



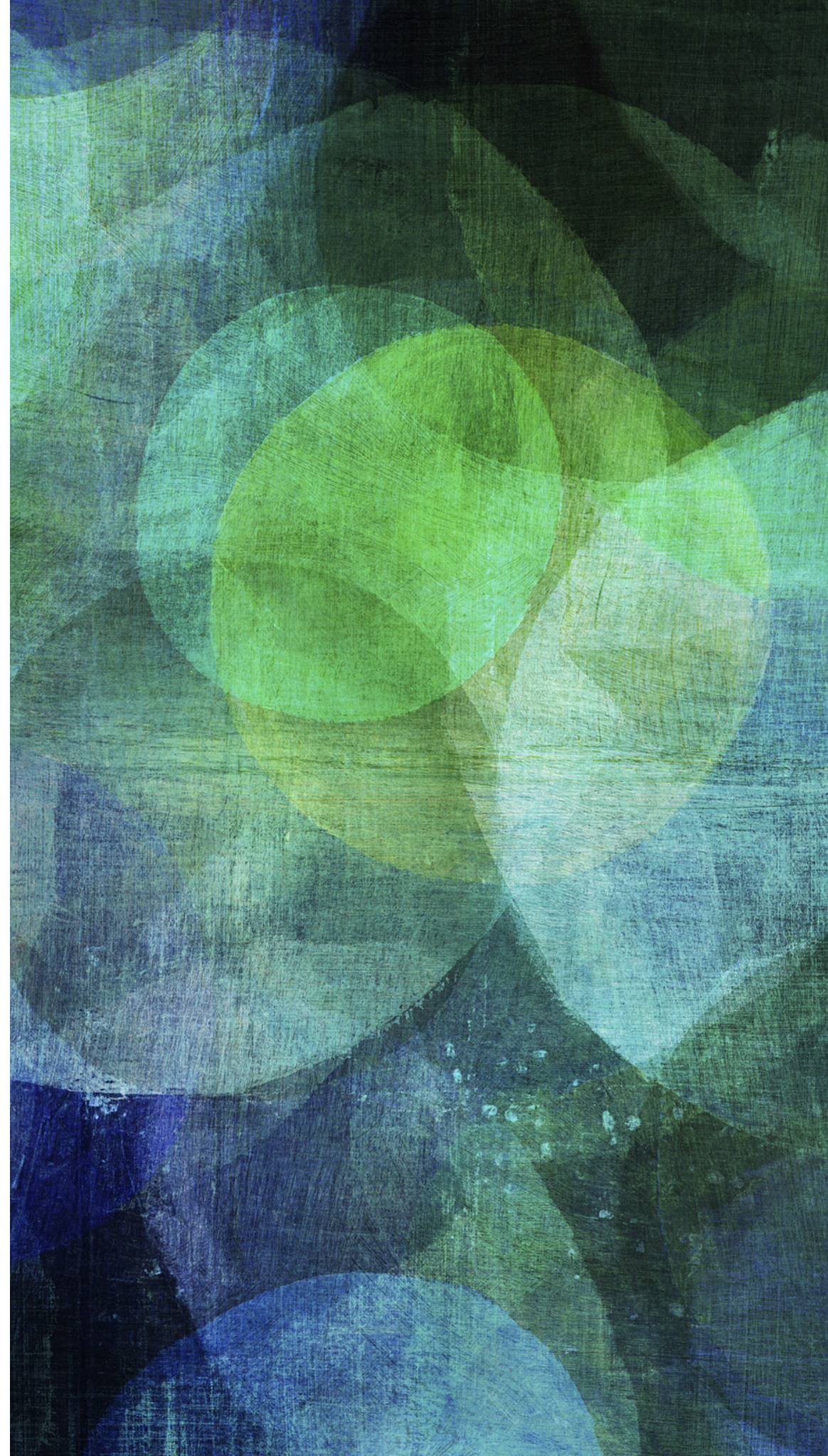
THE DARK SIDE OF EMPLOYABILITY IN TRANSLATOR AND INTERPRETER TRAINING: DO ETHICS MATTER?

Christian Olalla-Soler
didTRAD, 7/7/2016

THINGS I ASK TO MYSELF

- Work ethics of language services providers and NGOs have to be taken into consideration when collaborating with these entities?
- Should translator and interpreter trainers collaborate with language services providers rather than with translators' and interpreters' associations?
- Are language services providers a real solution to employability?
- Who are the real LSPs?
- Are we too focused on the intermediaries?

DOES EMPLOYABILITY MATTER?



DOES EMPLOYABILITY MATTER?

- Yes it does. A lot.
- It is important for students to gain experience.

Adoption of a system of easily readable and comparable degrees, also through the implementation of the Diploma Supplement, in order **to promote European citizens employability** and the international competitiveness of the European higher education system.

Bologna Declaration, 1999

Ministers expressed their appreciation of the contributions toward developing study programmes combining academic quality with **relevance to lasting employability** and called for a continued proactive role of higher education institutions.

Prague Communiqué, 2001

DOES EMPLOYABILITY MATTER?

They appeal to institutions and employers to make full use of the Diploma Supplement, so as to take advantage of the improved transparency and flexibility of the higher education degree systems, **for fostering employability and facilitating academic recognition for further studies.**

Berlin Communiqué, 2003

Furthermore, there is a need for greater dialogue, involving Governments, institutions and social partners, **to increase the employability of graduates with bachelor qualifications, including in appropriate posts within the public service.**

Bergen Communiqué, 2005

DOES EMPLOYABILITY MATTER?

Employability

3.5 Following up on the introduction of the three-cycle degree system, we ask BFUG to consider in more detail **how to improve employability in relation to each of these cycles as well as in the context of lifelong learning**. This will involve the responsibilities of all stakeholders. Governments and HEIs will need **to communicate more with employers and other stakeholders on the rationale for their reforms**. We will work, as appropriate, within our governments to **ensure that employment and career structures within the public service are fully compatible with the new degree system**. We urge institutions to **further develop partnerships and cooperation with employers** in the ongoing process of curriculum innovation based on learning outcomes.

London Communiqué, 2007

DOES EMPLOYABILITY MATTER?

Employability

13. With labour markets increasingly relying on higher skill levels and transversal competences, higher education should equip students with the advanced knowledge, skills and competences they need throughout their professional lives. **Employability empowers the individual to fully seize the opportunities in changing labour markets.** We aim at raising initial qualifications as well as maintaining and renewing a skilled workforce through close cooperation between governments, higher education institutions, social partners and students. **This will allow institutions to be more responsive to employers needs and employers to better understand the educational perspective.** Higher education institutions, together with governments, government agencies and employers, shall improve the provision, accessibility and quality of their careers and employment related guidance services to students and alumni. **We encourage work placements embedded in study programmes as well as on-the-job learning.**

Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve Communiqué, 2009

THE LINK BETWEEN UNIVERSITY AND EMPLOYABILITY

- Practicum programs
- Pro-bono work
- Students gain experience.
- Students get an overview of the translation market and what is expected from them.

THE LINK BETWEEN UNIVERSITY AND EMPLOYABILITY – PRACTICUM PROGRAMS

Macro-programs

EMT – ELIA/ EUATC/ GALA

It aims to set standards for relevant translation education, thereby meeting an increased demand for multilingual services on all levels that require a wider and more dynamic set of translation skills than what is often perceived by the general public. In order to improve students' employability as well as their knowledge of the professional language service industry, the EMT encourages master's students to absolve work placements with translation companies all over Europe.

<https://www.euatc.org/news/item/210-work-placements-in-the-language-industry>

THE LINK BETWEEN UNIVERSITY AND EMPLOYABILITY – PRACTICUM PROGRAMS

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Macro-programs

EGPS

Objectives:

- To develop a curriculum model for Translation Studies Master's programmes which prepares students for employment
- To establish occupational standards for European translation students on placement
- To embed a practical work placement within translation courses enabling the student to gain real life experience of the profession
- To develop a form of accreditation for work placements linked to the occupational standards

Partners:

Nova Language Services, Transatlantic Communications, Trânslation Street, xplanation, AADimatiq, Transperfect, Planetlingua, Traducciones Castilla, Pactera, Quicksilver Translate, Tradtec SL, etc.

<http://www.e-gps.org/>

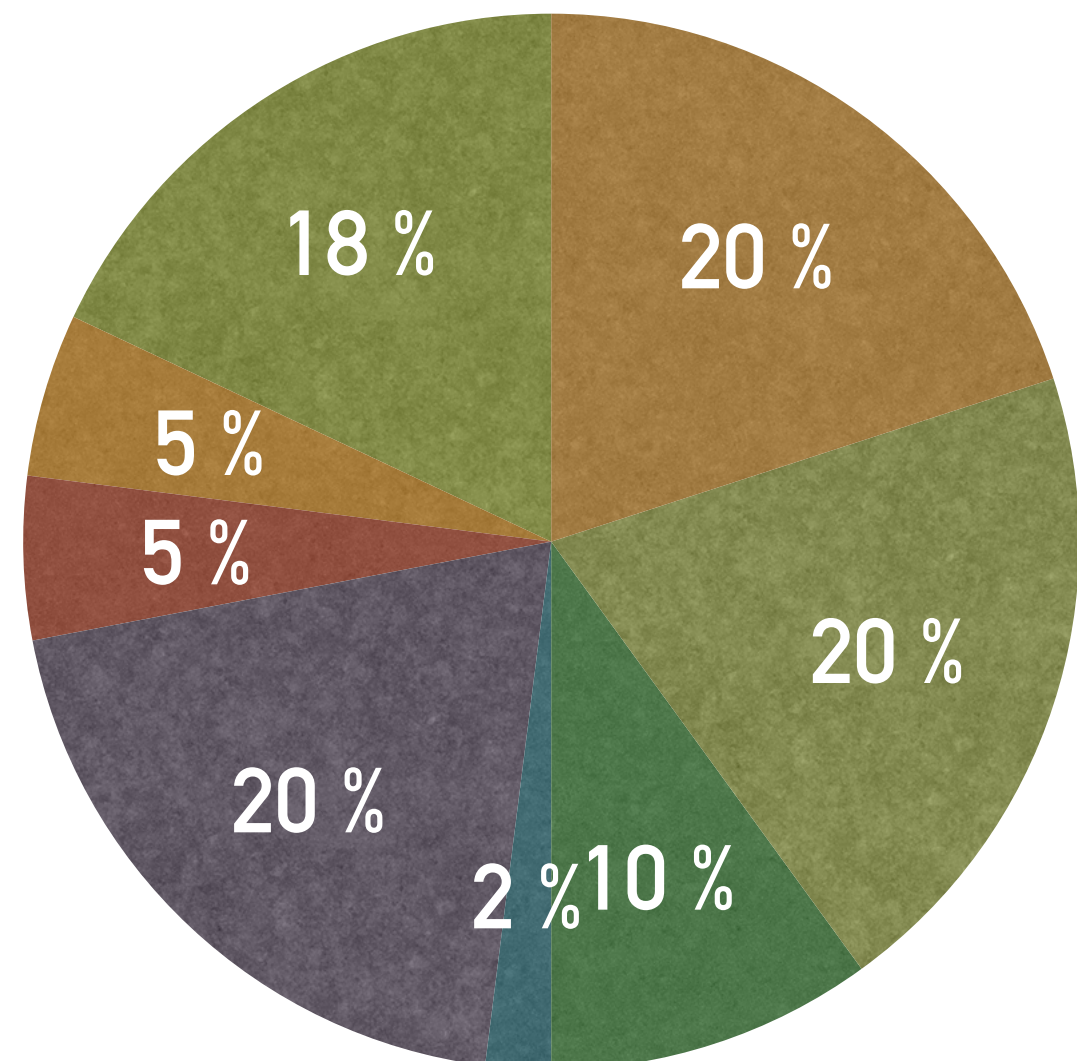
THE LINK BETWEEN UNIVERSITY AND EMPLOYABILITY — LOCAL PROGRAMS

Local programs

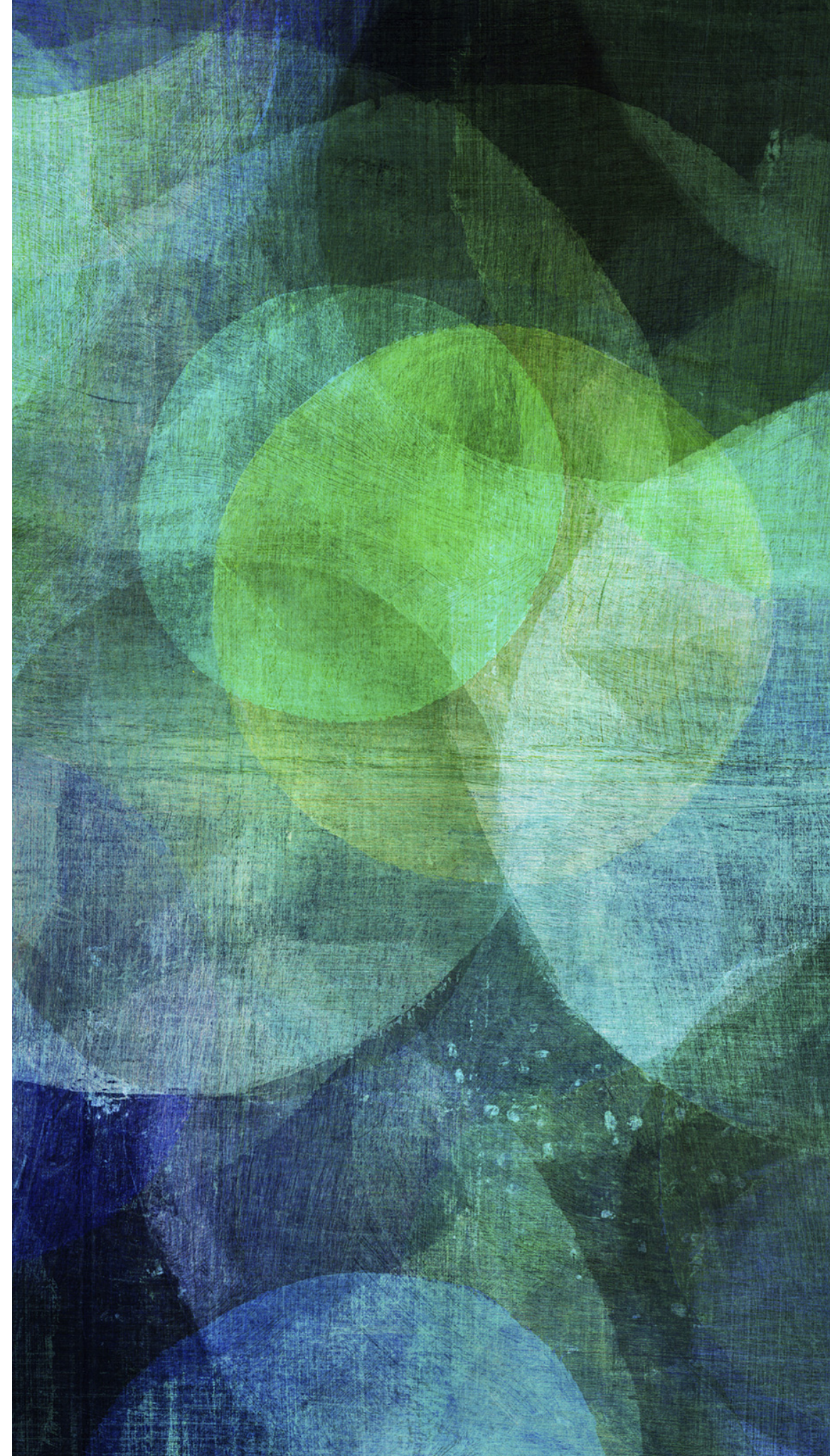
FTI-UAB's external practicum

Optional subject — 4th year (Degree in Translation and Interpreting)

- Translation agencies
- Other services
- News agencies
- Government institutions
- Non-profit organisations
- Publishers
- Theatres
- University agents



PRO BONO WORK



PRO BONO WORK — WIN-WIN SITUATION?

- Beneficiary (NGO / aid recipients)
 - Free linguistic help
 - Awareness – can lead to future involvement
- Translator
 - Can donate time and skills instead of money
 - Gets recognition (potential career entry pathway)
 - Gets satisfaction from helping those in need

PRO BONO WORK — THE CASE OF TRANSLATORS WITHOUT BORDERS

Traducteurs sans Frontières

- Founded in 1993 in Paris by Lori Thicke and Ros Smith-Thomas of Lexcelera (one of the top-10 French translation companies)
- Twin organization TwB set up in 2010 in Connecticut
- Both are registered nonprofits [501(c)]
- Do not work directly with recipients of humanitarian aid: help goes to humanitarian organizations

PRO BONO WORK — THE CASE OF TRANSLATORS WITHOUT BORDERS

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The **ACCEPT (Automated Community Content Editing Portal)** project is part of the seventh European framework programme and works on **enabling machine translation for the emerging community content paradigm, allowing citizens across the EU better access to communities in both commercial and non-profit environments.** (<http://www.accept.unige.ch/index.html>)

- EU-funded project (**€2M**)
- Involvement of **University of Edinburgh** and **University of Geneva**
- **Lexcelera** staff will contribute their technical expertise to the project while the volunteer translators of **TSF** (Traducteurs sans Frontières), managed by Lexcelera, will provide a highly motivated post-editing community.
- Involvement of for-profits **Acrolynx** and **Symantec**: presence in TwB's boards
- Part of the training material: user forums of **Symantec**
- Post-editing best practices identified by ACCEPT (and linked to **TAUS**):
<http://lexworks.com/translation-blog/3-sources-for-post-editing-best-practices/>

PRO BONO WORK — THE CASE OF TRANSLATORS WITHOUT BORDERS

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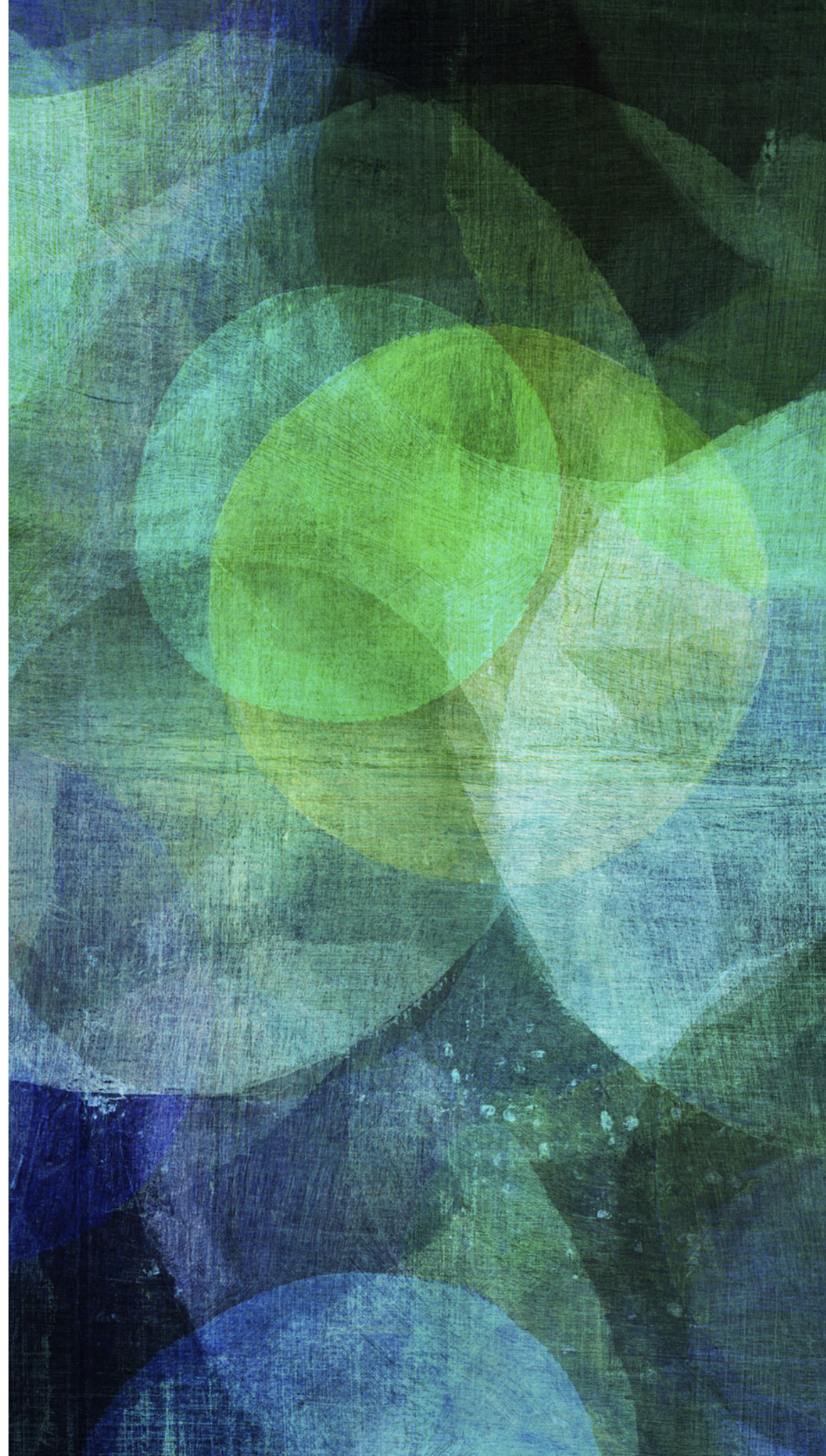
Commercial Exploitation by Project Partners

<http://cordis.europa.eu/docs/projects/cnect/9/288769/080/deliverables/001-D106ExploitationPlanUpdate1.pdf>

«Lexcelera is committed to scaling up the operations of Translation Without Borders from millions of words per year to tens or even hundreds of millions of words. This level of scalability, and the enormous benefits it brings in giving more people access to important information, can only be achieved by more automation and by addressing bottlenecks around editing which currently make the use of MT less than optimally productive. **Lexcelera, as a Language Services Provider and expert in Machine Translation, will be able to improve its commercial offering through technologies and processes that result from this project».**

Isn't there a conflict of interest?

LSPS AND WORK ETHICS



LSPS AND WORK ETHICS

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Rank	Company	HQ	Translation agencies blacklist	ELIA	GALA
1	Lionbridge Technologies	US	Yes	No	Yes
2	HP ACG	FR	No	No	No
3	TransPerfect/Translations.com	US	Yes	Yes	Yes
4	SDL	UK	Yes	Yes	Yes
5	LanguageLine Solutions	US	No	No	Yes
6	Euroscript international S.A.	LU	Yes	No	No
7	STAR Group	CH	No	Yes	No
8	Welocalize, Inc.	US	No	No	Yes
9	RWS Group	UK	No	No	No
10	ManpowerGroup Solutions - Language Services	US	No	No	No
11	CLS Communication	CH	No	No	No
12	Honyaku Center Inc.	JP	No	Yes	Yes
13	Yamagata Intech Corporation	JP	No	Yes	Yes
14	Moravia	CZ	Yes	Yes	Yes
15	thebigword Group	UK	No	No	No
16	Pactera Technology International	CN	No	No	No
17	Hogarth Worldwide	UK	No	No	Yes
18	Semantix	SE	No	No	Yes
19	Logos Group	IT	No	No	No
20	CyraCom International, Inc.	US	No	No	Yes

Top 20 Language Service Providers. Common Sense Advisory's 2015 Market Industry Report

Translation Ethics. *Translation Agencies Blacklist*. <http://translationethics.blogspot.com.es/p/blog-page.html>

LAPS AND WORK ETHICS — LIONBRIDGE

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Shameless rates, zero concern for quality, hell to work with.

LinkedIn report: (...) **the one and only client I have ever had, that I would not even want for my worst enemy is Lionbridge** because of the following reasons:

1. **They won't send you that much work** to make it worth your time.
2. **PMs** and other staff members **don't answer emails**.
3. Rates are OK, let's say they are within the standard, but **you'll end up investing a lot more time than you would for any other project for any other client**.
4. **They demand you use their software and apps for most projects, but their software and apps are unnecessarily complicated**, don't represent a real help for translators, learning how to use them will take a long time you're not being paid for, and the worst part is there are errors, bugs and glitches everywhere.
5. **Support for the use of their software is non-existent**. Not even their own staff knows how to use their own software. They even admit the software is faulty.
6. Most tasks come along with **silly requirements** such as a number of additional files to deliver for their statistics. It is just additional work that serves no purpose at all, and will make you waste your time.
7. I believe **they don't pay translators as it took me nearly 6 months to get paid** for the one and only task I completed for them, and only after spamming their emails every single day and shaming them in forums and else.
8. **All translators I have met in person or online have either had awful experiences** with them or heard the worst comments about them.
9. It is **terribly disorganised** as one PM doesn't know whether another PM has said or ordered something, they don't even know how their own company works, and they never solve any issues at all.

LAPS AND WORK ETHICS — SDL UK

Insulting rates and shameless bidding practices (about 2 cts./w.).

They offer **very low rates and poor quality standards.**

http://translationethics.blogspot.com.es/p/blog-page_94.html

LAPS AND WORK ETHICS — TRANSPERFECT USA

TO BOYCOTT until they sink: low quality, zero proofreading, greedy rates, unexperienced proofreaders, fake positive reports, non-payers, ignorant/untrained PMs.

The other day, a newbie PM called and said that another PM (one who has been around for a while) had suggested me for a "fun and exciting" job writing the narration (in English) for a 40-50 second advertisement ordered by a major U.S. retailer (not WalMart or K-Mart, but not an upscale place). **The offered price? \$25. Yup, US\$25 for writing the script for a 40-50 second video.** The PM told me that writing advertising copy was a new field for Transperfect. This was my reply: "Thank you for your inquiry, but \$25 for copywriting for a large company like X is ridiculous. They'd pay an advertising agency much more. If TransPerfect is really accepting \$25 plus company's overhead plus profit margin (=\$100 or less?), then there is something seriously wrong with its account executives. In any case, I'm very busy this weekend." Like many of you, I received better rates from Transperfect in the 1990s.

Diana Chemparathy (she can be found on LinkedIn) offered me bi-lingual proofreading for **US\$ 0.01** per word, telling me that **"2,000 words per hour is the norm in this industry"**! The **proofing/editing/reviewing (she never really clarified what she meant by "proofreading")** was to be done **over the weekend** and came with very detailed formatting instructions as well as two separate style guides. The work was highly specialized and not to be undertaken lightly, as it consisted of pages of faxed medical case notes, pathology reports and culture results, some handwritten. Needless to say I turned the job down flat. The agency she works with/for is TransPerfect. I complained directly to their head office but never received a reply.

translationethics.blogspot.com.es/p/blacklist-t.html

Plenty of reports here : <http://transperfect-translations-concerns.blogspot.ie/>

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LAPS AND WORK ETHICS — EUROSCRIPT LUXEMBURG

Winning tenders for the EU Commission with **low rates, 4 times lower than an acceptable rate.**

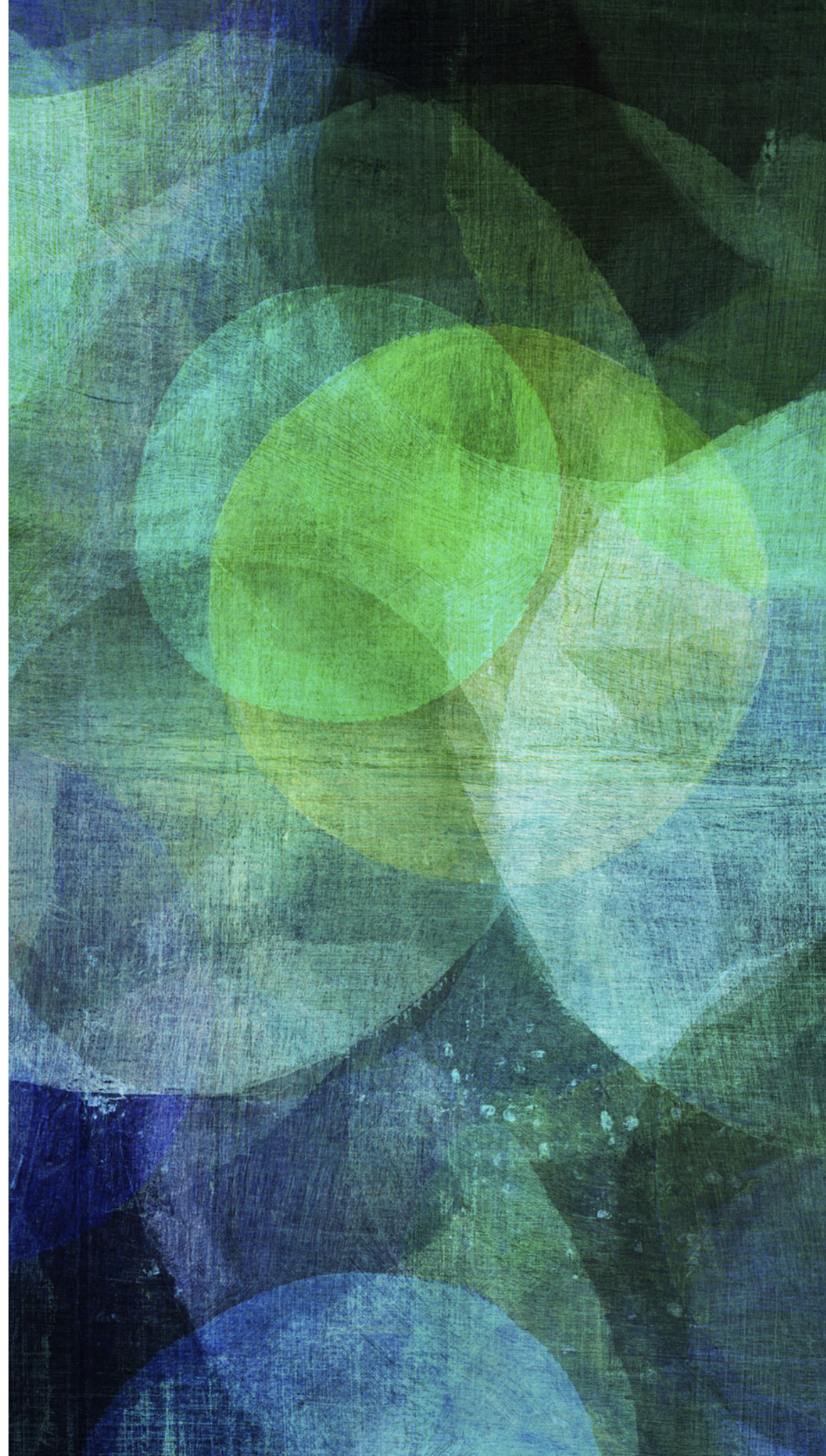
Euroscript is paying **4 cents per word for LEGAL texts to be used by the EUROPEAN COMMISSION**, which is **4 TIMES LOWER** than **what pros normally charge for this type of texts.** Impose rates and translation program (Trados) to lower it (**impose Trados discounts for repetitions**). Shall I remind you that the European laws and regulations go through this underpaid intellectual labour?

<http://translationethics.blogspot.com.es/p/blacklist-e.html>

LSPS AND WORK ETHICS — BAD WORK ETHICS

- Low rates or non-payment
- Tight deadlines
- Low concern for quality
- Reverse auctions (PM strategies, ProZ.com)
- Compulsory use of CAT tools for which translators have to pay
- Commercial exploitation of translation memories created by translators
- No help from PMs
- Unfair contract terms

WHO IS THE REAL LSP?



“The ageing profile of the translator on the one hand and the predicted growth in the sector on the other hand indicate that **there are opportunities for translation graduates** and that there is and will continue to be a need for their expertise. However, **it is also clear that they are unlikely to be employed inhouse**; the vast majority of them will work **freelance** and be **self-employed**. How aware are they of this likelihood? **How well does translator training prepare them for this experience?** If we take the view that preparation for the world of work is an important aspect of translator training, then trainers need to prepare students specifically for the freelance experience.

Olohan, 2007: 55

“In conclusion, it is argued that the development in students of the knowledge and skills to enable them to enter the profession successfully starts, prior to training, **with a realistic understanding of employment prospects**. This development proceeds with an awareness of the challenges and rewards of **translation as a predominantly freelance profession**. It concentrates on translation as a service which is technical and specialized and which encompasses other activities and services in addition to the translation activity *per se*. Finally, it sees the professionalization of the translator as a process which can be firmly rooted in the university translator training programme.

Olohan, 2007: 60

“In 2012, the language industry is primarily **digital, outsourced, and project driven**. According to Common Sense Advisory, **87% of all translation buyers outsource most or all of their translation projects** (Beninatto 2006, 4).

Dunne, 2012: 144

“The phenomena of **quality uncertainty, asymmetric information and adverse selection** may help explain the price pressure that has characterized the market for outsourced translation services over the past two decades. Indeed, Rory Cowan, CEO of Lionbridge Technologies, has observed that **prices of translation dropped 30% in constant terms between 1992 and 2003.**

[...]

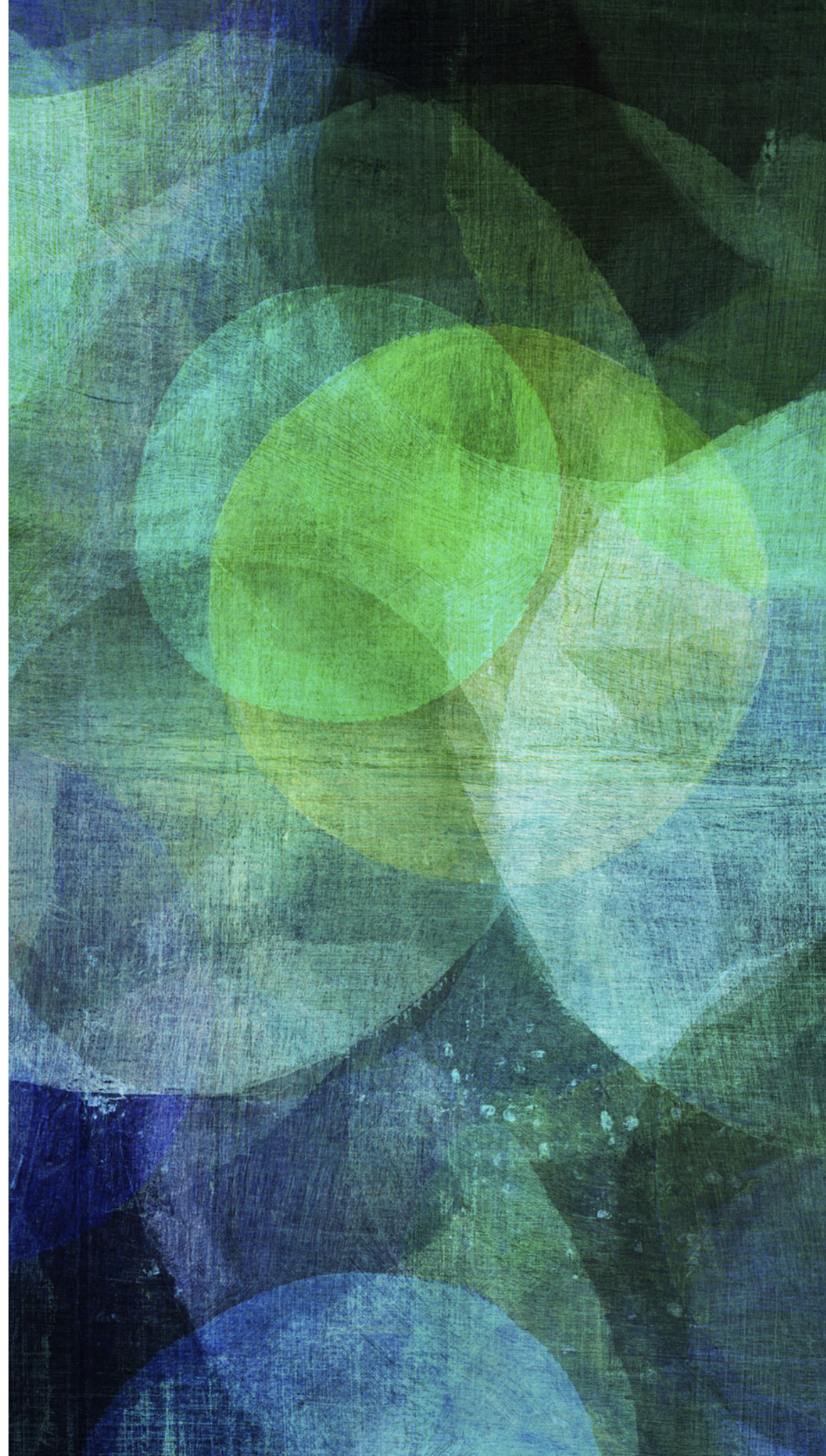
Donald Barabé, Vice President of Professional Services at the Translation Bureau of the Government of Canada, has found that **prices of translation services dropped 30% in constant value from 1998 to 2008** (Barabé 2008). (See also Chan 2005.)

Dunne, 2012: 153

“Magnifying this problem, **feedback is rarely provided** in the current marketplace. For instance, the marketing manager of Berlin-based LSP Milengo admits that “We translate hundreds of thousands of words every day at Milengo, for clients around the world. We receive files and deliver projects, and once handed back that’s often the last we see of them” (Davies 2012). **Anecdotal evidence and the scant treatment of this topic in the literature strongly suggest that the ‘throw-it-over-the-wall’ approach predominates in the industry** (Shreve 1998, 2000; Aberdeen Group 2006; Byrne 2006, 39–40; Dunne 2011b, 184).

Dunne, 2012: 158

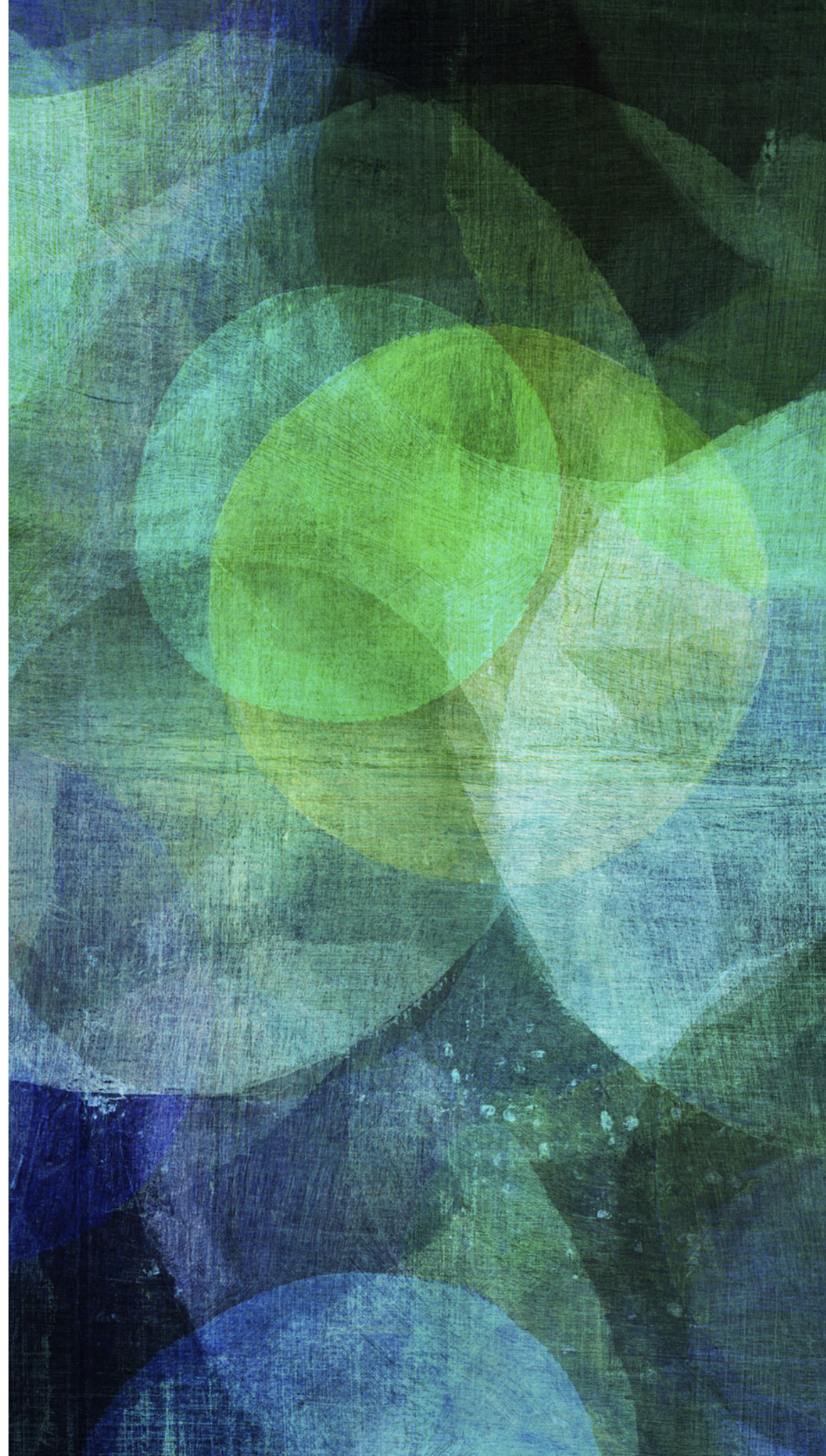
ADDING A NEW FACTOR TO THE EQUATION



ADDING A NEW FACTOR TO THE EQUATION



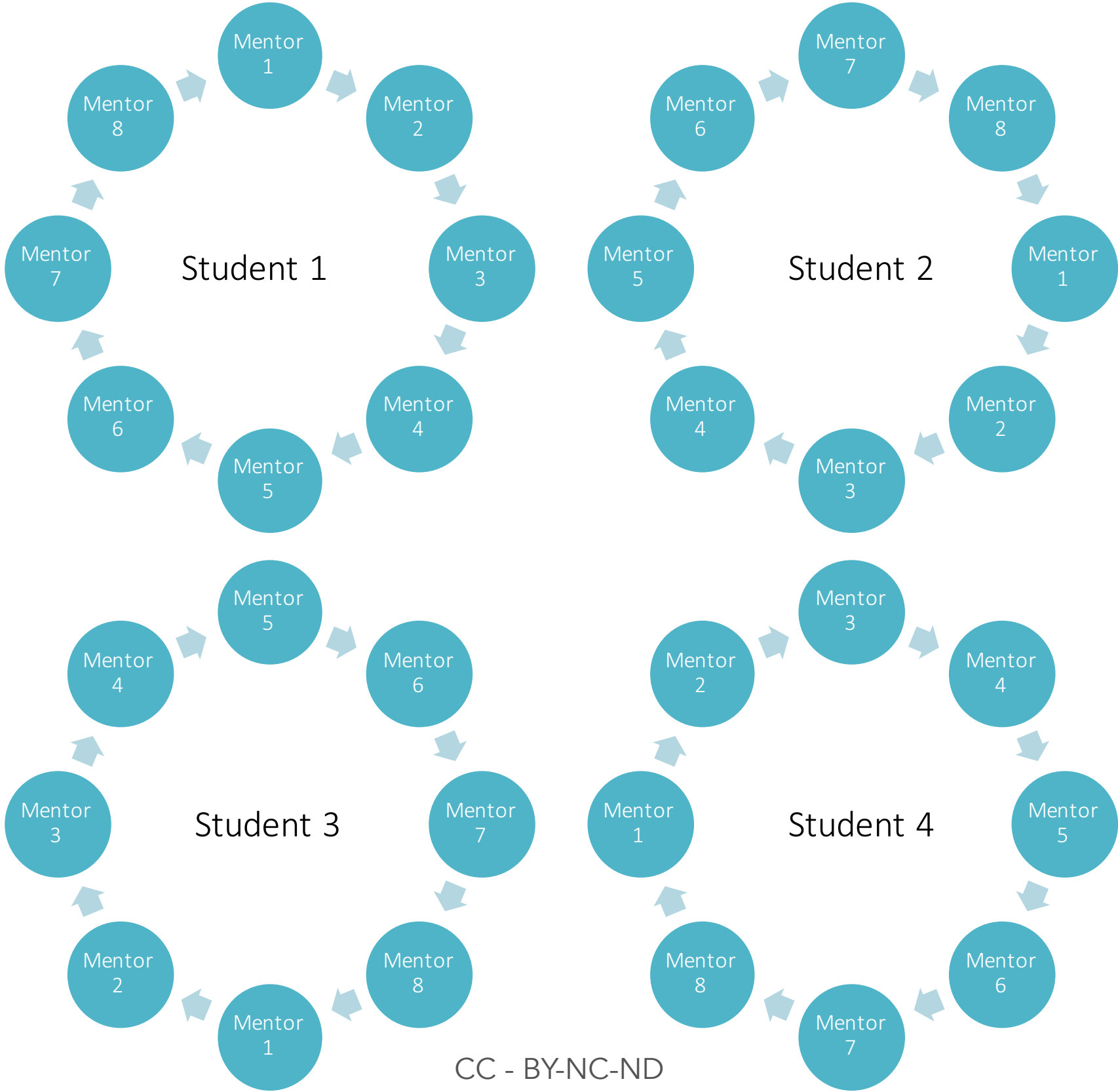
WHERE CAN ASSOCIATIONS HELP?



APTIC'S MENTORING PROGRAM

- Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona + Universitat de Vic
- 4 students + 8 professional translators and interpreters (mentors)
- eight-hour working day with each of the mentors
- translation and interpretation from the freelancer's point of view
- Aspects included: the practice of translation, interpretation, and proofreading, translation and interpreting rates, work ethics, project management, terminology management, ergonomics, marketing, and CAT tools

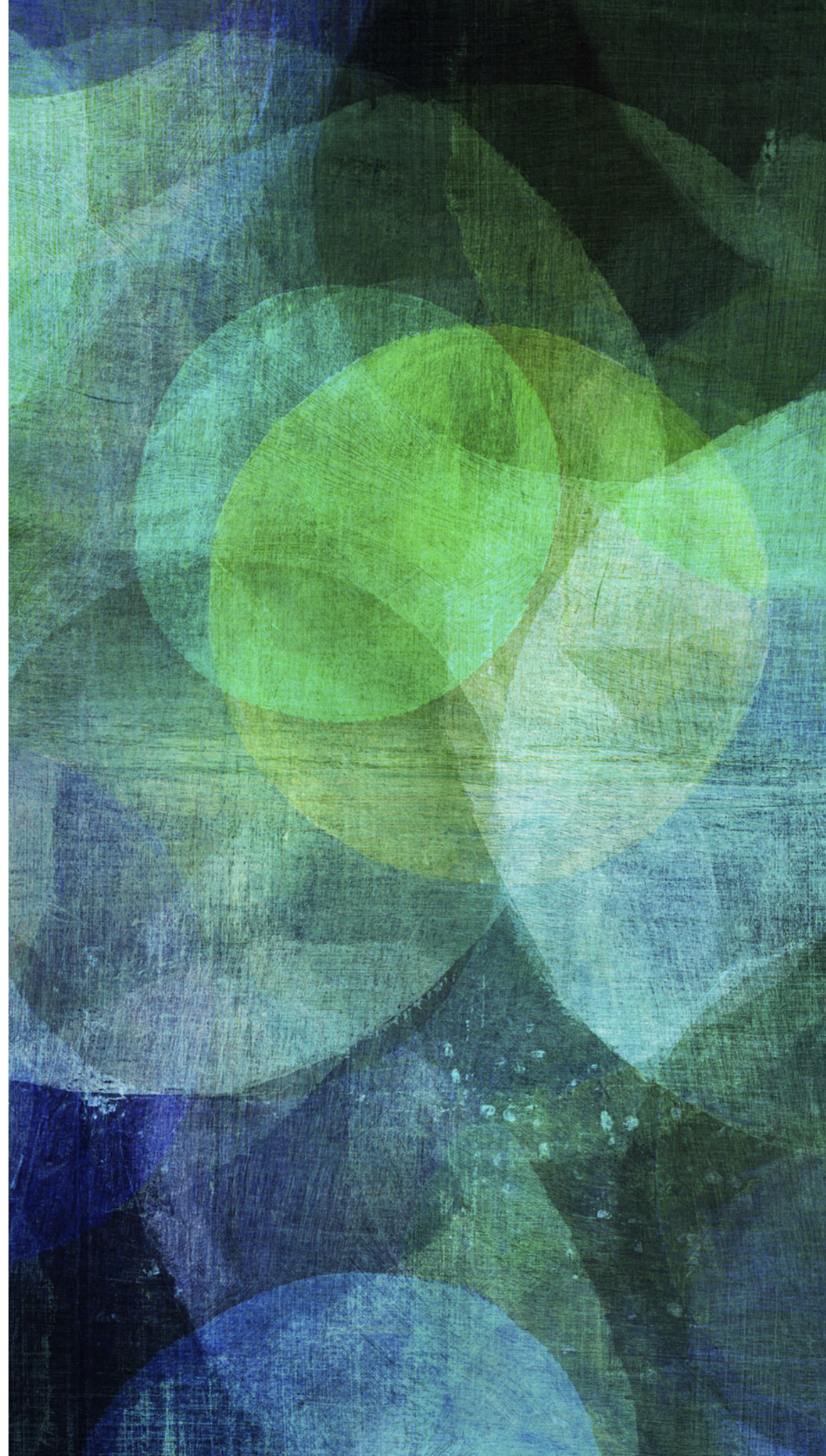
APTIC'S MENTORING PROGRAM



THE SOLIDARITÉS EXPERIENCE – AIPTI

- Career starters – proposal voted unanimously by the team
- Solidarités paid internships
- Part-time commitment from interns during 3 months
- Rest of the team pro bono
- Each intern collaborated with a dozen colleagues
- Series of 10 webinars to train the interns
- Webinars open and free for rest of the team
- Interns commit themselves to help train next year's interns
- 2 interns in 2009, 4 in 2010, 2 in 2013 and 2 in 2014
- Translations that can change people's lives
- Including the lives and professional careers of the interns

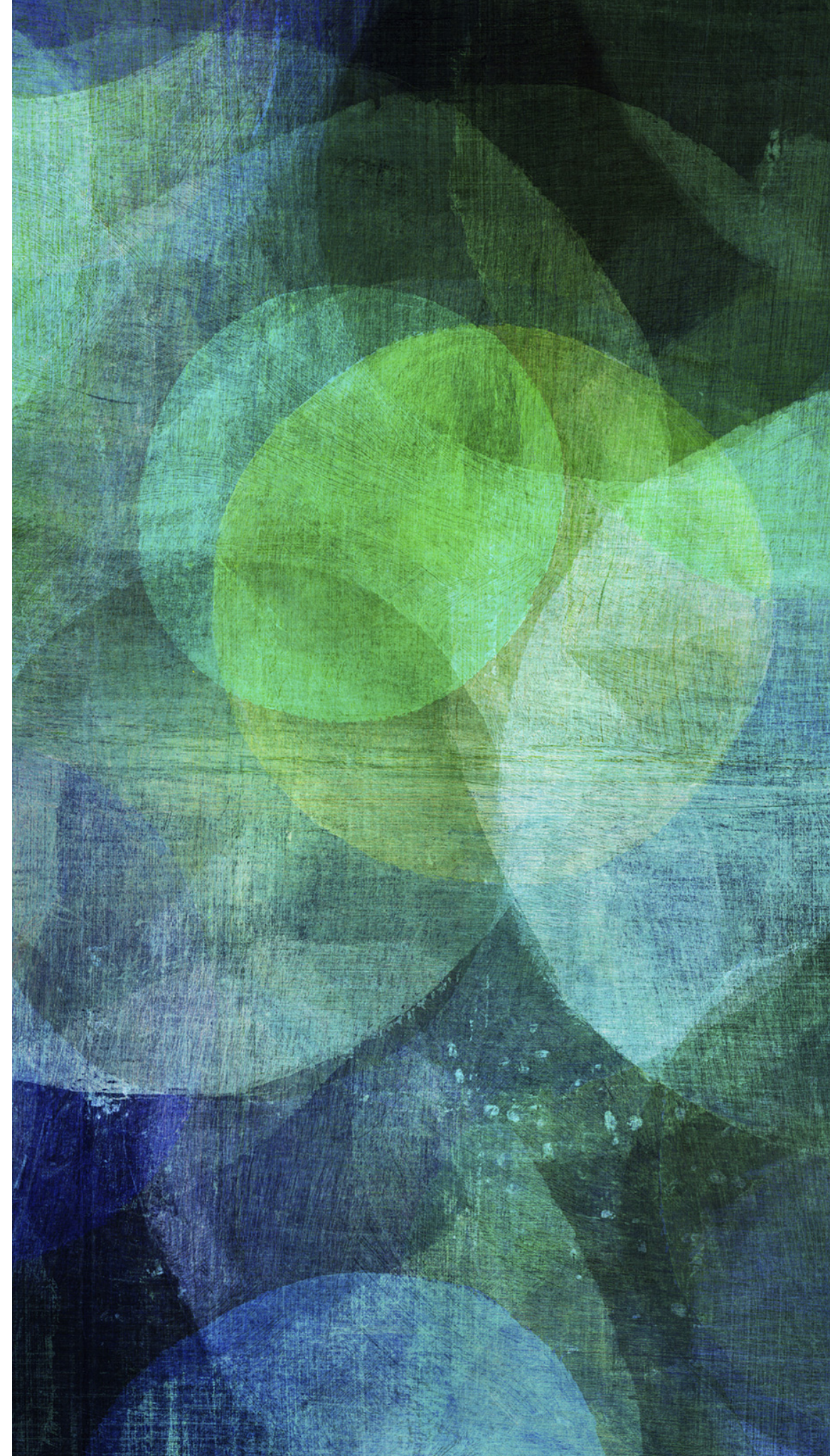
CONCLUSIONS



CONCLUSIONS

- Pro bono work is useful. We just need to be careful with the organisations we recommend to our students.
- We need to collaborate with companies, but we cannot forget who the real LSPs are.
- We have a commitment to our students' employability, but also to the profession and its development in an ethical way regarding work practices.
- Let's add translators' and interpreters' associations to the equation. They have a lot to say and to help with.
- LSPs' employment opportunities are important to take into account, but we cannot forget that freelancers are the present and the future of the translation industry.

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THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION

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