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## ***Editorial: Education, educating, educational...***

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# Editorial: Education, educating, educational...

**Jemina Napier, Editor<sup>1</sup>**

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Welcome to the third volume of the *International Journal of Interpreter Education (IJIE)*. I am delighted to report that due to the increasing number of manuscripts being submitted to the journal for consideration, as of 2012, we will move to two issues per year and will select articles according to themes. This volume focuses on different educational elements of interpreter education and training. When we consider interpreter education, it is important to reflect on the purpose of **education**, generally speaking.

Education in the largest sense is any act or experience that has a formative effect on the mind, character, or physical ability of an individual. In its technical sense, education is the process by which society deliberately transmits its accumulated knowledge, skills, and values from one generation to another. (Wikipedia, 2011)

As interpreter educators, we transmit our accumulated knowledge, skills and values to the next generation of interpreters working between spoken and signed languages by providing systematic and scaffolded instruction through formal training programs, continuing education (professional development) workshops, and mentoring. The goal of adult and higher education is to produce graduates who are critical thinkers, independent learners, and reflective and ethical citizens who are deeply committed to lifelong learning.

In formal terms, students enroll in university [and adult education] programmes for in-depth study of a limited number of disciplines and/or to learn how to be proficient in an established profession. The widely accepted view of [adult] education, though, goes beyond acquiring the knowledge base of a discipline or profession. There is generally an expectation that a graduate will have developed as a person and acquired a range of intellectual qualities so as to be capable of performing in an intelligent way outside the confines of what has been taught in formal courses (Kember & Leung, 2005, p. 155).

Interpreter education has the same goals. We need interpreters who are critical thinkers, independent learners, and reflective and ethical practitioners, and interpreter education programs of any form need to incorporate the development of such traits and equip graduates with the skills and capabilities necessary to be lifelong reflective practitioners (Winston, 2005).

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## Napier

In more recent years, approaches to **educating** in adult and higher education have shifted to become more learner centered, promoting collaborative, cooperative, and constructive learning. Higher education teaching philosophy is now focused more on meeting students' needs in a more general manner, especially those who are professionals undertaking vocational-related courses. A constructivist approach to learning highlights the importance of reference to the student's own experience:

Constructivism is building on knowledge known by the student. Education is student-centred, students have to construct knowledge themselves. Explanations can use metacognition via metaphor. Semiotics, or meanings of words, are important to keep in mind. Constructivism is a theory, a tool, a lens for examining educational practices (Dougiamas, 1998, p. 4).

A *constructivist perspective* embodies the notion of active learning, wherein the main interest is in the process by which the learner reaches an understanding of the structure of the learning tasks. Wilson (1981) supports considering the nature of the learner's individual experiences and how he or she interprets those experiences in the teaching and learning environment. Thus, to constructively encourage students to derive meaning from the learning process, an instructor must establish a good learning atmosphere with varied teaching strategies (Druger, 1996). Effective learning requires the process to be "an ongoing active learning experience" where the students are "intellectually engaged throughout the process, constantly reflecting on and assessing their understanding" (Evensky, 1996, p. 17).

Higher and adult education promote critical thinking and reflective practice, which works most effectively within an active learning framework. In evaluating higher education literature, the following points are crucial to ensuring effective pedagogy: (a) active learning, (b) student-centered learning, (c) experiential learning, and (d) interface between learning and professional skills development (i.e., workplace demands).

All of these points are also crucial in interpreter education. As stated by Sawyer (2003), "[T]he momentum driving interpreter education has gathered force" (p. 2), and curriculum and assessment theory must inform interpreter education. Likewise, research must inform interpreter education—interpreting not just research but, more important, interpreter education research (Pöchhacker, 2010). The aim of this journal is to facilitate the discussion of all elements of interpreter education in whichever form they appear—whether formal or informal, and through case studies, reflections, theoretical discussions, or research. *IJIE* seeks to validate what it means to be a teacher-researcher (Roulston, Legette, & Deloach, 2005) in interpreter education.

Volume 3 of *IJIE* explores **educating** spoken and signed language interpreters in different contexts, taking alternative approaches, and drawing on a variety of frameworks. All of the articles—although discussing educating either spoken or signed language interpreters, specifically in different countries—are more widely applicable and transferable across modalities, languages, and borders.

The featured research articles present the fundamentals of interpreter education that discuss how to draw on linguistics and teach reflective practice among spoken and signed language interpreters. Annette Sachtleben and Heather Denny discuss how to teach pragmatics to spoken language interpreters in New Zealand; Trudy Schafer details a project to develop expertise among American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters; and Maria Moreno and colleagues explore how they provided web-based training for Spanish-speaking, dual-role interpreters in the United States.

The commentary pieces focus on **educational** interpreting and professional development. There are two such articles: One describes projects addressing the performance assessment of educational interpreters in a school in Australia (Karen Bontempo and Bethel Hutchinson), and the other describes the delivery of a professional development program for educational interpreters working in schools throughout the state of Queensland, Australia (Maree Madden). Although the focus of each article is on Australia and educational interpreters, both articles highlight some of the most crucial aspects of interpreter education: standards, assessment, and, particularly, ongoing maintenance and development of professional skills. Thus, these two articles should also be relevant to people who are training, educating, and accrediting/certifying spoken and signed language interpreters in any country. Likewise, Fatima Cornwall's commentary on creating your own materials for use in the classroom is a welcome contribution in which the author shares pedagogical approaches and the ever-challenging aspect of finding appropriate source texts that students can use to practice and develop their interpreting skills.

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## Editorial

In our student section, we have an excellent contribution from Lisa Godfrey, who identified characteristics of effective interpreting programs in the United States. Although she surveyed ASL interpreter programs, much of the effective characteristics that she identified give educators and administrators food for thought in relation to what makes a good program. I was recently involved in leading a team to review the translation and interpreting curriculum at my institution, and we found many of the same issues that Lisa brings to light.

Finally, the open forum section features another interview with a scholar—this time, with Christopher Stone. Stone has been involved in sign language interpreter education since 1999 and also works closely with many spoken language interpreter colleagues in the United Kingdom. This interview gives us insight into what attracts us to our work as interpreters, interpreter educators, and, particularly, scholars of interpreting or interpreter education.

In keeping with tradition, I'd like to end the editorial with a quote that I feel encapsulates the theme(s) of the editorial and the volume. I recently discovered a great quote via one of my students studying in our Translation & Interpreting Pedagogy program. Although I am familiar with Don Kiraly's work on applying social constructivist approaches to teaching translation, when the student highlighted this quote in one of her online postings, it really resonated with me so I would like to share it with you:

We become empowered as teachers not by controlling learners, but by emancipating them. When we encourage learners to think for themselves and to depend on each other, on their individual capabilities for independent learning, and on us as guides and assistants to help them learn, we are empowering them to become full-fledged members of the communities in which they live and will work: we are helping them to build character and trustworthiness; we are promoting a culture of expertise and professionalism in our future colleagues and successors. This is empowerment for all of us: teachers, students and administrators alike. (Kiraly, 2000, p. 194).

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