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Implementing Safe and Effective Collaborative Environments in Technology-enhanced Interpreter Training

La implementación eficaz de entornos virtuales de aprendizaje colaborativo para la formación de intérpretes

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Abstract: The article offers a sociocognitive perspective on how online interactive pedagogical environments can make interpreter training collaboration more efficient. The author reflects on the ways Computer Assisted Interpreter Training can support collaborative blended learning based on the principles of deliberate practice (Ericsson 1993). An examination is made of how CAIT can motivate the teaching and learning of interpreting, along with an overview of some virtual tools and their potential impact on particular virtual interpreter training scenarios.

Group work has demonstrated motivational benefits for student learning, but there are complexities that trainers should consider carefully to ensure an effective learning environment. Building a learning community in an online space requires different elements than when face-to-face and therefore requires a pedagogical redesign of the interpreter training curriculum and practice in order to meet these particular needs and to avoid becoming 'lost in technology'.

Keywords: collaborative learning; interpreter training; CAIT; deliberate practice; self-directed learning.

Resumen: El aprendizaje colaborativo en entornos virtuales ha revelado su eficacia desde el punto de vista cognitivo, conductual y motivacional. Por otra parte, el carácter sincrónico o asincrónico de las interacciones plantea retos y una complejidad añadida que deben tenerse en consideración para preservar un entorno de aprendizaje eficaz.

Desde un enfoque sociocognitivo, la autora reflexiona sobre el valor añadido de las herramientas online al servicio de la formación de intérpretes (CAIT) y su implementación en contextos de blended learning sobre las bases de la 'práctica deliberada' (deliberate practice, Ericsson 1993) para alcanzar el nivel de experto.

Por otro lado, la autora llama la atención sobre las dificultades añadidas que implican poner en marcha una comunidad colaborativa *online* y la necesidad de adaptar la tecnología a la pedagogía y no a la inversa, para no comprometer los objetivos del aprendizaje y correr el riesgo de perderse en la revolución tecnológica.

Palabras clave: aprendizaje colaborativo; interpretación; CAIT; aprendizaje significativo; autonomía.

1. INTRODUCTION. MOTIVATION AND LEARNING

Learners, especially young students, are likely to benefit from motivational triggers. Furrer *et al.* stress that peer relationships have been shown to have an impact on classroom engagement and everyday *motivational resilience*, which can be defined as «focused, enthusiastic hard work and constructive responses to obstacles and setbacks» (2014, 111). Motivation then supports learning through «enhancing students' effort, persistence in the face of challenge, and use of self-regulated and deep-level learning strategies» (Kempler *et al.* 2013, 250).

Collaborative training methodologies within a community of practice, as conceived by Webb (2010, 636), provide added value to the traditional «teacher-led-whole-class instruction» and can contribute to each student's learning through interaction and self-responsibility, allowing students to learn in a more challenging and proactive way by helping each other understand, through critical analysis and effective interaction with their peers and the instructor.

2. SOME FACTORS TO CONSIDER WHEN BUILDING A SAFE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

As human beings, our physical selves (bodies) and the language(s) we sign or speak are central to our sense of selves and our identities. Additionally, our language, bodies, and voices are the principal tools of trade for interpreters. We often learn most and best through struggle from admitting we don't know, from making mistakes, from confronting difficulties head-on. As Herring (2016) recognizes, as interpreters, making mistakes and allowing ourselves to be seen to be less-than-perfect can bring the two realities of language and body as *identity* and language and body as *professional tools* into conflict in ways that may make us feel vulnerable. In order to confront this paradox without damaging our sense of self, we must learn to distinguish between critiques of ourselves (or others) as performers and critiques of ourselves (or others) as individuals.

This has direct implications for the classroom and raises the need to create a comfortable space or «safe zone» (Clapper 2010) where learners feel confident enough to follow instructions, constructively engage with their learning, and where these vulnerabilities do not inhibit progress. Research has shown that the classroom climate affects students outcomes (TALIS 2009, 5)[1], regardless of the field of knowledge or educational level. Adapted from the parameters set by Parrett and Budge (2012) for High-Performance Schools[2], the table below presents a proposal for a process for fostering a safe and supportive learning environment:

1. *Creating Effective Teaching and Learning Environments*: First Report from the OECD's Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS). OECD Publishing, 2009.
Full report available at: https://www.oecd.org/edu/school/43044074.pdf

2. The Collaborative for High Performance Schools (CHPS) is the United States' first green building rating program specially designed for K-12 schools. CHPS provides information and resources for schools to facilitate the construction and operation of high performance institutions. A high performance school is energy and resource efficient as well as healthy, comfortable, well lit, and containing the amenities for a quality education (see http://www.green-technology.org/green_technology_magazine/chps_story.htm).

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Process for fostering a safe and supportive learning environment			
	Getting started	**Gaining momentum**	**Sustaining gains, refining**
Progress **Indicators of evidence** →	– A vision for improvement is shared. – Implementation strategies are selected. – A community of learning is prepared to begin.	– People are empowered. – Barriers are being removed. – Implementation is becoming a routine. – Commitment is increasing. – Progress is monitored. – Initial gains are being made. – Support for improvement continues.	– Improvements are embedded in daily practice. – Collaboration continues. – Refinements are made. – Gains continue to be made and sustained.

Table 1. Fostering a safe and supportive learning environment (adapted from Parrett and Budge 2012)

Despite the clear benefits for building a community of learners, virtual scenarios present challenges that trainers need to take into consideration. The main differences in implementing collaborative learning in a face-to-face, virtual or blended learning space are found in the changes to the typical interaction dynamic, and this means a necessary adaptation of delivery and pedagogical mechanisms. Trainers will have to determine what parts of interpreting training would be best done in person, online synchronously, or online asynchronously, depending on the objectives set. Like collaborative learning, virtual and blended learning also have drawbacks. Furthermore, it should be kept in mind that collaborative blended learning (CBL) is not in itself a panacea for efficient, collaborative learning practices, and that «it takes time to develop and produce results» (Monteiro and Morrison 2014, 565).

3. FIRST STEPS TO SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING

There are a number of essential first steps for putting trainees onto the right path towards expertise, and for making sure that the subsequent stages of self-directed learning will be productive for achieving the established goals.

A conference interpreter is, above all, a professional communicator. Strong speaking skills should be developed to ensure an accurate, clear and convincing delivery of the interpreted speech. Setton and Dawrant (2016b) identify some «habits and routines»

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that should be inculcated from the beginning and worked through methodically in order to develop the necessary speaking and also broader communication skills, inherent to quality interpreting (2016b, 123-124):

- *Active reading and listening*: the student listens to a speech and, after every one or two paragraphs, or every 30-60 seconds, sums up the content, and occasionally paraphrases, or sight-translates.
- *Making and delivering speeches,* on the basis of an outline or succinct notes prepared in advance.
- *Oralising*, i.e. paraphrasing while reading, an important way to improve sight-translation and «extremely valuable […] for practice out of class when no fresh recordings or prepared speeches are available» (Setton and Dawrant 2016b, 124).
- *Language, knowledge enhancement and world affairs:* language proficiency, broad general culture and knowledge of current political, economic and international affairs are fundamental to conference interpreter training and can be enhanced through different exercises, such as reading, listening, analyzing and commenting on the news or making glossaries of key terms.

Topical deep-dives: closely linked to the previous routine, students should regularly read or listen to contemporary non-fiction in their working languages, with a special focus on domains related to their interests and future target markets as interpreters (e.g. international organizations, courts, or freelance legal interpreting).

After four or five weeks of public speaking skills enhancement, group practice should be implemented. Setton and Dawrant recommend working in small groups (3-4) and practicing the skills gained at least three times a week following «exactly the same procedures used in class» (2016, 126).

Team work will allow for a more dynamic acquisition of skills through a more interactive trainer-trainee relationship. A more student-centered and interactive approach demands clear instructions, a shared metalanguage between trainers and trainees, to make sure that the instructions and objectives set are unambiguously understood and lead to the intended goals. There should also be regular feedback to avoid misguided and inefficient practice.

Webb (2010, 639-640) identifies key pedagogical ideas that can be used to enhance the effectiveness of peer-based methods, such as providing social skills to improve communication and equal participation in heterogeneous (especially multiracial) groups, and helping students develop explaining skills, for example, sharing relevant information, reaching agreement, taking responsibility for decisions, and providing reasons.

Webb (*ibid.* 640) reviews certain strategies or assignments that can help structure peer interaction, and draws particular attention to the effectiveness of reciprocation. For example, by being forced to create an agreed-on representation of a problem with each other allows the group to build on concepts more successfully than would be the case with single individuals, what Cohen (1994, 4) calls «representational negotiation». Explaining an assignment to the rest of the group encourages the student to make an effort to be as explicit and unambiguous as possible.

Trainers, for their part, become a 'facilitator' of learning (Monteiro and Morrison 2014), and can then focus on task definition, monitoring progress and assessment.

4. SELF-REGULATION AND DELIBERATE PRACTICE

Horváth defines autonomous learning as «the learners' capacity to self-direct their own learning, which means taking responsibility for the decisions concerning the different aspects of the learning process» (2007, 103). Autonomous practice sessions outside of contact hours are an integral part of interpreter training to help automize routines (foreseeable difficulties) through practice in order to «free up cognitive resources to tackle 'new' [more challenging] information» (Sandrelli 2015, 115). Indeed, Setton and Dawrant (2016, 46) consider the automation of procedures as «the two key factors that are relevant in expertise».

Internalizing a process, or aspects of it, (i.e. developing automatic responses so as to acquire expertise), requires systematic, deliberate practice which is defined by Ericsson *et al.* (1993, 368) as «[those] activities that have been specially designed to improve the current level of performance». Deliberate practice involves optimization, or as Setton and Dawrant state, «highly targeted forms of individual training that focus on weak points, involve repetition and coaching, and are typically much more taxing than casual random practice without particular attention to the choice of tasks and materials» (2016, 47).

The current new approach to learning and teaching conference interpreting, as Motta highlights, is to become «an adaptive expert and a lifelong learner» (2016, 3). For the author, this cognitive apprenticeship approach «emphasizes the authenticity of the activity and the importance of exposing the learner to reflection and feedback», since individuals «learn deeper knowledge when they engage in activities that are similar to the everyday activities of professionals who work in a discipline» (Sawyer 2009, 4).

This pedagogical strategy advocates that practice should be deliberate in order to be effective. From this point of view, Motta stresses the importance of focusing training activities «on a well-defined task at an appropriate difficulty level for a specific learner, […] engaging on one suitable task at a time and moving towards a more advanced level when the task appears to be acquired» (2016, 5).

The research conducted by Ericsson *et al.* showed that the effect of deliberate practice on performance «is larger than earlier believed possible», and that «expert performance is acquired […] as result of practice» (1993, 364) or as Mackintosh (1999) puts it, «interpreters are made, not born».

Moser-Mercer (2000) estimates that «3000-5000 hours of deliberate practice (including class activities, individual and group work) are required in order to achieve professional levels of expertise in interpreting» (in Sandrelli 2015, 115).

The European Masters in Conference Interpreting Network (EMCI) establishes that the core curriculum[3] of interpreter's training for a full time post-graduate university program (between 60 and 120 ECTS –i.e. the equivalent of one to two years full time study) should normally provide no fewer than 400 hours of practice, of which a minimum of 75% devoted to interpreting practice. In addition, students should devote time to the group practice of simultaneous and consecutive interpreting along with other kinds of self-directed learning (e.g. background reading; information sources like radio, TV, and the Internet; preparation of glossaries). Therefore, the expectation is that the number of class contact hours, group practice hours and self-directed study should total no less than 800 hours. Setton and Dawrant (2016, 44), for their part, concur in recommending that students devote around 8-10 hours per week to practicing their interpreting skills in groups.

Learning-support tools can also help to remedy what Wang (2015) has described as the three systemic hurdles that are commonly encountered in current interpreter education:

- *Insufficient practice hours* that very rarely meet the recommendations/ quota of the practice hours required by the EMCI;
- *Lack of authenticity* in course materials and classroom activities which results in a gap between classroom practice and a real-world interpreting context. As Motta (2016, 135) states, «learning environments should foster transfer between the learning situation and everyday life so that students engage in situated learning».
- *Lack of guidance for students' out-of-class practice*: «students in interpreting classes are often required to undertake out-of-class practice but may not have access to suitable material nor know how to evaluate their own performance» (Wang 2015, 66).

To avoid this last pitfall, self-directed practice should be always structured, the goals to be achieved clearly established, and the working material supervised by

3. EMCI Core Curriculum. Course Structure and Workload. Retrieved August 15, 2016 from http://www.emcinterpreting.org/?q=node/13

the trainer. Likewise, autonomous work and progress should be monitored through tests, feedback and self-assessment. Morales *et al.* (2016), for example, recommend integrating ePortfolios into the learning process as a means to facilitate and enhance students' self-regulated learning and offer their instructors feedback on their learning achievements.

Wang (2015) also recognizes the difficulty of adding class hours due to institution and program limits. This constraint might tip the balance towards blended learning solutions and so-called Educational technology, or *EdTech*, which is defined by the Association for Educational Communications and Technology as «the study and ethical practice of facilitating learning and improving performance by creating, using and managing appropriate technological processes and resources» (Robinson *et al.* 2008, 15).

5. EVALUATING LEARNING AND ASSESSING TEACHING

Ed-Technology is developing almost more quickly than it can be understood and applied to the field of education (Lazaro 2014). Using social software to collaborate within peers and trainers seems an obvious motivational trigger for students already accustomed to social networking with friends and family. Motta, on the other hand, advocates for face-to-face and technology-mediated instruction as the most appropriate scenario to achieve learning goals, «because face-to-face interaction, focusing on social construction of knowledge, is combined with self-paced online learning, which improves individual retention» (2016, 6).

An important part of a successful learning experience is the opportunity to receive feedback from instructors. Setton and Dawrant define feedback as «the core of real teaching and the greatest challenge to an instructor's ability (2016, 13), and argue that:

> One complaint sometimes voiced by interpreting students over the years is that they do not get enough practical guidance, but mostly receive just very generic, holistic feedback on their performances, with an accompanying pep-talk, leaving it to them to intuit how to actually do the job better (Setton and Dawrant 2016, 1).

Reports of self-efficacy have been shown to influence people's actions in the workplace and have been linked with productivity; so when teachers envisage effective teaching as a skill that can be acquired, this feeling of self-efficacy can help them better analyze the training needs and learning objectives, and undertake a more effective approach to solving problems. Moreover, the TALIS report underlined a relation between teachers' beliefs and their training practices (2009, 6-7). In particular, teachers who employ student-oriented practices are more likely to be those who take

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a social-constructivist educational approach, which Kiraly *et al.* (2003, 51) describe as «[the] active involvement in authentic professional practices, a collaborative teaching environment that promotes interaction among students as well as an active participation in the learning and teaching process».

Trainers should employ particular practices in order to assess how effective they have been in facilitating learning for their students. For Motta (2016, 136), these strategies include setting intermediate goals, checking progress at regular intervals, keeping a reflective journal and measuring one's opinions against those of peers.

Teaching efficiency requires regular scrutiny and upgrading to identify strategies for improvement. For example, since multitasking can be overwhelming, especially in the initial stages of interpreter training, breaking up the interpreting task into primary and secondary tasks may be helpful. This will help students to separately reflect on different aspects of the interpreting process, strengthening and improving the different skills separately before recombining them all. The learning process should not end when the students take their exam. Careful analysis of the performance afterwards is the best tool the trainer has to help refine the planning focus and sharpen the training techniques.

According to Setton and Dawrant (2016, 13-14), implement this approach requires an instructor to be able to:

- teach by example (trying to reconcile 'what I say' with 'what I do');
- elicit curiosity, self-examination, self-correction and individual adaptive solutions;
- create the right problem situations –those likely to force a search for solutions– by the right choice of materials and exercises.

Sandrelli (2015, 116) stresses that «feedback sessions after an interpreting exercise are much more useful if self-assessment and peer assessment are added to teacher assessment». Student evaluations do provide an indication of how students feel about some of the specific teaching practices and activities used and will also report on the extent to which it is felt a trainer communicates clearly and effectively and stimulates interest and motivation. The results should inspire trainers to ask themselves questions about the learning objectives selected for a class, about their expectations for student's learning, and about their role as motivator (Sandrelli, *ibid.*).

Following Siemens (2002), peer-to-peer interactions in virtual learning environments can be viewed as a four-stage continuum:

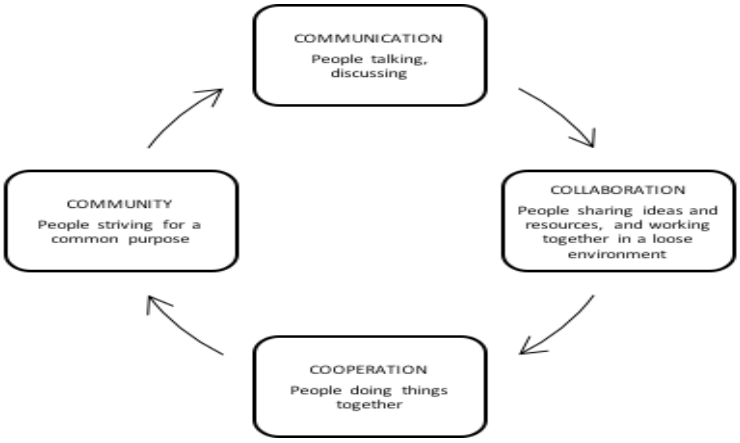

Figure 1. P2P interaction in virtual environments (adapted from Siemens 2002)

This continuum of involvement provides a useful framework for thinking about scaffolding[4] with learners through progressively more complex interaction skills leading to the creation of an effective working group (Brindley and Blaschke 2009, 2). Yang and Cheng (2007), for example, proposes subtitles as scaffoldings, turning them off one by one until students are able to interpret on their own. Without completely relying on them, subtitles can be used as references when the students encounter interpreting difficulties. They can also serve as models for students to learn to interpret and speak better.

6. GETTING READY FOR A VIRTUAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

When choosing a particular software tool for instruction of interpreters, we must be cautious and separate the marketing hype from the actual learning outcomes the program generates, possibly even more so with products developed by private companies than with open source products. It may be useful to review the forums used by developers, but also users, who will reveal the tricks and problems and provide a more neutral evaluation of the tool. Another important factor to take into account is that a few basic components of these tools can be downloaded and installed, generally the most widely used by academic institutions, but the support of an IT specialist may be needed.

4. Motta (2016, 135) defines scaffolding as «the structure and material that the master provides learners to help them carry out the task».

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Other elements to pay attention to might be: the number of people who need to interact in the collaborative environment, the possibilities for managing groups (for instance, re-using materials but preventing first year students from consulting what second year students had produced the year before), the possibility of having a space reserved solely for trainers/tutors, steps needed to register a new learner, administration rights reserved to one person or distributed, protection of intellectual property, server space available, funds available and IT knowledge of users.

Sandrelli (2015, 123-124) notes that trainers wishing to introduce an ICT tool should always contemplate taking a few classes on how to effectively use computer-based materials and then assess one's performance. This can in turn help to maintain motivation and promote faster and more efficient learning of their students.

It is generally accepted by instructional designers that the availability of synchronous and asynchronous tools is a must (the prioritization of one or the other will depend on the pedagogical approach chosen by each individual trainer or group of trainers). However, in order to guarantee a certain sustainability, and if a single choice has to be made, it would probably be in favor of an environment where asynchronous tools support the class room pedagogical approach and then to add regular activities using another synchronous tool, such as live chat. According to Motta (2016), asynchronous interaction allows for more reflection and is often more appreciated by learners, at least in the beginning. Also, different tools for different activities support different learning styles. Again, it is a question of objective, actors, skills and funds, and the different time zones of the people involved may also have an impact on this kind of decision.

7. COMPUTER ASSISTED INTERPRETER TRAINING (CAIT)

The development of computer tools for interpreter training has contributed to consolidating a learner-centred pedagogical approach while promoting the autonomous learning that is indispensable for achieving the level of expertise required of professional conference interpreters. As Sandrelli (2015, 111) points out, the basic idea of Computer Assisted Interpreter Training (CAIT) has developed in many ways, ranging from electronic resources to be used off-line by individual users to online speech repositories, and more recently to virtual learning environments which allow multiple users to interact.

The Ecole de Traduction et d'Interprétation (ETI) of the University of Geneva was one of the pioneers in progressing from a traditional face-to-face method into a blended learning format through a fully integrated virtual learning environment with its Virtual Institute. This platform, created in 2005, is an open-source content management system that was implemented in their 'training for trainers' courses (MA and Certificate of Advances Studies –CAS– in interpreter training). It was founded on the belief that knowledge is actively constructed by the student and future trainer in interaction with

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their learning environment and also that trainers have the responsibility to create a «rich environment» to fuel the constructive process (Moser *et al.* 2005). As Motta (2016, 139) highlights, in this context the role of trainers consists more of 'coaching' than of 'teaching', where «the coach models the process and provides guidance rather than simply telling the learner».

As is the case for most course management systems (CMSs), students will need to log in to access teaching materials, discussion forum and to have access to class schedules and group chats with their peers and trainers on the course. The platform develops a collaborative strategy based on the concept that «groups can attain more success than individuals learning alone because explaining one's thinking to another learner leads to a deeper cognitive processing» (Motta 2016, 140).

8. EXAMPLES OF CAIT TOOLS AND THEIR INTEGRATION IN INTERPRETER BLENDED-LEARNING SCENARIOS

Two platforms have been selected to illustrate the broad range of possibilities for learning management software: 1. the American Blackboard Collaborate (formerly Elluminate Live!), an online collaboration program providing web conferencing and virtual meeting rooms; and 2. Claroline Connect, an LMS (Learning Management System) created in 2000 at the Catholic University of Louvain (UCL), Belgium, one of the most commonly used online learning application in Europe (source: Open Source Guide[5]). Both tools have been selected for their potential for implementation collaborative interpreter training scenarios and as a complement to face-to-face sessions.

Secondly, we will provide an overview of the speech database SCiCLOUD from the European Commission's DG Interpretation, one of the most well-known resources available for guided learning, self-practice and assessment. This database is meant to facilitate students' autonomous practice and self-assessment by providing digital resources (real-life speeches repositories, terminology and documents databases, practical tips and best practices, etc.).

The aim is to illustrate the potential of CAIT tools to complement F2F classes in blended learning contexts. All of them are examples of valuable tools which, combined with trainers instruction and guidance, provide an integral pedagogical strategy based on interaction, flexibility and constructed, self-regulated learning.

5. http://www.open-source-guide.com/en/Solutions/Applications/E-learning/Claroline#.

8.1. *Comparative assessment of Blackboard and Claroline as examples cmss*

Blackboard Collaborate and Claroline Connect are examples of web-based environments that can be used in out-of-class practice as well as for peer assessment. Both CMSs can serve as mediums for hosting, managing or accessing full interpretation programs, short courses, skill-building exercises, content databases or communities of practice. They are able to enhance collaboration among interpreting schools (particularly helpful for rarer language combinations); share trainers with remote students in blended learning courses; or connect to the interpreting community through social media.

Through an intuitive, user-friendly interface, Claroline has three main features that could be exploited for interpreter training and professional development: social interaction/networking tools; platforms to organize theme-based resources; and greater learner control over activity and collaboration through sections organised by purpose. While both platforms succeed in creating an the active learning environment that is essential to collaborative learning, Claroline claims a more learner centred responsive design than Blackboard by encouraging greater social interaction, easier linking to social media (Twitter, Facebook, chat, video chat, wikis, blogs, podcasts, RSS feeds) and customisation based on objectives and preferences. Electronic communication such as blogs and user forums have been proven to positively impact interpersonal relationships (Shannon 2012) by offering efficient and flexible communication channels.

Blogging and social networking is second nature for today's students. Huang *et al.*'s research (2004, 154) showed that electronic communication channels have become an important communication means in education, mainly due to the freedom from constraints of time and space and the accessibility of different information resources.

In Claroline, the division of sections designates what is learner-managed (personal and activity) and what is teacher-managed (work/course). Enhanced learner responsibility through this management potential increases both awareness of common and individual goals and also learner accountability. Collaborative activities could include using wikis to prepare mock conferences or the website tool to group YouTube videos with specific themes or speakers. Likewise, trainers can propose activities, promote peer assessment or use tracking tools to adapt learning pathways to students' progress.

The cornerstone of Blackboard Collaborate is the combination of synchronous and asynchronous interaction through live sessions via web conferencing, streaming playback and interactive recordings of classes. An example of integration of this tool in a learning scenario will be developed below in this article. Likewise, Wang's research (2015) is another illustration of an e-learning environment that uses the Blackboard platform for students' autonomous learning. This blended learning model, which could pair well with Claroline, not only allows face-to-face interaction, but also benefits students who miss live sessions or want to reinforce learning in their own time. The model also

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helps to develop individual accountability and regulate interaction, allowing students more time for reflection and response. Real-time video conferencing is augmented by a virtual whiteboard to present content, display files or share applications. The follow-the-speaker and multipoint video also grants a more real, natural interaction.

Blackboard also provides a tool called The Self and Peer Assessment Building Block which allows students to give and receive feedback from their peers. Such assessment can be done anonymously, potentially resulting in more candid evaluations.

Group chats in both tools allow trainers to model effective group or individual feedback, encourage critical thinking, and to enhance connections between peers. Voice notes facilitate personalised messages and explanations. Blackboard's breakout rooms allow students to engage and interact in small groups to discuss course materials and take part in activities based on need and ability. Guest speakers/trainers can participate via web conferencing to collaborate remotely. This helps to motivate students through varied, challenging and more authentic learning experiences. External trainers share best practices from new perspectives, thereby enriching feedback.

Furthermore, Blackboard Collaborate and Claroline can be complemented with e-portfolios of conference-related corpora, multilingual glossaries, and digital class diaries that where students can reflect on training activities and problem-solve outcomes and objectives and then share this with trainers and peers.

8.2. *Online video material: SCiCLOUD and the Speech Repository*

DG Interpretation of the European Commission offers a wide range of digital resources and interactive services as part of its pedagogical assistance to interpreting schools. SCiCLOUD offers open access that can be used for autonomous training or within a collaborative context between trainers and experts for deliberate practice and assessment, including class based activities, or further individual and group work. Of particular note among the main training resources available is the Speech Repository, an e-learning tool which contains a vast collection of real-life speeches and training material classified into levels of difficulty. The new version of this tool, Speech Repository 2.0, consists of:

- Speech Repository, which offers full public access to a bank of streamed speeches, including recordings of excerpts of conferences or other public meetings, and training speeches made by interpreters from the European institutions.
- My Speech Repository, geared towards partner universities, organizations and EU-accredited interpreters. After log-in through the European Commission Authentication System (ECAS), access is granted to all speeches and additional

functionalities linked to conference interpreter training such as downloading speeches. The free SCICrec recording tool allows students to record their own interpretations and to play them back. The system also lets you share recordings, e.g. with other students or with trainers for evaluation (Source: DG SCIC).

8.3. *Example of integration of CAIT in a blended-learning environment*

The following section proposes an example of an online workshop scenario on nonverbal communication in simultaneous interpretation. The scenario is based on a four-phase blended learning model which integrates Blackboard as supporting online tool (live-sessions via web conferencing, a recording of the session, recording of the interpretation and breakout rooms and group chat for discussions). The workshop also follows the four components of experiential learning highlighted by Wang (2015, 69):

- practice with authentic speeches;
- observe on-site interpreting done by professional interpreters;
- analyze interpreting skills and strategies;
- share and discuss reflections on skills and strategies.

Expected outcomes. In order to be constructive from a learning-context perspective, trainers should enhance the future interpreter's awareness of their own delivery. The fact that the interpreter's work is 'nearly invisible' makes it easier for learners to forget about nonverbal signals that affect verbal discourse. The aim of this session is to make them realize the general influence of prosody and, more specifically, intonation in successful communication and, therefore, successful interpretation.

Collados' research (2007), for example, has determined that monotonous intonation has a negative effect on judgements of interpreting quality and the degree of confidence that the interpreter inspires. In other words, prosodic cues can produce a dissociation between actual and perceived quality, and therefore the success, of a simultaneous interpretation.

Distribution of the session:

1st phase: Preparation of the exercise. Explanation of procedure and interpretation guidelines to external collaborators.

Two guest interpreters will be invited to collaborate remotely with the trainer for the preparation of this activity. Verbal instructions should be provided beforehand via web conference, and the intended purpose of the session will be explained before starting. Interpreter A will be asked to interpret a speech with an engaging, confident

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tone, paying attention to intonation and voice inflection; Interpreter B will be asked to interpret a different speech in a monotonous and apathetic way, despite rendering the ideas faithfully and completely.

2nd phase: Brainstorming and reflection on the importance of nonverbal communication in daily life.

The session will start with a general discussion where students will be asked to come up with examples of nonverbal communication in their daily lives, e.g. gestures and facial expressions.

Attention will then be specifically drawn to intonation and the discussion will focus on the interpreting context. Clear parameters on the expected learning objectives and outcomes will be established through an appropriate set of hypotheses. A lesson-drawing hypothesis will be generated to guide students towards the expected learning objectives from the beginning until the end of the exercise. The trainer will raise questions for the students to first answer individually and then in groups: Does the tone of our voice has an impact in what we are saying? Does it influence the listener's perceptions somehow? How can tone of voice affect communication?

Blackboard's breakout rooms and group chats will allow students to engage and interact in small groups of discussion to put in common their ideas.

The aim is to promote individual accountability by first asking for individual answers and then providing a conversational environment in which individuals can defend their points of view, listen to others', debate and eventually reach some kind of consensus.

3rd phase. Students watch the interpreter's performance.

Students will watch online both interpretations. Interpretations will be recorded for streaming playback; they could be displayed again at the end of the session to increase consistency and reliability of the conclusions reached.

4th phase: Contrastive analysis of interpretations. Reflection in groups on the impact of the tone of voice when interpreting

Students will interact within their groups to reach agreement on the strengths and weaknesses of both interpretations, determining which one is more compelling, explain why they came to this conclusion, and validate or refute the hypothesis set beforehand. The trainer will monitor this exercise, guiding students if needed to ensure that the objectives of the exercise are covered and continuously encourage autonomous reflection.

5th part: Oral presentations of the reports

Students will work together to assemble a team report. Individual accountability will be promoted by having each person present a part of the oral report, and this

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will also provide opportunities for the performance of individuals to be observed and evaluated by others, at the same time paying attention to their own prosody as speakers. The grade on the project will partly be based on the group effort (40%) and partly on the individual oral presentation (60%). This process will also enhance positive interdependence, helping students to understand that there is value in working with other students and that both individual learning and outputs will be better as a result of collaboration. In parallel, each student will have the opportunity to apply lessons learned about skills and strategies for successful communication to his/her future performance.

Lessons to be learned about non-verbal communication through feedback, self- and peer-assessment:

Non-verbal communication analysis and users' expectations in simultaneous interpreting runs against the invisibility of the interpreter and conceives him/her as an agent that, to a lesser or greater extent, makes the discourse his/her own. Trainees should be aware that the interpreter is yet another link in the chain of communication and therefore only has a partial share of responsibility for the message's quality.

It is foreseeable that more monotone performances will be negatively viewed by trainees. Collados (1998; 2007) has pointed out how interpreters' expectations of interpreting quality are generally more demanding than end-users', particularly when evaluating other interpreter's performance in the role of listeners.

The impact of intonation in the overall assessment of the interpreters' performance may lead students to the conclusion that interpreters provide a link in the chain of communication leading users to demand active involvement on the part of the interpreter, rather than merely being the Messenger, and therefore the interpreter has his/her share of responsibility for the quality of the message.

9. DISCUSSION

The past decade has witnessed a revolution in technology that has reached all fields of human activity, including education. Multiple communication channels for peer-to-peer and student-trainer interaction now serve a generation connected by social networks and virtual technology. Traditional methods of skill acquisition alone are no longer optimal, and virtual spaces offer new possibilities that favor both autonomous and collaborative learning.

Unlike regular classes, this constructivist approach to teaching attaches more importance to the interpreting process than the product, and turns the trainer leadership over to trainees, helping them to become more proficient via adaptive expertise and flexibility, rather than more mechanical learning.

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Since the mid-1990s, virtual resources have contributed to responding to two of the traditional demands made by the interpreting market: to expose trainees to real-life working situations and to meet the high requirements of autonomous, deliberate practice in order to achieve expertise.

Becoming a conference interpreter requires the development of automated responses to the different tasks that take place throughout the cognitive process of interpreting, and deliberate practice on the basis of autonomous, situated learning activities appears to be the path to expertise. A pedagogical approach based on blended learning scenarios can provide a strategy for overcoming the difficulty of scheduling limitations in order to meet the demands of hundreds of hours of practice demanded for interpreter training, and, on the other hand, can encourage the transition from imparted to self-regulated learning.

As a counterpoint, Hawkins and Sandrelli (2006) argue interpreter training often has heavy relies on autonomous practice with little feedback from autonomous work, and this can ultimately lead to students' frustration. Therefore, we agree with Motta (2016, 133) that autonomous learning provided by VLE can only be effective when it is supportive and regulated under the guidance of the scaffolding and modeling skills of competent teaching assistants.

Although students must gain substantive practice in consecutive and/or simultaneous sub-skills, their peers can, in a manner that is reciprocal and collaborative, interact to assess and provide feedback on the skills related to language production, memory or language comprehension tasks.

Three requirements have been identified for creating scenarios in which cooperative learning can be effectively implemented: First, students need to feel safe, but also challenged. Second, small groups should allow every student to contribute. Third, tasks must be clearly defined and materials carefully selected. In other words, «learning designs need to be shaped by the desired educational outcomes», [and] and planning should «emphasize the strategies to engage, motivate, guide and monitor the learning experience» (Pannan and Legge 2016, 487).

Attention has been drawn to the importance of developing mechanisms for encouraging participation and maintaining motivation. As Herring (2016) remarked, if we want our collaborative learners to become a community of practice –i.e. working together because they want to, not because they have to– then we shouldn't take things for granted and need to think about how to encourage their collaboration. Our approach has defended that it is impossible to motivate students unless trainers have clearly thought through what we are trying to accomplish and understand the aim of what we are asking others to do.

Collaborative learning in blended scenarios does not arise spontaneously and its successful realization requires training and practice. Pedagogy has to be the driving force that guides a community of learners through their training, and technology should

follow, rather than lead, the process. In this way, we will avoid the risk of becoming lost in technology and end up losing sight of the primary purposes of the training.

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CLAROLINE http://www.claroline.net/.

SCICLOUD http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/scic/cooperation-with-universities/index_en.htm.