

9-2024

Book Review of *The Routledge Guide to Teaching Translation and Interpreting Online*

Xinhui Zhang

Weiwei Wang

Guangdong University of Foreign Studies

Follow this and additional works at: <https://open.clemson.edu/ijie>

Recommended Citation

Zhang, Xinhui and Wang, Weiwei (2024) "Book Review of *The Routledge Guide to Teaching Translation and Interpreting Online*," *International Journal of Interpreter Education*: Vol. 15: Iss. 1, Article 14.

Available at: <https://open.clemson.edu/ijie/vol15/iss1/14>

This Open Forum is brought to you for free and open access by Clemson OPEN. It has been accepted for inclusion in *International Journal of Interpreter Education* by an authorized editor of Clemson OPEN. For more information, please contact kokeefe@clemson.edu.



Book Review of *The Routledge Guide to Teaching Translation and Interpreting Online*

Edited by Cristiano Mazzei and Laurence Jay-Rayon Ibrahim Aibo (2022). Routledge. 162 pages, US \$49.59, ISBN 9780367711030

Xinhui Zhang

Guangdong University of Foreign Studies

Weiwei Wang

Guangdong University of Foreign Studies

Cristiano Mazzei and Laurence Jay-Rayon Ibrahim Aibo, both seasoned translators, interpreters, and academics with years of online teaching experience, authored *The Routledge Guide to Teaching Translation and Interpreting Online* (hereinafter “*The Guide*”) during the COVID-19 pandemic. *The Guide* addresses the expanding role of online modalities that enable learners to transcend temporal and spatial boundaries, thus attracting more potential practitioners to the field. Numerous scholars have explored the early phases of online education, focusing on aspects such as faculty satisfaction, cost-effectiveness, blended learning, and student engagement (e.g., Drysdale et al., 2013; Dumford & Miller, 2018; Graham, 2013; Halverson et al., 2012). Over time, a wealth of experience has been accumulated by practitioners, trainers, and researchers, leading to increasingly valuable insights and recommendations for online education. However, discourse on online teaching of translation and interpreting has not kept pace, even as online education has grown in popularity and emerged as a distinct area of study. *The Guide* represents the first comprehensive effort to overview online teaching in translation and interpreting, covering curriculum planning and course revision, and catering to the needs of both novices and experienced educators, instructors, lecturers, or course designers.

The authors base their arguments on a review of current teaching modalities and literature as well as their experience and standard practices in teaching translation and interpreting in various settings. As a result, *The Guide* sets itself apart from other comprehensive volumes like *The Routledge Handbook of Interpreting* (Mikkelsen & Jourdenais, 2015), *The Routledge Handbook of Translation and Technology* (O’Hagan, 2019), and *The Routledge Handbook of Translation and Education* (Laviosa & González-Davies, 2019) in two ways: first, the work under review is not structured around particular translation or interpretation modalities, and second, it seeks to generalize or extend perspectives and content geographically. Rather

than following a modality-specific structure, this encyclopedic handbook offers curriculum development recommendations, course design tips, and introduces state-of-the-art online tools suitable for a wide range of instructional needs. Divided thematically into six chapters, *The Guide* presents straightforward approaches to online translation and interpreting teaching, incorporating practical illustrations and detailed examples to elucidate concepts. A brief review of all the specific sections in each chapter follows.

Chapter 1 delves into the intricate landscape of distance learning, translation, and interpreting courses within diverse language contexts. It underscores the critical need for technological literacy and methodically explores concepts such as “Culturally Responsive Pedagogy” (Ladson-Billings, 1995) and Universal Design for Learning (UDL). These concepts aim to bridge the achievement gap by making learning accessible to all students. To mitigate the initial challenges of distance learning, the chapter suggests practical solutions like online support teams, video or written tutorials, and around-the-clock help desks. It delves into the complexities inherent in multilingual or language-specific online environments, highlighting the importance of carefully considering factors that affect student engagement, including course content, communication channels, and interaction modes. Resourceful tools like icebreakers in synchronous meetings, Echo360, and VoiceThread in asynchronous translation and interpreting practice are heralded as engagement facilitators. Additionally, the chapter examines the transformative potential of artificial intelligence (AI) in making educational content more accessible through machine translation (MT), speech recognition, and computer-assisted interpreting (CAI), thereby enriching the operational dynamics for translators and interpreters. The swift expansion of remote learning technologies necessitates educators’ proficiency with the latest educational tools, acknowledging the potential for instructor fatigue amid rapid technological advancements.

Chapter 2 concentrates on process-oriented and skill-building pedagogy in translation and interpreting. It underscores the importance of internalization and reflection in translation, recognizing the value of intuition when encountering unfamiliar terms or phrases, and advocates for a supportive environment that embraces mistakes as opportunities for learning (Robinson, 2019). The chapter further discusses the critical role of deliberate practice in advancing from novice to specialist levels, incorporating strategies like “modeling, scaffolding, and reflection” (Motta, 2011, pp. 34–35). It emphasizes the value of expert examples, ongoing feedback, and self-assessment in nurturing skill development and metacognitive awareness, which is essential for professional growth (Aguirre Fernández Bravo, 2019; Mellinger, 2019). By promoting reflective practice and self-regulation from a socio-constructivist viewpoint, the chapter offers concrete examples to illuminate these concepts. It also stresses the importance of training in lesser-diffused languages (LDLs) to broaden community services, highlighting the benefits of linguistic diversity in enriching translation and interpreting practices.

Chapter 3 provides an overview of online course development, covering practices, tools, syllabus design, learning outcomes, and selecting a Learning Management System (LMS). It highlights the principles of intentional learning and learner autonomy, promoting instructor guidance towards agency and student-directed learning (Washbourne, 2013). Creating safe practice spaces for students encourages them to take risks, make mistakes, receive feedback, observe good practices, and learn from their own and peers’ performances. Based on a guided rubric for a specific assignment, students can self-diagnose to reflect on their translation and interpretation of process and outcomes. Then, the authors put the internal architecture, recurring instructions, and low-stakes quizzes together in an online design with combined discussions. In addition, Anderson and Krathwohl’s revision of Bloom’s taxonomy supports dynamic learning design mapping for constructing objectives and syllabi (2001, pp. 54–55). Last, the chapter concludes by showcasing the effectiveness of LMSs and digital tools like Terminator, IATE, and VoiceThread in enhancing course delivery, supported by practical demonstrations of these technologies.

Chapter 4 focuses on building instructor presence in online courses within the self-directed and intentional learning framework, emphasizing the importance of instructor presence during course design. Effective communication channels, such as “I see you, I hear you, I respond to you,” are highlighted to enhance instructor presence (p. 63). The Community of Inquiry (CoI) model by Garrison et al. (1999) is

introduced, focusing on cognitive presence, teaching presence, and social presence. Instructor presence, particularly social presence, facilitates collaborative interactions in the classroom, leading to improved learning, commitment, and student performance. Pre-recorded videos reinforce instructor presence, offering advantages such as aesthetic-usability effects, more accessible access to recall, and enhanced student attention. In addition, the authors stress that instructor and peer feedback is indispensable in online learning courses, fostering self-directedness, self-analysis, and guidance through a socio-constructivist approach and process-oriented pedagogy (Washbourne, 2013). The authors conclude this chapter with effective communication practices in online courses, like timely feedback and responses, lowering the frequency of student notifications, and showing occasional vulnerability to students.

Chapter 5 explores the realm of assessments, rubrics, and assignments in online courses for translation and interpreting, providing practical examples and templates. It addresses the perennial debate over the integration of theory into practice, advocating for tasks that immerse students in relevant contexts and academic disciplines. The design of assessments aims to actively engage students, illustrate learning outcomes, and cultivate positive relationships both between students and teachers and among peers. Echoing themes from “Online Course Development” in Chapter 3, this section reinforces the necessity for educators to align assessment tools with learning objectives, ensuring a coherent educational experience. It introduces rubrics marked by their adaptability and focus on process, tailored to suit various levels of task complexity, performance types, and student skill sets. The chapter offers detailed examples of assignments ranging from theoretical discussions and text translations to audio/video interpretation and subtitling, alongside live interpreting tests. It highlights how platforms such as Discussion Forums, Zoom, and VoiceThread not only facilitate the completion of assignments but also promote connectivity among students. Asynchronous forums, in particular, are praised for deepening interactions between instructors and students. A significant focus of the chapter’s end is on the use of anonymous language reviewers in multilingual courses, emphasizing the critical evaluation of students’ linguistic capabilities and strategic approaches. This chapter emerges as a crucial resource for field researchers, offering insights and methodologies for further exploration.

Chapter 6 emphasizes the importance of ethics in developing critical thinking and decision-making in translation and interpreting practice. Sherry’s (2018) emphasis on political and cultural overtones echoes the argument that codes of ethics serve as guidelines for ethical dilemmas or controversial issues in the lives of interpreters and translators. Ethics should be a central component of online translation and interpreting programs due to the potential ethical implications of these practices. Different conceptual tools can engage students in critical thinking about ethics, such as deontological methods prioritizing rule-based morality and teleological models focusing on outcome-based judgments (Gawronski & Beer, 2017). Technology-assisted self-study sessions can compensate for fewer contact hours and facilitate self-paced practice (Gorm Hansen & Shlesinger, 2007; Kenny & Doherty, 2014). Pre-professional practice and simulated scenarios are ways to give students the chance to hone their skills outside of the classroom. Community engagement and service learning (CESL) allow students to immerse themselves in a community of practice, while interprofessional partnerships enhance collaboration across different fields. Online ethics classrooms can incorporate activities that explore racism, gender, power, privilege, and visibility through recorded presentations, readings, documentaries, or case studies.

The Guide offers a comprehensive overview encompassing a broad spectrum of topics such as the essence of process-oriented pedagogy, exemplary practices in online curriculum and course structure, maintaining an effective online presence, detailed examples of specific online assignments, and the crucial role of consistent and immediate feedback. This publication serves as a foundational framework and an extensive resource for educators and scholars in the fields of translation and interpreting, presenting profound insights and innovative strategies for application. Additionally, it invites further scholarly contributions toward bridging theoretical concepts with practical applications in these disciplines. For individuals not directly involved in these academic paths, the book sheds light on various aspects of

online education, highlighting the importance of elements like student reflection, engagement, feedback, and self-regulated practice.

Designed to cater to a wide audience, each chapter methodically introduces its core themes and methodologies, elaborating on processual steps and best practices, and providing explicit instructions. Overall, this guide fulfills its goals of thoroughly covering online translation and interpreting education and rigorously covering pedagogical approaches and online teaching modalities. It involves multilingual and language-specific online teaching as well as synchronous, asynchronous, and hybrid online education, ranging from the entirety of online translation and interpreting education to tools and tutorials employed therein. Also, it delves into the past and present of translation and interpreting education, offering in-depth introductions to each proposal and idea and a wealth of helpful advice for practitioners and instructors. *The Guide* is particularly valuable for both emerging and established scholars, providing a thorough breakdown of curricula, assignments, and digital tools, which together elucidate the journey through online translation and interpreting courses.

Despite its numerous strengths, the book does present areas for improvement. A notable concern is the need for structural refinement to prevent thematic redundancy across sections. For example, the section “Learning Objectives and Outcomes” in Chapter 5 appears to be more pertinent to Chapter 3 since the discussion relates to online course development. While repetition might aid in reinforcing key concepts for the reader, enhancing the organizational framework to streamline similar topics could mitigate potential confusion. Additionally, the book’s review of literature on current online translation and interpreting programs appears somewhat limited. As highlighted by Perramon and Ugarte (2020), the equivalence of skill development through online platforms compared to traditional in-person instruction remains a topic worthy of further investigation. While *The Guide* lays a solid foundation for understanding the direction of online education in these fields, it prompts the academic community to further explore and validate the efficacy of digital versus face-to-face learning modalities. This call for additional research underscores the evolving nature of online education and its impact on the field of distance learning. Although *The Guide* does not exhaust potential avenues for future academic exploration, it clearly delineates the objectives of online translation and interpreting education and outlines the focus areas for educators, lecturers, and course developers moving forward, suggesting broad implications for the advancement of distance learning. Simultaneously, it encourages students to critically engage with their translation and interpreting practices, leveraging feedback and insights from *The Guide* to refine their skills. Therefore, this publication comes highly recommended not only to those directly involved in translation and interpreting but also to researchers across related fields, serving as a valuable resource for anyone interested in the evolving domain of online education.

References

- Aguirre Fernández Bravo, E. (2019). Metacognitive self-perception in interpreting. *Translation Cognition & Behavior*, 2(2), 147–164.
- Anderson, L. W., & Krathwohl, D. R. (2001). *A taxonomy for learning, teaching, and assessing: A revision of Bloom’s taxonomy of educational objectives*. Addison Wesley Longman.
- Bot, H., & Verrept, H. (2013). Role issues in the low countries: Interpreting in mental healthcare in the Netherlands and Belgium. In C. Schäffner, K. Kredens, & Y. Fowler (Eds.), *Interpreting in a changing landscape* (pp. 117–131). John Benjamins.
- Bowker, L. (2021). Translation technology and ethics. In K. Koskinen & N. K. Pokorn (Eds.), *The Routledge handbook of translation and ethics* (pp. 263–278). Routledge.
- Chesterman, A., & Wagner, E. (2014). *Can theory help translators?: A dialogue between the ivory tower and the wordface*. Routledge.
- Costa, K. (2020). *99 tips for creating simple and sustainable educational videos: A guide for online teachers and flipped classes*. Stylus Publishing.

- Drysdale, J. S., Graham, C. R., Spring, K. J., & Halverson, L. R. (2013). An analysis of research trends in dissertations and theses studying blended learning. *The Internet and Higher Education*, 17, 90–100.
- Dumford, A. D., & Miller, A. L. (2018). Online learning in higher education: Exploring advantages and disadvantages for engagement. *Journal of Computing in Higher Education*, 30(2), 452–465.
- Garrison, D. R., Anderson, T., & Archer, W. (1999). Critical inquiry in a text-based environment: Computer conferencing in higher education. *The Internet and Higher Education*, 2(2–3), 87–105.
- Garrison, D. R., Anderson, T., & Archer, W. (2001). Critical thinking, cognitive presence, and computer conferencing in distance education. *American Journal of Distance Education*, 15(1), 7–23.
- Gawronski, B., & Beer, J. S. (2017). What makes moral dilemma judgments utilitarian or deontological? *Social Neuroscience*, 12(6), 626–632.
- Gorm Hansen, I., & Shlesinger, M. (2007). The silver lining: technology and self-study in the interpreting classroom. *Interpreting*, 9(1), 95–118.
- Graham, C. R. (2013). Emerging practice and research in blended learning. In M. G. Moore (Ed.), *Handbook of Distance Education* (3rd ed.) (pp. 333–350). Routledge.
- Halverson, L. R., Graham, C. R., Spring, K. J., & Drysdale, J. S. (2012). An analysis of high impact scholarship and publication trends in blended learning. *Distance Education*, 33(3), 381–413.
- Kenny, D., & Doherty, S. (2014). Statistical machine translation in the translation curriculum: overcoming obstacles and empowering translators. *The Interpreter and Translator Trainer*, 8(2), 276–294.
- Ladson-Billings, G. (1995). Toward a theory of culturally relevant pedagogy. *American Educational Research Journal*, 32(3), 465–491.
- Laviosa, S., & González-Davies, M. (2019). *The Routledge handbook of translation and education*. Routledge.
- Mellinger, C. D. (2019). Metacognition and self-assessment in specialized translation education: Task awareness and metacognitive bundling. *Perspectives*, 27(1), 1–18.
- Mikkelsen, H., & Jourdenais, R. (Eds.). (2015). *The Routledge handbook of interpreting*. Routledge.
- Motta, M. (2011). Facilitating the novice to expert transition in interpreter training: A ‘deliberate practice’ framework proposal. *Studia UBB Philologia*, 56(1), 27–42.
- O’Hagan, M. (Ed.). (2019). *The Routledge handbook of translation and technology*. Routledge.
- Perramon, M., & Ugarte, X. (2020). Teaching interpreting online for the translation and interpreting degree at the University of Vic: A nonstop challenge since 2001. *Translation and Translanguaging in Multilingual Contexts*, 6(2), 172–182.
- Robinson, D. (2019). *Becoming a translator: An introduction to the theory and practice of translation* (4th ed.). Routledge.
- Sherry, S. (2018). The language of cultural difference: Figures of alterity in Canadian translation. In L. Venuti (Ed.), *Rethinking translation* (pp. 159–176). Routledge.
- Venuti, L. (1995). *The translator’s invisibility: A history of translation*. Routledge.
- Washbourne, K. (2013). The self-directed learner: intentionality in translator training and education. *Perspectives*, 22(3), 373–387.