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# Proposed Community Action Plan for Casa Cornelia Law Center

Allison Bechill  
*University of San Diego*

Scott Campbell  
*University of San Diego*

Casey McKinley  
*University of San Diego*

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Proposed Community Action Plan for Casa Cornelia Law Center

Allison Bechill, Scott Campbell, and Casey McKinley

University of San Diego

Community Organizing and Change – LEAD 507

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## **I. Introduction**

Language barriers in the Somali immigrant community in the San Diego neighborhood of City Heights significantly contribute to ineffective communications between immigrant communities interfacing with government, nonprofit agencies, the private sector, and the community at large. Effective communication is crucial for strengthening social and cultural integration in the San Diego community as well as accessing a range of social, economic and legal support services.

Casa Cornelia and scores of other public and private agencies rely on interpreters and translators for communicating with immigrants and their communities. Volunteer support overcomes language barriers and ensures that all clients have access to support services in a culturally and linguistically appropriate manner. Unfortunately, there is often a lack of qualified volunteer interpreters and translators available, most acutely for its Somali clients, which comprise the largest percentage of its Asylum Program's caseload.

This paper considers possible solutions to the insufficient number of volunteers that are currently available to Casa Cornelia.

## **II. Research Methodology and Approach**

The project team applied a consensus organizing approach to the issue whereby the self-interests of various stakeholders in a community are tied to achieve a common goal (Eichler, 2007). Overlapping self-interest on the part of each stakeholder significantly improves the likelihood of success in realizing proposed recommendations because the energy and motivation is generated internally for each partner instead of externally engineered or imposed.

The project team interviewed an array of stakeholders with mutual interest in finding appropriate solutions to the language barrier issue as it relates to Casa Cornelia's efforts serving

the Somali immigrant population. These stakeholders include nonprofit organizations, for-profit entities, trade associations, and members of the local Somali community. For a complete list of agencies and individuals with whom we spoke, please see Appendix A – List of Interviewees. Summaries of our interviews can be found in Appendix B – Summary of Interviews. Input from various stakeholders in moving their individual interests forward where they overlap with others have produced recommendations that range from the short- to long-term.

### **III. Proposed Recommendations**

The common theme of each of the proposed recommendations is the focus on expanding the pool of interpreters of the Somali language. The recommendations consider interventions in the short- to long-term that feed and build off the other.

#### **a. Interpretation Techniques Training for Casa Cornelia Staff and Volunteers (Short-Term)**

Considering the needs of Casa Cornelia, it is possible for people with basic mastery of Somali and English, as opposed to those with skill and experience, to provide the desired interpreting services. This in itself has the potential of expanding the pool of interpreters as there are more people available who meet these basic requirements, provided certain techniques are followed during interpretation.

Casa Cornelia staff and interpreters meeting with Somali immigrant clients can significantly improve the quality of the interpretation by employing a few basic techniques provided through simple training. One of the various techniques, for example, is the need to limit the complexity and length of questions and sentences so that interpreters can relay all the information that is intended to be communicated (Bell, 2010; De Santis, n.d.; Millet, n.d.). Interpretation that involves multiple sentences and ideas can easily overwhelm less-skilled

interpreters, especially if they are new volunteers. Clarity and full transmission of the entire message is better ensured when fewer thoughts are expressed at a time. The string of thoughts should be in a logical sequence that leads the interpreter and the client to a full understanding of what is being expressed and elicited.

Just as volunteer interpreters must be trained in basic interpretation techniques, they also must be familiarized with the processes they will encounter when working with the legal staff and their clients in order to understand what is expected. A mock dry-run of an interview with the legal staff member using the technique explained above, including the use of technical terms (Millet, n.d.), would provide the familiarity interpreters need to perform their role with greater accuracy while also enabling them to capture the nuances of their role.

Simple orientation and techniques training is an intervention that can be put into place almost immediately with a qualified person overseeing the process, whether in-house or outsourced to a nonprofit or for-profit partner. The Alliance for African Assistance has expressed keen interest in partnering with Casa Cornelia to explore possibilities in this regard since they already have such trainings as part of their programming. Adopting these techniques enables less-skilled interpreters to preserve the desired high quality exchange of information. Selected resources on interpreting techniques may be found in Appendix C – Interpreting Techniques.

#### **b. Interpreter Training Program (Medium-Term)**

Moving beyond the immediate to a larger scale intervention, Casa Cornelia could initiate a process whereby interpreters are cultivated and recruited to expand the number of people able and willing to provide services. The City Heights Somali population holds one of the most important assets necessary for overcoming the language barrier: fluency in Somali and English.

Hanna Interpreting Services noted that the supply of Somalis proficient in both languages was significant in the San Diego area, even to the point where interpreter applicants had to be turned away (Thomas Hanna, 2011). These sentiments were echoed to varying degrees by Alliance for African Assistance, La Maestra, and Somali Family Services.

It was also noted that just as supply was significant, so too was demand. The real reason supply is not meeting demand comes down to the desire to be paid for interpreting services. Most bilingual Somalis of adequate interpreting quality soon come to realize that their skills have value, and due to financial necessity, begin to charge for services (Alliance for African Assistance, 2011). But this very drive to make a livelihood from interpreting can be tapped to expand the pool of volunteer interpreters.

There is a segment of the Somali immigrant population that is bilingual but lacks the awareness and certain skills to provide interpretation. Many observers agreed that the full potential of interpreting as a livelihood has not been adequately nurtured or developed. Research revealed that the main obstacles to becoming an interpreter, paid or otherwise, were 1) lack of awareness of interpreting as a viable livelihood; 2) inadequate access to appropriate interpretation training, especially in low-resource communities; and 3) a lack of coordinated programming effort to channel prospective candidates to the resources that will help them develop their skills as interpreters (Alliance for African Assistance, 2011; American Translators Association, 2011; Maryem Abdi, 2011).

Over the past two years, Casa Cornelia has explored the idea of training interpreters in-house in order to expand the pool from which they could draw. Casa Cornelia needs its Somali volunteer interpreters to be fluent in both Somali and English, culturally sensitive, confidential, adhere to a code of ethics, and be able to translate consecutively and/or simultaneously. The

work is also very draining, both mentally and emotionally. Interpreters mainly translate at the maximum-security immigration detention center listening to one traumatic story after another. Not surprisingly, there has been a recurring problem of finding volunteers and incentivizing them to continue, especially if stipends or other payments are not offered.

Most recently, Casa Cornelia considered providing volunteer interpreters a certificate of achievement for completing a certain number of hours of service as part of a practicum to becoming a professional interpreter as a way of incentivizing prospective interpreters. Interviews with interpretation and translation service firms, nonprofits, associations, and training entities—when asked specifically whether such a certificate was desirable—confirmed and agreed unanimously that it would make a real difference in hiring potential and would be highly sought after (Alliance for African Assistance, 2011; Day Translation, 2011; Hernandez, 2011; Judicial Council of California, 2011; Maryem Abdi, 2011; Northern California Translators Association, 2011).

The incentive of practical experience is useful in securing future employment, which can take a number of forms: simple interpretation for weddings, visiting guests, ceremonies, etc. to more official scenarios like court or medical interpreting. Even for medical interpreting, certification for English proficiency was not always required (Hanna Interpreting Services, 2011). Casa Cornelia's work for screening and processing asylum seekers is between the poles of informal and certified, official interpretation—but serves as practical experience for the full spectrum of interpretation careers.

#### *Interpreter Training Program*

To address the three obstacles to becoming an interpreter cited above, Casa Cornelia could initiate an Interpreter Training Program that would recruit, orient and train volunteer interpreters



with the incentive of gaining vital on-the-job experience for future employment as a salaried or contract interpreter. The program would train bilingual Somalis in interpretation techniques, confidentiality, cultural sensitivity, legal basics regarding asylum, and orientation of the working environment where interpreting takes place (i.e., detention center or other sites).

After training and orientation, real-world interpreting sessions with Casa Cornelia staff and clients would form the practicum. The amount of time would have to be determined. Once the practicum hours are fulfilled, the volunteer interpreter receives a certificate of achievement or certificate of completion for the hours of interpreting service. The certificate could also note the trainings the volunteer took at the beginning of the process, as explained above, or separate certificates could be issued for the trainings. Interpreter associations could be approached to endorse the certificates, which could add further weight to their value.

Casa Cornelia must identify a qualified member from the local Somali community with solid interpreting experience in the field to develop an Interpreter Training Program as the program designer and perhaps continue on as the program manager once developed. A detailed draft Scope of Work (SOW) may be found in Appendix D – Draft Scope of Work, which at a minimum maps out the different pieces that need to be covered in whole or in part for Casa Cornelia and/or its partners.

Briefly, the Scope of Work presents the different elements of the training program, which includes:

- Preparation of an implementation plan;
- Development of orientation and training materials and curriculum, including the interpreting practicum component with certificate of achievement;

- Awareness raising of interpreting as a viable career choice among various Somali groups; and
- Development and marketing of the Interpreter Training Program services and opportunities for participants.

Once an implementation plan has been prepared, the Scope of Work includes development of appropriate orientation and training materials required for the program. The plan would include determination of the various activities of the program and who would perform them. This would entail forging relationships with potential partners, some of whom have been mentioned in this report. It is quite conceivable, and even desirable, to have other partners manage different aspects where they have the means and/or resources already in place. Alliance for African Assistance, for example, already provides trainings covering techniques in interpretation, the importance of confidentiality, and sensitization on cultural realities while translating. Sharing the burden of the program allows organizations to focus on their primary mission and avoid duplication of services. Engaging community partners in this effort not only strengthens the project, but will also increase the likelihood of securing funding to address the issue.

Raising awareness of employment options in interpreting among different groups within the population is another key component of the SOW. The American Translators Association (2011) recognized the importance of awareness-raising and therefore developed the Careers in Translation and Interpreting - School Outreach Program as a result. It covers how to motivate students from elementary to graduate school, which addresses the spectrum of short-, medium-, and long-term initiatives for expanding the pool of interpreters. The Association's materials may be found in Appendix E – School Outreach Program.

The Scope of Work notes the need for assessing other developmental skills, such as supporting interpreters in becoming certified, at least for English language proficiency. Providing volunteers with support services by linking them to organizations to improve their skills on the road toward building a profession is likely to increase retention rates and further the network of volunteers given the array of incentives the program offers. Casa Cornelia already enjoys a reputation as a high-quality training ground for legal staff and volunteer attorneys, and expanding that to volunteer interpreters and translators is a natural and logical next step. Just as the staff currently mentors students and volunteer attorneys, so too could they provide guidance to new interpreters.

A list of institutions offering interpreting programs is presented in Appendix F – Interpreter Training Programs, as well as some FAQ sheets. The program designer may want to approach these institutions for possible partnership opportunities as part of the Interpreter Training Program as well. Likewise may be true for English as a Second Language (ESL) in the event volunteers may need to improve their English to become professional interpreters. The program could also link volunteers to the English proficiency testing sites. Conversely, volunteers may also have to enhance their Somali language skills.

The program could seek out strong Somali speakers from the community, irrespective of their English speaking ability, to provide higher-level instruction in Somali. It was mentioned that younger Somalis in City Heights may not possess a high level of Somali and may need additional language support (Maryem Abdi, 2011; Alliance for African Assistance, 2011). Additionally, a list of interpreter associations is provided in Appendix G – Professional Interpreter Associations that can further provide opportunities and support for interpreters entering the field through the training program. The program designer may want to meet with

these trade associations to enhance the services of the training program and for possible additional resources, including potential employment leads for participants.

Since Casa Cornelia is directly involved with the court system, the interpreting practicum would be most appealing to those who want to enter the professional field of court interpreting. There are a number of steps involved in the process, which are provided online from the California Courts and presented in Appendix H – Court Interpreting.

**c. Language Access Advocacy (Long-Term)**

While there is much that can be done on a local, modest scale to address the volunteer interpreting issue in order to meet Casa Cornelia's immediate needs, truly addressing the issue on a large scale to achieve systemic change would require advocacy efforts that are largely outside of the scope of CCLC's services and capacity. However, educating others about their existing rights under the law and supporting and encouraging efforts to increase access to justice is very much in line with Casa Cornelia's mission.

Currently, CCLC is always careful to make the distinction that they advocate for education and access around existing laws and do not advocate for laws to be changed or created. This has been vital to their ability to bring stakeholders with divergent interests around the proverbial table to work collaboratively with local agencies on immigration issues. This same distinction should be highlighted if CCLC chooses to engage at any level with advocacy efforts around this issue.

Although advocacy is not CCLC's primary objective, and would not be in a position to lead an effort of this scale and focus, there are opportunities to play an important role if the right partners can be identified to move forward on advocacy. One agency with whom we spoke, who are already invested in affecting change for the residents of City Heights, is Mid-City

Community Advocacy Network (CAN). Diana Ross, their Collaborative Director, shared her perspective on the issue, which she sees mainly as a matter of enforcement.

She explained that there are laws requiring the provision of language access at both the federal and state levels, but they are not being enforced. This information was supported by the input we received from La Maestra; specifically that most healthcare institutions are not in compliance with the language access policies that are currently in place. The first step towards addressing this could be educating the immigrant community and those that work on their behalf on their rights under the law. Given Casa Cornelia's expertise and strong reputation as a legal services provider, taking on a leadership role in raising awareness on the legal rights of immigrants as it pertains to language access would be a natural fit.

The other area in which advocacy would be needed to affect change is getting the federal courts to recognize Somali as a certified language. This would be the most difficult intervention to undertake, as it would require seeking out partners that have yet to be identified. However, it is also an intervention that, if successful, could affect enormous change. If Somali was recognized as a certified language then interpreter training programs would have a reason to put together certification programs for Somali speakers and the job market for Somali interpreters would be greatly increased, which would further attract bilingual Somalis to volunteer with CCLC to gain career-launching experience.

Each of the three proposed recommendations follow the orientation of the consensus organizing methodology in that they draw from the strengths and self-interests of various stakeholders and partners in the community toward a common goal. This enhances the likelihood of success and sustainability, which requires follow-up steps to realize the suggested initiatives.

**IV. Next Steps**

This project was a valuable exercise in learning whether Casa Cornelia is on the right track in addressing the interpreting-deficit issue, where it needs to adjust its approach, and who might be potential partners that had not yet been explored. The work that was conducted will provide a valuable resource as Casa Cornelia carries the project forward. Indeed, the internal member of the project team will continue to build on these findings in the pursuit of funding and the most complementary partners in addressing this issue that affects so many in our community.

**Appendix A – List of Interviewees**

***Stakeholder Interviews Included in Report***

Carmen Chavez, Executive Director, Casa Cornelia Law Center

Josh Chatten-Brown, Associate Director, Casa Cornelia Law Center

Elizabeth Lopez, Asylum Program Director, Casa Cornelia Law Center

Maryam Abdi, Somali Volunteer Interpreter, Casa Cornelia Law Center

Artemisa Valle, Volunteer Interpreter Coordinator, Casa Cornelia Law Center

Arksan Siarak, Asylum Program Paralegal/Somali Interpreter, Casa Cornelia Law Center

Day Translations, [www.daytranslations.com](http://www.daytranslations.com)

Northern California Translators Association, [www.ncta.org](http://www.ncta.org)

Jose Cruz, CEO, San Diego Council on Literacy

Diana Ross, Collaborative Director, Mid-City CAN

Jamie Regalbutto, Alliance for African Assistance

Thomas Hanna, Hanna Interpreter Services

Zara Marselian, Executive Director, La Maestra

Two Members of the Somali Community from Somali Festival

***Stakeholder Interviews in Process***

Judicial Council of California

Horn of Africa

Sweetwater Adult Basic Education Services

Price Charities

SD Refugee Forum

International Rescue Committee

San Diego Community College District

Laubach Literacy Council

## **Appendix B – Summary of Interviews**

**Carmen Chavez**  
**Executive Director**  
**Casa Cornelia Law Center**

### *Need for Somali Interpreters*

All of the legal work for refugees cannot be done unless the language barrier is overcome. Without an interpreter, asylum interviews are impossible. Initially, Carmen considered going directly to the community to ask for volunteer interpreters but they are not trained and there is a scarcity of trained Somali interpreters.

### *Training New Somali Interpreters*

Training can provide a career path for Somali's to become professional interpreters. Casa Cornelia can benefit by training interpreters to get to a pseudo-professional level through volunteering with Casa Cornelia. Casa Cornelia is working closely with Somali Family Services, together they might be able to better seek funding and more effectively administer trainings.

### *Recruiting New Somali Interpreters*

Religious organizations such as mosques are good places to recruit interpreters because people go to religious leaders first because they are trusted. Casa Cornelia would need a religious leader to stand with when pitching the idea and to show support and explain what they're getting in return.

### *Job Opportunities for Somali Interpreter*

Private attorneys, Volunteer Partner Firms (Pro-Bono), Medical (doctor/nurse & patient communication), Social Service Agencies, Schools (parent-teacher conferences) all have need for Somali interpreters. Interpreters get paid quite a bit because there is such a scarcity of qualified individuals. CCLC could pay a volunteer once they had served a certain amount of hours or on a certain amount of cases.

**Josh Chatten-Brown, Associate Director**  
**Elizabeth Lopez, Asylum Program Director**  
**Casa Cornelia Law Center**

### *History of Recruiting Volunteer Interpreters*

Previously CCLC reached out to the community thinking that they would want to "help their own people". They received a lot of support gathered from the faith, but many cannot speak English. CCLC reached out to universities to find young educated Somalis. CCLC learned that it's hard to keep volunteer interpreters if there is not incentive to keep them working for free. The volunteer experience can be described as draining because detention facility environment and it is a minimum 4-hour time commitment. Eventually, CCLC decided to give a small stipend to interpreters because people would drop out too quickly, and other organizations pay for interpreters. Overall, Casa Cornelia has not been successful in creating a pool of volunteers to pull from.



*New Ideas for Recruiting Volunteer Interpreters*

To attract new interpreters, CCLC plans to pitch work experience, path towards certification, and after 10 visits volunteers join the list of paid interpreters. Overall, the incentive for new interpreters would be to begin a career as a professional interpreter. But, there is no official certification for Somali interpreters.

**Maryam Abdi**  
**Somali Volunteer Interpreter**  
**Casa Cornelia Law Center**

*Personal Experience as a Somali Interpreter*

She has worked as a paid interpreter previously with the San Diego Superior Court on an as-needed/on-call basis. There was no test; she just registered with the courts. In order to work, though, she had to conduct a lot of her own research. She explained that as much as 90% of the words she encounters in a legal interpretation do not have a counterpart in Somali. She did a lot of online research (but notes that not everyone would know how to do so), and found a site where an experienced Somali court interpreter had translated a lot of commonly used court documents and materials from English to Somali and shared them for others to use. She noted that while there are interpreter certification programs for other languages, there is no training or certification programs for Somali interpreters.

*Recruiting Others to be Somali Interpreters*

Somali community is tight knit and they help each other in time of need. Getting the word out to the community might be effective in getting more interest. If Somalis understand the path to becoming interpreters, more people would pursue it as a career path.

*Job Opportunities for Somali Interpreters*

There are a lot of job opportunities for certified/qualified interpreters but many of the younger Somali's here do not have that good of Somali. People usually have not mastered both languages. The more proficient you one is, the more opportunities that one has. There is a lot of demand, but no actual facts about what is actually out there in terms of job opportunities. Most jobs are part-time or on-call basis. Interpreters who are making a career must do a lot of networking in order to get their name out and market themselves. There does not seem to be a central pool of interpreters that organizations can pull from when they need interpreters. Working as a volunteer for CCLC was a helpful for gaining experience, building your resume and developing skills. It would be great if CCLC could create a certificate that showed how many hours of interpretation that someone has done.

**Artemisa Valle**  
**Volunteer Interpreter Coordinator**  
**Casa Cornelia Law Center**

*Need for Female Interpreters*

She has observed a particular need for female Somali interpreters, as many are not comfortable sharing their traumatic experiences (FGM, rape, etc.) with a male. Somalis are the only client group in which females have requested a specific sex for their interpreter.

*Recruitment and Orientation of New Volunteer Interpreters*

CCLC and Somali Family service are now working together to recruit and train Somali volunteer interpreters from the community. There is an orientation for current and interested volunteers scheduled at the SFS office in City Heights on Friday, July 29 from 4-6 pm (6035 University Avenue, #6, San Diego, CA 92115).

The orientation will be specific to working with CCLC's Asylum Program. Maryam, a Somalian interpreter that is volunteering for CCLC, and Artemisa are putting together the orientation and accompanying materials. The orientation will devote a good amount of time to the Asylum Program (the same training that Volunteer Attorneys with the Asylum Program receive), particularly in terms of vocabulary and terms specific to immigration law. The orientation will also spend 10 – 15 minutes on interpreter techniques. Their hope is that the more the volunteers understand the program and the process, the more invested they will be.

The orientation will also mention the opportunities for Somali interpretation as a career path. For those that are interested in that option, Artemisa will meet with them one-on-one and provide mentorship and guidance. She explained that this will also allow her to get to know those that are committed volunteers, which will in turn help her to better match up the volunteers with the clients (i.e. timid clients with soft-spoken, sensitive volunteers, etc.). The right match is very important but unfortunately right now it's a luxury.

### **Day Translations**

[www.daytranslations.com](http://www.daytranslations.com)

#### *Training/Testing New Interpreters*

Trainings are offered online. Completed tests are sent to professional translators to check for quality of translation.

#### *Scarcity of Interpreters*

They do not have difficulty finding basic translators, but court approved are extremely rare. When they having trouble finding interpreters, the company reaches out to churches to find people to translate. Sometimes the company hires non-certified interpreters who are very good, but do not make as much as certified interpreters who have gone to school.

#### *Ideas for Recruiting New Interpreters*

Encourage non-professional interpreters to go through the orientation and training that the company offers. Tell volunteer interpreters that it is important for interpretation companies that their job applicants have significant interpretation experience and that there volunteering is getting them closer to a career.

### **Northern California Translators Association**

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

#### *Current Certifications for Somali Interpreters*

There are not any known of certifications for Somali in the US, For court interpreters in CA, someone can become registered with the court by taking an English exam CCLC could

provide its own certificate or statement that would show someone's experience, and could be a credential for someone. NCTA does not have a certification that they could give out for Somali.

#### *Common Credentials for Employment*

Credentials for employment include; education, years of experience, types of work, continuing education, years in a professional organization. A certificate can come from a variety of sources, but qualifications mean more than just a certificate

There is probably no one-stop shop for putting together what CCLC is looking for in terms of a training program. But, what is appealing is providing a training program, work experience and an ability to have someone vouch for their interpretation skills. This is all very important for employment even without a federal certification. Interpreters must go through the process of obtaining enough professional experience before they can market themselves as a professional interpreter. Offering people a path to professional interpretation helps people because people are struggling to find work and can't afford to not get paid as just volunteers.

**Jose Cruz**

**CEO**

**San Diego Council on Literacy**

#### *Role of Community Colleges in Immigrant Literacy Education*

Almost all adult immigrants in need of education are served by the community colleges, namely the San Diego Community College District, Grossmont and Sweetwater. Technically, it is Adult Basic Education (ABE) but it encompasses ESL services. All of the community colleges are "overwhelmed" and "working with less" due to economy-driven budget cuts. Jose has not heard of any programs turning people away. Turnover is usually very high so the waiting lists aren't necessarily a true indicator of capacity issues. There is generally a 100% turnover in students throughout the course of a single semester. Other life issues (work, family, etc.) and the high flexibility in the class structure contribute to the high student turnover.

Laubach Literacy Council has 17 programs set up throughout the county but they are very "distracted" with the huge influx of Iraqi refugees, as the majority of their programs are in East County. Grossmont College and Cuyamaca College are also heavily involved in serving the Iraqi immigrant population.

**Diana Ross**

**Collaborative Director**

**Mid-City CAN**

#### *Laws Requiring Somali Interpreters are not Enforced*

Both at the federal and state level that mandate language access are not enforced. For instance, there is a federal reimbursement program that states can opt in to have their interpretation and translation expenses reimbursed. California chooses not to opt in to

that program; as a result, they claim that the laws requiring language access provision is an “unfunded mandate” and then cite “budget issues” as to why they are not complying with the law. Similarly, it is unclear why the federal government allows states to opt out, since language access is covered under the Civil Rights Act. If the existing laws were enforced, then an economy of scale could be created and there would be a viable market for Somali interpreters/translators.

For example, there is a state assembly bill that was passed that prohibits the use of children under 18 as interpreters because they were being used so frequently in healthcare settings where there are informed consent laws, etc. (This was usually a child translating for their parents.) Despite it now being against the law it continues to happen because it is not enforced at all.

Lack of law enforcement is a huge problem in healthcare. Hospitals don't provide interpreter services and that a lot of informed consent violations are occurring. When Diana tried to work on the issue she found that they could not identify any self-interest on the part of the hospital. Because the laws are not enforced she said she thinks it will take a lawsuit to change the way that the healthcare industry is addressing the issue.

#### *Conflict Organizing as a Method to Ensure Law Enforcement*

The San Diego Unified School District (SDUSD) hired Somali staff interpreters at three City Heights schools. The interpreters they hired were highly respected and trusted members of the community. When there were recently plans to lay them off because of budget cuts, one of her teams at Mid-City CAN brought together over a hundred Somalis and they stormed a school board meeting, took it over, and made the school board be their audience while they conducted their own meeting entirely in Somali. They then told the school board that that's how the students felt without the aid of interpreters and left. They were victorious in keeping the interpreters on staff. Diana believes it will take mass numbers of Somalis and their supporters to rally together to demand their rights at the state and/or federal level in order for the issue to move forward.

#### **Arksan Siarak**

#### **Asylum Program Paralegal/Somali Interpreter Casa Cornelia Law Center**

#### *Importance of Confidentiality as a Somali Interpreter*

Arksan is very trusted by the clients because she takes confidentiality very seriously and while she is a member of the local Somali community, she holds herself apart to a certain extent. She lives outside of City Heights and has never revealed what clan she is from. This is important because many Somalis will only speak to people from certain clans, and that will often be the first question another Somali, client or otherwise, will ask her or another Somali interpreter.

The Somali community, though large in size, is very small in the sense that everyone knows each other and everyone talks. Gossip travels throughout the local San Diego Somali community and even to other resettlement areas in the U.S. (particularly Minnesota) and

back and forth between Somalia. The concept of confidentiality is foreign to Somalis, and they do not take the code of ethics/confidentiality agreement that the volunteers sign very seriously.

However, in spite of the challenges with Somali's confiding in Somali interpreters, the interpreters still need to be Somali themselves because the Somali clients feel most comfortable speaking to someone from their own culture. They are revealing very traumatic stories and it is hard enough to make them feel comfortable enough to open up completely without adding a cultural barrier by speaking to a non-Somalian.

### **Thomas Hanna Hanna Interpreting Services**

#### *Importance of Work Experience for Foreign Language Interpreters*

Certified interpreters are rare. There are plenty of people who speak Somali and English. And, Thomas' company does not need certification for contracted jobs, just look at resume and experience. Providing work experience is a great incentive for recruiting new interpreters. In fact, he hired an interpreter who was a former volunteer interpreter with Casa Cornelia. Interpreters do not need any specific background in the field that they are interpreting, Thomas' agency simply chooses interpreters who are the most competent and who have the most fluency in both languages. Though someone with experience working with in the specific field would be more desirable for those types of jobs

#### *Relatively Low Demand for Somali Interpreters in the Medical Field*

Their agency does not receive a lot of demand for Somali interpreters and is not sure if the need is there for Somali medical interpreters. There is a higher demand in California in the medical field for Spanish and Arabic interpreters.

#### *Importance of Incentives for Volunteer Interpreters*

It is difficult for people with no money to think long term about the benefits of working for free. A strong incentive must be given in order to get support. It would be important to advertising the ways that interpreters with experience can make money. And it would be important to show the connection between building one's resume with work experience as the way to acquire jobs.

### **Jamie Regalbuto Interpreting Services Manager Alliance for African Assistance**

#### *Recruiting Interpreters is only Successful with Strong Incentive / Pay*

Agrees that there are plenty of interpreters but they know that they can get paid \$40-50 an hour for working as interpreters and don't have incentive for volunteering. Many interpreters are refugees themselves and are in need of paying jobs. Also, many Somalis don't understand why they would not get paid for a skill that is so valuable. Furthermore, the work is part time in nature and it may be hard to string together enough work to make a livelihood. And it can be difficult to even find someone who will pay you.

*Strong Potential for AAA and CCLC to Partner Together*

Her agency is already trying to solve the exact same issue. AAA has volunteer interpreters that she could refer to CCLC to get work experience. Or, CCLC could use AAA professional interpreters at a discounted rate.

If a training program was designed and set up by CCLC with AAA then perhaps they could mutually fund the program. Or CCLC could just send their volunteer interpreters to AAA's trainings. It would be mutual self interest: AAA gets another name for the database & CCLC gets their volunteer trained without having to develop their own training program.

*Certification*

AAA could issue a certificate after a 40-hour training. A certificate showing your experience would be good for a resume or a job interview even if it was not an official state standard certification. Also, it would be important for those receiving certificates to view them as one of many qualifications needed to expect to be highly desirable as a professional interpreter.

**Zara Marselian**  
**Executive Director**  
**La Maestra**

*Impact of Language Barrier on Somali Immigrants and Community Organizations*

An access issue exists for Somalis and other immigrant populations because of the language barrier. These immigrant populations have difficulty navigating the system to find out about vital resources and services because of the language barrier. Also, there are not enough Somali in the workforce at schools, banks, hospitals and other places that Somali's go for services resulting in a lack of cultural competency in many community organizations.

*Need for more Trained Somali Interpreters*

One possible solution for overcoming the language barrier is to train more Somali interpreters to work in schools, hospitals and other service organizations. Currently, not enough translators are trained to work in these fields.

*Importance of Linguistic/Cultural Competency in Hospitals*

Previous initiatives have attempted to mandate linguistic/cultural competency at hospitals, but they are not currently being enforced. It would be important to work with regulators to enforce linguistic/cultural competency mandates at hospitals. This competency should be more than just telephone translator services and should involve translators that are culturally sensitive and gender appropriate.

**Two Members of the Somali Community from Somali Festival**  
**Ubah, Female Somali**  
**Unidentified, Male Somali**

*Summary of Interview with Ubah, Female Somali*

Ubah is the oldest of seven children; she came to the U.S. in 1995 and appears to be in her mid-20s to mid-30s. Ubah's parents speak no English, so she interprets for them everywhere they go. As she said, "I've been translating my entire life." (Note: she used translating and interpreting as interchangeable terms). Her youngest brother, who is 14, was born here. He speaks perfect English but very little Somali. She said that if you ask him a question in Somali he will reply in English. Ubah has been doing Somali interpretation over the phone for some time—her clients are mainly schools and hospitals. She said that she is a "people person", though, and so she wants to do face-to-face work. She sounded quite interested in interpretation as a long-term career path.

*Summary of Interview with an Unidentified 23-Year-Old Somali Man*

He came to the states as a refugee and has been looking for interpreter opportunities. Currently, he works for a taxi company called Somali Taxi Service.

## **Appendix C – Interpreting Techniques**

<http://translatinginterpreting.blogspot.com/2010/03/tips-for-working-with-interpreters-in.html>

### **Tips for Working with Interpreters in Political Settings**

- 1) Interpreters work in two different ways: simultaneously and consecutively. Simultaneous interpreters will interpret while you speak; consecutive interpreters interpret in pieces as you go. Each interpreter has his own preference. If you are working with a simultaneous interpreter, please speak slowly so he's not too far behind you. If you are working with a consecutive interpreter, please do not say more than 2-3 sentences at a time so the interpreter can relay all of your information.
  
- 2) Be aware that EVERYTHING you say will be interpreted, even if it's just your asking the debate organizer for more water.
  
- 3) It is not uncommon for an interpreter to interrupt. It is his job to convey everything you say accurately and completely. This may include stopping you if he needs to interpret what you have already said, asking you to slow down if you are going too fast, or stopping you to seek clarification when needed.
  
- 4) Don't be surprised if your interpreter has questions about seemingly simple vocabulary words. What's only one word in your language could be one of many words in the other language, depending on the context. In French, for example, the English word meeting could be a "tête-à-tête," a "rendez-vous," a "conference," or even a "meeting," depending on how many people attend and how formal the meeting is or isn't.
  
- 5) If you've studied the other language and the interpreter uses a different word than you would, don't be alarmed. Many languages have multiple dialects. Spanish, for example, has 19 major dialectal forms. The interpreter may simply be using a different Spanish.
  
- 6) Allow for extra time and ask the debate organizer ahead of time if the interpreter's



time will be deducted from your own. Everything you say will have to be said twice (once by you and once by the interpreter). In addition, some languages simply take more words to express a point than others do. Spanish, for example, uses 33% more words to say something than English.

7) Look at the limited-English proficient person instead of looking at the interpreter.

8) Keep it in the first and second persons. Instead of telling the interpreter "Ask him which issue is most important to him," say "Which issue is most important to you?"

9) Be as precise as you can with your comments. Anything in your syntax that is unclear (i.e., dangling modifiers, unidentified pronouns like "it," double negatives), may be interpreted incorrectly. Along these lines, shorter sentences are best.

10) Please understand that the interpreter does not take sides. The interpreter is ethically prohibited from having an opinion on your candidacy, the race at large, or the issues involved. This means he is neither for or against you, or for or against your opponent. He is ethically bound to be impartial and to acknowledge his role boundary as an interpreter and nothing more.

POSTED BY TERENA BELL - IN EVERY LANGUAGE AT 4:43 PM 

[http://www.justicewomen.com/help\\_interpreter.html](http://www.justicewomen.com/help_interpreter.html)

## Quick Tips for Using an Interpreter

(Español)

As a victim or advocate, you'll likely have many occasions to use an interpreter. And when you do, you'll want your conversation to be as smooth and as accurate as if the interpreter weren't there at all. So, here's a few tips on how to make that magic happen.

**Note:** *In conversations of legal or medical import, only professional interpreters should be used.*

**Note 2:** *If you are a victim reading this, even though we present these tips in terms directed to an advocate, these same tips apply to you and can guide you, too, whenever you use an interpreter.*

- 1. Introduce yourselves.** But don't jump into the business at hand. The minute or two you take to set the stage at the beginning is the key to easy communication across the language barrier.
- 2. Ask the interpreter if she (he) will be doing simultaneous or consecutive interpreting.** In simultaneous interpreting the interpreter interprets and speaks at the same time as you speak. In consecutive interpreting the interpreter waits until you have completed a segment of speech and then interprets while you pause and your client listens. (Unless the interpreter is professional, and can do simultaneous interpreting in both directions without stumbling, ask the interpreter to do consecutive translating throughout, so as not to be switching back and forth.)
- 3. If the interpreter is not a professional, instruct the interpreter that once you begin, she or he should not take part in the conversation in any way.** They should only interpret, phrase for phrase, as accurately as possible, what you and your client have to say. (If the interpreter is a professional, she or he will already know this.)
- 4. Physically place yourselves so that you are facing your client, and your client is facing you.** Place the interpreter physically close to both of you, but not in a position that breaks the line of sight between you and your client. (Similarly, if you are using a telephone interpreter, you and your client should sit facing each other.)
- 5. Have the interpreter instruct your client to look mainly at you as she speaks and listens, and not at the interpreter. Likewise, you should look at and speak to your client, not to the interpreter.** If you are using a telephone interpreter, sit so you can easily pass the phone back and forth.
- 6. Begin with a minute or two of light conversation to establish a reliable, steady**

**rhythm before getting into the business at hand.** In consecutive interpreting, it's also crucial to establish the quantity of speech in each segment before pausing for the interpreter to begin. (Two or three sentences is usually the maximum a non professional can handle accurately.) Have the interpreter instruct your client to stick as closely as possible to that same speech segment size in each round of conversation.

**7. Keep it slow.** If there begin to be mis-communications, stop, and slow the pace even more. Because of the slower rhythm, conversations using interpreters are often much calmer and smoother than conversations using only one language.

**8. Don't push the limits of the interpreter.** Keep the pace comfortable and reliable. Monitor the quality of communication. Stop and make adjustments at the first signs of mis-communication. The closer you can maintain an even pattern and keep focused on your client, the more the interpreter will magically seem to disappear from the conversation. In fact, when you use an interpreter well, you will even begin to forget that you and your client are speaking two different languages. It really is magic.

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Women's Justice Center,  
[www.justicewomen.com](http://www.justicewomen.com)  
[rdjustice@monitor.net](mailto:rdjustice@monitor.net)

<http://www.culturalsavvy.com/interpreters.htm>

## Working with Interpreters

By Joyce Millet

[Article  
Reprint  
Request](#)



### But I Thought Everyone Spoke English?!

#### ***Do I Need an Interpreter?***

Although more and more people around the world are learning English and becoming more proficient communicators, serious business meetings and negotiations are still often conducted with the assistance of interpreters.

Never assume that people do not speak English (or any other language), just because they do not say anything. Making this assumption can lead to embarrassing situations. In Japan, for example, there is often a spokesperson for meetings.

On the other hand, do not assume that everyone speaks English (or any other language), even if you find people nodding and acknowledging your comments. This may just be their way of being polite.

Many people, even though they may be quite fluent in a foreign language, still prefer to use an interpreter for several reasons:

1. Even a few mistakes can be costly or embarrassing. In Asian cultures, there is always the risk of losing face!
2. Using an interpreter is a way of buying time, giving you the opportunity to formulate a response or evaluate what is being said.
3. There is a distinct advantage to communicating in your own language, unless you are totally bilingual.

### ***Types of Interpreting***

Simultaneous – interpreter is in a soundproof booth, participants use earphones

Whispering – the interpreter sits close and whispers as people speak. This is similar to simultaneous interpreting without the booth and earphones. It can be very distracting.

Consecutive – back and forth interpretation.

## Working with Interpreters - Part Two



**Advanced briefings are very important, particularly when discussions involve technical, legal, or sensitive subjects.**

Preparing an agenda of topics to be discussed, or submitting advanced information is helpful to your counterparts.

### ***Tips for Effectively Using Interpreters***

Be sure your interpreter is well versed in your business and understands the goals and objectives of the meeting or presentation. AND, always hire the best--your business depends on it.

If you are making a speech or presentation, be sure your interpreter has copy of the text in advance. Explain important and/or difficult concepts and points.

Use your own interpreter whenever possible. Using your counterpart's interpreters is a distinct disadvantage.

Depending on the language, interpretations may take much longer than the original. For example, most people find that when translating from English to Japanese, the Japanese translation is about twice as long.

Speak clearly and slowly.

Pause after about 60 seconds, after a thought is complete (if not too



long), or after major points have been made.

Watch your interpreter to be sure he/she is keeping up with you.

Avoid long, complex sentences, and do not use slang, jargon, or colloquial expressions.

Avoid jokes and humorous stories. Humor does not travel well.

Advise your group that only one person should speak at a time.

## **Appendix D – Draft Scope of Work**

### **Program Designer – Interpreter Training Program**

#### **Casa Cornelia Law Center:**

Founded in 1993 to address the urgent need of access to legal services for the most marginalized communities in the region, Casa Cornelia Law Center (CCLC) provides a bridge to justice for those who come to the U.S. from around the world seeking safe refuge. As a 501(c)(3) public interest law firm, the mission of CCLC is to provide quality pro bono legal services to immigrant victims of human and civil rights violations, and to educate others regarding the impact of immigration law and policy on the community and the public good. CCLC provides free legal services to indigent immigrants with legitimate claims to immigration relief in three program areas: 1) unaccompanied children (all those detained by immigration authorities as well as non-detained children identified in the community), 2) women and children victims of domestic violence, and 3) asylum seekers.

#### **Scope of Work Background:**

Casa Cornelia Law Center (CCLC) has confronted a chronic problem of identifying and retaining sufficient numbers of volunteer interpreters working with the Somali immigrant community primarily focused on processing asylum status. Volunteers tend to limit the frequency or duration of their volunteer activities, which creates challenges in securing a sustainable number for interpreting the heavy caseload at CCLC. Some of the causes include lack of time, volunteer burnout, and need for gainful employment.

However, initial research has also revealed that the main obstacles to becoming an interpreter were: 1) lack of awareness of interpreting as a viable livelihood; 2) inadequate access to appropriate interpretation training, especially in low-resource communities; and 3) a lack of coordinated programming effort to channel prospective candidates to the resources that will help them develop their skills as interpreters.

#### **Program Summary:**

To address the three obstacles cited above, Casa Cornelia endeavors to initiate an Interpreter Training Program that would recruit, orient and train volunteer interpreters with the incentive of gaining vital on-the-job experience for future employment as a salaried interpreter elsewhere. The program would train bilingual Somalis techniques in interpretation, confidentiality, cultural sensitivity, legal basics regarding asylum, and orientation of the working environment where interpreting takes place (i.e., detention center or other sites where CCLC works).

After training and orientation, real-world interpreting sessions with Casa Cornelia staff and clients would form a practicum. Once the practicum hours are fulfilled, the volunteer interpreter receives a certificate of achievement or certificate of completion for the hours of interpreting service. The certificate could also note the trainings the volunteer took at the beginning of the process, as explained above, or separate certificates could be issued for the trainings.

The Program would also serve to support and mentor volunteer translators on their journey of professional development by linking them to skills development organizations and opportunities, interpreting associations, various future employment possibilities, etc. Success of the program is based on a sustainable pool of Somali-English interpreters available for the CCLC caseload by creating incentives for bilingual Somalis to volunteer as interpreters as a necessary first step in pursuing an interpreting career.

**Scope of Work in Detail:**

The Program Designer (PD) is required to conceptualize and draft the Interpreter Training Program Plan following the guidelines described in the Program Summary. Design work will be conducted in conjunction with CCLC staff, and other stakeholders, as required.

The Program Designer will develop the following components of the Program Plan:

1. Implementation plan of the program with time line, budget, and delineated partner roles.
2. Development of orientation and training materials and curriculum, including the interpreting practicum component with certificate of achievement.
3. Prepare materials for and conduct awareness-raising of interpreting as a viable career choice among various Somali groups.
4. Development and marketing of the Interpreter Training Program services and opportunities for participants.

**Qualifications:**

1. Bachelor's degree in related field.
2. Three to five years relevant experience in interpreting services.
3. Fluency in Somali and English.
4. Ability to connect with the Somali immigrant population of San Diego and various stakeholders and partners.
5. Ability to work collaboratively and creatively.
6. Ability to work effectively in a team-oriented environment and a cross-cultural setting.
7. Proven experience in marketing and networking.
8. Proactive, dynamic, creative, problem-solver.
9. Excellent communication and team-building techniques.
10. Strong computer skills (Word, Excel, MS Access, Power Point, Internet).



## Appendix E – School Outreach Program Materials

### 1) Elementary Schools

[http://www.atanet.org/ata\\_school/level\\_elementary.php#htsi](http://www.atanet.org/ata_school/level_elementary.php#htsi)

# Careers in Translation and Interpreting

## School Outreach Program

### Presenting to Elementary School Students

- [What to say](#)
- [How to say it](#)
- [For extra credit](#)
- [Presentation materials](#)

## What to say

- **Translation is written and interpreting is spoken: they're two different skills.** Demonstrate the difference with a couple of basic exercises in the classroom (see ideas below).
- **Being bilingual isn't enough to make you a translator or interpreter: you need additional training.** Briefly discuss educational requirements and helpful life experiences. It's also useful to emphasize the need for excellent English and foreign language grammar.
- **Translation is more than word-substitution.** Illustrate the point by giving an example of a translation problem or culturally specific word that the children can understand.

## How to say it

**Make it personal.** Begin by introducing yourself and identifying the languages you use. As you talk about your work, use anecdotes from your own experience. For example:

- Describe how you became interested in languages and how you entered the profession. Use this as a springboard to mention the talents and character traits required for your work (good memory, good vocabulary, love of languages, etc.).
- Sketch out your working conditions and tell the students what a typical day is like. Many students enjoy hearing about living abroad and about the travel and prestigious events involved in interpreting.

- Discuss the tools of the trade: computers (PC, laptop), dictionaries, the Internet, email, fax, computer programs, etc.

**Make it interactive.** Get the kids involved as quickly as possible: ask questions and encourage them to do the same. Asking questions about their exposure to other languages breaks the ice and simultaneously gives you a better feel for your audience. Sample questions might include:

- Who can point out the countries where my languages are spoken on the map?
- Who speaks another language at home?
- What language?
- Can you point out the country or countries where it is spoken on the map?
- Who has learned another language in school?
- What do you call someone who speaks two languages very well (bilingual)?
- Where have you used another language (e.g., travel, fun, talking to grandparents)?
- Where have you seen a translator/interpreter?

**Make it concrete.** Give specific, hands-on examples and use props and audiovisuals whenever you can.

- Do translation and interpreting exercises in class to demonstrate the difference. Have the students do a simple translation by writing a basic word or sentence on the board in one language and asking for volunteers to come up and write the word in another language. Then take them through an interpreting exercise: say a common phrase in a language they know and ask for a volunteer to interpret for you in another language. (If the kids are all monolingual, tell the teacher in advance what you'll be saying to the class, and have him or her repeat it in English.) *Highlight the key point: translation is written; interpreting is spoken.*
- Display or hand out some very simple translations, ideally of things the children may be familiar with. Tell them their names in a foreign language; show them bilingual labels on the packaging for international foods; or show them photographs of signs in foreign countries.
- Use maps. Ask the teacher in advance what kinds of maps are available in the classroom. If you're focusing on a particular country, you may want to bring your own map or photocopies of the map for the students to keep. And time differences can really get attention: one group of fourth graders gasped audibly when told that 10:30 in the morning in their home town was 4:30 in the afternoon in Paris.
- With older children, illustrate the problem of ambiguity by giving the students a simple word that has more than one meaning. This could be as simple as the word "grade," which would often be translated as two different words in the two sentences, "I am in the third **grade**," and "I got a good **grade** on my test." Give (or ask the students to provide) translations for each of the meanings of this term and

*highlight the key point: you can't possibly translate it accurately until you know what it means in context.*

- Highlight the difficulty of translating culturally specific words. Choose a culturally specific word in an appropriate language and ask the students to come up with the meaning of the word and all the associations it has. *Highlight the key point: you can't just replace one word with another.*
- Reinforce the message: write key points on the board as you go. As you make each point, review and ask questions: "Who can tell me what translation is?" "Who can tell me what interpreting is?" At the end, give a short, multiple-choice "pop-quiz" designed to be easy and fun while reinforcing the key points of the talk. A sample question might be "Which of the following countries is not Spanish-speaking? a) Mexico; b) Venezuela; c) Uruguay; or d) Mesopotamia." Have the students trade papers and correct them, and then go over the questions out loud.

**Make it fun.** Use props and audiovisuals whenever you can. Some examples:

- Bring translated material in source and target text. Try *The Rainbow Fish*, *The Cat in the Hat*, any of the Harry Potter books, or any other material that is appropriate to the age group you're addressing. (Some of these resources may be available from your local library.) Or bring dubbed and/or subtitled movies. You can also bring three versions—one in English, one with subtitles and one dubbed—and let the children see and hear the difference. *Point out that all of them began in one language and had to be translated into another one.*
- Translate age-appropriate cartoons into English and copy source and target text on two different colors of paper. Tell the class you have some fun cartoons, and hand out the foreign-language version. Ask, "Don't you like them? Why isn't anyone laughing?" The kids will probably respond, "We can't read it." Ask, "What should we do about it? How can we read it?" (Possible funny responses: Ask mommy to read it, ask the teacher to read it, ask the principal to read it.) Explain that they can't read the cartoons because they aren't in English, so they'll need to find a translator. "Fortunately," you continue, "I just happen to be a translator! Do you want me to translate these cartoons for you?" The kids should yell, "Yes!" Spend a few seconds at the teacher's desk "pretending" to translate the cartoons. Then pick up the translations and say, "All done! Who wants to read funny English cartoons?" Pass them out and enjoy!
- Read or talk to the students in a foreign language
- Do a brief interpreting demonstration. One mother does live interpreting demos with her sons in their school. Pretending that she only speaks French, she speaks to the class, and one of her sons interprets what she's said to his classmates. If the kids have questions on interpreting and translating, they can also be interpreted back to her in French.

- Bring in foreign currency. Put sample bills in a clear folder and pass it around the class (or assign a student to walk it around). If you have enough small change, you could even let the children keep a coin or give it away as a prize.
- Put photographs, postcards, crafts, or other memorabilia in an album or a protective cover and pass it around the classroom. Crafts that children can touch are an excellent idea: one sixth-grade class enjoyed seeing and touching a hand-woven poncho from Peru.

**Make it count.** Leaving something tangible behind will give you a better return on the time and energy you've invested in your presentation. Give the kids souvenirs or treats, such as novelty school supplies (a notepad in the shape of a globe; a pen that lights up), miniature foreign flags, stickers, brightly colored handouts, a food item from another culture, or maps. Even a flyer about your work or a brochure on your employer will help the students remember you and your talk. Give the teacher a [resource handout](#) with pointers to further information on translation and interpreting.

## For extra credit

**Spend some time with the teacher before or after your presentation.** This could be anything from a five-minute chat about the [resource handout](#) for this level to a cup of coffee or a lunch date. One seasoned presenter reports that teachers are very eager to learn more from her and that she finds the contact with them extremely rewarding.

**Cultivate a relationship with your local school.** Make your child's teacher (or the closest school) aware of your profession and offer to speak on foreign language-related subjects and at the school's career-oriented events. One parent went to her daughter's classroom twice a month for 15 minutes to teach a few words of the languages she learned as a child.

**Help organize an "International Night" at your child's school.** Begin with a "parade of nations" with the kids carrying flags of various countries. Afterwards parents and students can share artifacts, information, food, dance, etc. from their countries of origin or interest.

## Presentation materials

Each of the links below will take you to a sample presentation that can be adapted for your needs. If you use or adapt any of these materials, please be sure to acknowledge the author's contribution appropriately. All materials are in English unless otherwise noted.

### [Presentation](#)

**Detailed script for presenting to students in grades one through five. *In Microsoft***

***Word***

***Please acknowledge: Lillian Clementi***

**Presentation**

**Presentation tips and outline for presentation to students in grades one through five.**

***In Microsoft Word***

***Please acknowledge: Alexandra Russell-Bitting***

**Classroom Exercise**

A basic 911 information sheet in Spanish and English that can be used as a short interpreting exercise. Presentation tips included. *In Microsoft Word*

***Please acknowledge: John Shaklee***

## Presenting to Elementary Schools

By Alexandra Russell-Bitting

Whether or not you have children of your own, giving a presentation about translation to a school is an important outreach activity. Schools welcome participation by the adults in the community. Such presentations help raise the industry's profile, because both the students and their teachers will talk about the presentation to those around them, and older children might start to consider a career in translation. And the best thing about this community service you provide is that it will be a lot of fun.

To make sure your presentation goes as smoothly as possible, simply follow these two guidelines: 1) come prepared; and 2) use age-appropriate materials. Being prepared means having a written list of talking points and all the materials you need to illustrate them. "Age-appropriate" means that both your points and the props you use are things the students can grasp, remember, and use.

A good way to do both is to coordinate your talk with the classroom teacher. First of all, you'll need to know how much time you have with the class, usually roughly an hour, and what time to arrive. Second, you can find out what materials might already be available, such as maps. And third, you may be able to tie in your presentation to the curriculum. You can also check with the teacher about any questions as to age-appropriateness.

Following these two simple guidelines will help make sure that you don't lose your audience. Here are a few pointers about what to do.

### 1. Take Charge

When you come into the classroom, remember that you are providing an important community service. Better yet, you are giving the students a break from their routine and they are likely to be excited about it. You should have their full attention, so when you walk in the door, remember: you're in charge. The classroom teacher will usually give you free rein and only step in if you need help.

### 2. Keep the Pace Moving

Have a clear idea of what you're going to talk about and how you're going to talk about it. Decide in advance on a few key points you want to make and jot them down on a sheet of paper or note cards. Remember that the younger the audience, the shorter and simpler you want to keep your message.

Start by briefly introducing yourself, mentioning how you happen to be visiting the school ("I'm Rachel's mom" or "I live in the neighborhood"). Explain what language or languages you work with and where those languages are spoken. As you speak, you may want to write key words on the blackboard.

For younger children, you may want to just focus on awareness of a particular foreign language. In the case of Spanish, for instance, you should provide some background on history and linguistics to explain where the language is spoken. If the children come away with an understanding of the difference between “Spanish” and “Latin American,” you will have made a valuable contribution.

Be flexible enough to allow time for spontaneous questions and answers, but firm enough to move on if you think the conversation is veering dangerously off-topic. Be polite but decisive, for example, by saying “Okay, let’s save the rest of the questions for later, because right now I’m going to talk to you about....”

While you don’t want the discussion to get too sidetracked, if the students seem to be responding well to a particular topic, don’t feel compelled to rush through it. However, if a point is only getting blank stares, do move on.

### **3. Involve the Students**

Plan to let them ask questions, but feel free to question them as well throughout your talk. Make sure to call on as many different students as possible, not just the talkative ones.

Sample openers could include: “How many of you speak another language at home?” “Have any of you ever traveled to a country where they speak another language?” When discussing your foreign language, ask the students to list the countries where it is spoken.

For younger students, have small jobs for them to help you with, like passing out materials, holding up maps, even just pressing “Play” on a CD player to play some music, for example.

### **4. Show and Tell**

Bring lots of materials to share with the students, and try to include some they can keep. The more of their senses you can engage, the better. For example:

- Maps: It’s hard to talk about language without mentioning geography. Check with the classroom teacher to see if he or she has any maps you could use (most classrooms have a world map, for instance). If you’re focusing on a particular country, you may want to bring your own map. Better yet, bring Xerox copies of the maps for students to keep.
- Currency: Younger children especially may never have seen foreign money. You may want to put some sample bills in a clear folder and pass it around the class (or assign a student to walk it around). If you have enough small change, you could even let the children keep a coin.
- Flyers, photographs, postcards, crafts, memorabilia: A flyer about your job or your employer for the students to keep will help them remember you and your talk. Photographs and other memorabilia, such as postcards and admission tickets, in an album or inside a protective cover can be passed around the classroom. Crafts the children can

touch are an excellent idea: for instance, the sixth-graders in my son's class enjoyed seeing and touching a hand-woven poncho from Peru.

- Sample translations: Bring some very simple sample translations if possible of things the children may be familiar with. For instance, tell them their names in a foreign language; show them bilingual labels on Goya foods packaging; display children's books that have been published in translation, like *The Cat in the Hat* (some might be available from your local library); or show them photographs of signs in foreign countries. My daughter got a kick out of a Mexican stop sign that read "ALTO."

## 5. Reinforce Your Message

At the end of my presentation, I like to do a short, multiple-choice "pop-quiz" designed to be easy and fun while reinforcing the key points of the talk. A sample question might be "Which of the following countries is **not** Spanish-speaking? a) Mexico; b) Venezuela; c) Uruguay; or d) Mesopotamia." After having the students trade papers to grade them (so the teacher doesn't have to do it), I go over the questions out loud. Then I get to enjoy the gratifying sight of students shooting their hands up and waving eagerly.

## Sample Outline

### 1. Introduction

- Introduce self, indicating connection to school
- Explain job as translator (languages, office, brief background)

### 2. Presentation on language and translation (example: Spanish)

- Where is it spoken? Show on map(s)
- What is life like for people who live in that country/those countries? Show photos and discuss the geography, climate, ethnic makeup, etc.; show currency; pass around crafts; sample food/drink.
- What does the language look like? Show samples of foreign books, goods, photos of signs, etc.

### 3. Questions and answers

You will probably get lots of questions during your presentation. Make sure to call on the students who raise their hands first, in the order in which they raised them. Allow a separate Q&A time anyway. The class teacher may want to ask you or the students some questions at this point. If there are no questions, go right to next activity.

### 4. "Pop-quiz"

- Pass out and allow 5 minutes to do
- Have children trade quizzes with their neighbors and correct out loud, calling on different students



## Script for Elementary School Presentation

Please acknowledge: Lillian Clementi

Please note that this presentation incorporates a number of ideas contributed by other people. Special thanks to Barbara Bell and Amanda Ennis.

**Length.** The typical elementary school presentation is about 20 minutes, though you may have less for Career Day or more if you're doing a special presentation for a language class. There are several interactive exercises to choose from at the end: adapt the script to your needs by adding or eliminating material.

**Level.** This is pitched largely to third or fourth grade. I usually start with the more basic exercises and then go on to the next if I have time and the group seems to be following me. For younger children, simply make them aware of other languages and focus on getting the first two or three points across. For fifth graders, you may want to make the presentation a little more sophisticated by incorporating some of the material from the middle school page.

**Logistics.** It's helpful to transfer the script to index cards (numbered so they're easy to put back in order if they're dropped!). Because they're easier to hold than sheets of paper, they allow you to move around the room more freely, and you can simply reshuffle them or eliminate cards if you need to change your material at the last minute.

**Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I'm delighted to be here with you today. I'd like to talk to you about two jobs that you can do with foreign languages: translation and interpreting. I speak [your languages], and I am a [translator/interpreter]. Can anyone tell me what that means?**

1. Translators and interpreters are people who help other people understand each other even though they don't know the same language.

[Write *translator* and *interpreter* on the board]

**I want to tell you more about my job, but first I'd like to find out whether you speak any languages other than English and what they are.**

- **Who speaks another language?**
- **What language?**
- **Who has learned another language in school?**
- **What languages?**
- **Does anyone know the word we use to describe someone who speaks two languages (*bilingual*)?** [Write the word on the board or have a volunteer do it]

- **Where have you used another language (e.g., travel, fun, talking to grandparents)?**
- **Has anyone ever seen a translator/interpreter? Where?**
- **Has anyone ever helped a parent or family member who couldn't speak English?**

[Optional: Would some of you like to come up to the map and point out the countries where my/your languages are spoken?]

**Good. Now let's talk some more about *translation* and *interpreting*.**

**2. Translation and interpreting are two different jobs. The difference is that *translation* is *written* and *interpreting* is *spoken*. Let's do a translation together now.**

**Option 1 (monolingual class): I'm going to write the word for *this* [hold up a hand or point to a common object] on the board in [*foreign language*]. Who can write the word for this in English?**

**Option 2 (multilingual class): I'm going to write a word on the board [use a common word that heritage and beginning speakers will know, like *hand* or some other common object] on the board in English. Who can write the word for this in another language?**

**Good. You just did a *translation*, because you used *writing* to take an idea in one language and put it into a different one.**

Now let's do some interpreting. I'm going to say something [e.g. "I love soccer."] and then one of you can say it in another language.

**Who can say that in another language?**

**Good. What you just did was *interpreting* because you used *speaking* to take an idea in one language and put it into a different one.**

**So here's how it looks** [write on board]:

<b>Translation</b>	<b>Interpreting</b>
is written	is spoken

Now I'm going to give you some examples of real jobs that involve translators and interpreters and ask you to tell me whether translation or interpreting is involved:

- **Person who produces Spanish version of a Harry Potter book**
- **Person who helps 911 operator speak to someone who doesn't speak English**
- **Person who helps President Bush talk to the president of Russia**

[Display and/or pass around visual aids—translated videos, books, etc. You can also point out that they've read translated material (The Little Mermaid, other fairy tales, etc.).]

**Now you have some idea what translators and interpreters do. Where do you think they would work?** [Solicit or give some examples: hospital, courts, UN, publishing, US companies abroad.]

3. You will find translators and interpreters working anywhere that people need to communicate across the language barrier – and that means anywhere that people who know different languages need to understand each other.

**What's it like to work as a translator or interpreter?**

[Discuss daily routine, tools you use, etc.]

Now let's talk about what you have to know to be a translator or interpreter.

#### **4. Being bilingual isn't enough.**

**Who remembers the word for a person who knows two languages?** [Bilingual] **Being *bilingual* is a good start in becoming a translator or interpreter, but it's not enough. You need to know your foreign language very well, but you also need other training and experience in addition to your languages. It takes special skills to take ideas in one language and put them into another, so you need to take special classes to study translation and interpreting and develop those skills. And if you want to translate into English, you also need to know English very well and be very good at grammar and writing. You also need to know a lot about your *subject area*: that means that if you work in a bank you need to know about banking; and if you work in a court, you need to know about the law.**

[Briefly describe your about training/background, subject area.]

**5. We said that being bilingual isn't enough to make you a translator or an interpreter. Why? *Because* it's not always as easy as the examples we just did. Translation and interpreting are not just replacing one word with another one. You need special skills. Let's take a look at some of the problems that translators and interpreters have to solve in their work.** [Use interactive exercises to demonstrate this. A few examples follow.]

- Translation problem: One good example to use in the fall is the word *Thanksgiving*. Ask for associations with this word (turkey, Indians, Pilgrims in funny hats, pumpkin pie, Macy's parade, football, eating too much, etc.). Challenge the students to come up with a way to translate "Thanksgiving" (e.g., French Canadians call their Thanksgiving *le Jour d'Action de grâce*). Point out that the word has a special meaning in the US: it tells a whole story about American history and identity. Stress that every language has culturally specific words that tell a whole story about its history and its speakers. Other examples include: "I struck out," "I hit a home run," "I knocked it out of the ballpark." How would we translate these in a country that had no baseball?
- **Now let's play Word Detective. I'm going to give you some translations of sayings in other languages, but they aren't very good translations. We say some of the same things in English, but we say them a little differently. I know that you can come up with better translations than these. I have a prize for the first person to get each right answer in English.** [Some examples]:

I have other cats to beat (I have other fish to fry)

You can't have the butter and the money from the butter (You can't have your cake and eat it too)

You've been caught with your hand in the bag (You've been caught red-handed)

Health! (Bless you!) [You may need to give some hints on this one. This is based on German; one of your languages may have something even more interesting. As you discuss this, the word *Gesundheit* may come up; it may be worth pointing out that *Gesundheit* actually *means* "health" in German, but in English we use it as the *equivalent* of "God bless you." The important thing is not what the word *is*, but what it *means*.]

6. Excellent. Let's review what we've talked about today. **[If you like, you can hand out an easy, fun pop quiz with multiple choice answers to review these points. See the last page of this document for a sample.]**

1. Who can tell me what translators and interpreters do? [They help other people understand each other even though they don't speak the same language.]

**2. Translation and interpreting are two different jobs. Who can tell me what the difference is? [*Translation is written and interpreting is spoken.*]**

**3. To be a good translator you need to be bilingual, but that isn't enough. What are some of the other things you need to have? [Training, translation and interpreting skills, subject area expertise, experience.]**

4. *Why* isn't it enough to be bilingual? [Because translation and interpreting are not just replacing one word with another.]

Who has questions?

### POP QUIZ

**1. Translators and interpreters are people who:**

- a) **Work in banks.**
- b) **Help other people understand each other even though they don't know the same language.**
- c) **Make funny hats for dogs and cats to wear.**
- d) **Drive buses.**

**2. Translation and interpreting are two different jobs. The difference is that:**

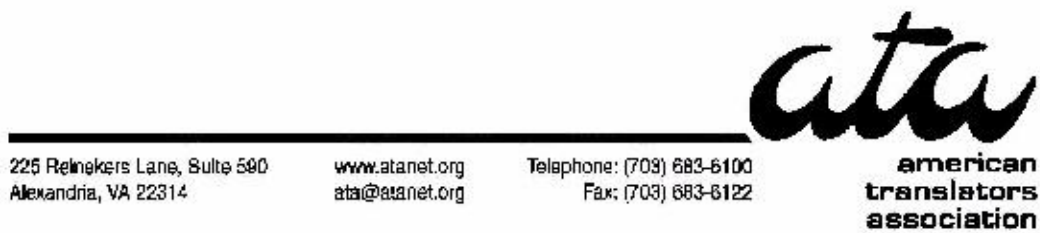
- a) **Translation is written and interpreting is spoken.**
- b) **Translation is done in courts and interpreting is done in offices.**
- c) **Translation is done by girls and interpreting is done by boys.**
- d) **Translation is easy and interpreting is hard.**

**3. To be a good translator or interpreter you need to be bilingual, but that isn't enough. What is one of the other things you need to have?**

- a) **Blue eyes.**
- b) **Special training.**
- c) **A fat dog and a skinny cat.**
- d) **A large chocolate cake.**

**4. *Why* isn't it enough to be bilingual if you want to be a translator or an interpreter?**

- a) **Because you need a skateboard too.**
- b) **Because you need a computer too.**
- c) **Because you need a magic wand too.**
- d) **Because you need to do more than replace one word with another.**



## SELECTED RESOURCES ON TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETING

### **American Translators Association**

Information on translation and interpreting and on ATA benefits and activities.

<http://www.atanet.org>

### **Value of Foreign Language Education**

Brown, Christine L. (2002). Early Language Learning: A National Necessity. *Basic Education*, 8, 3-7.

<http://www.c-b-e.org/PDF/be/BE0204.pdf>

### **Critical Role of Foreign Language Education in National Security**

Brecht, Richard D., & William P. Rivers. (2002). Language, National Security, and the Nation's Schools. *Basic Education*, 8, 13-16.

<http://www.c-b-e.org/PDF/be/BE0204.pdf>

### **Common Questions about Translating and Interpreting**

Humorous, practical questions and answers about the translating and interpreting professions.

<http://hometown.aol.com/marlasanch/Questions.html>

### **Bureau of Labor Statistics**

Statistics on the size and growth of the translating and interpreting professions.

<http://www.bls.gov/emp/emptab21.htm>

<http://www.bls.gov/oco/oco20052.htm>

## 2) Middle Schools

[http://www.atanet.org/ata\\_school/level\\_middle.php](http://www.atanet.org/ata_school/level_middle.php)

# Careers in Translation and Interpreting

## School Outreach Program

### Presenting to Middle School Students

- [What to say](#)
- [How to say it](#)
- [For extra credit](#)
- [Presentation materials](#)

## What to say

- **Translation is written and interpreting is spoken: they're two different skills.** Demonstrate the difference with a couple of basic exercises in the classroom (see ideas below).
- **Being bilingual isn't enough to make you a translator or interpreter: you need additional training.** Briefly discuss educational requirements and helpful life experiences. Emphasize the need for excellent English vocabulary, grammar and writing in addition to foreign language skills.
- **Translation is more than word-substitution.** Give specific examples of bad or literal translation and challenge the students to improve on them.
- **Machine translation isn't going to replace human translators anytime soon.** Provide concrete examples from Babelfish or another source of MT

## How to say it

**Make it personal.** Begin by introducing yourself and identifying the languages you use. As you talk about your work, use anecdotes from your own experience. For example:

- Describe how you became interested in languages and how you entered the profession. Use this as a springboard to mention the talents and character traits required for your work (good memory, good vocabulary, love of languages, good writing skills, etc.).

- Sketch out your working conditions and tell the students what a typical day is like. If they're likely to recognize any of your clients or projects, be sure to mention them. Many students are fascinated by the travel and prestige events involved in interpreting.

**Make it interactive.** Get the kids involved as quickly as possible: ask questions and encourage them to do the same. Asking questions about their exposure to other languages breaks the ice and simultaneously gives you a better feel for your audience. Sample questions might include:

- Who can point out the countries where my languages are spoken on the map?
- Who speaks another language at home?
- What language?
- Can you point out the country or countries where it is spoken on the map?
- Who knows someone who speaks another language?
- Who has learned another language in school?
- What do you call someone who speaks two languages very well (bilingual)?
- Where have you used another language (e.g., travel, fun, talking to grandparents)?
- Where have you seen a translator/interpreter?

**Make it concrete.** Give specific, hands-on examples and use props and audiovisuals whenever you can.

- Display or hand out some sample translations, ideally of things the children may be familiar with. Tell them their names in a foreign language; show them bilingual labels on the packaging for international foods; or show them photographs of signs in foreign countries.
- Take advantage of the opportunity to discuss the “gee whiz” aspects of the technology you use. Discuss Web research, on-line dictionaries, search engines, dictation software, and machine-assisted translation. If the classroom has the appropriate facilities, you can do some of this live; otherwise, use transparencies.
- Use maps. Most classrooms have a world map, but it's a good idea to ask the teacher whether the classroom has any maps you could use. If you're focusing on a particular country, you may want to bring your own map. Better yet, bring photocopies of the map for the students to keep.
- Put photographs, postcards, crafts, or other objects in an album or a protective cover and pass it around the classroom. Crafts that children can touch are an excellent idea: one sixth-grade class enjoyed seeing and touching a hand-woven poncho from Peru.



- Reinforce the message: write key points on the board as you go. At the end, give a short, multiple-choice "pop quiz" that is easy and fun and reinforces your key points (see [WHAT TO SAY](#)). A sample question might be "Which of the following countries is *not* Spanish-speaking? a) Mexico; b) Venezuela; c) Uruguay; or d) Mesopotamia." Have the students trade papers, and then correct them and go over the questions with the class.

**Make it fun.** Use audiovisuals and/or a game format to keep your presentation lively and interesting.

- Bring age-appropriate translated material in source and target text to illustrate the importance of translation. One of the Harry Potter books in two or more languages would almost certainly be a hit. Or bring age-appropriate dubbed and/or subtitled movies that allow the students to see and hear the differences between the source and target versions.
- Impress them with a brief interpreting demonstration. One mother does live interpreting demos with her sons in their school. Pretending that she only speaks French, she addresses the class, and one of her sons interprets what she's said to his classmates. If the kids have questions on interpreting and translating, they can also be interpreted back to her in French.
- Play Word Detective. Present the students with literal translations of foreign turns of phrase, similes or proverbs that have well-known English equivalents (e.g., "first come, first served," "I'm sick as a dog," "The early bird gets the worm") and challenge them to come up with a better translation. If the class has some knowledge of your languages, you can use the actual foreign phrase and work from a literal translation to an idiomatic one.
- Use funny translation bloopers. Chris Durban's [Onionskin column](#) is an excellent source of this kind of material, and humorous examples of machine translation are another good option. Signs and bizarre menu items also work well, but be careful to avoid any suggestion that foreigners are dumb or "can't talk right." Once the laughter has died down, challenge the kids to come up with an idiomatic translation into English. *Stress the point that a qualified professional translator or interpreter can avoid this kind of mistake through training and excellent knowledge of his or her languages and subject area.* This is a good starting point for a discussion of education requirements and the limits of machine translation.
- Illustrate the difficulty of translating ambiguous terms by giving the students a word like "draft" and challenging them to define or translate it in all its meanings (NFL draft, bank draft, military draft, rough draft, Bud Lite, draft from window). Give (or ask the students to provide) translations for each of the meanings of this term and point out that *you can't possibly translate it accurately until you know what it means*

*in context.*

- Try the UN Challenge: ask the students to name the six official languages of the United Nations (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, and Spanish) and give a prize to the student who names the sixth one. It's also useful to point out that UN linguists don't simply work into and out of English; they also need people who can work from Chinese to Spanish, French to Russian, Arabic to Chinese, and so on.
- Give prizes for correct answers. Try novelty school supplies (a notepad in the shape of a globe; a pen that lights up), stickers, buttons or bumper stickers in a foreign language, chocolates, or candy.

**Make it count.** Leaving something tangible behind will magnify the effect of your visit and ultimately produce a better return on the time and energy you've invested in your presentation. Give the kids souvenirs or treats, and give the teacher a [resource handout](#) with pointers to more information on careers in translation and interpreting. Even a flyer about your job or a brochure on your employer that the students can keep will help them remember you and your talk.

## For extra credit

**Spend some time with the teacher before or after your presentation.** This could be anything from a five-minute chat about the [resource handout](#) for this level to a cup of coffee or a lunch date. One seasoned presenter reports that teachers are very eager to learn more from her and that she finds the contact with them extremely rewarding.

**Cultivate a relationship with your local school.** Make your child's teacher (or the closest school) aware of your profession and offer to speak on foreign language-related subjects and at the school's career-oriented events. One parent went to her daughter's classroom twice a month for 15 minutes to teach a few words of the languages she learned as a child.

**Help organize an "International Night" at your child's school.** Begin with a "parade of nations" with the kids carrying flags of various countries. Afterwards parents and students can share artifacts, information, food, dance, etc. from their countries of origin or interest.

## Presentation materials

Each of the links below will take you to a sample presentation that can be adapted for your needs. If you use or adapt any of these materials, please be sure to acknowledge the author's contribution appropriately. All materials are in English unless otherwise noted.

**Presentation**

Slides providing outline for presentation to middle school students. *In PowerPoint*

*Please acknowledge:* Barbara Bell

**Presentation**

Presentation discussing the benefits of speaking a foreign language, careers using foreign language skills, and translation courses and programs. *In Microsoft Word*

*Please acknowledge:* Ruby Aldana

**Handout**

Colorful one-page handout illustrating the difference between translation and interpreting. *In Microsoft Word*

*Please acknowledge:* Ruby Aldana

**Classroom Exercise**

A basic 911 information sheet in Spanish and English that can be used as a short interpreting exercise. Presentation tips included.

*In Microsoft Word*

*Please acknowledge:* John Shaklee

**Translation Blooper**

Construction sign in Chinese and English.

*JPEG Image*

*Please acknowledge:* Chris Durban

### 3) High Schools

[http://www.atanet.org/ata\\_school/level\\_high.php](http://www.atanet.org/ata_school/level_high.php)

## Careers in Translation and Interpreting

### School Outreach Program

#### Presenting to High School Students

- [What to say](#)
- [How to say it](#)
- [For extra credit](#)
- [Presentation materials](#)

### What to Say

- **Translation is written and interpreting is spoken: they're two different skills.** Demonstrate the difference with a few examples.
- **Being bilingual isn't enough to make you a translator or interpreter: you need additional training.** Highlight education requirements and helpful life experiences. Emphasize the need for excellent English vocabulary, grammar, and writing in addition to foreign language skills. Provide information on translator and interpreter training programs.
- **Translation is more than word-substitution.** Give specific examples of bad or literal translation and challenge the students to improve on them.
- **Machine translation isn't going to replace human translators anytime soon.** Provide concrete examples from Babelfish or another source and discuss the strengths and weaknesses of MT.
- **Foreign language skills pay off in the workplace.** Highlight the need for language proficiency in hospitals, the schools, the courts, in social services, and in international law and business. Emphasize that language skills are an advantage in any of the well-known professions (doctors, engineers, nurses, business executives).

### How to Say It

#### Make it personal.

Begin by introducing yourself and identifying the languages you use. As you talk about your work, use anecdotes from your own experience.

Some examples:

- Describe how you became interested in languages and how you entered the profession.
- Describe your working conditions (flexibility and portability of translation; travel involved in interpreting; multiple options in economic downturns; pros and cons of working in a home office).
- Tell the students what a typical day is like, and be sure to use examples of any high-profile work you've done (interpreting at a well-known trial or political summit, translating or reviewing for *National Geographic*).
- If you wish, include a brief anecdote or two on your most \_\_\_\_\_ experience (interesting, exciting, nerve-racking, embarrassing, etc.).

### **Make it interactive.**

- Ask questions and encourage the students to do the same. If you don't already know, ask how many of your listeners speak or have studied languages other than English, how advanced foreign language students are in their studies, and what they already know about translation and interpreting. This simultaneously breaks the ice and allows you to adapt your presentation to your audience.
- Hand out sample translations (of non-confidential material!) and the corresponding source text, highlight difficult or ambiguous terms, and challenge the students to find solutions for them. It's also helpful to describe the research you did to arrive at your translation.
- Recruit a student or teacher who speaks one of your languages and do a brief interpreting demonstration.

### **Make it concrete.**

- Compare and contrast the skills, traits and talents needed in translation and interpreting. See [For More Information](#) if you need ideas. Point out that translators are essentially *writers* and need excellent English writing skills in addition to high-level foreign language proficiency (teachers love this!). Describe the experience of living and working in another country.
- Discuss the tools of the trade: computers (PC, laptop), dictionaries, terminology databases, the Internet, email, fax, computer programs, etc.
- Handle the issue of compensation with care: use ranges rather than isolated figures, and point out that there are no standard rates within the profession. For example, ATA's *Translation and Interpreting Compensation Survey* found that average 2001

income for full-time independent translators and interpreters ranged from \$30,090 to \$64,234, depending on level of experience.

The bottom line: you can earn up to six figures as a translator or interpreter if you work full time, specialize, invest in yourself through professional development, and diligently build up your practice. Click [ATA Translation and Interpreting Compensation Survey](#) for an executive summary of the latest report.

- Provide specific information on career resources for translation and interpreting and discuss the role of mentoring in becoming a professional. See the links below for more information.

### **Make it fun.**

- High school students, with their wicked sense of humor, might appreciate the old joke, "What do you call someone who speaks three languages? Trilingual. What do you call someone who speaks two languages? Bilingual. What do you call someone who speaks one language? American."
- Challenge the students to solve some translation problems. Hand out a list of literally translated foreign proverbs or common phrases and challenge the class to come up with an idiomatic translation (e.g., the French "I have other cats to beat" would be "I have other fish to fry" in English). Try to include one example that has no satisfactory equivalent, and ask the students how they would solve the problem.

*Stress the point that translation and interpreting go far beyond word substitution.* In longer presentations, this can be a useful springboard for discussing the limits of machine translation and the role of cultural differences in translation and interpreting.

- Use funny translation bloopers. Chris Durban's [Onionskin column](#) is an excellent source of this kind of material, and humorous examples of machine translation are another good option. Signs and bizarre menu items also work well, but be careful to avoid any suggestion that foreigners are dumb or "can't talk right."

Once the laughter has died down, challenge the students to come up with an idiomatic translation into English. *Stress the point that a qualified professional translator or interpreter can avoid this kind of mistake through training and excellent knowledge of his or her languages and subject area.* This is a good starting point for discussing education requirements and the limits of machine translation.

- Don't underestimate the power of bribery. Ask a few challenging questions and hand out appropriate prizes for intelligent or entertaining answers. These could include chocolate bars, posters, maps, bumper stickers or buttons in foreign languages, English-language books about a foreign country, and even ATAware (this is your opportunity to get rid of that extra tote or coffee cup!).

**Make it count.**

- Leaving something tangible behind will magnify the effect of your visit and ultimately produce a better return on the time and energy you've invested in your presentation.
- Give the students sample translations (non-confidential ones!), a handout with web addresses and other pointers to information on careers in translation and interpreting (see [For More Information](#) below), and/or a flier about your job or a brochure on your employer.
- Give the teacher a [resource handout](#) with pointers to further information on careers in translation and interpreting. If you have time, drop by the guidance counselor's office and leave a copy of the resource handout there as well.

**For More Information****Bureau of Labor Statistics**

Statistics on the size and growth of the translating and interpreting professions

<http://www.bls.gov/emp/emptab21.htm>

<http://www.bls.gov/oco/oco20052.htm>

*Contributor:* Chris Marquardt

**[Translating and Interpreting Careers in Government](#)**

*Translating and Interpreting in the Federal Government* by Ted Crump (2001).

Available from the American Translators Association.

*Contributor:* Ted Crump

**[Why Learn German?](#)**

A list of practical arguments for studying German.

*Contributor:* Brian Zahn

**[Park's Guide to Translating and Interpreting Programs in North America](#)**

Newly revised directory of over 50 translating and interpreting programs in North America, with detailed information on contacts, entrance and exit requirements, and more.

Available from the American Translators Association.

*Contributor:* Mary David

**[Foreign Language Careers](#)**

Interesting information about training and careers in languages.

*Contributor:* Teresa Waldes

## For Extra Credit

**Spend some time with the teacher before or after your presentation.** This could be anything from a five-minute chat about the [resource handout](#) for this level to a cup of coffee or a lunch date. One seasoned presenter reports that teachers are very eager to learn more from her and that she finds the contact with them extremely rewarding.

**Cultivate a relationship with your local university.** Make them aware of your profession and offer to speak on foreign language-related subjects and at the school's career-oriented events.

**Organize a panel presentation on language careers.** Panelists could include a court or medical interpreter, an in-house translator, a freelance translator, translation company project manager, and/or bilinguals who use their language skills in practicing another profession.

**Volunteer for "job shadowing."** This involves inviting a student into your workplace for all or part of a workday to give the student a hands-on, "day in the life" experience of your profession. Read [Job Shadowing: Promoting the Profession from the Comfort of Your Own Home](#) in the July 2004 issue of *The ATA Chronicle*.

**Offer to serve as a resource or mentor for students who are interested in pursuing language careers.** This could range from an occasional 15-minute phone conversation with interested students to an in-depth relationship with one special student.

## Presentation Materials

Each of the links below will take you to a sample presentation that can be adapted for your needs. If you use or adapt any of these materials, please be sure to acknowledge the author's contribution appropriately. All materials are in English unless otherwise noted.

### [Translation and Interpreting: A Global Career](#)

Slides providing an outline presentation for high school students. In PowerPoint.  
*Please acknowledge:* Sarah L. Garriott and AOLTl (Academy of Languages Translation & Interpretation Services).

### [Translation as a Profession](#)

Slides providing an outline presentation on translation for upper-level high school students. Includes a French-specific sample translation for discussion of translation techniques. In PowerPoint.  
*Please acknowledge:* Julie Johnson.



[Translation and Interpreting](#)

Slides providing an outline presentation to high school students. In PowerPoint.

*Please acknowledge:* Barbara Bell

[Beyond Bilingualism: What It Takes to Become a Translator or Interpreter](#)

Presentation on translation and interpreting careers for young adults. Includes detailed discussion of skills required for translation and interpreting, training programs, ethics and professionalism, translation problems (examples in English and Spanish) and professional associations. In PowerPoint.

*Please acknowledge:* Eta Trabing.

[Influencing One Classroom at a Time](#)

Presentation discussing the benefits of speaking a foreign language, careers using foreign language skills, and translation courses and programs. In Microsoft Word.

*Please acknowledge:* Ruby Aldana.

[Sample Questions for High School Presenters](#)

List of basic questions on translation and interpreting careers developed by upper-level high school language students. In Microsoft Word.

*Please acknowledge:* Jean Anderson and Sharon Rapp.

**Sample Questions for High School Presenters**

Contributors: Sharon Rapp and Jean Anderson

These were developed by a French V (senior high school) class.

- Is there a large job market?
- How many people are needed?
- What job satisfaction would I find in the work?
- Is a license or certification required?
- Is there an aptitude test?
- Do I have to pass a proficiency exam?
- Where would I seek accreditation?
- What kind of preparation/education/training would I need?
- Can you recommend courses? a particular degree? a special type of experience?
- Where would I find this preparation?
- How would I find work?
- Where would I work?
- Is travel involved?
- How much money would I make?
- How would I be paid? By whom?
- How would I handle taxes?
- Is the income dependable?

#### 4) Universities

[http://www.atanet.org/ata\\_school/level\\_college.php](http://www.atanet.org/ata_school/level_college.php)

## Careers in Translation and Interpreting

### School Outreach Program

#### Presenting to College and Graduate Students

- [What to say](#)
- [How to say it](#)
- [For extra credit](#)
- [Presentation materials](#)

### What to say

- **Translation is written and interpreting is spoken: they're two different skills.** Demonstrate the difference with a few basic examples.
- **Being bilingual isn't enough to make you a translator or interpreter: you need additional training.** Highlight education requirements and helpful life experiences, and point the students toward more information on translator and interpreter training programs. Emphasize the need for excellent English vocabulary, grammar, and writing in addition to foreign language skills.
- **Translation is more than word-substitution.** Give specific examples of bad or literal translation and challenge the students to improve on them.
- **Machine translation isn't going to replace human translators anytime soon.** Provide concrete examples from Babelfish or another source and discuss the strengths and weaknesses of MT.
- **Foreign language skills pay off in the workplace.** Highlight the need for language proficiency in hospitals, the schools, the courts, in social services, and in international law and business. Emphasize that language skills are an advantage in any of the well-known professions (doctors, engineers, nurses, business executives). Point out that employees with a second language are more likely to keep their jobs when companies downsize, merge, or lay off.

## How to say it

### Make it personal.

Begin by introducing yourself and identifying the languages you use. As you talk about your work, use anecdotes from your own experience. Some examples:

- Describe how you became interested in languages and how you entered the profession.
- Describe your working conditions (flexibility and portability of translation; travel involved in interpreting; multiple options in economic downturns; pros and cons of working in a home office).
- Tell the students what a typical day is like, and be sure to use examples of any high-profile work you've done (interpreting at a well-known trial or political summit, translating or reviewing for *National Geographic*). If you wish, include a brief anecdote or two on your most \_\_\_\_\_ experience (interesting, exciting, nerve-racking, embarrassing, etc.).

### Make it interactive.

- Ask questions and encourage the students to do the same. If you don't already know, ask how many of your listeners speak or have studied languages other than English, how advanced foreign language students are in their studies, and what they already know about translation and interpreting. This simultaneously breaks the ice and allows you to adapt your presentation to your audience.
- Hand out sample translations (of non-confidential material!) and the corresponding source text, highlight difficult or ambiguous terms, and challenge the students to find solutions for them. It's also helpful to describe the research you did to arrive at your translation.
- Recruit a student or teacher who speaks one of your languages and do a brief interpreting demonstration.

### Make it concrete.

- Compare and contrast the skills, traits, and talents needed in translation and interpreting (see [FOR MORE INFORMATION](#) if you need ideas). Point out that translators are essentially *writers* and need excellent English writing skills in addition to high-level foreign language proficiency (teachers love this!). Describe the

experience of living and working in another country.

- Discuss the tools of the trade: computers (PC, laptop), dictionaries, terminology databases, the Internet, email, fax, computer programs, etc.
- Use personal anecdotes illustrating job opportunities for multilinguals. Point out that if the choice comes down to two equally qualified candidates, being bilingual can be an edge. Show transparencies of classified ads seeking bilingual candidates.
- Handle the issue of compensation with care: use ranges rather than isolated figures, and point out that there are no standard rates within the profession. For example, *ATA's Translation and Interpreting Compensation Survey* found that average 2001 income for full-time independent translators and interpreters ranged from \$30,090 to \$64,234, depending on level of experience.

The bottom line: you can earn up to six figures as a translator or interpreter if you work full time, specialize, invest in yourself through professional development, and diligently build up your practice. Click [ATA Translation and Interpreting Compensation Survey](#) for an executive summary of the latest report.

- Provide specific information on career resources for translation and interpreting and discuss the role of mentoring in becoming a professional. See the links below for more information.

### **Make it fun.**

- Challenge the students to solve some translation problems themselves. Hand out a sample translation or list of translation problems and challenge the class to come up with idiomatic solutions. Try to include one example that has no satisfactory equivalent, and ask the students how they would write around the problem. *Stress the point that translation and interpreting go far beyond word substitution.* In longer presentations, this can be a useful springboard for discussing the limits of machine translation and the role of cultural differences in translation and interpreting.
- Use funny translation bloopers. Chris Durban's [Onionskin column](#) is an excellent source of this kind of material, and humorous examples of machine translation are another good option. Signs and bizarre menu items also work well, but be careful to avoid any suggestion that foreigners are dumb or "can't talk right."

Once the laughter has died down, challenge the students to come up with an idiomatic translation into English. *Stress the point that a qualified professional translator or interpreter can avoid this kind of mistake through training and excellent knowledge of his or her languages and subject area.* This is a good starting point for discussing education requirements and the limits of machine translation.

- Don't underestimate the value of bribery, even with adults. Ask a few challenging questions and hand out prizes for intelligent or entertaining answers. These could include chocolate bars, posters, maps, bumper stickers or buttons in foreign languages, English-language books about a foreign country, and even ATAware (this is your opportunity to get rid of that extra tote or coffee cup!).

### **Make it count.**

Leaving something tangible behind will magnify the effect of your visit and ultimately produce a better return on the time and energy you've invested in your presentation. Give the students sample translations (non-confidential ones!), a handout summarizing your presentation, a resource handout with web addresses and other pointers to more information (see [For More Information](#) below), a flier about your job, or a brochure on your employer. Give the professor a [resource handout](#) with pointers to further information on careers in translation and interpreting.

## **For More Information**

### **[Frequently Asked Questions About Translation and Interpreting](#)**

Humorous questions and answers about the translating and interpreting professions.

*Contributor:* Marla Sanchez-Pietton

### **Bureau of Labor Statistics**

Statistics on the size and growth of the translating and interpreting professions

<http://www.bls.gov/emp/emptab21.htm>

<http://www.bls.gov/oco/oco20052.htm>

*Contributor:* Chris Marquardt

### **[Guide to Translating and Interpreting Careers in Government](#)**

*Translating and Interpreting in the Federal Government* by Ted Crump (2001).

Available from the American Translators Association.

*Contributor:* Ted Crump

### **[Why Learn German?](#)**

A list of practical arguments for studying German

*Contributor:* Brian Zahn

### **[Park's Guide to Translating and Interpreting Programs in North America](#)**

Newly revised directory of over 50 translating and interpreting programs in North America, with detailed information on contacts, entrance and exit requirements, and more.

Available from the American Translators Association.

*Contributor:* Mary David

### [Foreign Language Careers](#)

Interesting information about training and careers in languages

*Contributor:* Teresa Waldes

## For extra credit

**Spend some time with the teacher before or after your presentation.** This could be anything from a five-minute chat about the resources handout for this level to a cup of coffee or a lunch date. One seasoned presenter reports that teachers are very eager to learn more from her and that she finds the contact with them extremely rewarding.

**Cultivate a relationship with your local** college or university. Make them aware of your profession and offer to speak on foreign language-related subjects and at the school's career-oriented events. And don't forget materials: the foreign languages department might be thrilled to get your old issues of *Le Point* or *Der Spiegel*.

**Organize a panel presentation on language careers.** Panelists could include a court or medical interpreter, an in-house translator, a freelance translator, translation company owner and/or project manager, and/or bilinguals who use their language skills in practicing another profession.

**Volunteer for "job shadowing."** This involves inviting a student into your workplace for all or part of a workday to give the student a hands-on, "day in the life" experience of your profession. Read [Job Shadowing: Promoting the Profession from the Comfort of Your Own Home](#) in the July 2004 issue of *The ATA Chronicle*.

**Offer to serve as a resource or mentor for students who are interested in pursuing language careers.** This could range from a periodic 15-minute phone call to an in-depth relationship with one special student.

## Presentation materials

Each of the links below will take you to a sample presentation that can be adapted for your needs. If you use or adapt any of these materials, please be sure to acknowledge the author's contribution appropriately. All materials are in English unless otherwise noted.

**Presentation**

Slides providing an outline presentation for college students. *In PowerPoint*  
*Please acknowledge:* Sarah L. Garriott and AOLTI (Academy of Languages Translation & Interpretation Services)

**Presentation**

Slides providing an outline presentation on translation for college and graduate students. Includes a French-specific sample translation for discussion of translation techniques. *In PowerPoint*  
*Please acknowledge:* Julie Johnson

**Presentation**

Presentation on translation and interpreting careers. *In PowerPoint*  
*Please acknowledge:* Michèle Hansen

**Presentation**

Presentation on translation and interpreting careers for young adults. Includes detailed discussion of skills required for translation and interpreting, training programs, ethics and professionalism, translation problems (examples in English and Spanish) and professional associations. *In PowerPoint*  
*Please acknowledge:* Eta Trabing, Berkana Language Center

**Presentation**

Slides providing a detailed look at the translation and interpretation professions, including the advantages of working in-house vs. freelance and how to work with agencies. *In PowerPoint*  
*Please acknowledge:* Kim Vitray

**Presentation Tips**

List of basic questions on translation and interpreting careers developed by students. *In Microsoft Word*  
*Please acknowledge:* Jean Anderson and Sharon Rapp

**Classroom Exercise**

A basic 911 information sheet in Spanish and English that can be used as a short interpreting exercise. Presentation tips included. *In Microsoft Word*  
*Please acknowledge:* John Shaklee

**Translation Blooper**

Construction sign in Chinese and English. *JPEG Image*  
*Please acknowledge: Chris Durban*

**Handout**

Ten Qualities of a Good Translator. *In Microsoft Word*  
*Please acknowledge: Marise Lashley and Paul Hopper*

**Handout**

Advice to Translators. Guidelines for quality translation from two veteran translators. *In Microsoft Word*  
*Please acknowledge: Paul Hopper*

**Handout**

Short essay on the translation profession in Spanish, originally used in Introduction to Translation classes. *In Microsoft Word*  
*Please acknowledge: Claudia Giannini-Coll*



## 5) Additional Materials

### American Translators Association Public Relations Initiative: Influencing One Classroom at a Time

## Table of Contents

1. Benefits of knowing a foreign language in addition to English
2. Careers in Foreign Languages
3. Translation versus Interpretation

**(Make copies of the handout and distribute one per participant)**

4. Translation Courses and Programs  
(One website was included as a reference. The Facilitator may include more websites or other reference materials as she or he may deem necessary)
5. Translation Organizations  
(Two websites were included as a reference. The Facilitator may include more websites or other reference materials as she or he may deem necessary)
6. References

## 1. Benefits of knowing a foreign language in addition to English

(Solicit a volunteer who may want to share with the class his or her view on some of the benefits of knowing a foreign language in addition to English. If there are no volunteers make the points below)

- Improves your communication skills, both written and oral
- Helps you penetrate the barrier of a single language and a single culture
- Helps you communicate more effectively with people of other countries and cultures
- Become a more effective problem-solver because of an increased awareness of a wider set of options
- Provides you with a competitive advantage with job opportunities and career advancement in the United States and abroad



## 2. Careers in Foreign Languages

This module includes an activity to encourage teamwork and group participation and can be facilitated as follows:

Materials for the Activity: Flip chart, color markers, tape

Activity:

- Divide the class in groups of four or five
- Distribute one piece of flip chart paper to each team and provide color markers. Depending on the size of the class, assign one or two of the following topics to each team: Communications, Business, Government Services, Social Services, Information Services, Education, Science, and Travel Services
- Have each team write or draw five or six Foreign Language Careers related to the topic assigned to the team
- I.E. – If Team 1 has Communications they should come up with some of the following answers:
  - Foreign news correspondents
  - Foreign news photographers
  - Translators of books, articles, and reviews
  - Advertising for ethnic or foreign markets
  - Film production and entertainment media
  - Simultaneous interpreters
  - Editors for university and other presses
  - International telephone operators
- Have each team designate a spokesperson
- Allow ten minutes for this activity
- When the teams are finished, they can place their chart on the wall. Have the spokesperson of each team come to the wall, one at a time, and read their findings aloud to the rest of the class. Continue until all charts have been debriefed
- Review the findings using the information on pages 5 through 8 of this guide

### **COMMUNICATIONS:**

- Foreign news correspondents
- Foreign news photographers
- Translators of books, articles, and reviews
- Advertising for ethnic or foreign markets



- Film production and entertainment media
- Simultaneous interpreters
- Editors for university and other presses
- International telephone operators

***BUSINESS:***

- Fashion buyers
- Personnel managers
- Public relations experts
- Business executives
- U.S. representatives for foreign companies
- International banking and finance
- International lawyers and patent attorneys
- Income tax consultants and accountants in ethnic communities
- Specialists for import/export firms



***GOVERNMENT SERVICES:***

- Diplomatic corps
- Court interpreters, U.S. translators and interpreters
- Bilingual staff in Federal Agencies (e.g. Social Security, Red Cross, etc.)
- U.S. Postal Service
- U.S. Customs agents
- U.S. Naturalization Service agents

***SOCIAL SERVICES:***

- Nursing in ethnic communities
- Law enforcement officers
- Public assistance interviewers
- Health services
- Multilingual defense attorneys



***INFORMATION SERVICES:***

- Translators of foreign publications in private and public libraries
- Classifiers of foreign documents
- Research librarians, library acquisition specialists



**EDUCATION:**

- Textbook authors or editors
- Elementary teachers for bilingual programs
- High school and special teachers for bilingual educational programs
- Educators in special commercial schools
- University comparative literature departments
- University foreign language departments
- University linguistics departments
- University schools of education
- University teaching of English as a Second Language
- University foreign study offices
- Overseas teaching for private corporations and diplomats' families

**SCIENCE:**

- Scientific research and translating
- Technical liaison for U.S. businesses operating in a foreign country
- Archaeology
- Museum studies
- Nursing and medicine in ethnic communities
- Hospital management
- Studying or practicing medicine overseas

**TRAVEL SERVICES:**

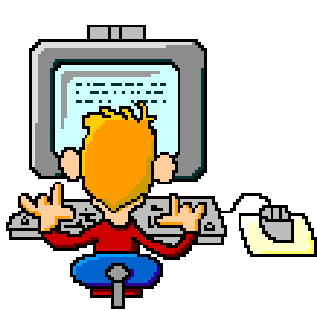
- Hotel and resort staff and management
- Restaurant staff and management
- Travel agents
- Airline flight attendants
- Airport personnel
- Foreign travel advisors
- Tourist guides



## 3. Translation versus Interpretation

(Solicit two volunteers, one to read the statement about Translators and the other to read the Interpreter)

**Translator** - One who translates in writing documents from one language into another.



Translation is

**Interpreter** - One who translates oral communication from one language to another.

Interpretation is spoken



## 4. Translation Courses and Programs

The website below contains a very comprehensive list of translator-training institutions by country. This list is prepared under the auspices of the Training and Qualification Committee of the [Fédération Internationale des Traducteurs](http://www.fit-international.org/) (FIT).

<http://www.ice.urv.es/trans/future/tti/tti.htm>

## 5. Translation Organizations

American Translators Association (ATA):

<http://www.atanet.org>

The International Federation of Translators (FIT):

<http://www.fit-ift.org>

## 6. References

<http://www.lai.com/lai/trorg.html>

[http://www.tti-corp.com/Page\\_5x.html](http://www.tti-corp.com/Page_5x.html)

<http://www23.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/2001/e/groups/5125.shtml>

<http://www.iupui.edu/~flac/FLCareers.html>

<http://www.ice.urv.es/trans/future/tti/tti.htm>

[http://www.marshall.edu/language/wakeup\\_call.html](http://www.marshall.edu/language/wakeup_call.html)

<http://www.ericfacility.net/ericdigests/ed276305.html>

**QUALITIES POSSESSED BY EVERY  
SUCCESSFUL TRANSLATOR**

(by Marise Lashley)

1. A love of words and language.
2. Broad cultural background, derived from an open mind, reading widely, and having a great deal of intellectual curiosity.
3. An excellent knowledge of your native language.
4. A rich vocabulary and a flair for writing your native language well.
5. An analytical mind.
6. A sense of when something is or sounds absurd (*l'épreuve de vraisemblance*).
7. A great deal of mental discipline. Translating is not writing, and you cannot give free rein to your imagination. You must not only render the text in the source language accurately, but seek to recreate its tone and style.
8. An excellent memory.
9. Attentiveness to detail (i.e., no omissions) and to accuracy (i.e., no mistranslations).
10. Flexibility and good time-management skills.

### **Sample School Outreach Cover Letter**

Dear :

An astonishing number of teachers in the United States are unfamiliar with the translation and interpreting professions and are actually discouraging their students from studying foreign languages because they believe there are no jobs other than teaching—at a time when language capabilities are more critical to our national security and economic success than ever before.

While many Americans still believe that everyone speaks English, recent events have begun to undermine this stubbornly entrenched idea. Business is increasingly aware of the importance of language skills in staying competitive in a global market. The intelligence failures preceding the attacks of September 11 and the subsequent experience of our troops in Afghanistan and Iraq have made it very clear that the U.S. is also in desperate need of competent linguists for our military and intelligence communities, while a presidential panel recently found that our embassy personnel are failing to communicate with audiences in their host countries, in large part because their language skills are inadequate. At home, translation and interpreting are more and more important to law enforcement, the courts, healthcare professionals, schools, and local governments as immigrant populations with limited English proficiency move into heartland states such as Georgia, Michigan, and Nebraska.

I would be delighted to speak to your [description of school and class] on these vital and growing careers. My presentation will briefly introduce translation and interpreting and describe the skills and educational background they require. I will include the following points:

[Here you can insert your own bullet points or adapt material from the “What to Say” sections of the ATA’s School Outreach Resource Center. Go to [www.atanet.org/ata\\_school/welcome.htm](http://www.atanet.org/ata_school/welcome.htm), scroll down to LINKS, click on the appropriate age level, and copy and paste as needed].

I am enclosing/attaching [list whatever you’re sending to establish your bona fides—see the tips under Getting the Gig at [www.atanet.org/ata\\_school/welcome.htm](http://www.atanet.org/ata_school/welcome.htm)]. I would be delighted to answer any questions you may have once you have had a chance to review this material.

Cordially,



**Appendix F – Interpreter Training Programs**





























## Appendix G – Professional Interpreter Associations

### Professional Interpreter Associations

The following list does not constitute an endorsement of any of these associations, but is provided for informational use only.

**American Translators Association (ATA)** 225 Reinekers Lane, Suite 590 Alexandria, VA 22314 703-683-6100 [www.atanet.org](http://www.atanet.org)

**California Court Interpreters Association (CCIA)** 5620 Paseo Del Norte #127-116 Carlsbad, CA 92008 760-603-1892 phone/fax [www.ccia.org](http://www.ccia.org)

**California Federation of Interpreters (CFI)** 12215 Telegraph Road, Suite 210 Santa Fe Springs, CA 90670 562-944-2341 <http://www.cfinews.org/>

**Northern California Translators Association (NCTA)** P. O. Box 14015 Berkeley, CA 94712-5015 510-845-8712 [www.ncta.org](http://www.ncta.org)

**Southern California Translators Association (SCATIA)** P.O. Box 802696 Santa Clarita, CA 91380-2696 818-785-3889 [www.scatia.org](http://www.scatia.org)

**Translators and Interpreters Guild (TTIG)** 8611 Second Avenue Silver Spring, MD 20910 301-563-6450 or 800-992-0367 FAX: 301-563-6451 <http://www.ttig.org>

**National Association of Judiciary Interpreters & Translators (NAJIT)** 603 Stewart Street, Suite 610 Seattle, WA 98101 206-267-2300 FAX 206-626-0392 [www.najit.org](http://www.najit.org)

**Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID)** 333 Commerce Street Alexandria, VA 22314 703-838-0030 <http://www.rid.org>

**European Forum of Sign Language Interpreters (EFSLI)** <http://www.efсли.org>

**World Association of Sign Language Interpreters (WASLI)** PO Box 56216 London N4 2UD United Kingdom <http://www.wasli.org>

**International Association of Conference Interpreters (AIIC)** 10, avenue de Sécheron CH - 1202 Geneva, Switzerland Tel +41-22-908-1540 <http://www.aiic.net>

## Appendix H – Court Interpreting

### Overview of the Court Interpreting Career- posted 6/29/10 <http://www.courts.ca.gov/7996.htm>

Shaw-Chin Chiu, AOC *“Court interpreters work in a fast-paced environment, using two languages, to accurately interpret what people say in court. This exciting career offers new challenges every day while you work in a professional setting. To become an interpreter, you need to be fully bilingual in both English and a second language, pass the state tests to become certified or registered, and enroll with the Court Interpreters Program (CIP).”*

*“There are a lot of things you need to know, so check out this video series and look at our entire website.”*

Interpreter Candidate *“My aunt told me I should find out about court interpreting. A lot of people think that if you’re bilingual and know legal terminology, you’ll be ready for court interpreting. Is that enough?”*

Shaw-Chin Chiu, AOC *“It’s a step in the right direction, but court interpreting is so much more than that.”*

*“Interpreting is done on-the-spot and you have to account for different types of speech and grammar.”*

*“You’ll need to perform in three modes of interpreting including simultaneous, consecutive and sight translation.”*

*“It can take years to prepare for a career in court interpreting.”*

Interpreter Candidate *“How long will it take me to prepare?”*

Shaw-Chin Chiu, AOC *“It really depends on your language ability and your experience in interpreting. Doing a self-assessment is a great way to get started. We have one on our Web site, so click on “prepare” to see if court interpreting might be the right career for you.”*

Interpreter Candidate *“How much do interpreters earn in California?”*

Shaw-Chin Chiu, AOC *“Full-time staff interpreters work in the courts and earn a minimum of \$68,000 per year plus benefits. Many interpreters in California are independent contractors or part-time staff. Independent contractors earn \$156 for a half-day and \$282 for a full day.”*

Interpreter Candidate *“Are you hiring?”*

Shaw-Chin Chiu, AOC *“Good question. The Court Interpreters Program doesn’t actually do the hiring; we’re the qualifying body. Once you’ve enrolled with us as a certified or registered interpreter, you are added to our Master List so that the courts can find you. You’ll also be able to contact your local courts at that point to let them know that you are available for work.”*

Shaw-Chin Chiu, AOC *“Remember, there are three major steps in becoming a court interpreter: prepare for the profession, pass the state tests to become certified or registered, and enroll with the Court Interpreters Program (CIP).”*



**Getting Started in Court Interpreting- posted 6/29/10**

Interpreter Candidate *“How do I know if court interpreting is right for me?”*

Shaw-Chin Chiu, AOC *“There are two things I’d recommend to help you find out. Do a self-assessment, like the one on our website and go to court and sit in on some proceedings.”*

*“Get a sense of the environment and the language used.”*

*“Almost all proceedings are open to the public, so it’s easy to do. Watch a trial or hearing that actually uses an interpreter, if you can. See if you think court is somewhere you’d like to work.”*

Interpreter Candidate *“How do I prepare for a career in court interpreting?”*

Shaw-Chin Chiu, AOC *“We link to a number of training programs and other resources, on our “prepare” webpage, including self-study tools. Our records show that self-study is one effective way to prepare for this career, so if you think you do not have a lot of training opportunities, don’t worry—you can still get ready for a career in court interpreting.”*

Interpreter Candidate *“I think court interpreting might be a good profession for me and I think I’m ready, what do I do next?”*

Shaw-Chin Chiu, AOC *“Once you’ve prepared, it will be time to take our written and oral examinations. Our written exam is a computer-administered, English-only test. Once you’ve passed the written exam, you can take either the English oral proficiency exam or the bilingual oral interpreting exam, depending on what language or languages you’ll be interpreting in.”*

Interpreter Candidate *“What do you mean? Why does it depend on what language I speak?”*

Shaw-Chin Chiu, AOC *“California has both certified and registered interpreters. Languages, and the interpreters who speak them, are called certified if we have a bilingual interpreting exam for them.”*

*“All the other languages, including many dialects and indigenous languages, are called registered languages and require you to pass the oral English proficiency exam. You can see the full list of certified languages on our Web site. If your language is not on the list, it is a registered language.”*

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# ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF THE COURTS

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## COURT INTERPRETERS PROGRAM

Adapted from “Court Interpreting Qualifications,” National Center  
for State Courts Research Services

## Qualifications and Self-Assessment for Court Interpreting Certification Exams

### What qualifications should someone have before attempting to become a certified court interpreter?

Professional court interpreters are individuals who:

- ⌚ possess educated, native-like mastery of *both* English and a second language;
- ⌚ display wide general knowledge characteristic of what a minimum of two years of general education at a college or university would provide; and
- ⌚ perform the three major types of court interpreting: consecutive interpreting, simultaneous interpreting, and sight translation.

In other words, court interpreters must have 1) a high level of mastery of two languages and 2) specific performance skills in the modes of interpreting. Court interpreters must perform each type of interpreting skillfully enough to include everything that is said, preserve the tone and level of language of the speaker, and neither change nor add anything to what is said. Interpreters must deliver services in a manner faithful to the canons of a Code of Professional Responsibility and court policies regarding court interpreting.

Mastery of two languages at the levels required for court interpreting involves reading and speaking the languages regularly in a wide variety of language contexts and, typically, years of formal education. Acquiring the necessary interpreting performance skills usually involves some combination of aptitude, study, and extensive practice.

The following page contains some questions to ask yourself to help you decide if you are ready to take a court interpreting certification exam. For a more extensive self-assessment, consult Part 5 of the *Federal Court Interpreter Examination for Spanish/English Examinee Handbook* (“Self Assessment of Readiness to Take the FCICE,” pp. 44-55) at the following url:

[http://www.ncsconline.org/d\\_research/fcice\\_exam/FCICEExamineeHandbook2010.pdf](http://www.ncsconline.org/d_research/fcice_exam/FCICEExamineeHandbook2010.pdf).

Although designed for Spanish/English self-assessment, both the “Language proficiency self-rating in English and in Spanish” (5.2) and the “‘Can Do’ Interpreter Self-Assessment” (5.3) of the FCICE Examinee Handbook may be used for self-assessment in any language pair.

### A Few Self-Assessment Questions Related to Court Interpreting

1. Do you have experience interpreting simultaneously in court or conference settings?  
 Yes  No
2. Have you ever recorded yourself while simultaneously interpreting, and compared your performance to a transcription of what was originally said?  
 Yes  No
3. If your answer to 2 was "yes", how successful were you?  
 a)  I could not keep up. b)  I could keep up most of the time. c)  I omitted very little of the original information. d)  I rendered the complete meaning of what was said with very few exceptions.
4. When watching the nightly news on television, I can simultaneously render the newscaster's speech into my specialty non-English language without falling behind.  
 a)  always b)  most of the time c)  often d)  rarely e)  never
5. If someone reads a passage to me that is descriptive (describing what something looks like or something that happened), I can remember and repeat back what I hear word-for-word:  
 a)  I have never tried this, and have no idea b)  Only if the passage is less than 20 words in length c)  Usually, even if the passage is as many as 30 to 40 words long d)  Usually, even when the passage is more than 40 words long.

#### KEY:

**Questions 1 and 2:** If your answer was "no" to one or both of these questions, then you are probably **not** ready to take a court interpreter certification exam.

**Question 3:** If your answer to 3 was **c** or **d** then you **may** be prepared for the exam. If you answered **b** to 3, ask yourself whether you might have accurately rendered as much as 80% of the source language. If you think "yes", then you **may** be ready to take the exam.

**Question 4:** You should be able to answer **a** or **b**. You are probably **not** ready for the exam if you answered **d** or **e**.

**Question 5:** You should be able to answer **c** or **d**. If you answer **d** with confidence, you probably have the required short-term memory ability necessary for consecutive interpretation. If your bilingual language proficiency skills are also excellent, then you **may** be prepared to take the consecutive part of the exam.

Inquiries regarding Court Interpreting may be directed to the following:

Administrative Office of the Courts  
 Court Interpreters Program  
 455 Golden Gate Avenue  
 San Francisco, CA 94102  
 1-866-310-0869

[courtinterpreters@jud.ca.gov](mailto:courtinterpreters@jud.ca.gov)

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## **Knowledge, Skills and Abilities Essential for Court Interpretation**

The following knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) essential for court interpretation are identified in:

*Study of California's Court Interpreter Certification and Registration Testing (2007)* by ALTA Language Services, Inc.

### **Linguistic skills:**

- 1A** Native-like proficiency in all working languages;
- 1B** Ability to think and react communicatively in all working languages;
- 1C** Knowledge and use of a broad range of vocabulary, including legal terminology, subject-specific terminology, and slang; and
- 1D** Knowledge and use of cultural nuances, regional variations, idiomatic expressions, and colloquialisms in all working languages.

### **Speaking skills:**

- 2A** Ability to speak with proper pronunciation, diction, and intonation in all working languages;
- 2B** Ability to speak with a neutralized accent in all working languages; and
- 2C** Ability to project and/or speak softly.

### **Listening comprehension skills:**

- 3A** Ability to listen to and comprehend different rates of speech in all working languages;
- 3B** Ability to listen to and comprehend various regional accents and/or dialectical differences in all working languages; and
- 3C** Ability to ignore auditory distractions and focus on source speaker.

### **Reading comprehension skills:**

- 4A** Ability to read and comprehend overall meaning and specific details of written text in all working languages;
- 4B** Ability to read and recognize various written contexts, including formal and informal text, subject-specific vocabulary, idiomatic expressions, and colloquialisms; and
- 4C** Ability to read quickly and with little preparation.

### **Interpreting skills:**

- 5A** Ability to concentrate and focus;
- 5B** Ability to process linguistic information quickly;
- 5C** Ability to make quick linguistic decisions regarding word choice or terminology selection;
- 5D** Ability to apply short-term memory skills in retaining small units of information;
- 5E** Ability to think analytically;
- 5F** Ability to utilize predictive thinking skills to anticipate incoming messages;
- 5G** Ability to convey meaning;

- 5H** Ability to provide transference from one language to another;
- 5I** Ability to preserve accuracy;
- 5J** Ability to select appropriate equivalent for vocabulary or phrases;
- 5K** Ability to conserve intent, tone, style, and utterances of all messages;
- 5L** Ability to reflect register; and
- 5M** Ability to self-monitor and self-correct.

**Behavioral skills:**

- 6A** Ability to practice and follow ethical standards;
- 6B** Ability to conduct business in a professional manner;
- 6C** Knowledge and awareness of cultural aspects that affect language;
- 6D** Ability to work in various settings, situations, or conditions;
- 6E** Ability to project self-confidence and self-awareness when interpreting; and
- 6F** Knowledge, and continued learning of social, technological, and legal changes that affect language.

<http://www.courts.ca.gov/2683.htm>

## **FAQs - General Court Interpreters FAQs**

### **Q: What is the Judicial Council of California's role in the current court interpreter program?**

A: Ensuring equal access to the courts has been and continues to be a priority of the Judicial Council. The council, effective January 1, 1993, has been mandated to certify and register court interpreters (Sen. Bill 1304; Stats. 1992, ch. 770). Specifically, the statute requires the council to:

- Designate the languages for which certification programs shall be established;
- Approve one or more entities to certify Spanish-language interpreters and interpreters for as many other languages as the council designates;
- Give provisional approval to an entity to examine interpreters while final approval of one or more certification entities is pending;
- Adopt and publish guidelines, standards, and procedures to determine which certification entities will be approved to test and certify interpreters;
- Adopt standards and requirements for interpreter proficiency, continuing education, certification renewal, and discipline;
- Adopt standards of professional conduct for court interpreters;
- Adopt programs for interpreter recruiting, training, and continuing education and evaluation to ensure that an adequate number of interpreters is available and that they interpret competently; and
- Conduct a study of language and interpreter use and need in court proceedings and report to the Governor and the Legislature every five years.

### **Q: Which Judicial Council panel oversees the court interpreters program?**

A: In June 1993 Chief Justice Malcolm M. Lucas appointed the Judicial Council Court Interpreters Advisory Panel. The panel is responsible for assisting the council in implementing the legislation that in 1993 created programs to improve interpreter recruiting, training, testing, certification, renewals, continuing education, and performance evaluation (Stats. 1992, ch. 770; Gov. Code, § 68560 et seq.). The advisory panel membership represents a diversity of languages, courts, geographic regions, and interests.

### **Q: How can courts identify certified court interpreters and registered interpreters of nondesignated languages?**

A: The Judicial Council maintains a list of certified and registered interpreters from which courts can make their selection. Certified and registered interpreters receive identification badges, which they must wear during all court interpreting assignments.

### **Q: How do I request a new or replacement interpreter badge?**

A: The process for requesting a new or replacement interpreter badge is very straight forward. Simply fill out the Badge Form and submit a recent passport size photo and a check for \$15 payable to the "State of California" to:

Administrative Office of the Courts  
Court Interpreters Program  
455 Golden Gate Avenue  
San Francisco, California 94102-3688

### **Prospective Interpreters FAQs**

#### **Q: What is a court interpreter?**

A: Spoken language court interpreters interpret in civil or criminal court proceedings (e.g., arraignments, motions, pretrial conferences, preliminary hearings, depositions, trials) for witnesses or defendants who speak or understand little or no English. American Sign Language interpreters interpret for all parties who are deaf or hard of hearing in all proceedings. Court interpreters must accurately interpret for individuals with a high level of education and an extensive vocabulary, as well as for persons with very limited language skills without changing the language register of the speaker. Interpreters are also sometimes responsible for translating written documents, often of a legal nature, from English into the target language and from the target language into English.

#### **Q: What do court interpreters do?**

A: California court interpreters have an important job in the courtroom: they interpret court proceedings for witnesses and defendants with limited English skills or for parties who are deaf or hard of hearing. The position requires strong memory and communication skills. Court interpreters shift between two different languages, in real time, accounting for different types of speech and grammar. They also know legal terms and commonly used courtroom forms and reports.

#### **Q: Are court interpreters in demand?**

A: Very much so. According to a recent study, more than 200 languages are spoken in California. Of the state's 36 million people, about 20 percent speak English less than "very well." That's almost 7 million Californians who would need help from an interpreter if they found themselves in court.

#### **Q: What does it take to become a court interpreter?**

A: First, interpreters need to be fluent in both English and a second language. Right now, court interpreters can be certified in the following languages:

American Sign Language  
Arabic  
Armenian (Eastern)  
Armenian (Western)  
Cantonese  
Japanese  
Khmer  
Korean  
Mandarin  
Portuguese  
Punjabi



Russian  
 Spanish  
 Tagalog  
 Vietnamese

- People who master other languages can become registered interpreters with the same full-time pay and benefits that certified interpreters receive.

Court interpreters:

- Interpret speech and text from English into a second language and back again in real time. The interpretation must be accurate without any editing, summarizing, omissions, or change in meaning
- Maintain good working relationships with judges, attorneys, other court personnel, supervisors, and coworkers
- Understand a variety of court procedures and practices

**Q: Is special training recommended to become a court interpreter?**

A: Yes. Court interpreting is a very demanding job. Spoken language court interpreters must be completely fluent in both English and the second language, while court interpreters of American Sign Language must be completely fluent in both English and American Sign Language. The level of expertise required for this profession is far greater than that required for everyday bilingual conversation. The interpreter must be able to handle the widest range of language terms that may be presented in the courts—from specialized legal and technical terminology to street slang. Most people do not have a full command of all registers of both English and the foreign language and, therefore, require special training to acquire it.

Although there are no minimum requirements that must be met in order to apply to take the state certification test, applicants are encouraged to complete formal, college-level course work and training in both languages and modes of interpreting before applying for the examination. At present there are colleges and universities throughout the State of California that offer introductory courses and certificate programs in interpretation or translation. However, most of these are for English/Spanish. We encourage you to contact the schools and request information about their programs. For the other languages, the following self-study techniques are suggested: (1) expand your vocabulary, (2) develop your own glossaries, and (3) develop interpreting techniques. Suggested skills-enhancing exercises are available to help you develop three interpreting techniques: (1) consecutive interpretation, (2) simultaneous interpretation, and (3) sight translation.

**Q: What is the difference between a certified and a registered interpreter?**

A: Only interpreters who pass the Court Interpreter Certification Examination or the required exam for American Sign Language and fulfill the corresponding Judicial Council requirements are referred to as certified interpreters. Currently, there are certification examinations for the following designated languages: American Sign Language, Arabic, Eastern Armenian, Western Armenian, Cantonese, Japanese, Khmer, Korean, Mandarin, Portuguese, Punjabi, Russian, Spanish, Tagalog, and Vietnamese.

Interpreters of spoken languages for which there is no state-certifying examination are required to pass the English Fluency Examination and fulfill the corresponding Judicial Council requirements in order to become a registered interpreter of a nondesignated language.

**Q: What happens when a previously nondesignated language is designated for certification?**

A: Certifications may change periodically, depending on the results of studies of language use in the courts. When a language is designated for certification, there is a transitional period in which a new certification exam is developed and registered interpreters are given time to meet the requirements for certification.

**Q: What has the Judicial Council determined to be the requirements for becoming a certified court interpreter?**

A: As approved by the Judicial Council on July 7, 1994, court interpreters must meet the following requirements for certification:

- Pass the Court Interpreter Certification Examination or the "Specialist Certificate: Legal" exam for American Sign Language offered by an approved testing entity;
- File for certification with the Judicial Council;
- Pay the annual \$100 fee;
- Attend a Judicial Council Code of Ethics Workshop; and
- Submit proof of 30 hours of continuing education and 40 assignments of recent professional interpreting experience every two years.

**Q: What has the Judicial Council determined to be the requirements for registered interpreters of nondesignated languages?**

A: Registered interpreters of nondesignated languages must satisfy the following requirements:

- Pass an English Fluency Examination, offered by an approved testing entity;
- File for registration with the Judicial Council;
- Pay annual registration fee of \$100;
- Attend a Judicial Council Code of Ethics Workshop;
- Attend a Judicial Council Orientation Workshop; and
- Meet the requirements developed for court interpreters regarding continuing education and professional experience.

**Q: What entity administers the Court Interpreter Certification Exams?**

A: The AOC has contracted with Prometric to administer the Certified Court Interpreter and Registered Interpreter examinations. See the Exam Information page for more information.

**Q: Is certification required to become an American Sign Language Interpreter?**

A: The Judicial Council also has the authority under California Evidence Code section 754(f) to designate testing entities for American Sign Language (ASL) interpreters. The council has determined that a qualified ASL interpreter is one who holds the following certificate:

"Specialist Certificate: Legal" issued by the Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf (RID) (see <http://www.rid.org/>)

**Q: What is the job market like for court interpreters?**

A: Most court interpreters work as freelance or per diem interpreters, meaning that they are hired by the day or the half day, rather than being permanent employees of the trial courts. Some trial courts, however, have permanent positions for court interpreters. A freelance interpreter must be willing to travel from one trial court to another, perhaps even from one county trial court system to another. Court interpreters are generally paid by the whole or half day.

**Q: How do I contact the Court Interpreters Program?**

A: Please direct further questions to our toll-free number (866) 310-0689, or send an email to [courtinterpreters@jud.ca.gov](mailto:courtinterpreters@jud.ca.gov).

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