



# The first generation of conference interpreters trained online: What can they teach us?

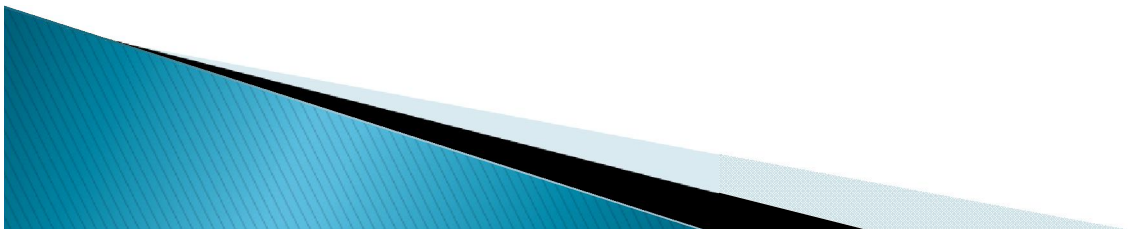
Sheyla Carvalho

November, 5th 2015



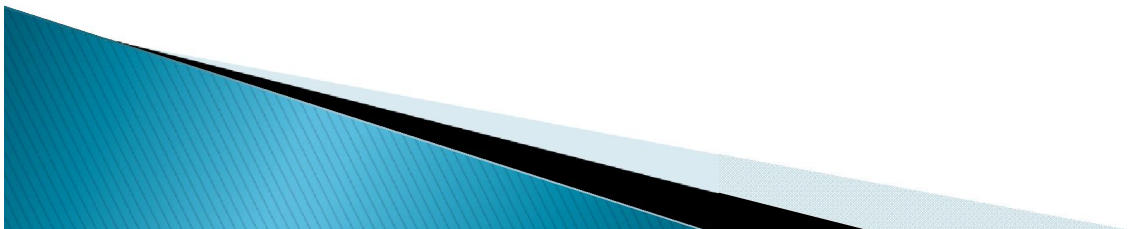
## Our interaction

- 50 minutes (presentation)
- 10 minutes (final Q&A)





What is your interest?





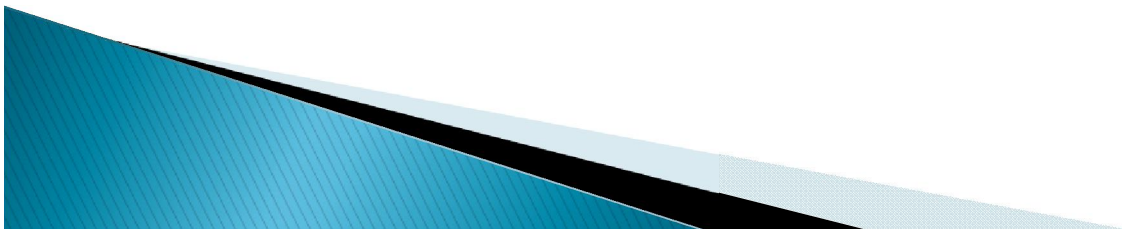
## My background

- Conference interpreter and translator (since 1992)
- Co-founder of Brasillis – Language Service Provider (LSP) (1992) and Translation/Interpretation School (2001)
- **Interpreter and translator TRAINER (since 2001)**
- Staff translator and interpreter at the Organization of American States (OAS) in Washington, D.C. (since 2009)
- Graduated in Law, Business, and Conference Interpreting
- MBA in Business Management
- Master of Advanced Studies (MAS) in Interpreter Training (online – Geneva, Switzerland – ongoing)



## My interest in the topic

- Reassessing our online interpreter training program
- Implementing new changes in our program
- Industry interest in ICT tools (Information and Communications Technology) applied to interpreters training





## Our experience teaching conference interpreting REMOTELY

- 1992: Company founded (services only, no training)

\* \* \*

- 2001: Interpreting face to face (f2f) program (EN<>PT)
- 2002: Translation f2f program (EN<>PT)
- 2008: Translation online training program (EN<>PT)
- 2011: Interpreting online training program (EN<>PT)



## The beginning of the online interpreter training program (March, 2011)

- Entry exam
- Course curriculum: approx. 120 hours
- Synchronous (real time) and asynchronous
- Aulavox (platform)
- First program offered only simultaneous
- Limited technical support (dependent on Aulavox support)



## Our present online interpreter training program

- Entry exam
- Course curriculum: 210 hours
- Synchronous (real time) and asynchronous
- WebEx (Training Center, CISCO)
- Skype
- Email
- Simultaneous and consecutive
- Technical support (not dependent on WebEx)



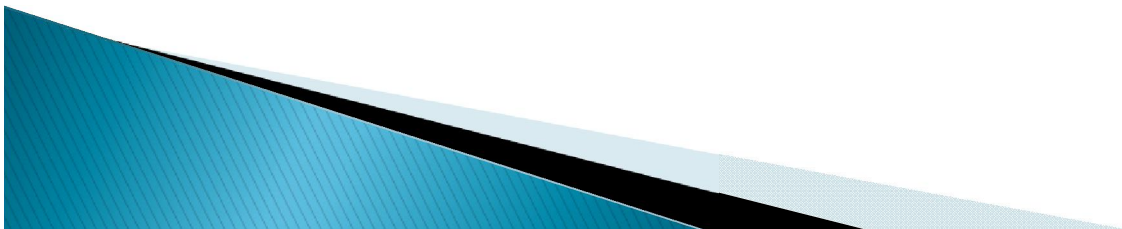


## Improving the online interpreter training program Who can help us?

- 30 students who graduated from the online program
- 6 instructors
- 5 team members (management & technical support teams)

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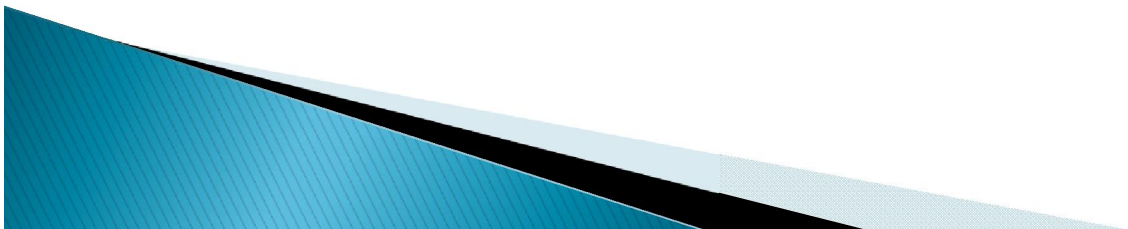
- SurveyMonkey
- Skype
- Email





## Improving the online interpreter training program SurveyMonkey and Skype – QUESTIONS

1. Why did you choose an online interpreter training program?
2. What are the positive and negative aspects of online training (at least three for each).
3. How can we tackle the negative aspects mentioned above?
4. Is online training alone enough to enable you for the market? If not, did you take any additional courses after graduating?





## Improving the online interpreter training program SurveyMonkey and Skype – QUESTIONS

5. How long after graduating did you work as an interpreter? Was it a f2f or remote assignment?
6. Do you work as a conference interpreter presently? How often do you work? Freelancer or in-house?
7. How can we improve the online interpreter training program?
8. What are the essential features of a good conference interpreting training program be it online and/or f2f?



## Improving the online interpreter training program

1. Q – Why did you choose an online interpreter training program?

A – No f2f program available in my area.

2. Q – What are the positive and negative aspects of online training?

Positive:

A – Classes at locations where training is not offered; experienced teachers offering valuable feedback.

A – Convenience and mobility.

A – Interaction with students and teachers from different parts of the world.

A – Learn the techniques without disrupting one's professional activity.



## Improving the online interpreter training program

Q – What are the positive and negative...

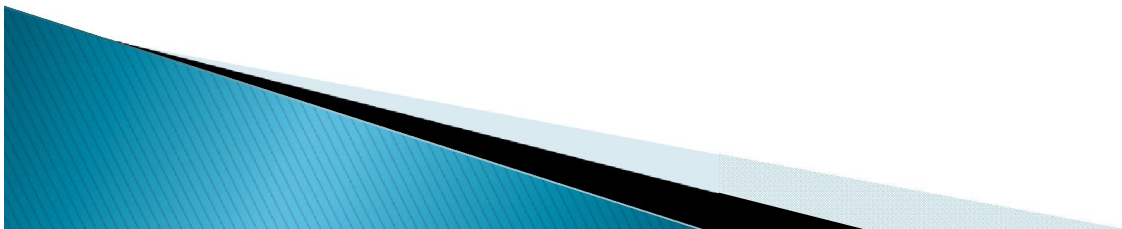
Room for improvement:

A – Technological mishaps (platform, internet, audio).

A – Lack of real booth experience with booth mate and audience.

A – No in-person networking.

A – Communication with students.





## Improving the online interpreter training program

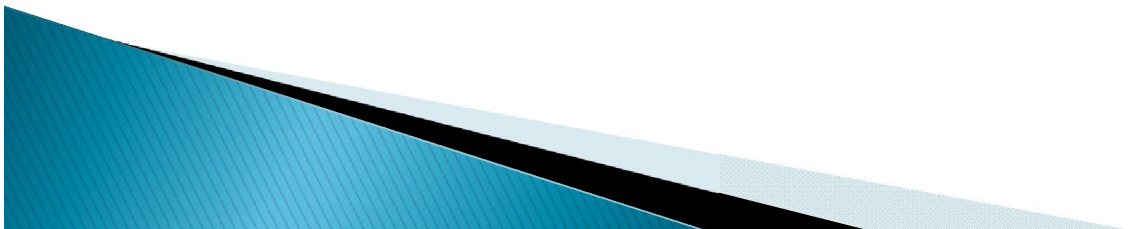
3. Q – How can we tackle the negative aspects mentioned before?

A – Technical support during class hours.

A – Constant communication with students.

A – Introduction of mandatory f2f classes.

A – More videos (less audio-only classes).





## Improving the online interpreter training program

4. Q – Is online training alone enough to enable you for the market?  
A – Yes!
5. Q – How long after graduating did you work as an interpreter? Was it a f2f or remote assignment?  
A – From 4 to 8 months.  
A – Two weeks.  
A – Before graduating!  
A – All in-person assignments.



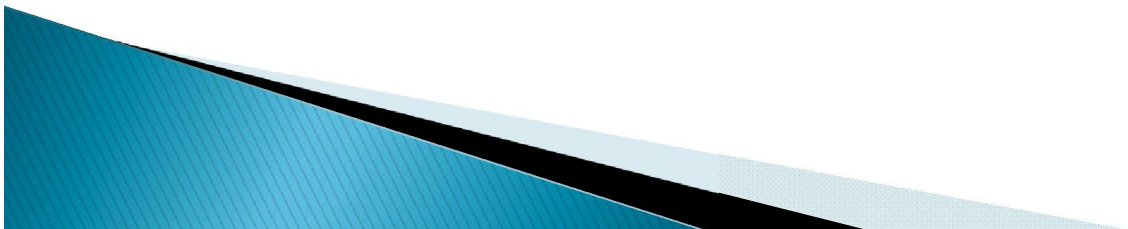
## Improving the online interpreter training program

6. Q – Do you work as a conference interpreter presently? How often? As a freelancer or in-house?

A – Yes!

A – About twice a month.

A – Freelancer.







## Improving the online interpreter training program

7. Q – How can we improve the online interpreter training program?

A – Train teachers better on how to use the platform.

A – More authentic materials.

A – Technical assistance during class hours.

A – Further training after graduating (“enhancement courses”).

A – More effective communication with students.

A – Feedback from students throughout the program.





## Improving the online interpreter training program

8. Q – What are the essential features of a good conference interpreting training program be it online and/or f2f?

A – Good theoretical basis.

A – Plenty of practice, including speakers with different accents.

A – Experienced teachers, trained in the field.

A – Simulation of a variety of interpreting situations (round tables, interviews etc.)

A – Chance to attend real-life events.

A – Well structured feedback, from teachers and among peers.

A – Clear strategies to help correct students mistakes.



## Improving the online interpreter training program

### Email – QUESTIONS

- Teachers and administrative staff
- 3 questions:
  1. One to three positive and negative aspects of our online interpreter training program.
  2. Is our online training good enough to enable students to work in the industry?
  3. One to three recommendations for improvement.



## Improving the online interpreter training program

### 1. Q – One to three positive and negative aspects...

#### ➤ A – Positive:

- . Convenience.
- . One of a kind program.
- . There is a demand for our online program.
- . Most of our students are not based in Rio de Janeiro.
- . Less distraction when practicing simultaneous.
- . Practicing over the internet at home prepares students for independent practice.



## Improving the online interpreter training program

### 1. Q – One to three positive and negative aspects...

#### ➤ A – Room for improvement:

- . In consecutive: Difficulty in assessing students posture and contact with speaker.
- . Students are isolated in virtual booths, rare chances to listen to peers delivery.
- . Students are always “protected” in their homes. They do not face the challenge of speaking to a real audience.
- . No real-life experience interacting with booth mate.
- . Practicing mostly with audios instead of videos.
- . Industry-wide: lack of qualified teachers.



## Improving the online interpreter training program

2. Q – Is our online training good enough to enable students to work in the industry?

A – Yes.

A – Yes. But it could be blended (add f2f classes), specially for consecutive, and simultaneous finals.

3. Q – One to three recommendations for improvement.

A – Blended learning environment.

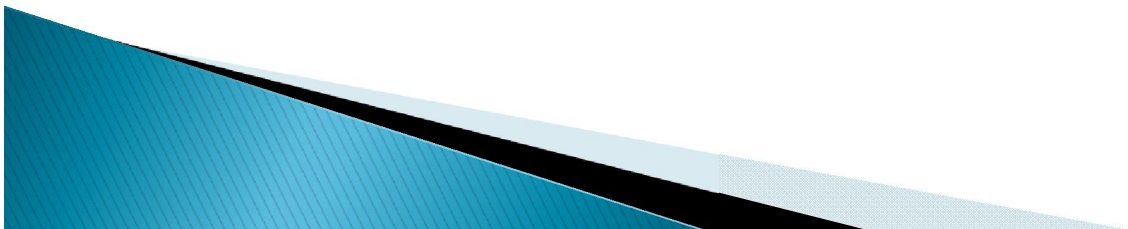
A – Hire and train more teachers.

A – More (authentic) videos in lieu of audios.



## What have we learned?

1. We are meeting the needs of a niche market.
2. Quality and experience of teachers essential.
3. Positive aspects surpass the negative.
4. Students feel prepared.
5. Market is hiring them.





## What have we learned? (continued)

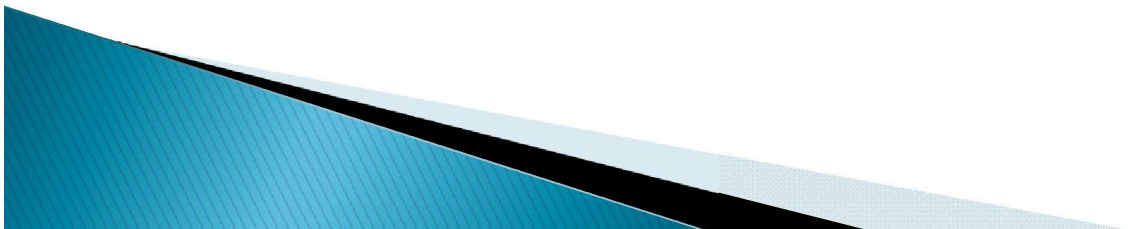
6. Technical assistance must be available during class.

7. Constant communication a must.

8. Online students are more sensitive, vocal and direct.

9. Most of our online students are techy-savvy.

10. Organization and communication more complex for online programs than in-person.







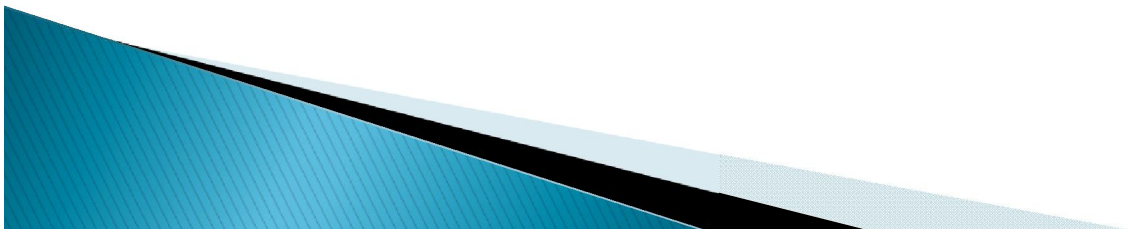
## Changes we have implemented in 2013–2015

1. New platform.
2. Technical assistance during classes at all times.
3. More videos, less audio-only classes.
4. Immediate response to students emails and/or requests, comments etc. (ALWAYS request to “acknowledge receipt” )
5. Opening and wrap-up class.
6. Introduction of extra hours of practice (self-study and self-assessment)
7. Creation of a Facebook closed group for instructors.
8. Introduction of online classes into the f2f program.



## Changes we plan to implement in 2015–2016

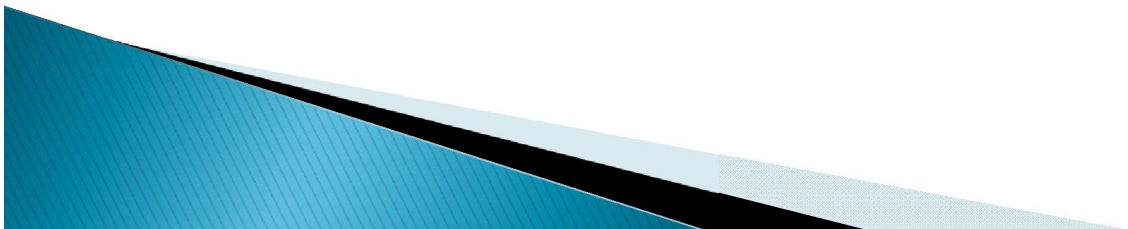
1. New website with a “Student Portal.”
2. Create chatrooms per class for asynchronous debates.
3. Create an only–teachers group.
4. Add hours of practice.
5. Create a continuing education program.





## Some of the changes we plan to implement in 2015–2016 (continued)

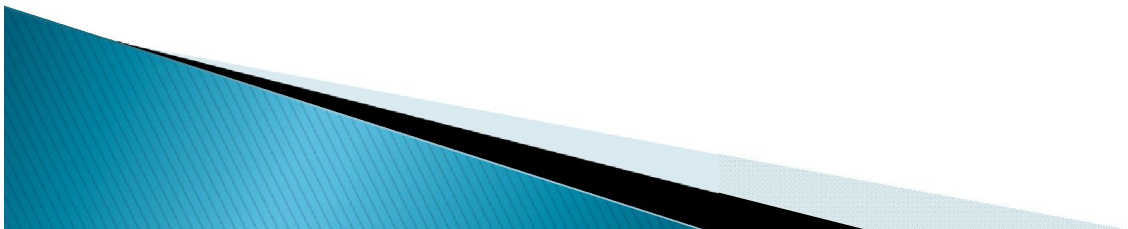
6. Improve syllabus, more clear objectives.
7. Promote periodical meetings between course managers and teachers.
8. Promote the use of ICT tools in classroom.
9. Promote exchanges and interactions with students from other institutions.
10. ATA credit.
11. Request regular feedback about the program from students.





## Conclusion – Some ideas to consider

- Online education (OE) (growing)
- Slow but positive change in perception of OE
- Geographic location has an impact
- Students bring professional awareness to their regions
- Need for trainers
- Remote interpreting is growing





## Remote interpreting – Conference







## Remote interpreting – Health care





## Remote interpreting – Business





QUESTIONS?







Thank you!

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