

Work-Based Learning in Translation and Interpreting Education: Bridging Academic Training and Professional Practice

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Abstract

Work-Based Learning (WBL) has become an increasingly prominent approach in the education of translation and interpreting students, aiming to bridge the persistent gap between academic training and professional practice. This paper offers a conceptual and critical examination of WBL in the context of translation and interpreting studies, drawing on existing scholarship, pedagogical models, and industry expectations. Rather than relying on empirical data, the study synthesises key theoretical perspectives on experiential learning, situated learning, and professional competence to explore how WBL can be meaningfully integrated into curricula.

The paper interrogates the pedagogical assumptions underpinning WBL and evaluates its potential to foster essential competencies, including linguistic precision, intercultural awareness, ethical decision-making, and technological literacy. It further considers structural and institutional challenges, such as constraints in curriculum design, uneven access to industry opportunities, and the evolving demands of the language services sector.

By critically engaging with current debates, the paper proposes a principled framework for embedding WBL in translation and interpreting education that prioritises reflective learning, scaffolded practice, and alignment with professional standards. The study contributes to ongoing discussions by offering a theoretically grounded perspective on how WBL can be reconceptualised as an integral, rather than supplementary, component of translator and interpreter training.

Keywords

Work-based, learning, translating, interpreting, academic training, professional practice.