



Book Review

Rudvin, M. and Tomassini, E. (2011). *Interpreting in the community and workplace: A practical teaching guide* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

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The rationale behind this book is that a gap needed to be filled in the relatively new – yet vibrant – area of community interpreting research to deal specifically with interpreter training issues. With this new contribution on training interpreters for face-to-face interaction in the workplace, both public (health and legal settings) and private (commercial settings), the authors – both experienced practitioners and interpreter trainers in Italy – have gone a long way towards bridging the gap in question. This is all the more welcome that, as interpreter training research develops as a discipline in its own right, there are also more and better training programmes on offer around the world. Those involved in delivering such programmes at all levels of specialisation are bound to find this theory-grounded textbook to be an extremely valuable resource.

Out of a total of six, the first three chapters are aimed at providing the contexts, both theoretical and sector/setting-specific, which inform the methodology for the interpreter training proposed in the next three chapters.

The authors explore the main issues at stake at global and community level (e.g. perception of immigration, power differentials between providers and clients, advocacy etc.) in connection with migration and the concurrent and growing requirement for cultural mediation. They provide clarification with respect to the terminology used to refer to the various types and modes of interpreting carried out in the three above-mentioned sectors. Although this is not the primary focus of the book, Chapter 1 concludes with a significant footnote on the need to train service providers, as well as interpreters, and generally raise awareness about the important role played by community interpreters in society. The theoretical discussion developed in Chapter 2 digs deeper into the impact of cultural aspects (such as perceptions of hierarchy, politeness strategies and the rules governing non-verbal communication in various settings) on the mediation process. The discussion leads seamlessly onto identifying the components of the all important *intercultural transfer competence* to be fostered among trainee interpreters; this entails in particular the ability to manage the conversation and coordinate the floor. The codes of ethics followed by professional interpreters provide the authors with the point of departure for a review of the knowledge, skills and abilities * required when interpreting in community settings. It is particularly noteworthy that the chapters focusing on theoretical discussions are not decoupled from the more practical approach outlined in the second half of the book. Indeed, suggestions are made throughout on the best ways to incorporate the relevant issues into the curriculum as well as raise them in the classroom. In a similar vein, the structural overview of the health, legal and business sectors (including the ways in which interpreting services are organised) presented in Chapter 3 provides a blueprint to be adapted for the

design of specific syllabi in other contexts, based on the local realities and challenges of cultural mediation.

The next two chapters are practical in nature and reflect the authors' experience of over a decade as interpreter trainers. Initially, questions of relevance to both pedagogy and higher education strategy are explored. For example, how to cater for the needs of language teaching as well as interpreter training units? Should programmes offered be language-specific or generic? Which language combinations should programmes focus on in given contexts? Secondly, the skill set alluded to in Chapter 2 (see * above) is taken up in more detail to arrive at a comprehensive list of the passive and active skills, knowledge and competences from which course objectives – and thus a course structure – may be derived. Thirdly, a template for a detailed syllabus is provided in tabular form (Table 5.1, pp.91-93). It suggests that trainers' input, followed by in-class discussion, on a number of generic issues related to the interpreting process, the nature of interpreting in the sectors at issue or the features of intercultural and interpersonal communication, should be combined with hands-on practical exercises (see section 5.3 for a detailed review of the sub-skills to focus on in the practical sessions) and role play-based interpreting activities. The various formats and relative merits of role play and dialogue simulation, involving different combinations of student, trainer and even guest speaker's input, are explained and concrete recommendations are made in connection with dialogue preparation and the *planting* of relevant obstacles to communication in order to mirror authentic situations effectively. Potential preparation materials are evaluated. In addition, the authors have appended to the bibliography a substantial list of websites and references, which may be used in class or recommended to students. This directs readers towards organisations working in the field as well as sector-specific documentation. Finally, a very useful section is dedicated to alerting trainers, including non-specialists in translation/interpreting, to aspects of student performance to home in on in the classroom, such as the management of turn-taking, or the mnemonic, interrupting and anticipation strategies displayed. Even though the authors state that assessment does not fall within the scope of this book and is more thoroughly dealt with in the work of others, they nevertheless provide a useful – albeit general – account of the theoretical and practical components to bear in mind when assessing students, as well as a sample feedback sheet (pp.136-137), built around a typical set of criteria for the assessment of dialogue interpreting.

The theoretical, methodological and background information provided up to this point is operationalised in the final Chapter 6 as a set of fifteen scripted and annotated English-Italian dialogues, preceded with a section on how to optimise use of these in class as well as *localise* them so that they may adapt to other training/professional settings or language combinations. This will also be facilitated thanks to the back translation into English of all Italian interventions. The progression from the general business scenarios to more specific health then legal settings as well as gradual rise in terms of difficulty/technicality within each sector, make pedagogical sense as this will allow trainee interpreters to progress from applying simple and flexible strategies to more complex and constrained ones. Even though the in-class approach suggested in the commentary accompanying each dialogue may be, to some extent, familiar to specialist trainers, it will assist class plan and preparation. In addition, it will provide non-specialist trainers with a comprehensive step-by-step guide to class management.

Overall, with its wealth of relevant information and material, this book is a *must-have* resource for both language training units wanting to offer their students a practice and theory-grounded insight into the work of the professional community interpreter, as well as for established specialised programmes. It may also be used to support the training of business, health or legal service providers. We must remember that the training of all those involved in interpreter-mediated encounters is one of the keys to successful communication, to the professionalisation of interpreting and thus, ultimately, to ensuring that the needs of those served by community interpreters are best met.