

# A little more knowledge...

Embarking on ITI's Professional Development Course was rewarding for **Isabel Hurtado de Mendoza**, who took many module ideas back to her work



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**W**hat did you learn at school today?' Didn't you always find it very difficult to reply to your mum when she asked this at the end of a hard day at school? Well, the same happens when trying to give an account of ITI's Professional Development Course. It is such a varied course that each person can get completely different benefits from it, depending on their profession, background, experience, age, computer literacy, etc. Moreover, depending on the stage in your career you are at, you will only be prepared to incorporate some of the things you learn, whereas this will be different when you review your notes in the future.

### Language skills

However, I have selected a few specifics that I have taken back to my work after each one of the PDC modules, as an illustration of what you might learn if you were to do the course next year. If you think it's too difficult for you, don't worry: we covered many other more basic topics. If, on the contrary, you think this is child's play, don't dismiss the course straight away: these weren't the most advanced subjects either.

Module 1 dealt with Language Skills. We discussed the different strategies available to keep up our source language and maintain our mother tongue, and how to develop our writing skills for particular purposes. I especially enjoyed a talk on translating high-end texts for publication, because it suits my

creativity. In this type of translation, used mainly for magazines and advertising, a lot of re-creation is needed: not only translating the text, but also restructuring it in order to make it flow and adapting it for the target audience, even improving the original if necessary. This sounded so interesting that I have already started trying to improve my writing with a view to specialising in this type of material.

The module on Subject Knowledge also helped me take the final steps towards specialising in one subject. This part of the course gave me an insight into what different specialisations would entail, and it helped me reject one of the areas I was considering specialising in. I realised that legal translation was something that would provide work, but it wouldn't be something that I enjoyed. At the same time, one of our speakers managed to give me the courage to specialise in an area I had been toying with for a while but always considered risky: art translation. In this module, we talked about how to deepen our subject knowledge, and I have already started putting into practice what I learned.

### Business-minded

Module 3 (Business Practice) was very useful and practical, because we discussed things such as VAT, accountancy, late payment, effective working and ITI's free legal helpline. I must say there is one thing I found very helpful, and I implemented it straight away in my working life: a job

management spreadsheet with columns for deadline, job reference, file name, word count, rate, total and time taken. I soon realised that this was going to help me immensely when it came to judging how long I would take to do a specific translation and how much work I could accept at any given time. Negotiating deadlines and payment is a lot faster now, and I am not prone to miscalculating as much as before!

When I attended the fourth module (IT and the internet), I thought it was going to be too basic for me, but I still found it varied and interesting. After having tried speech recognition with not very good results in the past, I learned a few tips in this module and, most importantly, I learned that practice makes perfect with this type of software. Since I heard good reviews from both tutors and participants, I decided to give it another go. Let's see if it's as useful as they claim.

### Personal Development

The Personal Development module proved very good for health awareness, so I now aim to do more exercise, stretch often, keep a good posture while typing, drink more water and take regular breaks. These are just a few of the problematic aspects of my working life that I managed to pinpoint during the course, and they will surely change in the future. However, I have learnt a basic way of identifying these areas easily whenever necessary. It consists of an exercise of mind-mapping, where a sheet of paper is divided into four sections that simultaneously affect me: spirit/mind, physical, professional and social. Now that I see how everything is interconnected, I will try never to neglect any of these areas again.

Choosing only one item from each one of the five two-day modules due to space constraints is extremely limiting. However, I hope it has given you an idea of what to expect from the course. In any case, you should remember that the course is designed for a wide range of participants, and this diversity makes it all the more worthwhile. Not only through classroom discussion but also through networking with other participants and tutors during the course and social events, you are bound to benefit immensely from the PDC!

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