

# AIIC Training of Trainers seminar, Rome 2016

This edition of AIIC's popular annual seminar focussed on how research informs what we do and teach.

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AIIC Training and Professional Development.

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**For the last ten years interpreter trainers from around the world** have reserved the last weekend in January for AIIC's annual Training of Trainers seminar in Rome. The event attracts some of the biggest names of this very small world, and this year was no different with **Franz Pöchhacker** presenting an overview of interpreting research under the title **Conference Interpreting: What we know**.

And who better than the author of [Introducing Interpreting Studies](#) and the new [Encyclopedia of Interpreting Studies](#) to take interpreter trainers on a short guided tour of the current state of research covering:

- The evolution of research on interpreting over the last 50 years,
- The main models used to describe interpreting, and
- A variety of specific research areas under the headings of *basic research*, *professional issues* and *training*.

The course was attended by **teachers from 16 countries and 4 continents**. In addition to European countries, participants hailed from Japan, Brazil, Mexico, Indonesia, Nigeria, Peru and the United States. Franz Pöchhacker illustrated the state of the art of research in our field, using a 'Socratic' approach to analyse, inter alia, the psycho-cognitive aspects of interpretation and to question some traditional concepts in the light of recent studies.

*Left: Franz Pöchhacker in the classroom. Right: Group dinner*



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Here's what **some of the participants** had to say about the workshop:

## **Anne-Lise Boyer**

Franz Pöchhacker's ToT fits right into the series of stimulating ToTs organized by Stefano Marrone. I believe I have read most of the material "required" to understand what teaching interpretation is all about and do try to keep up-to-date with new methods/findings. Having said that, I usually favor a hands-on approach over a more theoretical one, although I do quote research I am aware of as well as bright insights from fellow trainers, quite often gained during ToT seminars. However, when I saw Franz Pöchhacker's name on the program, I signed on in hopes of getting access to a wealth of knowledge and research findings on aspects of interpreting I was not necessarily aware of.

Not only did Franz expertly explain and illustrate the state of the art in interpreting research, his knowledge about psychological aspects of interpreting and training and his willingness to challenge widely accepted notions from past research in the light of new findings gave me a wealth of new elements to incorporate into my activity as a trainer of future interpreters. Thank you Franz and Stefano.

## **Angela Zawadzki**

Professor Pöchhacker exhibited great breadth of knowledge and experience, and shared his research with us effectively. It confirmed what I know, and I also learned a great deal. His ability to transmit knowledge and information, recommend pertinent reading, and recommend ways to teach for current interpreting settings and situations, such as for refugees, proved helpful. Class discussion added value. Another extremely valuable aspect - networking with colleagues. All in all this was a unique opportunity.

I am very pleased with the seminar topics over the years. It might be good to go deeper into some or all of the areas covered by Professor Pöchhacker. In addition to conference interpreting, it would be interesting to review the growing field of court interpreting.

## **Cyril Flerov**

I especially appreciated how we tackled practical problems. What to say when students ask about *exercises to improve memory*? Well perhaps that is actually about prioritizing information, but interpreters can benefit from, for example, chunking, note-taking, and visualization. Or they want *strategies for simultaneous*? Let's boil that one down to the specific language pair and also explain that 'strategies' must be made automatic by turning declarative knowledge into procedural knowledge. And let's not forget to stress that preparation is an effective strategy as well.

I also enjoyed discussions about research on quality, such as Bühler's pioneering survey (1986) and the results of a more recent survey of over 700 AIIC members on [quality and the interpreter's role](#) by Zwischenberger (2010).

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## **About the Rome Training of Trainers Seminar**

Every year AIIC organizes identical consecutive 2-day seminars to accommodate more people while maintaining class size small to maximize participation.

**All interpreter trainers are welcome** to attend, members of AIIC or not. **AIIC also sponsors 4 trainers from outside Europe** to come to Rome by paying their airfare so that best practices in training can be taken further afield.

## **Recent editions of the Rome seminar**

- 2015 - *Best practices in simultaneous training* with Dick Fleming - former organiser of the EU Commission interpreter training course and subsequently trainer of trainers both in-house and for various universities.
- 2014 - *Teaching into B: Challenge or Opportunity?* with Clare Donovan, former Head of ESIT in Paris and currently Chief Interpreter at OECD.
- 2013 - *Student progress: A practical approach to matching classes with student needs* with Cathy Pearson, former teacher and a staff interpreter for the European Commission (SCIC).

For information on upcoming seminars keep an eye on AIIC's [events calendar](#) and/or sign up to AIIC Training & Professional Development's [mailing list](#).

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