



# The Interpreters *Voice*

The Newsletter of the Interpreters Division of the American Translators Association



Winter 2011



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# The Interpreters

Voice

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## EDITORIAL

Welcome to the winter 2011 issue of The Interpreters Voice Newsletter!

The main goals of this comprehensive, forward-thinking publication are to connect language professionals, while focusing on issues of special interest to the membership including professional development activities, new research/studies, and ideas on improving your business's service, as well as your experiences, challenges, and accomplishments.

We have added important articles regarding the certification of healthcare interpreters and Nataly Kelly writes about the value of a single word. In this issue we are also introducing the Tips and Viewpoints columns. Jennifer De La Cruz and Rita Weil share their tips and viewpoints. We want to hear from you, so please send us your submissions.

This year promises some great events such as the NAJIT annual conference. In today's competitive world, this will be a great opportunity to network, generate more business, and increase your marketing potential. The interview with Jiri Stejskal touches on the upcoming International Federation of Translators (FIT) XIX World Congress, which will be held in San Francisco, California and will bring together language professionals, organizations, and exhibitors from all over the world. We also have an article submitted by Professor Holly Mikkelson, who will report on some of the research that has been conducted on how the brain functions, and how it can be applied to improve an interpreter's performance. Don't miss it!

Finally, Olimpia Hernandez shares her experience at the ATA 51st Annual Conference and Jeff Sanfalcon contributes his photos, commemorating this annual event.

We continue to strive to bring you an informative publication. Please send us your comments, suggestions, and above all, submissions! We are always open to ideas for new sections, articles, or interviews.

Till next issue!



Vanesa Lopez is an interpreter and translator. She is a K-12 school teacher. She is a graduate from Metropolitan State College of Denver with a degree in Modern Language and a minor in International Business. She specializes in healthcare/legal interpreting and translation and is a Spanish language tutor. Her areas of expertise include dubbing/subtitling, proofreading, redacting and editing, with specialization in natural sciences, business, education, immigration, criminology and penology. She is also an experienced interpreter in civil and criminal judicial proceedings. Contact: [vanesalopez73@yahoo.com](mailto:vanesalopez73@yahoo.com)

### Submission guidelines

Send the MSWord file to the editor at [vanesalopez73@yahoo.com](mailto:vanesalopez73@yahoo.com). Submissions are subject to editing. Include author's name, detailed photo captions, a headshot of yourself (optional), a 100 word bio and any copyright notes. Suggested maximum lengths for articles: 1500 words, reviews: 500 words, and letters: 300 words. Advertisements: \$125 full page, \$65 half page, and \$35 quarter page.

ATA certified translators will earn you two (2) points of continuing education (CE) per published article about interpreting and/or translation. A maximum of eight (8) points allowed per reporting period.

### Disclaimer

Opinions expressed in this newsletter are solely those of their authors and do not reflect those of the editor, the Interpreters Division or the American Translators Association.

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Mailing Address  
American Translators Association  
225 Reineker Lane  
Suite 590 - Alexandria, Virginia 22314  
Phone: 703.683.6100 Fax: 703.683.6122  
[www.atanet.org](http://www.atanet.org)

## ATA

## INTERPRETERS DIVISION

### ADMINISTRATOR

Thelma Ferry

[Topinterpreter1@stx.rr.com](mailto:Topinterpreter1@stx.rr.com)

### ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR

Maria Weir

[maria@mariaweir.com](mailto:maria@mariaweir.com)

### MID-YEAR CONFERENCE COMMITTEE CHAIR

Francesca (Fran) Samuel

[alacartetrans@msn.com](mailto:alacartetrans@msn.com)

### CONFERENCE PLANNING COMMITTEE CHAIR

Virginia Valencia

[Virginia.valencia@gmail.com](mailto:Virginia.valencia@gmail.com)

### WEBMASTER

Michael Wahlster

[Michael@GW-Language.com](mailto:Michael@GW-Language.com)

### LISTMASTER

M.Teresa Roman

[teresa.roman@gmail.com](mailto:teresa.roman@gmail.com)

### EDITOR

Vanesa Lopez

[vanesalopez73@yahoo.com](mailto:vanesalopez73@yahoo.com)

### PROOFREADERS

Jonathan Downey

[sixohthree@gmail.com](mailto:sixohthree@gmail.com)

Jennifer De La Cruz

[jenuli@msn.com](mailto:jenuli@msn.com)

### LAYOUT DESIGNER

Jenny Laredo

[Jenny@yahoo.com](mailto:Jenny@yahoo.com)

## MEET THE ID ADMINISTRATORS

Dear Colleagues,

We would like to express our sincerest gratitude to the membership for the vote of confidence in electing us as ID Administrator and Assistant Administrator and want to extend our best wishes to you for a successful New Year.

As we embark on this journey to accomplish our goals and objectives for ID, we ask that you join us in this team effort to improve the visibility of our division and we will continue creating a successful environment for professional growth and camaraderie. As language professionals, we are facing serious and intensifying challenges affecting our careers; therefore, in addition to facilitating professional development activities, increasing resources and social relations among our membership, we will promote communication and dissemination of information to benefit ID members. We welcome an open dialogue, exploring potential and sharing insights, enabling professional development and evolution to benefit our membership and for the advancement of the profession. We look forward to your volunteering, questions, suggestions, concerns, and innovative ideas. Thanks for being an ATA-ID member!

### **THELMA FERRY, ADMINISTRATOR**

Thelma Ferry, LCI, has more than 20 years of experience as a language consultant, managing her own linguistics consultant firm providing language interpretation-translation services and servicing multinational organizations. She has served as an expert witness in criminal and civil cases, performing as court interpreter-translator, under contract for the United States District Court in the Southern District of Texas, Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Courts and The United States Attorney General among other state and governmental agencies. A Texas state Licensed Court Interpreter, conference interpreter, experienced translator and conference organizer, she specializes in the judicial, community, and medical fields as well as video-link interpreting. She is a state approved continuing education (CE) Licensed Instructor and conducts educational development courses for Licensed Court Interpreters. She is a recognized educator, who has contributed as a language instructor for English as a Second Language, sharing her approach to language teaching experiences through workshops, authoring articles and offering field-tested teaching techniques.

An advocate for the profession, she conducts pre-conference seminars and educational workshop sessions at annual conferences of the American Translators Association (ATA), the National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators (NAJIT), to include the 2010 San Jerónimo International Interpreting and Translation Annual Congress. In addition, she also presents educational and professional development related courses to academic and community organizations, while contributing to the advancement of the profession. Her professional affiliations include: The Texas Association of Healthcare Interpreters and Translators (TAHIT), and she is currently serving as Red Cross representative, in addition to active involvement as Advocacy and Bench and Bar Committee member of the National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators (NAJIT).



### **MARIA WEIR, ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR**

Maria Weir is a full-time interpreter and translator with a background in communications, marketing, and advertising. She has more than 16 years of experience in the language industry and has been qualified as an interpreter by the Executive Office for Immigration Review. As the owner of Spanish Services, based in the Philadelphia area, she works with a select group of recognized and accredited linguists to provide language interpretation and written professional translations among other multilingual services. Maria specializes in interpreting for immigration court hearings, medical-evaluation sessions, judicial deposition proceedings, workers' compensation appearances, and focus-group meetings for marketing research industries.

She is a translator with a wide range of technical expertise from translation of environmental standards and guidelines to medical records to documents related to environmental health and safety, employees' handbooks, advertising, cooking recipes, training programs and other related technical and corporate documentation. In addition, Maria is recognized as a professional presenter for wellness programs, basic training on environmental health and safety, as well as providing foreign language voice-over recordings for radio and video productions. She has been a member of the American Translators Association (ATA) since 1995, an active member of the National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators (NAJIT) and currently serves as board member of the Delaware Valley Translators Association (DVTVA), as part of her commitment to increase the professional level of the profession.

A native of Colombia, she has lived in Mexico and Argentina, and traveled extensively in Latin America. She resides with her husband in Gladwyne, PA.





August 1-4 2011 - San Francisco, California, USA - Hilton San Francisco Union Square

## **XIX World Congress** *Bridging Cultures*

### **Interview with Dr. Jiri Stejskal, Past President of The American Translators Association (ATA) and vice president of The International Federation of Translators (FIT) for 2008-2011.**

• **When was The International Federation of Translators (FIT) founded, what is the purpose of the organization and what disciplines does it represent?**

FIT was founded in Paris in 1953 by Pierre-François Caillé. It is an international federation of associations representing translators, interpreters, and terminologists with member organizations in nearly 50 countries throughout the world. The main purpose of FIT is to bring together existing associations, to help form new associations, to provide member associations with useful information, to promote the interests of translators, interpreters, and terminologists, and to uphold their moral and material interests throughout the world. I should mention here that FIT does not have an individual membership category – only organizations such as ATA can be members.

• **During the XVIII World Congress of The International Federation of Translators held on August 2-7, 2008 in Shanghai, you were elected as one of three vice presidents of FIT and entrusted with organizing the XIX FIT World Congress which will take place in San Francisco August 1-4, 2011. How was it that ATA was chosen to host this congress and the city of San Francisco selected for this international event?**

ATA stepped in after other candidates for hosting withdrew at the last minute and at the XVIII Congress in Shanghai it was the sole bidder to host the XIX Congress. Much is owed to Peter Krawutschke, past president of ATA and president of FIT at the time of the Shanghai Congress, who suggested that I work with the ATA Board in my role as ATA's president at that time to prepare the bid. With the Board's support, I presented ATA's proposal to the FIT Statutory Congress in Shanghai and suggested three possible venues for the next Congress: Orlando, Washington DC, and San Francisco. The overwhelming majority of Statutory Congress attendees voted for San Francisco, so that's where we'll be in August.

• **What is the goal of the XIX World Congress and the significance of the "Bridging Cultures" theme?**

The Congress will bring together translators, interpreters, terminologists, and other professionals from all over the world to discuss topical issues such as copyright, human rights, language standards, literary translation, translation technology, as well as community interpreting and legal interpreting which will be of interest to the Interpreters Division.

With the venue being the Golden Gate city, we could not resist incorporating a bridge into the Congress theme and the logo. "Bridging Cultures" is what we all do on a daily basis as translators and interpreters, because our business is not just about words - it's about what the words mean.

• **This will be the first time that a FIT Congress is held in the United States. What does this represent to our country, to ATA, and to attendees to the World Congress?**

The United States has long been the butt of jokes about foreign languages (What do you call a person who speaks two languages? Bilingual. And what do you call a person who speaks only one language? An American). Obviously, it is a great honor for us to host the Congress of a language organization that has been traditionally Eurocentric and I am very pleased with the enthusiasm and positive attitude of the entire FIT Council regarding both ATA and the Congress venue. To put things in perspective, there are only eight North American organizations in FIT, whereas Europe is represented by a whopping sixty-one. And the Congress attendees? Judging from the overwhelming response to our call for proposals both from North America and overseas, I think that we can expect a great crowd!

• **In the past, conference organizers have featured exclusive line-ups of high-level presentations on a wide variety of topics, focusing on training and educational sessions among others. Approximately how many sessions, prospective topics and categories will be offered throughout the upcoming XIX World Congress?**

We are just starting to assemble the Congress program and I expect that we will have close to 100 educational sessions, in addition to several keynote addresses. The topics loosely follow the FIT committee structure: Community Based Interpreting, Audiovisual Translation, Training, Legal Translation and Court Interpreting, Copyright, Literary Translation, Terminology, Translation Technology, Human Rights, Standards, and Translation and Culture.



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• **Every three years, this event attracts attendees from around the world and brings together interpreters, translators, terminologists, and other professionals of the language industry. What would be the benefit of attending the XIX World Congress?**

Attending the FIT Congress is a unique opportunity to mingle with fellow translators and, interpreters from every imaginable corner of the world and to exchange experiences and stories, and learn from each other. For me personally, the greatest benefit is the networking opportunity, seeing old colleagues, and making new friends. The educational value is a very close second. Compared to ATA conferences, FIT traditionally pays more attention to social aspects of its events and we can expect this to be the case in San Francisco as well. Bring lots of business cards!

• **As we continue in our quest to perform more professionally as interpreters given the changing economy, what message would you like to send to language professionals who are seeking a competitive edge in 2011?**

Above all make sure you perform like a professional. Our professional status needs to be raised and the public has to be educated about how professional we are; our status can only be raised by us becoming truly professional. This means not accepting assignments for which we are not ready. This means continuing our education and training. This means getting appropriate credentials. This means charging professional-level fees for our services. And, of course, delivering professional results. My second recommendation is to specialize – you want to be a big fish in a small pond and not the other way around. If you are a Spanish interpreter, you are in a rather large company. If you are a Spanish interpreter with a reputation as a go-to source for pharmaceutical events, the pool suddenly gets a lot smaller.

• **When will registration for the Congress open?**

Registration is now open. April 15 is an important date, as it marks the end of the early bird registration period. By then, the full program will be available on the Congress site ([www.fit2011.org](http://www.fit2011.org)). Regular registration ends on July 22. After that you will pay a higher fee.

• **Do you want to provide any additional information you may consider of interest to the members of the Interpreters Division of ATA?**

Like ATA, FIT is struggling with the fact that there is no mention of interpreters in the organization's name. Because of brand recognition and other issues, FIT Council did not consider it practical to change the organization's name. Instead, the Council formulated a tagline that reads as follows: "Representing associations of translators, interpreters, and terminologists around the world." This tagline is to be used with FIT's name and incorporated into all marketing and other relevant materials.

I look forward to seeing many of you in San Francisco!



Dr. Jiri Stejskal is the founder and president of CETRA Language Solutions, a provider of translation and interpretation services to the Federal Government and many corporate and institutional clients worldwide. An internationally recognized leader in the language services industry, Jiri served as president of the American Translators Association from 2007 to 2009, and currently serves as vice president of the International Federation of Translators. Having worked in the industry for more than 30 years, Jiri has a great respect for interpreters and appreciation of the skills they need to excel. Contact: [jiri@cetra.com](mailto:jiri@cetra.com)

# TIPS

## PRACTICAL TIPS FOR NEW MEDICAL INTERPRETERS

By Rita N. Weil, Ph.D.

1. Dress appropriately as a professional. Wear comfortable shoes, no sneakers.
2. Always have water with you. Some assignments can be unexpectedly long.
3. Bring a snack with you such as nuts, string cheese, and fruit.
4. Plan to arrive 10 minutes early. Leave lots of travel time especially during rush hour, and when you are going to a site for the first time. Sometimes patients arrive early and may be seen before you arrive.
5. Always, always have pen and paper to take notes and a glossary of words.
6. Write down any words that you don't know in English or the target language that you hear during an encounter. Look them up when you get home.
7. Start a glossary for yourself adding new words as you go along. You will be surprised how quickly your vocabulary will grow. You will hear the same words again and again.
8. Collect any patient materials in English and the target language you find in clinics, hospitals or doctors' offices. This is a great way to not only improve your vocabulary but also to increase your knowledge of diseases and their treatment.
9. If you work as an independent contractor for an agency, always let the scheduler know each week when you are available. Staying in frequent contact will net you more assignments.
10. Be available for last minute-assignments. Showing you are willing to help out at the last minute will get you more future assignments.
11. Always have your contact information for an assignment handy so you can call if you get lost or delayed in traffic.
12. Turn your cell phone off during the encounter. Keep it on at other times so the office can reach you.
13. Join both national and local professional organizations such as the National Council on Interpreting in Health Care (NCIHC), the International Medical Interpreters Association (IMIA), and the American Translators Association (ATA) among others.
14. Take advantage of future interpreter training opportunities and seminars on medical topics.
15. Network with other interpreters.
16. Wash your hands often.
17. You don't need to know everything. You just need to know what to do when you don't know something.
18. Welcome to a most rewarding and important career!

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## The Certification Commission for Healthcare Interpreters (CCHI) Announces First Credentialed Interpreters and Opens Exam Applications for Testing in 2011

By Mara Youdelman

The Certification Commission for Healthcare Interpreters (CCHI) congratulates the first group of healthcare interpreters to earn the CHI™ (Certified Healthcare Interpreter™) Certification and AHI™ (Associate Healthcare Interpreter™) Credential. The CHI™ and AHI™ credentials are the nation's highest credential available to healthcare interpreters and professional recognition of their qualification.

We have been anticipating this moment for years and are thrilled to welcome 235 trained, qualified, and credentialed healthcare interpreters - 130 CHI™ certificants and 105 AHI™ recipients. This is monumental for healthcare providers, patients, coordinators of interpreting services, and language service providers who, with the CHI™ and AHI™ credentials, can now ensure the competency of healthcare interpreters across a wide variety of languages in a valid, consistent, and reliable way.

We invite all healthcare interpreters to join this competency-based community of healthcare interpreters and apply today for CCHI's CHI™ or AHI™ credential. The first administration of the CHI™ and AHI™ examinations last fall was available to a limited number of healthcare interpreters. That limit has been lifted and on December 22, 2010, the CCHI application re-opened to all healthcare interpreters across the nation. Click here and apply now.

### CCHI currently offers two credentials:

- Certified Healthcare Interpreter™ (CHI™) – A CHI™ has been tested on the most critical knowledge, skills, and abilities required of a healthcare interpreter. A CHI™ must first complete the AHI examination plus an oral performance examination testing the CHI's™ interpreting skills and abilities in consecutive and simultaneous interpreting, sight translation and translation. The CHI™ credential is currently only available for Spanish interpreters.

- Associate Healthcare Interpreter™ (AHI™) – An AHI™ has been tested on only a part of the knowledge, skills and abilities that are required of a healthcare interpreter. Since the AHI™ examination covers only part of the knowledge, skills and abilities required of healthcare interpreters and does not test an individual's actual interpreting skills and abilities; a certification is not awarded to those who pass this test. Rather, the AHI™ credential (a certificate indicating that the individual has passed the first step in becoming a CHI™ and has shown that he/she has the knowledge required of a certified health care interpreter) is available for all interpreters except those who interpret in Spanish.

Healthcare Interpreters must meet the following eligibility requirements before they can apply for the examination.

- Minimum age of 18 years.
- Have at least one year of experience working as a healthcare interpreter. This must be verified by the organization for which you work or are contracted by, through a work history verification letter attached to your application.
- Have a minimum of U.S. high school diploma (or GED) or its equivalent from another country.
- Have at least 40 hours of healthcare interpreter training (academic or non-academic program).
- Have linguistic proficiency in English and the target language(s).

Please see CCHI's Certification Examination Handbook for more information on these prerequisites. CCHI offers more information about its application process on its website. Topics include:

- CCHI Associate Healthcare Interpreter™ examination (AHI Exam) (Languages other than Spanish) - Overview & Eligibility
- CCHI Spanish Certified Healthcare Interpreter™ Examination (AHI and CHI™ Exams) - Overview & Eligibility
- Test Content Blueprint - Subjects Covered by the Examination
- Certification Examination Handbook
- Frequently Asked Questions
- Application Timeline & Checklist
- Sample Work History Verification Letters
- ADA Accommodation Request Form
- Examination Application
- Continuing Education Requirements
- Fees

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Our primary goal is to provide a process that will enhance the profession of healthcare interpreting, and in turn, benefit the communities that are in need of healthcare interpreters. CCHI has brought together the necessary stakeholders through a non-profit organization whose main mission is to develop and administer a national, valid, credible and vendor-neutral credentialing program for healthcare interpreters. CCHI has researched and built its program based on data from the field that reflects the knowledge, skills, performance, and expectations of healthcare interpreting. To start the application process, go to

<http://www.healthcareinterpretercertification.org/certification/apply-now.html>.

Feedback from exam participants has been overwhelmingly positive. Here's what a few examinees had to say:

**"Thank you for this excellent news. Being certified by the CCHI is a major milestone for me in my career as a healthcare interpreter. I am very proud to carry the CHI™ certification."** Marc Friedman, M.A. Coordinator - Interpreter Services, St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.

**"I would like to express my thanks for this opportunity to have my qualifications recognized. More importantly, my gratitude is for this opportunity to advance our profession by creating a reliable, trustworthy instrument for measuring medical interpreter abilities, which is an essential part of gaining recognition for our very profession. Thanks to all of you who have worked so hard to make this certification process possible. Hats off!"** Diane Grosklaus Whitty, Self-Employed Interpreter.

**"Thank you very much. Since the very moment I started researching CCHI, I have been very comfortable in pursuing my Certification and have no regrets. I did read the latest update and news from CCHI, and I am still convinced I made the right decision and gave the right information to my leaders and co-workers so they also could make an informed decision about how important this step was for everyone concerned."** - Evelyn Brody, A.S., Interpreter, the Children's Hospital.

**"I esteem CCHI and its commissioners like you, for the responsiveness and organization that I've experienced not only before the exam (i.e. last name-changing issues) but also post-exam with your thoughtful reply to my feedback. You can count on me to recommend CCHI certification to all my colleagues."** - Sasha F. Carrillo. Spanish Interpreter, William T. Evjue Clinic.

**"Thanks for everything you do to improve our profession! I had an amazing experience with the CCHI certification and the staff."** - Cristian Castaneda, Senior Staff Spanish Interpreter, Choice Translating, Inc.

CCHI offers a monthly newsletter with updates on our work. If you would like to sign-up, go to <http://www.healthcareinterpretercertification.org/contact-us.html>.



Mara Youdelman, J.D., LLM., is Chair of the Certification Commission for Healthcare Interpreters. She is also Senior Attorney at the National Health Law Program (NHeLP). At NHeLP, Mara directs the National Language Access Advocacy Project, funded by the California Endowment, to increase awareness of language access at the federal level. Mara coordinates a national coalition to develop a consensus-driven agenda to improve language access policies and funding. Mara is co-author of Ensuring Linguistic Access in Health Care Settings: Legal Rights and Responsibilities and, from The Commonwealth Fund, three reports on promising practices for providing language services. Mara is recognized as a national expert on language access and has participated on expert advisory panels for the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation; the National Committee for Quality Assurance; the National Quality Forum; and The Joint Commission.

Contact: [youdelman@healthcareinterpretercertification.org](mailto:youdelman@healthcareinterpretercertification.org)





## THE NATIONAL BOARD OF CERTIFICATION FOR MEDICAL INTERPRETERS

### National Certification for Medical Interpreters Takes Hold

By Rita N. Weil, Ph.D.

The National Board's medical interpreter certification program has attracted hundreds of applicants who are moving through the process, and to date there are over 130 Certified Medical Interpreters (CMI) all across the country, with more added every day. Many of these proud pioneers are the first in their state or organization to get certified and their example has inspired others to emulate them and get certified too. Several hospitals and health care institutions are now encouraging and subsidizing their interpreters to go through the process, with the goal of requiring certification within a specified time frame. The written exam is available for everyone to take, and until now the oral exam has only been available in Spanish. This is about to change!

The National Board of Certification for Medical Interpreters (National Board) has been recently awarded a grant by the Oregon Office of Multicultural Health & Services for the development of oral certification exams in five additional languages: Cantonese, Mandarin, Korean, Vietnamese and Russian. The State of Oregon currently recognizes the independent board's testing and credentialing in Spanish as meeting the requirements for certification of Oregon interpreters and will extend approval to the CMI credentialing in the additional languages upon implementation of the new oral exams.

Oregon has long been a trailblazer in the area of language access for limited English speaking patients, being one of just a handful of states that have any formalized standards for medical interpreter certification. The state's adoption of the certification exams and credentialing process established by the National Board is an important validation of its historic initiative to bring a national standard to the profession. The Board anticipates other states following suit, but as always, this national exam is available in every state.

**“By embracing the National Board's standards and supporting its expansion for five additional languages, Oregon is saving considerable time and resources to achieve our goal of ensuring the safety of LEP patients.”** David Cardona, MD, MPH, Healthcare Interpreter Program Coordinator for the Oregon Office of Multicultural Health & Services.

#### The National Board Certification Exam

The National Board Certification exam was designed based on an extensive job analysis survey completed by over 1500 medical interpreters. Based on this analysis and validation by PSI, a national testing company, it was deemed that an exam that would accurately assess the skills of medical interpreters should include both a written test and an oral test. The written test is in English and consists of 60 multiple choice questions that assess an applicant's medical knowledge (75% of the exam) as well as knowledge of interpreter standards of practice and ethics. The oral exam has two parts. The first part consists of two sight translations from English into the target language only. (There is no sight translation from the target language into English.) The second part of the oral exam is 12 typical medical encounter scenarios that are interpreted in the consecutive mode. (There is no simultaneous interpretation on the exam because based on the job analysis this mode is infrequently used by medical interpreters.) Total test time for the oral exam is approximately one hour. Both exams are administered at testing centers around the country and exams are individually scheduled at the convenience of the applicant.

The written test is taken first and upon passing the written test, the applicant can schedule the oral exam. At present, the oral exam is only available in Spanish. However, in the next 6-8 months, the oral exam will be available for interpreters of Russian, Cantonese, Vietnamese, Mandarin, and Korean. The fees for the exam are: application fee: \$30, written test: \$150 and oral test: \$250.

Application for the exam is done online by going to: [www.certifiedmedicalinterpreters.org](http://www.certifiedmedicalinterpreters.org)



Interpreters receiving their CMI certificates at the IMIA conference in 2010

***"I was very excited about taking the National Board Certification Exam and I can't tell you how proud and honored I am to now carry the title of Certified Medical Interpreter."*** Mario D. Alfonso, CMI, St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, Member of the Tennessee Association of Medical Interpreters and Translators (TAMIT )

### **Get help preparing for the exams. Join in the National Board Webinars**

The National Board holds monthly webinars on different topics relating to the certification exam, such as the application process, and preparing for the oral and written exams. The one hour webinars are open to everyone and there's no need to pre-register. Participants need a phone line and a computer with Internet access to fully participate. The next webinar will be held on Thursday, February, 22 at 11:00 EST.

The schedule for all webinars and how to join are posted on the web site: [www.certifiedmedicalinterpreters.org](http://www.certifiedmedicalinterpreters.org)

### **National Board Looking for Volunteers and Subject Matter Experts**

Over the next six months, the National Board will develop oral certification exams for the five additional languages - Cantonese, Mandarin, Vietnamese, Russian and Korean - in accordance with the same strict standards and scientific process used to design the Spanish certification test.

1. Interpreters interested in participating in pilot testing of any of the five oral exams can pre-register at [staff@certifiedmedicalinterpreters.org](mailto:staff@certifiedmedicalinterpreters.org).

2. Interpreters who would like to be subject matter experts in Cantonese, Mandarin, Vietnamese, Russian and Korean please see the requirements below\*

3. If you would like to volunteer to help out on this project, anyone interested can join our testing committee and put your talents to use in making history. Let us know at [staff@certifiedmedicalinterpreters.org](mailto:staff@certifiedmedicalinterpreters.org)

\*To qualify as a Subject Matter Expert, individuals must be practicing professional medical interpreters with over five years of experience in a medical setting, have successfully passed a medical interpreter performance exam, and completed a training program of at least 40 hours.

Preferred candidates would also have one or more of the following:

- 1) Post-graduate educational background in Translation and/or Interpreting, such as a Master's Degree
- 2) Previous participation in a medical interpreting standards-setting process
- 3) Training and over 3 years of experience as a medical interpreter trainer
- 4) Experience in the development of interpreter skills assessments
- 5) Over 3 years interpreting experience in an acute care healthcare system
- 6) Interpreter Certification by another entity (i.e. Court, Washington State, etc.)

If you would like to be considered, please submit the following: your resume, proof of interpreter training & testing, and two letters of recommendation.

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For certification information and registration go to: [www.certifiedmedicalinterpreters.org](http://www.certifiedmedicalinterpreters.org)

Rita N. Weil, Ph.D., is Vice Chair of the National Board of Certification for Medical Interpreters and ATA Member. She is a professional medical and community interpreter and interpreter trainer for both Bridging the Gap and Interpreting in Health and Community Settings for Eastern Connecticut AHEC. She has ten years experience as a Spanish interpreter working first in the Washington, DC area and presently in Philadelphia, PA. In addition, she is a member of the committee for the development of an advanced medical interpreter course for Eastern Connecticut AHEC. The goal of this curriculum development is to provide medical interpreters with advanced knowledge and training that goes far beyond the basic 40 hour training. She is most interested in the advancement of the medical interpreting field and the development of highly trained professional interpreters.



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PROMOTING THE PROFESSION WORLDWIDE

## The value of a single word

By Nataly Kelly

If a picture is worth a thousand words, then what is a word worth? It seems difficult to quantify. Yet 30 years ago, a Florida hospital was faced with that very question.

In 1980, 18 year old Willie Ramirez was admitted into the hospital. Spanish-speaking family members trying to explain his symptoms said that they believed Willie was “intoxicado.” The hospital staff’s incorrect interpretation of the word led to one of the most tragic documented cases of medical error involving language differences.

Ramirez reported that he had a headache and felt dizzy. Due in great part to the fact that the word “intoxicado” was misinterpreted as “intoxicated,” Ramirez was diagnosed with an intentional drug overdose. The miscommunication led to a misdiagnosis, the wrong course of treatment, and eventually, to his quadriplegia. It also resulted in a malpractice settlement of \$71m. It was later discovered that the symptoms were the result of an intracerebellar hemorrhage.

“Intoxicado” does not mean “intoxicated.” Rather, “intoxicado” refers to a state of poisoning, usually from ingesting something. “Intoxicación solar” means “sun poisoning.” “Intoxicación por plomo” means “lead poisoning.” “Intoxicación por alimentos” means “food poisoning.” In the case of Willie Ramirez, his family suspected that he had food poisoning because he had eaten an undercooked hamburger.

Yet, three decades after Willie Ramirez’s experience, the failure to address language barriers puts health care workers, their patients, and their facilities at risk. Just a few months ago, a California hospital was fined when a surgeon failed to provide an interpreter to Francisco Torres, a 72-year-old Spanish-speaking patient with a kidney tumor, before he consented to surgery. The surgeon removed the wrong kidney, and both the surgeon and hospital were sued for medical negligence.

Policymakers and health care professionals seek to provide patients and members of the public – including foreign-born citizens whose first language may not be English – with the highest quality health care possible. Yet, they often wrestle with the question, “Where will we find the money?” During a time of economic downturn, this question takes an even more prominent place at the forefront of decision making. When budgets are slashed, services that are seen as unnecessary are eliminated.



Nataly Kelly is the Chief Research Officer at Common Sense Advisory, a Massachusetts-based market research company focusing on the language services market. She is a certified court interpreter, a former freelance translator, and the author of *Telephone Interpreting: A Comprehensive Guide to the Profession*. She researches a variety of topics, including community interpreting, domestic multiculturalization, and terminology management. Contact: [nataly@commonsenseadvisory.com](mailto:nataly@commonsenseadvisory.com)

But in health care, providing high-quality language services can actually reduce the overall costs of delivering services. Numerous studies – such as those published by Bernstein et al, Graham et al, Hampers et al, and others – show that providing language access can reduce dependency on emergency services in lieu of primary care, increase preventive care. Conversely, language barriers result in increased diagnostic testing costs and length of stay. As a report from the European Refugee Fund on the cost effectiveness of medical interpreting explains, “Language barriers can increase medical costs in two main ways: (1) they increase the risk of medical errors and complications of the disease; and (2) they can produce unnecessary costs.”

There are many ways to provide language services – and not all of them necessarily cost more money. Bilingual staff who can provide language-concordant care are often a viable option for overcoming language barriers – so long as their language skills are adequately screened. In addition, in countries like Australia and the United Kingdom, the government provides instant access to interpreters via telephone in order to lower the barrier to obtaining linguistic support whenever it is needed – perhaps, in part, because of the evidence that addressing these barriers reduces the total cost of health care over time. And, language services are not just limited to spoken language. Sometimes, simply providing a translated form or patient education materials can make a difference between a patient following a treatment plan or presenting for the third time in a row in the emergency department, consuming valuable time and resources.

Furthermore, in many countries, laws require that language services be provided in health care settings. In the United Kingdom, the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 highlight the importance of effective communication in hospital and GP settings, stating that wherever possible, “communications should be provided in languages and formats appropriate to the patient group.” In the United States, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act prevents discrimination on the basis of national origin, which includes those with limited English proficiency. A large number of states within the United States have also issued requirements for physicians to be trained in cultural competence, which typically includes training on language access.

What’s a word worth? It’s a question that has not been fully resolved, but one thing is certain: in healthcare settings, a single word, when misinterpreted, can dramatically alter the course of a patient’s life.

This article originally appeared in the *British Medical Journal* blog. (c) Nataly Kelly / Common Sense Advisory 2010. It is reprinted here with written permission.



May 2011

## *Annual Conference*

Long Beach California

The National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators will hold its annual conference in Long Beach, CA May 13-15, 2011. This year's roster is full of presentations aimed at raising the bar for all professionals in the field. Dr. Barry Slaughter Olsen, of InterpretAmerica and the Monterey Institute of International Studies, will be the keynote speaker.

The pre-conference schedule offers a second session of the Society for the Study of Translation and Interpretation, Inc. (SSTI) Train-the-Trainer workshop, the first session of which filled up within a matter of days. Friday's events cover a variety of languages and topics, from the three modes of interpreting in a "new light", to issues unique to Korean culture and linguistics. Saturday and Sunday's schedules include presentations on medical terminology, ethics, the entrepreneurial side of being an interpreter/translator, and many more.

The NAJIT Certification Exam in Spanish will be held in conjunction with the conference. More information is forthcoming. Several sponsorship and exhibitor opportunities are also still available. The Sponsor and Exhibitor Packet can be found at <http://www.najit.org>.

NAJIT is in the process of applying for Continuing Education credits, and will update its website with more information as it is available. For the preliminary schedule and registration information, go to <http://www.najit.org/Conferences/2011/confgeneral.php>. Please contact NAJIT's Administrator Zalina Kotaeva with any questions at [zalina@najit.org](mailto:zalina@najit.org).

# FCICE

Federal Court Interpreter Certification  
Examination Program

## **IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The FCICE will be conducting two separate Phase Two Oral Examination administrations in 2011. A field test of new exam forms will be administered to no more than 120 candidates during the week of April 25th, 2011. The regular operational administration will be conducted during the week of July 11th, 2011.

Only those individuals who have passed the Phase One Written Examination of the FCICE are eligible to take the Oral Examination. The registration fee is \$200 and is nonrefundable. All candidates are encouraged to read the Examinee Handbook and take the Oral Exam Practice Test in preparation for the exam.

### **Field Test**

The field tests will be administered in five locations:

Chicago, IL - Dallas, TX - Los Angeles, CA - Miami, FL - Washington, D.C.

Registrations for the field test administration were accepted on a first come/first served basis until 120 candidates were registered.

### **Regular Examination**

Registration for the operational 2011 Phase Two Oral Examination administration will open on Tuesday, March 15, 2011 at 8:30 a.m. Eastern time and will close on Tuesday, May 31, 2011 at 5:00 p.m. Eastern time. Administration of the operational examinations will be scheduled during the week of July 11.

For more information visit [FCICE@ncsc.org](mailto:FCICE@ncsc.org)



## VIEWPOINTS

### Toward a Quieter Code of Silence Upholding the Ethical Standard of Confidentiality

By Jennifer De La Cruz

Regardless of the venue in which we provide our services as interpreters, one of our most critical duties is to preserve the privacy of the information we learn about those we serve. Professional codes and standards from such entities as the National Association of Judiciary Interpreters (NAJIT)<sup>1</sup>, the American Translators Association (ATA)<sup>2</sup> the Judicial Council of California<sup>3</sup> have taken great care to highlight the importance of confidentiality, often taking matters a step further by providing practical examples and pitfalls that benefit new and seasoned interpreters alike. This article outlines just a few examples from criminal court and thoughts on how to avoid the slippery slope leading to inadvertently divulging information which is subject to attorney-client privilege and general privacy standards.

I would venture to assert that just about anyone who studies interpreting, and perhaps even those who don't, can embrace the importance of preserving confidentiality in this profession; moreover, they are likely capable of explaining the concept in great detail. Of course, the basic message behind the standard is "don't", and I truly believe that professional interpreters have a phenomenal reputation for strict adherence to this rule. Perhaps some find it very easy; others likely find it more of a challenge, while yet others may not realize they've broken the rule. My experience is that some settings are simply conducive to the casual divulging of information, whereas others are such a stringent, guarded environment that the interpreter hardly wants to utter a salutation, let alone improperly reveal a secret. That said, how can we, as professionals, ensure that no matter what we are surrounded by, our duty to avoid breaking a veritable "code of silence" is upheld?

#### What Information?

As we will see below, it is not really a matter of defining what information is that which should be kept confidential. Instead, we can treat all information, whether public or privileged, as something we can protect, even if just to develop good habits that we can apply across-the-board. Considering that interpreters are expected to maintain neutrality, which is another topic altogether, avoiding unnecessary discussions about case information can foment impartiality.

#### Unintended Recipients

Jurors and opposing counsel most likely come to mind when we think of the players in the criminal court system with whom we make an extra effort to avoid sharing confidential information. However, even if an interpreter assigned to a particular case never expressly reveals information directly to these or other participants in a criminal case, we must remember that even the most unsuspecting walls can have ears. Consider these scenarios:

- Counsel overhears interpreters cheerfully conferring about the fact that their trial has only two more defense witnesses, and they'll be done for the day. This is information learned during an attorney-client conference, and the opposing counsel did not have the intention of revealing the witness lineup quite yet.
- A member of a jury is waiting down the hall from her assigned courtroom when two interpreters approach a nearby doorway, commenting about their colleague's experience on the witness stand on that juror's case, and further expressing personal viewpoints about how cases such as that should end in a particular verdict.
- Interpreters speaking over lunch about the questioning of a witness, trying to be discreet by speaking in their non-English language, but overheard by family members of the victim in that case who speak that language but were excluded from the proceedings as potential witnesses.

Fortunately, as a staff interpreter at the Superior Court of California, policies and procedures implemented and enforced by Human Resources on the subject of confidentiality do a great service by periodically reminding employees to be aware of situations such as those above. However, because interpreters do become privy to an open exchange of information between the parties in the cases they work on, one could say that the limitations on how and where information becomes revealed can become fuzzy. The walls surrounding the clerk's office, for example, could be a great reminder for clerk staff to uphold a strict code of silence when stepping outside. Interpreters work right in the middle of the ebb and flow of the judicial process, providing service to a variety of players, with no walls to remind us of where to exercise self-restraint.

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## Making Confidentiality a Purposeful Habit

When we think of the most highly-respected attorneys in our courthouse, it is likely that those who come to mind are those who take the confidentiality to the highest level, ensuring at all times that even the most minimum discussions regarding the case occur behind closed doors. Interpreters may work in courthouses that have varying proportions of attorneys who fit this profile, and even within an individual court there may be variations between departments or levels of offense.

As an officer of the court, the professional conduct of interpreters is measured by a similar standard. As facilitators of communication, it may seem counter-intuitive to limit the exchange of information. The close friendships and valuable sounding boards we have in our colleagues can contribute further to making strict limitations less second-nature. Some habits, however, can be developed with a purposeful aim to prevent slip-ups that can cause not only uncomfortable situations but true miscarriages of justice.

- It goes without saying that there should be a firm conviction that need-to-know discussions about cases are off-limits when there is any risk whatsoever that they would not be kept strictly confidential.
- Within the confidential environment, when discussing terminology or even other matters that can help interpreters better perform their duties, restrict the information and thoughtfully consider whether the information could be shared at such a time when it cannot easily be connected to any particular matter.
- Adopt a more neutral perception of cases by avoiding personalization and nicknames (“the Smith matter” instead of “my murder case”). This can help in any fight against the temptation to hold unnecessary discussions about the case.
- When interpreting even the most innocent of information, be in the habit of keeping an extremely low voice. This may not always seem necessary, but making it a constant practice makes it second-nature to protect all information.

## Debriefings

As we consider the suggestions above, we must keep in mind that interpreters are often in grave necessity of



Jennifer De La Cruz has taught interpreting courses since 1999 and currently works as a court interpreter in Southern California. She received her Bachelor's Degree in Spanish from California State University at Fullerton, and went on to become a Federally and California Certified Court Interpreter and an ATA-certified translator (Spanish to English). She has participated on a variety of advisory boards for colleges and statewide organizations seeking to improve provision of interpreter services and education for student interpreters. She most recently served a term on the Court Interpreters Advisory Panel of the Judicial Council of California. Contact: [jenuli@msn.com](mailto:jenuli@msn.com)

expressing pent-up emotions and share experiences with colleagues. Remember, being in the habit of preserving confidentiality does not preclude interpreters from participating in appropriate debriefings; the key is to pause and reflect, and find the time, place and even the person that is most appropriate for this purpose. In the professional environment, there is no place for gossip or mindless chatting for entertainment purposes. Developing strict habits personally can assist in avoiding any temptation to use debriefings too liberally.

*“Habit is stronger than nature”* –Roman historian Quintus Curtius Rufus

Merriam-Webster<sup>4</sup> defines *habit* as “a behavior pattern acquired by frequent repetition or physiologic exposure that shows itself in regularity or increased facility of performance.” When we think about our profession as interpreters, it is one thing to pride ourselves in having strong ethical standards regarding confidentiality. It is something different to practice upholding them even in the most difficult of circumstances.

Despite any behaviors we may perceive by others in our daily encounters, purposefully adopting habits that are stricter than what may seem necessary can be the key to protection against divulging information. Further, if our confidentiality practices are ever called into question, we will have no doubt as to whether or not something we are purported to have said could possibly have been heard either directly or indirectly by an unintended listener.

<sup>1</sup>National Association of Judiciary Interpreters & Translators, “Code of Ethics and Professional Responsibilities”. [...] Canon 3. Confidentiality: Privileged or confidential information acquired in the course of interpreting or preparing a translation shall not be disclosed by the interpreter without authorization.

<sup>2</sup>American Translators Association, “Code of Professional Conduct and Business Practices”. [...] C. I will safeguard the interests of my clients as my own and divulge no confidential information.

<sup>3</sup>The Professional Standards and Ethics for California Court Interpreters dedicates a section to Rule 2.890(d) of the California Rules of Court, “An interpreter must not disclose privileged communications between counsel and client to any person.”

<sup>4</sup><http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/habit>



## Want to Improve Your Interpreting? Drop that donut and grab a jump rope!

By Holly Mikkelson

The brain is plastic. Sugar is bad, exercise is good. Daydreaming is good. Stress is a good thing too, or maybe a bad thing, depending on how you use it. Writing by hand is better than typing. Even swearing can be good! Some of these statements may be old news, others surprising. What does all this have to do with interpreting? Well, it comes from recent research on how the brain functions, and it can be applied to improving interpreters' performance.

Reports in the press reveal a great deal of information about the latest scientific discoveries, written in language that anyone can understand. There are also academic journals devoted exclusively to research on interpreting, and often practitioners can glean information that has implications for their daily work. In this article I will report on some of this research and also on resources available to interpreters for keeping up with the latest developments.

One of the most astounding discoveries is that the adult brain is plastic, meaning that it is constantly rewiring itself and growing new neurons as we have new experiences. We used to think that the brain stopped developing at the end of childhood, and that dead brain cells were replaced (if at all) at a much slower rate in adults than in children. But it turns out that even adult brains can respond to either damage to critical areas of the brain or to new experiences through a process called adult neurogenesis. Cerebral structures and organization can actually change over time, depending on the activities we engage in. In other words, what we do can either enhance or detract from our cerebral capacity.

We have known for a long time about how short-term memory (STM) and long-term memory (LTM) interact to process meaningful information, and researchers have continued to investigate these two aspects of memory. It is now thought that working memory is something that applies to both STM and LTM. Long-term working memory (LTWM) involves developing associated networks of neurons that enable us to retrieve information rapidly and apply it to new situations.

MacDonald (2003b) writes that LTM development occurs in three stages: 1) acquisition of information, 2) consolidation into neural circuits for long-term storage, and 3) retrieval by several parts of the brain working together. The constant process of feedback and modification that occurs as new memories are laid down is essential for learning, and the third step, retrieval, is particularly important in interpreting.

Barbara Moser-Mercer (2010) has done a great deal of research specifically focused on the cognitive aspects of interpreting. She has found that interpreters develop procedural memories that enable them to select, organize and store information relevant to their interpreting assignments. This capacity improves over the years as they progress from novice to expert, provided that they engage in what she calls "deliberate practice." This term refers to the repeated and intensive performance of exercises specifically targeted to the development of interpreting skills, enhancing awareness of one's own interpreting in terms of both process and output, and receiving structured feedback on areas that need further work. This is more than mere rote practice, repeating the same things over and over again (and making the same mistakes over and over again) like racking up frequent flier mileage.

According to Moser-Mercer, expert interpreters employ strategies such as anticipation (drawing on information they gathered and organized as they prepared for the assignment in order to predict what the speaker is going to say during the interpreting itself) and monitoring their own output (making sure their production matches the target-language version they prepared in their working memory and then adjusting or refining that production as they get further into the speech). And it is deliberate practice that enables them to internalize these strategies. Fascinatingly, this process actually alters the structure and organization of the expert interpreter's brain. In the conclusion of her latest article, Moser-Mercer states that although not enough research has been done to reach definitive conclusions, it is clear that adult neurogenesis is real: the adult brain is indeed capable of continued growth. So those of us who are approaching our senior years need not despair.

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Those brain exercises you read about on the Internet are not necessarily the answer, however. Other research, not focusing on interpreting but relevant nonetheless, tells us that although both mental and physical activity can enhance memory, they must be challenging in order to have any effect. Cevallos (2010) writes that it is not enough to do the newspaper crossword puzzle every day or walk along the same route that you always use. You must constantly challenge your senses with new and more difficult exercises for cerebral growth to take place. In other words, "If it's not hard, it's not helping." She quotes one researcher as recommending that people learn a new musical instrument, a different language, or how to paint. Even something as simple as getting dressed in the dark can be useful, as long as it's novel.

Cevallos also points out that the harmful things we do to our bodies can also harm our brains. "Stress kills neurons and prevents new ones from growing, and can lead to depression," which is "fertile ground for Alzheimer's." Furthermore, worrying seems to impede memory. When we go into a particularly stressful situation, such as interpreting at a high-profile event attended by VIPs and the press, or taking a certification exam, excessive worrying about our performance can prevent us from achieving our maximum potential. Richard (2010) suggests that we need to learn how to worry properly in order to succeed. She quotes Sian Bielock, a psychologist who specializes in performance anxiety, as saying that over-analyzing the negative consequences of a poor performance makes it harder to access the information we need and impairs the networking functions of the brain, resulting in "information logjams." Bielock (2010) recommends practicing under pressure to simulate the stress of the situation we are preparing for and focusing on the outcome rather than the mechanics. When helping people prepare to speak in public, she says, "If you have memorized the introduction to your speech or what you are going to say in its entirety, just go with it and try not to think too much about every word." This is an approach I often recommend to interpreting students: that they focus on the big picture rather than the individual words of what they are interpreting.

As is often the case, however, different findings on how the brain works seem to contradict each other. Another study reported in the press (Avril, 2010) concludes that a little bit of stress in the form of tiny amounts of electrical stimulation can improve recall.

It could also be argued that the anxiety and frustration we experience as we struggle to solve a sudoku puzzle or learn to play a new piece on the piano is just the kind of stress we need to keep stimulating brain growth. In any case, no one is claiming that we should all undergo electroshock therapy or deliberately subject ourselves to stressful situations. Apparently, we need to experience stress in moderation.

Another thing that has to be done in moderation is eating. Studies (MacDonald 2003a) show that our diet and physical activity can affect our memory. For example, it has been established that glucose contributes 99% of the energy the brain needs. Now scientists have discovered that impaired glucose tolerance (a feature of diabetes, which can be caused by obesity and inactivity, among other factors) is associated not only with heart and circulation problems but also with the deterioration of brain functions. What happens is that glucose intolerance causes shrinkage of the hippocampus, which is critical for both immediate and delayed recall. Therefore, it is possible that by increasing our glucose tolerance through diet and exercise we may be able to improve our memory.

Because interpreters have to be good problem-solvers, we can all benefit from the research on brain wave activity cited by Hotz (2009). It shows that daydreaming is not a sign of a lazy brain, but is actually a demanding activity that helps us develop our intuitive problem-solving ability. The sudden insights that occur during those "aha" moments when we are suddenly able to solve a problem are actually "the culmination of an intense and complex series of brain states that require more neural resources than methodical reasoning." When the mind is wandering, brain activity increases even more than it does when it is reasoning with a complex problem. In another study reported by Hotz, subjects who solved puzzles by means of insight rather than reasoning had a pattern of high-frequency neuronal activity as much as 8 seconds before the answer came to the subject's conscious mind. That is, their brain knew the answer well before they did. Furthermore, people in a positive mood were more likely to experience an insight. The researchers conclude that much of our creative thought comes from processes that are outside our awareness and beyond our direct control. These findings comport with those described in Malcolm Gladwell's book *Blink* (2005), which discusses the benefits of relying on implicit association, the product of the right hemisphere's powerful intuitive processes.

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Another interesting finding that could be applicable to interpreting is that writing by hand instead of keyboarding contributes to brain development. Bounds (2010) reports that the physical act of writing engages the brain in learning because it requires the execution of sequential strokes to form letters (in contrast to typing, which allows us to select an entire letter simply by touching a key). It seems that the sequential finger movements involved in the handwriting activate parts of the brain associated with thinking, language and working memory. This is another reason why note-taking is so important for interpreting: not only do the notes help us recall things that are difficult to remember such as names and figures, but evidently they also enhance cerebral functioning in other ways.

And finally, my favorite research finding: Apparently, swearing helps us tolerate pain. A study by a British psychologist (reported in Fields, 2010) revealed that when subjects were asked to say curse words out loud, they could keep their hand in a bucket of ice water much longer than a control group that uttered innocuous words. I don't know that this has anything to do with interpreting, other than the fact that court interpreters often have to say four-letter words on the record in court, but it does appeal to my perverse sense of humor.

In conclusion, it is clear that there is a wealth of information available in the press as well as in interpreting journals that we can draw upon to improve our interpreting techniques.

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The scholarly publications issued by John Benjamins provide information on the latest research on translating, interpreting and language-related matters. See <http://www.benjamins.com/cgi-bin/welcome.cgi> for more information. One of the leading interpreting researchers whose work can be found in a number of different Benjamins publications is Barbara Moser-Mercer. The latest example, cited above, is Moser-Mercer, B. (2010), "The search for neuro-physiological correlates of expertise in interpreting," in Shreve, G. and Angelone, E. (Eds.) *Translation and Cognition*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

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Holly Mikkelson is Adjunct Professor at the Graduate School of Translation and Interpretation, Monterey Institute of International Studies. She is an ATA-certified translator (S>E, E>S) and a state and federally certified court interpreter who has taught translation and interpreting for over 30 years. She is the author of the Acebo interpreter training manuals as well as numerous books and articles on translation and interpretation. She has consulted with many state and private entities on interpreter testing and training, and has presented lectures and workshops to interpreters and related professionals throughout the world. Contact: [holly@acebo.com](mailto:holly@acebo.com)

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## My ATA Annual Conference Experience

By Olimpia Hernandez

I am a relative newcomer to the translation and interpretation business. I spent 20 years working as an engineer in the automotive industry -- a career that comes with a built-in network of people, a sense of camaraderie, and the defined structure of a large corporation. When in 2005, I decided to transition into the field of translation and interpretation, I did so because it was a growing field that was interesting and intellectually stimulating. However, I knew I was going to be facing different challenges because it was my first time owning my own business and it was different from the corporate world I was used to. I had to develop my own network of colleagues to replicate the camaraderie I used to have, find learning opportunities for acquiring tools to improve my business, and find ways to expand my business.

One great way to address these challenges is to attend the ATA Annual Conference. This was the second year I attended and I plan to continue going due to all the benefits it provides. From the professional development perspective, the conference offers a large number of learning opportunities through the presentations, tutorials, and overview sessions in my areas of work, as well as other areas that I have not had any experience in. I had the opportunity to learn not only about technical tools, but also about the challenges and opportunities available in other fields of translation and interpretation I do not currently work in through experienced professionals currently working in those fields. The tutorial sessions gave me a really good roadmap of how to expand into new areas should I desire to do so.

Another important aspect of the conference is networking, not only with language agencies, but with other colleagues working in the same or in different languages. Through the parties offered by the different divisions, the dinners, and networking events, the conference also offers numerous opportunities to meet and build relationships with colleagues from different countries and cultures, working in multiple languages and fields. It promotes sharing tips and insights based on our experience and, therefore, helped me build the camaraderie I lost when I left the corporate world.

In addition, the conference provided me with the opportunity to build work partnerships with colleagues from different geographical areas that I normally would not have met through my local professional group and, therefore, supported the expansion of my business. I do not look at other interpreters or translators as my competition. Even in the same language, we often have different areas of expertise. We are not all competing for the same jobs. Even for those of us working in the same language and field, we can cooperate on larger projects through partnerships. Personally, I paid for last year's conference with referral work generated from people I met at the conference. This year, I already recovered the registration fee in a similar manner.

In addition, it is just fun -- like attending a very large party with nearly 1,500 other people that love doing the same thing you do and are proud of their profession. Like the previous conference I attended, upon returning home, my bag was full of notes and business cards, as well as many ideas on how to expand and refine my work.



Olimpia Hernandez is a freelance interpreter and translator between English and Spanish. She is a retired engineer, born in the Canary Islands (Spain) and has lived in Spain, Venezuela, and the US. She specializes in the areas of engineering, automotive industry, manufacturing, energy, aviation, environmental science and business. She has a graduate certificate in translation from Marygrove College, is a member of ATA and currently serves as Vice President of Programs for the Chicago Area Translators and Interpreters Association (CHICATA). Contact: [www.oh-translations.com](http://www.oh-translations.com).

# The Interpreters *Voice*

The Newsletter of the Interpreters Division of the American Translators Association



Winter 2011



## 51st ATA ANNUAL CONFERENCE - DENVER 2010

Photos by Jeff Sanfacon



## 52nd ATA ANNUAL CONFERENCE BOSTON 2011



The American Translators Association is now accepting presentation proposals for the ATA 52nd Annual Conference in Boston, Massachusetts, October 26-29, 2011. The deadline for submitting a presentation proposal is March 14, 2011. The ATA Annual Conference is an essential professional development event specific to the needs of translators and interpreters. Over 150 educational sessions are offered, including a selection of three-hour, in-depth Preconference Seminars. Sessions feature more than a dozen languages and a variety of specializations. Speakers come from all over the world and volunteer to share their experience and expertise with all attendees. They are working translators and interpreters, many of whom are also educators, attorneys, physicians, CEOs, and managers. To learn more, please visit [www.atanet.org](http://www.atanet.org)