Book Review: To Know How to Suggest ...: Approaches to Teaching Conference Inter

New book introduces theory-based training to conference interpretation teachers.

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Published: March 11, 2015 Last updated: December 2, 2015

To Know How to Suggest ...: Approaches to Teaching Conference Interpreting

Dörte Andres & Martina Behr (eds.)

Perfect Paperback: 260 pages

Publisher: Frank & Timme (19 Dec. 2014)

ISBN-10: 3732901149

ISBN-13: 978-3732901142

The target audience for this highly readable new offering from the University of Mainz/FTSK Germersheim (all but 2 of the 11 chapters are written by interpreter trainers based there) is described in the Editors' Preface as "experienced interpreter training practitioners who may not have received theory-based training in this domain during their studies". That description would fit a sizeable proportion of the current pool of interpreter trainers, including myself. Having found it difficult to put down- which is not always the case with books on interpreting- I would warmly recommend it to that group and even relative beginners in the interpreter training field.

Typically, trainers attending AIIC training of trainers courses report that they would like to get some tips on effective practical exercises, get to know a bit about relevant theory and learn about the latest techniques. This volume can provide them with food for thought- and action- on all three counts.

Silvia Kalina (Heidelberg) kicks off with a potted history of interpreter training over the years and a look ahead to the future, followed by a short introduction to the main theories as to what the interpreting process consists of and a plea for Interpreting Studies to be more closely integrated in all fields of conference interpreter training.

The link between theory and practice is developed by Maren Dingfelder Stone (Germersheim) who looks at the "Note-Taking Debate" over the last sixty or so years before moving on to examine some core elements of note-taking systems and finally providing some useful practical suggestions for a structured note-taking syllabus.

She also teams up with colleague Catherine Chabasse to give a recapitulation of Daniel Gile's popular Effort Models and to explain how capacity allocation strategies may vary according to

directionality (into the A or B language) and according to similarity or differences between language pairs. Again they conclude with useful suggestions for classroom exercises.

Co-editor Dörte Andres- together with fellow Germersheim trainers Sophia Boden and Claudia Fuchs- provide a thoughtful discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of well-known preparatory exercises for simultaneous interpreting (dual-task training, shadowing, cloze and fairy tales). She also writes a chapter on the importance of careful text selection for training purposes, following up work done by Hans Hönig and others and including some useful tables setting out "text-internal" and "presentation-based" criteria of difficulty.

Useful tables are also provided by Catherine Chabasse in her contribution on "Aptitude", but in this case they serve to match the skills being tested (cognitive, non-cognitive and personality) with the possible methods for testing them as proposed in the literature.

In "Anticipation, Segmentation…Stalling? How to Teach Interpreting Strategies" Stephanie Kader and Sabine Seubert (Germersheim) answer the question in the title by highlighting the need to first make students aware of these strategies. They then provide a compilation (with practical examples and text) of the best-known macro- and above all micro-strategies and how they could be taught/learnt.

Martina Behr, the other co-editor of this volume, addressing the question of "How to Back the Students", looks first at the issue of quality from the user's point of view, then at assessment sheets for both exams and training and ends with a brief but excellent analysis of how to give good feedback.

As for readers on the lookout for new techniques, they may well be persuaded by Marc Orlando's (Monash) convincing arguments in favour of using the digital pen to help students develop their note-taking systems. These arguments are further backed up by positive feedback from two universities using the pen. They may also be swayed by Maren Dingfelder Stone's practical look at how IT and the digital media can be harnessed to create a self-study platform (Moodle) containing structured practice exercises purpose-designed to deal with specific interpreting difficulties.

To complete the cycle from selection, through training, to life after training, Jacquy Neff (Germersheim) makes a strong case in "Professionalization: A Systematic Didactic Approach" for a tailor-made course to prepare students to survive- and more- on the market.

To conclude, the main attraction of this volume is the variety of input from different authors on a wide range of practical topics, all potentially of interest to trainers of interpreters. Furthermore, the guiding hand of the editorial team ensures that each and every chapter adds a new angle to the training process. It can also be seen as a valuable contribution from a centre of excellence in the German-speaking world with several of the chapters translated (well) from German into English.