Enhancing interpreting students' ability to assess their own performance

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The program

- ☐ Since 1991: undergraduate courses, Applied Modern Languages (LMA) Department
- ☐ 2002-2003: creation of the Master in Conference Interpreting (MIC)
- ☐ 2003-2004: MIC follows SCIC guidelines
- ☐ 2004-2005: MIC follows EMCI core curriculum
- ☐ 2008-2009: Bologna implementation

MIC statistics

Year	Candidates for test	Master students	SCIC bursary recipients	Successful graduates		EU Accredited (last test March 2007)				EU working interpreters
				No.	Rate	SCIC Staff	EP Staff	CdJ Staff	AIC	
2002-2003	15	12	5	10	83,3 %	0	1	0	2	3
2003-2004	20	12	7	7	58,3 %	2	0	0	1	3
2004-2005	43	12	5	10	83,3 %	0	1	1	2	4
2005-2006	38	12	10	9	75 %	0	0	0	1	1
2006-2007	24	12	10	7	58,3 %					
2007-2008	36	12	8	-	-					

Assessment

- ☐ 20h/week, 14 weeks/semester, 2 semesters
- ☐ non-eliminatory mid-term examination in CI in January
- ☐ CI resits and SI examination in May
- ☐ graduation exam end of June

Self-assessment (I)
What trainers do

- ☐ Provide a feedback pattern:
  - ■ coherence and accuracy
  - ■ content
  - ■ presentation and language

- ☐ Encourage self-evaluation and peer evaluation in class:
  - ■ interpreter student assesses own rendition
  - ■ audience students assess in detail the exercise
  - ■ trainer gives synthetic feedback

Self-assessment (II)

What students do

- Since 2004-2005 group work compulsory but not supervised
- Accustomed to peer evaluation
- Trainer = authority instead of partner
- Motivation high but not enough commitment to self-training
- Unaware about deliberate practice

Hypothesis

Due to insufficient

- Contact time

- Self-reflexiveness
- Deliberate practice

- Determine degree of self-awareness
- Increase involvement through metacognitive tools:
  - Journal
  - Tutoring

Action research

- problem identification

- fact-finding

- planning

- action

- "the action research framework is most appropriate for participants who recognize the existence of shortcomings in their educational activities and who would like to adopt some initial stance in regard to the problem, formulate a plan, carry out an intervention, evaluate the outcomes and develop further strategies in an iterative fashion" (MacIsaac 1996: 1)

The practice journal

- ☐ "students would become accustomed to regular, active review of their performance" (Harmer 1996: 11)
- ☐ Experiment:
  - ■ 12 students
  - ■ 6 weeks
  - ■ consecutive course
  - ■ feedback on journal at the end

The sample

Student	Languages	Journal			
		Type	Size/ pages	Entries	Style
A	RO FR EN	Word doc	10 pages (A4)	23 almost daily	narrative, structured
AX	RO EN FR	Word doc	11 pages (A4)	28 daily, by language	narrative, final conclusions
D	RO FR ES	Word doc	22 pages (A4)	2-3 entries per day, one for each exercise	table
L	RO EN FR	paper notebook	11 pages handwritten (A5)	16 almost daily	bulleted list, diary style
M	RO GE EN	Word doc	4 pages (A4)	daily, by speech and language, 3 weeks missing	table
MM	RO GE EN	paper notebook	21 pages handwritten (A5)	weekly, by speech, monthly synthesis	well structured, lists
MO	RO FR EN	Word doc	5 pages (A4)	7 weekly synthesis	simple table
V	RO EN FR	Word doc	5 pages (A4)	9, weekly synthesis	narrative, deep insight

Analysis criteria

- ☐ Objectivity
- ☐ Self-assessment
  ("How did I perform today?")
- ☐ Feedback
- ☐ Difficulties
- ☐ Progression
- ☐ Alternative activities

Results and debriefing session

- ❏ 8 journals
  - ■ 3 follow the guidelines and are illustrative
  - ■ 3 are partially reflecting skill acquisition
  - ■ 2 are unusable to assess progression

- ❏ Debriefing session
  - ■ round table open debate
  - ■ 9 students present, all 9 took the floor
  - ■ Q&A according to the analysis criteria

Experiment conclusions

- Unease with journal writing (no privacy)
- Stop at identification of problem, exceptionally analyze or solve it
- Feedback as one time label
- Prevalent psychological difficulties
- Stages in skill acquisition not reflected
- Speech preparation

- Prefer oral dialog
- Think about ≠ write about performance
- Request extra-guidance and feedback
- Recurrent difficulties: note-taking, expression in mother tongue
- Declarative enthusiasm ≠ journal observation
- Peer evaluation system

Tutoring plan

- Maieutic method: elicit self-evaluation statements from trainee
- Aim: "reflective conversations"
- Scaffold students' self-analytical skills
- Short term plan:
  - same group in SI
  - weekly 15 min private tutorials
  - analysis after 6 weeks