

Liu, B. (2015). A Proposed Curriculum Roadmap for “Marketable” Undergraduate Degrees in Translation: It All Begins with a Digital Sciences Information Session. *Current Trends in Translation Teaching and Learning* E, 2. 31–71.

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# **A PROPOSED CURRICULUM ROADMAP FOR “MARKETABLE” UNDERGRADUATE DEGREES IN TRANSLATION: IT ALL BEGINS WITH A DIGITAL SCIENCES INFORMATION SESSION**

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## **Abstract**

On a global scale, undergraduate programs in translation have raised considerable concern over their applicability to industry practice, since many graduates find themselves unprepared professionally for working in the translation industry and quite a few choose to pursue a master’s degree upon graduation or after working briefly. To address this predicament, the current study proposed a roadmap for curriculum design by highlighting the possible career paths of a translation-major graduate. Built upon a curriculum review of the translation programs offered by selected US universities, the roadmap is characterized by customized field concentration requirements, which align individual preferences to job-market realities while

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maintaining the essence of academic training in core program requirements. In the end, the author discussed the limitations of the current study and recommended future research directions, among which involving translation students in the bilingual teaching of non-humanities courses will be the theme for a separate study.

Key Words: Translation undergraduate program, Curriculum design, Market-oriented, Career interest, Career choice, Core program requirement, Field concentration requirement

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Finch and Crunkilton (1999, p. 11) define curriculum as “the sum of learning activities and experiences that a student has under the auspices or direction of the school.” East or West, degree programs offered by universities, especially at the undergraduate level, have drawn considerable criticism in that their curriculum design only contributes to the widening of gaps between academia and industry, and translation programs are no exception. As reported by Canadian Translation Industry Sectoral Commission (1999, p. 19), many complaints from employers in the translation industry about graduates mainly revolve around their narrow exposure to culture, lack of practical training, and difficulty in working

independently. Mauriello (quoted in Kiraly, 2005, p. 1100) further reports that employers also complain about translators' lack of preparation for dealing with specialized translation, unfamiliarity with terminology management and information technology, their inability to organize themselves autonomously or work in teams, solve problems or establish and effectively manage interpersonal relations on the job. From a popular utilitarian view, being awarded a bachelor's degree in translation only means that the candidate has fulfilled all the academic requirements and is thus eligible for graduation; more often than not, the graduate will prove incompetent for the actual practice in translation industry.

Previous research attempting to address this issue have mostly been focused on incorporating constructivist education theories (Tao, 2012), blended learning using Information and communications technologies (ICT) (Galán-Mañas, 2011) or fostering teleworking and collaborative working environment (Olvera-Lobo *et al.*, 2009). This article, on the other hand, ventures to shed fundamentally different light on pragmatic concerns about the practicality of undergraduate translation programs by proposing a distinctive roadmap for curriculum development of such programs. The inspiration originates

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from the curriculum design of Digital Sciences, a market-oriented, CS<sup>1</sup>-related degree program first introduced by Kent State University (KSU). The program aims to find its graduates a unique niche in the job market while accommodating their personal preferences.

Built upon various career paths an undergraduate translation student can take after graduation, the roadmap proposed by this study guides the students through a four-year journey consisting of core program requirements, field concentration requirements and field-specific electives that eventually lead to their respective career objectives. Owing to the clear-cut roadmap design, students are able to acquire timely assistance in pinpointing their professional preferences at an early stage. Furthermore, they can even make necessary adjustments along the way with the help of their academic advisors.

This research also considers the feasibility of adapting the curriculum design from a non-humanities field by finding support from the existing literature pertinent to curriculum studies. The author discusses both advantages and limitations of applying such a curriculum model for

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<sup>1</sup> Computer Science.

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undergraduate translation programs, before making some suggestions for further studies in better orienting the translation degree programs toward industry needs.

## **2. METHODOLOGY**

### **2.1. Literature Review on Curriculum Studies**

The field of curriculum studies has accumulated a substantial body of literature, some as far back as the nineteenth century. In regard to research in translation-specific curriculum, however, there are few, if any published studies that take into account the whole duration of a translation degree program. To begin with, this study shared the theoretical framing approach with previous translation research and also referenced the findings of curriculum studies in general to guide the translation-specific pursuit. This article referred to the curriculum criteria established by Velleman (1952, p. 8; quoted in Park, 2007, p. 168), who proposes four components of a translation and interpreting curriculum: language studies, area studies, ancillary studies and *practica*. Although Velleman’s conception of what should constitute a translation/interpreting curriculum has been

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around for over half a century, it is still considered valid and has found wide adoption by all leading translation schools (Park, 2007, p. 168).

Park further clarifies the four curriculum components as follows, in addition to the importance of incorporating translation theory:

Language Studies courses cover both composition and terminology studies, and Area Studies courses develop the students’ specific area knowledge in the language of the country being studied. Ancillary Studies courses in fields such as economics, political science and law are for developing subject-field knowledge in specialized translation and interpreting. Practica courses develop a variety of practical knowledge through practice and training of translation and interpreting. Finally, we can find answers to the essential qualities or characteristics of translation, the translators’ role, how translation, culture and language are interrelated, and the ethics of translation through the study of theory (*ibid.*).

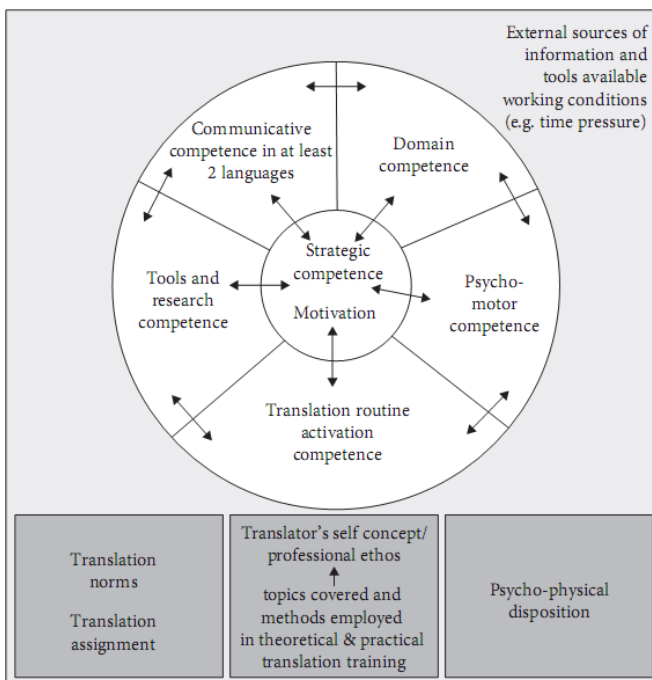
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In addition to Park’s conception, the author referred to Göpferich’s (2013) translation competence model as shown in Figure 1 to refine the proposed curriculum model. Since Park’s (2007) model does not actually include ancillary studies which develop domain competence as specified in Göpferich’s model, the curriculum model proposed in this article addresses this gap by incorporating all the five components: language studies, area studies, ancillary studies, theory and practice.

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Figure 1. Göpferich’s Translation Competence Model<sup>2</sup>



<sup>2</sup> Göpferich, Susanne. "Translation Competence: Explaining Development and Stagnation from a Dynamic Systems Perspective." *Target* 25.1, 2013: 61-76.



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## **2.2. Applicability of Adaptation: Analysis of the Digital Sciences Curriculum Model**

The School of Digital Sciences at KSU started in fall 2011. A closer look at its website<sup>3</sup> reveals that the school offers bachelor’s and master’s degree programs that are designed to implement niche marketing of the graduates to IT industry. This program objective is demonstrated in the following aspects of Digital Sciences BS (Bachelor of Science) program requirements:

- 1) There is a clear outline of the career opportunities a Digital Sciences degree can possibly open doors to, and each academic path taken by registering for different courses has thus been assigned an explicit “finishing line,” that is, an IT professional title in the real-world job market, such as web developer, software project manager, user interface specialist, etc. This apparently answers a typical question from new graduates about vague or too idealistic curriculum design: “what am I supposed to do with my degree?”
- 2) The BS degree provides students with six optional concentrations (Digital Systems Software

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.kent.edu/dsci/>

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Development/DSSD, Digital Systems  
Interaction/DSIN, Digital Systems  
Telecommunication Networks/DSTN, Digital  
Systems Analysis/DNA, Enterprise  
Architecture/ENAR, and Digital Systems  
Management/DSMT), which are tailored with courses in Digital Sciences and related disciplinary fields to prepare students for different career paths<sup>4</sup>. To reach a specific career goal, students are recommended to take a combination of courses. Figure 2 shows the roadmap of fall 2014 digital sciences BS program requirements<sup>5</sup>. As can be seen from the roadmap, once personal preferences undergo significant changes, the students can proactively make adjustment to their development paths within the four-year time span by registering for a different set of courses in later academic years so as to fulfill an updated goal. As early as freshman year, students in the same BS program can take separate paths by choosing different course combinations.

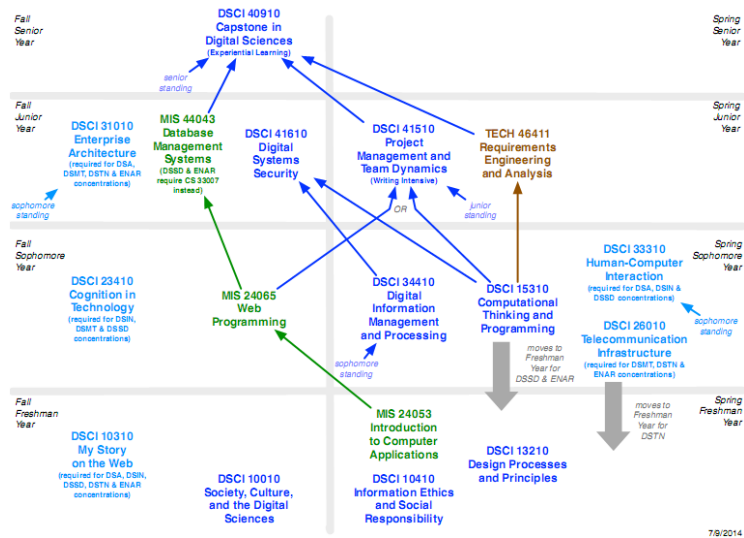
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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.kent.edu/dsci/undergraduate/bs>

<sup>5</sup> <http://du1ux2871uqv.cloudfront.net/sites/default/files/file/Fall%202014%20DSCI%208-Semester%20Roadmap%20Diagram.pdf>

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Figure 2. Fall 2014 digital sciences BS program requirements



3) A great part of the charm about this curriculum model lies in interdisciplinary involvement. Ever since the first year, students have started to interact with teachers from fields other than Digital Sciences, including communication, journalism, education and philosophy. By studying with classmates and teachers from different fields, Digital Sciences students will better understand how the use of software applications

and hardware systems varies across different organizational and non-organizational settings and learn how to develop and test more user-friendly computer-based technologies for all walks of life.

Next, the current study identified some interesting similarities between KSU’s translation program and its Digital Sciences program that can serve as commensurate ground for adapting the Digital Sciences curriculum roadmap to undergraduate translation programs.

- 1) A straightforward presentation of career possibilities that a translation major can explore upon graduation is greatly helpful to students and parents who know little or nothing about the field of their choice, as is often the case for the routinely arduous and winding experience of deciding on a university to go to and a major to pursue.
  
- 2) For the purpose of further clarifying the path of academic pursuit for translation-major students, the roadmap sets up a year-by-year development schedule in form of course combinations, starting with foundational theory and gradually advancing into the phase of actual practice. Since the curriculum model

consists of both required and elective courses, students are allowed the flexibility in choosing the combination that interests them most and therefore can readily develop a strong motivation to bring out their best in coursework.

- 3) Fostering an interdisciplinary perspective at an early stage will remarkably facilitate both academic and professional development of a translation-major student. So long as the student consistently absorbs the inputs from fields other than translation itself, the ability of viewing translation within multi-disciplinary context—linguistics, psychology, sociology, cultural anthropology, communication theory, literary criticism, aesthetics and semiotics etc. – comes only too naturally.

### **2.3. Rationale of Building the Proposed Roadmap for Translation Programs**

The author finds it truly tempting to adapt the curriculum model for a science/technology related program to such a humanities-oriented field, since Translation, either as an academic field or a profession, has always thrived from its undisputed liaisons with science and technology (for the

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historical and pedagogical significance of scientific and technical translation, see Olohan, 2015, p. 7–14 and Bynre, 2014, p. 3). Cordero (1994, p. 172) holds that “... the greatest demand is for translators who can translate difficult technical and scientific texts for the purpose of research, technology, commerce, industry, etc. Such translators are required to have technical knowledge which they cannot acquire in the humanities.” Modeling the curriculum of translation programs in a practice-oriented approach, therefore, can enable students to pinpoint the connections between academic learning and expectations from the job market. In spite of the fact that the overall curriculum structure seems to orient students towards subject fields related to science and technology, the applicability of the proposed roadmap to the development track of literature translation will also be analyzed in the Discussion section of this article.

#### **2.4. Process of Roadmap Building for Translation Programs (Undergraduate and Master’s)**

To begin with, the author collected a number of possible career choices for a Translation BA (Bachelor of Arts) graduate, partially resting on the contribution of the report

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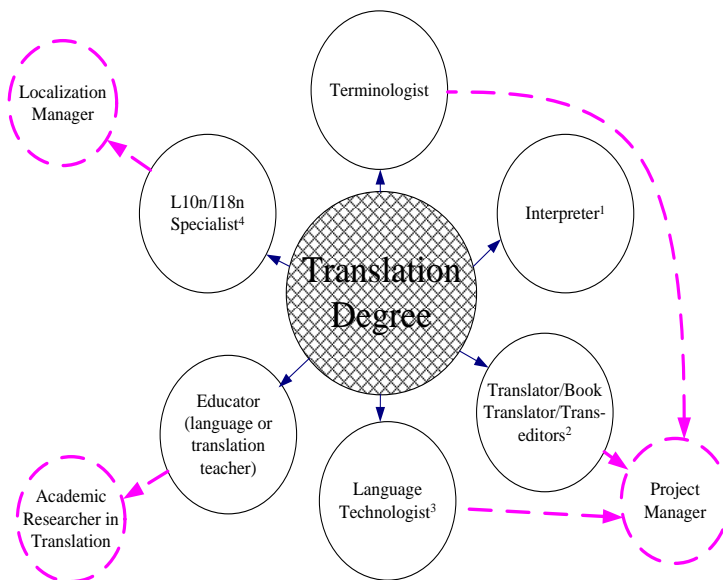
entitled “The Language Industry - A Source of Interesting Career Choices”<sup>6</sup> and the findings are presented in Figure 3 below (the career goals marked in dashed circles are the possible choices for undergraduate senior level as well as master’s level). While it should be acknowledged that this is definitely not an inclusive career list due to the variability of the job market, it is worth noting that each job goal set for different academic development paths is no fixed target and students are expected to learn the value of independence and resilience in making their own choices; after all, life is never short of variables that are out of human control; what educators can do is to prepare students for adapting to the working environment of their own preferences and to equip them with important lifetime skills, including life-long learning and self-adaptation. The proposed curriculum roadmap can thus help develop the transferable skills promoted by Kearns (2006, p. 194), who distinguishes between vocational and transferable skills, stressing that “[s]uch [transferable] skills differ from traditional ‘vocational’ skills in that, while vocational skills prepare the student for a specific job, transferable skills prepare him or her for mobility between a number of different jobs.”

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<sup>6</sup> [www.utm.utoronto.ca/~w3car/pdf/language\\_industry.pdf](http://www.utm.utoronto.ca/~w3car/pdf/language_industry.pdf)

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Figure 3. Career choices for translation undergraduates (as well as master’s level)



1. Court, conference, hospital/medical, civic service, international organization, business/financial
2. Legal, medical, science & technology, business/financial, literature; the current trend shows that translators in future may be very likely to take up the role of an editor due to the influence of crowd sourcing and machine translation
3. Language Technology consists of 4 dimensions: translation technology, content management technology, voice processing technology and language training technology. Examples of relevant careers in this area are bilingual tester and language engineer.
4. L10n is the abbreviation form of Localization. Localization Specialists usually work for a high-tech company rather than a translation company, dealing with localization of company materials and all related translation work. I18n is the abbreviation form of Internationalization, which means preparing a product or a document for localization.

After a review of the different career objectives for the customized concentration of academic development, the



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researcher now turns to the selected US universities that grant bachelor’s or master’s degree programs in translation and analyzed their curriculum plans. While striving to incorporate all common courses into the proposed roadmap as core program requirements, the researcher also took into account those less commonly seen, but interestingly unique courses as field concentration requirements.

Appendix shows a list of all the US translation programs that have been referenced and Table 1 shows a combined list of courses.

Table 1. A combined list of major courses provided by selected US translation programs

<b>Semester</b>	<b>Core Program Requirement</b>	<b>Field Concentration Requirement (related to the specific career objective)</b>
1	• Language Studies (grammar, phonetics, diction, conversation and composition)	
2		

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<b>Semester</b>	<b>Core Program Requirement</b>	<b>Field Concentration Requirement (related to the specific career objective)</b>	
3	• Area Studies (Intro. to Literature/Civilization)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technical or Business Writing</li> <li>• Survey of Literature (Literature Analysis or Literature Criticism)</li> <li>• Business and Special Texts</li> </ul>	
4	• Multilingual Information Lifecycle		
5	• Translation Practice • Approaches to Translation		
6	• Conversation for Business and Special Purposes • Problems in Translation • Cross-language Meditation		
7	• Advanced Composition and Conversation		
8	• Advanced Translation and Interpreting		
<b>Field Practice/Graduation Project</b>			
1–4 (Master’s Level)	• Documents in Multilingual Contexts		• Project Management Seminar on international relations, investment and trade,

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<b>Semester</b>	<b>Core Program Requirement</b>	<b>Field Concentration Requirement (related to the specific career objective)</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Theory of Translation</li> <li>• Practice of Translation</li> <li>• Terminology and Computer Applications for Translators</li> <li>• Literary and Cultural Translation</li> <li>• Commercial, Legal and Diplomatic Translation</li> <li>• Scientific, Technical and Medical Translation</li> <li>• Software Localization</li> <li>• Case Study in Translation</li> <li>• Interdisciplinary Approaches to the Arts &amp; Humanities</li> <li>• The Art and Craft of Translation Workshop</li> <li>• World Literature</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• and market competition</li> <li>• Voice-over dubbing for commercial videos and movies</li> <li>• Over-the-phone customer service and emergency interpreting</li> <li>• Simultaneous/consecutive conference interpreting</li> <li>• Court and legal translation and interpreting</li> </ul>

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<b>Semester</b>	<b>Core Program Requirement</b>	<b>Field Concentration Requirement (related to the specific career objective)</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Political, Social, and Cultural Thought</li> <li>• Creating Nonfictions</li> <li>• History of Modern Thought</li> <li>• Writing for New Media</li> <li>• Literature of the Twentieth Century</li> <li>• Independent Study for Portfolio on Translation Studies</li> </ul>	

The table above clearly shows that a great many core courses over master’s level, compared with those undergraduate-level courses, are more specialized and field-specific and address more of the career choices available to translation-major graduates. Therefore, to enhance the marketability of a BA or BS translation degree, the author suggests that undergraduate students be allowed to take the courses offered by the master’s program, or else they will be dragged down in the market competition by staying away from learning those

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imminent skills such as translation skills and specialized subject knowledge until master’s level (Yan, 2004, p. 6). According to Yan (2004, p. 9), *imminent skills* have direct relevance to professional practice, whereas *subtle skills* involving linguistic and cultural knowledge exert an implicit and underlying impact on the practitioner’s career development. To strive for balanced development of imminent skills and subtle skills, necessary adjustments should be made to sustain students’ personal preferences of academic development from as early as the first year in the BA/BS translation program, as shown in the Results and Recommendation section of this article.

The current study also considers the applicability of the proposed roadmap for a BA/BS Translation program concentrating on interpreting by following Park’s (2007, p. 170) approach in applying “Y-model” of translator and interpreter training presented by Renfer (1991, p. 175). One advantage of the Y model is that translation and interpreting are given equal importance. Another advantage is that this model screens out students not suited for either translation or interpreting at a relatively early stage in their course (Park, 2007, p. 170). Therefore, the proposed roadmap applied the Y model in that translation and interpreting students will take distinct

paths of academic development after two year of studying core courses fundamental to both written and oral translation. As will be shown in the Results section (Figure 4 and Table 3), among all the track choices, the interpreting students may take the interpreter track while the translation students may take the translator track to fulfill their respective field concentration requirements, and their studies on both tracks will be further enriched by a common pool of electives.

### **3. RESULTS & RECOMMENDATION**

#### **3.1. Proposed Roadmap for Core Program Requirements**

Core program requirements depict the academic development path commonly taken by all academic translation trainees, regardless of their personal subject interests. While the core program requirements proposed by the current study have already shown some path differentiation starting from the freshman year, as shown in Table 2, students are allowed even greater flexibility in drafting their individualized development blueprint when it comes to fulfilling the proposed field concentration requirements.

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Table 2 shows the proposed roadmap for the core program requirements of both undergraduate and master’s degree in translation and interpreting.

Table 2. Core program requirements for bachelor’s and master’s degree programs in translation

<i>Fall Freshman Year</i>		<i>Spring Freshman Year</i>	
Professional Imaging on the Web <sup>1</sup>	Society, Culture and Translation <sup>2</sup>	Writing for a Special Purpose (Legal, medical, technical or business) <sup>4</sup>	Phonetics and Diction & Conversation <sup>3</sup>
Introduction to Literature <sup>5</sup>	Grammar and Composition <sup>3</sup>	Introduction to Civilization <sup>6</sup>	Ethics in Translation <sup>7</sup>
<p>1. This course is provided by Journalism School and this is a Communication course aiming at enhancing the student’s online presence either as a freelancer or a translation professional; students will learn how to market their talents and build foundation for a satisfactory career by means of a professional image through major social networks and other types of online communication channels.</p> <p>2. This course is provided by School of Education.</p> <p>3. Language Studies</p> <p>4. Students can choose two concentrations based on their preliminary field interest, for example, legal and technical, medical and business, etc. And this is the starting point of path differentiation in terms of academic development.</p> <p>5. Provided by Department of English.</p> <p>6. Provided by Department of History.</p> <p>7. Provided by Department of Philosophy.</p>			
<i>Fall Sophomore Year</i>		<i>Spring Sophomore Year</i>	
Multilingual Information Lifecycle <sup>1</sup>	Survey of Literature <sup>2</sup> Intermediate Composition and Conversation	Translation Practice <sup>3</sup>	Approaches to Translation <sup>4</sup> Survey Business and Special Texts

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<i>Fall Junior Year.</i>		<i>Spring Junior Year.</i>	
Cross-language Mediation <sup>1</sup>	Advanced Composition and Conversation	Literary and Cultural Translation <sup>2</sup>	Problems in Translation <sup>3</sup>
Intermediate Translation Practice <sup>3</sup>		Commercial, Legal and Diplomatic Translation <sup>3</sup>	
		Scientific, Technical and Medical Translation <sup>3</sup>	
		Software Localization <sup>3</sup>	
<i>Fall Senior Year.</i>		<i>Spring Senior Year.</i>	
Advanced Translation Practice <sup>3</sup>	Literary and Cultural Translation <sup>2</sup>	Field Practice <sup>4</sup>	Graduation Project <sup>5</sup>
	Commercial, Legal and Diplomatic Translation <sup>3</sup>		
	Scientific, Technical and Medical Translation <sup>3</sup>	Translator's Workshop <sup>5</sup>	
	Software Localization <sup>3</sup>		

1. Provided by Computer Science or Library Science program; students will learn how to process and manage different document formats in the context of the Information Age...

2. Literature analysis and criticism; provided by Department of English...

3. Different levels of Translation Practice courses are distributed all through the last three years of undergraduate studies and this course is field-specific, which means students' translation practice will focus on the fields of their own choice. While continuing with the choice from freshman year is understandable, students are still allowed to change the field for Translation Practice course in sophomore year...

4. Translation theory will be introduced...

5. For the last semester, the workshop is intended for the teacher and students to brainstorm the solutions to the questions students encountered in their actual practice based on what have been learned from the program.



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Master's Level <sup>3</sup>				
<i>Fall Freshman Year</i>			<i>Spring Freshman Year</i>	
	Documents in Multilingual Contexts	Theory of Translation	Interdisciplinary Approaches to the Arts & Humanities	Case Study in Translation
	Terminology and Computer Applications for Translators	Practice of Translation	The Art and Craft of Translation Workshop	
<i>Fall Sophomore Year</i>			<i>Spring Sophomore Year</i>	
	History of Modern Thought	Writing for New Media	Independent Study for Portfolio on Translation Studies	Graduation Thesis

The four modules in grey (Literary and Cultural Translation; Commercial, Legal and Diplomatic Translation; Scientific, Technical and Medical Translation; and Software Localization) aim to hone students’ translation skills in their preferred subject fields. Students are recommended to choose a combination of any two modules for one year. This approach offers an opportunity for students to identify their strength areas by means of semester-by-semester trial and error until finally locating their personal preferences.

The module marked in gridline, “Field Practice”, is also an area that has attracted a lot of attention from academia

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in targeting the academic development at securing a job in industry. Many researchers believe that students should be involved in industry practice during the last year of study, such as internships or volunteering for non-profit organizations. While agreeing on these proposals of field practice, the researcher took one step further in considering the possibility of involving translation-major students in Bilingual Education (other similar terms are Bilingual Instruction, Bilingual Teaching, or English-Medium Instruction) for a subject field in which they have taken introductory courses and are also interested in considering it as future career focus. Bilingual Education for non-humanities courses has been carried out in many non-English speaking countries and received mixed feedback and comments from academia. The major concern centers on whether teaching with a combined use of both mother tongue and English can truly improve non-humanities major students’ English skills, especially in their own specialized fields. For the benefit of translation teaching and learning, the feasibility analysis of involving the translation students in the process of bilingual education for the courses of Computer Science, Chemistry, Physics, Telecommunication Engineering and other non-humanities disciplines will be the object of a different study. Simply put, translation students will better

understand how to carry out translation for special purposes by preparing bilingual teaching materials (for teaching scenarios applicable to translation or interpreting) and contributing to the instructive atmosphere of bilingual education; in the meantime, both the major students and teachers of the course in question have an opportunity to view the course from a distinct, translation-oriented perspective and more importantly, hone their language skills and in turn more skillfully conduct academic communication in English as the second language.

### **3.2. Proposed Roadmap for Field Concentration Requirements**

Based on the career choices discussed in Figure 3, the author proposed a roadmap for field concentration requirements accordingly, as shown in Figure 4. A series of customized, field-specific translation courses were suggested to develop students’ market-oriented skills so as to fulfill the requirement of a certain career track. Additionally, a common pool of electives is shared by all tracks in order to enhance student engagement. Students can enjoy great diversity in their choice of electives that are complementary to conventional courses intended for field-specific development. For example, active

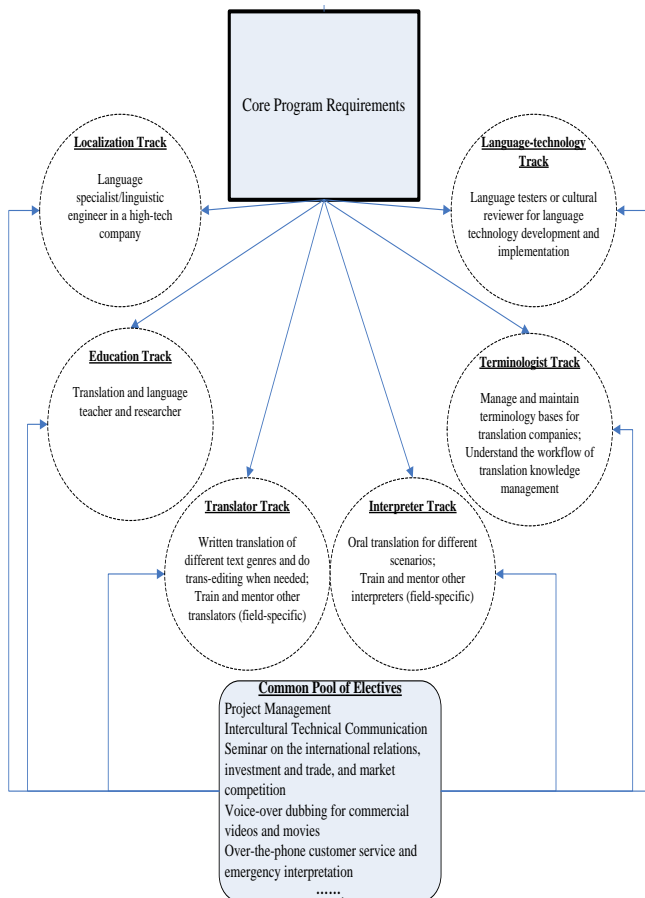
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practitioners in students’ interested fields and industry leading figures can be invited as guest speakers to share their work stories with students; field competitions can be held regularly to strengthen professional skills and the winners are provided with internship opportunities and co-authorship for translation projects. Table 3 lists some course examples for field concentration requirements that correspond to different career tracks.

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Figure 4. Proposed roadmap for field concentration requirements



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**Table 3. Proposed course examples for field concentration requirements**

Localization Track	Education Track	Translator Track	Interpreter Track	Terminologist Track	Language-technology Track
Intro. to Language Engineering in Multilingual Context; Project Management for Localization ... ..	Translation Pedagogy; Education Psychology for Translator Training; ... ..	Subject-field Studies for Translation; Writing for Translation; Editing for Translation; Working with Machine Translation ... ..	Subject-field Studies for Interpreting; Interpreting Practice Dialect Studies ... ..	Termbase Management; Enterprise Knowledgebase Management ... ..	Technology Development Principles and Approach; Software Testing and Reviewing as a Language Expert ... ..

Note: The courses offered in a track can also serve as electives open to students in other tracks, so as to promote interdisciplinary understanding and all-round skill development. Similarly, some courses offered by master’s programs should be open to interested undergraduate students.

## 4. DISCUSSION

According to Yan (2004, p. 9), a translation curriculum is always a field of (uneasy) compromises between the company employers (community needs) at large and the university academics, since university degree programs tend to be dominated by the subtle skills in terms of course hours, such as language training and area studies, rather

than imminent skills like translation practice in the working environment. The proposed roadmap attempts to address the importance of imminent skills by taking into account the market needs, while keeping intact the fundamental position of subtle skills. The students are allowed to decide on their preferred development paths from an earlier stage, which in turn gives them more time to make adjustments and better prepare for future career. The incorporation of specialized masters-level courses presents undergraduate students with clearer guidance in honing their field-specific translation/interpreting skills. I strongly believe that undergraduate students have every right to pursue a field-specific development track, instead of developing imminent skills from as late as master’s level. This is exactly why most translation (or English) undergraduates choose to pursue a master’s degree upon graduation or working in industry for a short time. This roadmap can also find its application in the conventional profession of literature translation through customized subject-field studies under Translator Track. Categorizing literary studies that is customized for translation under Field Concentration Requirements can develop imminent skills of literary translation, while categorizing literary studies in a broader sense under Core Program Requirements will continue to value the role literary

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studies play in developing subtle skills of language, culture, and literature.

While arguing that the proposed roadmap mitigates to a certain extent the gap between academic training and industry practice, the researcher also recognizes the limitations in the current research, which in a way highlight a few possible directions for future studies.

First and foremost, more extensive study needs to be carried out to collect all the available curriculum structures for both undergraduate and master’s programs in translation on a global scale. Actually there are relatively few US universities offering a bachelor’s degree in translation; English majors account for a large part of student enrollment in most translation MA (Master of Arts) programs. By contrast, China, for instance, has already had over 30 universities offering undergraduate translation programs, although the first Chinese university was approved to grant undergraduate degrees in translation as late as 2008<sup>7</sup>. Differences also exist in the information open to the public on US and Chinese university websites. While a year-by-year course list of a degree program is always accessible from a US

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<sup>7</sup>[http://www.tac-online.org.cn/en/tran/2008-02/25/content\\_3179716.htm](http://www.tac-online.org.cn/en/tran/2008-02/25/content_3179716.htm)



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university’s website, hardly any Chinese university’s website provides detailed course information about translation programs. Therefore, for future study, the researcher plans to incorporate translation program information from countries other than US so as to refine the curriculum roadmap by the triangulation of other approaches to data collection, such as interviews and questionnaires.

Next, to refine the proposed course list for field concentration requirements, the researcher suggests conducting focus group interviews with both practitioners and industry employers for a better understanding of market needs and industry requirements.

Thirdly, as for the assessment of the proposed curriculum model, it is still too early to reach any evaluative conclusion on the recently established market-oriented curriculum structure. The School of Digital Sciences at KSU applied this market-oriented structure into their program list as late as fall 2011; however, the school’s website reported that many companies have already shown great interest in their program schedule by offering their sophomore students internships and the school experienced dramatic growth upon their second year of

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admission<sup>8</sup>. During an information session which is the source of inspiration for this article, parents working in IT industry all expressed a great interest in recommending this program to their high school children and even suggested holding a forum with the school director to discuss the feasibility of designing short-term training certificate programs for company employees. It would be presumptuous to argue that the proposed roadmap will successfully apply to undergraduate translation programs for the current blueprint stage, but we have every reason to welcome the application of this roadmap into academic setting since its scalability caters for both academic development and vocational training. The roadmap should attract great public attention to such a relatively young academic program like Translation by virtue of its crystalline, market-oriented language.

Regarding evaluating the applicability of the proposed roadmap to different national and local contexts, the researcher would like to express her gratitude to the participants of 2012 UMass Graduate Conference in Translation Studies, who gave inspiring advice on future research directions to expand the current study. Many participants reported that this proposed roadmap will

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<sup>8</sup> <http://www.kent.edu/dsci/major-why-dsci>

more readily find implementation in the translation programs granted by non-English speaking countries, where undergraduate translation students typically have received the academic training in their second language (English) for a much longer period of time than their peers (learning a language other than English as the second language) in English-speaking countries such as USA and Canada. To accommodate for the marketing needs of those universities not yet ready for an early start of embracing the training of imminent skills, the author suggests adding one introductory course “Exploring Translation as a Profession” to the first year of undergraduate translation programs instead of fundamental curriculum restructuring. Inspired by similar exploratory courses found in the undergraduate-level curriculum of disciplines with a vocational slant, such as Business (“Exploring Business”) and IT (“Computer Science 101”), this proposed course will welcome the newcomers with an comprehensive overview of translation profession and job market, so as to help them experiment with different possibilities from an early stage and work towards their personal interests and individual self-development goals. The designing, implementing, evaluating of such an introductory course will be another promising topic of pedagogy research.

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Lastly, in dealing with the issue of offering students more authentic working experiences in the coursework, the researcher suggests involving translation students in bilingual teaching of non-humanities courses that match their field interests. Further analysis and assessment of this approach’s effectiveness will be brought forth in a separate study.

## **5. CONCLUSIONS**

Joining the persistent efforts in bringing the academic curriculum closer to industry practice, the study proposes a market-oriented roadmap for translation degree programs over both undergraduate and master’s level. Inspired by the program structure of an IT-related field, “Digital Sciences,” this proposal aims at aligning a student’s personal interest with the job-market realities and presents distinctive and flexible academic development paths for different career preferences. The article also deals with the limitations of the current study and in turn outlines the possible directions for future studies, in particular the compelling and promising interdisciplinary collaborations that will contextualize translation teaching and learning in the instructional environment of non-humanities fields.

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## **Appendix**

List of all the US university programs whose curricula have been referenced in this article

1. B.A. in French Translation & B.A. in German Translation, Kent State University
2. B.A. in Spanish Translation, Brigham Young University
3. M.A. in Translation, Kent State University
4. M.A. in Translation, University of Texas, Dallas
5. M.A. in Translation and Interpreting, Monterey Institute of International Studies

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