

Tandem Teaching in the Education of Public Service Interpreters

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ABSTRACT

This chapter addresses the question of how to perform *tandem teaching* within an experiential-dialogic approach to learning and focuses on how course coordinators assist in the facilitators' preparation for their joint activities in the classroom. There are two types of facilitators in the model: *facilitators of interpreting strategies* and *facilitators of language strategies* cooperating in the supervision of role-played exercises. The chapter first presents the training model developed at Oslo Metropolitan University (OsloMet). Then, it describes the basic ideas, aims, and organization applied in coaching the facilitators on how to cooperate in the classroom. The model's foundation is on-the-job training that includes seminars, follow-up meetings both on-campus and online, and group and individual feedback and evaluations. After presenting the training model, we discuss some advantages and challenges associated with the approach.

Keywords: tandem teaching, teacher role, facilitators of learning, experiential-dialogic learning, role-play

1 INTRODUCTION

The education of interpreters who practice in institutional encounters of public services is challenged by the multitude of language combinations needed in society. The challenges include the need to locate adequate teachers, as it may be difficult to find language specialists who are sufficiently proficient in both working languages and have the necessary competence to facilitate classes on interpreting. Moreover, there are no pre-existing learning materials, such as dictionaries or curricula of context knowledge. In some languages needed, the process of standardization is still in the making, such as the Kurdish languages, or there are multiple standards or dialects, as with Arabic. In fact, “trained language specialists” are in short supply for most language combinations when it comes to interpreter education. A key to resolving these challenges is found in tandem teaching.

Tandem teaching has been addressed in pedagogical literature on teaching in inclusive classrooms (Wilson and Blednick 2011), in language teaching (Antic 2015), and across disciplines (Plank 2011). The idea of tandem teaching in interpreter training dates back to the 1950’s in Danica Seleskovitch’s seminal ESIT¹ classes and was later used in several contexts, including its adoption at the European Commission and the European Parliament (Driesen and Drummond 2011, 144–145) and interpreter training in judicial settings (Driesen 2016). Driesen (2016, 81) mentions that tandem teaching was coined to deal with the fact that trainers who have knowledge of “a specific language combination as well as interpreting techniques” are often hard to find. In the tandem classroom, therefore, Driesen explains: “Similarly to a tandem ride, the first trainer (interpreter) takes the lead, structuring lessons and exercises, while the second one (language expert) has to concentrate on the language quality and rendition” (ibid. 81).

By tandem teaching in this chapter, we mean organized collaborative learning activities where *facilitators of general interpreting skills* work together with *language specialists* in organizing the multilingual classroom. Henceforth, the two types of facilitators, *facilitators of interpreting strategies* and *facilitators of language strategies*, are referred to with the abbreviations FINs and FLAs, respectively. Anchored in an experiential-dialogical pedagogical approach to learning, tandem teaching at Oslo Metropolitan University (OsloMet) is envisioned as a three-way dialogue among students, FINs and FLAs.

After contextualizing tandem teaching within the experiential-dialogical pedagogical approach, we present the model when applied as an on-the-job training model that consists of several measures, including regular seminars, follow-up meetings, group and individual feedback, and evaluations. The chapter concludes with a brief discussion about the advantages and challenges experienced in the

1 I.e., École Supérieure d’Interprètes et de Traducteurs.

development and application of the current model: despite initial challenges with internalizing the facilitating teacher role on both sides of the ‘lectern’, the model provides a fruitful learning environment for the type of know-how that the interpreter students need to acquire.

2 THE TEACHER’S ROLE AS FACILITATOR IN AN EXPERIENTIAL-DIALOGICAL MODEL

In line with the experiential-dialogic approach to learning (see the chapter on blended learning in this volume, as well as Skaaden and Wattne 2009; Skaaden 2013; and Skaaden 2017), the term *facilitator* is used instead of “teacher” for both the person in charge of the learning activities aiming at interpreting strategies and those that aim towards language skills and developing bilingual sensitivity and context knowledge. Based on the principles of collaborative learning, in this approach, the students are considered the main resource in the learning process. Hence, the teacher’s main task is not to “transmit” knowledge to the students through lectures or provide them with “set answers”. Rather, the learning facilitators are to furnish the basis and structure for observation, stimulate interaction, and subsequently encourage reflections and dialogue about the students’ joint or individual experiences.

The choice of approach is generated by four aspects that characterize the interpreting classroom. First, interpreting courses are not language classes. The classroom’s learning objective is for the students to further develop their linguistic sensitivity in a bilingual context and learn how to apply their bilingual skills in the activity of interpreting. The student interpreter, therefore, should be a skilled bilingual individual at the outset of the course. Second, as it takes time to develop the level of bilingual skills needed for the interpreter’s task, most interpreting students are adult students with a wide array of previous experiences, both professional and personal. Hence, interpreting education deals with adult learning. Third, given that the market’s language needs are constantly changing, a model for interpreter education must embrace the need to train students from a variety of working languages in the same classroom. Thus, the approach must process the multilingual classroom. Finally, the nature of the knowledge that the student interpreters need to acquire and apply in their future practice has an impact on the choice of approach. In their future practice, the interpreters will need to apply their bilingual repertoire and interpreting skills in constantly changing situations and domains characterized by contextual, linguistic, and relational variations. Therefore, in their future practices, they need to exercise discretion within the complex domain of bilingual contexts and human interaction (Skaaden 2017, 324–337). Sociologist Donald Schön (1983, 50; 276–278), in his discussions on professional education, stresses in general that the practitioner needs to *reflect in action*. Like skiing, the type of knowledge needed for professional practice cannot be acquired from simply

reading a book, holds Schön, but *reflection on action* may improve the former. We believe that the same is valid for the practitioners of interpreting.

In summation, the above aspects favour the experiential-dialogic approach, where the teacher's task is to facilitate learning, and variation in the students' backgrounds serves as a resource in the learning process. The challenge remains to operationalize learning within the multilingual classroom and to assist the students in achieving the course's four basic learning aims, that is, for the students to develop and improve their awareness of the following.

- Professional ethics and the boundaries of the interpreter's area of expertise.
- The interpreters' main tool, i.e., their bilingual skills and their understanding of relevant phenomena of language, such as the nature of bilingualism, linguistic registers, style, pragmatics, rhetoric, etc.
- The application of their tool in real situations, i.e., their knowledge of situational and relational aspects, including the characteristics of institutional encounters and interpreted encounters, the application of appropriate interpreting methods and strategies in a diversity of contexts, etc.
- Specific contextual knowledge and strategies for handling constant new linguistic domains and professional cultures and contexts.

In the multilingual tandem classroom, the FINs oversee drawing students' attention to general learning topics 1 and 3. The FLAs' task is to assist the students in topicalizing issues related to 2 and 4. Ideally, topics that emerge from the observations of specific instances should be reflected upon in a generalized manner that enables the group to capitalize on the examples. Therefore, we discuss the following questions. How can these aims be achieved within the 'tandem teaching' classroom? What are the advantages of the approach? What are the main challenges of the tandem teaching classroom?

3 THE TANDEM TEACHING TRAINING MODEL

As aforementioned, the first challenge is finding the facilitators and subsequently preparing them to act in a similar way when facing similar problems. The facilitators who lead the classes on interpreting strategies and techniques should be trained interpreters. Their task is to manage the role-play sessions and balance group dynamics; they should also have previous pedagogical education and teaching experience. The team should have a core of practice group facilitators (FINs) who have interpreting competence and experience from teaching according to the described model. New members will inevitably join the team regularly, as the working languages (other than the majority language) that are covered by the course change from year to year in line with society's needs. When recruiting bilingual

FLA facilitators, the following basic criteria should be followed: an FLA facilitator should have a high degree of bilingual proficiency and extensive knowledge of both majority and minority cultures. The facilitator should be a native speaker of one of the working languages, preferably of the minority language. Moreover, the facilitator should have completed higher education and have some experience with group management.

These criteria are important in allowing the facilitator to establish the necessary authority and deal with group dynamics. Being a practicing interpreter is not necessarily an advantage in the FLA role, however. In our experience, some group members may then see the facilitator as a competitor and take on a challenging attitude. Most importantly, the FLA facilitator must have the ability to analyse concepts and contexts from a bilingual vantage point. When necessary, course coordinators, by supplying general strategies, may assist FLAs in their work with the students in comparative analysis and developing context knowledge. As described below, the organization of the tandem classroom according to the principles of the experiential-dialogic approach offers broad learning opportunities for student interpreters. However, it also entails some challenges. After a brief presentation of the overall structure of the way the facilitators are coached at OsloMet, we outline some opportunities and challenges below.

The Bachelor of Arts (BA) on Public Sector Interpreting (PSI) at OsloMet is organized as a part-time, blended programme that provides a combination of onsite and online learning activities and offers education to students who want to work in any sphere of the public sector in Norway (see the chapter on blended learning in this volume and Skaaden 2017). Onsite activities and workshops take place on campus one to four times per semester and last two to four days. During these on-campus gatherings, the students are divided into two types of groups:

- *mixed language groups*, where they participate in role-playing and discuss general interpreting topics combined with language issues, and
- *language-specific groups*, where they concentrate on selected bilingual issues and contextual knowledge.

The mixed language groups are managed by FINs, while the language-specific groups are facilitated by FLAs. In the role-play classes, FINs work together with one or two FLAs. This is where tandem teaching takes place. Here, learning potential is found in making an instantiation that occurs in a specific role-play example and language combination serve as an illustration of a more general problem of interpretation, thereby making it relevant for the whole group. To guide the facilitators in their work, several measures are taken by the course coordinators. The facilitators receive coaching in kick-off seminars, in on-campus and online follow-up meetings, in group discussions, and in individual feedback and evaluations.

3.1 SEMINARS

In the first year of the BA in PSI, the facilitators are gathered for a kick-off seminar that takes place before the students arrive. The topics addressed at such kick-off seminars and subsequent follow-up meetings include an outline of the chosen didactic approach and the main learning aims of the course; its perspectives on bilingualism, culture, and language learning; and some general aspects of adult learning, education, and professionalization. Moreover, the meetings address the facilitators' role, how to work together in the classroom, and how to deal with group dynamics. Additionally, the facilitators are provided with brief guidelines on the management of group sessions and how to elicit the students' reflections on their observations during the role-play sessions. Simultaneously, the facilitators are provided with a set of "focus points", a selection of topics to be addressed during each student gathering. The objective is to secure similar learning outcomes across parallel exercise groups. These topics are also addressed in group discussions during the facilitators' follow-up meetings. Hence, the facilitators' meetings with the course organizers are structured according to the principles that the facilitators are expected to apply when managing student groups. At the start of the second semester, a seminar follows up on selected topics according to the group's needs. The final seminar at the end of the year includes a general evaluation of the course and accumulates the participants' experiences with tandem teaching.

3.2 FOLLOW-UP MEETINGS (ONSITE AND ONLINE)

a) Onsite follow-up meetings and debriefings

During every weekend gathering with the students, which happens three times a semester in the first year, time is allocated to joint meetings for the facilitators where they discuss the didactic approach, group dynamics, and emergent problems as well as propose improvements. The topics addressed in these meetings include how to interact in the elicitation of feedback without contradicting each other in front of the students, the development of role-play scripts and role cards, time management, and group dynamics.

During the on-campus student gatherings, the course coordinators observe the classes and provide feedback to facilitators in the group meetings or individually. From time to time, the facilitators may observe each other's classes to seek inspiration and feedback.

b) Online "staff room" and meeting points

All facilitators have access to an online "staff room," located on the learning platform, which includes both an asynchronous forum channel and a synchronous chat room. Synchronous text-only chat sessions for the facilitators are occasionally organized between campus gatherings and allow for discussions on didactic and interactional issues, as exemplified below.

3.3 EVALUATIONS

Both written and oral evaluations are collected from the facilitators after each on-campus gathering and at the end of the course. Moreover, the students evaluate each learning activity of the campus gathering. When relevant, matters raised in the students' evaluations are discussed at the facilitators' meetings. Importantly, onsite learning activities during campus gatherings are topically interconnected with online learning activities and establish a thematic thread throughout the course. In between campus gatherings, the facilitators work online using both synchronous and asynchronous channels.

Table 1: The facilitators' tasks and their on-the-job training measures in the experiential-dialogic model with tandem teaching²

<p>Preparation phase (onsite and online)</p>	<p>Facilitators meet in seminars to familiarize themselves with the course didactics and harmonize their pedagogical approaches.</p> <p>Facilitators prepare to lead role-plays and address focus points before each on-campus gathering.</p> <p>Role-plays, role-cards and learning material are provided by the course coordinators via the online staff room.</p>
<p>Onsite learning activities in tandem style: interpreting exercises in terms of role-playing, where the aim is to create tableaux, scenes, and illustrations for the group to reflect upon.</p>	<p>The FIN facilitator introduces the topic of the role-play and distributes its parts among the students, videotapes each role-play and facilitates reflections and discussions by prompting open questions. Each role-play session should last approximately 10 minutes, followed by 10 to 15 minutes of reflection.</p> <p>FLA facilitators observe language-specific issues and comment in mixed classes or bring up issues to language-specific classrooms.</p> <p>Facilitators are observed by co-facilitators or course coordinators.</p> <p>Meetings are organized for the facilitators between exercises and workshop classes, where selected issues are discussed.</p> <p>General and individual feedback is provided when appropriate.</p> <p>Evaluations initiated in oral or written form.</p>

² Table 1 shows how the elements of the training model (in italics) are incorporated into online and onsite modules.

Both the facilitators and students are introduced to the role-play method of learning at the beginning of the first semester. As an “ice breaker”, a short film featuring a role-play situation where “the interpreter” breaks all the ethical rules of interpreting is shown to the students and facilitators at the outset of the role-play sessions. This introduction to the exercise sessions is used to emphasize that the aim of role-plays is to create brief tableaux or scenes for subsequent reflection and discussion in the group. Hence, “making mistakes” in this situation is actually a good thing as it creates examples for discussion.

During the role-play exercises, the FIN facilitator manages the session, elicits reflections, and summarizes issues of interpreting. The FIN also controls the duration of the role-play. Normally, there will be enough examples for reflection and discussion after a relatively short time (approximately 10 minutes of role-play). In addition to the FIN managing the session, one to two FLAs sit in the classroom. The role of the FLAs during the roleplay sessions is to observe and comment on linguistic distinctions from their language group.

The tasks and responsibilities of both groups of facilitators are described in a set of guidelines, including ‘focus points’ that accompany the role-plays for each gathering. The aim of these guidelines is to establish an even progression across the number of parallel exercise groups and to make sure that selected topics are addressed in all groups. The FINs’ guidelines include suggestions on how to manage the role-play sessions, such as what to pay attention to when distributing the parts of the role-play scenarios, how to distribute observational tasks, and how to elicit reflections and facilitate discussions after each role-play.

Furthermore, it is emphasized that the facilitators’ task is to encourage students to freely express their feedback and to ensure a safe atmosphere for group reflections: “With the aim to release peer feedback and involve the group, the facilitators are encouraged to structure student reflections by posing open-ended questions” (Skaaden 2013, 16). A list of open-ended questions first presented at the kick-off seminar is repeated throughout the follow-ups with the facilitators and via the focus points. As pointed out in Skaaden (2013, 16), “[t]he open-ended questions should draw attention to selected aspects of the performance just observed, and preferably follow the progression indicated by the ‘focus points’” but, most importantly, direct the students’ attention to specific aspects of the performance just observed. Accordingly, after opening the floor for reflection with a wide perspective inquiry, such as “What did you observe here?” or “What did we learn here?”, the facilitator may narrow the scope by pointing to certain aspects of the performance, for instance:

How was the interpreter’s pronoun choice?; What about the register choice?; What happened/may happen when...?; What alternatives did the interpreter have when...?; What may be the consequences if...?
(Skaaden 2013, 16)

The primary aim of the open-ended questions' approach is for the students to discover first-hand diverse options and strategies of interpretation and to reflect upon the consequences that the different options may generate for the interpreted encounter. Accordingly, the choice of approach concerns the type of knowledge to be built and the fact that in their future practice, the students will need to exercise discretion in complex situations on their own. In other words, the aim is to reflect *on* action to enable future reflection *in* action. Moreover, for adult students who are often experienced interpreters, it is important that feedback is generated from the peer group rather than the facilitator alone. Somewhat paradoxically, the approach serves to strengthen the role of the facilitator, who may soon run into trouble with the adults and experienced student interpreters if perceived as "telling them what to do." The focus points and guidelines are presented in some detail in the following section.

4.1 GUIDELINES FOR THE FACILITATORS OF INTERPRETING AND INTERACTIONAL STRATEGIES (FINS)

Distribution of the 'parts' in a role-play

After a warm-up phase, where the members of the group get to know each other before each role-play starts, the FIN facilitator distributes the parts for the role-play. In determining who plays the interpreter, the professional/case worker, and the patient/client, the facilitators must pay attention to group dynamics.

- Picking the right students for the different parts is difficult, especially when the group is new, and discretion must be exercised in the distribution of parts. At the beginning of the course, it may be particularly stressful for the students to play the part of the interpreter, as this is the part scrutinized.
- Playing the parts of professional and patient/client can be demanding as well, and the students may need a few minutes to prepare for their parts. Nevertheless, part of the learning experience is to sense what it is like to sit in the "interpreter's client's chair," and it is important that all students experience these parts as well. For the part of the Norwegian speaking professional, therefore, a student who does not understand the other language should be chosen.
- During the role-play, the FIN facilitator concentrates on noting observational points, time management and more, while the FLA facilitators concentrate on bilingual issues and the details of contextual knowledge of their language combination.
- The role-play scenarios are presented in Norwegian/the majority language, either as full scripts or role cards, with brief descriptions of the case at hand and its parts. Role cards are known to produce more of a natural dialogue than scripts (Dahnberg 2015). However, because students may find it demanding to improvise their parts from role cards at the beginning, it is advisable to start

with scripted role-plays and then move on to role cards. If the role-play (script or role card) sketches a complex situation that is time consuming to play out, students can take turns sitting the part of the interpreter.

Figure 1: Illustration of role-plays in mixed language groups with participants from three different working languages: Italian, Lithuanian and Sorani Kurd



Distribution of observational tasks

The FIN facilitator distributes observational tasks in the group before each role-play starts, thereby determining:

- who should observe the interpreter’s renditions into the minority language;
- who should observe the interpreter’s renditions into the majority language (i.e. Norwegian in our case); and,
- who should pay special attention to the interpreter’s interpreting and interactional strategies, such as turn-taking, clarifying strategies, posture, and presence.

Primary attention to this last observational task is usually assigned to the students who do not understand both working languages and who can then focus solely on non-verbal strategies and behaviour. This option to see the activity of interpreting “from the outside” is one of the benefits of working with mixed language groups.

The designers of the course created a selection of “focus points” for each on-campus gathering that draw attention to interpreting and interactional strategies as well as linguistic issues. The focus points are distributed throughout the course so that the locus of attention moves from the simple to the more complex, from the concrete to the more abstract, etc. To assure similar development in parallel groups, the facilitator may draw attention to the selected focus points in the distribution of the observational tasks. However, the role-play and the observations experienced by the students may display other features than those listed as focus points. Given that the students’ opportunity for first-hand experience and observation is seen as a basic path to learning in the current model, it is important that the facilitator strikes the right balance and gives leeway to discussions of actual observations made during a specific role-play scenario. Next, the proposed strategies for balancing reflections are described in detail in the facilitators’ guidelines.

Stimulate reflection and lead the discussions after each exercise

The FIN facilitator’s task is to elicit reflections after each exercise and to stimulate the group to participate actively. The facilitators are supposed to notice the experience from the group and should therefore not “provide the answers” themselves; rather, they should pose relevant questions that may extract general learning points from what could be observed during the role-play.

- After each role-play, approximately 10 to 15 minutes is allocated for reflection and discussion.
- The facilitator should ensure that the person who plays the interpreter receives both praise and criticism from the peer group.
- To get the discussion started or to supplement the students’ comments, the facilitator should note a few points from the observed role-play that relate to the current focus.
- To stimulate discussion, the facilitator should alternate between asking open questions and narrowing the scope; a question like “Is there anything you want to comment on?” will not open the floor as the response could be “No, everything was just fine,” while an open question, such as “What did you observe?” or “How was...?” may elicit a fuller response.
- The aim of the discussions is not always to conclude with a “correct” or “set answer.” It is rather to create a basis for reflection, which might be triggered by questions such as “What will be the consequences if the interpreter chooses alternative a or alternative b?” or “What other options do you see?”
- To stimulate reflection, the facilitator may also return a suggestion back to the group, like “You/NN would/suggested ... What other suggestions are there as to what the interpreter could do in such a situation?”

- The facilitators should keep the discussion within the workshop's suggested focus and bring discussions to an end when adequate. Yet, it is important to allow a certain amount of leeway because the students need room to air their own experiences – and frustrations – that can be triggered by the exercise.
- To conclude discussions based on examples from the students' own practices or real-life experiences, the facilitator can refer to continued discussions on the learning platform and ask the student to portray the problem as a case description in the asynchronous discussion forum.
- After each session or practice day, it is the facilitator's task to extract and summarize some main learning points from the observations and discussions.

During the role-play sessions, the students are encouraged to take note of language-specific terminology or bilingual issues that cannot be resolved during the mixed group class and to bring the concepts, distinctions, or issues into the language-specific classes later, either on-campus or in online chats and asynchronous fora. Because each exercise is video-recorded and subsequently distributed to the students in the learning platform, each student can examine their own performance at home, reflect on their own actions, and consider the consequences of their choices, as well as observe their own progress throughout the semester.

4.2 THE LANGUAGE FACILITATOR'S TASK DURING THE ROLE-PLAY SESSIONS

During the course, students within each language group collaborate and jointly discuss bilingual terminologies and contextual knowledge. The main goal of this collaboration is for the students to develop their linguistic sensitivity and adequate strategies for entering new linguistic domains and the multicultural contexts of different professional domains. Moreover, another aim is to recognize that a group of bilinguals is more knowledgeable than each of its individuals, and to realize the value of collaboration with colleagues.

A couple of classes during each on-campus gathering are set aside for collaboration in the language-specific groups. The language-specific classes address a variety of public sector subdomains in the Norwegian context and discuss these in comparison to similar contexts and domains in the country or countries where the group's working language is spoken. Resources for further development of their bilingual sensitivity and contextual knowledge in terms of dictionaries, links, and other resources are addressed in terms of both general principles and specific contexts. In these campus classes, the task of the language facilitator is to stimulate the group's continued collaboration online. The language-specific group can pick up a topic that they did not finish elaborating on during the mixed language group, where limited time is allocated to language-specific topics. Linguistic or contextual issues that cannot be resolved during on-campus lessons are carried on into discussions in the online fora.

Between campus gatherings, the specific language group's communication with its FLA takes place on the learning platform through synchronous chat and an asynchronous forum. Again, the basic idea of these learning activities is that the students' efforts should be the driving force in the learning process. The principle applies to collaboration online and on campus within the following framework,

- The main task for the language facilitator is to stimulate the students to take responsibility for their own learning through self-activity and collaboration with other students, to guide the group in these activities, and to supply links and sources.
- The language facilitator should not give the students “the solution” or “set answer” but should draw attention to suggestions that are incorrect or unsatisfactory and make the students aware of contextual cues and distinctions that they need to discuss in more detail.
- During the interpreting exercises in mixed groups, the FLA facilitator's task is to observe and address linguistic aspects during the student's performance – with special emphasis on the interpreter's performance in the minority language (e.g. choice of language register, dialect distinctions, vocabulary choice and style, politeness marking, pronunciation, grammar).

Thus, in the mixed group, the FLA should pay attention to examples that may create learning opportunities for students of the other languages in the group.

Finally, in the mixed sessions, it is important that the FLA facilitators do not take on a prominent role in the discussions about interpreting strategies but retain their own contributions to linguistic issues. Too much FLA engagement may disturb group dynamics and create role confusion that may eventually undermine both the FIN and FLA facilitators' authority. Due to their versatile role, the FLAs in some language groups may acquire “closer” contact with their specific group and establish a sort of “form teacher” position in the eyes of the students. Due to trust issues, special attention should be paid to these aspects during tandem classes.

4.3 FOCUS POINTS

The focus points are guidelines suggesting aspects that the facilitators should draw attention to progressively throughout the workshops, “e.g., the interpreter's rendition of pronouns; semantic and pragmatic accuracy in terminology, linguistic registers and distinctions; the interpreter's turn-taking and coordinating strategies; pronunciation in both languages; introduction of the interpreter's role; etc.” (Skaaden 2013, 15).

The following is an example of the focal points designed for the very first workshop in the BA. During the first gathering, the primary focus should be the following points in the reflection phase after each role-play.

- What effect/function did the interpreter's pronoun choices have on the conversation?
 - The interpreter's use of the "I" form instead of "he says that..."
 - The interpreter referring to him/herself as the interpreter
 - The use of politeness forms
- What did you notice about the interpreter's attempts for clarification "when and how"?
 - What happens if the interpreter asks, "Could you please repeat what you said?" versus what happens if the interpreter simply repeats the last segment of the utterance (that the interpreter remembers)?
 - How (functional/disturbing/time consuming) was the clarification sequence between the interpreter and interlocutors?
 - What are the effects of an apologetic interpreter? To exemplify, what is the impact on the dialogue/encounter if an interpreter initializes every clarification sequence with "excuse me, the interpreter did not hear the last thing you said... could you please repeat what you said?"
 - How did the interpreter's information about their own function (or "role") in the conversation come across? What should the presentation include? How should it be presented?

The FLA facilitators' foci in the first workshop comprise the following.

- The main goal of the first on-campus gathering is to make the students acknowledge their need to keep developing their own language skills and encourage them to embark on this journey together.
- At the beginning, attention should be paid to establishing the students' strengths and weaknesses, for example, in terms of the students' use of (medical) terminology and bilingual lexicon. Then, attention should gradually be drawn to other linguistic and contextual distinctions as well.
- The FLA's primary emphasis is on the minority language. However, in the tandem classes, the FLA should present the observed examples so that they may serve as adequate illustrations for the whole group.
- The FLA should observe group dynamics and assist the group in eliciting constructive feedback to their fellow students.

In terms of interpreting strategies, the focus shifts to turn-taking signals in the subsequent focal points before moving to posture, presence, and voice. Regarding the linguistic-contextual aspects, the focus changes from terminology and lexicon to the complexity in the relationship between content and form, via grammar, register, and style, to rhetorical aspects. Accordingly, the focal points gradually

move attention to more complex strategies of interpreting and interacting as well as the complexity of the bilingual context in different domains. Concurrently, the topic headings of each gathering evolve, from the doctor-patient encounter, pregnancy control and psychiatry, to the asylum process and the police interview and witness stand and finally to welfare services and child protection. The facilitators' chat exchange below follows the coordinator's question: "How well do the focus points function in your opinion?"

Example 1:

1. FacilB3 20:21> the focus points are useful, in the back of your head at least, but the situation might not always present you with fitting examples. Frequently, there are other topics that present themselves for valuable discussions.
2. FacilB4 20:22> the focus points have a structuring function; they functioned well in the groups I've had – I sum them up at the end of the weekend gathering ... important to include previous focus points as well ...
3. FacilB4 20:23> the focus points are no hindrance for addressing other topics as well
4. FacilB2 20:23 > I am all for focus points. I use them to distribute observational roles and to structure the discussion, as long as we do not follow them to a T.
5. FacilB3 20:24 > Agree, nice to use the focus points to distribute tasks, but not all the time, because you then run the risk of locking both observations and discussions.
6. FacilB2 20:24> agree
7. FacilB4 20:24> agree (now I feel like our students :-)) (Skaaden 2017, 336)

The exchange illustrates how the focus points are understood and applied by the FIN facilitators but also shows that they have to a large extent internalized the pedagogical model described here.

5 EVALUATION

Regular evaluations, oral and written, are conducted after each on-campus gathering and at the end of the course. Additionally, periodical group discussions are organised to follow up and, when necessary, improve the model. The following excerpts, taken from online evaluations provided by "novice" facilitators and posted in asynchronous forums at the beginning of the semester (Skaaden 2017, 335), indicate that the issue of "set answers" and adjustment to a facilitating-teacher role instead of the traditional lecturing-teacher role is a recurrent topic in the FLA facilitators' reflections and discussions.

Example 2:

- Language Facilitator A: “The main challenge for me was to pose open-ended questions and not always provide the answer.”
- Language Facilitator B: “Myself [when a student] I found it frustrating when group leaders just passed the ball back, so I tried to create constructive reflections, and felt that I succeeded.” (Skaaden 2017: 335)

The comment of language facilitator B shows that some FLA facilitators are former student interpreters and thereby familiar with the experiential-dialogic approach. However, the excerpt also reveals that students and facilitators alike need time to appreciate and internalise the facilitator role as it differs from the traditional teacher role. The set answer issue, therefore, is discussed well into the first semester. Example 3 displays the chat discourse of seven bilingual FLA facilitators working with different language groups on bilingual context knowledge and terminology.

Example 3:

1. FacilitatorC1 18:20> I still think the “set answer” issues are
2. FacilitatorC1 18:20> very interesting
3. acilitatorC218:21> Yeah, I guess we all have some “Besserwissers” [*“know-it-alls”*]and if the rest just accepts what this one suggests, I would like to challenge the solution
4. FacilitatorC3 18:22> the “set answers” are killers, I feel. Then I ask the students to explicate the context or place the concepts in concrete sentences or contexts.
5. FacilitatorC418:22> great idea from FacilC3 :-)
6. FacilitatorC5 18:22> All my students believe they’ve got the “set” answer. Heated discussions arise.
7. FacilitatorC6 18:23> I don’t quite agree about the set answers. Are students who know the answer just supposed to sit and be quiet, and wait for the others to stumble over it or elaborate towards it? Some concepts are simple and quite unambiguous, and then it is better to settle on them quickly, with a set answer. Thus, we are left with time to discuss thoroughly the really difficult ones, or those where there are no perfect solutions at all
8. FacilitatorC6 18:24> because there are concepts where good solutions simply don’t exist
9. FacilitatorC1 18:25> Or that the solution is different in different contexts. We had that discussion, and some of them thought you ALWAYS have to use the same concept once it had been chosen [by the group]...

10. FacilitatorC3 18:25> we have often “prioritized” in the group between the bad and the worst solutions and then discussed the consequences of their application.
11. FacilitatorC7 18:25> FacilC3, great strategy! (Skaaden 2013, 17)

This excerpt illustrates how the value of the experiential-dialogic approach is gradually accepted and how the facilitators may inspire each other by sharing their strategies for dealing with group dynamics. Simultaneously, the excerpt reveals their challenges with establishing group authority.

At the end of each gathering, the students’ written evaluations rate each learning activity according to relevance. This feedback demonstrates that the role-play sessions were found to be the most valuable learning activity throughout the fifty gatherings across a ten-year period from 2007 through 2017. This is somewhat surprising, as the exercises imply the chance of displaying personal weaknesses and flaws in front of one’s future colleagues. The facilitators’ own evaluations indicate that the roleplay sessions are fruitful; the feedback from a Zoom focus group with experienced FIN facilitators in August 2020 also indicated a positive experience on their behalf. The comment in Example 4 is a response to the topic “How to avoid burnout?”

Example 4:

- FIN A: “We have opportunity to talk to each other. I hope we know each other well enough to talk to [each other]. – The [students’] gatherings are rewarding – I seldom feel drained of energy – and usually I experience them as fun – if not I would not have done it ... to watch the students’ development – that is inspiring. Difficult episodes can be discussed with the [course] coordinators – that is an important point.”

The seasoned facilitators emphasized that tandem facilitation might be problematic when the co-facilitator is unable to take on the discrete attitude required by the FLA facilitator’s role within the current approach. Some language facilitators, who are interpreters themselves, may ‘behave like students,’ thereby becoming too eager to take part in the discussion. When asked to elaborate on difficulties they had faced within the tandem approach, the experienced facilitators agreed that “this always depends on the personality of the language facilitators.” However, they experienced difficulties providing a more concrete description of their impression. In an offline encounter after the recorded focus group session, a facilitator elaborated by describing certain aspects that may cause disturbances in the tandem facilitation – problems may for instance be caused by FLA facilitators experiencing difficulties in establishing trust and authority within their specific language group. The source of the problem may either be too high or too low self-esteem in the facilitator role. On the one hand, the assertive or self-absorbed

type of facilitator who displays a need to “shine” will want to supply the set answer. This FLA will then take up too much space in a tandem classroom where the students’ own reflections are the aim. On the other hand, an insecure FLA may also see a chance to strengthen their own authority by supplying the “set answer.” Whether the issue in question is ‘showing off’ with linguistic solutions or personal opinions on interpreting techniques and interpreting ethics, the latter behaviour is problematic in the tandem classroom. In fact, the strategy may sabotage both the tandem facilitation of learning and the language facilitator’s authority, particularly if the students sanction the suggestion to be “incorrect”. In sum, for tandem teaching to be optimal, the participants, matured understanding of their facilitator’s role is required, as well as their understanding of the value of the experiential-dialogic approach to learning.

6 CONCLUDING REMARKS

The tandem teaching model combined with an experiential-dialogic approach is a practical tool in a multicultural classroom. By recognizing the students as a main resource in the learning process, the experiential-dialogic approach is well suited for preparing the students for their future practice of interpreting – where they, individually and on their own, must exercise discretion in extremely complex contexts of communication. The model’s combination with tandem facilitation makes the approach cost-efficient and permits the integration of online and on-campus learning activities in mixed language groups as well as specific language groups. The role-play sessions, with their structured exercises and observations and the subsequent reflections *on* action, are designed to prepare for future reflection *in* action. A tandem approach in these mixed language groups creates learning synergies, highlights the nature of the activity of interpreting, and illustrates that interpreting issues are often independent of the interpreter’s language combination and cultural background.

In contrast, challenges associated with the model include the acquisition and acceptance of the facilitator’s role opposed to a traditional teacher role. It takes time to internalise this role, which for many facilitators and students alike represents a novel way to understand learning, and some facilitators may find it challenging to establish authority and trust within the group. Moreover, the dynamics between the facilitators of interpreting and those of language issues (the FINs and FLAs) must be constantly negotiated. During tandem teaching, some FLAs may cause problems for the FINs and group dynamics when they cross the line of their own domain of responsibility and expertise. Personal face-saving and face-building strategies may subsequently pose a challenge when they come into conflict with the model’s aims. To quote one of the facilitators, the work on “how to be self-confident and humble at the same time” is an ongoing venture.

Another ongoing challenge from the course coordinators' side is ensuring that parallel groups experience a similar progression. The measures described in this chapter are designed to ensure that the facilitators act in a similar way when confronted with the same challenges. However, the ideal follow-up of all groups and individual facilitators requires that enough time and funds are allotted to do so.

7 ACTIVITIES

Activity suggestions for future organizers of tandem classes:

1) In preparing for role-play class, discuss these questions with your co-facilitators:

- a) How do I prefer to receive feedback myself?
- b) What type of feedback puts me down?
- c) What type of feedback is constructive for the whole group?

2) Discuss in your group of course organizers and your facilitators' team:

- a) What content should the guidelines for our courses entail?
- b) What kind of backup would be needed in terms of handling group dynamics? (Consider what specialists on group psychology and dynamics to invite/consult; reading material, etc.)
- c) Make 5 to 10 bullet point guidelines for interpreting facilitators and language facilitators in your course(s). Discuss the guidelines with the facilitators.

3) Case discussions

A: Discuss in smaller groups possible outcomes in the following case

One of the bilingual facilitators is an experienced interpreter and cannot refrain from commenting on the students interpreting strategies in the exercises.

How do you as a group leader/facilitator react?

What can you do to avoid the situation from occurring again?

B: Discuss in smaller groups the following situation; note possible outcomes and consequences to take back to plenary session:

An experienced student who has a strong position in the group insists that you as the "paid teacher" should give the group the "correct" or "set answer" and clearly expresses dissatisfaction with you and the didactic approach.

- How do you as facilitator handle the situation?
- What are the options and what might be the consequences of your approach?

8 FURTHER READING

Plank, Kathryn M., ed. 2011. *Team teaching: Across the disciplines, across the academy*. Sterling, VA: Stylus Pub.

This book offers an overview of team teaching, its challenges and advantages, and a number of good examples in which teachers present and reflect upon their approaches.

Driesen, Christiane. 2016. “The Tandem method for training legal interpreters and translators: Briefing trainers for a tandem training programme for legal interpreters and translators.” In *TraiLLd: Training in Languages of Lesser Diffusion*, edited by Katalin Balogh, Heidi Salaets, and Dominique van Schoor, 80–98. Leuven: Lannoo Campus Publishers.

Driesen, Christiane J., and George Drummond. 2011. “The ‘Tandem’ Method Training Interpreters to Work at National Courts.” *Forum - International Journal of Interpretation and Translation* 9, no. 2: 139–156.

Both articles by Driesen describe the tandem method in training of legal interpreters.

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