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Teaching localization: 6 Practices that make a difference (Part II)

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This is Part II in a two-part blog from **Uwe Muegge**, Senior Director at Beijing-based CSOFT International and Coordinator of the MA program in Translation and Localization Management at the Monterey Institute of International Studies.

The Final Three Practices that Make a Difference

TREAT TRANSLATION MEMORY SYSTEMS AS QUALITY ASSURANCE TOOLS

Translation memory (TM) systems have become commonplace in today's translation courses – sometimes for the wrong reasons. If students are told that the only reason for using a translation memory is to leverage previous translations, these students will not use a TM system for non-repetitive texts. That teaching approach might also be frustrating for students who start with an empty translation memory, as these students may not get any immediate benefit from using TM technology. If, however, students are introduced to the translation memory as a quality assurance tool, the return on investment is instant. From translating the very first sentence in a translation memory system, students can take advantage of functions like completeness control, formatting control, and terminology control. *Note: I insist that any translation project where formal translation quality (stylistic, numerical and terminological consistency, formatting, etc.) is important, belongs in a translation memory system.*

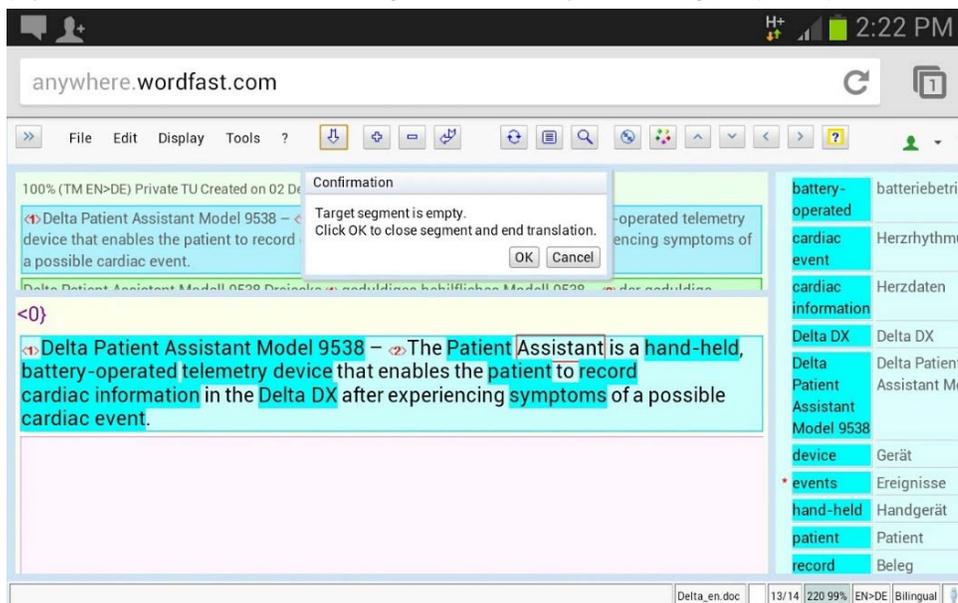


Figure 3: Example of a cloud-based translation memory system I use in class. This screenshot was taken on an Android device, displaying several QA features, e.g. automatic terminology look-up, formatting placeholders, and completeness control.

TEACH PROJECT MANAGEMENT AS THE NEW KEY SKILL

Most of my students seek in-house, salaried positions after graduation. The reality of the job market in the U.S. is that unlike in the past, very few organizations, including language service providers (LSPs), have internal translation staff. Today, the overwhelming majority of translators work as freelance linguists for LSPs or direct clients. But LSPs and a growing number of organizations that buy translation services are hiring translation and localization project managers. In fact, 85% of TLM graduates work as project managers, and as such, they *manage* localization projects instead of *translating* documents. Therefore, to prepare students for success in the localization industry means shifting the focus from teaching translation skills to teaching project management skills. *Note: In addition to six translation tools courses, the TLM program requires students to take five business/PM courses.*



Figure 4: What you see in this photo: The author (first from left) sitting on a career panel organized by **The International Multilingual User Group**, with Lydia Clarke (Acclaro), Iris Orriss (Facebook) and Jack Boyce (Google). What you don't: More than a dozen TLM students using this event as a networking opportunity (Photo: Joe Katz, IMUG)

HARNESS THE POWER OF (SOCIAL) NETWORKING

Can (localization) students be too prepared for their job search? I believe not. And that is why the very first tool I expose students in my Intro to CAT course is LinkedIn, the global job search engine. True, the majority of students already has a LinkedIn profile, but I have yet to see the incoming student that has a complete, let alone compelling, profile. But can't creating a presence on professional networks wait until students are close to graduation? Not if you want the best jobs for your students. Building a LinkedIn profile that really stands out takes time; especially the tasks that most LinkedIn users neglect (e.g. creating a network of relevant 1st-degree connections, getting recommendations/endorsements from former managers and co-workers, joining relevant professional groups). In addition to covering LinkedIn in class, I invite students to follow me on twitter and friend me on facebook, which are two other social networks I use to extend teaching beyond the classroom. *Note: Here are two examples of students using social media to their advantage. One student landed an internship with the International Criminal Court and a job with Amazon, and another one won the prestigious JTG Student Scholarship after acting upon tweets I sent.*

Please visit my SelectedWorks site to download additional resources on teaching localization, localization tools and processes.

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