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Professional portfolio in translator training: professional competence development and assessment

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ABSTRACT

Current European Higher Education Area demands for university degree programmes to focus attention on competence development have brought about the need for effective competence assessment tools. A professional portfolio is one of the tools that may be used by teachers to assess students' professional competences; besides, it may be used by students to search for a job once they graduate. This article analyses the use of professional portfolios in translator training. Details are given of the contents of the portfolio and the criteria used for assessing the outcome of activities designed to develop professional competence. The results of a survey conducted to find out the students' and teachers' opinions on the use of professional portfolios as a new assessment instrument are also shown. The findings show that students have difficulties in defining their professional profile; however the professional portfolio turns out to have a number of benefits, as it helps students to identify their own general competences and to set future goals, and to become familiar with the market rates and taxation.

Keywords: Professional portfolio; assessment; professional competence assessment; competence-based training; translator training

1. Introduction

One of the pillars of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) is training by competences. Competence-based training takes professional practice into account, with the competences to be acquired on a given programme being defined on the basis of a description of the corresponding professional profile (Galán-Mañas 2016). Competence-based training requires a realistic, continual and educational assessment in which the student plays an active role – in other words, they participate in the assessment process itself (self-asessment and co-assessment).

The field of professional translation and interpreting has started to use the professional portfolio as a tool for the capture of new clients or the search for employment. For example, at Proz, the world's largest translator network, translators

upload their project portfolio, consisting of sample translations from previous jobs, to illustrate the quality of their work (Calvo 2015).

In the professional field, the professional portfolio is described by Jato (1999) as a personal, documented and systematic dossier whose objective is to give personal recognition to the knowledge acquired through training and experience, for the purpose of their recognition in the professional world. Rodríguez Moreno (2006) adds that it also serves to assign value to the professional qualifications and adaptability of a worker in a job position, and that the experience included translates as job competences.

Since the professional portfolio is a tool used by translation and interpreting professionals to seek work, its use during training is recommended with a triple purpose: (1) it allows students to weigh up their competences and professional interests, (2) it provides a basic document for searching for work and (3) it acts as an instrument for assessing transversal and specific professional competences in the subject 'Curricular Work Placement'.

Used in this way the professional portfolio can be compared to the learning portfolio, which is one of the tools par excellence for assessing competences in the academic field and consists of a collection of the best samples of work carried out by the student, accompanied by the strategies employed to solve problems encountered in the course of the work. It demonstrates the student's level of competence achievement, and since the student is required to reflect on that achievement, it also becomes a means for monitoring and assessing their own learning (Galán-Mañas 2016). According to Paulson, Paulson, and Meyer (1991), Davies and Lemathieu (2003) and Driessen et al. (2005), a learning portfolio not only provides evidence of a student's performance, but it also, by way of critical analysis of its contents, reflects a student's personal and professional development.

In fact the learning portfolio has its origin in the professional portfolio or portfolio of competences, used especially by artists and architects to show samples of their work.

Whereas the use of the learning portfolio in translator training is increasingly extensive (Johnson 2003; Colina 2003; Rojas 2004; Kelly 2005; Haiyan 2006; Rotheneder 2007; Hurtado 2007, 2008, 2015; Rico 2010; Fernández Polo and Cal 2011; Fadeeva 2011; Calvo 2015; Galán-Mañas and Hurtado Albir 2015; Galán-Mañas 2009 and 2016; Hurtado and Olalla 2016), for the use of the professional portfolio in translator training we are only aware of our own work (Galán-Mañas 2014), in which an outline of the professional portfolio contents was provided.

The aim of this article is to analyse the professional portfolio as a tool for translator training assessment. We show how the professional portfolio has been used to evaluate the development of professional competence in students of the work placement subject at the Faculty of Translation and Interpreting of the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona.

2. Using professional portfolios for assessing competence in trainee translators

The professional portfolio was designed as a tool for formative and summative assessment for the work placement subject of the Bachelor's degree in Translation and Interpreting at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona.

It forms part of a tutorial action plan for professionalization and entry into the labour market by translation and interpreting graduates (cf. Galán-Mañas 2017) implemented at the Faculty of Translation and Interpreting of the UAB.

The aims of the tutorial action plan are: 1) find out about professional opportunities and the possible tasks that may be commissioned to translators and interpreters, 2) understand the competences of the profession, 3) identify professional interests, 4) draw up a personal itinerary of professional interests, training and competences, 5) identify individual employment options, 6) become familiar with job search techniques: CV, interviews, and 7) draw up an active job search plan.

The activities that make up the plan are: talks, workshops, visits to organisations, personal consultancy, final degree projects, practical classes included in the syllabus, competence testing and curricular work placements. The plan has to operate at zero cost as a result of a lack of economic resources.

2.1. Curricular work placements

The curricular work placements module forms part of the Bachelor's degree course in translation and interpreting. It is an optional module in the fourth year and counts for 6 ECTS credits. According to the guidelines issued by the Faculty's Academic Committee, the purpose of this module is to allow students to apply and complement the competences acquired during their academic training in relation to the world of translation and interpreting, promoting the acquisition of competences that will prepare them for professional practice, increase their employability and hone their entrepreneurship skills.

Students taking this subject already have prior knowledge related to the profession which they have acquired in the different subjects of the degree course:

- Employability of translators and interpreters
- Aspects of professional ethics
- The translation and interpreting labour market: translation and interpreting services and related tasks
- Professional management: rates, drawing up estimates, invoicing and taxation
- Online associations and communities for professional translators and interpreters

The competences that students are required to achieve in this subject are:

(1) Strategic, autonomous and continuous learning.
(2) Command of the professional aspects of interpreting.
(3) Command of the professional aspects of translation.
(4) Critical reasoning.
(5) Team working.

The learning objectives of curricular work placements are:

(1) Promote initial contact between students and the labour market.
(2) Familiarise students with the work flow in a company or translation agency. Encourage the development of specific competences and transversal competences.
(3) Understand which competences will be required in the future.

The average number of students registered for this subject is 92 per academic year which represents 30% of all students registered on the fourth year of the degree course, although in recent years there has been a drop in the number of registered students of between 5% and 10%, which could be explained by the attractive offer of optional subjects and minors available in the syllabus. In any case, this drop in registrations is significant considering the importance of curricular work placements as an initial contact with the market for translation and interpreting and, as Valero (2003) points out, for some companies they represent a frequent source of potential candidates for future jobs.

Previously, assessment of the work placement consisted of 50% of the grade given by the tutor at the company where the student was placed, and the other 50% given by the academic tutor at the university. The problem with this assessment was that the academic tutor and the student had practically no contact; this meant that the grading was subjective since in most cases there were no documents available as samples of the students' work for questions of confidentiality.

To reduce the subjectivity of the academic tutor's assessment, the professional portfolio was introduced as a tool for assessment, and the academic tutor awarded 30% of the grade for the subject based exclusively on the professional portfolio, while the tutor at the company awarded 70% of the grade based on the student's performance during the placement.

2.2. Contents of the students' professional portfolios

The structure of the professional portfolio, as set out on the course guide, was as follows:

(1) Cover letter
(2) CV
(3) Samples of translations, interpreting, transcription, revision, etc.
(4) Rates

The aim of these contents was that students could have a useful document available for searching for work, independent of their language combination and specialist areas, and with enough information about the level attained according to the learning outcomes (cf. 4).

To guarantee that the different tasks included in the portfolio satisfied the assessment requirements, students were provided with a rubric describing the assessment

criteria, which also served as a tool for self-assessment during the preparation of the portfolio (Appendix 1).

More detailed information about each of the elements contained in the portfolio is provided in the following sections.

2.2.1. Cover letter

The purpose of the cover letter is to gain the reader's attention – in other words, the attention of a potential client or employer. Students had to write a model letter as if it were an unsolicited candidacy for work, indicating the reason for their interest in the fictitious (or real) job. The letter had to promote the student's individual competences and personal qualities.

Before writing the letter, students had to take an employment interests test to discern the kind of work that best suited their personality and competences.

A set of recommendations was given for the structure of the letter:

- Greeting
- Introduction. Emphasis was placed on the objective of the letter as a means of capturing the reader's attention, in other words, the attention of the company being contacted.
- Main body. In this part of the letter students ha to briefly describe their strengths and outline the competences demanded by the market which they consider they are best prepared for. To help them carry out this difficult self-analysis they were recommended to take: (1) an employment interests test to discern the kind of work that best suited their personality and competences and (2) a competences test such as *competencies.clau* or the PAPI. The former is a test available to the public from Barcelona City Council. It evaluates 21 competences: initiative, aspiring to excellence, planning and organisation, importance of order and quality, people management, leadership, team working and cooperation, self-confidence, self-control, commitment to the company, flexibility and management of change, etc. The PAPI is available at Treball Campus, the university's employment agency, and collects information on leadership, planning and autonomy, capacity for adaptation and perseverance, search for excellence, team working, pace of work and decision-making, self-control, search for success.
- Interview request. In this part students must explore the possibility of visiting the company in order to give further details of their CV. They should also indicate that they will be making a follow-up phone call.
- Sign off.

The general characteristics offered for writing the cover letter were that it should be organised in brief sentences without using an overly effusive tone, exaggerating expressions of gratitude or making spelling mistakes.

The cover letter enabled the assessment of competences 1, 2 or 3, 4, and 5 for the subject taking into account the level of critical analysis in relation to the personal competences indicated in the letter and the suitability of the description of competences, as well as the accuracy of the writing and the format of the letter.

2.2.2. Curriculum Vitae

With regard to the CV emphasis was on the importance of detailing the services offered and the languages or language combinations for those services, and a possible structure was offered:

- Personal information: full name, postal address, e-mail address, date of birth (never age as this becomes quickly outdated), nationality (only if bilingual, for example if one parent is foreign or because the student was born or has lived abroad, or to seek work abroad).
- Professional profile. In this section students had to specify the services that they could offer as well as the language combinations. For example, legal translation x → y; liaison interpreting x ↔ y; simultaneous interpreting x → y; text revision x, y, etc.; project management, etc.
- Professional experience, indicating the organisation, start and end dates, tasks carried out in each job. Students with sufficient experience could divide this into thematic groups: general translation, legal translation, scientific-technical translation, liaison interpreting, text revision, etc.
- Academic training, organised from most to least recent and specifying any qualifications obtained, the centre, start and end dates (or whether the training is ongoing).
- Complementary training. This section had to include courses taken in relation to the field of work, specified as follows: course, seminar, workshop; organising body and duration (hours, days, years, etc.).
- Periods spent abroad (country, city and duration).
- Other information of interest. In this section students had to include information that they could not include in previous sections: geographical mobility, interests, etc. For example, having been a leisure time monitor would demonstrate the activation of certain competences: organisation, leadership, team working, etc.

Competences 1, 2, 3 and 4 were assessed taking into account the presentation of information. Special emphasis was given to the coherence of the professional profile with the description of competences set out in the professional letter.

2.2.3. Samples of translations, works of interpreting, transcriptions, revisions, etc.

In this section, students had to select some of the best work they had produced during the work placement, such as translations, interpreting work, revisions of text, etc., to demonstrate their competence in the services offered in their CV. There was no limit to

the quantity of samples that could be included (translations, interpreting, transcriptions, revisions, etc.). Each sample had to be between 150 and 300 words long and could be in a variety of formats: audio to demonstrate interpreting, video to demonstrate an audio visual translation task, etc.

Students were reminded that professional documents or those produced within the work placement programme were probably confidential and so they should obtain written authorisation to be able to include them in the professional portfolio. Where authorisation from the company was not forthcoming, they could include parts of work carried out professionally, in class or voluntarily.

For every sample they included, they had to describe the strategies undertaken to solve the problems of translation/interpreting that they encountered.

The fact of having to include different pieces of work and describe the problems encountered and the strategies employed to solve them involved the activation of competences 1, 2, 3 and 4. The assessment took into account the range of samples presented as well as the descriptions of the strategies used to solve problems encountered in each.

2.2.4. Rates

In this section students had to draw up a table of rates for all the services that they had indicated in their professional CV. If services with more than one language combination were offered, then they had to specify the rate for each, as well as rates for direct clients or agencies.

Table 2. Rates.

	Direct client		Agency	
	English-Spanish	Chinese-Spanish	English-Spanish	Chinese-Spanish
General translation	€x /word			
Technical translation				
etc.				

This section was included in the portfolio because of the importance given to students reflecting on their rates. It was a way to ensure that they had thought about prices and when they receive their first commissions they are able to provide an estimate and decide whether what they are being offered by the market is reasonable or not. We insisted that this section was personal and should not be included in the portfolio when presenting it to a possible employer. With respect to current Spanish legislation, lists of rates were not provided during training sessions, but students did receive information on other aspects which could be useful as a starting point when thinking about prices so that they could draw up their own table of rates.

In the assessment of competences 1, 2, 3 and 4 the appropriateness of the rates was matched to the professional profile indicated in the CV and their adaptation to the reality of the market for translation and interpreting.

3. Contents assessment

The professional portfolio is a tool that can be used for both formative and summative assessment. Regardless of the fact that it is the academic tutor who carries out the final (summative) assessment of the portfolio, throughout the semester different training sessions were organised by the vice-dean for professionalization at the faculty (cf. 3.1) which were useful for the formative assessment.

3.1. When to assess

The professional portfolio was submitted at the end of the semester but nevertheless throughout the semester several training activities and formative assessment activities took place.

In week two of the 15 that make up the academic semester, a two-hour training workshop took place covering the basic points to bear in mind in the production of the portfolio. It should be remembered that the students had received the rubric when they registered, and so this session aimed to resolve specific questions that the students had.

In week 8 a four-hour workshop was offered to look at the students' CVs and cover letters. For this session students had to bring their CVs and cover letters in draft format. In small working groups the students co-assessed each other's work. The CVs and cover letters were also reviewed by the session trainer with the aim of eliciting further information from the students which could be useful for their CVs and making comments to the whole group on points which were relevant to all the students.

In week 10 a four-hour workshop was organised to cover the following topics: the job interview, the tax situation for translators and interpreters, and the creation of a professional or business project. The workshop covered aspects which could be common for the CV, the cover letter and for a job interview. It also helped students to reflect on whether they wanted to present their professional portfolio with a view to becoming salaried employees or liberal professionals. In the latter case they were recommended to make a website with details of their services instead of writing a CV.

There was also a two-hour training session for lecturers that were academic tutors to outline the nature of the content of the portfolio and the use of the assessment rubric.

Some 70% of students attended the training sessions, while the percentage for academic tutors was just 8%.

3.2. Assessment criteria

As commented in section 2.1 of this article, the final grade for the professional portfolio represented 30% of the total for the work placement as a whole. The person responsible for the grade was the academic tutor.

To make sure that students were aware of exactly what was expected of them in terms of the content of the portfolio and the way in which it would be assessed, they were provided with a rubric with a description of all the assessment criteria (cf. Appendix 1). This rubric contained a row for each of the content elements of the portfolio plus a row with the criteria for the assessment of the organisation and design of the portfolio, with four levels of attainment divided into columns.

This design was chosen because the description of the results of a task, in terms of different levels of achievement, as suggested by Fernández March (2010, 24), stimulates the self-regulation of the students.

The rubric also enabled the academic tutors to assess the work of the students objectively, without the need for extra time for correction. An online form was made available to the tutors, who simply had to enter the mark for each of the elements of content in accordance with the following scale:
- Cover letter: 0 to 2 points
- CV: 0 to 3 points
- Samples of translations, interpreting, etc.: 0 to 2 points
- Rates: 0 to 1.5 points
- Organisation and design: 0 to 1.5 points

Each element of the content had to be assessed using the points scale. Any element missing from the portfolio meant that assessment could not take place, as the tool only made sense if taken as a whole.

4. Findings

4.1. Map of assessed competences

One of the tools to ensure that the competences planned in the syllabus are worked on adequately in a subject is the competence map (Galán-Mañas 2016b). A competence map, according to García San Pedro and Gairín (2011), is a tool that can serve to guarantee the pathway of competences and allows the extent and times at which they are developed to be observed, as well as the skill gaps, overlaps and strengths.

Table 2 shows the competence map in the professional portfolio. The columns indicate the different content and the rows show the specific competences for the module (cf. 2.1). The shaded area shows the competences that were subject to formative assessment.

Competences (1) strategic, autonomous and continuous learning, (2) command of the professional aspects of interpreting, (3) command of the professional aspects of translation, (4) critical reasoning were assessed together with all the content both

formatively and summatively. Competence (5), team working, was assessed using the cover letter and the CV, and only as a formative assessment.

It is important to remember that the professional portfolio only represented part of the module assessment and that all the competences were also assessed during the period of the placement.

### 4.2. Evaluation of the professional portfolio as an assessment tool by students

On completion of the semester-long curricular work placement students were asked to reply to an online survey and give their opinion about the usefulness of the professional portfolio (1 = totally disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neither agree nor disagree, 4 = agree or 5 = totally agree). A total of 63.5% of student registered for the subject replied to the survey.

On completion of the semester-long work placement students were asked to reply to an online survey and give their opinion about the usefulness of the professional portfolio (1= totally disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neither agree nor disagree, 4=agree or 5=totally agree). A total of 63.5% of student registered for the subject replied to the survey.

Q1. The professional portfolio will be useful to look for a job.

61.5% of all students who replied to the survey considered that the portfolio would be useful to look for a job at level 4=agree or 5=totally agree, while 30.77% gave a score of 3=neither agree nor disagree and 7.6% a score of 2=disagree (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Usefulness of the professional portfolio.
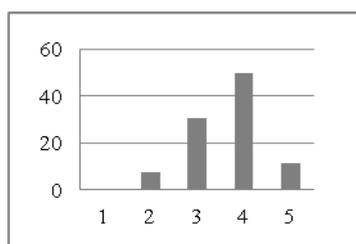
Q2. The professional portfolio has helped me to reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of my professional skills.

54.8% agreed or totally agreed that the professional portfolio had helped them to reflect on their strengths and weaknesses, 32.5% neither agreed nor disagreed and just 12% disagreed (see Figure 2). We think the high percentage of students who did not agree one way or the other, giving a score of 3, is due to the difficulty they have reflecting on their own competences.

Figure 2. Usefulness of reflection on strengths and weaknesses.
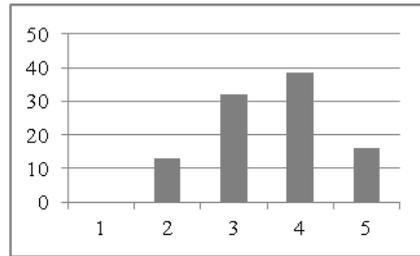
Q3. *The instructions I received to prepare my portfolio were clear.*
77.7% of students agreed or totally agreed that the instructions were clear, and 22.2% neither agreed nor disagreed (see Figure 3).

Figure 3. Clarity of the instructions.
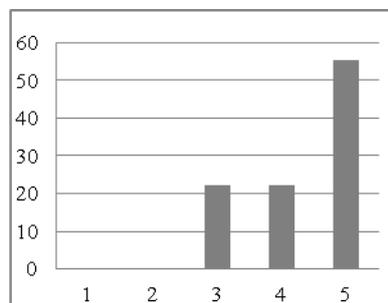
Q4. *The training I received to prepare my portfolio was enough.*

In terms of the amount of training received student replies were more varied: 64.38% agreed or totally agreed, 14.29% neither agreed nor disagreed, 17.86% disagreed and 3.57% totally disagreed (see figure 4).

These results make it necessary to reconsider the duration of the training.

Figure 4. Duration of the training.
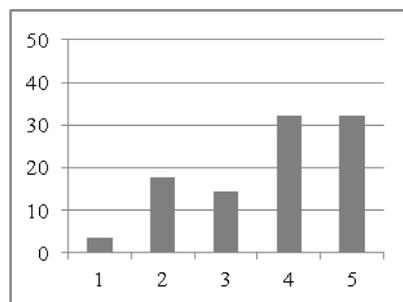
Q5. *During the preparation of my portfolio I have found the following problems.*

This was an open answer question. Most students commented that what they had found hardest was to define their professional profile, followed by the cover letter, rates and the selection of work samples.

Many students took advantage of this space to comment that their academic tutor had not been involved in the assessment of the professional portfolio and had not given them feedback to improve it.

Q6. To prepare the portfolio I spent.

As figure 5 shows, most students spent an average of 9 hours preparing their portfolio.

Figure 5. Preparation time.	
3.57%	0-3 hours
14.29%	3-6 hours
32.14%	6-9 hours
32.14%	9-12 hours
10.71%	12-15 hours
7.14%	More than 15 hours

Q7. The professional portfolio contributes to a more objective assessment of my work placement by my academic tutor.

Whereas 43% replied that the portfolio contributed to a more objective assessment of the placement, 39.3% neither agreed nor disagreed, and 14% disagreed (see Figure 6). We think that this very high percentage of students who neither agreed nor disagreed can be explained by the fact that they were unaware of the subjective weighting of the previous method of assessment.

Figure 6. Objectivity of the assessment.
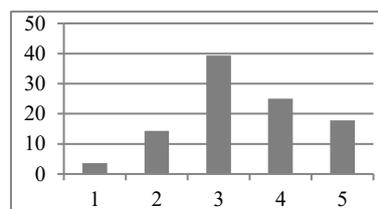
Q8. My academic tutor gave comments on how to improve my portfolio.

The replies to this question are surprising in their polarity: 40% received feedback from their tutor on how to improve the portfolio, while 35.7% did not receive any feedback at all (see Figure 7). This indicates that there were tutors who were aware of this tool and capable of giving feedback to improve it, possibly through being more involved with the training and assessment of the student, while others were either unaware of the tool (and did not consult the rubric provided) or carried out a superficial assessment.

Figure 7. Feedback from the academic tutor.
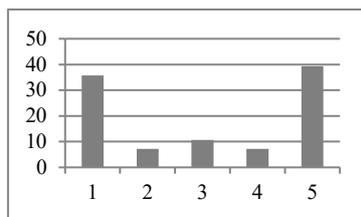
Q9. I would eliminate the following content from the professional portfolio.

10.34% of respondents said they would eliminate the cover letter; only 3.5% would eliminate the CV; 6.9% the list of rates; 10.34% the work samples, and 68.97% would not eliminate any of the content.

Q10. It is positive to include the professional portfolio as an assessment tool for my professional work placement.

Practically all students (86%) saw the inclusion of the portfolio in their placement assessment as being a good thing.

Q11. Please add any other comments about the professional portfolio.

Most of the comments students made in this section were related to the degree of correction by the tutor. There were complaints of a lack of specific comments to improve their portfolio.

They also mentioned the usefulness of the training sessions and two students suggested that the content of the portfolio could be more flexible, specifically suggesting the inclusion of other documents. However, they did not specify what those documents could be.

After analysing the students' opinions, it is observed that most of them considered that the portfolio could be useful for finding a job, as well as for reflecting on their competences, and therefore deemed it positive to include it as an assessment tool in the curricular work placement module.

Although the training was considered sufficient by the majority of students, the results show that it would be advisable to complement it with individual guidance. This guidance should not only focus on the portfolio development but also on vocational perspectives, thus helping students identify their professional interests and their professional competences, as well as the professional services they can offer in their CVs, which were the aspects in which students found more difficulty.

It would also be advisable that academic tutors should not only give students a grade for the portfolio, but should also provide feedback and suggestions of how to improve it. Before that, however, the faculty should ensure that tutors have the necessary skills to conduct this type of guidance, and if not train them. In fact, the faculty should find mechanisms to check that all academic tutors give sufficient feedback to students.

4.3. Evaluation of the professional portfolio as a tool for assessment by students

Academic tutors were also given a survey to reply to on the portfolio. A total of 15 replies were received representing 18.75% of all tutors.

Q1. The instructions I received to assess the professional portfolio were clear.
37.5% of tutors replied that the instructions they had received for assessing the portfolio had been very useful, while 25% considered them quite useful and another 25% just useful (see Figure 8). Surprisingly for 12.5% of tutors the instructions were not at all clear. This could be due to the fact that they had not attended the training sessions, as well as offering evidence that the exhaustiveness of the instructions needs to be reviewed.

Figure 8. Clarity of the assessment instructions.
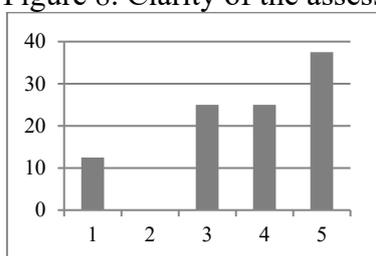
Q2. The portfolio contributes to a more objective assessment by the university tutor.
50% of tutors gave a score of 3 out of 5 with 1= very little and 5= a lot. Another 24% gave a score of 4, equivalent to quite useful and 17% considered it very useful (see Figure 9). The high number of tutors giving a score of 3 was surprising, but could be explained by the fact that they had also assessed the placements in the previous system objectively, despite not being provided with any rubric.

Figure 9. Assessment objectivity.
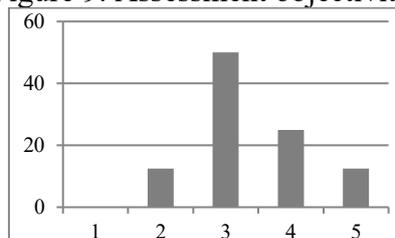
Q3. To assess the portfolio I spent.
On average, tutors spent between one and two hours assessing the professional portfolio (see Figure 10). Tutoring of the placement counts for 2.5 hours in the teaching plan.
Figure 10. Time spent on the assessment.

25%	0 - 1 hour
50%	1 - 2 hours
25%	2 - 3 hours

Q4. After correcting the portfolio I sent some feedback to the student.
62% recognised that they had not sent any feedback to the student after assessment of the portfolio. We there think that the rubric compensates for (although only partially) the lack of feedback by the tutor.

Q5. I think it is good for students to build their professional portfolio.
All tutors who replied to the survey thought that it was beneficial to student to create a professional portfolio.

Q6. Before being an academic tutor I already knew what a professional portfolio was.
Only 13% were previously aware of the professional portfolio. The remaining 87% did not know what it was.

Q7. Add here any suggestions or comments
One tutor noted that "it is not bad for the students to create a portfolio; however, it should form part of the assessment of the placement, where students should be putting into practice the competences they have acquired during the degree course".

Another tutor commented that "the CV should include a section on the level of competence in the use of translation programs (subtitling, localization, editing, etc.)".

After examining the academic tutors' opinions, it can be observed that most of them did not know what a professional portfolio was. Although it was deemed an important tool by most of them, it appears contradictory that they admit to not having given enough feedback to students on how to improve their portfolio. As mentioned in Section 4.2 above, the faculty should observe that all academic tutors have the necessary skills to conduct the tutoring, so they can give vocational guidance and provide more useful feedback on the portfolio.

5. Conclusions

The use of the professional portfolio in translator training has several advantages for the student as well as being an assessment tool for the tutor.

It promotes self-knowledge: students have to take a test of employment interests and competences (cover letter), as well as being aware of the professional services they can offer and the language combinations they can use (CV). The tool allows them to become familiar with job search tools, such as the professional portfolio as a whole, and the cover letter and CV.

Since students have to consult translators' and translation agencies' web pages, as well as translation portals, to find out which rates apply for different language combinations and tasks, they obtain an overview of the range of professional tasks offered in the translation and interpreting market and the range of rates which they could apply for providing professional services in the future.

In the same way as the learning portfolio (Galán-Mañas 2016a), the professional portfolio allows students to compile samples of their achievements and competences in different pieces of work. These tasks have an executive function as students have to select and apply different strategies in each case.

The portfolio encourages students to draw up a personal and professional project thanks to the knowledge they acquire about themselves and about the market. It serves as a basic document and a starting point that can be adapted and personalised as their

individual needs and interests, as well as their personal and professional career path, develop according to the profile of the potential employer they are addressing.

The professional portfolio also offers some advantages as an assessment tool. It is useful for: formative and summative assessment; for self- assessment, thanks to the rubric and the content of the portfolio itself – cover letter, CV and selection of work samples; and for co-assessment in training sessions. In addition, the organisation of different training sessions gives students time to self-regulate.

The portfolio serves as a diagnostic tool as it offers information about the degree of (perception in the) acquisition of transversal and specific competences acquired by the student. Similarly, it is a valuable source of information not just in terms of the product but also the process (cover letter and selection of work samples).

On the other hand, the rubric promotes a more objective assessment since the acadèmic tutors are also provided with the description of content and assessment criteria.

However, there are some disadvantages of the portfolio. Students find it difficult to reflect on their own transversal competences, professional interests and the services they can offer to guarantee a quality service. Also, a high percentage of the students are not sure which line of specialisation they want to follow. Furthermore, production of the portfolio increases the students' workload considerably. Promoting better use of the rubric in order to know what is expected of each task would possibly reduce the time taken on the production of the portfolio and make the task more efficient.

The faculty should draw up an agreement with some of the institutions that offer competence and professional interest tests so that all students take the same tests, as we do not currently have a record of who has taken the tests. Also, if we had individual anonymous results for the tests we could organise specific workshops on certain competences that are valued in the market where general gaps are detected.

The professional portfolio only makes sense within the whole tutorial action plan for professionalization and entry into the labour market. Counting on the support of experts in careers guidance with a complete understanding of the particular nature of the area of translation and interpreting would be ideal. However, this would be very costly, and at the moment, even the continuation of the plan cannot be guaranteed as it needs to operate at zero cost.

The university should also review the degree of involvement of the academic tutors in the assessment of the portfolio, since this is the principal complaint by students and one which is recognised by 50% of the tutors.

This paper has offered some steps to take in using the professional portfolio in competence-based training of translators. However, further research into the use of the portfolio in other educational contexts is necessary as well as its effectiveness in the entry of students in possession of a professional portfolio in the labour market. The professional portfolio should be compared with other tools andmethods to identify its advantages and disadvantages in the assessment of professional competences. Finally, the extent to which employers take the professional portfolio into account in their recruitment processes should be studied.

Notes

1. https://treball.barcelonactiva.cat/porta22/cat/altres/diccionari.jsp.
2. http://psychology.wikia.com/wiki/Personality_and_Preference_Inventory.

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Appendix 1. Rubric for the assessment of the professional portfolio.

CONTENT	FAIL	PASS (C)	GOOD (B)	EXCELLENT(A)
Cover letter	▪ *The cover letter is not properly structured. The differences between the different parts are not clearly marked: greeting, introduction, request for interview and signing off.* ▪ *The main body of the letter describes the student's strengths and competences (transversal and specific) too generally.* ▪ *The description of the strengths and weaknesses does not manage to describe the level of achievement of professional competence for a possible recruitment process.* ▪ *The cover letter is poorly written and/or contains 3 or more grammatical errors.*	▪ *The cover letter is not properly structured. The differences between the different parts are not clearly marked: greeting, introduction, request for interview and signing off.* ▪ *The main body of the letter vaguely sets out the strengths and competences (transversal and specific) that the student has.* ▪ *The description of strengths and weaknesses is rather poor and achieves an average description of the level of achievement of professional competence for a possible recruitment process.* ▪ *There are no serious writing errors but there are 2 grammatical errors.*	▪ *The cover letter is well structured. Each of the sections is clearly differentiated: greeting, introduction, request for interview and signing off.* ▪ *The main body of the letter sets out the strengths and weaknesses very generally and specifies the competences (transversal and specific) that the student has.* ▪ *The strengths and weaknesses are described such that the student is able to present their general level of achievement of professional competence for a possible recruitment process.* ▪ *The cover letter is well written but contains 1 grammatical error.*	▪ *The cover letter is well structured. Each of the sections is clearly differentiated: greeting, introduction, request for interview and signing off.* ▪ *The main body of the letter sets out the strengths and weaknesses and specifies the competences (transversal and specific) that the student has.* ▪ *The strengths and weaknesses are described such that the student is able to present a clear and exhaustive statement of their level of achievement of professional competence for a possible recruitment process.* ▪ *The cover letter is well written and there are no grammatical errors.*
	0 – 0.49	*0.5 – 0.99*	*1 – 1.49*	*1.5 - 2*
CV	▪ *The CV is badly set out and does not follow the basic sections suggested in this document.* ▪ *The professional profile offered does not correspond to the competences described in the cover letter.* ▪ *It contains 3 or more grammatical errors.*	▪ *The CV is set out in the following sections: personal details, professional profile and academic information but is not presented in a logical order.* ▪ *The professional profile is somewhat coherent with the competences described in the cover letter.* ▪ *There are 2 grammatical errors.*	▪ *The CV is structured to include the following parts: personal details, professional profile and academic information. Where appropriate it also includes sections of professional experience, complementary training and other information of interest.* ▪ *The professional profile presented is fairly coherent with the*	▪ *The CV is structured to include the following parts: personal details, professional profile and academic information, professional experience, complementary training and other information of interest.* ▪ *The professional profile presented is coherent with the competences described in the cover letter.*

	▪ The design is not consistent for all the sections.	▪ The design and layout of the CV is quite poor (e.g. the letter type and size is not consistent in all sections).	competences described in the cover letter. ▪ There is 1 grammatical error. ▪ The design of the CV is good but there are some errors of layout or proofreading (between 2 and 3).	▪ There are no grammatical errors. ▪ The design of the CV is good, there is no incoherence in format between the different sections. The letter type and size is coherent in all the titles and in the main body of the text.
	0 – 0.74	*0.75 – 1.49*	*1.5 – 2.24*	*2.25 - 3*
Samples of translation, interpreting tasks, etc.	▪ The student has presented a maximum of two samples of translations or other work carried out during the placement. ▪ There is no critical analysis of how problems of translation and/or interpreting were solved. ▪ It contains 3 or more grammatical errors.	▪ The student presented at least three samples of translation, interpreting or other work carried out during the placement. ▪ There is no critical analysis of how problems of translation and/or interpreting were solved. ▪ It contains 2 grammatical errors.	▪ The student presented at least four samples of translation, interpreting or other work carried out during the placement, mainly illustrating different kinds of problems. ▪ There is a brief critical analysis of how the problems of translation and interpreting encountered were solved. ▪ There is 1 grammatical error.	▪ The student presented at least five samples of translation, interpreting or other work carried out during the placement, all of them illustrating different kinds of problems. ▪ There is a critical analysis of how the problems of translation and interpreting encountered were solved. ▪ There are no grammatical errors.
	0 – 0.49	*0.5 – 0.99*	*1 – 1.49*	*1.5 - 2*
Rates	▪ There is no table with the range of rates for the services and language combinations offered in the professional profile on the CV, or the table is incomplete (more than 5 fields missing) and does not correspond to the rates offered in the market.	▪ The table of rates ranges is presented for some of the professional profiles and language combinations offered in the professional profile on the CV. Some of the fields (maximum 5) in the table are incomplete or have little correspondence with the rates offered in the market.	▪ The table of rates ranges is presented for some of the professional profiles and language combinations offered in the professional profile on the CV. Some of the fields (maximum 3) in the table are incomplete or have little correspondence with the rates offered in the market.	The complete table of rates ranges is presented for all of the professional profiles and language combinations offered in the professional profile on the CV. All the fields are complete and correspond to real rates applied in the market.
	0 – 0.36	*0.37 – 0.74*	*0.75 – 1.12*	*1.13 – 1.5*
Organisation and design	▪ The content of the professional portfolio is disorganised and it is difficult to find all the different parts. ▪ There are more than six errors in the layout: margins, double	▪ The content of the professional portfolio is well organised. ▪ The use of different fonts, colours and text and page layout, margins, etc. is present but does not enhance the different content sufficiently.	▪ The content of the professional portfolio is well organised. ▪ The use of different fonts, colours and text and page layout, margins, etc. facilitates reading.	▪ The content of the professional portfolio is well organised. ▪ The presentation of the professional portfolio is in a webpage or blog format for greater visibility.

spaces between words, title and subtitle formats. ▪ *There is no use of different fonts, colours, page layout, etc. to enhance the presentation of the professional portfolio.*			▪ *The use of different fonts, colours and text and page layout, margins, etc. facilitates reading.*
0 – 0.36	*0.37 – 0.74*	*0.75 – 1.12*	*1.13 – 1.5*