

The Voice of Interpreters and Translators

**THE  
ATA**

Nov/Dec 2016  
Volume XLV  
Number 6

# CHRONICLE



## **BREAKING SILENCE:** What Interpreters Need to Know About Victim Services Interpreting

A Publication of the American Translators Association



## FROM THE PRESIDENT

DAVID RUMSEY

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# The Value of Volunteering

In my last column I wrote about the benefits of a diverse membership at ATA to provide a wide variety of experience and skills that can help our members learn from each other. I also discussed the importance of having a strong crew at the helm of the Association to help guide us on a clear course to success. But the engine is what keeps the ship moving forward.

ATA is a big ship that runs on a huge number of volunteers. Although we have a small staff of 10 people at Headquarters who help run the operational aspects of ATA, the Association itself still runs on the energy of literally hundreds of volunteers. The Certification Program alone has over 150 volunteers serving as graders and committee members. There are also dozens and dozens of volunteers running other committees at ATA, not to mention the Division Leadership Councils who engage their own volunteers within each division to help with various programs and activities. Regarding ATA's Annual Conference, consider the hundreds of individuals who donate their time and energy to share their expertise on a variety of subjects or to organize other events at the conference. As ATA continues to grow and expand its engagements, so does its need for additional volunteers.

But before you flip the page or return to your regularly scheduled work, consider how much volunteering not only benefits ATA, but the volunteers themselves and the work we do for the community.

## REACH OUT TO OTHERS

ATA's divisions are considered to be the fertile field for volunteers and future leaders of the Association. But what attracts many people to the divisions is the ability

to get out from behind their computers or their interpreting booths and start connecting with other individuals in the same profession. Divisions offer the ability to share stories and ideas via the division listserves and at conference events. Since the divisions are focused around various languages or subject areas, finding people with similar interests is easy. Many lasting friendships and partnerships are formed in the divisions. It's where I got my beginning as a volunteer with the nascent Nordic Division.

*The Association runs on the energy of literally hundreds of volunteers.*

## CONSENSUS THROUGH COMMITTEES

While ATA divisions tend to be focused inward, helping to develop connections among members, ATA committees focus on external policies and programs. The committees help to shape how ATA should approach the outside forces and opportunities that are facing the Association. Working on a committee provides members with the opportunity to carefully consider the intricacies of a particular issue and how it affects our Association and its members. It's more than just the "what" of creating or running a program. It explores "how" a program should be run to maximize the benefit for ATA and its members. Committee members have the opportunity to learn the details of the particular issues on which they work. They also learn how to work with other committee members, staff members, and stakeholders to reach consensus and establish a plan and chart

a course forward. It's excellent negotiating and teamwork training.

## BUILDING A FUTURE THROUGH THE BOARD

As I've learned over the past year as president, and indeed in the past 5+ years as a Board member, Board work is perhaps the most challenging and the most rewarding. Much of this work involves closely examining a wide variety of issues with which Board members may be unfamiliar (which is why we rely on committees) and looking for easy opportunities or facing difficult choices. There is often a plethora of great ideas that get generated by the various committees, divisions, and individual members. However, the issue becomes one of figuring out which ones will be most beneficial and effective given the current volunteer resources, financial resources, and overall culture of ATA.

The ATA ship has a lot of moving parts. Working at the Board level provides insight into how all these parts fit together. Board members learn to see a bigger picture of the Association and its place within a sea of other associations and social forces at play. Board work provides members with true leadership skills, including the willingness to take risks, the ability to see another side, and, of course, exercise the duty to sacrifice your own vision for the greater good. These types of mental agility skills are what help ATA navigate the waters ahead.

## GET INVOLVED

So, when you hear the siren call for volunteers in your harbor and someone approaches you, consider all of the excitement, friends, and strength that you can gain from climbing aboard. ●

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## FROM THE PRESIDENT-ELECT

CORINNE MCKAY

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# ATA's Annual Conference: Looking Back and Looking Ahead

As I write this, we're one week out from the early registration deadline for ATA57 in San Francisco, and all signs point to an excellent turnout. By the time you read this, the conference will be in the history books and we'll be looking ahead to ATA58. As of mid-September, our room block at the Hyatt is sold out and we're quickly filling up our overflow room block at the Hilton. As expected, given that our 2007 conference in San Francisco had a huge turnout, registrations are flowing in briskly as well. With all the professional development opportunities from which our attendees can choose, we're excited that so many of you are choosing ATA's Annual Conference.

When we look back at past ATA Annual Conferences, we see a few trends. The vast majority of our attendees give the conference excellent reviews. Year after year, our members rate the conference as one of ATA's most successful programs, if not the most successful, and to our knowledge it is consistently the largest in-person conference in the world for translators and interpreters. While many other professional associations struggle to get their members to attend in-person events, we're thrilled to see you investing the time and money to attend ATA's conference every single year.

Looking ahead, we have a number of plans and hopes for the conference. Most importantly, we're committed to having the conference be self-sustaining from a financial standpoint. As you've heard many times by now, ATA's Board decided—ahead of ATA56 in Miami—

that registration fees for the conference must at least cover our costs, rather than running the conference at a loss that was then subsidized by membership dues. We're aware of the huge impact that the conference has on ATA's overall finances, and we're making major progress in drilling down to better forecast and manage our revenue and expenses. Most of all, we're thrilled that after just one profitable conference (Miami), we were able to erase ATA's equity deficit completely. We know that members want us to remain "in the black," and our conference budget reflects that.

Whether you attended the San Francisco conference or not, you may be wondering where ATA will be meeting in future years. In 2017, we'll be in Washington, DC, not far from ATA Headquarters and in the heart of the international action in our nation's capital. 2018 will find us in ever-lively New Orleans (meet me at Café du Monde for beignets!), and in 2019 we'll be testing out a convention center model for the conference when we visit Palm Springs, California. When looking at cities for the conference, we try to mix East Coast, West Coast, and central locations, smaller cities, and larger cities. In Palm Springs, we'll be taking over the entire city and many of its hotels, instead of focusing on just one host hotel. Our hope is to throw some new elements into the mix at every conference, while remaining your in-person conference of choice.

Thank you so much for the trust you place in ATA! ●

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### TRANSLATION IN TRANSITION—CHRISTELLE MAIGNAN

Thanks for sharing this very interesting article, Christelle. Yes, embracing change is definitely in our interest if we want to thrive in our jobs! It's so sad to see so many of us spending so much time and energy complaining about the situation in our profession, but not go any further. It would be so much better if they used this time and energy to develop themselves and discover uncharted territories.

Fabienne Coupe

### A TALE OF TWO COLLABORATIVE CLASSROOMS: EARLY SUCCESS AND FOLLOW-ON FAILURE—STEVEN GENDELL

I would like to comment on the experiences you described in your article. I never taught in a classroom myself, but have friends who are teachers or instructors, and they've gone through the same disparaging experiences as you—having groups of students so different on matters of previous knowledge, initiative/proactivity, and engagement.

It also seems that the main culprit in that hapless situation was the school when it decided to open up registration to the general public. Right there, it pushed through the window the best chance it had to put together a cohesive group of students.

I can understand the school's need to make the course financially justifiable, but putting together such a classroom won't benefit anyone in the long term. Students don't grow as they should, the teacher is left frustrated, and the school risks having its reputation tarnished.

Ana Gauz

### TRANSLATION IN TRANSITION—CHRISTELLE MAIGNAN

The idea Christelle puts forth in her article—"progress actually follows an exponential trend where the speed of change increases constantly"—immediately strikes me as a bit odd. Why an exponential trend? Why not a parabolic trend, or a trend that follows a power curve of 4.87? Surely such a trend cannot continue indefinitely—of course it can't.

The idea reminds me of the harsh warnings of the Reverend Malthus in his 1798 *Essay on the Principle of Population*. Malthus warned that a supposedly geometric increase in population would hit against a simple linear increase in food production, resulting in inevitable famine and starvation. What he ignored is that there are other limits to population growth than death from starvation, as we see in many developed countries where the population is essentially static. Food production does not have to have simple linear growth: we can actually get better at producing more food for the same number of people.

Change is incremental, but that doesn't mean that there are no limits to the increasing speed of change. Certainly there have been more technological advances in the past 100 years than in previous centuries, but this is not because of some inherent exponential rate law. It's because we now are spending less and less of our limited resources on staying alive, so we can spend more of those resources on other things, such as technological development. But we can't spend more than 100%, since there are limits to what can happen. Another limit to the rate of change is the need to transfer knowledge. This will never be

100% efficient, as anyone who has ever taught a child to read will see immediately.

In our own profession, the MT lobby is saying that we all have to use MT because human translators will be redundant in the next 10 years. They've been saying that for 60 years now! Certainly MT is getting better, and CAT tools are getting better, but this is an incremental change made possible by the reduced cost of computing power. Now I don't know when this trend is going to end—not any time soon seems like a good bet—but I know there are limits to the rate of change. It's like the mortgage brokers who claim that house prices will always rise faster than wages, forever, as if there were no limits—we saw what happened with that one!

In summary, change is not something we can opt out of, not as human beings and not as professionals and business owners. Fortunately, life and evolution have equipped each one of us with a wide range of psychological and social capacities for dealing with this change. Some of us may need outside professional help at some point or other in our lives, but the majority of us won't. We need to be wary of the doomsayers, both as individuals and as a profession, because the real challenge is identifying which changes are most important for each one of us, not decrying the fact that there is change.

Nigel Wheatley

## TOP TWEETS



Translating for customers in different time zones

#translator #interpreter  
OCTOBER 7 / @ATANET



Why Australia is home to one of the largest language families in the world  
#translator #interpreter  
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## FEATURED FACEBOOK POST



American Translators Association

October 3

Catherine Hammond on Translating Carmen Boullosa and Olvido García Valdés

Read more:  
<http://bit.ly/HammondTranslating>

# Credentialed Interpreter Recognition, Your Directory Profile, and More



**FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

WALTER BACAK, CAE  
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## **C**redentialed Interpreter Debuted:

While ATA does not test interpreters, we have looked for ways to recognize their hard-earned credentials in ATA's Directory of Translators and Interpreters ([www.atanet.org/onlinedirectories](http://www.atanet.org/onlinedirectories)). To accomplish this goal, ATA recently debuted credentialed interpreter designations in the directory for three prominent areas: court, health care, and conference. Credentialed interpreters who want to take advantage of this spotlighted feature need to request an update to their directory listing and provide proof of their credential. Not all credentials are recognized. The Interpretation Policy Advisory Committee, led by Chair and ATA Director Melinda Gonzalez Hibner, reviewed dozens of credentialing programs offered to interpreters. The committee then established the criteria for a credential to be listed. (More on this program can be found at [www.atanet.org/certification/interpreter\\_credential.php](http://www.atanet.org/certification/interpreter_credential.php).) With this feature in place, clients can search the directory for interpreters by their credentials and credentialing organizations.

*More than 73% of members who have profiles in ATA's Directory of Translators and Interpreters have gotten jobs.*

**Update Your Directory Profile:** More than 73% of members who have profiles in ATA's Directory of Translators and Interpreters have gotten jobs. One job could easily cover your ATA membership dues. To maximize this members-only benefit, you need to create a profile of your professional services in the directory and keep it updated. Add or change your areas of specialization as appropriate. Try

**Reminder for ATA57 conference attendees:**  
Please complete your overall conference evaluations via the Conference App.



changing key words in the "Additional Information" area of your profile. If you work in a dialect or language not listed in the general search, you definitely want to feature it in the "Additional Information" field. Ditto if you want to list more specific areas of specialization than the ones provided. (If you need help with your profile, please contact ATA Membership and Marketing Manager Lauren Mendell: [lauren@atanet.org](mailto:lauren@atanet.org).)

**ATA Professional Liability Program:** ATA has one of the oldest professional liability insurance programs specifically for translators, interpreters, and language services companies. The ATA program has a new broker: Alliant Insurance Services. The program underwriter, Lloyds of London, has not changed. We look forward to working with Alliant to offer

competitive rates, excellent service, and better coverage for ATA members.

## **Overall Conference Evaluations:**

For those who attended ATA's Annual Conference in San Francisco, please be sure to complete your overall conference evaluations. The evaluation can be accessed via the Conference App. Your feedback really makes a difference. The conference planning team—ATA president, president-elect, Meetings Manager Teresa Kelly, and I—review the compiled results and read all the comments. We then shape future conferences based on this feedback.

**Membership Renewal:** It's time to renew your ATA membership. Watch your mailbox and e-mail for more information. Thank you for being a member in 2016 and for renewing for 2017. ●

## Rika Mitrik Wins 2015–2016 ATA School Outreach Contest



Rika Mitrik speaking to preschoolers at the WEE Center in Rockville, Maryland.

**R**ika Mitrik, a Japanese<>English interpreter and ATA-certified English>Japanese translator, won a free registration to ATA's 57th Annual Conference in San Francisco, California, through ATA's School Outreach Contest.

Rika won the contest with a colorful photo taken during her visit to the WEE Center in Rockville, Maryland, where she spoke to preschoolers in the Japanese program about her profession.

"I shortened the material to fit their attention span, but the kids were very eager," she says. Rika considered these children to be a perfect fit for a School Outreach presentation because they are all

educated in a bilingual school and raised in a bilingual home environment.

Rika has given School Outreach presentations in the past, "not only because I value how the program is trying to educate the young, but also because I hope my daughters will learn to appreciate all the hard work needed to take their language skills to a useful level."

Rika is thrilled to have won a free registration, especially since she was already planning on attending the conference in San Francisco. ●



**Molly Yurick** is a Spanish>English translator specializing in the tourism, hospitality, and airline industries. She has worked as a medical interpreter in

Minnesota and as a cultural ambassador for the Ministry of Education in Spain. She has a B.A. in Spanish and global studies and a certificate in medical interpreting from the University of Minnesota. She is currently living in northern Spain. Contact: [molly@yuricktranslations.com](mailto:molly@yuricktranslations.com)

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**Applications for Fall 2017 will be considered from September 1, 2016 until March 15, 2017.**

For more information, please contact the School of Literatures, Cultures, and Linguistics Graduate Student Services Office at [sldgradservices@illinois.edu](mailto:sldgradservices@illinois.edu) or the Center for Translation Studies Office at [translation@illinois.edu](mailto:translation@illinois.edu).

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The 2016-2017 School Outreach Contest is now open! The winner will receive a free registration to ATA's 58th Annual Conference in Washington, DC, October 25–28, 2017. For more information, visit [www.atanet.org/ata\\_school/school\\_outreach\\_contest.php](http://www.atanet.org/ata_school/school_outreach_contest.php).





## The New England Translators Association's 20th Annual Conference: Successful Collaboration with the University of Massachusetts Boston

For professional translator and interpreter organizations, collaborating with local educational institutions can be both challenging and rewarding.

Photos by Lesley Andrews (NETA vice-president)

Opportunities for partnerships between professional translator and interpreter organizations and institutions of higher learning abound. The U.S. alone has over 40 professional organizations that co-exist with over 60 university-level translation and interpreting programs.

This past May, the New England Translators Association (NETA) took advantage of such an opportunity when it co-sponsored its 20th annual conference with the University of

Massachusetts Boston. The conference was held in cooperation with the university's Latin American and Iberian Studies Department and the College of Advancing and Professional Studies Translation Program. The event was a rousing success. The only disappointment was the realization that this type of partnership could have begun sooner!

Here is an overview of how this event came together. NETA hopes to inspire other professional organizations to plan

similar events in collaboration with educational institutions.

### PLANNING STAGES

The initial idea was the result of a conversation between Ken Kronenberg, one of NETA's most seasoned and influential members, with one of the association's newest members, graduate student Adel Fauzetdinova. The conversation went something like this: "Why don't we reach out to translation and interpreting students in the area and offer them a space within NETA's traditional conference schedule to share their research and interact with professionals?"

After that initial meeting, NETA's conference committee decided to investigate the feasibility of using university facilities as the venue for the conference. This possibility had been explored years ago, but the idea was abandoned because of the high rent the university charges. When we researched the idea again, however, we learned that UMass Boston applies different rates if the buildings are rented for university versus non-university events. The solution was clear: make it a collaborative event.

Using a college or university as a conference venue offers some significant advantages. Here are a few examples:

- **Location:** Many colleges and universities offer beautifully landscaped, convenient locations. Thanks to the continued growth of the student body, modern facilities are being constructed, and one of these new buildings was used for the conference. The great venue made the conference even more enjoyable.
- **Access to Volunteers:** Students were invited to the conference and were eager to attend. We also enlisted many of these students as volunteers during the conference. Volunteers are always needed for this type of event, and the students were happy to assist.
- **Increased Promotion:** The university helped promote the event, placing posters on campus and running ads on the closed-circuit TV network and on its website.





*The 2016 conference brought to light some of the differences between the academic world and the professional world.*

- **Possibility of Reduced Fees for Facility Rental:** In our case, the university was able to offer a discounted fee for renting the facilities.
- **Onsite Technical Support:** A college or university usually has a team of experienced technical personnel on site who can help with the logistics during the conference.
- **Increased Visibility:** Our conference was visible to the university community. In fact, some students joined the conference because they just happened to be there at the right time and saw the signs.
- **Upbeat Atmosphere:** In comparison to other venues, a larger, learning-oriented space promotes an upbeat atmosphere and positive interactions among attendees.

## APPROACHING UNIVERSITY ADMINISTRATORS

Once it became clear that we wanted to bring industry and education—working language professionals and members of the academic community—together under the same roof, NETA's conference committee had to approach university administrators with a concrete proposal.

## Benefits of Collaboration

Whatever the specific theme of a conference or event, all participants stand to benefit from a collaborative approach.

### For professional organizations:

- An opportunity to review the organization's goals
- Potential broadening of the organization's membership base through the inclusion of academic translators and students
- Opportunities to connect with other area organizations that are already connected to the university
- The possibility of using the institution's facilities at a reduced cost
- Receiving assistance in conference preparation and organization from members of the university community
- Increased publicity for the event as a result of website and e-mail blast advertising by both the organization and the university
- Potential growth of the organization's prestige as a result of hosting a larger and more inclusive event

### For individual professional translators and interpreters:

- A venue for sharing expertise with students and active professionals
- Opportunities for new collaborative projects
- A chance to influence the development of the field of translation at its roots
- Exposure to innovative approaches to technology and translation techniques
- Learning about teaching technologies that can also be useful to professionals
- Opportunities for mentorships and internships
- Gaining a broader perspective on new developments in the fields of translation and interpreting

### For college professors:

- Opportunities to align instruction and adjust teaching methodologies to practical problems
- Opportunities to learn about students' needs and preferences
- Opportunities to elevate an individual's professional academic profile as a result of taking part in conference organization or speaking at a successful event

### For students:

- Exposure to the real-world practical aspects of paid translation and interpreting work
- Concrete application of the broad theoretical concepts learned in class
- Opportunities to present one's work and receive high-quality feedback
- Opportunities to explore future job possibilities
- A place to meet other students, which is something that may be especially appealing to students enrolled in online study programs
- Opportunities to meet with and learn from experienced professionals
- Possible academic credit for attendance and for volunteer work at the conference

### For the college or university:

- Greater exposure to current and future translation/interpreting students
- Increased prestige of the institution and the departments involved
- Possible collaboration with other schools, companies, and institutions
- Opportunities for the cross-promotion of related programs

It always helps to have a direct relationship with someone who works at the university. One or more participants with close ties to both organizations is ideal. In our case, one of the members of the planning committee both teaches at the university and is a member of NETA's board of directors. Knowing each

side's aspirations, values, and needs is instrumental when setting common goals and designing a roadmap to achieve them.

We presented the administrators with a clear idea of the objectives for the conference. The committee worked in advance to generate a list of possible benefits to the university (see the list in the sidebar).



This helped academic and administrative personnel to quickly grasp that the proposal was good for both parties. The spirit of collaboration was beginning to materialize.

## COLLABORATION: MEANS AND ENDS

The organizing committee concluded that a collaboration between NETA and UMass Boston would not only be a good way to organize this conference, but that the idea of collaboration itself would provide a wonderful central theme for the entire conference. We wanted to explore this topic from both practical and theoretical points of view, using the various perspectives of professionals, students, and professors. The goal was to provide a place in which opportunities for reflection and mutual understanding could emerge.

A call for papers was issued, which was posted on NETA's website and sent directly to several colleges and universities in and near New England. The selection committee included both professional translators and translation instructors. Many students submitted session proposals, and a vetting process resulted in the selection of five excellent student panels. Each panel was chaired by either a translation studies professor or an experienced professional translator. After their sessions, the students received valuable feedback from peers, professors, and professional translators.

## PRAISE FOR THE OUTCOME

Comments from students were very positive and detailed. Here is one quote that summarizes many others:

*I wanted to formally thank you for the opportunity that you presented the class and myself yesterday. I spoke to many different people and thoroughly enjoyed every workshop I attended. I learned so many new things and new techniques. Translation is a field where it definitely benefits all parties to work together and collaborate. I'm so happy that you allowed us to work in groups in class because it taught me that there could be alternative ways to translate a text, and it allowed me to learn from fellow colleagues. It was fascinating to see how everyone collaborated and networked with each other.*

Many of the post-conference survey comments from professional translators and interpreters emphasized the enthusiasm generated by the degree of interaction between industry professionals and academia.

## SELECTING A KEYNOTE SPEAKER

One important decision was the selection of the keynote speaker. (For example, should the speaker be an academic or a professional?) For this year's conference, NETA decided to invite a scholar as the keynote speaker and a professional interpreter as the endnote speaker. Both speakers were asked to address issues that would be of interest to everyone involved.

The keynote address—entitled “Collaborative and Situated Translator Training: Moving Towards the Profession”—was given by María González Davies. María is a translator who teaches at the University Ramon Lull in Barcelona, Spain. Her professional interests include translator training, the role of translation in language acquisition, and children's and young adult literature.

María, an internationally recognized expert in translator training, used the example of Spain to show how collaborative and situated learning can enhance the field of translation, both academically and professionally. Her talk included:

- A history of the development of the translation industry and translation training in Spain and the European Union.

- Proposals on how industry and academia might better come together through collaborative and situated learning. Maria explained that these educational styles could benefit not only students in training, but also the industry itself, by providing hands-on experience. As she put it, such experience enhances “the capacity of learners to think and act like professionals” and fosters communities of practice.

- Background information on current trends in translation training programs within the framework of collaborative and situated learning. High simulation learning involves bringing real-world materials into the classroom. Including examples of actual translation/interpreting work exposes students to current professional practices. Inviting professionals to participate in classes is a way to combine both approaches.

The endnote speaker was Cristiano Mazzei. His presentation was entitled “Interpreters, Identity, and Performance.” Cristiano is the director of the Translating and Interpreting Program at Century College in Minnesota. The presentation highlighted the following:

- The difference between interpreting and translation, with an emphasis on the immediacy of the former.
- Two types of interpreters: 1) invisible, the so-called angel interpreters, and 2) the licensed practitioner, who is more easily able to establish distance between himself (e.g., has his own ideas and beliefs) and the client.
- Cristiano explained that interpreters used to be trained to be invisible, but today the profession is moving toward recovering the visibility of interpreters. This promotes understanding of the complexity of the profession and the psychological imprint its practice may leave on an interpreter.

## CHALLENGES

- Even among event planners in an established professional organization like NETA, everyone experienced a learning curve in terms of adjusting to a new venue, broader participation in the various planning committees, and

navigating a variety of points of view and working styles.

- Some professional translators worried that the level of the conference sessions would be lower due to the involvement of students. It turns out that the high quality and complexity of the student sessions proved this concern to be unwarranted.
- Increased time was required for scheduling to ensure that sessions appealing to various groups of participants were offered during each time block.
- Speakers needed to ensure that their sessions would be interesting to a more varied and diverse audience, one composed not just of currently active language professionals.
- The conference date had to be chosen with the academic calendar in mind, resulting in some limitations.
- Generally, planning for this conference was more time-consuming than for some previous NETA conferences.

## THE HUMAN FACTOR

Important as the sessions are, the quality and usefulness of the information presented in workshops and lectures is secondary to the main reason why most people go to conferences: to interact in person with other professionals. This is why it's important to schedule enough unstructured time so that people can enjoy each other's company.

Low-stress activities, such as coffee breaks, should be organized to facilitate interaction and networking, especially for students who may feel intimidated by the accomplished professionals in the room. ATA conference organizers do a great job presenting the first-time attendee with opportunities to mingle, and some of those activities are easily adapted to a smaller-scale event. Giving students the chance to get involved in the workings of the conference can help break the ice and reinforce a sense of community and respect. For example, student volunteers can help attendees find their way to the rooms, solve minor technical issues, and conduct short interviews with presenters.



*Today's students are tomorrow's translators, and today's theoretical research eventually reaches the world of language professionals.*

## COLLABORATION AND TECHNOLOGY

Information technology has greatly increased opportunities for professionals to connect with others in their field. Distance-learning programs in translation and interpreting already take full advantage of electronic tools for communication, group work, and networking. Many of these techniques can be put to excellent use during conference sessions. For instance, we used Poll Everywhere software to survey attendee responses submitted via mobile phones.

Attendees not only received information from the presenter, but also learned interesting facts about each other and the group in general. Everybody was more engaged in the session due to the expectation generated by immediate results and the relevance of the information. Whenever technology is used in a group with widely varying technology skill levels, the opportunity arises for more tech-savvy members of the audience to assist their peers.

## COLLABORATION CAN LEAD TO NEW-FOUND RESPECT FOR LANGUAGE PROFESSIONALS

As a first experience of this type, NETA's 2016 conference proved to be a success. NETA and UMass Boston have already agreed to collaborate on the 2017 conference.

The 2016 conference brought to light some of the differences between the academic world and the professional world. At the same time, the conference revealed that the two groups have much in common and are dependent on each other. Today's students are tomorrow's translators, and today's theoretical research eventually reaches the world of language professionals. In addition, it's vital for translation and interpreting instructors to stay in touch with current professional practices and environments.

The academic world, through teaching and research, contributes to the visibility of translators and interpreters and their work. Sometimes this ultimately "translates" into respect for professional translators and interpreters. Therefore, it's beneficial to both students and professionals in the language industry to create and participate in joint conferences. ●



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The interpreting team with one of the surgeons. From left: Sebastiana Pale, Ofelia Pérez (Spanish-Tzotzil interpreters), Julie Burns, Katharine Allen (English-Spanish interpreters), and Fru Bahirael, M.D.

## The Connected Interpreter: Integrating Interpreting and Translation into Medical Missions

The story of how professional interpreters were integrated into the planning and execution of a medical mission to Chiapas, Mexico, serves as a budding language access model that is adaptable to missions and disaster response efforts.

*Photos used with permission of Mammoth Medical Missions (Sara B. May, M.D.), Rotary International, and the Rotary Foundation*

It's 5:30 a.m. as a sleepy crew of volunteer medical providers and interpreters assemble in a Los Angeles hotel lobby, coffee in hand, toting 25 huge duffel bags of medical equipment and supplies. Destination: the remote village of San Andrés Larraínzar, nestled in the highlands of Chiapas, Mexico—home to one of the poorest and most vulnerable indigenous populations in the area.

In May 2015, Mammoth Medical Missions, in partnership with Rotary International, Rotary Club of Bishop Sunrise, and Club Rotario de Oriente de Tuxtla, Mexico, embarked on its fourth mission to provide medical training and free surgeries to this remote area. For the first time, professional medical interpreters were integrated into the

mission's planning, execution, and evaluation from the project's inception.

Our story, shared here, points to a preliminary template for a working language access model that can be adapted to missions and disaster response efforts.

### THE PROBLEM

Billions of dollars are spent annually around the world to address global health, disaster relief, and humanitarian aid. Providers who speak English, French, German, or Swedish hop on planes to treat people who speak indigenous and tribal languages in Asia, Africa, and South America. For all their diversity, however, such efforts have one thing in common: unsolved language barriers.

With few exceptions, reality on the ground points to a mish mash of ad hoc and “we get by” solutions to multilingual communication barriers.<sup>1</sup> Partially bilingual providers work with untrained volunteer interpreters to cobble together a shaky communication chain that is easily broken. Despite all the money being spent to design and implement sophisticated relief programs, usually little thought is given to addressing the inevitable challenges to be faced when trying to communicate important information to non-English-speaking individuals. When it comes time to actually provide services to those in need, many top-notch medical volunteers find themselves at a disadvantage—engaging in toddler-level exchanges involving hand signals with critically ill patients. The probability of life-threatening mistakes is unreasonably high.

### OUR MISSION

The overall purpose of the medical mission chronicled here was to provide critical medical training and hands-on care to providers and patients who see too little of either. So, what was our goal as the interpreting team brought in to assist with this project? We wanted to model a viable and realistic process for ensuring that language access is provided by professional and supported ad hoc interpreters in a medical mission setting.

In short, we didn't want the planning, funding, and onsite implementation to fail by hitting the language barrier brick wall once the project went live. And we certainly didn't want any catastrophic medical mistakes because doctors and patients couldn't communicate.

### THE PROCESS

This was an ambitious, multi-focus service mission project. It included a week of intensive skills training for local medical providers and a half-day disaster seminar at the Escuela de Protección Civil in Tuxtla, Gutierrez. After the training, medical

## 2015 Chiapas Austere Medical Vocational Training Initiative

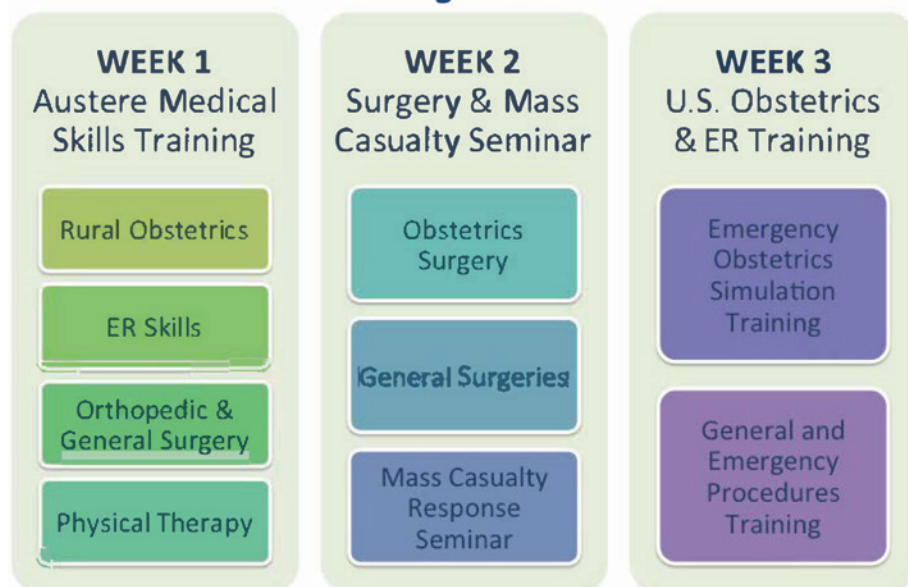


Figure 1: 2015 Chiapas Austere Medical Vocational Training Initiative

volunteers would spend a week in Chiapas providing no-cost elective surgeries for the indigenous population. Eight months later, several providers were brought to the U.S. for continued training. (See Figure 1 for a detailed breakdown of the mission's training schedule.)

The three-stage process described below provides an overview of how we incorporated language access into the Chiapas part of the project. (See Figure 2 on page 14 for a breakdown of the three-stage language services integration process.)

### Stage 1—Access to the Planning Team:

We had a vision. We didn't just want to volunteer to interpret for a medical mission. Instead, we wanted the mission to have full, professional language access baked into it. We figured the only way to make that happen was to start at the top and work our way to the core planning team.

How did we do that? We called the planning team and offered our expertise. Having already experienced the results of ad hoc, unplanned, and inadequate interpreting services during three previous missions, the planning team jumped at the offer.

We became part of the lead team eight months before the mission, during its initial planning and grant writing phases.

As the mission's scope, team, location, and services came together, we were there throughout the process to make sure language access was considered during each stage of the mission's execution.

The provision of translation and interpreting services was written into the funding grant. Plans were made to create a mixed team of professional and ad hoc interpreters who could provide a broad range of interpreting services. In addition, the translation of key documents would also be provided. As professional English-Spanish interpreters, Julie and Katharine would team up with two Spanish-Tzotzil interpreters (Sebastiana Pale and Ofelia Pérez) and several bilingual members of the mission's core team.

### Stage 2: Translation of Critical Documents:

The demand for document translation for the project was substantive and essential. Everything from formal memorandums of understanding between U.S. and Mexican organizations, physical performance tests for the training week, and informed consent and post-surgery instructions for the patients were needed.

We advocated for including money in the grant funding to pay for professional translation services. The value of having

## A Day in the Life of a Medical Mission Interpreter

Picture this. A hot afternoon. One operating room. Two U.S. surgeons. Two Mexican surgeons in training. Two anesthesiologists (one U.S.-based, one a Mexican volunteer). An interpreting team comprised of two English-Spanish interpreters (Julie and Katharine) and one Spanish-Tzotzil interpreter. Two mixed-language scrub and recording teams. Two patients: the first one undergoing a total hysterectomy for painful fibroids, and the second, a young woman, with an incapacitating inguinal hernia that has caused her so much pain that she has only been able to eat two tortillas a day for the past two months.

As if on cue, the room is silent for a moment before springing to life again after the first incision is made. At this moment, our interpreting team is thrust into a complex multilingual communications dance. Instructions are given, surgical maneuvers are explained, instruments are requested, and questions are asked and answered back and forth between the surgeons and the anesthesiologists. Then there is another round of questions and answers between the patient and the doctor, between the patient and the anesthesiologists, and between the surgeons and the scrub team.

A head pops in the doorway—an interpreter is needed in pre-op. After a quick check-in and an assessment of the status of each surgery, a member of our interpreting team steps out. Then one of the surgeons cracks a joke to lighten the mood, so we attempt to convey the subtlety of humor across three languages. The clock ticks on ... feet shift, one of us comes back in, the other steps out. The formerly silent young Tzotzil woman with the hernia wakes up from conscious sedation, crying tears of relief and gushing words of gratitude until we are all teary-eyed.

access to translated documents to ensure smooth project operation and correct recordkeeping is incalculable.

**Stage 3: Implementation:** We had done the planning, envisioning as many possible scenarios as we could. Now it was time to jump from the frying pan into the fire and

## Averting Disaster

A middle-aged Tzotzil woman lines up with her husband, patiently awaiting her turn. She is scheduled for a full hysterectomy. Earlier in the week, the anesthesiologist conducted a preliminary assessment, speaking in broken Spanish, which the husband speaks a little and the patient not at all.

The woman passed the preliminary assessment, but now a Spanish and a Tzotzil interpreter are there with the anesthesiologist, working through the final assessment and consent process. This time, the pace is slower and the questions more thorough.

**Anesthesiologist:** “Do you have any symptoms of pain or fatigue?”

**Patient:** “Well, yes, sometimes when I do housework, it hurts here” (the woman points to her chest).

The anesthesiologist’s head jerks up from her questionnaire, fully alert. “How does it hurt?”

**Patient:** “Oh, it’s no big deal. It goes away after awhile when I stop.”

**Anesthesiologist:** “Do you ever get short of breath?”

**Patient:** “Well, sure, sometimes, but I just stop till it passes.”

The anesthesiologist huddles with the obstetrician and interpreters. These are clear symptoms of a possible heart condition. There is no way to run the necessary diagnostic tests before surgery. Reluctantly, but firmly, the anesthesiologist decides the patient cannot have surgery this year. “She could die on the table if she has an underlying heart condition.”

The interpreters help to relay the bad news. The woman and her husband are upset. They say they are willing to take the risk, but the decision stands.

Our hearts hurt for this woman, who is so clearly suffering. But as interpreters, we are proud. The work we have done to convince doctors to stop “getting by” with their Spanish and work with the interpreters instead has potentially saved a life.

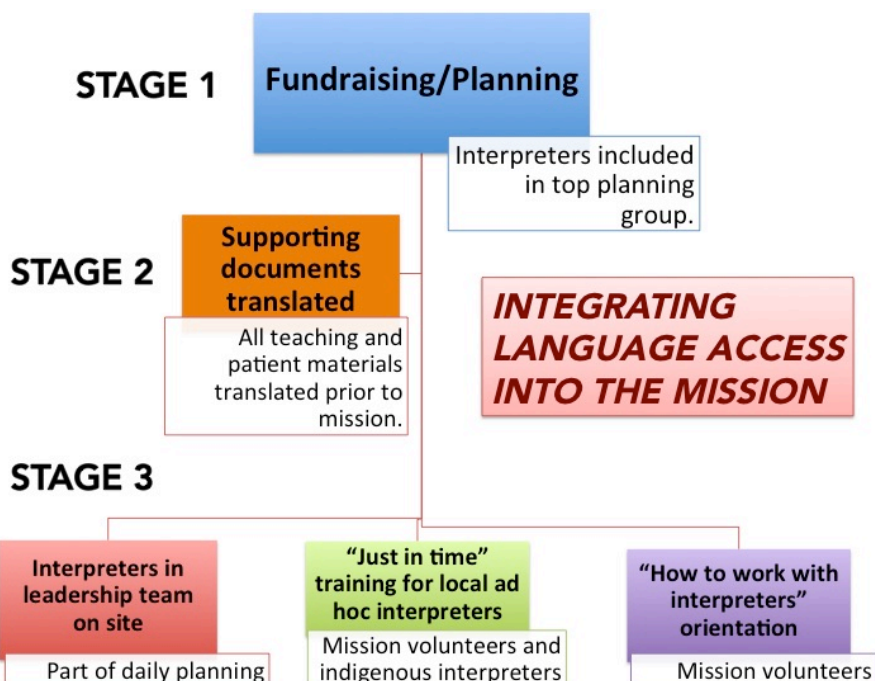


Figure 2: Three-stage language services integration process.

see if our proposed system would work. Overall, our vision for baked-in language access was a big success, thanks primarily to three key factors.

1. **Integration of interpreters into the onsite leadership team:** This factor cannot be overvalued. We had *equal* standing in the planning and leadership team. Our concerns and requests were taken seriously and implemented. (The sidebar on page 13—“A Day in the Life of a Medical Mission Interpreter”—describes a scenario that underscores the importance of our concerns being taken seriously to avoid potentially disastrous outcomes.) The mission leader backed up our requests with the medical providers and made adjustments to the daily logistics to ensure that we could cover key language needs.
2. **“Just in time” training for our mixed professional/ad hoc interpreting team on basic protocols and ethics:** This factor goes to the heart of our vision and efforts. Two professional interpreters provided onsite training of all ad hoc interpreters involved in the mission. Our “just in time” training

included, among other elements, accuracy and completeness, asking for repetitions and explanations of unknown concepts, and pointing out potential communication train wrecks due to misunderstandings. Though brief, the training really paid off. Many key moments of successful communication pivoted on our ability to transfer ideas correctly from an English-speaking provider through an English-Spanish interpreter, then through a Spanish-Tzotzil interpreter to the patient and then back again. Our ability to work effectively as a team helped us navigate innumerable moments of disconnect, confusion, and “otherness.” (The sidebar at left—“Averting Disaster”—describes a scenario in which the mixed professional and ad-hoc interpreting team successfully navigated the complexities of a surgical intervention across multiple languages and cultures.)

3. **“How to work with interpreters” orientation:** The training process wasn’t complete without a parallel orientation session with members of the mission team on how to work effectively with their interpreters. We originally envisioned a sit-down



training meeting with everyone present at the same time. That never happened. We then shifted to Plan B, providing one-on-one orientation to team members whenever we could catch them.

## LESSONS LEARNED

There were so many lessons that were learned during the course of the mission—individually, as a team, professionally, and personally. But the following key elements for a language access model stick out:

**Hierarchical planning models are a good fit for integrating language access.** Full-scale integration of language access into the mission resulted in smoother overall operations, many fewer misunderstandings, the prevention of several potentially major medical problems, and, most importantly, greatly improved patient care and outcomes from previous years.

**Creating effective, mixed professional/ad hoc interpreting teams is possible.** Two professional interpreters (ideally cross-trained with conference and community interpreting skills) were able to provide coordination, training, and oversight to untrained ad hoc interpreter volunteers. With guidance, the untrained interpreters achieved a greater degree of accuracy, transparency, and professional behavior.

**Portable simultaneous equipment can multiply a small team's reach:** Even a small amount of portable interpreting equipment can work miracles in expanding the reach of limited numbers of interpreters (as long as at least two are trained in simultaneous). With creative configurations, one 25-piece kit served for lectures, planning meetings, hands-on workshops, and the large mass casualty seminar.

**The proper role of the interpreter in global health and humanitarian aid settings is worthy of study.** The role of the interpreter for this kind of project needs a great deal of exploration. In our case, our role went well beyond the transmission of words. We were a vital component in fostering relationships of shared understanding, caring, and interconnection. We leaned on all



Practice exercise—consecutive relay into Tzotzil for traditional midwives: Julie Burns (left), Martha Kim, M.D. (middle), and Ofelia Pérez (holding patient's head)

our training with medical, legal, and conference ethics and protocols to handle the sheer diversity of interactions appropriately and professionally, adapting and stretching them along the way.

## DEMONSTRATING THE IMPORTANCE OF THE INTERPRETER'S ROLE

Medical missions can be mostly volunteer affairs, but the seriousness of the organization put into them is often highly professional. Doctors maintain professional standards and practices even when operating in austere conditions. Why should addressing the inevitable language barriers to be encountered on missions be any different? We set out to demonstrate to the support professionals what coordinated and competent interpreting and translation could bring to a mission's overall success. And we succeeded.

As interpreters, we're in a position of enormous influence. We help weave myriad diverse cultural fabrics around the world into one global tapestry. The Chiapas experience was a vivid testament to the power of this global interconnectedness, and to the unique role interpreters and translators can play in achieving it. ●

### NOTE

1. There are pioneering organizations that are engaged in groundbreaking work to professionalize this area, such as InZone's Interpreting in Conflict Zones program, as well as the collaboration between the International Association of Conference

Interpreters, International Federation of Translators, and RedT to create the *Conflict Zone Field Guide*.

## LINKS

### Mammoth Medical Missions

[www.mammothmedicalmissions.org](http://www.mammothmedicalmissions.org)

### Rotary International

[www.rotary.org/en](http://www.rotary.org/en)

### Club Rotario de Oriente de Tuxtla

[www.facebook.com/ClubRotarioOrientedeTuxtla](http://www.facebook.com/ClubRotarioOrientedeTuxtla)

### International Association of Conference Interpreters

<http://bit.ly/Conflict-Zone-Field-Guide>

### International Federation of Translators

[www.fit-ift.org/guide-pour-zones-de-conflit](http://www.fit-ift.org/guide-pour-zones-de-conflit)

### Inzone Interpreting in Conflict Zones

<http://inzone.unige.ch>

### Red T

<http://red-t.org>



**Katharine Allen** is a veteran health care and community interpreter with over 30 years of experience interpreting, training interpreters and trainers, and providing

curriculum design and language access services. She is the founder and co-president of InterpretAmerica. She is the lead developer for the Indigenous Interpreting+ 60-hour training course for indigenous language interpreters and an instructor for the Glendon School of Translation Masters in Conference Interpreting. She is the co-author of *The Community Interpreter®: An International Textbook*, as well as a licensed trainer for The Community Interpreter® curriculum. She has an MA in translation and interpreting from the Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey. Contact: [sierraskyt@gmail.com](mailto:sierraskyt@gmail.com).



**Julie Burns** is a veteran interpreter trainer, a certified Spanish interpreter (Certification Commission for Healthcare Interpreters), and an ATA-certified Spanish>English

translator. She has a master's degree in adult education. A former director of the Bridging the Gap Interpreter Training Program and a licensed trainer for The Community Interpreter®, she has trained thousands of interpreters. She has 20 years of experience in health care interpreting and translation, as well as extensive experience in health education and training in the U.S. and Latin America. Contact: [julie@julieburns.net](mailto:julie@julieburns.net).



# Breaking Silence: What Interpreters Need to Know About Victim Services Interpreting

When interpreting for victims of trauma, the greatest gift you can give to the survivor is letting his or her voice be heard.

**F**irst, the good news. This past July marked the release of an innovative, in-depth training program to prepare interpreters to work with survivors of violent crime, with a strong focus on domestic violence and sexual assault. A set of training materials—*Breaking Silence: Interpreting for Victim Services*—that includes a manual, workbook, and glossary, has also just been published on the subject.<sup>1</sup> Together, these *free* resources show you how to perform victim services interpreting with a “trauma-informed” perspective.

The *Breaking Silence* program was developed through a partnership between the District of Columbia’s Office of Victim

Services and Justice Grants and Ayuda, a nonprofit agency serving immigrants and refugees in the DC metro area. (You can download the *Breaking Silence* training manual, workbook, and glossary for free at: <http://ayuda.com/wp/get-help/language-services/resources>.)

## AN EMERGING SPECIALIZATION: VICTIM SERVICES INTERPRETING

Victim services interpreting is part of the larger field of trauma-informed interpreting. Anyone who performs legal or community (including medical) interpreting can benefit by learning about this area because almost any interview

in these fields can entail exposure to trauma—often without warning.

When a survivor cries, goes silent, or shares horrific details about a crime, it can create difficulties for the interpreter. The temptation to comfort the victim and overstep professional boundaries is huge. However, such “helpful” behaviors from the interpreter can damage or delay the survivor’s recovery. The information contained here shows interpreters how to be successful in this field while supporting survivor autonomy and avoiding re-traumatization of the crime victim.

## CHALLENGES OF VICTIM SERVICES INTERPRETING

You arrive at the hospital in the middle of the night to interpret for a 16-year-old rape victim. The assignment lasts five hours.

In that time, you end up interpreting for a police officer, two detectives, a sexual assault nurse examiner, a doctor, a rape survivor advocate, a medical assistant, and others. The victim is asked to describe her rape several times, in chilling detail. She weeps and shrieks. You start to feel nauseated and light-headed. You can’t get the images of the brutal assault out of your mind. At one point as the survivor tells her story you think you might throw up, but you’re afraid to interrupt her. What do you do?

Welcome to victim services interpreting. It’s tough. It can be painful. Yet for many interpreters, it provides some of the most meaningful and fulfilling work they’ll ever do. Since victim services interpreting is a new specialization, interpreters need training to perform it well. The following highlights many of the lessons to be learned from the *Breaking Silence* program, including the specific challenges facing interpreters who work with victims of crime and trauma survivors.

## WHAT ARE VICTIM SERVICES?

The provision of “victim services” began in the 1960s.<sup>2</sup> They are defined within U.S. law as services (public or private):

... with a documented history of effective work concerning domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

—42 USCS § 13925<sup>3</sup>

In most cities and counties across the U.S., there is a victim assistance network where government, health care, legal, law enforcement, and nonprofit services collaborate to support crime victims in a complex interplay of services with their own professional cultures.

## WHAT ARE TRAUMA-INFORMED SERVICES?

A relatively new field called trauma-informed services encompasses an array of government and private programs that put the victim front and center stage. Trauma-informed services are concerned with the survivor's healing, recovery, and access to justice. According to the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), trauma-informed programs address trauma in depth and integrate that knowledge into their policies, procedures, practices, and settings.<sup>4</sup>

Trauma-informed providers receive specialized training to help survivors feel respected, safe, and empowered. In trauma-informed services, we stop asking "What is wrong with this person?" and begin asking "What has happened to this person?"<sup>5</sup>

## OVERVIEW OF VICTIM SERVICES INTERPRETING

From the time victim services became available in the 1960s until today, almost no one thought about interpreters or trained them in victim services interpreting. By 2013, the DC Office of Victim Services (OVS)—which is now the DC Office of Victim Services and Justice Grants—and its Victim Assistance Network (VAN) recognized this as a problem. VAN providers who request interpreters most often appear to work in the areas of domestic violence cases, sexual assault, and child abuse. Yet interpreters can also be needed for:

- Survivors of torture and war trauma
- Trauma therapy
- Police officers
- Homicide survivors (family members and loved ones of a homicide victim)
- Fire and rescue
- Victim compensation services



*When a survivor cries, goes silent, or shares horrific details about a crime, it can create difficulties for the interpreter.*

The District of Columbia lacked interpreters trained to provide this kind of service. As a result, OVS funded a program in 2014 that established the nation's first Emergency and Victim Services Bank, a unique interpreter service administered by Ayuda, a nonprofit agency providing legal, social, and language services. However, Ayuda could find no training manual or curriculum anywhere in the country to train victim services interpreters.

## HISTORY OF THE BREAKING SILENCE PROGRAM

Ayuda commissioned my agency, Cross-Cultural Communications (CCC), to create a four-day program for victim services interpreting.

First, a needs assessment and a literature review were conducted. Ayuda set up a focus group and 20 in-depth interviews with service providers, including therapists, lawyers, social workers, advocates, a forensic nurse, a deputy fire chief, a hotline counselor, law enforcement, a disaster response behavioral therapist, and a grief counselor for homicide survivors.

I then recruited three other national specialists to create a curriculum and

the training materials with input from VAN and OVS. The four authors of these training materials were national trainers with curriculum development expertise. An American Sign Language interpreter trainer and trauma-informed therapist for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing was engaged to review and revise the training materials.

The intent was to make this four-day program freely accessible across the country. The four-day program, entitled *Breaking Silence: Interpreting for Victim Services*, was piloted three times between 2014 and 2016.

## LESSONS LEARNED FROM BREAKING SILENCE

The needs assessment for the creation of this program highlighted a simple fact: almost every community and legal interpreter confronts trauma in their work. Some of that trauma is extreme and affects interpreters in profound ways. As a result, interpreters are eager, even hungry, for specialized training about interpreting for victims of trauma.

Another lesson learned is that interpreters need guidance to manage their emotions. For example, imagine that you interpret for a domestic violence victim who, against the advice of her advocate, is about to return to the partner who almost killed her. You might want to shout, "Don't go back!" However, you can't do that.

Providers interviewed for the *Breaking Silence* program reported that many interpreters lost control and interjected comments, or told providers such things as, "Is that all you can do?" After hearing traumatic stories, some interpreters broke down and cried. Some couldn't interpret the grisly details, or softened or edited them. One interpreter spent more than 30 minutes lecturing a victim about domestic violence. Others have advised victims to leave—or stay with—their abusers.

## TRAUMA-INFORMED INTERPRETING: STAKES AND BENEFITS

Interpreters for victim services need to understand:

- The impact of crime on victims
- What trauma is and its impact





- Vicarious trauma (discussed below)
- Domestic violence, sexual assault, and child abuse
- How basic interpreter skills (such as mode switching, note-taking, sight translation, and simultaneous interpreting) are used in this field
- Where community (including medical) interpreting crosses the line into legal interpreting

In addition, the interpreter needs to be keenly alert to the potential impact of his or her unconscious bias. For example, providers noted that some interpreters made facial expressions conveying dismay or disgust when interpreting for lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender victims.

Finally, interpreters need to be emotionally prepared for whatever faces them. Some victims giggle, fall silent, or seem calm. Every situation is unpredictable.

## PREPARING TO INTERPRET FOR SURVIVORS OF TRAUMA

Here are some examples of how to prepare for tough assignments.

- Inform yourself as much as possible beforehand.
- Have boundary rituals (e.g., put on a special bracelet or scarf for assignments that means something to you and offers mental reassurance).
- Prepare to interpret body parts and terms for violence.
- Practice interpreting coarse and obscene language in a mirror (to be sure you don't display discomfort).
- Establish a "distress" signal with the provider (who can call for a break).
- Plan for visualization of peaceful imagery.
- Rehearse deep breathing.
- Prepare for possible interpreter distress.

Above all, make a conscious decision to display warmth and compassion. According to clinicians, survivors have keen feelers—they sense if you care. Make a conscious decision to care. However, suppress the desire to say kind things. Don't be the interpreter who touches the victim, hands out tissues, gives legal advice, or says, "It's okay, you're safe, speak up!" "You need to share your story

with your therapist/lawyer." "Don't cry, dear, everything will be all right."

Finally, try to avoid eye contact while you interpret. Let the survivor build a relationship with the *provider*—not you—because that relationship is critical for the survivor's journey to recovery and justice. Remember, your job is to interpret. It's the greatest gift you can give the survivor: his or her voice.

## VICARIOUS TRAUMA

Here's a little quiz. What three things are taken away from a survivor of major trauma? (You'll find the answer at the end of this article.) In fact, what is trauma? SAMHSA provides this definition:

Individual trauma results from an event, series of events, or set of circumstances that is experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or threatening and that has lasting adverse effects on the individual's functioning and physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being.<sup>6</sup>

Although we know that many survivors experience trauma, most people don't realize how often interpreters experience vicarious trauma. Vicarious trauma (VT) means experiencing or internalizing someone else's trauma. VT builds up over time through exposure to hearing traumatic stories. It's a dirty secret that many interpreters are affected by VT, yet few are trained to manage it.<sup>7</sup>

*Let the survivor build a relationship with the provider—not you—because that relationship is critical for the survivor's journey to recovery and justice.*

Interpreters with VT can experience symptoms of trauma, so they should be especially careful to protect themselves. Be careful if you start to notice:

- Intrusive thoughts
- Anxiety or depression
- Insomnia
- Fear for your safety or your loved ones

If you have experienced any of the above, download the free training manual, workbook, and glossary from the Ayuda website mentioned at the beginning of this article and try to get specialized training.

## *Almost every community and legal interpreter confronts trauma in their work.*

### HOW TO PREVENT OR REDUCE VT

Here are just a few examples of how you can reduce the impact of VT.

#### Before the Session:

##### Objects

- Bring or wear a special object (e.g., a stone or necklace). Touch it during the encounter for comfort.
- Put an elastic band on your wrist. When a survivor speaks of trauma, discreetly snap the elastic.

##### Visualization

- Practice creating imagery in your mind of a “safe place”—a peaceful mountain, beach, or meadow, a beloved person’s face, or even music. During the encounter, distract yourself from traumatic content by visualizing your “safe place.”

##### Rituals

- Engage in a boundary ritual before and after a tough encounter. It could be a phrase, a prayer, a mantra, a song, or a suite of movements.

You should also practice regular relaxation exercises. Do them before and after tough assignments. Many relaxation exercises are available online. Do a search, try some, and find which ones work for you.

**During the Session:** Here are techniques that can soothe you:

- Ground yourself: focus on the “here and now” (e.g., the ticking of a clock, air swirling on your cheeks, your feet on the floor).
- Breathe deeply from the diaphragm.
- Take a break.

- Try self-calming strategies:

- Switch briefly from first to third person (many interpreters do this instinctively).
- Focus on note-taking.
- Observe yourself interpreting: monitor your performance.

**After the Session:** If possible, debrief with the provider. Use any of the “before” practices that help you. Also:

- Have a written self-care plan in place and consult it.
- Seek out social supports like family, friends, and colleagues.
- Utter a prayer or a comforting phrase.
- Seek out those who share your faith.
- Engage in a social activity.
- Exercise.
- Journal (but protect confidentiality).
- Share your feelings with someone safe.
- For intense sessions, perhaps avoid being alone afterwards.

*The interpreter needs to be keenly alert to the potential impact of his or her unconscious bias.*

### TRAINING IS KEY

The preceding was a short journey into the new specialization of victim services interpreting. As mentioned previously, the training materials available from Ayuda can be downloaded for free (see Note 1). They will provide you with in-depth information to increase your knowledge, enhance your performance, and offer a new degree of self-confidence when you interpret for crime victims.

Good luck. Enjoy the journey! ●

#### Mini-quiz Answer:

**Question:** What three big things are taken away from a survivor of major trauma?

**Answer:** Trust, safety, and the ability to impact the world. (There are other answers, but many therapists emphasize these three.)

### NOTES

1. Bancroft, Marjory A., Katharine Allen, Carola Green, and Lois Feuerle. *Breaking Silence: Interpreting for Victim Services* (Ayuda, 2016), <http://ayuda.com/wp/get-help/language-services/resources/>.
2. “The History of the Crime Victims’ Movement in the United States” (U.S. Office for Victims of Crime), <http://bit.ly/OVC-victim-movements>.
3. 42 U.S. Code § 13925—Definitions and Grant Provisions, [www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/42/13925](http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/42/13925).
4. SAMHSA’s working definition of trauma and principles and guidance for a trauma-informed approach [Draft] (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2012), 4.
5. See PowerPoint of “Trauma-Informed Care,” a workshop presented by Amy Fleischauer (director of Victim Services International, Institute of Buffalo) and Kristin Heffernan (associate professor of social work at The College at Brockport, State University of New York), <http://bit.ly/trauma-informed-care>.
6. Bambarén-Call, AnaMaria, et al. *Interpreting Compassion: A Needs Assessment Report on Interpreting for Survivors of Torture, War Trauma, and Sexual Violence* (The Voice of Love, 2012).
7. SAMHSA’s working definition of trauma and principles and guidance for a trauma-informed approach [Draft] (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2012).



#### Marjory Bancroft

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## Some Fundamentals of Project Management

At its most basic, managing expectations is about proactive, clear, and explicit communication. Managing expectations is also about showing respect for one's partners in the collaborative translation process.

**M**y professional experience as a project manager includes positions at three translation firms of varying organizational maturity. In those positions, not only have I managed projects of varying complexity in over 60 languages, I've also had the opportunity to model my own work as a project manager off of the strategies of some amazing professionals. I would like to share a few of the fundamental skills and practices I've seen implemented consistently by the successful project managers with whom I've had the pleasure to work.

### KNOWING YOUR PARTNERS

While collaborating with colleagues from around the globe is one very exciting and rewarding component of the job, the need to know as much as possible about one's partners is compounded by a work environment in which collaboration takes place almost exclusively online. For example, if you discover that the translator in Japan is unable to work with the file you sent, you'll likely lose an entire working day (due to time zone differences) coordinating to get them the correct file format. In an industry in which turnarounds of yesterday can be the norm,

proactively establishing project parameters around knowledge of a translator's programs, capacity, location, etc., is one way to ensure smooth project launches.

Overall, the information that seasoned project managers endeavor to know about their translators includes:

- Location (time zone) and contact details (i.e., landline, cell, Skype, Whatsapp, or other messenger IDs—the more the better)
- Operating systems and computer-assisted translation (CAT) tools
- Specializations, degrees, and certifications
- Other commitments and capacity
- General knowledge of the translator's strengths and weaknesses

In addition to knowing this information about each of the translators with whom they work, as they become more experienced, project managers also become increasingly aware of factors affecting the language pairs with which they regularly work as a whole. Such factors include things like periods in which availability in certain language pairs will be greatly diminished due to vacation trends and national holidays, the cost of living in target markets and its effect on language costs, and degree equivalencies between target and source markets. Building this kind of working knowledge on individuals and cultures is an ongoing process. This is why project managers develop and rely on a network of colleagues and a repository of resources to which they can turn for all sorts of on-the-fly answers to language questions.

Since project management is largely about big-picture facilitation, project managers rely on these individuals at each stage of the translation process for micro-level feedback on performance, processes, and potential improvements. For example, as a project manager, I look to translators for proactive feedback on localization issues and problems that have popped up during file preparation, such as character or symbol corruption and other issues. I rely on internal desktop publishing specialists for information on compatibility issues between desktop publishing file formats and CAT tools. I turn to the subject matter experts in quality control with questions regarding



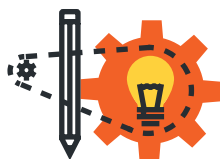
the appropriate stylistic treatment of textual features, along with feedback on the translator's performance, conformance to style guidelines, and how instructions could be improved. Maintaining open and constructive dialogue with all participants helps to ensure that any issues that arise are caught and resolved as quickly and smoothly as possible. Additionally, this ongoing positive collaboration amongst all stakeholders to overcome small challenges can have a big impact on overall work satisfaction and the realization of greater overall efficiencies as a result.



## MANAGING EXPECTATIONS

As I've learned the hard way, a deadline of "tomorrow" may mean September 1 to me, but on the other side of the globe (in China, for example), by the time a translator reads my e-mail message, that same "tomorrow" deadline will mean September 2 to her due to time zone differences. At its most basic, managing expectations is about proactive, clear, and explicit communication. Asking to receive a translation by tomorrow—Thursday, September 1 at 9:00 a.m. central standard time—communicates my delivery expectations much more explicitly than "tomorrow" does. This communication style helps to ensure timely deliveries and facilitates project timeline planning as well.

Managing expectations is also about showing respect for one's partners in the collaborative translation process. If a translator e-mails me proactively to let me know that they will need some additional time to complete a project due to unforeseen issues, I manage the expectations of the other providers in that process by letting them know of changes to the timelines so that they can adjust their schedules accordingly. The same goes for scheduling any unexpected



*As a project manager, I look to translators for proactive feedback.*

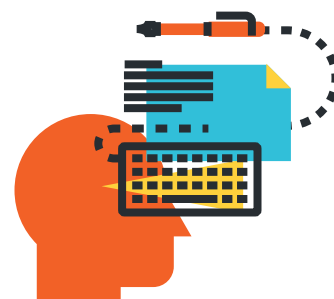
project reviews. If file updates or revisions are necessary, for example, I can alert the translator and request that they maintain a window of availability to respond to any questions or review changes to files. Proactively communicating changing project parameters with all providers within a dynamic environment in which multiple projects are being completed simultaneously helps to ensure that resources are available as adjustments are made. Most importantly, this keeps projects on track for final delivery.

The concept of managing expectations is also very important to establishing a project's scope with the client. For example, the client may send over three files for translation, but their request e-mail only references two. Better to ask up front whether they have accidentally attached an extra file than to find out upon delivery that content has been translated that the client neither wanted or needed. Conversations with the client surrounding project expectations may include more delicate topics as well. These could include how rush turnarounds increase project costs and decrease quality, or how failure to make appropriate project investments up front is more likely to result in situations that require expensive and inefficient rework—in which all losses will likely not be recoverable. Approaching these kinds of topics certainly requires delicacy, and sales representatives rely on their translation



teams to provide informative and realistic feedback to clients on project parameters.

While difficult, this sort of consultative approach has long-term benefits, not only for specific clients, but for the profession as a whole. As clients become more aware of the intricacies of the translation process, they are more likely to approach that process more critically, with an understanding of the investments necessary to reach translation goals. As a result, they're more likely to return with their translation needs to those providers who have a positive track record for managing expectations successfully.



## PRIORITIZING

Project managers follow multiple projects simultaneously of various types and with varied processes. On any given day, a project manager's task list may include project launches, queries for the translator from the quality assurance team, quotes, questions from clients on new languages or services, questions from management on new translation technology, and post-production terminology management updates. More experienced project managers have established systems for tracking outstanding tasks. They prioritize tasks based on the overall objective of project management—to keep projects moving through the production process.

When I arrive at the office, I may have three high priority tasks that all need immediate attention. My general strategy will be to cross those items off my task list that I can complete most quickly, so that I can concentrate on more time-consuming items. For example, not only does passing a translation delivery to the quality team take just a few minutes, but by making this pass right away, I've ensured that the project has not stalled between the

translation and quality assurance stages. I may also be working on finalizing a multi-language quote and initiating a new quote. While CAT analysis runs on the new quote, I can follow up with any translators from whom I have not yet received a quote for my multi-language project. I'll keep bouncing between the two projects until I'm able to deliver the multi-language quote to the sales team and send the processed files to the translator for the new project quote. This sort of multi-tasking means that process-orientation is an important skill for project management. While project managers often focus on monitoring the overall big-picture status of projects, they must also be able to break down each stage into the individual actions that will move—sometimes inch—projects forward and follow through with those actions.



*As clients become more aware of the intricacies of the translation process, they are more likely to approach that process more critically, with an understanding of the investments necessary to reach translation goals.*

Prioritizing, however, is also about understanding at what points in the process to make time investments. A good rule of thumb is that front-end investments often yield the greatest efficiencies on back-end processes. For example, when launching a project, establishing clear instructions on the treatment of stylistic features (acronyms, proper nouns, measurements, etc.) will be beneficial at every stage of the project that follows. This means that during the translation process, the translator

won't have to pause to make a treatment decision for each new stylistic feature they encounter. During quality review, the reviewer will have a translation product in which measurements and acronyms are treated consistently, so they will be able to review the content more quickly and request less changes. During the desktop publishing phase, fewer changes will be required, cutting down on project revisions during formatting. During post-production translation memory updates, fewer changes will need to be implemented into the bilingual file, cutting down on the time for that as well. By taking the time on the front end of the process to establish stylistic guidelines, the project manager has generated time savings at every subsequent stage.



*Maintaining open and constructive dialogue with all participants helps to ensure that any issues that arise are caught and resolved as quickly and smoothly as possible.*

Still, project managers are also realistic, and they understand that no matter how carefully a project has been planned, surprises are bound to pop up as new versions of programs become available and generate new bugs, as deadlines are inadvertently missed, and revisions to the source file are sent over mid-project. Ultimately, project managers are flexible, and when problems arise their immediate reaction is to establish plan(s) B, C, and potentially D. Only after a project is back on track will they take the time to reflect on what went awry and what improvements can be made next time around to avoid similar issues.



## IT'S ALL ABOUT STRATEGY

Overall, implementing the strategies outlined here can help project managers achieve a positive domino effect within their organizations, in which happy translators lead to happy reviewers and desktop publishers. This leads to happy clients as project costs decrease, happy sales teams as clients request more work, and happy managers and business owners as a result. Beyond these skills, and as with any professional, a healthy amount of curiosity also goes a long way, as does identifying the individuals within your organization who work hard and have the know-how and sticking with them!



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# An Interview with Radd Ehrman, Classical Philologist

**A**s translators, we are familiar with the concept of picking a word apart to grasp its meaning. We refer to glossaries and dictionaries to determine exactly how a word is defined in specific circumstances or fields. In literary translation, we often have to know precisely how a word or phrase was used at the time it was originally written, perhaps hundreds of years ago. To do that we must understand the context in which it was used—a complicated process that falls within the purview of classical philology.

My guest today is Radd Ehrman, a classical philologist and professor of Greek and Latin at Kent State University. He has an MA in classics from the University of Kansas and a PhD in classical philology from the University of Illinois. He has taught a wide range of courses at Kent State in Greek and Latin language and literature, from elementary courses in both languages to graduate courses on Latin authors. In describing his work, Professor Ehrman says that, “very generally speaking, a classical philologist is one who seeks to understand, interpret, and transmit to modern times the language and literature (both literary and non-literary) and their interpretation from Greek and Roman antiquity on the basis of words, grammar, idiom, etc., in the context of the genre and individual author.”

**Dr. Ehrman, it's a pleasure to be talking to you today. To get started, would you please tell us how you came to be a classicist?**

**What originally led you to the field, which has evidently kept you engaged ever since?**

The earliest beginnings were probably prompted by my interest in mythology and reading old works in translation—works such as Homer's *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*. In high school, I took two years of Latin and was fascinated. That was all my school offered at the time, so I subsequently took two years of high school French. I really liked French, but it didn't have the same appeal for me as Latin. So, when I became a freshman at the University of Kansas I took a



*It was the exciting nature of virtually everything I read in the classical languages*

*that kept me wanting to pursue classical philology even further.*

Latin course and, again, found myself fascinated. I enrolled in Latin classes every semester after that and soon also began studying classical Greek.

It was the exciting nature of virtually everything I read in the classical languages—the war among gods, the creation of the universe, the transformations, the humor, the pathos, the attempt to understand humanity's place in the universe—that kept me wanting to pursue classical philology even further. I was also taken by the very power of words and idioms found in ancient authors. All of these, I came to realize, can speak to modern audiences about a view of the world that is still important today. Classical antiquity in all its aspects, and not least its languages and literatures, has had such a profound influence in so many different ways on subsequent cultures and understandings of the nature of the world. In addition, I found myself drawn particularly to ancient comedy, not only because the surviving plays are so phenomenally funny, but because in the ancient texts of Aristophanes and Plautus I discovered the sheer power of words.

**What was the subject of your doctoral thesis?**

My doctoral dissertation was entitled *Lucilius and the Cross-Currents of Literary Thought in the Time of Scipio Aemilianus*. In it I examined aspects of the burgeoning Latin literature and the influence of the philhellenic movement in Rome during the third and second centuries BCE, which was supported by powerful individuals, such as Scipio Aemilianus,

and publicly opposed by others, including Cato the Elder. I discussed what early Latin authors, such as the satirist Lucilius and the comic poet Terentius, considered to be the nature of literature, and the relationship of early Latin literature to Greek and across Latin genres.

**Have you ever worked as a translator, or done translations as part of your philological work?**

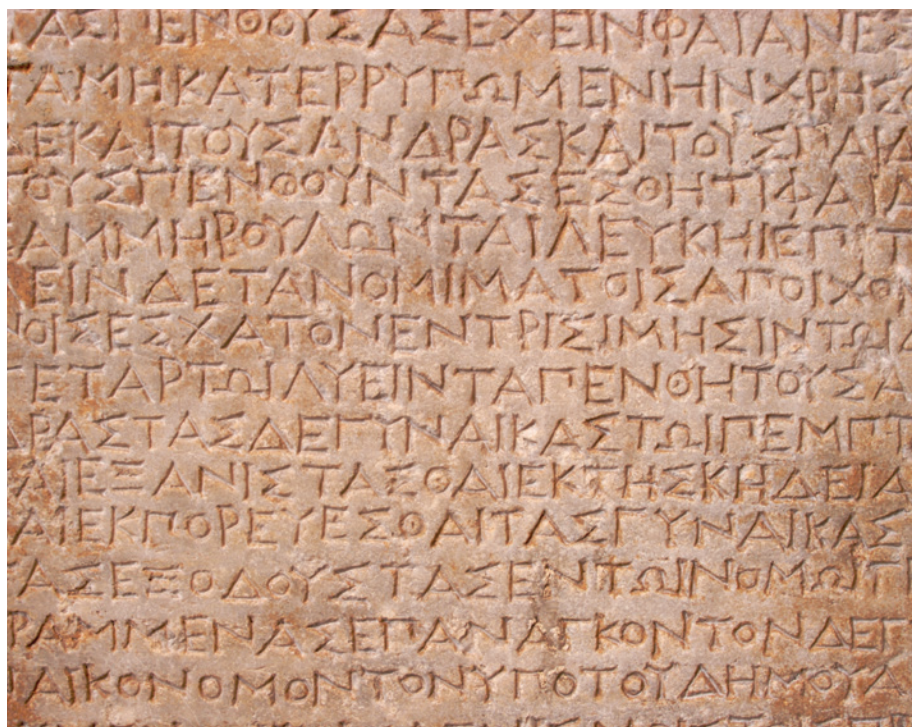
I've worked as a literary translator, which in my field incorporates many aspects of philology. My published translations have been of a medieval Latin author, Hildegard of Bingen, a 12th-century Benedictine nun. My colleague, the late Dr. Joseph Baird, and I published the complete corpus of her surviving letters in three volumes with Oxford University Press. I'm currently revising my translation of the last of Hildegard's three works of mystic visions, *Liber Divinorum Operum* (*The Book of God's Works*), to include philological, and some historical, commentary.

I've also been working on a translation with commentary of the fragments of the *fabulae togatae*—Latin comedies set in Italian towns rather than Greek towns. None of these plays survive intact, but only through quotations from lexicographers, antiquarians, etc. This project calls upon almost all aspects of classical philology to attempt to understand, as far as is reasonably possible, the entire body of work from the surviving parts.

**Do you think we've defined classical philology well enough? Is there something else we could say that might help a layman gain a better understanding of the field?**

I think the definition stated at the beginning of this interview is sufficient. Readers should understand that there are various independent aspects that fall under the umbrella of “classical philology,” such as linguistics, papyrology, paleography, codicology, and textual criticism. There are certainly controversies, such as the applicability of various “theories,” the relationship of philology to hermeneutics, and so on.





Inscription of Classical Greek text on limestone tablet.

**Should we make a distinction between philology and classical philology?**

From my perspective, the distinction arises from the fact that a classical philologist studies material ranging from the earliest literature of Greece up through the fall of Rome and even into the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. But, just as a modern philologist will do, the classical philologist will also make use of the latest discoveries and theories of recent scholars regarding approaches to literature, including theories such as post-modern, feminist, narratological, and Marxist. In addition, the classical philologist makes use of developing understandings of ancient cultures through related fields, such as archaeology, papyrology, and numismatics.

**As regards its etymology, the word philology<sup>1</sup> is derived from the Greek terms meaning a love of learning, literature, and reason. Is that an accurate assessment?**

Yes. But as I try to show, philology is not only the love of those things, but also the application.

**A philologist is therefore “one to whom the word is dear,” or “a learned lover**

**of the written word.” Is that how you describe yourself?**

Yes, because classical philology deals with the written word. It’s important to remember that classical Greek and Latin were, of course, spoken languages of which only the written word has come down to us.

**What are your specific areas of interest? Can you tell us why?**

My specific areas of interest are Greek and Latin comedy in its various developments, from Aristophanes through the *fabulae togatae* and also in Medieval Latin. Ancient comedy, much like a situation comedy on television today, is a window into the world. These comedies depend to a large extent on reflecting the circumstances and reactions of ordinary people to everyday events and developing with the audience a sense of recognition of such events and their outcomes. The surviving plays of Aristophanes, Plautus, Menander, and Terence are very funny, and that is appealing to me.

**Philology is concerned with the correct interpretation of texts, which you say must be found in the context of the genre and**

**individual author. Please tell us more about what “context” means here.**

What “context” means is that the classical philologist and translator, just as any translator, has to look at the entire picture of the work to be rendered. For example, in the case of ancient comedy, it’s really hard to bring a line that is funny in the original into the target language and get somewhere near the original intent and result. Part of the reason is not only the extreme difficulty of rendering the expressions in a comic drama where a literal rendering will more than likely fall flat, but also because sensibilities of what is humorous, appropriate, or decorous are constantly in flux. Moreover, comic poets are writing for an immediate audience and not for posterity, so a clash of cultures can be an obstacle because that sense of recognition that is so important to comedy can be lacking when presented to a modern audience.

Compare modern reactions to a song by Gilbert and Sullivan, such as *A More Humane Mikado Never Did in Japan Exist*, where allusions that a Victorian audience would have appreciated may well be lost on a modern audience. In addition, Aristophanes, our earliest surviving Greek comic playwright, and Plautus, our earliest surviving Latin author, are both masters of the neologism and word play. They both could stand side by side with Shakespeare and not embarrass themselves. Therefore, the interpretation of the text depends not only on the original interpretation, and setting, of the works, but also on an understanding of the intended audience, historical and social background, and genre. The job of the classical philologist is to understand and impart all these.

**You say that a philologist works with both literary and non-literary material. Please give us some examples of the non-literary type and explain why and how they are studied by philologists.**

If we define “literary” rather narrowly to mean something along the lines of a work with a narrative structure of some kind, whether fictional or nonfictional, then “non-literary” could include material such as tax documents, graffiti, contracts, and inscriptions. Studying this material is

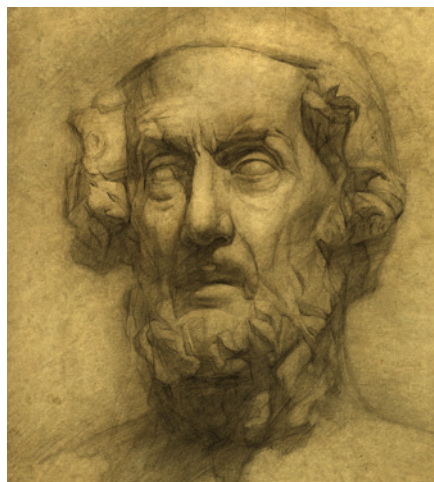
useful for philologists for many reasons. For example, inscriptions can tell us a great deal about historical background and (in the case of tomb inscriptions) family and other personal relationships that might not otherwise be quite so apparent. As another example, although certainly not limited to this, graffiti and papyri can tell us about current events, popular opinions, and also give us a clue into how words were pronounced (since people often spell the way they hear).

**In antiquity, a philologist was a commentator on ancient texts, such as *The Iliad* or *The Odyssey*. What exactly would those commentators do, and has that changed much in modern times?**

In the case of the commentators on the works of Homer, the issue was to try to discover which lines of the epics were really “written” (better, composed) by Homer and which were spurious; that is, which were later additions to the text. A written text of Homer is not known to have existed until a considerable time after any original was created. (And even “original” is something of a misnomer, since Homer’s poems were presented orally for a long time.) The commentators were attempting, as philologists do today, to establish, as closely as possible, the “original” or “authentic” text. Modern philologists, however, may not agree with their criteria.<sup>2</sup> Ancient philologists, including those working in the Library at Alexandria, looked at a variety of issues, such as whether a line was of unsuitable dignity for the grandeur of the epics, or whether a line was, in the context, repeated inappropriately from elsewhere. They didn’t necessarily alter the texts in most instances, but they did notate them for future references.

**Please tell us about the very early development of philology at the Library of Alexandria in the third century BCE. How did it influence the birth of punctuation and what we now call copyediting?**

Aristophanes of Byzantium is credited with establishing some sort of punctuation—including marking the accentuation of words and using sign notations to indicate whether a line of Homer was to be regarded as spurious—



Homer

but we can hardly say that punctuation was standardized. By way of comparison, look at an early edition of, say, a novel by Charles Dickens and note how differently it’s punctuated in comparison with a 21st-century edition. At any rate, we can say that people like Aristophanes of Byzantium gave punctuation a start. Others also contributed to the field, so the development and application of punctuation has a very long history.

I might point out that both Greek and Latin can often have a sort of “imbedded” punctuation, so to speak. For instance, in Latin a question can be indicated by the use of the enclitic *-ne* attached to the first word of a sentence. So, *videt vir canem* is a statement, “The man sees the dog”; whereas *videtne vir canem* asks “Does the man see the dog?”

**Philology, as a discipline, has meant different things at different times for over two thousand years. Can you discuss the different classifications and tell us where classical philology stands today in terms of linguistics and the humanities?**

Classical philology is allied with linguistics, in that philology uses linguistics to understand the language component of texts in various aspects. It’s not, however, the same thing as linguistics. To a larger degree, classical philology considers other factors in interpreting texts, such as the contemporary culture and history. Classical philology is foundational to the humanities because it provides access

to texts in both the original (as far as can be determined, as we noted earlier) and in current, idiomatic (and hence intelligible) translations, as well as in their interpretation on a variety of levels. In fact, a recent book by James Turner calls philology “the forgotten origins of the modern humanities.”<sup>3</sup>

**Finally, what of the future? What shape will philological studies take in the years to come?**

It’s hard to predict precisely other than to say that philological studies will, in my view and despite a reluctance in several quarters to even use the term “philology,” continue to assess texts, textual variations, lexical matters, and interpretation and their degree of importance. It will also assess the relationship of ancient terms to modern words, phrases and idioms, contemporary settings, and their influence on more recent literature. As new literary theories and practices develop and older ones are perhaps discounted or not appreciated as much as they once were, classical philology will take note of new ways to understand text both in the original and in the interpretation.

**Thank you for your insights into this field. It’s quite fascinating for those of us with an enduring interest in the origins of humanity and our ability to communicate. ○**

#### NOTES

1. See <https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/philology>.
2. See Reynolds, L.D., and N.G. Wilson. *Scribes and Scholars: A Guide to the Transmission of Greek and Latin Literature*, third edition (Oxford University Press, 1991), 9–15, [http://bit.ly/scribes\\_scholars](http://bit.ly/scribes_scholars).
3. Turner, James. *Philology: The Forgotten Origins of the Modern Humanities* (Princeton University Press, 2015), <http://bit.ly/Philology-Turner>.



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# On Court Interpreting and Language Discrimination

For my final column of the year, I've decided to tackle a perhaps controversial topic that I've been discussing with friends and colleagues in the court interpreting world: language discrimination. Does it exist? How should you handle it? Bear in mind that the following is, of course, only my opinion, but I hope it provides some food for thought by also presenting both sides of the argument. I shall use my own unique situation as a starting point.

I call the phenomenon that I've witnessed native language accent discrimination. Perhaps this is a natural bias that English speakers—or speakers of any language—might have that makes them more likely to identify with people who sound more like them.

For better or worse, some people who make hiring decisions for court interpreters in the U.S. tend to be native English speakers (think court personnel, lawyers, lawyers' assistants, etc.). And sometimes these individuals might prefer linguists who are native speakers and perfectly fluent in English. If they are simply picking an interpreter from a list, they might choose someone with a non-Hispanic name; or they might choose the opposite, depending on their bias.

Clients have actually told me that I was selected because my name sounds like I'm a native English speaker, which, ironically, I am not. I have also heard the opposite: that I had initially not been chosen because of the fact that my last name is not Hispanic-sounding (and that I was their second or third choice).

This practice may seem unfair, but perhaps it's not any more unfair than the decisions we all make as consumers on a daily basis. For example, perhaps we choose a particular massage therapist because we feel more comfortable with someone of our own gender, or a certain sports medicine doctor because we feel like we can relate better to someone close to our age. Not all biases are inherently evil, and it's good to be aware

*Not all biases are inherently evil, and it's good to be aware of them and be able to run a business in spite of it.*

of them and to be able to run a business in spite of it.

We could write books (in addition to those already written) and hold entire conferences on this topic without reaching consensus, as there really isn't an easy answer. In general, though, I think the following is true: the idea is to establish communication between, in my case, the English speaker and the Spanish speaker. The English speakers (who are usually those in the power position in court interpreting assignments) want to be able to have stellar interpreting into English so that they can understand what the Spanish speaker is saying. They usually have no way of judging if the into-Spanish interpretation is any good. On the other hand, the non-English speaker wants to make sure that what he or she is saying is being interpreted correctly into English. However, their first priority is understanding the interpreter, as without initial understanding there's no communication.

So, what's more important? Dominance of the source or the target? Both are important, but those who are in a position to hire interpreters for court assignments might have a bias toward interpreters who speak English with a minimal accent, since it makes their own communication easier. On the flip side, I've also heard from clients who specifically look for interpreters who, on paper, seem like native Spanish speakers, because they want to make sure the Spanish side is perfect. Food for thought indeed, right?

In my case, I grew up in Mexico City, yet I do not have a Spanish-sounding surname, my accent is not often detected, and I write well in English. On the other hand, I always score higher on into-Spanish than into-English on standardized interpreting exams.

Bottom line: appearances are deceiving, and someone with the last name of Hernández or Ponce de León might not have spent one day in school in a Spanish-speaking country and may be more English-dominant. That is, of course, fine: there are very few true native speakers of both languages. Clients need to decide who to retain for interpreting services, and language discrimination/bias might influence their decision, but we can't really control that. As professionals, however, we can control many other things, including the impression we make on others and how well we demonstrate our skills and knowledge.

I wish you all a lovely start into 2017 and happy interpreting! ●



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This column is not intended to constitute legal, financial, or other business advice. Each individual or company should make its own independent business decisions and consult its own legal, financial, or other advisors as appropriate. The views expressed here are not necessarily those of ATA or its Board of Directors. Ideas and questions should be directed to [judy.jenner@entrepreneuriallinguist.com](mailto:judy.jenner@entrepreneuriallinguist.com).



# Three Crazy Ideas about Translation Standards

I'm a big fan of standardization! That's why I've been using international standards in my classroom for almost 10 years. I believe that a big part of skill-oriented teaching (my own specialties are computer-assisted translation and terminology management) is familiarizing students with industry best practices. And one way of looking at standards is precisely as that: industry best practices! Now here is a crazy idea: how about teaching based on the requirements specified in the same standards that translation service providers certify against?

Fortunately, there is no lack of international standards that deal specifically with the skills and processes involved in translation or post-editing. Here are just a few recent examples:

- ASTM F2575 Standard Guide for Quality Assurance in Translation
- ISO 17100 Translation services—Requirements for translation services
- ISO/DIS 18587 Translation services—Post-editing of machine translation output—Requirements

In the diagram on page 28 I have compiled the skills or competencies identified in each of the three standards for easy reference.

Before I get to the crazy part, let me talk briefly about one standard in more detail. Just a little over one year after its publication, ISO 17100 is already the most widely adopted translation standard in the (English-speaking) world, based on a Google search I conducted.

## ISO 17100:2015 TRANSLATION SERVICES—REQUIREMENTS FOR TRANSLATION SERVICES

This new ISO standard is the successor of EN 15038:2006 Translation Services—Service requirement, the previously most widely adopted translation quality standard. That being the case, it's not surprising that the content of the section entitled "Professional competences of translators" in ISO 17100 is almost



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identical to EN 15038. However, there is one notable addition in ISO 17100—namely “Domain competence.”

Here are the six translator competencies listed in ISO 17100:

- **Translating competence:** Ability to translate content.
- **Linguistic and textual competence in the source language and the target language:** Ability to understand the source language, fluency in the target language, and knowledge of text-type conventions.
- **Competence in research, information acquisition, and processing:** Ability to acquire any additional knowledge required to understand the source language content and render the target language content.
- **Cultural competence:** Ability to make use of locale-specific information that are characteristic of the source language and the target language culture, respectively.
- **Technical competence:** Ability to use the technical resources that support the entire translation process.

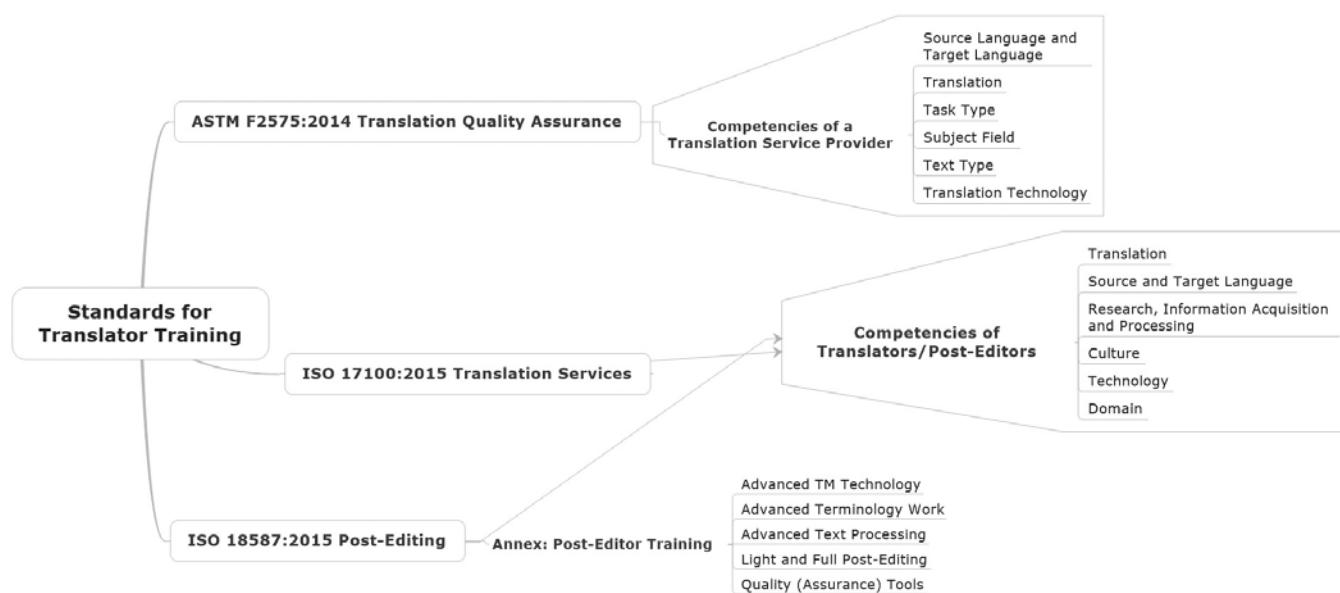


Figure 1: Overview of the translation-related skills identified in ASTM F2575, ISO 17100, and ISO 18587

- **Domain competence:** Ability to understand source-language content and render target-language content using the appropriate style and terminology.

It deserves mentioning that in addition to the specifications of translator competences, ISO 17100 also includes competences of revisers and reviewers, as did EN 15038. However, unlike EN 15038, ISO 17100 also includes specifications of the competencies of translation project managers. And that, in my opinion, makes ISO 17100 even more relevant for teaching purposes.



### USE TRANSLATION STANDARDS TO GUIDE CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT/REVIEW

The efforts of international standardization organizations like ASTM and ISO are typically directed at industry, and ISO 17100 is no exception. So, it may sound crazy to take a document designed explicitly for implementation by translation service providers and propose the development of translator training curricula against this standard.

If you take the competencies listed in ISO 17100 as a reference, many translation programs probably already cover translation, linguistic and textual, as well as cultural

*Another thing I like about ISO 17100 is the fact that it applies to “all aspects of the translation process directly affecting the quality and delivery of translation services.”*

competence. But what about research, technical, and domain competencies? It amazes me how even recent graduates lack basic Internet search skills. The same is true for basic translation technologies, such as machine translation or terminology management systems.

Another thing I like about ISO 17100 is the fact that it applies to “all aspects of the translation process directly affecting the quality and delivery of translation services.” In fact, the main part of ISO 17100 does an excellent job illustrating that translation projects involve many tasks in addition to translation proper. In my opinion, students would benefit from being familiarized with all types of tasks involved in a translation project, including the administrative and technical activities during pre- and post-production. That is particularly true for those students seeking in-house employment. The vast majority of the students in translation/interpreting/

localization programs I taught who found a salaried job after graduation didn’t work as linguists, but as project managers and localization engineers.



### USE TRANSLATION STANDARDS TO GUIDE FACULTY DEVELOPMENT/SELECTION

Translator training programs that aim at producing graduates who can find well-paying jobs in industry after graduation need to teach the competencies that the industry requires. Some will argue that these competencies are best taught by instructors who themselves have industry experience. To this I would add that “faculty with industry experience” certainly includes instructors who work as freelance translators, but should also include those with agency or client-side experience.

So, how does a translation program align the competencies of their faculty with market needs? Here is my second crazy idea: look no further than the relevant international translation standards in general, and ISO 17100 in particular. The competencies and processes outlined in these standards can be used to guide curriculum development, but also to serve as guidelines for faculty development/recruitment.



## USE TRANSLATION STANDARDS TO GUIDE INTERNSHIP DEVELOPMENT

As someone who has completed three internships as part of his translator training, I know from personal experience that internships can add a lot of value to an academic education. I've also learned that not all internships are created equal. In some internships, students go through a progression of trainings, are guided by a mentor, and by the end of their internship have created a portfolio of meaningful work. In other internships, there is none of the above and interns just do the work no one else wants to do.

Unfortunately, many translator training institutions are taking a "hands-off" approach to internships management, offering little in the way of guidance to students and potential host companies. The thinking at the leadership level of some translator training programs seems to be that any practical experience students might get out of an internship is better than none. And so educational institutions may limit their internship-related efforts to attracting companies willing to offer internship opportunities to their students.

However, without guidance on what skills their interns need in addition to those necessary for the project at hand, potential host companies might never get an internship program started. Likewise, it's often difficult for students to know exactly what kind of learning experience they can expect from an internship.

So, here is the third crazy idea: model translation internships using the competencies and processes outlined in ISO 17100. That should be particularly easy for—and relevant to—the many organizations that already are ISO 17100-certified. And students, as well as educational institutions, would have objective criteria for selecting and evaluating internship opportunities.

## CONCLUSION

Perhaps it may not be such a crazy idea after all to have the leadership of translator training programs take a good look at international translation standards.

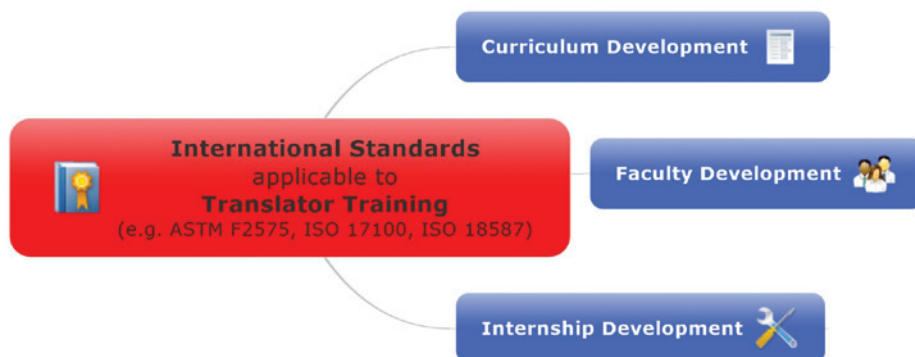


Figure 2: Diagram of possible educational uses of translation standards.



Figure 3: Product-centric translation, where a text to be translated is not only connected to a product, but to earlier versions of the same text, earlier versions of the product, and other texts that are connected to the same product, as well as earlier versions of those other texts. These relationships that are typical for technical translation projects raise a variety of consistency issues, which are absent from the translations of stand-alone/literary texts.

The competencies and processes outlined in standards like ISO 17100 can be used as a roadmap for (re-) orienting their curriculum and faculty—not to mention internship—development efforts.

What should leaders in translator training institutions base the future course of their programs on? Hearsay and the diverging opinions of a local guru? Or an international standard developed by experts from dozens of countries that is being deployed by companies all over the globe—the same companies that hire the graduates from these programs? ●



**Uwe Muegge** has more than 15 years of experience in translation and localization, having worked in leadership functions on both the vendor and buyer sides of the industry.

He has published numerous articles on translation tools and processes and taught computer-assisted translation and terminology management courses at the college level in both the U.S. and Europe. In addition, he has been active in several standardization efforts; most recently as chair of ASTM F43.03 subcommittee on language translation. Contact: [info@muegge.cc](mailto:info@muegge.cc).



# Why I Train Interpreters

If we want qualified interpreters (which I argue we do), we need to continue to train interpreters.

I live in a tiny conference interpreting market. The number of Swedish members of the International Association of Conference Interpreters (AIIC) is under 30, and the total number of Swedish A-language conference interpreters worldwide is probably under 100. Our biggest clients are the European institutions, so any change in meeting or language policy has an immediate and dramatic impact on the market. On top of this, the Swedish have a long and strong tradition of learning and using languages, so interpreters are often deemed unnecessary.

I would like to stress that this is not a list of complaints, only a realistic description of the market. Not surprisingly, I often get feedback from conference interpreter colleagues asking why I train new interpreters when they consider their jobs to be threatened. These colleagues argue that training should only take place when there is a need for new interpreters, and, from their perspective, there is no current need. I don't agree.

Other colleagues think that if we train interpreters, they shouldn't be trained through a university. They argue that interpreting is a practical trade, so it shouldn't be part of a formal academic program. I don't agree.

Many of my community interpreter colleagues (where the market needs are big and training scarce), on the other hand, don't think we can train large enough numbers of interpreters through university programs. They say training should be done elsewhere. I don't agree with this either.

Other community interpreter colleagues tend to have a hard time understanding why they should train at all, especially when remuneration is so low and when many practitioners don't take responsibility for providing quality interpretation or for training others as they pass through on their way to more lucrative business. Well, I agree on the low remuneration, but—you guessed it—when it comes to the analysis of the needs of training, I don't agree.

Since the debate often gets heated, I'll try to explain why I think it's important to train both conference and community interpreters on a regular basis, and why it should be part of university training.

**Who decides when and how many interpreters the market needs?** The interpreter, who doesn't get hired for some reason? The institution that wants interpreters with a particular profile? The agency that would like to have a variety of low-cost interpreters available at all times?

In Sweden, we don't have a state agency that is responsible for the interpreting industry. Therefore, the market and the market's needs are difficult to assess. Some claim thousands of community interpreters are needed, while others say that there is no future for interpreting and that conference interpreters are first in line to get automatized.

*In Sweden, we don't have a state agency that is responsible for the interpreting industry. Therefore, the market and the market's needs are difficult to assess.*

The arguments for how many interpreters are needed is not, in my opinion, the same as the argument for the need for qualified interpreters. If we want qualified interpreters (which I argue we do), we need to continue to train interpreters. Interpreters, just like anybody else, take parental leave, are injured, or decide to change careers. This is why we need to have a steady trickle of qualified interpreters at the ready to take over for those who decide to leave the profession.

**Does a profession lose its authenticity or credibility if it's part of an academic program?** Do we get worse interpreters if we conduct research on interpreting or teach future interpreters about what research has discovered about interpreting, or teach them how to conduct research

themselves? Apparently, some colleagues seem to believe that. Or, at least, believe that if you're going to be a good interpreter, then you should only study that and not the theory behind the act.

Interpreting is a highly complex activity. Believing that future interpreters are not capable of studying both the theory and the practice of interpreting is very demeaning (let alone believing that interpreting students are not capable of university studies). Of course, you cannot learn to interpret by only reading a book, but you'll probably become a better interpreter by reading a few books while you practice in a monitored environment. Furthermore, I think that it's relevant for students to not only learn the trade, but also learn to be able to evaluate and talk intelligently about what interpreters do. Otherwise, what is the difference between an interpreter and a Skype translator? (Jonathan Downie has a great post about that, by the way.<sup>1</sup>)

## WHY I TRAIN

So, to conclude, I train interpreters because I believe that by giving people an appropriate education, I empower them to get decent jobs and good pay for what they do, be it in interpreting or in any other business. Although I agree that training should be balanced against a certain level of demand, I do think training and education needs to be stable. Your call! ●

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Downie, Jonathan. "Why Every Interpreter Needs a USP," *Integrity Languages* (July 27, 2016), <http://bit.ly/Downie-interpreter>.



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# Online Training Resources for Translators

**A**s chair of ATA's Translation and Interpreting Resources Committee, my goal is to gather information on resources of all kinds, including those related to professional development. The following discusses short-duration online training that does not lead to a certificate or university credit.

## WEBINARS

Webinars are online seminars—a sort of mini-class on a specific subject. Normally, you pay a fee and receive a link you can use to “attend” the talk live.

When I was chair of ATA's Translation and Computers Committee (2009–2011), I created ATA's webinar series after talking to Lucy Brooks, who was running a similar series for the Chartered Institute of Linguists, a sister organization in the United Kingdom. I ran the series for four years, then handed the baton to Karen Tkaczyk, who served as administrator of ATA's Science and Technology Division (2010–2015). Lucy now runs a for-profit webinar series under her own brand, eCPD.

*ATA's job is to use all the Association's resources to find the best of our own, as well as great speakers from outside ATA.*

To provide readers with an in-depth look at how webinars for translators and interpreters are organized, including the selection process for speakers, I decided to interview both Karen and Lucy.

### **Naomi: What are the advantages/disadvantages of webinars over in-person events?**

**Lucy (eCPD):** Webinars completely eliminate the need to travel. This clearly saves two things: money and time. In-person events can be presented many miles from a translator's home or office. It takes time to get there, and if the event is



really a long way away, accommodation and food are required along the way.

Webinars tend to be offered in bite-sized chunks, ranging from an hour to 90 minutes. It's easy to block this amount of time in your schedule, even on the busiest days. If you have to miss the live webinar for some reason, you will usually be able to view the recorded event after it's over (more than once if you desire).

Of course, in a webinar you don't get the same interaction with the speaker. You cannot see his or her body language, nor do you get to meet your fellow attendees. But if you attend a live webinar, you get a chance to ask questions and join in the interaction that is provided in many webinars.

To participate in a webinar, all you need is a computer with an up-to-date operating system and decent broadband. I find that the best option is a PC or Mac with dedicated Wi-Fi.

### **Naomi: How do you ensure top quality in your webinars and courses?**

**Karen (ATA):** We contact potential speakers based on their reputation in the industry, conference evaluations, and personal references. ATA divisions also refer

speakers to us, with topics they know will be useful to their members. In fact, we encourage all divisions to do that. In particular, we would love to offer more language-specific sessions. We also look for speakers who are knowledgeable in business management for freelance translators and interpreters.

There is no foolproof way to find and select speakers. Some may be excellent at presenting in-person, but not as good at presenting online. The reverse is also true. The skill set is slightly different. Some people can train effectively when looking at a blank screen, whereas other speakers need to see the audience's energy and become dull or dry without it. ATA's job is to use all the Association's resources to find the best of our own, as well as great speakers from outside ATA.

**Lucy (eCPD):** For our own program of events at eCPD, I personally seek out speakers. I use my extensive knowledge of the industry to get top professionals, such as Gwen Clayton, Jason Willis-Lee, Andrew Leigh, and Joy Burrough-Boenisch, to offer presentations and courses to translators all over the globe. I also look for top professionals in other



industries—such as Christopher Barnatt (3D printing), Ken Adams (law), and Ivan Vasconcelos (oil and gas exploration)—to pass on their expertise in their areas and to give translators working in their fields a thorough background in the subject.

**Naomi: What kinds of webinars do you have?**

**Karen (ATA):** We have some language-specific webinars, but most of ATA's webinars focus on business practices and specialty subject areas. Recent business webinars have covered negotiating contracts, terminology management, marketing, and proofreading. Subject-specific webinars have included intellectual property law, patents, the pharmaceutical industry, and medical interpreting.

**Lucy (eCPD):** We have covered many subjects during the six years I've been running eCPD Webinars. We organize them into 10 categories:

- Audiovisual (covering subtitling, localization, films, etc.)
- Business (marketing, finding clients, getting paid, getting started)
- Creative (art world, tourism, gastronomy, transcreation)
- Financial translation

- Legal translation
- Medical translation
- Science and technology
- Style
- CAT tools
- Research

There are around 150 titles in the library, so there is a lot from which to choose. There is also a section for interpreters. Many of the videos are offered in languages other than English (e.g., Polish law, a French translation workshop, the German legal system, and Spanish law).

**Naomi: How do webinars compare to longer courses, like on Coursera?**

**Karen (ATA):** Coursera and other Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) providers are an amazing resource. For subject matter expertise, they are hard to beat. Having said that, MOOCs usually last several weeks and require a much greater time investment than webinars, so they will not suit everyone.

**Lucy (eCPD):** Because the webinars are short (although they sometimes come in a series of three or five lessons), they are less of a commitment than taking a course on Coursera, for example. But the webinars

we produce are made with translators in mind, whereas MOOCs are not.

**Naomi: What do webinar attendees say about the webinars after taking them?**

**Karen (ATA):** Post webinar surveys ask attendees to rate content and speaker performance, as well as whether they would recommend the webinar to a friend. On average, 80% to 85% of attendees rate ATA content and speaker performance as “good to excellent.” An overwhelming majority say they would recommend the webinar to a friend. Some presenters draw rave reviews; others get quieter compliments. It's hard to please such a diverse audience, but attendee surveys show we are getting it right as a rule.

**Lucy (eCPD):** On the whole, attendees are very appreciative of the medium. It allows people who have home and family commitments or who live far away from a large city to have access to high-quality training tailored precisely to translators and interpreters. Because we keep the quality high, the satisfaction rate is very high. So high, in fact, that eCPD Webinars is now an accredited provider of CPD (continuing professional development, or continuing education), upholding the demanding standards of the CPD standards office in London. We are also an approved training provider registered by the official Dutch government office (Bureau Btv).

**Naomi: If someone misses out on booking a live webinar, can they purchase it retrospectively?**

**Karen (ATA):** Absolutely! ATA has a library of recorded webinars available for streaming ([www.atanet.org/webinars](http://www.atanet.org/webinars)). There are no limits for how many times the webinar can be viewed, and recordings are available for at least five years.

**Lucy (eCPD):** We usually make a webinar that was broadcast live available in our e-library a few weeks later. Of course, people who view a webinar this way don't have the opportunity to ask questions, but they can watch the video as often as they like, and all the handouts are available in the form of downloads. At certain times during the year we offer special promotions of our videos from the e-library, making



it a very cost-effective way to accumulate continuing education points.

**Naomi: If someone books a live webinar but cannot make it to the live session, what happens?**

**Lucy (for eCPD and ATA):** If you buy a seat at a webinar, whether for an ATA webinar or an eCPD webinar, it's essential to follow the instructions carefully. We ask you to register for the webinar, but we check the lists frequently and make sure that everyone is registered with GoToWebinar, the service we use to provide webinars, before the start of the webinar. Provided you don't "cancel" your place, which would mean you wouldn't show up in the registration database, you will receive a link to the recorded webinar a few hours after the webinar is over. We try to do this within a few hours, but it can take up to 24. In addition, if there is a handout, we send it to you.

**Lucy (eCPD):** Based in the U.K., eCPD is ideally located to hold live webinars at times that are also convenient to attendees all over the world. Some of our CPD courses start at 10:00 a.m. in the U.K., which is probably not ideal for people on the American continents, but great for people in Asia and Australia. Others begin at 2:00 p.m., and even 4:00 p.m., which is more convenient for those in the western hemisphere. Either way, all our webinars are recorded. Attendees who are unable to make the live event can ask questions retrospectively and receive an attendance certificate, provided they watch the recording within two weeks of the live session. After that, they can watch it, but the opportunity to ask questions and give feedback expires.

**Karen (ATA):** ATA webinars are usually scheduled for noon eastern time. That suits most people in the U.S. and many ATA members elsewhere who are a few hours ahead.

**Naomi: Who runs webinars for ATA?**

**Karen (ATA):** Mary David at ATA Headquarters does all the heavy lifting for the logistics and behind the scenes work. Lucy at eCPD takes care of infrastructure. After last year's ATA Annual Conference in Miami, I was asked if I would like to pick up the member review portion of the process. (Officially that

means I run the Webinar Subcommittee of the Professional Development Committee.) I would welcome other volunteers, should anyone love online training and want to help make the program stronger!

**Naomi: How can someone propose giving a webinar? Do speakers receive payment?**

**Karen (ATA):** We're happy to hear from anyone with subject matter expertise and speaking skills. Contact Mary David at ATA ([mary@atanet.org](mailto:mary@atanet.org)). Speakers receive a stipend of \$300 from ATA.

**Lucy (eCPD):** I'm always happy to discuss proposals from potential trainers and to discuss terms. Proposed talks must meet our quality criteria, and I'm happy to discuss these if you approach me. ●

**Other online training options not mentioned explicitly above are listed below.**

**LINKS TO ONLINE TRAINING RESOURCES**

**Translation and Interpreting Webinars and Courses:**

**ATA Webinar Series**

[www.atanet.org/webinars](http://www.atanet.org/webinars)

**The ATA Podcast**

**Episode 8: The ATA Webinar Program with Karen Tkaczyk**

[www.atanet.org/podcasts](http://www.atanet.org/podcasts)

**Bundesverband der Dolmetscher und Übersetzer**

<http://seminare.bdue.de>

**eCPD**

[www.ecpdwebinars.co.uk](http://www.ecpdwebinars.co.uk)

**International Association of Professional Translators and Interpreters**

[www.iapti.org/webinar/](http://www.iapti.org/webinar/)

**International Medical Interpreters Association**

[www.imiaweb.org/education/learningseries.asp](http://www.imiaweb.org/education/learningseries.asp)

**National Council on Interpreting in Health Care**

[www.ncihc.org/trainerswebinars](http://www.ncihc.org/trainerswebinars)

**Société Française des Traducteurs**

<http://bit.ly/SFT-training>

**Translation Automation User Society Translation Technology Webinars**

<https://events.taus.net/events/webinars>

**MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses) Coursera**

[www.coursera.org](http://www.coursera.org)

*(Provides universal access to the world's best education, partnering with top universities and organizations to offer courses online.)*

**Edx**

[www.edx.org](http://www.edx.org)

*(Provides access to online courses from universities and institutions, including Harvard, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, University of California–Berkeley, Microsoft, and the Smithsonian.)*

**Class Central**

[www.class-central.com](http://www.class-central.com)

*(Features a directory of MOOCs offered by institutions in many languages.)*



**Lucy Brooks** has been in business for over 30 years, and for 23 of these has run a small, successful translation business from her office in the U.K. A fellow of the Chartered Institute

of Linguists (translation and language services) and a qualified member of the Institute of Translation and Interpreting, she translates from German, French, and Spanish into British English, concentrating on technical, publicity, business, and commercial subjects. More recently, she has been providing online training for translators and interpreters through her company eCPD Webinars. Contact: [lucinda.brooks@btconnect.com](mailto:lucinda.brooks@btconnect.com).



**Karen Tkaczyk** works as a French>English freelance translator. Her translation work is highly specialized, focusing on chemistry and its industrial applications. She

holds an MChem in chemistry with French from the University of Manchester, a diploma in French, and a PhD in organic chemistry from the University of Cambridge. She worked in the pharmaceutical industry in Europe. After relocating to the U.S. in 1999, she worked in pharmaceuticals and cosmetics. She established her translation practice in 2005. Contact: [karen@mcmillantranslation.com](mailto:karen@mcmillantranslation.com).



**Naomi Sutcliffe de Moraes** has a PhD in linguistics (University of São Paulo), a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering and a master's degree in physics (University of California, Los

Angeles), and a bachelor's degree in law (University of London). She translates both Portuguese and Italian into English. She is currently a visiting professor at the Federal University of the ABC Region, Santo André, Brazil. She is chair of ATA's Translation and Interpreting Resources Committee. Contact: [naomi.linguist@gmail.com](mailto:naomi.linguist@gmail.com).

# The Certification Toolbox: Get Ready!

Late fall and early winter are traditionally a slow time for ATA's Certification Program, since no exam sittings are scheduled between ATA's Annual Conference and the beginning of the new exam year in March. Certification graders take advantage of this respite to select new exam passages, fine-tune grading standards, and tend to other housekeeping tasks.

This period is also a good opportunity for prospective certification candidates to get ready to take the exam in 2017 by exploring ATA's toolbox of exam preparation resources. Here's an overview.

## PRACTICE TEST

It can't be said enough: completing a practice test and studying the results is one of the best ways to prepare for the exam. ATA practice tests are retired exam passages that the candidate translates at home and returns to ATA Headquarters. Practice tests are evaluated by graders in the same way as the actual exams. However, unlike the actual exam, the candidate receives a marked copy, showing each error with a brief explanation as needed. This is a terrific way for prospective candidates to see what sort of text they could encounter, how the grading standards are applied, and what skills they might need to work on to pass the exam. Best of all, practice tests will be available online in 2017.

## NEW MEDIA

ATA is committed to employing new media for preparing candidates for the certification exam. The latest example is a webinar given in September by Michèle Hansen and Holly Mikkelsen. If you missed it, you can purchase a recording from ATA's website: [www.atanet.org/webinars](http://www.atanet.org/webinars). Stay tuned for other new media approaches to candidate preparation!

## WEBSITE

Translators interested in certification often overlook the valuable information readily available on ATA's website. The Certification Exam Overview and the Frequently Asked Questions are a good

place to start. (See links at the end of this column.) If you're contemplating sitting for the exam, be sure to check out these essential resources.

## PREP SESSIONS

This year's Annual Conference in San Francisco included workshops to prepare candidates for the certification exam in four languages: Spanish, French, Japanese, and Italian. These in-depth sessions, moderated by certification graders, are extremely popular and considered highly useful by prospective candidates. Watch for them at next year's conference in Washington, DC—but also think about asking your local chapter or affiliate to schedule a session at your local or regional conference in 2017.

*ATA is committed to employing new media for preparing candidates for the certification exam.*

## INTO-ENGLISH GRADING STANDARDS

One overlooked and important resource for candidates is the Into-English Grading Standards (IEGS). This document, downloadable from ATA's website, sets forth standards applied by all ATA graders of foreign-into-English language pairs when assessing a variety of issues, such as proper punctuation, nonparallel constructions, and split infinitives. It's a must for exam candidates translating into English, and is especially useful at computerized sittings, since candidates can access the searchable PDF version on their computers.

## INDEPENDENT PRACTICE

If you don't translate material on general subjects on a regular basis, and/or you have not done timed tests lately, independent practice should be part of your personal exam preparation toolbox. A simple way to hone both skills—working with expository texts and working quickly—is to search the Internet for texts that resemble the practice test in your language pair. Good sources are articles from online publications written

for a general (but educated) audience. Download articles that interest you, copy them into Word files, and set aside time to practice translating parts of them into your target language. If you're very busy (as most of us are!), just start with one paragraph at a time, minimizing your use of reference tools (print and online dictionaries). After a few practice sessions, you'll likely see your speed and facility improve.

## TRANSLATION INSTRUCTIONS

The final tool is not something candidates can prepare for in advance, but it's still an important part of the exam: paying close attention to the translation instructions that accompany each passage, specifying the source of the text, the reason it is being translated, the audience addressed by the translation, and the medium in which it will appear. This opening statement, which precedes each exam text and, in fact, should be considered part of the overall passage, gives the candidate important information about how to approach the translation task, especially with regard to style and register, but even in such basic regards as terminology and usage.

So, grab your toolbox and put it to good use! ●



**David Stephenson** serves as chair of ATA's Certification Committee. Contact: [david.translator@gmail.com](mailto:david.translator@gmail.com).

## LINKS TO INFORMATION ABOUT THE CERTIFICATION EXAM

**ATA Webinars on Demand**  
**"A Guide to ATA Certification"**  
[www.atanet.org/webinars](http://www.atanet.org/webinars)

**Certification Exam Overview**  
[www.atanet.org/certification/aboutexams\\_overview.php](http://www.atanet.org/certification/aboutexams_overview.php)

**ATA Certification Into-English Grading Standards**  
[www.atanet.org/certification/Into\\_English\\_Grading\\_2013.pdf](http://www.atanet.org/certification/Into_English_Grading_2013.pdf)

**ATA Certification Program: Frequently Asked Questions**  
[www.atanet.org/certification/certification\\_FAQ.php](http://www.atanet.org/certification/certification_FAQ.php)

# Congratulations!

The following members have successfully passed ATA's certification exam:

## English into Chinese

Sijin Xian  
North Bethesda, MD

## English into Russian

Alexey Rusinov  
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## German into English

Susanne Jasper  
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## Spanish into English

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Jason H. Raff  
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## English into Spanish

Monica Moreno  
San Juan Capistrano, CA

## Swedish into English

Samuel J. Henderson  
Gary, IN

Karelia Báez Sánchez  
Toronto, Canada

## Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation

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