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Ho, C.-E. (2022). *Sustaining engagement with employability in T&I education: an exploratory study of gamifying an internship*. Abstract from Translation and Interpreting Forum Olomouc 2022, Olomouc, Czech Republic.

Document Version:
Peer reviewed version

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Sustaining engagement with employability in T&I education: An exploratory study of gamifying an internship

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Employability has been on the agenda for higher education for years (Bologna Process Implementation Report 2015, 2018; Yorke 2006), and Translation and Interpreting (T&I) programmes are no exceptions (examples see INSTB (Buysschaert, Fernández-Parra & van Egdom) 2017; Rodríguez de Céspedes 2017). However, students at Master's level not infrequently see only T&I skill-based training as relevant to their development, especially when in the UK the length of most programmes is short. Meanwhile, there is no curriculum to guide UK doctoral students through their journey, and research often seems occupying their full attention. This study addressed the above-mentioned challenges by introducing the EMT competence frameworks at both MA and PhD levels to highlight a multitude of competences for T&I practitioners and to-be-educators and to increase the awareness of employability for students who joined an internship piloted by the Centre for Translation and Interpreting at Queen's University Belfast. A journey log was created using the concept of gamification, which has been shown to successfully increase and sustain engagement (Burke 2014; Kapp 2012) and assigned to students to regularly record all activities engaged during the internship. All activities were matched against the EMT competence frameworks to draw on another benefit of gamification—distributed practice that can facilitate the recall of content—to remind them what employability entails. The findings show that most students are positive about the journey log, which made them aware of the importance of developing various competences and helped keep track of the time and effort devoted to building each capacity.

Keywords: T&I education, employability, engagement, gamification, journey log