A Learning-centered Course Design of Interpreting for Non-English Majors—An Empirical Study

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Abstract—Curriculum design is crucial for any courses, however, there seems to be sparse published literature that relates curriculum theory to interpreter education. Even scarcer is the study on the curriculum design of interpreting courses for non-English majors. To address such a scarcity of study, the author designed an optional course named Interpreting for Non-English Majors (IFNEM), drawing upon a learning-centered approach to course design in the ESP theories. After being implemented for one semester, the course design was evaluated by relating to the learning outcomes to the objectives, using instruments including a questionnaire on the course design and the students' learning journals and semester summaries. Results showed the course was well designed: the students had improved their interpreting scores with a statistical difference (p<0.01), enhanced their English proficiencies and learning autonomy; the students' feedback on the course and the teacher was very positive. This study may bring insights into the curriculum design of similar courses.

Index Terms—course design, learning-centered, interpreting

I. INTRODUCTION

Curriculum design is one of the aspects that directly affect the quality of an educational program. However, there has been sparse published research that relates curriculum theory to interpreter education (Li, 2012; Sawyer, 2011). Even scarcer is the study on the course design of an interpreting class for non-English majors (IFNEM), a new existence in China's colleges, which requires emergent research attention.

Interpreting courses used to be set only for English majors, who were considered more competent linguistically for an interpreting task. However, non-English majors have improved greatly their English proficiencies. Many of them are capable candidates for interpreting training. Besides, results of both social and students' needs analysis have indicated the necessity to establish IFNEM as an optional College English course (Deng, 2007; Li, 2011; Luo, Huang, & Xu, 2008). As China's college English policy advocates curricular diversity and individuality (Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 19), the time is ripe for optional courses like IFNEM to open. Then follows a practical problem of how to design it.

As the language teaching paradigm shifts from teaching to learning and from the instructor to the learner, the learning-centered curriculum design is gaining wider recognition. To design IFNEM, a new course for a certain group of students with special needs, a learning-centered approach of English for Special Purposes (ESP) seems to fit just well, for ESP is "an approach to language teaching which aims to meet the needs of particular learners" (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987, p.21) . Therefore the course design of IFNEM adopts this approach.

II. RATIONALE

A. Learning-centered Approach to Course Design

There are three basic curriculum designs: subject-centered designs, learned-centered designs and program-centered designs (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2009, p.191). Among them, the learner-centered design in line with constructivism learning theory has gained popularity since the early 1900s, when the learner became in the limelight of educational programs.

Building upon the learner-centeredness, Hutchinson and Waters (1987) proposed a learning-centered approach based on their understanding of learning. They held that learning is not just an internal process of the learner, but also a process of negotiation between the society that sets the target and the individual who tries to attain it. In other words, the learner is not the only factor to consider in learning. The learning-centered approach, as they suggested, involves both what competence that enables someone to perform and how that competence is acquired (pp. 72-73). This indicates that the learner should be considered at every stage of course design. Fig. 1 illustrates this approach (p. 74) with the author's modifications.
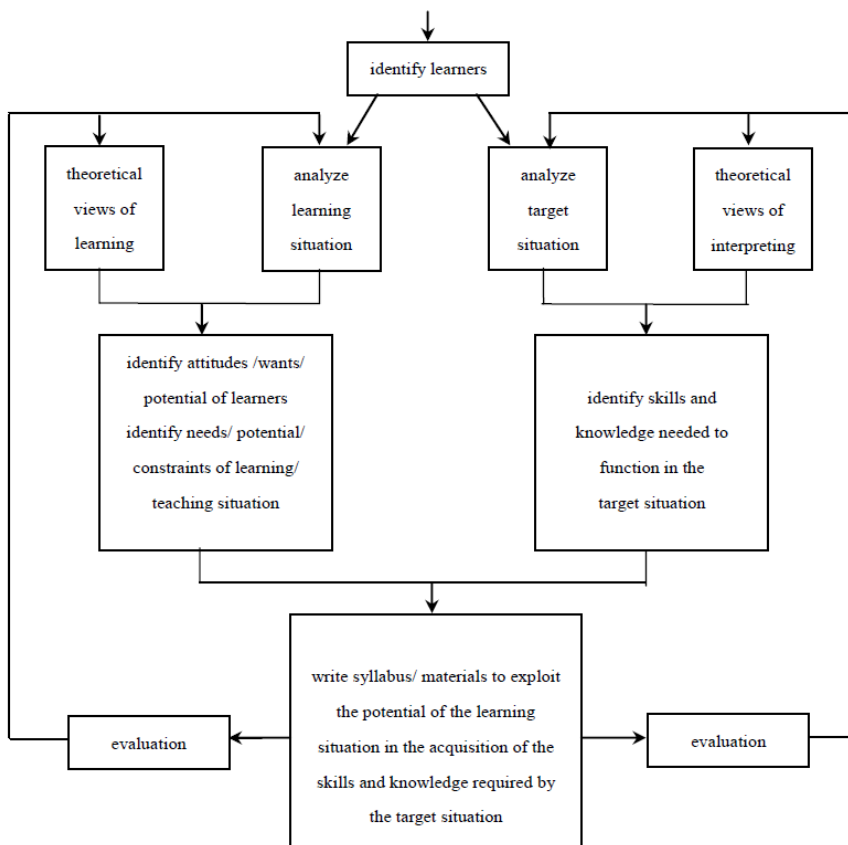
Figure 1. A learning-centered approach to course design with modifications

B. *Factors Affecting ESP Course Design*

To design a ESP course one should start by asking questions concerning language descriptions, learning theories and needs analysis (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987, p.22). Considering the difference between a language course and an interpreting course, the author altered the framework by replacing "language descriptions" with "descriptions of oral translation competence". The modified framework is demonstrated in Fig. 2.
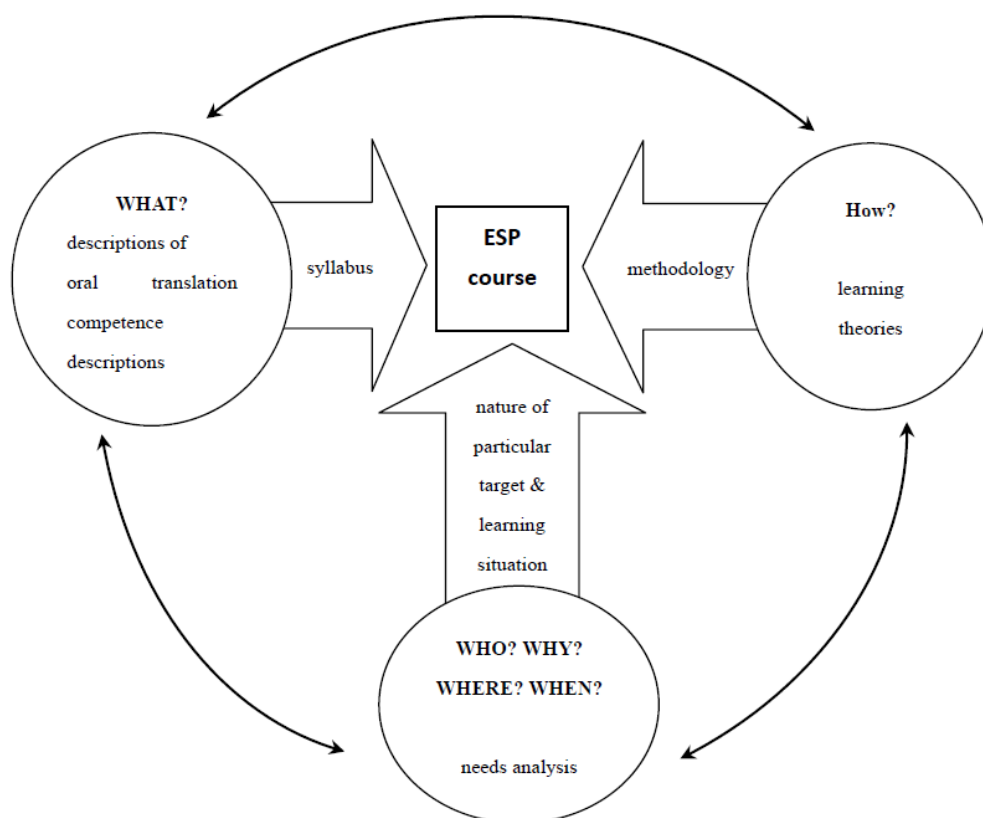
Figure 2. Factors affecting ESP course design

1. Descriptions of oral translation competence

To define components of oral translation competence one can refer to those of translation competence, since oral translation is one mode of translation. Gile (2011) summarized the components of translation competence as good passive knowledge of passive working language(s); good command of active working language(s); adequate world knowledge; and good command of the principles and techniques of translation (P. 18). Studies on oral translation competence (Lin, 1994; Zhong, 2003) shared similar views. A consensus has been reached that there are three key elements that comprise interpreter education, namely, interpreting skills, encyclopedia knowledge and proficiencies of languages (Wang, 2009, p. 209). A training program for professional interpreters should address all of the three aspects in its goals and objectives.

2. Learning theories

The starting point for all language teaching should be an understanding of how people learn. To avoid danger of basing too narrowly on one learning theory, Hutchinson and Waters suggested an eclectic approach and proposed a model for learning (1987, pp. 49-51). In addition to this learning model, the author drew upon constructivism and adult learning theories.

a. Constructivism

According to constructivists, learning is a constructive process in which the learner is building an internal representation of knowledge, a personal interpretation of experience. It is an active process in which meaning is developed on the basis of experience (Bednar *et al.*, 1999, p.22). This nature of learning requires learners to become actively involved and participate in a community (Lauzon, 1999, p. 263).

b. Adult learning

According to adult learning theories, education is defined as a process of mutual, self-directed inquiry (Knowles, 1972, p. 36). Adult learners are profoundly influenced by past learning experiences, present concerns and future prospects (Brundage & MacKeracher ,1980, pp. 21-31). This group of learners prefers a process design in which they participate as well.

3. Needs analysis

Needs analysis is a vital prerequisite for developing a course. Before IFNEM was established, the designer carried out a needs analysis through a questionnaire to 156 freshmen and junior students at her university, some of whom would be potential learners of the IFNEM that she later set up. The questionnaire was based on an adapted checklist of analyzing learning needs by Hutchinson and Waters (1987, p. 62).

Results showed that it is highly necessary to provide an IFNEM as an optional course. The students hoped to have free access to it in the second semester of the freshman year or the sophomore year, either in the evening or in the morning. They also expected a small-sized class of 20 to 40 students. The teaching environments were expected to

include multi-media appliances, computers and movable tables and chairs. Students' motivation to take this course was mainly instrumental, many expecting to improve their English skills. They expected the teaching goals to be improvement of both interpreting skills and language abilities, especially English listening and speaking abilities. (Li, 2011, pp. 1100-1101).

III. COURSE DESIGNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

The process of course design involves initial planning, implementation, and evaluation (Nunan, 1988a, p. 8). Traditionally this process is finished by curriculum designers before any encounters of the teacher and the students. This leads to difficulties to consider the learner at every stage of course design, as required in a learning-centered approach. Ideally the key participants of pre-course planning should be both the teachers who are to direct a course and the learners who are to take part in it (Nunan, 1988b, p. 45) , and "the most valuable learner data can be obtained, especially after relationships have been established between the teacher and learners" (p. 5).

Fortunately, the IFNEM design lived up to the ideal: the designer of the IFNEM is also the teacher (and the author) who had been teaching English to the potential learners of IFNEM in their freshmen year. The teacher had known the class so well that she could remember all of the students' names and general English proficiencies. During that period, the teacher proposed the new course of IFNEM to the students and received many "reservation requests" from interested candidates. Much discussion was led afterwards to elicit the learners' opinions about the course design, especially on the content and assessment. For instance, as part of the formative assessment, the number and frequency of quizzes and learning journals was decided after rounds of negotiation between the ambitious teacher and realistic students. The decision proved to be a wise one as the course turned out. Without consulting with the learners, the assessment could have been too intensive and scared away many candidates.

The teacher was also able to collect comprehensive data about the learners before the class, encompassing their current proficiency level, age, previous learning experiences, preferred learning arrangement, learning-style preferences, personal learning objectives and motivation, etc., through tests, questionnaires, and most importantly, causal chats via WeChat, a communication tool of instant messaging. In fact, this effective channel of communication continued to the period during the implementation of IFNEM class, enabling ongoing supervision, modification and evaluation of the course.

The final design of IFNEM is as follows.

A. Aims and Objectives

This course aims to introduce the fundamental knowledge of interpreting to students, and equip them with basic interpreting skills, higher English listening and speaking skills and independent learning strategies. A subdivision of fundamentals of interpreting knowledge and skills is elaborated in Table 1:

TABLE 1.
OBJECTIVES ON FUNDAMENTALS OF INTERPRETING AND BASIC INTERPRETING SKILLS

1. On fundamental knowledge of interpreting
The course is to help students to understand:
- competence required for an interpreter;
- principles of de-verbalization;
- Effort Model;
- principles and techniques of listening for interpreting tasks;
- principles and techniques of note-taking for interpreting tasks;
- principles and techniques of short-term memory for interpreting tasks;
2. On interpreting skills
The course is to help students to learn and practice:
- listening for meaning;
- short-term memory techniques;
- note-taking techniques;
- public speaking skills;
- critical thinking skills (e.g., to summarize, to identify main ideas and to reconstruct);
- interpreting figures;
- coping tactics
3. On professionalism
The course is to help students learn about:
- short-term preparation for interpreting tasks;
- cross-cultural communication ;
- professional standards.

The list is not exhaustive. For instance, more advanced objectives like analysis of different registers and artistic delivery of interpreting are not included. For "it is essential to select the number of objectives that can actually be attained in significant degree in the time available, and that these be really important ones" (Tyler, 1949, p. 31).

B. Syllabus

In view of the introductory nature of this course and learners' varied proficiency levels, the teaching content is decided upon liaison interpreting in common settings (tourism, business and culture, etc), which are less challenging and more practical. The materials for this course are from multiple sources, including textbooks, online recourses and training materials that the teacher accumulated from her own education and interpreting experiences. The textbooks selected are *Liaison Interpreting* (Wang & Wu, 2010), *Basic Interpreting Skills* (Su & Deng, 2009), and *Asia Link--Interpreting Asia Interpreting Europe* (Xiao & Yang, 2006). Additional multi-media resources are uploaded online to the "iclass" teaching platform, a MOODLE-like course management system, which the students have access to via computers or a smart phone application named "Blackboard Mobile Learn".

The teaching content attempts to address the three components of translation competence as mentioned before, with interpreting skills ranking the first in importance. This is in line with the interpreter educationalist Zhong's viewpoint (2001, p. 31). He maintains that training of interpreting skills should be the top priority of interpreting education, which can be arranged according to different themes of situations that interpreting takes place. Accordingly, the IFNEM is arranged by themes, except for an introduction to fundamentals of interpreting at the beginning.

The theme-based syllabus is presented below:
1. fundamental knowledge of interpreting,
2. short-term memory techniques,
3. listening techniques in interpreting,
4. note-taking techniques,
5. receiving guests,
6. tourism and shopping,
7. food and catering,
8. seeing guests off,
9. exhibition and fairs,
10. business negotiation,
11. business etiquettes,
12. cooperation talks,
13. cultural communication,
14. preparation for an interpreting task,
15. interpreting practicum.

This theme-based syllabus, however, fails to demonstrate the actual focus on training interpreting skills which happen in almost every class, regardless of the theme. To present an overview of what and how those interpreting skills are trained and assessed, a skills-based syllabus is elaborated in Table 2, drawing upon Zhong's summary of basic interpreting skills and training methods (2001, p.31).

TABLE 2.
THE SKILLS-BASED SYLLABUS OF IFNEM

Content	Objectives	Materials	Activity	Assessment
interpreting competence	to understand competence required for an interpreter and learn what long-term preparation is needed as a self-directed learner of interpreting	Gile's comprehension equation, etc.	Lecture; impromptu interpreting practice	Quiz on fundamentals of interpreting
Effort Model	to enhance awareness of better distribution of efforts during interpreting and the importance of proficiency of languages, especially listening and speaking skills	Gile's Effort Model, related practice	repeating practice, retelling the gist	pretest, learning journal
de-verbalization	to be more cautious about common mistakes of literal translation by beginners	de-verbalization model	mini-lecture, related interpreting practice	learning journal
listening in interpreting	to understand and practice "listening for meaning"	Chinese and English listening materials	listening and retelling in source and target language	retelling quiz, learning journal
short-term memory	to learn and practice short-term memory techniques; to learn to summarize, identify main ideas and reconstruct	a celebrity's speech, etc.	listening and retelling in source and target language	retelling quiz, learning journal
note-taking	to learn and practice note-taking techniques	logical passages	lecture and note-taking at the sentence, passage level	quiz on basic principles of note-taking
interpreting figures	to master at least one of the ways to interpret large numbers	speeches containing figures	related interpreting practice	figure interpreting quiz
short-term preparation	to learn what short-term preparation to make for an interpreting task	a lecture in source language	listening and memorizing related vocabularies	simulation of the interpreting task
coping tactics	to learn possible solution to frequent difficulties in interpreting	practicum	a real-life interpreting practicum	practicum, video-recording, learning journal
professionalism	to learn about professional standards	textbook DVD	lecture and DVD watching	learning journal

C. Method and Organization

1. Course arrangement

The arrangement of the course is, for the most part, a fulfillment of the students' wishes and expectations, as expressed in the Needs analysis mentioned before. The IFNEM is established as an optional course in Tuesday evenings for Non-English majors of the second year and above. It is a 16 week program for two credits. The course is conducted in a language lab equipped with a multi-media console for the teacher, computers for each student and movable chairs--basically everything necessary for interpreting training, which entails presenting and sharing multi-media resources, carrying out simulation activities, and collecting the students' data. However, there is only one discrepancy from the original plan. The enrollment of the class is limited to 46 instead of the ideal 20, a balance between the teacher's hope to give due attention to each student in a small class and the administrative staff's concern with students' large demand for such a course.

2. Class organization

The course is organized in ways to maximize the learners' participation in interpreting practice. More than half of the class time was devoted to the interpreting practice. This emphasis on students' participation is grounded in constructivism and adult learning theories which stress the importance of the students' personal experience. It also echoes the golden rule in interpreter education that "practice makes perfect", which is also phrased as "the practice-based principle" of interpreting training (Zhong, 2007, p.52).

There are different activities in the practice, ranging from individual interpreting, role-play, three-corner simulation and whole-class interpreting. Every learner is required to participate either in a three-corner simulation or a role-play task, which provides source materials for the rest to interpret. In order for the students to practice public speaking skills, a stimulus plan is added that bonus points could be gained by delivering a speech on the theme of that class, which serves also as a source text of interpreting for the class.

As advocated in translation programs (Li, 2012, p. 159), the principle of authenticity is applied in IFNEM for the practice to have relevance to the learners. Authentic training signifies authentic training materials and training methods (p. 160). The teacher adopts authentic training methods especially, having foreigners come to her class physically and via Skype to be interpreted by the learners, in which the students learn interpreting by doing it for real instead of for exams.

D. Assessment

In accordance with the focus on the process of learning, the assessment of IFNEM is largely formative (70%) . Summative assessment accounts for only 30%. The assessment breakdown is shown in Table 3.

TABLE 3.
ASSESSMENT BREAKDOWN OF IFNEM

formative assessment 70%					summative assessment 30%
attendance & class Participation	three-corner simulation/role play	5 Quizzes	5 learning journals & 1 portfolio	bonus items	final interpreting test
20%	10%	25%	15%	2-10%	30%

The learning journal is used to help develop students' independent learning abilities. It follows a structure of "SEEDS" and "GPS". "SEEDS" is an acronym the designer coined from "Summary", "Evaluation of oneself", "Evaluation of others", "Difficulties" and "Solution"-- five parts of the learner's reflection after a particular class. "GPS" is a record of the students' autonomous learning efforts during the week, organized by the titles of "Gains", "Problems" and "Solution". The students are to submit this homework every other week, though they are encouraged to do so every week for bonus points. This assignment is designed for the students to increase meta-cognition awareness as they reflect regularly on their learning. It also helps the teacher to adjust content and methods during the course.

The bonus items in Table 4 need explanation. As mentioned before, one of them is the extra learning journal, which is 2 points each; other bonus-winning items include deliverance of speeches (5 points each), and contribution of model three-corner simulation video (5 points each). Obviously the stimulus plan intends to encourage students' regular reflection and active participation in learning.

IV. EVALUATION

No curriculum design would be complete without being evaluated. Evaluation addresses the value and effectiveness of curricular matters and activities (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2009, p. 304). Essentially, it consists of gathering data and relating them to goals (p. 279). In this empirical study, the designer examined the effectiveness of the course against its aims through both quantitative and qualitative methods, including tests, a questionnaire on course evaluation, students' learning journals and semester summaries.

A. Results Relating to the Aims

1. Fundamental knowledge of interpreting

As an introductory course to interpreting, the preliminary goal is to inform the students of the basic knowledge on the subject. This objective has been attained: the students' scores of the quiz on fundamentals of interpreting averaged at 3.52 (full mark: 5), indicating a fairly good mastery. In addition, all of them reported in their learning journals and

semester summaries that they had gained a general understanding of interpreting. Many "demystified the allegedly 'fancy and classy' interpreting competence", and discarded prejudices like "interpreting is no big deal but a matter of vocabulary".

2. Improved interpreting skills

At the end of the course, the students' interpreting skills saw a marked progress with a statistical significance (p<0.01), manifested by the results of a paired samples test of their pre- and post-test scores as shown in Table 4. Both examinations used authentic tests from China Accreditation Test for Translators and Interpreters (CATTI), a national qualification exam of high validity and reliability.

TABLE 4
PAIRED SAMPLES TEST OF THE STUDENTS' PRE- AND POST- TESTS

	Paired Differences							
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	99% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
				Lower	Upper			
Pair 1 pretest - posttest	-6.58974	4.27180	.68404	-8.44455	-4.73494	-9.634	38	.000

This progress is also confirmed by their learning journals and semester summaries. Many expressed joy and pride at their achievement of being able to interpret long dialogues in the final exam, in comparison with their "bleak" starting points when they had difficulties in interpreting short sentences. Two of them described their first experiences of interpreting in real life after class and gave credit to IFNEM, saying they would had shied away from the challenges without the knowledge and skills equipped in this class.

In fact, all of the students ascribed their growth in interpreting skills to the course. In their responses to the questionnaire on the course evaluation, all of them acknowledged the helpfulness of this class to their English interpreting skills, half of them (51.52%) considered this course "greatly helpful" (Table 5).

TABLE 5.
THE HELPFULNESS OF IFNEM IN IMPROVING ENGLISH INTERPRETING SKILLS

Item	Percentage
A. greatly helpful	51.52%
B. somewhat helpful	39.39%
C. helpful	9.09%
D. Not very helpful	0%
E. No help at all	0%

3. Language enhancement

As a byproduct of interpreting training, the students' English improved as well. In their semester summaries most of them mentioned that they had increased their vocabulary on the themes covered in the course, and saw "surprisingly" a growth of their English listening and speaking abilities, especially in comparison with their peers who failed to enroll in this class. Another evidence lies in their increased scores of interpreting tests, which alone could indicate an increase of language proficiency, as prerequisites of interpreting involve a certain amount of vocabularies and good English listening and speaking skills. Again, all of them agreed that the class had helped with their English listening and speaking skills (table 6).

TABLE 6.
THE HELPFULNESS OF IFNEM IN IMPROVING ENGLISH LISTENING AND SPEAKING SKILLS

Item	Percentage
A. greatly helpful	27.27%
B. somewhat helpful	57.58%
C. helpful	15.15%
D. Not very helpful	0%
E. No help at all	0%

In fact, the role interpreting practices play in language enhancement is confirmed in other studies. Research found that the students who took an IFNEM scored far higher than those who did not. The enrollers' English listening, speaking and translation abilities advanced in particular (Xiong & Luo, 2006). They improved in both translation and writing, embodied by a raised language sense and better choice of word collocation (Deng, 2007).

4. Independent learning strategies and abilities

One of the teaching objectives is to assist the students to further their interpreting skills through independent learning, which requires both the knowledge of interpreting training strategies and abilities of autonomous learning. The former has been mastered, judging from the students' scores and writings as evaluated before. Their autonomous learning abilities have also been strengthened, as they mentioned the learning journals had helped them to summarize and reflect, and form a habit of learning English. Most of them (81.82%, a combined percentage of Item A and B, in Table 7) claimed that they did take further action upon finishing the journals. Admittedly, even with the students' claims, it is

hard to prove or quantify the development of independent learning abilities. However, it is safe to assert that a regular reflection on one's learning could be a good beginning to increase one's meta-cognition awareness, an integral part of independent learning ability. After all, action starts from a thought. In this sense, the designer believes that the students' autonomous learning abilities should have been promoted.

TABLE 7
WHETHER THE STUDENTS TOOK FURTHER ACTION UPON FINISHING THE LEARNING JOURNAL

	Percentage
A. I will take action accordingly	21.21%
B. It helped me to reflect, though with little further action.	60.61%
C. It helped me to reflect, though without further action.	12.12%
D. I forgot everything after finishing it. There is no further action.	6.06%
E. Others. Please specify:	0%

B. The Students' Feedback on the Course

The course has met the students' expectations in general. According to the results of the questionnaire, the majority of the students acknowledged that the teaching model had been greatly (27.27%) and largely (60.61%) in accordance with their expectations, as Table 8 shows.

TABLE 8.
THE DEGREE TO WHICH THE TEACHING MODEL IS IN LINE WITH THE STUDENTS' EXPECTATIONS

Item	Percentage
A. greatly	27.27%
B. largely	60.61%
C. somewhat	9.09%
D. not quite the same	3.03%
E. complete different	0%

Specifically, the participants rated the course elements on a 5-point scale in terms of the teaching content (4.24), methods (4.15), assessment (4.13) and effects (4), as Table 9 illustrates. More than half of them were "very satisfactory" with all the course elements. Though there were five votes for "very unsatisfactory" options, no supporting evidence was found in any of their writings, including the answers to questions eliciting feedback on the course in the same questionnaire.

TABLE 9
THE STUDENTS' RATINGS OF THE COURSE ELEMENTS

Item	Very Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Fairly satisfactory	Satisfactory	Very satisfactory	No comment	average
Content	5(15.15%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	5(15.15%)	23(69.7%)	0(0%)	4.24
Method	5(15.15%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	8(24.24%)	20(60.61%)	0(0%)	4.15
Assessment	5(15.15%)	0(0%)	0(0%)	8(24.24%)	19(57.58%)	1(3.03%)	4.13
Effects	5(15.15%)	0(0%)	2(6.06%)	9(27.27%)	17(51.52%)	0(0%)	4

The teaching content is described as "appropriate "(51.52%) and "a bit difficult" (42.42%), indicating a challenge and potential for growth that the course has brought (Table 10). The students further explained that their difficulty lied mainly in a relatively low English proficiencies, especially English listening and speaking skills.

TABLE 10.
THE DIFFICULTY LEVEL OF THE TEACHING CONTENT

Item	Percentage
A. Very difficult, because:	6.06%
B. A bit difficult, because:	42.42%
C. Appropriate	51.52%
D. A bit too easy, because:	0%
E. Too easy, because:	0%

As for the implementation of practice-based methodology, 60.61% (a combined percentage of Item A and B in Table 11) affirmed that half and more of class time was invested in interpreting practice. One explanation is needed here that this opinion was based on the whole semester, including the beginning lecture-based orientations to interpreting fundamentals. The proportion of interpreting practice in the skills-based classes was actually even lager. The multiple patterns of interpreting activities have met students' expectations, as the patterns were "always" (21.21%) and "largely" (66.67%) the same as their preference (Table 12).

TABLE 11.
THE PROPORTION OF THE TIME SPENT ON STUDENTS' INTERPRETING PRACTICE IN CLASS

Items	Percentage
A. over 75%	9.09%
B. 50-75%	51.52%
C. 25-50%	30.30%
D. 10-25%	9.09%
E. under 10%	0%

TABLE 12.
THE FREQUENCY OF THE PATTERNS OF INTERPRETING ACTIVITIES PREFERRED BY THE STUDENTS

Item	Percentage
A. always	21.21%
B. largely	66.67%
C. sometimes	9.09%
D. seldom	0%
E. Never	0%
Blank	3.03%

The students also approved of the predominance of formative assessment in the course evaluation, deeming it was more comprehensive and helped them to focus on the learning process instead of cramming for tests. All of the students agreed the quizzes held on a regular basis had been helpful to their study (Table 13), because "Otherwise I would probably slack off", as some students confessed. The majority of them (90.91%) believed multiple learning journals had also helped with their interpreting learning, as Table 14 shows.

TABLE 13.
HELPFULNESS OF HAVING A QUIZ EVERY OTHER WEEK TO THE STUDENTS' INTERPRETING LEARNING

Items	Percentage
A. greatly helpful	30.30%
B. somewhat helpful	48.48%
C. helpful	21.21%
D. Not very helpful	0%
E. No help at all	0%

TABLE 14.
HELPFULNESS OF REGULAR LEARNING JOURNALS TO THE STUDENTS' INTERPRETING LEARNING

Items	Percentage
A. greatly helpful	24.24%
B. somewhat helpful	30.30%
C. helpful	36.36%
D. Not very helpful	9.09%
E. No help at all	0%

On the whole, the students regarded their IFNEM learning experience as intensive, interesting and meaningful. Quoting from them in semester summaries, "It had never occurred to me that an optional course could be so informative and intensive, even better than compulsory English courses"; "I have never learnt so much in a course before"; "I wish there would be another IFNEM next semester".

C. The Students' Comments on the Teacher

The success of a course can be exemplified by the students' recognition of the teacher. The teacher of this IFNEM is highly thought of and appreciated. In fact, one of the reasons some students selected this course is that they believed in the teacher, as revealed in the semester summaries. From their encounters with the teacher during a one-year English program before IFNEM, the students found her "highly responsible and committed" and her class "interactive and relaxing". Many mentioned that they were so touched by the devotion of the teacher that they increased their efforts during the course.

D. Room for Improvement

There have been few complaints about the course. One or two students advised to reduce the class size and increase real-life interpreting practice, which might be hard to realize due to practical constraints. A very feasible suggestion from the students is to replace some learning journals with video recordings of their interpreting practice after class, which is a more interesting way to improve their interpreting skills. In the teacher's opinion, a lack of updated and authentic materials that caters to the learners' needs is the most pressing problem, which calls for academic attention and contribution of practitioners.

V. CONCLUSION

As an attempt to address the scarcity of curriculum study in interpreting education, the author designed an IFNEM class based on Hutchinson & Waters' learning approach to course design, and a three-pronged framework of oral

translation competence, learning theories and needs analysis results.

During the course design process, the designer was able to consider learners at every stage of course planning, thanks to the ideal condition that the teacher had been personally acquainted with and consulted directly the students who were to be enrolled in this new course.

The final product of the course design is presented in terms of aims and objectives, syllabus, method and organization and assessment, the four key elements of curriculum. The IFNEM is designed with the aims to introduce the fundamental knowledge of interpreting to students, and equip them with basic interpreting skills, higher English listening and speaking skills and independent learning strategies. It is arranged mainly by theme-based interpreting situations, with an introduction to interpreting fundamentals at the beginning. Meanwhile, there is a hidden skills-based syllabus, specifying the subdivision of interpreting skills and how those are trained and evaluated in class (in Table 2). The practice- and authenticity-based methodology of IFNEM is grounded in constructivism and adult learning theories, emphasizing the students' maximum and active participation. Finally, the assessment of the course is mostly formative (70%), focusing on the students' learning process.

At the end of the IFNEM, the course was evaluated through tests, a questionnaire on course evaluation, students' learning journals and semester summaries. It is found that this course design had been effective, judging from the results relating to the objectives, the students' feedback on the course and the teacher.

There were only a few suggestions for improving the course. One constructive suggestion is to include in the students' homework video recordings of their interpreting practice after class. From the perspective of the instructor, a pressing problem is a lack of authentic materials specifically for non-English major students, which calls for further academic endeavors.

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