How to Integrate Useful Competencies from Technical Communication into Translation

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Tcworld conference 2017, October 26

Curricula Overview

- Following development of the competence framework, the next stage was to start to develop prototype curricula
  - The purpose of the prototypes
  - Challenges and solutions
  - Steps in designing curricula
  - Selection of curricula

Purpose of Prototype Curricula

- Prototypes are meant to serve as **inspiration** for institutions planning to introduce a curriculum at one of these levels
- Prototypes serve as **templates** from which higher education institutes can derive their own curricula and which can be tailored according to their needs and the local conditions
- For institutions already offering programmes in technical communication, they are a **point of comparison**
- The prototypes are **indicative** of the amount and level of depth of coverage of content in different scenarios
  - For example, a bachelor's degree in technical communication will cover more content, more deeply than a specialisation course as part of another degree
  - Templates include key information (module title, credit weighting, indicative syllabus, learning outcomes) commonly found in module outlines in universities throughout Europe

Challenges and Solutions

- Scope of the framework
  - We filtered from the framework to select competencies
  - Partners worked in teams to agree content
- Lack of standardisation across institutions
  - We agreed to focus on prototypes that serve as examples/inspiration
- Level of detail
  - We have provided general, rather than very specific, content
    - For example, we have not included detail about assessment, teaching methods, or recommended readings, because these change quickly and may be institution-specific

Design Process

1. Teams met (online and face-to-face) to select competencies
2. Used the original Excel sheet and discussed each competency
3. Filtered the content in Excel to derive a smaller list of competencies

   The original framework has over 1,000 competencies
4. Included first-level and second-level subjects from the framework
5. Organised these competencies into modules – not part of the original framework
6. Created the number of modules to correspond to the agreed curriculum
7. Applied credit weightings to each module

Example

1	Competence dimension	First-level subject	Second-level subject	Learning goal	Selected item
2	Academic Perspective	Academic Research	Concepts in research	Understand differences between academic and other types of research	
3				Recognise the systematic nature of academic research (e.g. validity, reliability, triangulation)	
4			Research in technical communication SEE ALSO EVALUATION AND USER EXPERIENCE	Identify important concepts in research (e.g. usability and user experience, adoption and appropriation of technologies, document/video design, intercultural communication, the changing job of technical communicators)	
5				Recognise the importance of research in technical communication (e.g. information design theories such as minimalism; information processing theories)	
6				Outline research topics in technical communication (e.g. survey, focus group, interview, ethnographic study, usability study, content analysis, experimental study)	
7				Classify theoretical concepts in technical communication	
8				Understand the range of methods and instruments	
9				Understand the purposes of different research approaches	
10				Understand the limitations of each approach	
11				Understand populations and research sampling	
12			Methods and instruments SEE ALSO EVALUATION AND USER EXPERIENCE	Distinguish among different research methods	
13				Design and distribute a survey	
14				Set up and run a focus group	
15				Write interview questions, organise and conduct research interviews	
16				Set up and run user tests	
17				Design and implement a content analysis	
18				Set up and run an experimental study	
19				Use heuristics	
20				Set up and run a cognitive walk through test	
21				Do an ethnographic study	
22			The research process SEE ALSO INFOMINING	Choose approaches to academic research in technical communication (e.g. theoretical, empirical, qualitative/quantitative)	
23				Identify research goals, questions and hypotheses	
24				Review the literature	
25				Select an appropriate research method	
26				Consider ethical topics in research (e.g. confidentiality, data protection)	
27				Conduct a study	
28				Gather and store data	
				Analyse study results, using the appropriate techniques (e.g. statistical tests to	

TecCOMFrame_Academic_Competence | Sheet1

Example

	Competence dimension	First-level subject	Second-level subject	Learning goal	Selected item
2	Academic Perspective	Academic Research	Concepts in research	Understand differences between academic and other types of research	x
3				Recognise the systematic nature of academic research (e.g. validity, reliability, triangulation)	
4			Research in technical communication SEE ALSO EVALUATION AND USER EXPERIENCE	Identify important concepts in research (e.g. usability and user experience, adoption and appropriation of technologies, document/video design, intercultural communication, the changing job of technical communicators)	x
5				Recognise the importance of research in technical communication (e.g. information design theories such as minimalism; information processing theories)	
6				Outline research topics in technical communication (e.g. survey, focus group, interview, ethnographic study, usability study, content analysis, experimental study)	
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20				Set up and run a cognitive walk through test	
21				Do an ethnographic study	
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26				Consider ethical topics in research (e.g. confidentiality, data protection)	x

Additional Considerations

- European labour market demands and competence requirements of industry
  - Focus on employability of graduates at bachelor's and master's level
- Introduction to each curriculum will include
  - Overall level
  - Overall goal
  - Characteristics: breadth, focus, depth
  - Types of workplace/job
  - Employer expectations of graduates
  - Target groups and prerequisites
  - Potential for internship
  - Further education/training options

Prototype Curricula

Working in teams based on expertise, we have started to develop these curricula:

- **Bachelor**'s degree in Technical Communication
- **Consecutive master**'s degree (for students who have studied Technical Communication at bachelor's level)
- **Non-consecutive master**'s degree (for students from any disciplinary background who have not studied Technical Communication)
- Subject stream: **specialisation course** in a bachelor's degree in another field (e.g. language studies, engineering, economics)
- Subject stream: **specialisation course** in a master's degree in another field (e.g. language studies, engineering, economics)

TC in Translation studies

Specialisation in a master's programme in translation studies or a related programme (1 semester)

Overall goal of the specialisation

Overall goal

To give students a broad overview over the field of Technical Communication

- by teaching them basic knowledge on important topics and concepts;
- by learning them some basic, necessary skills.

So that they will be able to closely collaborate with technical communicators in their future jobs as translators,
or that they will be able (with some further education) to start working as a technical communicator.

The target group

Intended audience

- Students of translation studies
- Students of (applied) language and communication studies

Assumed prior knowledge on which the curriculum builds

- Good language skills
- Insight in communication theories and processes
- Experience with text and discourse

Designing the curriculum

ECTS credits represent the workload and defined learning outcomes ("what the individual knows, understands and is able to do") of a given course or programme.

Module name	#ECTS
1. Catching the Context	3
2. Planning	8
3. Creating and Testing	8
4. Supporting Planning and Creation	8
5. Managing Projects	3

1: Catching the Context

- Communication and culture
- Content
- Technology and media
- Management
- Transversal competencies
- Academic perspective

Competence dimension: Communication and culture

Subject	Sub-subject	Learning goal (examples)
Multilingual Workflow	Globalisation	Understand the global information product life cycle
	Internationalisation	Understand the principles of multilingual document design
	Localisation	Understand the interfaces between search engine optimization (SEO) and localisation

Competence dimension: Management

Subject	Sub-subject	Learning goal (examples)
Corporate Management principles	Organisation and Management	Know the aspects of global governance of the organisation
	Strategic Management	Know the components of the model of strategic management (e.g. mission and strategic vision, goals)
	Customer and Relationship Management	Understand CRM as a strategy adopted to support activities related to customer service, with a particular focus on educated cultural patterns of behaviour.

1: Catching the Context

Competence dimension: Content

Subject	Sub-subject	Learning goal (examples)
Legal requirements and standards	Risk assessment	Understand the legal significance of risk assessment
	Product safety	Know basic principles of product safety
	Product compliance	Know basic principles of product compliance
	Legal and standard research	Understand interplay between standards, regulations, directives and national law
	Standards	Know standard IEC/EN 82079 for preparation of instructions for use
	Compliance with standards in particular	Know normative requirements of international markets

Competence dimension: Content

Subject	Sub-subject	Learning goal (examples)
Information Mining	Target group analysis	Understand and apply methods of characterizing, for instance TG analysis
	Target group characteristics	Characterize features of target groups
	Culture-specific aspects of the target group	Understand culture-specific differences regarding expected ways in which information is presented
	Product features and information product	Understand features of the product and resulting requirements, restrictions and options for the information product
	Information specification	Determine and specify the product-specific themes for which information needs to be obtained (e.g., technology)
	Information acquisition	Determine exploitable information sources
	Knowledge domain	Understand the specific requirements for a particular industry or knowledge domain (e.g., technical, medical)

Competence dimension: Content

Subject	Sub-subject	Learning goal (examples)
Information architecture	Model theory for information architecture	Know model theory for information architecture for all kinds of media
	Classification and metadata	Use taxonomies and ontologies to define metadata
	Access and retrieval	Know different information seeking behaviours
	Content analysis	Define a content map (visualise the content structure)
	Content structure	Use techniques for developing and visualising a content structure

Competence dimension: Content

Subject	Sub-subject	Learning goal (examples)
Content development	Types of information products	Specify and select types of information products
	Product life-cycle support	Understand the content lifecycle – what, where, who, etc.
	Information creation planning	Understand the stages in the writing process
	Continuous improvement process	Understand how to analyse data from evaluation and user experience
	Content development process	Draft content
	Standardisation methods	Understand language standardisation (e.g., depending on translatability)
	Writing according to rules and guidelines	Use plain and controlled languages

Competence dimension: Content

Subject	Sub-subject	Learning goal (examples)
Visualisation	Concepts on visualisation and information design	Understand visual rhetorics
	Digital design	Design comprehensible tables and diagrams
Evaluation and user experience	Usability and user experience	Understand the common definitions of usability and user experience
	Evaluation	Understand evaluation and its purpose
	Corporate feedback	Understand corporate feedback principles
	User feedback	Understand quality criteria for user feedback
	Observation	Understand evaluation and user observation concepts
	Web feedback	Understand web feedback principles

3: Creating and testing

Competence dimension: Management

Subject	Sub-subject	Learning goal (examples)
Quality management	Quality management methods	Understand the components of quality management systems
	Quality assurance	Understand quality assurance for text, illustration and structure

Competence dimension: Technology and media

Subject	Sub-subject	Learning goal (examples)
Content delivery	Printed material	Know about specifications for printing (formats, paper quality, bindings)
	Digital printing	Know the requirements on content for digital delivery

Competence dimension: Management

Subject	Sub-subject	Learning goal (examples)
Information Management	Content Management	Understand the benefits, advantages and disadvantages of component content management systems, conditions for efficient use, assessment of cost-benefit ratios
	Document management	Know about the document management principles
	Archiving documents	Know the different motivations (legal requirements, organisation policies, etc.)
	Corporate information management	Know the methods and techniques of sharing and transferring of information
	Product data management	Understand the meaning and principles of Product Data Management and Product Life Cycle Management

Competence dimension: Technology and media

Subject	Sub-subject	Learning goal (examples)
Information Technology	Technology knowledge	Know principles of Human-Machine-Interaction
	Database principles	Understand database concepts and techniques
	Media and formats	Understand types of media that are inherently representational (e.g., text, image, graphic) or inherently interactive (e.g., hypertext)
	Markup languages	Know key concepts of XML/SGMLmeta language
	Internet technology	Understand principles of web page design
	App technology	Understand App design
	Social media	Understand the role of social media for Technical Communication
	Backup and archiving	Understand backup purposes and techniques

Competence dimension: Management

Subject	Sub-subject	Learning goal (examples)
Project Management	Principles of project management	Understand the stages and the content of the stages in project management
	Project management techniques and tools	Know the project management techniques and tools
	Project planning	Know about workflow, deadline and resource planning
	Project communication	Know about project communication tasks and objectives
	Project reporting	Know the ways of project reporting

Thank you!
Questions?

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On behalf of the TecCOMFrame project team

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