

# Preface and acknowledgements

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**Fundamental Aspects of Interpreter Education:  
Curriculum and Assessment**

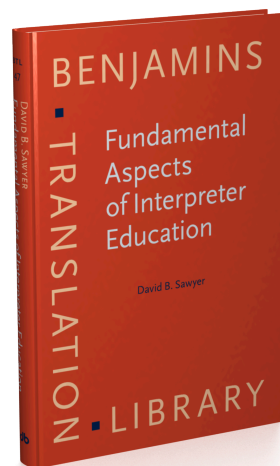
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## Preface and acknowledgements

As the world presses eagerly forward toward the accomplishment of new things, education also must advance no less swiftly. It must provide the intelligence and the aspirations necessary for the advance; and for stability and consistency in holding the gains. Education must take a pace set, not by itself, but by social progress. (Bobbitt 1971: iii)

This exploratory volume contributes to the theoretical discussion of curriculum and assessment in interpreter education programs, an area that is under-researched and under-studied. In this book, I view expertise, or interpretation competence, as an outcome of curriculum design and implementation and review procedures used to assess these outcomes. I adopt a holistic approach by focusing on a description of general curriculum frameworks and the processes and environments that contribute to learning. While the theoretical and empirical portions of this study are scientific in nature, other sections, in particular the introduction, the suggestions for enhancing curriculum, and the outlook, reflect my personal viewpoint on the need to improve interpreter education and steps that can be taken. My intention is not to be prescriptive but rather to stimulate debate.

While the body of literature on language interpreting has been growing rapidly for several decades, readers of this research are sometimes asked to take a leap of faith when the conclusions of scientific and humanistic thinking are discussed in the context of interpretation pedagogy. There is general agreement in the community of researchers that the field of Interpreting Studies (IS) is by definition interdisciplinary. Nevertheless, little work has been done to relate literature from the fields of education to the pedagogy of interpreting. The purpose of this volume is to help interpreter educators, program administrators, industry professionals, students, and alumni involved in interpreter training and testing take a step forward. A leap of faith becomes a manageable step when goals are explicit, clear links between theory and practice are forged, and descriptions of how to apply theory and research in the classroom are provided. I hope that I have been successful in the initial effort that this book represents.

Before this project began, a process of curriculum and assessment review was underway in the Graduate School of Translation and Interpretation (GSTI) of the Monterey Institute of International Studies (MIIS). Before I completed this manuscript, the curriculum and examinations in the GSTI had been restructured. Given the need to update curricula and tests on an ongoing basis, GSTI's curriculum and examinations will have continued to evolve. Although the curriculum and examinations described in this book have since been reviewed and updated, the information presented here documents fundamental aspects of curriculum and assessment that – it is my hope – interested parties will find useful as a basis for comparison with other programs.

I wish to extend a heartfelt thanks to the many individuals who contributed to this book. First and foremost are my dissertation adviser, Prof. Dr. Karl-Heinz Stoll, and co-adviser, Prof. Dr. Franz Pöchhacker. Without their untiring feedback and effort in seeing my dissertation through to completion, there would not have been a manuscript to revise for publication. I would also like to extend special words of thanks to Diane de Terra, former dean of the GSTI. Her enthusiasm in seeing the case study as part of an ongoing effort to improve pedagogy and instruction made it possible to complete this research.

I must also express my gratitude to friends and colleagues in the language testing community. In matters regarding assessment, testing, and methodology, I owe thanks in particular to Jean Turner of the Graduate School of Language and Educational Linguistics, MIIS, whose support was unfailing during both the dissertation and subsequent revision of the manuscript. Frances Butler of the Center for the Study of Evaluation, UCLA, commented on the introduction, chapter on assessment, and outlook with insight, enthusiasm, and grace. The experience of working with Frances and Jean in test development and validation in the language industry continues to broaden and deepen my thinking about interpreter assessment. The opportunity to implement ideas that were explored in my dissertation in a collaborative effort with language testing specialists has been an invaluable educational experience.

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Finally, I would be remiss were I not to mention my family and friends in the United States and Germany who lived through the various stages of the dissertation and book process with me over the years. I thank them for their patience and words of encouragement.

David B. Sawyer  
Monterey, June 2003

