Chapter 11

Developing Peer–to–Peer Supported Reflection as a Life–Long Learning Skill:
An Example from the Translation Classroom

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ABSTRACT

Life-long learning skills have moved from being a side-affect of a formal education to skills that are explicitly trained during a university degree. In a case study a University class undertook a translation from Swedish to English in a keystroke logging environment and then replayed their translations in pairs while discussing their thought processes when undertaking the translations, and why they made particular choices and changes to their translations. Computer keystroke logging coupled with Peer-based intervention assisted the students in discussing how they worked with their translations, enabled them to see how their ideas relating to the translation developed as they worked with the text, develop reflection skills and learn from their peers. The process showed that Computer Keystroke logging coupled with Peer-based intervention has to potential to (1) support student reflection and discussion around their translation tasks, (2) enhance student motivation and enthusiasm for translation and (3) develop peer-to-peer supported reflection as a life-long learning skill.

IINTRODUCTION

Lifelong learning and the importance of generic skills have gained a clearer position in higher education in Europe thanks to the Bologna Declaration (1999) in general and the Bergen Communiqué (2005) in particular as it "explicitly mentions the chance to further implement lifelong learning in higher education through qualification frameworks" (Jakobi & Rusconi, 2009: 52), and policy development in the European Union (see Dehmel, 2006 for a good overview of this policy development). What is worth mentioning here are the subtle changes in the definition of lifelong learning between 2000 and 2001 from "all purposeful learning activity, undertaken on an ongoing basis with the aim of improving knowledge, skills, and competence" (CEC, 2000, p. 3) to "all learning activity undertaken throughout life, with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competences within a personal, civic and/or employment-related perspective" (CEC, 2001, p. 9). Dehmel highlights the removal of *purposeful* as informal learning with no specific purpose is a core element of lifelong learning, and the change from on *an ongoing basis* to *throughout life* that stresses continuous learning from the cradle to the end of life. Dehmel also points out a shift in the understanding of life-long learning from the 1970s to today; a shift from humanistic ideals of Bildung to "primarily utilitarian, economic objectives" (p. 52), even if these have been nuanced recently to combine the social and cultural with the economic.

One generic skill of central importance for life-long learning is being able to reflect upon what you are working with in order to learn. It is important that formal learning experiences at university support the development of reflective learning skills, that is the ability to "demonstrate self-awareness and motivation, awareness of the process of learning and independence" (Pickering, 2005). Micelli (2006) wrote that without reflective learning "learners cannot accept responsibility for their own learning" (p. 1), and Boud, Keogh & Walker (1985) view learner reflection as a "a term for those intellectual and affective activities in which individuals engage to explore their experiences in order to lead to a new understanding and appreciation" (p. 3) and one that involves mentally revisiting the experience or event. Some, e.g. Posner (1996), argue that more learning can be derived from retrospective reflection on an event's process of learning than from the experience itself (Posner, 1996).

This chapter examines peer-to-peer learning training in the context of a university level translation class. Lindgren, Sullivan, Deutschmann and Steinvall (2009), of which this chapter is an expanded version containing much textual overlap, focussed on how peer-to-peer learning could be used to improve student learning in the translation class and to overcome some of the criticism directed at the use of the Grammar-Translation Method of language teaching over the past 20 years as this method focuses on form as rather than on language for communication (see, for example, Levefere & Bassnett, 1998). Peer-to-peer supported reflection skills are defined here as both giving support and being sufficiently reflective to respond to peer learning support. The development of peer-to-peer supported reflection as a life-long learning skill is important; in working life much learning occurs in non-formal settings and is supported by peers who are often work colleagues, and in personal life much learning occurs in hobby and home settings where the supporter can be a family member peer, including your children, in sporting and social clubs and other daily activities.

This chapter begins with a look at peer-to-peer learning before turning to the computer tool we used in the classroom to train both peer-to-peer learning and the students' Swedish-English translation skills. The computational technique used in this paper to enhance language learning and support the development of peer-to-peer reflective learning is Computer Keystroke Logging. In an earlier study Lindgren, Stevenson and Sullivan

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