

Training the translation trainers: an introduction

Gary Massey^{a*}, Don Kiraly^b, Maureen Ehrensberger-Dow^a

^a*Institute of Translation and Interpreting, School of Applied Linguistics, Zurich University of Applied Sciences, Winterthur, Switzerland*

^b*Division of English Linguistics and Translation Studies, Johannes Gutenberg University of Mainz, Gernersheim, Germany*

*Corresponding author:

Gary Massey
Institute of Translation and Interpreting,
School of Applied Linguistics,
Zurich University of Applied Sciences, Winterthur,
Switzerland
gary.massey@zhaw.ch

Training translation trainers: An introduction

Since the inception of translation studies, educating translation students has been a constant feature of the applied branch of the discipline, with some scholars regarding translation pedagogy as a sub-discipline of its own (e.g. Piotrowska and Tyupa 2014). Most empirical pedagogical research has concentrated on student learner competence and its development, but those who actually do the teaching have received much less attention. At least the second part of Kelly's (2008, 99) assertion that "little has been said about students [and] even less has been said about teachers or trainers" still seems to apply.

This is not to say that the issues surrounding translator educators' competences have not been acknowledged at all. Competence models have been developed for translator educators, the best known being Kelly's (2005, 150–151) heuristic competence profile that covers three principal areas of expertise (professional translation practice, the academic discipline of Translation Studies and teaching skills), and the EMT translator trainer profile (EMT Expert Group 2013), whose five components (instructional, organisational, interpersonal, assessment and field competence) are evidently based in large part on Kelly's earlier model. In addition, the diffuse information that exists on concrete initiatives to develop translator educators' competences shows that it has been taking place at an institutional level, and sporadically also inter-institutionally and internationally, for at least two decades (e.g. Englund Dimitrova 2002; Kelly 2005, 150–156; Pym 2001). The most recent attempt to shed light on requirements and measures for translator educators is a 2018 survey of university institutes and programmes in the European Master's in Translation (EMT) and *Conférence internationale permanente d'instituts universitaires de traducteurs et interprètes* (CIUTI) networks.¹ There also appears to be a need to develop approaches

¹ The results are reported more fully in Massey (Forthcoming) as part of a detailed overview of research on, and approaches to, translation teacher education.

specifically relevant to developing translation and interpreting competences. But given the relatively low proportion of universities that require their teaching staff to attend mandatory professional development courses and the limited number of hours per year allocated to continuing professional development at numerous institutions that took part in the survey, future initiatives are unlikely to have much impact without corresponding structural and regulatory changes in the individual organisational contexts where they are to be implemented.

Kelly's comment notwithstanding, the literature on translator education has been trying to say something *to* the educators. Published research on translator education in this journal as well as in various recent edited volumes and monographs (e.g. Cui and Zhao 2015; Colina and Angelelli 2017; Venuti 2017) abound with good practices for translator educators and their institutions to enhance teaching and curriculum development. This body of literature demonstrates that developing translation and translator competence goes far beyond the routine cognitive activity that the term "training" might imply to include extensive and sustained reflection and a capability to tackle new and unexpected tasks and problems. Early milestones are Kiraly's (2000) social constructivist approach to translation teaching through authentic collaborative project-based learning, Colina's (2003) research-based approach in applying functionalist theoretical models to materials, course and assessment design, and González Davies' (2004) consideration of the "multiple voices" and learner requirements in the translation classroom. Yet, these three volumes are at the same time symptomatic of the lacunae in explicitly addressing the needs and development of translator educators themselves – although they consistently draw on evidence of the way students learn, they say little about the educators themselves, or how they might develop the competences needed to teach. Educators' roles and development as (self-)reflective practitioners and learners may well be conceptualised in a variety of publications (e.g. Colina 2003; Kelly 2005), but they

have not been subject to anything but piecemeal empirical study. Educators are provided with methodological toolkits, advice, instructions and case-study examples about what and how to teach, but how they learn to do so has only rarely been considered, and applied research on developing translator educators' competence represents a neglected though "vital avenue for the future" (Way Forthcoming).

There are exceptions, of course. Hubscher-Davidson (2008,) Haro-Soler (2017) and Li (2018), for instance, have included research on educators in conjunction with learner-oriented studies, while investigations of future and working teachers have been carried out by Kelly (2008), Pinto and Sales (2008) and Li and Zhang (2011), among others. Most recently, Pavlović and Antunović (Forthcoming) combine the views of translator educators and professional translators to find out more about what constitutes a desirable teaching profile. As in the case of translator competence and its development, these and other contributions indicate that teachers of translation (should) fulfil a complex set of educational roles that the terms "trainer" and "training" do not adequately capture – which is why, in this introduction, we have consistently chosen to refer to translator education and educators.

Nevertheless, the work that has been tailored specifically to translator educators' competences, needs and development remains scarce. With this in mind, the present volume serves to address, and to some extent reflect, the current state of research on educator development. With the exception of Marc Orlando's generic consideration of translator and interpreter educators' skills, the contributions focus solely on translator (as opposed to interpreter) educators. This is no accident, as only a small fraction of proposals received by the editors were devoted to interpreting – it appears that translator educators currently command the greater interest and need.

Orlando opens this issue by focussing on the synergetic potential of translator and interpreter educators combining practical, research-oriented and pedagogical skills to educate

their students. After reviewing major pedagogical approaches, he makes concrete recommendations for recruiting the educators and developing their competences to meet current market and educational realities, appealing to higher education institutions to ensure that their contexts provide the development measures to equip staff with the skills required to educate today's language mediation professionals.

Translator and educator competences are directly addressed by Di Wu, Lawrence Jun Zhang and Lan Wei, who report on research exploring the fit between Chinese translator educators' beliefs about developing translation competence and their actual educational practices. The discrepancies they identify are attributed both to external factors, such as the curriculum, examination systems, colleagues and student abilities, and to internal ones, like self-efficacy and motivation – with corresponding implications for (self-) educating the educators and the institutions that employ them.

Student beliefs about their own self-efficacy lie at the centre of the action research study by Maria del Mar Haro-Soler and Don Kiraly. Results showing how a socio-constructivist pedagogical approach driven by an emergentist epistemology seems to have boosted student self-efficacy beliefs, prompting the authors to conclude that the interwoven processes of learning, teaching and doing research might also serve as a strategy for (self-) educating the educators themselves.

As already noted, translation pedagogy has consistently used case study research to reveal and expose educators and their institutions to good and better practices for teaching and curriculum development. The next five articles stand in this tradition, as they explore teaching practices designed to prepare students, and their educators, for emerging profiles in societies and economies dominated by digitalisation and multimodal communication.

Elsa Huertas Barros and Juliet Vine present the case study of a collaborative transcreation project to provide educators with a set of concepts with which to prepare their

students for the continuously evolving markets of the future. Key to this is a broader conceptualisation of translation and translators' roles to embrace activities such as transcreation, and developing students' assessment literacy to help them participate actively in their own learning and to gain confidence in the professional judgement of their educators.

Jean Nitzke, Anke Tardel and Silvia Hansen-Schirra discuss the ERASMUS+ *DigiLing* project, designed to prepare linguists and translators for the job market by teaching and improving their skills and knowledge of digitalisation. After examining the competences needed by the current generation of translation students and considering how they can be integrated into curricula, they show how the *DigiLing* courses can be used to keep translator educators abreast of the newest developments in the language industry.

Digital skills also feature large in the contribution by Verònica López-Garcia and Patricia Rodríguez-Inés – in this case applied to corpus linguistics tools used to educate audiovisual translators. Corpus tools can not only achieve genuine improvements in translators' efficiency, they can also serve as useful pedagogical resources to explore idiolect, register and lexical recurrence. The authors present a successfully implemented teaching unit on corpus-based script analysis to meet a very real need, identified by a local survey, to develop educators' competence to teach audiovisual translation.

Continuing the audiovisual theme, Agnieszka Chmiel, Iwona Mazur and Gert Vercauteren present a procedure for designing an audiodescription course that incorporates modern learning models and at the same time meets the requirements of this emerging multimodal profession. Based on good practices described in the article, the various course elements are conceived as a reference point for curriculum developers and educators seeking to enrich their teaching.

Finally, Joanna Gough presents an investigation of information resource use and retrieval behaviour among 16 freelance professional translators, using methods drawn from

cognitive translation process research. She suggests ways in which the results can inform educators' approaches to this aspect of translation competence, including diversifying student search strategies and external resource use and raising student awareness of how technological innovation can impact translators' information behaviour.

The eight articles making up this special issue throw valuable spotlights on the nature and range of current approaches to supporting the development of translator educators' competences. They are also intended to increase the visibility and discussion of this important but neglected aspect of translation pedagogy. We hope that, in future, considerably more research will be devoted to the key issues of what translator educator competence is, and how it develops.

Acknowledgements

The editors are profoundly grateful to all the contributors and reviewers involved in this special issue.

References

- Colina, S. 2003. *Translation Teaching from Research to the Classroom: A Handbook for Teachers*. Boston: McGraw-Hill.
- Colina, S., and C. Angelelli, ed. 2017. *Translation and Interpreting Pedagogy in Dialogue with Other Disciplines*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Cui, Y., and W. Zhao, eds. 2015. *Handbook of Research on Teaching Methods in Language Translation and Interpretation*. Hershey: IGI Global.
- EMT Expert Group. 2013. *EMT Translator Trainer Profile: Competences of the Trainer in Translation* [online]. Accessed 1 July 2019.
<https://de.scribd.com/document/246979198/Translator-Trainer-Profile-EMT>
- Englund Dimitrova, B. 2002. "Training and Educating the Trainers: A Key Issue in Translators' Training." In *Teaching Translation and Interpreting 4. Building Bridges*, edited by E. Hung, 73–82. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- González Davies, M. 2004. *Multiple Voices in the Classroom: Activities, Tasks and Projects*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

- Haro-Soler, M. M. 2017. "Teaching Practices and Translation Students' Self-efficacy: A Qualitative Study of Teachers' Perceptions." *Current Trends in Translation Teaching and Learning English* 4: 98-228.
- Hubscher-Davidson, S. 2008. "A Reflection on Action Research Processes in Translator Training." *The Interpreter and Translator Trainer* 2 (1): 75–92.
- Kelly, D. 2005. *A Handbook for Translator Trainers: A Guide to Reflective Practice*. Manchester: St. Jerome.
- Kelly, D. 2008. "Training the Trainers: Towards a Description of Translator Trainer Competence and Training Needs Analysis." *TTR: Traduction, Terminologie, Rédaction* 21 (1): 99–125.
- Kiraly, D. 2000. *A Social Constructivist Approach to Translator Education: Empowerment from Theory to Practice*. Manchester: St. Jerome.
- Li, X. 2018. "Teaching Beliefs and Learning Beliefs in Translator and Interpreter Education: An Exploratory Case Study." *The Interpreter and Translator Trainer* 12 (2): 132–151.
- Li, D., and C. Zhang. 2011. "Knowledge Structure and Training of Translation Teachers: An Exploratory Study of Doctoral Programmes of Translation Studies in Hong Kong." *Meta* 56 (3): 693–712.
- Massey, G. Forthcoming. "Translation Teacher Training." In *The Routledge Handbook of Translation and Education*, edited by S. Laviosa and M. González Davies. London: Routledge.
- Pavlović, N., and G. Antunović. Forthcoming. "A Desirable Profile of Translation Teacher: Perceptions and Needs in the Croatian Context." *inTRAlinea Online Translation Journal Special Issue: New Insights into Translator Training*.
- Pinto M., and D. Sales. 2008. "Towards User-centred Information Literacy Instruction in Translation: The View of Trainers." *The Interpreter and Translator Trainer*. 2 (1): 47–74.
- Piotrowska, M., and S. Tyupa. 2014. "Translation Pedagogy: A New Sub-discipline of Translation Studies." *inTRAlinea Online Translation Journal Special Issue: Challenges in Translation Pedagogy*. 16 [online]. Accessed 1 July 2019.
<http://www.intralinea.org/specials/article/2112>
- Pym, A. 2001. "Trial, Error and Experimentation in the Training of Translation Teachers." In *Traducción & comunicación*, 2, edited by E. Sánchez Trigo, and Ó. Díaz Fouces, 73–90. Vigo: Universidade de Vigo.
- Venuti L., ed. 2017. *Teaching Translation: Programs, Courses, Pedagogies*. London: Routledge.

Way, C. Forthcoming. "Training and Pedagogical Implications." In *The Bloomsbury Companion to Language Industry Studies*, edited by E. Angelone, M. Ehrensberger-Dow and G. Massey. London: Bloomsbury Academic.