

INTRODUCTION

THE IDEA for this book has been in my thoughts for a long time. I have always enjoyed talking with colleagues about their best teaching practices and have always searched for the reasons why and how those practices evolved. But how can we bring valuable research into the classroom and show students the value of scholarly publications? Napier (2011) encourages us to publish our work and to share it with others in our field. Russell (2011) encourages us to do it, and to teach our students to do it well. I want to talk about how we use what we already have and how good research informs our teaching today in our individualized education programs, graduate programs, workshops, and conference presentations.

My goal was to invite faculty members to start a conversation by sharing best teaching practices and then backtracking to the evidence and observations that resulted in those teaching methods. I wanted to know more about the faculty who continue to inspire the next generation of interpreters. I had attempted to find financial support to travel around and actually observe their teaching, live and in person, in their home environments. Alas, that did not happen; but I still think that would be a wonderful experience. Instead, I conducted Skype interviews with 17 like-minded colleagues who were kind enough to share their time and energy. The challenge of this book has been to take the excitement, energy, and, dare I say, passion of each contributor and convey that to you, the reader.

Several events inspired me to write this book. Roy's *Innovative Practices for Teaching Sign Language Interpreters* (2000) was an inspiration to me. She included authors who were "interpreters, researchers, and educators" who shared a teaching practice for teaching discourse used in their classroom that was "supported by current knowledge, research, and theory about how

one learns to interpret” (Roy, p. 11). Her groundbreaking work in discourse analysis continues to serve us well, and the wisdom in that volume should be reviewed on a regular basis, because those chapters reflected the thinking of educators who understood the importance of research and their attempt to move our field forward. I took her approach and incorporated it into my goal, and I invited faculty members to have a conversation, sharing their favorite teaching practices and then telling me why they use it, how they use it, and how it fits into their teaching approach.

And then in 2001, I was involved in an effort (Cogen et al.) to explore interpreter educators’ activities and philosophical approaches in the classroom through an online survey with members of the Conference of Interpreter Educators (Winston, 2005, p. 217). The questions, such as the following, were somewhat convoluted: “Describe your favorite/most effective teaching activity, discuss why, and describe how you assess it” (ibid., p. 218), and the data collection through the organization’s listserv was problematic. However, responses indicated “some level of understanding of the essential need to develop critical thinking” in students (ibid., p. 219). These surveys were followed by an online roundtable in February 2003, entitled “Teaching Interpreting: What Do We Need To Know” (ibid., p. 222), for which there were 229 registrants from around the world, an incredible number given the early stages of online professional development.

The other concept that impacted my thinking was a proposal for bringing together “eminent researchers ... with junior and student researchers,” originally conceived by Winston and Cokely (2007) for the National Interpreter Education Center (NIEC).¹ They proposed 18 initiatives for improving interpreter education, with the understanding that the limited research in the field was “written to satisfy research criteria” rather than addressing practitioners and educators (ibid., p. 1). Alas, this initiative did not come to fruition primarily due to lack of funding.

1. The NIEC collaborates with five regional interpreter education centers across the United States, providing leadership, coordination, needs assessment, and professional development support and services. The NIEC is funded by the Department of Education, which completed its second five-year cycle in 2015. This concept was inspired by Winston’s participation in a conference held at Texas A&M University in May 1990.

We have had enough of “pseudoscholars who present workshops not grounded in theory and who pontificate their point of view without sufficient knowledge of the discipline” (Monikowski, 2013, p. 16). It is time to step up to the “academization” (Pöchhaker, 2004, p. 30) of interpreting and instill in our students an understanding of why teaching, grounded in research, is our future. My requirement for this volume was that each contributor had to share a scholarly publication, either their own or someone else’s.

The 17 chapters in this book represent 17 Skype interviews with my colleagues, all master teachers from my perspective. They were fascinating and resulted in me either re-reading or reading every suggestion they offered, which was an absolute treat. Some of the scholarly publications they selected were very familiar to me, some not so much, and some were buried deep in my memory.

I wrestled with how to organize this volume. Before I began, my plan was to categorize the faculty by the courses they taught: undergraduate or graduate courses, online or face-to-face courses, introductory or capstone courses; but then it became complicated. So I decided that an imposed grouping would not enhance anything. For that reason, I have presented the contributors alphabetically within each section, and I encourage you, the reader, to take what rings true for you. I also needed a way to distinguish the interviewees’ comments from direct quotes from other publications, and I decided to put the comments in italics.

Dennis Cokely shared the four primary readings he uses in his Introduction to the Interpreting Profession course, and I especially enjoyed Apostolou’s presentation of interpreters at “the in-between space” (2009, p. 2).

Tobias Haug surprised me by focusing on Johnston and Schembri’s (2007) *Australian Sign Language: An Introduction to Sign Language Linguistics* and the challenge that presents to his German-speaking interpreting students throughout his beginning, intermediate, and advanced linguistics courses.

I revisited several seminal works when interviewing **Tom Holcomb** about his ASL Discourse class, especially those by Kannapell (1989) and by Bragg (1990), both still so relevant to interpreting students as they learn how to adjust to different language choices made by Deaf people.

I conducted my interview with **Jack Hoza** when he was in the middle of writing his own recent volume, *Interpreting in the Zone* (2016), and we shared a lot of laughter as we discussed how he wants to help his students understand what it means to work “in the zone.” He shared how this goal is infused throughout his program and has had an impact on his approach to teaching.

The theoretical foundation **Terry Janzen** offers his students in his Introduction to Interpretation Theory course gives students a deeper understanding of cultural differences by assigning Simon’s (1995) article and sharing an excellent example of his own interpreting experience.

The *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (Council of Europe, 2001) has permeated the Irish Sign Language curriculum at Trinity College Dublin, and **Lorraine Leeson** appreciated the opportunity to share this with me. She and her colleagues have done an impressive job of gaining recognition for sign language interpreting and for Deaf people.

When **Elisa Maroney** chose to discuss Larson’s *Meaning-Based Translation* (1998), I was embarrassed that I still had the first edition, up on the top shelf in my office. She selects specific chapters for different courses, culminating in the students’ final projects. I took down my older copy (Larson, 1985) and re-read Larson, smiling at my own marginalia from years ago.²

Jemina Napier had just begun her position and was developing undergraduate courses at Heriot-Watt when I interviewed her. Her selection was *Sign Language Interpreting* (Napier, McKee, and Goswell, 2010), a volume she co-authored while at Macquarie University. This book was always a student favorite because of its accessible language and concrete examples.

The short but incredibly important article, “The Importance of Stupidity in Scientific Research” (Schwartz, 2008), which **Brenda Nicodemus** chose, is crucial for helping her doctoral students begin their research.

2. “In getting my books, I have been always solicitous of an ample margin; this not so much through any love of the thing in itself, however agreeable, as for the facility it affords me of penciling suggested thoughts, agreements, and differences of opinion, or brief critical comments in general.” (Poe, 1844, p. 484).

Rico Peterson oversees an Apprentice program, which includes a weekly colloquium, in the classic style of recitation. In *What Can Interpreters Learn From Aristotle and Stanislavsky?* (2002), Herrera asks whether interpreting is an art or a technique (p. 37), an excellent way for apprentices to begin discussing the work of an interpreter.

The “Introduction to Translation and Interpreting Studies” graduate course that **David Sawyer** teaches is a multilingual course taught in English. David chose to discuss Liu’s “How Do Experts Interpret?” from Hansen et al. (Eds.), *Efforts and Models in Interpreting and Translation Research* (2008), because it helps students see the challenges they are encountering in their own practice.

Barbara Shaffer’s choice was another surprise—*The Gish Approach to Information Processing* (Gish, 1996), a classic work that fits nicely with Barb’s own approach to the interpreting process.

Theresa Smith brought her vast interpreting experience to our interview and offered a broad view of teaching interpreting and her own approach to teaching, primarily framing it in the language of Gumperz (1982) and Karpman (1968).

Christopher Stone was teaching a graduate course when I interviewed him, “Fundamentals of Interpreting,” and he assigned Baker’s *In Other Words* (2011), because it is evidence-based and draws upon actual translation practice. Also, Baker includes a variety of languages that helps his students understand the common challenges faced by translators, regardless of the languages they use.

The students in the “Senior Seminar” that **Laurie Swabey** co-teaches finish the semester by giving presentations that are open to the community. They select their own topics; however, Laurie always includes Leeson’s *Making the Effort in Simultaneous Interpreting*, because it resonates with them as they make the transition from students to working professionals.

Beppie van den Bogaerde teaches a Deaf studies course that includes the cultural aspects of the Dutch and international Deaf communities. She begins the course by assigning Lane’s “Do Deaf People Have a Dis-

ability” from *Sign Language Studies* (2002), and her students always find it quite an eye opener.

And when **Betsy Winston** chose our co-authored *Discourse Mapping: Developing Textual Coherence* (2002), I was not surprised. (On occasion, we hear from colleagues who express interest in learning more about this approach.) She uses parts of this approach in all the discourse classes she teaches—graduate and undergraduate—although the application depends on specific course goals.

Every one of the individuals who participated in this adventure with me—totally without prompt—talked about how they adjust/adapt to their students. They all emphasize the importance of research and of exposing students to research in our field and in the broader disciplines of psychology and translation studies. But they also recognize the importance of helping students ease into this kind of reading, because they are experienced teachers who have developed a keen sense of “when”—when to introduce an article, when to adjust, and when to discuss.

As educators, we seem to innately know the importance of research and evidence-based practice in our higher education programs. However, the ultimate question is, of course, the following: Does this evidence-based approach to our courses have a positive impact on the work interpreters provide? Napier (2005) approached “a few Auslan interpreters, Auslan-interpreting students, and deaf professional consumers” and asked them to comment on “the application of research into education” (pp. 97–99). And although the following comments are subjective, they indicate a “benefit in terms of interpreting practice”; it is worth it to include some of them here, because I do not know that we have any other publication that includes these kinds of comments.

Practitioner: “The most palpable benefit to me as a fellow practitioner is the strategies that they now bring before, during, and after assignments.”

Students: “I have become much more aware of what it is I’m doing as an interpreter” and this understanding of research and theory “has enabled me to develop a greater appreciation for an understanding of the Code of Ethics and my role as an interpreter.”

Deaf consumers: Students “think more carefully about their translation . . . and their analysis of the interpreting situation is more pronounced, clearer, and most certainly more professional.”

I hope we can continue to see a positive impact on our students by using teaching and learning grounded in research.

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