**Globally Speaking**

**Podcast 89 Transcript**

**Should Localization Education Ride the Technology Wave?**

**Featuring Max Troyer, Jon Ritzdorf and Jan Grodecki**

Michael I’m Michael Stevens and today on Globally Speaking, we have something different for you, our listener. I was asked to moderate a panel of localization experts who teach in higher-level education. The topic is “Should Localization Education Ride the Technology Wave?” Each one of these experts is a professor at a university; we get to get insight into how they build their curriculum and what skills they believe are necessary to thrive in this industry. You’ll hear some challenges that are facing the education system, but also the ways that these folks recommend we seek to educate and prepare our next generation of leaders.

Max My name’s Max Troyer. I’m an associate professor, now, at the Middlebury Institute and program chair for the Translation and Localization Management program, and I guess I see my role as a professor as the simulated client for our students. I have to hold them to deadlines and kind of simulate what they’ll experience in the real world so that they can hit the ground running. I always say that our graduates can hit the ground running, but I can only do that if I try to kind of be that mean client or that nice client occasionally, play around with those different roles.

Jon Jon Ritzdorf. I am an adjunct professor at University of Maryland, NYU and here at Middlebury Institute in addition to my full-time role at RWS Moravia as a solutions architect. I’d say as a professor, definitely my role is to constantly be there as a person who students can get an understanding of what the reality of the industry looks like. I think one thing that is lacking in a lot of the programs I’m in is although people might be professionals in terms of freelancing or they might be working in translation, localization areas as kind of a part-time job, I’m full-time in it, so I’m constantly trying to challenge them to think about what is going on right now and how it’s relevant and how it connects to what they’re learning in class, and trying to keep them on the toes. I mean, that is a lot of it, too; Max is totally right about that. You know, you try to keep them on their toes a lot, try to challenge them and try to push them to really think deeply and have strong critical thinking skills, that this is not always a cake-walk and that sometimes you’re going to have to deal with stuff that might be unpleasant or difficult, and keep them constantly aware of that.

Jan I’m Jan Grodecki. Similar to Jon, also Solutions Architect at RWS Moravia and a professor at University of Washington in the Professional Continuous Education Program for Localization. I see myself, with the experience that I gained over roughly 20 years in localization, as a link between the industry and the education we provide to the students. That being said, there was an initial question about how far we should go, should we just provide the latest technology and challenges to the students? I also think we must also focus on the traditional topics of localization.

 Just for an example, everybody’s talking about Agile project management, but should we now drop everything we taught and we teach on project management traditional areas like risk management, scheduling and all these things? No, I think this is a basis we also need to provide to our students to give them the foundation and not only focus on the recent technologies. So, a combination of both, I think, is really important.

Michael And Jan, you’re leading into really the next question I have. First, what do you define as the traditional skills and what are these new technologies and automation? And then, currently, what percentage of the curriculum that you have is dedicated to new technologies?

Jan Yeah, I mean, traditional is traditional. There have always been project management-typical tasks. If we look at machine translation, there is a foundation. You need to understand where machine translation comes from, what is rule-based, what is statistical-based machine translation and now, where does neural machine translation come from. So, in order to understand the current technology, you also need to know a bit of the history and you need the foundation, like in project management. I mentioned risk management; I think it’s an integral part everybody needs to know. And Agile—whatever it is—project management can be an excuse to drop everything else, so I think that’s really a main point. So, what we teach is hard to say, it totally depends on the area, how much our focus is on the latest technology. Again, it depends. For machine translation, of course, a huge focus should be on NMT, post-editing these current tasks.

Jon One area that I’d like to point out, too, is that if we look at the courses that we’re teaching, at least here at MIIS, the way Max has set up the program here, is there’s different tracks, there’s different ways of approaching it, right? There’s the technology side of localization, but then there’s also the more translation side of localization and there’s also the more business side of localization. And what’s interesting for me is that the courses that I teach here, looking at that instead of the more technical courses, really there is no technology when it comes to business-side, in terms of human interaction. In that place, that’s where nothing has changed; it hasn’t changed for thousands of years. People want to talk to people.

Michael Yeah.

Jon People want to buy from people. People want to interact with people who respect them.

Michael When something goes wrong, you don’t want a voice prompt; you want a person to talk to.

Jon Exactly. So, to a large degree, that’s where I do still teach very, like, skills that are as traditional as, you know, probably something taught in 800AD: writing people a confirmation of what was discussed at a meeting, confirming what their needs and what their wants are with relation to services, understanding deeply that when you are selling to them, they want you to listen to what their concerns are and you are going to be addressing those concerns by building out ideas. I mean, these are fundamental things that technology just can’t replace, right? So, this is one area where I feel like those skills are just never going to change, right? That skillset piece is never going to change over time. I mean, it’s going to be taught this way even 1,000 years from now.

Max I feel like we have a responsibility to our graduates. Sure, there are people who are going into fully automated shops where you can turn the light out and hang out on the beach and wait for text messages if there’s a problem in the workflow. But we have graduates going in to LSPs that are in the top 10 worldwide where, through mergers and acquisitions, they’re getting these little shops that are still doing everything through email. So, if our curriculum is based on an entirely automated workflow, and then our graduates go into these companies that are still emailing files around and following up with translators to make sure that they’re working on something, there’s no automation, they need to be ready for that. And besides, when we’re teaching automation, if we’re not teaching what we’re automating, if students don’t understand the process, “we’re going to turn off the automation, can you still do things?” you know, we’re not really doing a service. You have to understand what is being automated to configure these systems.

Michael That’s one of the things I wanted to highlight, was automation runs on so many dependencies; it’s dynamic, things are changing pretty quickly. The moment an update is made, the moment one of these automations breaks, they’re dependent upon someone else to fix the job and therefore, limited in their ability to serve whatever person they’re working for. Critical thinking and the traditional skills are still important; what are some of those that you think programs should continue? You mentioned communication is a big one.

Jon This is a major one. I just have to reiterate this one. So, I when I started teaching kind of the business-track courses, one of the pieces I went back to was an old, 1980, or I think I collected it in 1999 or somewhere in the early 2000s, when Bowne Global was doing a purge of a lot of their materials, a bunch of people were throwing stuff in the trash. I picked up everything. I pulled out everything I could, and I stuck it on my bookshelf because I was like, “This stuff might become useful as teaching material in the future!”

 So, I pulled it all off and I stuck it in there and when I started creating the business classes here which is, you know, a decade, more than a decade later, I pulled those out and I realized there were these great training materials on just about, like, how to communicate with other people. And one of the main things, it was from Tracy Feick, who I think is still at Lionbridge, and she had taught us there that, like, when things are going wrong, right, when you’re trying to email people about problems, because that what it was—our main form of communication, no Slack, no whatever back then right—when you’re emailing people about problems or trying any methodology and it just seems to just be snowballing and getting worse and worse, just pick up the phone. That is still the same today as it’s been for years. Even at my full-time job, I find there’s a lot of situations where it just escalates and escalates and escalates through chat, and then it escalates even more through email, and the next thing you know, everybody’s hopping on and everybody is just kind of confused and the whole message is being lost. And I’ll just be like, “Okay, that’s it; I’m just going to literally call the person who’s the source of this problem. We’re going to talk it out, figure it out and then move forward.” Because there’s points at which technology just fails you.

Jan Yeah, and you’re absolutely right, internationalization, globalization, localization, it’s so complex because we’re not dealing with one team that is developing software, one team that’s creating content. We’re working with people all over the world in different time zones, different cultural backgrounds and so on. You have to be prepared for everything.

Jon Yeah, absolutely.

Jan And so my absolute favorite topic, again, is risk management. If I teach students about project management, risk management, I don’t hammer on, “you have to have this process, or you have to have a risk register in place.” Just the thinking: be aware what will happen or what are you going to do if something goes wrong? What if the power failure is there or what we had at one LSP—they had a burglary. So, everything was shut down, but the business has to continue working. So, you don’t have to have a list to look up, “okay, in this case I do that and do that.” No—just be aware and think, “oh yeah, we had something like this before, or there was an example about this. I think a good idea to proceed would be to take the phone, call people, burn a CD to transfer your data.”

Jon It’s not like when you lose your laptop, you’re like, “I’m going to look up on Google what to do when I lose my company laptop.” It’s like, “I’m going to call IT!” Oh crap, right? I know, “right away!”

Michael Yeah, “I hope there’s backups involved with this.” What about scheduling and, like, Gantt charts and dependencies and those things as well? Is that something that’s covered?

Max I don’t know that we’re spending too much time on Gantt charts anymore, but the fundamentals of the Gantt chart, the critical path, I mean, these are core project management concepts that, if you don’t know what critical path is, can you manage projects? How do you shorten a project? Well, you look at the critical path-based tasks and so, I mean, we’re still looking at fundamentals and, yes, if you’re automating, the fundamentals all still apply. In the TLM curriculum, to get our students better at just talking about these issues and talking about internationalization and localization, we’re going to be rolling out case studies in more classes. The idea is that, well, I love jumping into the weeds and the details and I love technical tutorials that students sometimes push back against because we’re getting too technical and it’s too complicated. I need to take a step back in many of my classes and really get our students better at talking about these things so when you pick up the phone, you can explain what’s wrong and hopefully find a solution. So, I think just, you know, the soft skills will be improved through the case study discussions that we’re having.

Michael Yeah. That’s a probably really helpful skill for students and for these programs, that the first time they’re picking up the phone and having to explain a technical issue is not when something has gone wrong in their career. Like, let’s do that in front of the classroom, let’s get feedback, that’s a nice thing.

 How do you approach the differences or plan to approach the differences of localization project management when compared to general project management theory?

Max Every couple of years, I get a student who gives me feedback that we need to cover the PM body of knowledge, PMBOK or PMI, and I always say that in my experience as a project manager, you don’t necessarily need PMI or PMBOK to manage localization projects in an agency. But when you go to the buyer or the client side, occasionally you’re going to be talking to people who have gone through the PMI certification or are obsessed with the PMBOK system. So, from what we’re doing, preparing students for the LSP, it’s not necessary, but as you make the transition to the client side, you may you might need to talk the talk and have some of those concepts. So, I think there’s room for it, but it’s not necessary for the LSP side. I don’t know...

Jan No, I think I can answer to that. So, coming from Microsoft and we worked on giant projects like Windows Vista, if you remember the predecessor to Windows 7, we did have schedules that were nested that were gigantic, and you have to have a good knowledge of project management scheduling to manage this. But these people who were managing that were experienced project managers. So, if you’re a newbie, you’re not really expected to handle things like that. That being said, I often get the question, “Would you do a PMP certification?” I am PMP certified. Yes and no. I wouldn’t just do it for the certification itself. I would do it if I can apply immediately what I learned on the job. And even if it’s just little pieces and bits. PMI certification is for project managers that deal with huge projects in industry, in building construction and so on, not really necessarily in all the details for localization for our business. That being said, I just taught a class internally, in our company, on the basics of project management. It just came up. We looked into things like MS Project, Gantt charts and all these things. It was very useful. So, yes, it’s a good use if you have that background, but normally you’re not required to go that deep into project management.

Jon I just have to point out, I’m not half as organized as either of these guys, so anybody who knows me from work and knows me from classes knows that I like chaos. So, I kind of thrive off of chaos. So, the way I’m just addressing your question about exactly how we’re handing this in the curriculum here, my goal is to throw you all into the chaos that I deal with on a daily basis. I try to simulate the chaotic situations. The primary areas of chaos are covered in the course that I teach here on sales and solutions development, where I’m going to put you into literally the first…well, I don’t want to give you the warning of the first question I give you because then it’s not going to be such a scare.

 But I think what I’m trying to say is, is that if you turn it into a formal—and I think it’s basically what these guys are saying, too—if you turn it into a formal, formulaic process, we’re not teaching you critical thinking skills. Critical thinking skills is by taking you and unfortunately—well, maybe not unfortunately, I think it’s actually the best way to learn—dumping you in the deep end and forcing you to swim and seeing how you’re going to swim your way out, right? That is the learning we’re trying to give you. So, yeah, it might not be in the official curriculum, or it might not be officially on the syllabus. The whole idea, though, is to make you encounter the rather chaotic nature, I think, that localization just happens to have associated with it; that fires can happen at any time. And if you’re working on account management or business development, you are walking into—and, you know, Michael can tell you this himself—you are walking sometimes into a phone call, no knowledge whatsoever. You don’t know where you’re starting, you don’t know where it’s going, you don’t know how that person’s going to behave. They might be nice, they might not be nice; they might be aggressive, they might not be aggressive. We walk into meetings, sometimes; suddenly there’s a person there who we did not know was coming to the meeting. Turns out that person happens to be a senior VP of the company and their whole goal is just to make our life hell. That’s why they’re there. They wanted to be there to run us over hot coals and burn us as much as possible. I just want to say we introduce the skills; it’s just maybe we don’t do it in a formulaic way because we want you to understand that this is not a formula.

Michael Do you all have examples of situations where you’ve had assignments or particular classes where students have taken the initiative related to some type of technology or automation and get a leg up or had some thriving happening because of that, that may not have been, like, assigned in the curriculum, but because of the environment? Jon, you perked up when I said that, can you share that story?

Jon Absolutely, yeah, I mean, I have a scenario that I give the students every year in the sales and solutions development course that I ran into and I had a lot of trouble solving, and I’m always shocked when I give the students the exact same scenario with no guidance, what do they come up with. And it’s rather kind of sad because in hindsight, I see that the students’ ideas were significantly better than anything I’ve ever came up with. And if I’d came up with that idea originally, I might have actually been able to obtain that line of reasoning and thought and built out a solution on that that might have actually won us that customer.

Michael So, the student has become the master, I’m hearing.

Jon Yeah, it’s kind of crazy, yeah. And the generational gap that’s happening for me as I go from teaching…when I first started teaching, I was teaching Baby Boomers and they were older than me, and then as time has gone on, I taught the same age as me, and, you know, then I taught millennials, and now I’m teaching GenZ…I’m starting to realize just this level of creativity and their ability to use technologies in such creative and interesting ways that I’ve just never thought of.

Max My examples just make me look bad. I teach continuous localization in a few courses—website localization and in the software and games localization course that I teach—and when you’ve got 60 or 80 students following an exercise that is 20, 30, 40 steps long, you get to the end of the exercise and a student will say, “Max, I can’t get it working; it’s not working,” and I say, “Well, let’s go through the steps again and see where you went wrong.” And I can’t always just in two minutes figure out why it’s not working. So, that’s just an example of how complex configuring these systems is and just how frustrating it is sometimes when a student thinks they did everything right, gets to the end of the exercise and it doesn’t actually do anything continuously, it just doesn’t work. That’s the fun part of our program, I think.

Michael “Let’s go back to step one and see where you fell out.” Aww. Okay. So, this is a question that came to mind recently. I attended one of these boot camps where a Silicon Valley technology company is looking for ambassadors as they’re expanding. It happened to be Asana, the project management tool and shared collaboration tool. What responsibility or what engagement do you guys have with especially tech companies to sort of provide a level of support and education to your curriculum and what your students are doing? Is there any relationship there?

Max With localization tool providers or like project management tools?

Michael Yes, across the board, how has this wave of technology, what are these companies providing the educational institutions?

Max Well, I think we’re all suckers for the latest, shiniest tool without a doubt, and I’m all for putting new tools in front of students and getting rid of tools that are no longer meeting our needs…without mentioning any companies, currently evaluating whether we’re teaching the best translation management system right now, and if we should be teaching other ones. I think one thing that we all agree on is that whatever tools that we teach, what we’re really teaching is the transference of skills to new tools. If you’re going to work in an agency that’s not using a tool you ever learned, you’d better not say, “Well, I don’t know that tool,” you need to say, “Well, I don’t know that tool, but I know this tool and I can very quickly learn that tool.”

Michael “I’ve set up an admin account, I know how to do workflows, I know how…,” like, some of these basic skills and they’re very transferable.

Max So, so yeah, I mean, I we dive into very specific tools and how to use them, but with the caveat that you know how to use other…quickly learn other tools.

Jan Exactly. So, we do exactly the same. We use the tools that are freely available. We use trial versions for some of the common suspects, and then if students have questions, “Oh, can we also take a quick look at this tool?” Absolutely. But sometimes, I’m not even aware this tool exists. So, what I did with one class, they brought a new tool to me, Espresso, or something like that…

Jon The text editor?

Jan No, no, no, no, it’s a web-based CAT tool. And so, what I did, I assigned to the students, “Okay, I see 15 menu items and so until next class, you two take on the first menu, you take the second, you the third…”

Michael Nice.

Jan … and then you show what’s inside the menu, what you can do, you present that to the whole class.” Well I’m done, I was out, I learned from the students and they had their assignment. It was wonderful.

Michael I’m seeing a theme here, guys, be careful how much you share on that. So, when you’re developing curriculum, how do you take into account the diversity of backgrounds students come with and diversity of what they’re studying? How do you evaluate them in the midst of are they getting the skills they need? And how do you evaluate after they leave that you’ve been successful in this? Are you riding the wave appropriately of technology that’s coming to empower students?

Jan I can start answering to that. So, what I typically do is I do a survey up front for before the first class. I want to know the students, at least because we have online students, internationally, where they’re located, what languages they speak, how much experience they have in engineering and translation. So, we do survey and then analyze that. And then another thing I offer is basic technology; how to navigate your PC or so. Many students of mine are translators and they’re not familiar with how to open a command prompt and do this or so; like, stuff you need for a workshop where we work with CAT tools. So, I offer an additional class, it’s optional, to just bring them within one hour familiar with the basic steps on navigating on a PC. But you are absolutely right. It is really a challenge to create a curriculum so nobody is really bored, but also not overwhelmed with the information you provide to them. So, again, a survey is a good idea to check what kind of students you are facing and then you can also, if they have specific questions, encourage them to bring these up and maybe have a solution in a one-on-one discussion or a separate class.

Jon My chaos is going to come through again here! My best piece of advice to any beginning teacher, I’m going to give it to you. Teaching is just a science experiment like any other science experiment. You walk into a classroom, you take up just like grabbing a bunch of chemicals, you mix them together and you just hope it doesn’t explode on you. That’s literally what teaching is. You have no idea. You are sitting at home, you are designing a curriculum. It might include technology that could blow up on you two steps into the process. It might include exercises you thought were going to be fun and then everybody is bored. It might include something you thought was funny and nobody laughs. It might include—I mean, all these kinds of things.

 Teaching is just a never-ending science experiment, and the thing about teaching and, you know, the interesting thing you said about how do you, like, update your curriculum? To me you just don’t even…your curriculum is kind of a nebulous squishy thing that kind of starts off with an idea, and then as time goes on, you start to kind of get some shape to it. You start to realize, “wow, this worked but that didn’t, so I’m eliminating that, adding this. Wait. Now, I have to fill in this piece. I’m going to try this now.” And you’re just forming it and forming it until eventually you have created something that works consistently, always. And then as time goes on, especially with technology—and I’ve seen this especially in my CAT course which is my longest running course, I’ve been teaching that for 17 years—so you know, as technology changes, you pull pieces out and stick another piece in, but that piece is now experimental, and again, it’s like having a cube and then you rip off the corner and then you stick a bunch of, like, squishy Play Doh in that one corner of the cube and you slowly try to mold it back into the shape of the cube, right? As time goes on, that one piece of the curriculum is now that moldable piece that you have to test out over time.

 Especially with technology, though, I’ve got to say, you know, it changes so fast and so aggressively that, like in my MT courses, my MT course from 2016 is not the same MT course I’m teaching now, not at all. I mean, night-and-day different. It’s just a matter of you need to be constantly adapting and changing and willing to take risks. And I think one of the most fundamental skills that any teacher has to have is to be able to walk in front of a group of 10, 20, 30, 40 people and just be ready to deal with what might be before you, whether it’s good, bad or otherwise.

Jan Yeah, and you think you have it figured out, you have your perfect curriculum, then the next student comes up and says, “Oh, well, on the last version of Trados, this actually works. I can show you right here.” And you say, “Okay, you come up here and fill my role!” Right?

Jon Yeah, exactly, you come up here and teach it because I don’t know how even how to use that function, right, or I’ve never even seen that function, I just didn’t realize it had popped up, yeah.

Max For the TLM program, we kind of assume everyone has a language background, traditionally, and so we treat students like frogs in a nice pot of water that’s cold and we slowly heat that water up and bring everyone up to speed from a technology point of view. As for check-ins and feedback to how students are doing, we rely on the students’ internship experience over the summer. For some students, it’s a wakeup call for what they’re interested in or what they really need to work on, and then in their second year they really focus on what they need to improve. And then the other big feedback loop we have is our alumni. So, if we’re doing anything wrong in our program, our alumni let us know. It’s their first job, they learn something that’s 180 from what we’re doing in the program—that’s not ever actually happened because our pulse is on the ground—but if that were to happen, if someone were to email me and say, “Max, you you’re teaching this and this is not how it’s done in the industry,” then we have an opportunity to immediately pull that module out and redo that module. And that made me think of a conversation I’ve had, a couple of conversations I’ve had recently. I was talking with someone who wanted to collaborate on a textbook and I didn’t laugh in their face, luckily….

Michael That was wise.

Max I said, “That sounds very interesting, I don’t think that textbooks are compatible with localization training.” And then I had another conversation with Jan very recently who said, “Would you be interested in collaborating on a Wiki?” And you know the Drake meme where he’s like, “Write a textbook? No! Collaborate on a Wiki!”

Michael Exactly, totally. I know the meme.

Max Exactly. So, I was like yes, localization training should be done through Wikis, not through textbooks, so it’s a living breathing curriculum that never change… that never… always changes, yeah.

Michael And Jon, since you teach on both the east coast and the west coast of the US, do you see a difference in the programs and curriculums and the adaptation or influence of technology in the programs?

Jon Not really. I think it’s just because, you know, the classrooms that we’re teaching in are highly international no matter where and we’re dealing with universities and universities, especially in our field, bring a lot of international students, so really, it’s kind of generally the same overall culture.

Michael That’s great.

Jon I mean, I would say out of all the universities I teach at, MIIS has the most focused localization curriculum in that it’s very honed in and sharp, whereas the other ones have kind of like just GenEd almost, like, localization fundamentals kind of shoved into a 12-week course and that’s it.

Michael Okay.

Jon Whereas here at MIIS, we get down to a very, very sharp level of refinement in terms of covering stuff. I just have to add one thing to what Max said, too. One area of feedback that I think has become critical for me over the years: it’s not the evaluations, it’s not checking with people beforehand; it’s really actually going and what Max was saying, talking to alumni. Not alumni who have just graduated because, to me, they don’t have enough experience yet to reflect on what they’ve learned. If there’s anything I learned, it’s that it took me five or six years before I started to really realize what I had learned six years ago actually came true and that, “Oh my God! That thing I learned that I thought was stupid or…it’s really actually, like, practical!” Like, I didn’t realize it, but it took me six years to get there. I ask students, usually, five years later; I’m like, “Okay, tell me what you learned in the course that I taught you that you have never forgotten or came up and became part of your relevant day-to-day work?” That’s the stuff then that I go back to the class and I make sure to nail that piece into that framework that’s going to become permanent for that course.

Michael It is a big commitment for students to come enroll full-time to a program like this. What advice or guidance do you have for someone who’s considering, “maybe I need to go develop more skills, or should I just go and jump in the deep end and be a part of the program?”

Max I should probably start with that question. I’ve talked to plenty of prospective students who are debating whether or not to do the program or try to roll their own localization career. And I’ll happily give advice for how to roll your own career. If you’re in the Bay area, you can go to the IMUG Meetups. There’s plenty of online training available; there are certificates, short certificates, long certificates. But ultimately, I feel that I’ve had enough conversations with students who I’ve told that to and then a couple of years later, they applied to the TLM program because either they haven’t gotten the ins that they’ve been looking for or it’s just not happening. And so, I think the TLM program is kind of a…I don’t want to say it’s a sure bet because I don’t want to get in trouble, but it’s a more reliable entry point into the industry. I mean, before, I could get into the localization industry with a translation degree because there weren’t really any localization programs, but now, we’re almost saturating the market—I hope we’re not saturating the market because our program’s getting ready to expand yet again. Why hire a translation graduate when you can hire a localization graduate from University of Washington or from the East Coast or from the TLM program.

Michael The employers look very favorable. So, if the goal is to get a job after whatever you do, it’s a pretty good choice to go into one of these programs full-time.

Max It’s the easy route. The expensive route, but the easy route.

Jon But there are plenty of people, I have to say, that, you know, do roll their own. I’ve seen many who take just summer courses, or, you know, do an intro course here or there, then they go off and they start with…usually the, like, beginner job in localization is like QA tester.

Michael What are your views on requiring aptitude, a technology aptitude test, for people entering programs like this?

Max That’s a really good question and it’s a little bit sensitive. I’ve come up with some draft technical exams, but ultimately scrapped those plans because all we need in TLM is a willingness to learn technology and can we ask people to just look into their hearts and, you know, do I really want to learn technology? I think the biggest problem we have in TLM—well, not the biggest problem, but based on that issue, we have people who really want to do translation and interpretation but get into the TLM program—that’s their only way into this school for various reasons. And so, they don’t really want TLM in the first place and I haven’t found a way to get them in the right program. Because Chinese T&I is full, as you know [laughter].

Jan Yeah, Max, we were thinking about the same thing for the UW course. Requirements, should they do a technical test up front? I’m not so sure. What I really would like, and we don’t even have that, all students should at least speak another language. I get students who only speak English and that really complicates things if you…well, the only thing I can suggest them for the exercises is, well, machine translate it into another language, but if you don’t speak that the whole concept…I a little bit discourage you from going into that career if you don’t even speak another language or are aware of another language. And then, from a technical perspective, I think you should be open and really make clear these are the expectations for the course: you should be familiar with that and the PC, navigating here and there, and really give them a good idea what they are expecting. That could shy people away who shouldn’t probably take that class, or do some more research or take another class before that.

Michael This will be a challenge, hopefully, to answer in one sentence, but if you had to break down your curriculum and rebuild it, what would your number one focus related to technology be?

Jan Probably a combination of machine translation and CAT tools.

Michael Okay.

Jon I’m going to get all Zen on you: the technology of no technology. Meaning, I still think everything comes down to critical thinking, communication, all these kinds of fundamental skills. The more technology we get, the more students seem to assume they can Google everything. And I think that’s the problem. We need to get rid of…so, it was the exact opposite problem before. Like, if I went back to localization when I started, it was the opposite. We didn’t have the technology, so we were all craving for it. Now, it’s the opposite problem. We have so much information, so much data, so much technology, let’s learn to let—it’s like “Use the force,” right? It’s like Star Wars—let go of the technology and see where you can get with that.

Michael Yeah, I take that as a non-answer, but that’s okay.

[Laughter]

Max If I were starting from scratch, I think I would do a 50:50 mix of automation and strategy and really teach those in parallel.

Michael Awesome.

**End of conversation**