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Establishing a sustainable public service interpreting education in Sweden / Hacia una formación sostenible en la interpretación en los servicios públicos en Suecia

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Abstract: This article describes the reorganization of the Public Service Interpreting (PSI) education initiated in 2017 at the Institute for Interpreting and Translation Studies at Stockholm University in Sweden. The objective was to establish a sustainable educational infrastructure in order to meet societal needs for interpreting services in languages of lesser diffusion (LLD). The concept of sustainability is discussed in relation to interpreting education. Three particularly important areas are highlighted in relation to this objective. Firstly, is the design of the PSI curriculum and the necessity of meeting the varying needs of working languages. Secondly, is the establishment of an educational infrastructure by creating different trajectories for continued PSI-related education. Thirdly, is the establishment of connecting activities linking the PSI program and related courses and stakeholders in society at a number of different levels. The rationale behind the curriculum development and related activities, as well as the journey ahead, are discussed.

Keywords: Sustainable PSI education; LLD; Connected curriculum

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Resumen: Este artículo describe la reorganización de la formación universitaria en Interpretación en los Servicios Públicos (ISP) iniciada en 2017 en el Instituto de Estudios de Interpretación y Traducción de la Universidad de Estocolmo en Suecia. El objetivo era establecer una infraestructura educativa sostenible para suplir las necesidades de interpretación en la sociedad de minorías lingüísticas (ML). El artículo presenta el concepto de sostenibilidad en relación a la formación universitaria en interpretación y resalta tres áreas particularmente importantes sobre este objetivo. En primer lugar, el diseño del plan educativo de ISP y la necesidad de cumplir con las necesidades cambiantes de las lenguas de trabajo. En segundo lugar, el asentamiento de una infraestructura educativa con la creación de diferentes trayectorias para una formación continua relacionada con la ISP. En tercer lugar, el establecimiento de un sistema cohesivo que enlace las actividades ligadas al programa en ISP, los cursos relacionados y los actores interesados en la sociedad a distintos niveles. El artículo finaliza con las razones del desarrollo del plan educativo y de las actividades formativas relacionadas, además, se añaden otras consideraciones a tener en cuenta.

Palabras clave: Formación sostenible en ISP; Minorías lingüísticas; Plan educativo cohesivo

1. Introduction – PSI training and education in Sweden

Public service interpreting in Sweden is closely related to the influx of foreign labor in the 1960s (Almqvist, 2016; Lemhagen & Almqvist, 2013). Compared to many European countries, interpreting training in Sweden has a comparatively long tradition and goes back to the 1970s (Wadensjö, 1992, p. 50–51; Valero–Garcés, 2019; Tiseliu, 2022). The first rudimentary training programs were offered at adult education centers and study associations (Englund Dimitrova & Wadensjö, 2013, p. 68), and the first interpreting program at the university level was offered in 1977 (Wadensjö 2013, p. 71). Over the years, higher PSI education and related courses have been developed and run with occasional gaps. Since 2013 university education in PSI has been offered regularly every year (Tiseliu, 2022, p. 189).

Characteristic of the PSI training and education landscape in Sweden is the divide between the short training courses offered at adult education centers and the one–year interpreting program offered at the university level. In addition to differences of length of studies and the combination of knowledge and skills, the languages offered were slightly different. The PSI program at the university level required, apart from an admissions test, also previous academic studies and a minimum of 60 ECTS in one of the working languages (Tiseliu & Wadensjö, 2015). This meant that necessary and high–level competency in the relevant languages were available at Swedish universities (Almqvist 2016: 39–40). This however also meant that the PSI program was restricted to languages taught at higher education in Sweden, while the PSI training courses at adult education centers were focused on a wider range of languages, including migrant languages. Other differences were related to organizational aspects, for example the exam procedures. The PSI program at the university level has followed the standard operating procedures at the university, while the procedures at the adult education centers have differed over time and between the schools, and between arranging some form of final exam and not offering any final exam at all. For a detailed description of the differences between the PSI courses at adult education centers and the PSI program at the university level, see Almqvist 2016.

The languages included in the new PSI education presented below can be categorized as languages of lesser diffusion (LLD) (Giambruno, 2014; Skaaden & Wadensjö, 2014; Balogh, Salaets & van Schoor, 2016). However, a short comment regarding this way of categorizing languages in the context of public service education would be appropriate here. LLD as a category, does not take into consideration the languages' "importance on the world stage, the number of people in the world who speak it, or its importance to those for whom it is their mother tongue" (Roat & Creeze, 2015: 237). Rather, this is a context-based categorization encompassing languages spoken by smaller communities in areas where the shared language of the wider population is another language. This means that

Turkish, for example, is a language of lesser diffusion in the United States, where few Turkish speakers have immigrated, but not in Germany, where there is a large Turkish community. Somali is a language of lesser diffusion in Atlanta, but not in Minneapolis. (Roat & Creeze, 2015: 237).

This quite fuzzy categorization is obviously not simply based on linguistic context. It takes its starting point from the majority language of the geographical area, whatever that or they may be. Another description of LLDs could be languages spoken in communities, where both the languages and the speakers lack formal status. The categorization a language in LLD, whether the languages refer to a lesser, limited or low diffusion, rather shows the need to bring some order to the perceived messiness of multilingualism in societies dominated by monolingual language ideologies (Gal, 2006). In a Swedish PSI education and training context (both at universities and adult education centers), the LLDs represent languages in which qualified public service interpreters are highly requested and lack official status in society. They should not be confused with the national minority languages which are protected by the Swedish Act on National Minorities and National Minority Languages (SFS, 2009:724). Apart from that, the LLD categorization is not particularly useful in handling the practicalities of designing and implementing the PSI education, as it is generally a very rough category and does not take the unique and complex sociolinguistic variation surrounding each and every one of these languages into consideration.

Related to the need for educated public service interpreters with LLDs as working languages, is the aspect of sustainable PSI education. Sustainability in the PSI education context refers to the ability to adapt to the shifting societal demands and the capacity to handle socio-ecological and economic fluctuations (Kadric & Pöllabauer, 2022). In this article, the sustainability of PSI education is highlighted from three perspectives. These are a research-based PSI program, agreeing with previous researchers on the necessity of basing interpreting teaching on theory and research (Roy, 2000; Hale, 2007; Gustafsson, Norström & Fioretos, 2012; Pokorn & Mikolič, 2020; Skaaden & Radanovic Felberg, 2020; Sagli & Skaaden, 2022), an educational infrastructure in which the PSI program is embedded, and well-developed networks connecting the education with the wider community.

In 2017, the Institute for Interpreting and Translation Studies at the department of Swedish Language and Multilingualism at Stockholm University received funding from the Swedish government for reorganizing and developing its PSI program by broadening the range of languages offered, and including migrant languages of societal interest. Furthermore, the new program should also develop the educational environment by adding additional and advanced PSI-related courses. This meant reorganizing the PSI program at several levels, for example the abolishment of the previous requirement/ for prior higher education language studies. At the same time, the admissions test that was used for testing the language skills of the applicants was developed in range and expanded to the new working languages. Apart from that, a number of PSI-related courses were revived and updated, and new ones were established for

this purpose. Another requirement related to the funding was the establishment of the PSI program at another university located outside the capital city of Stockholm. The university chosen for this was Lund University, located in the southern parts of Sweden, which started its own PSI program in 2019. The aim of this article is twofold. Firstly, the aim is to describe the development of different curricula that has taken place since 2017 at Stockholm University. Secondly, it is to discuss these curricula together with a range of related activities as examples of how they contribute in creating meeting places in-between, that is, spaces where stakeholders come together around shared interests.

This article is organized as follows. After the introduction, the new PSI curriculum is introduced and the pedagogical implications in the reorganization are discussed. The section following describes and discusses the educational infrastructure built up at the Institute for Interpreting and Translation Studies (TÖI) and the ideas behind offering different PSI-related courses. Thereafter, a section follows where a selection of the many activities launched at the institute in order to connect the PSI program and activities with the wider community in different ways. Finally, in the concluding remarks, the various different perspectives are brought together and the remaining development work with the PSI program and the educational infrastructure is discussed in light of a long-term sustainable PSI education.

2 The design of the PSI curriculum

As mentioned above, one of the elements in the reorganization of the public service interpreting education was the replacement of working languages offered with further requested languages. In 2017, the working languages in combination with Swedish were Arabic, Dari, Mongolian, Persian, Somali and Tigrinya. Later on, Uzbek, Russian and Ukrainian were added one by one, replacing Mongolian, Tigrinya and Uzbek which turned out to be lesser demanded. The requirements of previous academic language studies were removed and the admissions test was modified to ensure the students' functional mastery of the relevant working languages before entering the program. The recast of the program was no doubt an opportunity for individuals who previously had not qualified for the PSI program at the university level, bilinguals as well as already working interpreters with training from adult education centers. Other elements were the adjustments in the organizing and implementation of the learning activities bearing in mind that the students had quite varying experiences from higher education in Sweden (Gentile, 2020; Orlando & Gerber, 2020). The PSI program was offered as a combined online and onsite education, in order to make participation for students residing in different parts of the country possible. In the area of blended learning, use was also made of fruitful experience learned from other countries, for example in Norway (Skaaden, 2013b; 2016; 2017b; Skaaden & Radanovic Felberg, 2020). It was important for the content of the curricula to be connected (Fung, 2017) in order to create the best pedagogical conditions, while at the same time making sure that the classes and the teaching were to be based on "theory of interpreting or informed by the results of research" (Hale, 2007, p. 178; see also Roy, 2000; Pöchhacker, 2013; Tipton & Furmanek, 2016).

2.1. The PSI curriculum

The new PSI program is organized around two courses of 30 ECTS each, named *Public Service Interpreting I* and *Public Service Interpreting II*. The first one is an introductory course and the second one is a continuation course. Each course is composed of four to five modules, each carrying between 3.5 and 10 ECTS credits. The modules are divided into theoretical and practical components, with area-specific learning objectives incorporated into both types of

modules. Not only were experiences made in how to best organize and combine the modules and activities by repeated experiences, the giant leap in digital literacy during the COVID-19 pandemic also contributed to developed skills in organizing blended learning activities. The courses and modules are presented in Table 1.

Public Service Interpreting I, 30 ECTS	Public Service Interpreting II, 30 ECTS
Professional ethics & professional knowledge I (7,5)	Professional ethics & professional knowledge II (7,5)
Basic terminology (3,5)	Introduction to law for interpreters (7,5)
Terminology in practice (4)	Realia for healthcare interpreting (5)
Interpreting technique and practice Ia (7,5)	Interpreting technique and practice II (10)
Interpreting technique and practice Ib (7,5)	

Table 1. Overview of the modules of the PSI program

The two modules in Professional ethics and professional knowledge I and Professional ethics and professional knowledge II offer insights into ethical codes and aspects in interpreting, sociolinguistic insights into the dynamics of interpreting as interaction and intercultural communication, and also historical aspects of interpreting and translation, including the interface between the interpreting profession, training and research. The modules *Basic Terminology* and *Terminology in Practice* introduce Language for Special Purposes (LSP), professional jargon versus everyday informal language, and general principles and methods for bilingual, interpreter-focused terminology work. Discussions on bilingual terminology and word list production during these courses are particularly important, especially for students whose working languages lack extensive linguistic resources. Students are required to refine their skills for future professional practice as interpreters, which is why the knowledge and skills acquired in these courses are practiced throughout the one-year PSI program. The two modules, *Introduction to Law for Interpreters* and *Realia for Healthcare Interpreting*, each focus on specific areas and introduce students to the Swedish legal and healthcare systems. As with legal and healthcare systems in other countries, the Swedish systems are complex, and considerable effort is dedicated to understanding them and their specialized terminology.

The remaining three modules, *Interpreting Technique and Practice Ia*, *Ib*, and *II*, focus on practical skills training. The first module (*Ia*) emphasizes interpreting in the domains of the labor market, social welfare, and migration, while the second module (*Ib*) focuses on anatomy and the healthy body. In the continuation course, where the third module (*II*) is included, interpreting and skills training concentrate on diseases and legal interpreting, respectively. Within these practical modules—namely, *Interpreting Technique and Practice Ia*, *Ib*, and *II*—a range of complex skills is developed. These include working across various social domains, utilizing the prepared bilingual word lists, exercising professional discretion during interpreting, and employing techniques for requesting clarifications and repetitions, among other skills. Interpreting practice is conducted through scripted roleplays and role cards, both in language-specific groups and in mixed-language groups. Each term, students also engage in interprofessional learning activities where they practice interpreting alongside students from other educational programs. These activities are described in further detail below.

3. Pedagogical implications

The reorganization of the PSI program, not surprisingly, brought about several pedagogical implications. For one, the majority of the students are adults struggling to balance work obligations, family life, and studies. At the same time, their diverse personal experiences with life, migration, and encountering Swedish society as adults have proven to be a true asset. Many students have firsthand experience of encountering public service providers as clients and through interpreters. Some even have personal experience as interpreters, though with varying levels of qualification. At the same time, most students are second-language speakers of Swedish, with varying levels of academic and digital literacy. The heterogeneity of the student groups demands attentiveness from teachers, particularly regarding instructions and clarity of expectations. Moreover, educational materials in Swedish – the shared instructional language – are still relatively scarce. Since 2017, a substantial amount of educational material has been developed, and several key publications have been updated (e.g., Wadensjö 1998; 2018) or translated into Swedish (e.g., Skaaden 2013a; Skaaden 2017a; Hale & Napier 2013; Hale & Napier 2020).

In 2017, a new group of interpreting teachers with diverse language backgrounds was recruited. These teachers were experienced interpreters, respected in the interpreting community, and had teaching experience, primarily at adult education centers, but varying knowledge of the higher education system. Since the program's inception, the new language-profiled PSI teachers have received pedagogical and digital support and participated in various types of training. This support has included classroom observations (sitting in on colleagues' classes), monthly teacher team meetings to discuss classroom challenges, thematic pedagogical seminars held twice a year, and material development workshops when needed. There has been close collaboration with the PSI program at Lund University, formalized through an agreement. This collaboration encompasses aspects such as course syllabi, staff recruitment & training of interpreting teachers, the exchange of lesson materials as well as arranging interprofessional learning activities. Several teachers have taught at both PSI programs, which became easier to manage when classes were offered online during the COVID-19 pandemic. The similarities in the PSI courses have also facilitated the transition for students from Lund University to continue their studies, as more advanced PSI-related courses are offered exclusively at Stockholm University. In this section, we have focused inward, examining the design of the PSI curriculum. In the next section, we will broaden our perspective and describe the process of building an educational environment.

4. Building an educational infrastructure

Already at the design and planning stage, it was clear that the new one-year PSI program alone would not suffice, especially since there was a huge unmet need among interpreters with LLDs as working languages for further PSI-related educational trajectories. In addition, in order to attract the heterogeneous (pre-) professional student groups, having various interests, strengths and weaknesses, and goals, several educational trajectories were needed. This approach was both in line with the goals of the university offering widening participation from underrepresented social groups, and the demand made in the public inquiry in 2018 (SOU 2018:83, p. 300–303) to prolong the PSI program. For this purpose, both previous experiences of courses and new ideas were taken into consideration.

Below, three examples of educational trajectories are described. The first one is the Bachelor's course in interpreting that was reinstated after a pause of a few years. The second one is the Education for Interpreting Teachers, that was revived after many years. The third

one is the Public Service Translation course that was designed specifically to support the development of the educational infrastructure. All courses are offered as part-time courses based on a combination of onsite and online learning activities. In Figure 1 below, the three educational trajectories are illustrated. The dashed arrows point towards ongoing course development work.

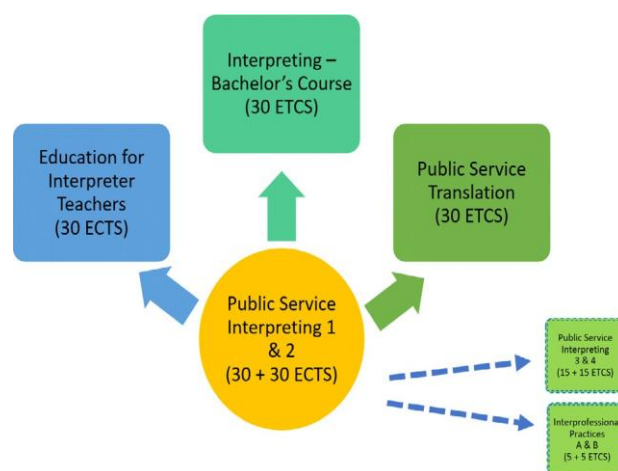


Figure 1: Educational trajectories available after the PSI program

41. Interpreting – Bachelor's Course

The Bachelor's course (30 ECTS) is an example of an existing course that was paused for a few years during the reorganization of the PSI program, and was reintroduced in an updated version in 2018 in order to meet a more heterogeneous student group. The entry requirement is the one-year PSI program, and the course contains three modules:

Bachelor's course (30 ECTS)
Research Methods in Interpreting Studies (7.5 ECTS)
Theoretical Perspectives in Interpreting Studies (7.5 ECTS)
Degree Project (15 ECTS)

Table 2. Overview over the modules in the Bachelor's course.

There were two general challenges to handle. The first one was, not surprisingly, that the one-year PSI program does not focus on research studies, but is rather based on a combination of theory and practice focusing on making the students ready for professional practice. On the other hand, only the most motivated students usually apply for the Bachelor's course and the chances for them to obtain a passing grade in the course is good. The second challenge is the fact the majority of the students are second-language speakers of Swedish and do not receive specific training in academic writing in Swedish. In order to meet these challenges a number of measures have been developed over time. One important element has been to introduce certain theoretical aspects and present research studies already during the PSI program. This also applies to written assignments and some focus on spelling, punctuation and handling references. By practicing writing skills gradually over time, the students become acquainted

with the central aspects of academic writing already before joining the BA program. As for the modules in the Bachelor's course collaboration with the section of Academic Writing Service at Stockholm University was initiated in order to get support in further adapting the curriculum. The teaching staff also regularly attend courses at the Centre for the Advancement of University Teaching at Stockholm University. From the autumn term of 2024, apart from the 60 ECTS from the PSI program, studies in the Swedish language (30 ECTS) will be a required prerequisite to take the Bachelor's course.

4.2 Education for interpreter teachers

The course Education for Interpreter Teachers (30 ECTS) was launched in the autumn of 2018. This course is successor of courses offered previously (1999, 2001 and 2004), but that was shut down because of reorganizations and a lack of resources. The recent Interpreter Teacher course shares the same vision as its predecessor when it comes to the “necessity for both promoting the process of professionalization of interpreters (and translators), and for confirming and strengthening translation studies and interpreting studies as an academic discipline” (Englund Dimitrova & Wadensjö 2013: 69). It is also inspired by the curriculum development internationally (Furmanek 2010; Wadensjö 2013a; Orlando & Gerber, 2020; Skaaden & Radanovic Felberg 2020; Biggs, Tang & Kennedy, 2022; Kadric & Pöllabauer 2022). Education for Interpreter Teachers is what is referred to as a joint course, addressing future interpreting teachers from PSI interpreting, conference interpreting and sign language interpreting. It is based on the assumption that even though interpreter–teacher students have various backgrounds, they also have a number of common interests, “concerning both the nature of the professional tasks of interpreters in various settings and the theoretical issues of relevance to them” (Englund Dimitrova & Wadensjö 2013: 71; see also Pokorn, Viezzi & Felberg, 2020). There are also similarities related to the practice of interpreting such as “competencies in interpreting techniques, interpreting ethics, memory skills, discourse management and terminology management” (Englund Dimitrova & Wadensjö 2013: 71) that need to be taught and trained in any interpreter program. Further, there are pedagogical and didactic aspects of organizing classes and in order to acquire knowledge in social learning theories, epistemic and procedural types of knowledge, curriculum design, combining online and onsite learning activities in blended learning, the creation of teaching material, working on area–specific technical language, as well as formative and summative assessment. These issues are offered in the following four modules.

Education for Interpreter Teachers (30 ECTS)
Pedagogical and Didactic Perspective in Interpreting Education (7.5 ECTS)
Teaching Interpreting Techniques and Ethics (7.5 ECTS)
Teaching technical Language Terminology and Lexicography (7.5 ECTS)
Language, Communication and Interpreting (7.5 ECTS)

Table 3. Overview over the modules in the Interpreter Teacher's course

The current course is still searching for the adequate admission requirements. Initially, some level of documented experience in teaching interpreting was required. The aim was to target unqualified interpreting teachers working in for example the adult education centers

but also highly experienced interpreting teachers at the university who lacked formal academic qualifications. However, having educated the frontline teachers, the system of requiring documented experience as entry requirements for the course became a “catch-22.” Aspiring interpreting-teacher students felt that they could not acquire the experience demanded of them without the teacher-training course. During a pilot test period, no requirements for previous experience in teaching interpreting were imposed, and the experience from this will be evaluated in the near future.

43 *Public service translation*

The course Public Service Translation (30 ECTS) is the most recently established course among the educational trajectories presented in Figure 1. Existing courses in translation require previous academic language studies and offer a range of specializations and languages, with Swedish as the source or the target language. The current course in PST offers Swedish as the source language and a specific set of target languages, corresponding to the same languages offered in the PSI program. The entry requirements for the PST course is 60 ECTS from the PSI program. The rationale behind connecting the PSI program with the PST course and enrolling PSI students is that the students are already familiar with the university system and have acquired a general academic literacy in the sense that they are acquainted with the digital learning platforms, are aware of different examination forms and general teacher-student expectations. Having already acquired academic literacy skills makes it easier to focus on the linguistic details in written translation production, which can be quite challenging for PSI students used to focus on oral production. Another reason is to use skilled teachers already accustomed to the university teaching system. Only the most interested students apply for the PST course, open to students from both Stockholm University and Lund University. The current course has been requested not only by students who search for further possibilities to specialize in interpreting and translation, but also the necessity of increasing the quality of public information given by public service providers has been stressed frequently, for example in Public State Inquiries (SOU 2018:83, p. 302). At the same time, it is not unusual for interpreters with LLDs as working languages to also work as translators since the demand often exceeds the supply (Taibi & Ozolin 2016). The modules in the Public Service Translation course are stated in Table 4 below.

Public Service Translation
Translation Theory (5 ECTS)
Textual Analysis (5 ECTS)
Terminology Management (5 ECTS)
Practical Translation I (5 ECTS)
Practical Translation II (5 ECTS)
Professional Practice (5 ECTS)

Table 4. Overview over the modules in the Public Service Translation course

Of course, not all students have a desire to continue studying after a fulfilled one-year PSI program. In fact, some go for the accreditation test offered by the Legal, Financial and Administrative Services Agency, which is the certifying body in Sweden. However, it is not uncommon for students who develop a taste for academic studies to continue their academic

journey after completing the one-year PSI program as a way of engaging in continuing professional development (see also Tipton & Furmanek, 2016). Several students have successfully completed all three courses presented above. This section has focused on the internal educational environment and selected courses surrounding the one-year PSI program. These courses still undergo regular adjustments and adaptations, and will probably do so for some time ahead. Good examples of the ongoing course development efforts include plans to extend the one-year PSI program with continuation courses, *Public Service Interpreting III* and *IV*, as well as developing the interprofessional learning activities into regular freestanding course for broader target groups (see Figure 1). In the next section, we look up and beyond the educational environment, focusing on a selected number of activities connecting the PSI program and the related courses with the wider community.

5. Creating meeting places in-between

In this section, a selection of so-called in-between activities is described. These activities can be described as social practices creating meeting places interconnecting theory and practice, profession and education, academia and the wider community at multiple levels. They include a range of participants, such as students, practitioners, researchers and stakeholders in the community, in different constellations. The continuous arrangement of activities such as these have, together with the ongoing PSI program and PSI-related courses, led to a positive network of communities of practice (Wenger, 1998; D'Hayer, 2012), united by a shared interest in the interpreting profession and interpreting research. A selection of three different types of activities is presented below. The first one is *Interprofessional Education* (IPE) where interpreting students practice their skills in role-play sessions together with students from other educational programs. The second and third ones are the *Interpreting Seminar* and the *Interpreting Arena*, two different activities where students, researchers and stakeholders in the community are brought together.

5.1. *Interprofessional education as part of the PSI education*

Starting in 2019, a system for interprofessional education has gradually been developed and established, and the close collaboration with the PSI program at Lund University has been crucial in developing that system (Bani-Shoraka 2023). The interprofessional educational collaboration takes place with the Social Work Study Program at Linnaeus University during the first term, and with the Medical Program at Karolinska Institute and the Police Program at Linnaeus University during the second term of the PSI program. The general aim of the interprofessional education is to practice interpreting together with students from other educational programs, with whom the interpreters may meet and work with in the near future. The setting is a supervised environment in which the joint training sessions are followed by peer reflections. Based on scenarios inspired from real life students practice interpreter-mediated encounters with clients, patients, suspects or witnesses. The scenarios are written by teachers in the different IPE teams responsible for the training session (Krystallidou *et al.*, 2018; Krystallidou, 2023; Dahnberg, 2022). The peer reflections take into consideration both the interpreters' and the public service providers' roles and responsibilities by discussing issues such as discourse management, expectations and the division of roles in the interpreter-mediated institutional encounter (Radanovic Felberg 2013; Krystallidou 2023; Hlavac, Harrison & Saunders, 2021). Evaluations have shown that both the students and the teachers find these joint practice sessions highly rewarding. Seeing the emerging professional self through the eyes of others and performing the role of one's future profession is an important step

on the journey towards the formation of a professional identity. The shared experiences of interpreting teachers and students also offers good examples of situations and reactions to be further discussed in later modules (Bani-Shoraka, 2023).

52 The interpreting seminar

The Interpreting Seminar was established in 2017 with a desire to bridge the distance between interpreting students and researchers. The aim was to offer a space where undergraduate students could practice their skills in presenting studies, such as their BA-projects, as a way to support them on their academic journey. At the same time, the aim was to offer a space where these studies and related issues could be discussed informally, as a way to gradually acquire membership in the academic community (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wenger, 1998). As such, the Interpreting Seminar started out as an internal, small-scale activity targeting mainly current interpreting students at the PSI program, the BA-program in sign language and sign language interpreting, and the conference interpreting program. With the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Interpreting Seminar shifted into an online activity, and the number of professional interpreters asking for the possibility to join the seminar grew. Over the past two years, the number of participants in these seminars has not fallen below 50 people at any seminar. The online one-hour late afternoon format proved to be quite accessible even for working interpreters and stakeholders in the community. This also showed the desire to learn more about Interpreting Studies at large for people dealing with interpreter related issues on a daily basis. The Interpreting Seminar as an activity seemed to offer such a community. The initially temporary solution of offering the Interpreting Seminar as an online event turned out well and has had unexpected and far-reaching effects. Today, the Interpreting seminar is arranged three times each term, six times a year. Depending on the subject, among the participants we find professional interpreters, representatives from interpreting agencies and public authorities, professional organizations, university staff from other departments, and, of course, interpreting students. It is a well-attended seminar where actors representing different parts of the interpreting ecosystem can meet and discuss under the leadership of the Institute for Interpreting and Translation Studies.

53 The interpreting arena

The Interpreting Arena is the name of a large yearly activity with the aim of disseminating research findings from the multidisciplinary field of Interpreting Studies to audiences beyond academia. There is a general demand for more knowledge about this field of research and current research questions as a whole. The Arena format resembles the Interpreting Seminar described above in that it is an open online event targeting a wider audience interested in interpreting research related questions. However, it differs in that it is a three-hour event, organized around specific themes, and presented by researchers. Academic researchers from various academic disciplines specialized in interpreting may present either their own research or the research of others. Connected to the Interpreting Arena is a steering committee with representatives from stakeholders such as representatives from public authorities, interpreting agencies, professional organizations, researchers from other disciplines, and interpreters representing different interpreting professions. The themes of the annual event are decided based on the discussion in the steering committee. The recorded presentations are subtitled in Swedish, which is part of Stockholm University's accessibility policy, and are made available on the YouTube channel belonging to the Department of Swedish Language and Multilingualism. The presentations are free to use as training and educational materials.

6. Concluding remarks

In this article, the reorganization of the Public Service Interpreting (PSI) education at Stockholm University initiated in 2017 has been described. The aim has been twofold. The first was to describe the development of various curricula that have been developed since 2017. Here, the focus was the design of the PSI curriculum and the building of an educational infrastructure. Some courses that had previously been discontinued for different reasons were revived, some courses were updated and some were newly established in order to meet the needs of the new adult student groups and working languages. It has all along been important to design the curricula on a combination of research-based knowledge and practical skills.

The current educational environment offers a framework or an infrastructure, including education founded on research-based knowledge in combination with skills training, clear routines, and trained staff, that contributes to organizational stability. This means a readiness to adapt and adjust courses to the changing needs of working languages, changing categories of students, adjusted priorities regarding courses offered which may mean the pausing of existing courses, or establishing new ones. The COVID-19 pandemic is a good example of an external factor that forced the PSI courses to adapt to online and eventually various hybrid (different combinations of online and onsite) educational activities. In the post-pandemic period, a new blended-learning format has been created. It is the combination of a stable organizational frame and flexible curricula that offers a sustainable PSI education.

However, the capability of adaptation is not entirely an internal question for the educational organization as it interplays intimately with societal needs and demands. This leads to the second aim of this article, which was to describe and discuss the creation of a selection of “meeting places in-between” in which different types of connecting activities (Fung, 2017) are arranged. These activities fill different identified gaps, interconnecting theory and practice, profession and education, academia and the wider community at multiple levels. They can be described as social practices that offer a range of participants, such as students, practitioners, researchers and stakeholders in the community, to come together in different constellations, and share knowledge, thoughts and ideas. The arrangement of these meeting places has led, along with the ongoing development of the PSI education, including the PSI program and the PSI-related courses, to a positive and knowledge-affirming loosely knitted community united by a shared interest in the interpreting profession and interpreting research.

While extensive work has been done on reorganizing the PSI education at Stockholm University, it should be reminded that this remains an on-going journey. Conversely, one could describe this constant motion of things as the normal state for education providers. While there are short-term curriculum related goals to work towards, the long-term objective is to establish a sustainable organization with in-built capacity to adapt to good and bad times, and thrive.

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