway

# Bridging the Gap at Imperial I

- **Getting Started in the Translation Profession**
  - Has been running annually since January 2005
  - Speakers bring their skills in and experience of the translation profession to our students
  - Our students greatly appreciate being introduced to the very real challenges and opportunities of translation as a business
- **Workshops on:**
  - The practicalities of being a freelancer;
  - Proofreading, editing and revising for translators.

## Bridging the Gap at Imperial II

- Practical translation module
- Team projects in translation technology module
  - Designed to simulate a real life situation, along the lines proposed by Nord who proposes that “training should simulate professional practice” (Kelly, 2005:12)
  - Team led by project manager who coordinates translation of a text into multiple languages
  - Other team members include translators and terminologists/checkers
- Imperial College Translation Centre (ICTC) and student-mentoring

# The ICTC and Student-Mentoring I

- A pilot mentoring scheme was launched in 2006 for one MSc Trans student
- Aims: to try to bridge the gap between academic training and professional reality and as a feasibility study to see if the scheme would be worth rolling out on a larger scale
- Developing a model for the mentor-mentee relationship

# The ICTC and Student-Mentoring

## The Mentee's Perspective

- Gave me opportunity to carry out first paid translation with real deadline
  - Very different from practical translation module of MSc Trans
- Advice on running a freelance business
  - CV writing, technology plan inc. website design
  - Rates, invoicing, negotiation skills, etc.
- Taste of project management deputising for the ICTC Coordinator

# Possible Future Developments I

- Ever closer cooperation and partnership with the translation industry:
  - Translation technology developers;
  - Translation agencies;
  - Translation professionals;
  - Translator organisations.
- Integration of certification programmes in TM systems as part of academic training

## Possible Future Developments II

- Closer integration of practical translation module with the work carried out by the Translation Centre at Imperial
- Expansion of the mentoring programme:
  - To involve more MSc Trans students (resource-dependent);
  - Expansion of links with existing mentoring and peer-support schemes run by translators' organisations both in the UK and overseas (ITI, CIOL, ATA, etc.)

## References

- Mossop, Brian 2002. *Translator Training & the Real World: Concrete Suggestions for Bridging the Gap*. In: *Accurapid* Vol. 7 No.1 Jan 2003 Available from: <http://accurapid.com/journal/23roundtablea.htm>
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