FROM THE PRESIDENT
CORINNE MCKAY
president@atanet.org
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Turning the Page into 2019

As 2018 draws to a close, it’s time to take stock of what we’ve achieved—both within ATA and within our own jobs and businesses—and look ahead to the new year. ATA has so much to celebrate this year, including:

- Adding two new language combinations (Chinese>English and English>Arabic) to our Certification Program. We’re also excited that the majority of certification exams are now taken on the computer instead of being handwritten.
- Signing the contract for the development of ATA’s new website.
- Approving ATA’s position paper policy and seeing our first position paper (on machine translation) go through the development process.
- Proceeding with the plan to open our certification exams to non-members in 2020.
- Selecting Miami, Florida, as the host city for our 2023 Annual Conference.
- Adding two new divisions—Audiovisual and Law—to our roster of divisions.
- All of us on ATA’s Board hope that our association will be your first choice for career development in 2019 and beyond.

2019 will also mark the end of my term as ATA president and the handover of ATA’s leadership to our current President-Elect, Ted Wozniak. I look forward to using my remaining time in office to see some of these efforts through to completion, while others will extend beyond my term on the Board.

The end of the year is also an excellent time to set goals in your own translation and interpreting work, looking at what’s working well for you and what needs improvement. Hopefully, your plans for 2019 will include activities such as professional development, networking, and perhaps earning ATA certification. All of us on ATA’s Board hope that our association will be your first choice for career development in 2019 and beyond, and we appreciate all 10,000+ of you!
Translation Workflow Reference Tables: Setting Job Expectations the Easy Way

Setting expectations before starting translation-related tasks is a critical step in the project lifecycle. By clarifying work requirements in advance, linguists and other language services providers can set reasonable rates, workflows, and schedules that deliver exactly what clients need and want.

How to Nail the “About” Page of Your Website

The “About” page of your business website is arguably the most important page to get right. Why? This section allows potential clients to get to know you and get a sense of what you’ll be like to work with.

Dealing with PDF Files During a Translation Project

Why do some customers send PDF files for translation? There’s certainly not just one answer to this question.

Looking for Member News and Humor and Translation? These columns are found in the Chronicle-Online edition: www.atanet.org/chronicle-online!
Advocacy and Local Legislation: See Something, Say Something

In recent months, a few state legislatures have taken steps that could affect voluntary certification programs such as ATA’s. These are certification programs that professionals can choose to pursue, but that are not mandatory to work in a given profession. The proposals range from no longer recognizing such voluntary credentials, since they might be considered barriers to the market (e.g., Louisiana), to suggesting that the state should regulate the service, if the credential is that important (e.g., Ohio), to somewhere in between (e.g., Michigan and Missouri).

To address these concerns, ATA has joined the Professional Certification Coalition, a group of over 90 associations offering certification programs. The coalition, which aims to get in front of the issue in other states, is coordinated by the American Society of Association Executives.

ATA’s advocacy efforts are coordinated by ATA’s Government Relations (GR) Committee in consultation with the Board of Directors. Underscoring the importance of this work, the chair of the GR Committee is always ATA’s President (Corinne McKay). The GR Committee members are the chairs of the Interpretation Policy Advisory Committee (Melinda Gonzalez-Hibner), Public Relations Committee (Madalena Sánchez Zampaulo), and Standards Committee (Jennifer DeCamp).

In addition to the efforts of ATA’s GR Committee, the Association is a longtime member of the Joint National Committee for Languages (JNCL)—more on JNCL below—continues to work for better wage rate survey reports through the Bureau of Labor Statistics; to educate government translation users about machine translation (MT); and to advocate for changes in how the government procures language services.

Summary of ATA’s 2018–2019 Budget

A budget is the monetary reflection of an organization’s values. By setting goals and expectations for revenue and expenses, the organization creates a tangible expression of what it hopes to accomplish and how it intends to get there. All budgets—including ATA’s—express factual information and embody our hopes and goals.

ATA’s budget process begins each year at ATA Headquarters, where our Executive Director, Mooch Bacak, and our Accounting and Finance Manager, Kirk Lawson, prepare an initial draft. The information is compiled in a multi-tab spreadsheet with hundreds of individual items that cover everything from the Annual Conference’s food and beverage expense to website hosting and the certification exam’s proctors. That draft becomes the working budget and is reviewed by ATA’s treasurer (yours truly, in this case) and shared with the Finance and Audit Committee (FAC).

Once the working budget is approved at the spring ATA Board of Directors meeting, individual items are tweaked over the summer by the executive director, accounting and finance manager, and treasurer before a final version is again presented to the FAC. With the FACs approval, the budget is then presented to the full ATA Board for final discussion and approval. Our current budget was recently approved at the Board’s quarterly meeting in Portland, Oregon.

ATA operates on a fiscal year that goes from July to June, with our yearly budget covering that same period. This fiscal year has been chosen to avoid an accounting and tax bottleneck at the end of the calendar year, shortly after the Annual Conference, at a time when many members are joining and renewing.

In terms of our current budget for FY2018–19, the headline figure is an estimated $3.24 million in revenue. Most of that will come from membership, which should generate $1.95 million, or 60% of incoming funds. The Annual Conference is our second largest source of revenue. This year, our event in New Orleans is expected to bring in roughly $1.0 million. Apart from membership and the conference, all other revenue streams combined at ATA are responsible for less than 10% of annual funds.

On the other side of the ledger, we have set the operating budget at $3.16 million. The single biggest line item is salaries and benefits, at $1.39 million, or 44% of expenses. It covers the staff at ATA Headquarters who keep ATA running throughout the year, planning the conference, managing the website, organizing events, overseeing certification, and providing support to all the divisions and chapters. Our programs are next, with a budget of $1.06 million. This figure includes the Annual Conference, responsible for the lion’s share of outlays, at around $600,000. Funds have also been earmarked for ATA’s Certification Program ($204,500) and The ATA Chronicle ($120,500). In addition, this year, we have expanded the public relations/marketing budget to $65,000 and set aside $60,000 to begin updating/upgrading our website and database.

Overall, if we stick to the current budget, we can expect to close out FY2018–19 around $77,000 in the black. In short, ATA is on sound financial footing, and our budget represents a responsible and sustainable allocation of available funds.
Although International Translation Day (ITD) has been around since 1953, it’s usually a quiet time when translators and interpreters reflect on their careers and congratulate each other on a job well done. But this year was different!

In August, ATA called on members to shake it up and celebrate ITD 2018 on September 28 with a special social media blitz. Throughout the day, ATA’s social media channels (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Pinterest, and Instagram) featured a set of six infographics designed to answer common questions about translation and interpreting. ATA encouraged everyone to comment, retweet, follow, repin, tag, save, and share the infographics with family, friends, clients, and all those people who keep asking, “Can you really make a living doing that?”

**WHY AN ITD SOCIAL MEDIA BLITZ?**
What better way to create a platform for raising awareness of the translation and interpreting professions than to utilize the power of social media? This volunteer effort was headed by Jamie Hartz and Molly Yurick, who spent countless hours coordinating the details with ATA Public Relations Committee Chair Madalena Sánchez Zampaulo and ATA Headquarters. (You can listen to Episode 25 of The ATA Podcast as Jamie and Molly tell Host Matt Baird how the plans all came together as a full-on social media blitz [www.atanet.org/resources/podcasts.php#episode25].

**LET’S KEEP THE ITD MESSAGE GOING!**
What type of company would a translator or interpreter work for?

Translation and interpreting are great career options for bilingual individuals who hone their skills.

With all the buzz about machine learning, are human translators outdated? As you can see, humans and machines can both play a role in translation.
On September 26, 2018, at the invitation of Red T, a nonprofit advocacy organization, I was honored to represent ATA and the National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators (NAJIT) at the opening ceremony of a photo documentary exhibition, “Interpreters on Mission: Contributing to Peace,” at the United Nations headquarters in New York City. The photos depicted linguists working in UN peacekeeping and peace-building missions.

This exhibition celebrated the second UN International Translation Day and recognized interpreters and translators for their contributions and vital role they play in international affairs. The opening ceremony featured several eminent speakers who focused on the critical importance of language and communications across borders and cultures.

The event took place during the opening of the 73rd Session of the General Assembly. It was organized by the Permanent Missions to the UN of Azerbaijan, Belarus, and Turkmenistan in cooperation with the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management. Valentin Rybakov, permanent representative of Belarus to the UN, delivered the inaugural remarks. Among the other speakers were:

- Yashar Teymur oglu Aliyev, permanent representative of Azerbaijan to the UN.
- Andrei Dapkiunas, deputy minister of foreign affairs of Belarus.
- Cecilia Elizalde, director of the UN Documentation Division—Department for General Assembly and Conference Management.
- Maya Hess, founder and chief executive officer of Red T.
- Humphrey Tonkin, chair of the board of directors of the Center for Research and Documentation on World Language Problems. Tonkin is also the head of the Study Group on Language at the UN and the UN representative of the Universal Esperanto Association.

Attendees to the event included several representatives and staff interpreters from the UN, as well as ATA and NAJIT. It was nice to see representatives from across the U.S. and many other countries.

Since the UN was brimming with activity from many competing events during the General Assembly, Deputy Foreign Minister Andrei Dapkiunas compared the location, format, and promotion of the exhibition to the way language professionals are marginalized and often “get lost” in the process. Dapkiunas emphasized that interpreters and translators help make peacekeeping and peace-building missions possible. He noted that their sacrifices must be acknowledged and that the international community needs to provide appropriate protection, as translation and interpreting (T&I) professionals are indispensable for these missions. Dapkiunas stated that he doesn’t believe technology will provide a substitute for language professionals, but...
The road ahead is long, but we are halfway there, or very much on the right track!

Hilda Shymanik is a Spanish staff interpreter for the Essex County Superior Court in New Jersey. She is also the president of the New York Circle of Translators and the treasurer of the National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators. Contact: hshymanik@yahoo.com.

Maya Hess from Red T spoke about peace as a precious but often elusive commodity—one that would be even more elusive if it weren’t for the critical work of linguists around the globe who facilitate dialogue in the pursuit of peace while risking their lives. She outlined the efforts being made by an international coalition of language organizations (including Red T, the International Association of Conference Interpreters, International Federation of Translators, International Association of Professional Translators and Interpreters, Certified Languages International, and World Association of Sign Language Interpreters), as well as associations such as ATA and NAJIT, that are joining forces to raise awareness for our more vulnerable T&I colleagues. On behalf of the world language community, she called on the UN to adopt a resolution for the protection of civilian translators and interpreters in conflict situations similar to those addressing the safety of journalists and the issue of impunity.

Humphrey Tonkin, UN representative of the Universal Esperanto Association, discussed the progress the profession has made in protecting language workers from the risks of physical harm and even death in conflict zones. He highlighted the alarming number of interpreters and translators at risk and made a comparison between journalism, a similarly dangerous profession, and T&I. In support of his argument, he cited a New York Times article that disclosed some disturbing statistics regarding the increase of civilian losses since 1990.

While I wandered around the exhibition, I chatted with other attendees, all of whom were moved by the content of the photographs. The general feeling was one of awe at what we’ve achieved as a profession and what is still at stake to protect our colleagues working in conflict zones.

Yet, as I walked the exhibition hall I realized there was much to celebrate on this particular International Translation Day. There is a Spanish idiom, Aportar nuestro grano de arena, which means to contribute our small part, “our grain of sand,” to an effort. Thinking of sand always makes me reflect on how insignificant we are individually. However, when looking from afar, a beach can be immense. That’s where my thoughts were that day. My fellow attendees and I might have been in a small corridor observing this fantastic effort put together by supporters of the language professions, but that corridor was in the United Nations!
Jessica Sanchez Wins 2017–2018 ATA School Outreach Contest

Jessica Sanchez, a Spanish interpreter and interpreter coordinator for the Fayette County Public School District in Kentucky, won a free registration to ATA’s 59th Annual Conference in New Orleans (October 24–27, 2018) through ATA’s School Outreach Contest.

Jessica won the contest with a photo taken during her career day presentation at Harrison Elementary School in Lexington, Kentucky, where she presented to rotating classes of students from multiple grade levels.

She began her presentation by greeting students in Spanish and sharing a fun fact with them. The students were surprised to hear that, at their school alone, their peers spoke over 12 languages at home.

Throughout her presentation, Jessica repeated the difference between an interpreter and a translator a number of times. “The best part for me was that the teachers and staff that were present also learned the difference,” she says. “A couple of them even jotted it down and told me they thought there was no difference.”

The best part for the children was when they got to test out the interpreting headset equipment. A staff member read a short story to them in English while the children wore the headsets. “I stepped outside or to a far corner and would interpret the story into Spanish,” Jessica explains. “Seeing the countless smiles on their faces and how they covered their mouths in disbelief when they saw/heard me in action was amazing!”

WHAT IS ATA’S SCHOOL OUTREACH?

For more than 12 years, ATA’s School Outreach Program has been raising awareness of the role that translators and interpreters play in business, government, and society at large. With several sources predicting major growth in the demand for professional translators and interpreters, this program continues to build awareness of careers in the language industry. As our world becomes more integrated globally, businesses and governments are realizing the importance of using skilled professional translators or interpreters to communicate their message effectively and successfully to global audiences, avoiding potentially costly and embarrassing mistakes.

ATA launched the School Outreach Program in 2004 to educate students about translation and interpreting and to interest them in these rewarding career fields. Through the program, professional linguists speak to students at all levels, highlighting the career benefits of learning another language and the increasing potential for exciting work with language skills. Using a variety of model presentations and activities available on ATA’s website, presenters outline the requirements for becoming a professional translator or interpreter, emphasizing that these careers demand far more than simply being bilingual.

“By visiting classrooms through the School Outreach Program, translators and interpreters share valuable information not only with the next generation of linguists, but also the next generation of language services clients,” says Meghan Konkol, coordinator of the School Outreach Program. “Our program focuses on educating the public about these exciting career paths and their wide range of applications around the world.”

To receive this award, participants must belong to ATA, an ATA chapter, or an ATA-affiliated organization and must deliver a presentation at a school of their choice. Entrants must also submit photos of themselves presenting in the classroom. To learn more about ATA’s School Outreach Program, visit www.atanet.org/ata_school.

WIN A FREE REGISTRATION TO AT60—2018–2019 SCHOOL OUTREACH CONTEST NOW OPEN!

The 2018–2019 School Outreach Contest is now open! The winner will receive a free registration to ATA’s 60th Annual Conference in Palm Springs, California, October 23–26, 2019. For more information, visit www.atanet.org/ata_school/school_outreach_contest.php.

Molly Yurick is a Spanish>English translator specializing in the tourism, hospitality, and airline industries. She has worked as a cultural ambassador for the Ministry of Education in Spain and as a medical interpreter in Minnesota. She has a BA in Spanish and global studies and a certificate in medical interpreting from the University of Minnesota. She currently lives in northern Spain. Contact: molly@yuricktranslations.com.
Translation Workflow Reference Tables: Setting Job Expectations the Easy Way

Easy-to-use tables make setting expectations for translation, revision, and edit validation a breeze!

Setting expectations before starting translation-related tasks is a critical step in the project lifecycle. By clarifying work requirements in advance, linguists and other language services providers can set reasonable rates, workflows, and schedules that deliver exactly what clients need and want. However, defining work scope on complex tasks sometimes involves lengthy email exchanges and multipage instructions. This process can be time consuming and prone to misunderstandings. Fortunately, even projects that appear complicated can be simplified with the right tools.

I would like to share three tables I often send to clients before confirming, quoting, or starting projects. These tables cover three major tasks of my everyday work (translation, revision, and edit validation, or proofing review) and serve as a point of reference in the expectation-setting process. When I provide pre-set workflow options (referred to in this article as “approaches”) for my client to choose from or customize to their needs, we can quickly reach a common understanding on the work to be done.

Each table presented here is specific to an individual type of task. For example, if I’m asked to revise another translator’s work, I email the project manager a screenshot of the Revision Approaches table (Table 2 on page 13) and ask which of the six approaches listed in the table best describes the workflow I should follow. The project manager then identifies the approach that matches the project requirements, or else explains how my work needs to vary from one of the listed approaches. Of course, I could also email a Word or Excel file containing the table (or even provide a link to a Dropbox or Google Drive downloadable file) and let the project manager type his or her requirements into the file and email it back to me with instructions. Regardless of the format, once I receive the client’s feedback and understand the scope of the work involved, we can then agree on a price and schedule.

It’s important to point out that the tables are convenient tools for reaching an agreement before a project has begun, but are not intended for ongoing discussion once the work is underway. There are several reasons for this.

1. I have to know what the client expects before I can set my price or decide if I can meet the budget or schedule.
2. Changing the work scope after the job has begun (or worse, after it’s finished) so that I have to rework previously completed sections results in wasted time, money, and effort.
3. I find that having client expectations in mind throughout my work helps me maintain consistency, efficiency, and quality.
4. Having a written record of the project scope provides an objective basis on which the client can compare my delivery with the specifications we agreed to at the beginning. This helps avoid conflicting opinions about the outcome.

Once we’ve reached an agreement on project terms, the client may include the applicable table with other instructions in a purchase order or even in a more formal project contract, which I can then sign or accept electronically. Of course, a formal contract is a best practice. But if a job is small enough, I might even take the client’s emailed selection of an approach and my emailed acceptance of the instructions as the basis for defining project scope. Thus, these tables can be flexibly incorporated.

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into the workflow in whatever way is best suited to the circumstances.

Each of the three tables introduced in this article uses a two-column structure. The left column lists the names I’ve given to several pre-defined approaches for the respective task and the right column provides an additional description of what each approach covers. The Translation Approaches options (Table 1 below) addresses the varying degrees to which a translation might adhere to the source. The Revision Approaches options (Table 2 on page 13) stipulate the types and extent of edits made to a translation during the revision process. For the Edit Validation Approaches (Table 3 on page 14), each choice relates to the criteria used when deciding whether or not to accept reviewer edits to a previously translated document.

The methods I suggest in these tables correspond to how I work, but they aren’t unalterable. If none of the given approaches is a perfect fit for the project requirements, a client can pick the one that’s closest to what they have in mind and then specify what they want changed. This still takes a lot less effort than explaining everything from scratch.

Also, even though this article describes a process where I (a freelancer) clarify the scope of the project and the amount of work desired by emailing a table to a client (in practice, usually a project manager at a translation agency), the tables can be used in other arrangements as well. For example, a project manager assigning a job to a freelance translator might include the appropriate table in the initial project instructions and designate which approach the translator should take. Agencies can also send tables to their direct clients, as appropriate, when defining the scope of the project at the originating project level.

**CHOOSING A TRANSLATION APPROACH**

Table 1 below provides a framework for choosing a translation approach and discussing adjustments to that approach depending on the client’s specific needs. In this table, the approaches are listed according to how closely the translation matches the source text in terms of meaning, terminology, and how the client wants the final text to read. Approach #1 at the top (Strict and Literal Translation) requires that the translator match the translation to the source as closely as possible. Moving down the table, each subsequent approach targets an outcome that is less tied to the source and gives the linguist more discretion in composing the translation.

**Table 1: Translation Approaches—Degree of Adherence to the Original**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approach</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Strict and Literal Translation</td>
<td>Let the reader see the source text unfiltered. Don’t fix or even point out apparent source errors. Translate as literally as possible even if the translation reads unnaturally.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Faithful but Natural Translation</td>
<td>Let the reader understand the source text completely. Translate as literally as possible, but don’t be so precise that the translation reads unnaturally. Point out, but don’t correct, source errors in the translation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Translation that Reads as Naturally as the Source</td>
<td>Don’t let the translation read like a translation. Readers should feel they are looking at an original document because the writing style of the translation has been polished appropriately. Point out and correct source errors in the translation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Transcreation(^1)</td>
<td>Adapt the message to the audience of the document in the target language. Rather than translating each sentence, phrase, and concept directly, take the cultural and linguistic context into account to produce a new document.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Summarizing</td>
<td>State the main points the writer is trying to convey. Don’t translate details that are not part of the main message. Keep it short.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*REVISING/EDITING AND PROOFREADING*

Revising/editing can be painstaking work, especially when the goal is to deliver a perfect final product. The effort increases even more when the original translation isn’t as good as it should be. However, if the client doesn’t value stylistic improvements as much as just getting the text free of objectionable errors, then the effort and budget may be adjusted accordingly. With the exception of Approach #6,
Thus, the variable component of the charge rises as the extent of the edits increases. This formula captures the basic effort needed to understand the text and the additional work to make changes. It also aligns the client's interest (value for cost) with the linguist's interest (compensation for time and effort). Changes can then be compared against the pre-agreed approach to validate that the work was performed to specification. Unlike hourly billing, this hybrid rate structure provides an objective basis on which to evaluate the value delivered without bringing up trust-killing questions such as how long the work took or should have taken. This approach also provides an incentive for the linguist to invest in tools and skills that improve his or her quality and efficiency.

VALIDATION OF REVIEWER EDITS

Client-side reviews (sometimes also called “in-country reviews”) and other independent proofreading and edit workflows of translations delivered can result in anything from a few light edits to a complete rewrite. Additionally, what the agency client wants from the linguist when validating those reviews also varies on a case-by-case basis, and what the end client wants on a validation doesn’t always align with best practices. Sending the information in Table 3 on page 14 to an agency client for guidance allows the I don’t try to persuade clients that one approach is better than another, but clients do need to be aware of the price/quality tradeoff and what degree of improvement they can expect. Since the approaches require different investments of time and effort, the rates charged for each should also vary. Unfortunately, even if the client communicates their expectations about the final product clearly, this still doesn’t provide enough information for a linguist to precisely assess in advance the effort required for a revising/editing or proofreading job. This is because the effort to reach a predefined final output quality also depends on the quality of the original translation.

Ideally, the cost for revising/editing and proofreading should be billed in two parts. The first component is a fixed per-word rate. Then a charge should be added based on a metric, such as edit distance, which provides a quantitative measure of the number of edits made to a document. Thus, the variable component of the charge rises as the extent of the edits increases. This formula captures the basic effort needed to understand the text and the additional work to make changes. It also aligns the client’s interest (value for cost) with the linguist’s interest (compensation for time and effort). Changes can then be compared against the pre-agreed approach to validate that the work was performed to specification. Unlike hourly billing, this hybrid rate structure provides an objective basis on which to evaluate the value delivered without bringing up trust-killing questions such as how long the work took or should have taken. This approach also provides an incentive for the linguist to invest in tools and skills that improve his or her quality and efficiency.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approach</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Technical Proofreading</td>
<td>Fix typos and grammatical errors only. Don’t make stylistic improvements. Don’t look for mistranslations, but fix if found.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Technical and Stylistic Proofreading</td>
<td>Fix typos and grammatical errors and make stylistic improvements. Don’t look for mistranslations, but fix if found.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Light Revision/Editing</td>
<td>Fix typos, grammatical errors, and mistranslations. Don’t make stylistic improvements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Careful Revision/Editing</td>
<td>Fix typos, grammatical errors, and mistranslations. Make stylistic improvements, aiming for a “good-enough” level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Intense Revision/Editing</td>
<td>Fix typos, grammatical errors, and mistranslations. Make stylistic improvements, aiming for the best delivery possible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Essential Edit</td>
<td>Fix mistranslations. Don’t fix typos or grammatical errors, and don’t make stylistic improvements.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
linguist to set a budget and determine an outcome that will ultimately achieve the objectives of the task.

Table 3: Edit Validation Approaches—Criteria for Deciding Whether to Accept Reviewer Edits to a Previously Translated Document

For example, Approach #1 (Assess-and-Defer) might be appropriate when no budget is available for the review and the translator is just being asked for a general opinion on changes. On the other hand, end clients who send back edits to be finalized usually want their changes incorporated into the final version as long as the edits don’t introduce errors or otherwise make the translation worse. In such cases, one of the two Reviewer Deferred approaches would be appropriate since these options respect the reviewer’s work but also ensure the reviewed version isn’t worse than the original translation. When agency clients have a translation independently edited before delivery to an end client and ask the translator to review the edits and finalize, Approach #3 (Even-Handed) is usually preferred. Occasionally, even an extreme approach such as a Defensive review (#5) might be in order.

CLARIFY EXPECTATIONS NOW TO SAVE TIME LATER

The tables in this article are designed for reference in specific workflows that I follow daily. I’ve found them useful for setting and meeting expectations with clients on specific tasks, and I encourage you to use them in your work. However, there seem to be as many workflows as there are linguists and language providers, and it’s likely you’ll want to adapt these to your own unique situation, and even create table for other tasks. Fortunately, this concept of standardizing common routines into clearly described options can be applied to a wide range of work circumstances. I designed these tables to avoid composing a new email to clarify details for each and every job. However, before creating the tables, I had to think carefully about the available approaches and how to describe them in ways that would be easy to understand at the beginning of a project and to compare against performance at the end of a project. The key requirements for a useful table are: 1) the table must apply to a frequent type of task; and 2) the approaches must be clearly and objectively described. Don’t hesitate to contact me with questions or feedback. I’ll be particularly interested to hear how you have adapted these tables to your own unique situations and workflows.

NOTES
1. Visit http://xl8.link/tables to download these tables in PDF format for easy use in your projects.
2. Transcreation refers to an approach to translation used commonly in marketing and literary work that emphasizes the cultural and linguistic context of the target language. Thus, in transcreation, the translator may adapt a message to a target language. Thus, in transcreation, the translator may adapt a message to a target audience with translated elements that aren’t necessarily included in the source text. For more information on transcreation, refer to http://bit.ly/Wiki-Transcreation.
3. Clients commission a back-translation to identify possible errors in a forward translation. Then they validate the forward translation by comparing the back-translation to the source (both of which are in the source language). Therefore, the closer the back-translation matches the forward translation, the easier it is for the client to identify potential issues during this comparison review. This is the reason clients generally choose a Strict and Literal Translation approach for back translations. For more information, refer to http://bit.ly/back-trans.

4. According to Wikipedia, “In computational linguistics and computer science, edit distance is a way of quantifying how dissimilar two strings (e.g., words) are to one another by counting the minimum number of operations required to transform one string into the other.” The reason for suggesting edit distance as a factor in billing for revising/editing and proofreading work is that the number of operations required to improve a text is proportionate to the effort required to make those improvements. Therefore, edit distance is a useful way of measuring effort and value delivered. For more information on edit distance, refer to http://bit.ly/edit-distance. For a detailed description of my two-part revision model, refer to http://bit.ly/revising-post-ed.

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How to Nail the “About” Page of Your Website

You have less than 30 seconds to impress someone to keep them interested enough to stay on your website, which is why nailing the “About” page of your website is so vital.

The “About” page of your business website is arguably the most important section to get right. Why? This section allows potential clients to get to know you, as well as to get a sense of what you’ll be like to work with. After all, people do business with those they like, know, and trust. That’s why you should use the “About” page to shine and really toot your own horn. There’s no need to be “salesy”: you’ll want to be specific and brief, since there’s little time to impress those who visit your page and read about you for the first time. You have less than 30 seconds to impress someone to keep them interested enough to stay on your website, so it’s crucial to get this piece right. That’s why nailing the “About” page is so vital. People want to know who you are and how you’re qualified before they hire you to translate a document or interpret for their next meeting.

To get an idea of how to construct this page on your website, you can always see what other colleagues have done, but here’s where I would tell you to stay in your own lane. What do I mean by that? Just this: use your research on what others are doing, not to do something similar, but to show how you’re different. Remember, you want to stand out from the crowd so a client will choose you over another individual who provides the same or similar services.

People want to know who you are and how you’re qualified before they hire you to translate a document or interpret for their next meeting.

Olá! My name is Susan Duncan. I’m a small-town Portuguese-to-English translator who serves big-town clients all over the world by delivering translations of their marketing and communications content. I’ve found that
companies in Portuguese-speaking countries struggle to find professional translators who really understand the corporate culture when they start to do business and market their products in the U.S. I’ve helped numerous clients refine their email campaigns, advertisements, internal and external communications, brand identity, and social media messaging so that they can conduct business successfully in the American market and gain peace of mind in the process.

It’s easy to see that Susan mentions all the key areas of her work that a client would want to know about: her profession, language pair, and the type of translations she is qualified to handle. Susan also touches on a pain point that she knows her clients have (i.e., finding a professional translator who understands corporate culture), as well as how she can solve this problem for them. The copy is effective because Susan tells clients that when they work with her, they will gain peace of mind and be able to conduct business successfully in the American market. This type of language not only taps into the emotions of the buyer, but it also builds confidence within the reader.

**WHERE TO LIST YOUR DEGREES AND QUALIFICATIONS**

Notice that you don’t see a long litany of degrees, training sessions, workshops, certifications, or other credentials listed in Susan’s description. Yes, those things are important, but they are probably not the first thing a client wants to know when visiting your website. Instead, use the space to tell potential clients what you can do for them. Save the prime real estate of your “About” page for the actual sales pitch. By keeping the “About” section brief and above the fold (i.e., the area of the website that’s visible when someone first lands on the page), Susan is able to capture the attention of the reader. Once readers decide they want to know more, they will click to other pages on the website to gather more information.

So, where should you put things like your education, trainings, achievements, memberships, etc.? I would argue that these are fine to put below the fold on the “About” page (i.e., the area of the page that’s seen once the reader scrolls down), or even on another page of the site. For example, some people like to list these items on a page called “Credentials” or “Bio.” It’s up to you where to place them, but just know that a potential client isn’t going to visit your site to soak in all the degrees you have. (Tip! To avoid long lists or bulky paragraphs, consider using logos to represent education, memberships, and other key information.)

If you’re an interpreter, you could do something really creative on your “About” page. Instead of writing a description, consider recording a brief, but professional video with your pitch. Video is a very effective form of marketing these days, and what better way to allow your clients to hear how you speak and see your professional demeanor firsthand than through a video in which they can get to know you better?

**HOW TO DRIVE TRAFFIC TO YOUR WEBSITE SO YOU CAN PUT YOUR “ABOUT” PAGE TO THE TEST**

Finally, don’t forget to utilize the “About” page in other ways. Link any directory listings and profiles you have from organizations to which you belong back to this page or to the “Home” page of your website. Utilize every platform where people can find more information about you and drive all of the traffic from those platforms back to your website. This is key to getting more work from the clients you want to target.

The “About” page of your website is bound to be one of the pages with the highest number of views, so you should always make sure it’s updated. Over time this page will change, just as your business does, as you do, and as your ideal client does. You may not always have the same type of ideal client. This is yet another reason to continue to update your “About” page at least once a year. Remember to include the type of work you want to do. This might not necessarily be the work you’re doing now, especially if you’re just starting out or if you’re looking to shift your specialization(s). This is why it’s essential to craft a description of yourself and your work that will benefit you in the long term.

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**Madalena Sánchez Zampaulo,** an ATA director, is the owner of Accessible Translation Solutions and a Spanish>English and Portuguese>English translator. She joined ATA’s Public Relations Committee in 2012 before becoming its chair in 2014. She has also served as administrator for ATA’s Medical Division (2011–2015). She has a BA in Spanish from the University of Southern Mississippi and an MA in Spanish from the University of Louisville. She is also a consultant for the University of Louisville Graduate Certificate in Translation. You can read more of her articles on her blog at www.madalenasampaoulo.com/blog. Contact: madalena@accessibletranslations.com.
Dealing with PDF Files During a Translation Project

Although PDF files are helpful for reference, providing them for translation could prove quite inconvenient. Knowing how to handle these files in various cases will better prepare you to help clients understand the challenges posed by the files they send.

Dealing with the translation of PDF files could turn into a nightmare during some translation projects. Getting them without their source files often causes issues that probably wouldn’t have arisen had the client just sent the text in its original format. So, why do some clients send PDF files for translation? There’s certainly not just one answer to this question. What can we do when there’s no chance of receiving the source files? Should we charge more when working on PDF files? To give you a better idea of some of the issues involved, let’s explore some aspects of handling PDFs during a translation project.

WHY CAN RECEIVING ONLY PDF FILES FOR A TRANSLATION PROJECT BE AN ISSUE?

Nowadays, most translators overwrite the source text they receive in an electronic format for translation. They open the original file in the same program as the one used by the author (or by the publishing team) or process it using a translation memory (TM) tool. Any layout work required on the target text is then done by the translators or by desktop publishing (DTP) experts using the source program.

PDF files are not normally supposed to be overwritten. This format type is actually generated from the original files and used to exchange data easily without any specific program requirement to read the content. Therefore, receiving them as a reference during a translation project can be highly practical. They can be given to linguists who don’t have the original program and/or who work within TM tools that don’t let them visualize the actual layout. They can also be a useful reference during DTP to ensure the same final output is obtained. Or they can even be sent for quality assurance or client validation, since it’s easy to insert comments on the translated text or layout.

Although these files are helpful for reference, providing them for translation could prove quite inconvenient. Overwriting text in Acrobat Pro is feasible, but not very practical because it’s problematic when the target text is longer (or much shorter) than the source. Despite more and more TM tools supporting the PDF format, the result isn’t always optimal. Sometimes the text to be translated isn’t extracted correctly. More issues may appear when the original layout is complex or when the translation has to be delivered in a particular format, like Adobe InDesign or Microsoft PowerPoint.

It’s generally advisable to ask clients for the source files and only use the PDF files for reference.

As we’ll see later in this article, there are techniques to extract the text from a PDF file and rework the layout. However, when the files contain images and have to be printed in high resolution, these processes might not provide the expected results. That’s why it’s generally advisable to ask clients for the source files and only use the PDF files for reference.
Why Do Some Clients Send PDF Files for Translation?

Unfortunately, not all clients send the files to be translated in their original format. Some think it’s easy to overwrite the content in the PDF itself. Others assume that translators create new files (e.g., in Microsoft Word) in which they type the target content directly. Many clients often fail to realize that it’s far easier to receive their editable document and overwrite it with the translation. In most cases, this simplifies the final layout process. I remember when a client sent us a PDF file generated from a text he had just written himself. We immediately asked for the source file, but his reply was quite puzzling. After generating the PDF file, he had deleted his editable file, not realizing anyone would ever need it. Fortunately, a simple explanation will often persuade clients to send the appropriate files for our translation projects.

Some clients who request a translation send PDF files when they judge the source files too complex for translators, such as Adobe InDesign documents. It’s true that not all linguists own this layout program, but providing them with a format compatible with TM tools (in this case IDML files) means that the source text can be overwritten and the original formatting easily recovered for target layout adaptation.

Unfortunately, we might occasionally come across clients who aren’t fully responsive. They feel we should find the solution on our own or be talented enough to handle any file format.

In some companies, the people requesting a translation (for themselves or others) haven’t worked on the source files at all. They were provided with PDF files or retrieved them from a common repository and don’t have any idea who created them. In these cases, it can prove difficult for them to provide us with editable files for translation. When the source files are created by an external team, such as a public relations agency, it can be virtually impossible to get editable files. These agencies might only deliver PDF files to their clients and not share the original material they created. This could be because they want to charge extra for the layout of target languages, or perhaps they simply fail to understand the requirements of the translation team.

Finally, there are exceptional situations, such as when the source text is only available on paper and then scanned. With the best intent in the world, the client won’t be able to send us the actual sources in their original editable format.

The key is to assess the steps needed to produce the expected result from a PDF file and make sure you’re compensated for the extra work.

How Can We Handle PDF Files?

The methods used to handle PDF files depend on the programs with which we work, the complexity of the PDF files, our own skills, or even the client’s expectations.

Retype: Creating a new document and writing the target text isn’t really complex. Nonetheless, translators used to overwriting may find it takes them longer to type from scratch. This isn’t really an issue if you use dictation software, as dictating from a printout or a second screen can be relatively fast. For repetitive texts or similar projects, however, you’ll also lose the advantage of retrieving existing translations from a TM. And when the client asks for the layout to be retained, attempting to format the target file to match the original PDF can increase project time significantly. In any case, this method will sometimes be recommended for scanned text or non-extractable portions of text.

Copy and Paste: As long as the source content wasn’t scanned, you can select the text of a PDF file, copy it, and paste it into a new document. For plain text, some adjustments may be essential, such as removing carriage returns at the end of each line. You might also need to redo tables. Obviously, the more complex the original layout, the more work you’ll have to do, not only to obtain an editable text but also to reproduce a format similar to the original one.

Save As: You can also save the accessible PDF content in editable formats. Most solutions must be paid for, but will result in quite a good output, requiring only a few adjustments. Nevertheless, some source formats might not be properly supported, and complex layouts, frames, tables, organizational charts, etc., will more often than not complicate the task and require preparation of the source content and/or major work on the final target layout.

Use a TM Tool: For some time, more and more TM tool editors have integrated PDF support. They might even include some features handling scanned text within PDF files to translate. The result is often very good for a simple layout, and even heavily formatted content, with tables, graphics, etc., might be processed correctly. Checking whether all the segments to be
translated are actually made available to the translator and whether any adjustments are needed (e.g., correcting double or missing spaces) is strongly recommended.

As far as layout is concerned, the TM tool output could suit the client, possibly with some adaptation. However, if the client expressly requests a specific format other than the proposed output, major formatting work may be necessary, potentially leading to the recreation of full-page layouts using the same program(s) as the source file creator.

**Extract the Content into an Editable Format:** Several PDF extraction tools are available, sometimes for free. However, make sure that you’re not contravening any non-disclosure agreement and/or contract you’ve signed with the client by uploading files to online sites.

These tools may allow you to select the required format and most of them will extract the text correctly while keeping most of the original layout intact. Once again, the result will mostly depend on the complexity of the source material. Therefore, a preparation or pre-layout step is recommended, particularly when projects involve multiple target languages. Any work you do in advance won’t be needed afterwards for each target language, which will speed up DTP time. Translators should be aware of any potential issues occurring during extraction. You may decide to fix the source text before starting to translate, or fix problematic segments as you go along. When you receive these extractions from a translation agency or a client, you should check that they optimized the extracted source text first. If not, inform the client or agency that the extractions might need to be fixed.

Sometimes one extraction tool might suit all your needs, or you might need several tools to extract various content types into different formats. For example, tables appearing in some PDF files might be extracted with one tool, whereas another tool will need to be used to extract organizational charts. Some tools are limited to one extraction format, like Microsoft Word, while others will provide you with the opportunity to properly extract an Excel spreadsheet, PowerPoint presentation, or even an Adobe InDesign file.

**Use Optical Recognition:** Instead of being generated from a specific application, some PDF files result from a scanning process. In this case, you can turn to optical character recognition (OCR) software. The output will vary greatly depending on the quality and resolution of the scanned document and correct language detection. (If possible, define the source language of the PDF to be processed.) It goes without saying that it’s also preferable to check the file carefully before launching into the translation. Spotting mistakes linked not only to the format or to some missing text, but also to badly recognized letters or figures, will often be crucial and prevent serious quality problems in the target text (e.g., an “i” extracted as an “l” or “3 cm²” extracted as “3 cm³”).

**WHAT ARE THE COSTS LINKED TO PDF TRANSLATION?**

Basically, the key is to assess the steps needed to produce the expected result from a PDF file and make sure you’re compensated for the extra work. Sometimes it’s quite hard to make the right guess, but often a few minutes is all you need to make an estimate. You can base this estimate on your experience or on some tests (e.g., opening the file in a TM tool, or checking the rough output from a text extractor).

If the client only expects translated content, without any layout, the extra effort required might be minimal. It will then be a question of deciding whether the work should be paid like any other job or whether you should charge slightly more, either by increasing the rate (per word, line, character, etc.), adding billable minutes or hours, or even apply a flat rate (e.g., specifying the extra amount charged for processing PDF files).

If the request is to deliver the target text following the original file layout, I would advise you to analyze the scope of the task and rate it, especially for a complex layout. For instance, you might add preparation hours to the quote as well as the usual DTP work negotiated per page and/or illustration. Or you could increase the rate per page for DTP when PDF files have to be processed.

In any case, the first action I would recommend is to always ask clients for the editable source files with illustrations containing editable text layers, any proprietary fonts, templates, etc. Explain to them that the goal is not only to ease the linguists’ work, but also to reduce costs and guarantee a proper file resolution. Looking at the PDF file properties (e.g., via the File menu in Adobe Reader) may also give you a good indication of what the source files were.

**BEING CLEAR WITH THE CLIENT HELPS EVERYONE**

We might encounter clients who won’t be able to send us any other format than PDF files for translation and who might even forget to unlock them at times. Knowing how to handle these files in the various cases is extremely helpful. Whether you write a brand new text, make a basic extraction without any layout, prepare the file for the client so they can format it easily, or recreate the full layout yourself, I suggest you measure the approximate time and effort it takes to complete the tasks and include the related costs in your project price. Clients should understand that extra work means extra charges. But they might need some clear explanations of the challenges posed by the files they send, and they should definitely be warned in advance of any potential price increase.

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**Nancy Matis** has been involved in the translation business for more than 20 years, working as a translator, reviser, technical specialist, project manager, and teacher, among other roles. After earning degrees in translation and social and economic sciences, she worked for an international language services firm for several years. She currently manages her own company based in Belgium, specializing in localization, translation project management, consulting, and training. She also teaches translation project management at Université Lille 3 (France), KU Leuven (Belgium), Université Libre de Bruxelles (Belgium), and through webinars. Besides publishing articles on project management and the importance of teaching this subject to future translators, she has also written about terminology management in projects and quality assurance in translation (www.translation-project-management.com). She is the author of How to Manage Your Translation Projects, which is available on her website. Contact: nancy@nmatis.be.
Teaching Localization in the 21st Century: Six Practices That Make a Difference

Translation skill is no longer the key differentiator in the various careers available in the localization field.

For more than 10 years, I’ve been working full-time in leadership roles in the localization industry and have been sharing the insights I gained in the real world with newcomers to this still rapidly evolving field. Here are the main principles I’ve developed for my own teaching practice.

BRING THE CORPORATE WORLD INTO THE CLASSROOM

I believe the best way to prepare aspiring language professionals for a career in the localization industry is to expose students to real-world problems and solutions. As the vast majority of participants in my courses seek in-house employment, I go beyond the translatable text to examine localization in the context of business transactions. These transactions typically involve roles other than that of the translator.

In my current position as manager of the language management program at a global enterprise, I provide guidance to content creators on how to write translation-ready texts, manage a team of terminologists who maintain a multilingual corporate terminology database, and manage a team of analysts who manage translation projects from end to end using a powerful and highly automated translation management system. I’m also responsible for the overall relationship with our external language and technology service providers.

I’m happy to say that a number of my former students are already in similar positions where they’re not only responsible for translation, but for a much larger portion of the multilingual content life cycle. Preparing students for these bigger roles requires teaching staff that have a perspective that goes beyond that of the freelance translator.

FOCUS ON THE PRODUCT

One of the key differences between traditional translation and localization is the fact that in localization there is typically a strong link between translatable text and a commercial product. When translating a newspaper article, context is important, but the text itself stands on its own. In a localization project, however, a given text is usually part of a product launch or update. And a product launch typically involves multiple texts and text types (e.g., user manual, tutorials, specifications, marketing materials, etc.).

Teaching product-centric translation means emphasizing the importance of the consistency of a translation with other translations of the same launch, previous launches, as well as launches of related products. In my opinion, the only way of addressing the consistency problem that is particularly challenging in product-related translation projects is through the effective use of translation tools—in the real world and in the classroom. And that means teaching more machine translation, post-editing, and above all, terminology management skills!

TAKE THE CLASSROOM INTO THE CLOUD

The cloud has had a dramatic impact on how I teach localization. Using cloud-based software as a service (SaaS) applications, my students now have access to the latest translation technology from any device, from anywhere. In other words, students can use a laptop,
tablet, or smartphone that runs Windows, MacOS, iOS, or Android in class, at home, or from any place with an internet connection. And 24/7 access is not limited to software applications. In fact, I’ve moved all teaching materials to the cloud: reading materials, assignments, instructor slides, exams (with instant feedback!), as well as student-generated content (groups capture their deliverables in wikis). And since most SaaS tools neither require a heavy up-front investment nor technical support from the educational institution’s information technology department, these cloud-based solutions can be rolled-out very quickly. Note: In the courses that I’ve been teaching, students work with cloud-based translation memory, translation management, terminology management, machine translation, post-editing, and translation quality assurance systems. (See Figure 1 below for the types of course content I deliver via the cloud.)

TREAT TRANSLATION MEMORY SYSTEMS PRIMARILY AS QUALITY ASSURANCE TOOLS
Translation memory (TM) systems have become commonplace in today’s translation courses, sometimes for the wrong reasons. If students are told that the only reason for using a TM is to leverage previous translations, these students will not use a TM system for non-repetitive texts. That teaching approach might also be frustrating for students who start with an empty TM, as these students may not get any immediate benefit from using TM technology. If, however, students are introduced to the TM as a quality assurance tool, the return on investment is instant. From translating the very first sentence in a TM system, students can take advantage of functions like completeness control, formatting control, and terminology control. (See Figure 2 on page 22.) Note: In my opinion, any translation project where formal translation quality is a consideration (e.g., stylistic, numerical, and terminological consistency, formatting, etc.) should be processed in a TM or translation management system.

TEACH PROJECT MANAGEMENT AS THE NEW KEY SKILL
Most of the students I’ve taught in recent years seek in-house, salaried positions after graduation. The reality of the job market in the U.S. is that unlike in the past, very few organizations, including language services providers (LSPs), have internal translation staff. Today, the overwhelming majority of translators work as freelance linguists for LSPs or direct clients. But LSPs and a growing number of organizations that buy translation services are hiring translation and localization project managers. In fact, the majority of students I’ve been teaching over the years now work as project or program managers, and as such, they manage localization projects instead of translating documents. Therefore, to prepare students for success in the localization industry means shifting the focus from teaching translation skills to teaching project management skills.

Yes, localization students need a basic understanding of the translation process, but more importantly, these students need to be aware that translation is just one piece in a long chain of processes that begins (ideally) with authoring for translation (and using author-assist tools like terminology management and automatic style checkers), translation preparation (including pre-translation), translation and revision (including automatic quality assurance), and (ideally) client review, publishing, and translation maintenance.

The best way to prepare aspiring language professionals for a career in the localization industry is to expose students to real-world problems and solutions.

HARNESS THE POWER OF (SOCIAL) NETWORKING
Can (localization) students be too prepared for their job search? I believe not. And that’s why the very first tool I expose students to in my introduction to computer-assisted translation course is LinkedIn, the global job search engine. True, the majority of students already have a LinkedIn profile, but I’ve yet to see the incoming student who has a complete, let alone compelling, profile.

But can’t creating a presence on professional networks wait until students are close to graduation? Not if you want the best jobs for your students. Building a LinkedIn profile that really stands out takes time, especially the tasks that most LinkedIn users neglect (e.g., creating a network of relevant first-degree connections, getting recommendations/endorsements from former managers and co-workers, and joining relevant professional groups).

Figure 1: Types of content I have delivered via the cloud in my courses

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American Translators Association 21

www.atanet.org
Over the past few years, I’ve built one of the largest networks of translators and people who hire translators/buy translation services, with more than 30,000 followers worldwide. I’ve always invited my students to connect with/follow me so that they can take advantage of my connections, and I’m now extending the same offer to all linguists. You can find my LinkedIn profile here: www.linkedin.com/in/uwemuegge. In addition, I maintain a Twitter account from which I tweet job opportunities, information on grants, awards, and competitions, as well as information on translation and localization events. Feel free to follow me here: https://twitter.com/uwemuegge.

**IT’S NOT ALL ABOUT TRANSLATION SKILLS**

As the field of localization evolves, so must the programs that prepare students for the increasing number of opportunities in this exciting field. Localization is very different from traditional translation in many ways, and I know from personal experience that translation skill is no longer the key differentiator in the various careers available in this field. I believe that it’s the depth of an applicant’s understanding of language processing technology and business processes, and how well that person is connected in the real and virtual worlds, that will determine their initial success in the localization industry.

One of the key differences between traditional translation and localization is the fact that in localization there is typically a strong link between translatable text and a commercial product.
Spoken Language Education Interpreting at a Tipping Point: Let’s Not Reinvent the Wheel

(The following was originally posted on the InterpretAmerica blog and is reprinted here with permission, http://bit.ly/InterpretAmerica.)

Spoken language education interpreting is here. The signs are everywhere. And now is the critical moment for those of us who work in its sister specializations—health care and legal interpreting—to stretch out a helping hand and bring education interpreters into the fold.

Why do I say “spoken language education interpreting?” Because sign language interpreting has a long and established presence in education settings in the U.S. There are many areas of overlap, but as a specialization for American Sign Language (ASL) interpreting, education interpreting reached the tipping point in terms of professionalization long ago.

THE EXAMPLE OF HEALTH CARE INTERPRETING

In the fall of 2002, I arranged hard-to-find childcare for my preschool-aged children, got into my car, and drove five hours south to attend the second annual conference for the California Healthcare Interpreting Association (CHIA). That was the year that CHIA published the California Standards for Healthcare Interpreters, an important milestone that helped professionalize health care interpreting. To me, the standards were a revelation.

I had spent years being pulled from my regular job as a case manager for county mental health to help out down the hall at victim services, or for social services, or for the domestic violence agency. I sat in on sessions between the department psychiatrist and patients, attended doctors’ appointments, health fairs, and, eventually, early intervention assessments, physical and occupational therapy sessions, special education evaluations and Individualized Education Plan (IEP) meetings. Lots and lots of IEPs.

In the 1990s the simple fact of being bilingual made me, and many others, an interpreter. But I had no professional home, no formal training. It wasn’t until I started going to conferences that I began to understand that the side gig I was constantly being pulled into was in fact a possible career.

Fast-forward almost 20 years, and health care interpreting is a transformed profession—with national ethics, standards of practice, training standards, and not one but two national certification programs. I didn’t know it then, but I entered the field at the precise moment it was ready to tip. I was more of an education and social services interpreter than a health care expert, but it didn’t matter. Health care was developing first, so that’s where I made my home.

Education interpreting in 2018 appears to be experiencing the same moment that health care interpreting hit in 2002.

EDUCATION INTERPRETING ON THE RISE

Education interpreting in 2018 appears to be experiencing the same moment that health care interpreting hit in 2002. Again, this is for spoken language interpreters.

Education interpreters now make regular appearances at regional and national interpreting conferences.

School districts have dedicated interpreter and translation staff positions and are seeking professional training for them.

Education interpreting conferences are popping up in community interpreting certificate programs.

Education interpreting conferences are: a) being offered, and b) attracting significant attendance.

The availability of short course and conference sessions on education-specific interpreting topics is growing.

For some language services companies, filling education-related appointments makes up the majority of their business.

Demand is up for a code of ethics, standards of practice, and training curriculum targeting the unique demands posed by education settings.

In just my own professional sphere, in the past 18 months I’ve been paid to:

Give a 40-hour community interpreter training for a county office of education.

Provide individualized training in simultaneous for education interpreters.

Create workshops on note-taking and mediation skills for a large school district with over 180 languages and 150 dedicated interpreters and translators on staff.

Collaborate on a curriculum-writing project for education interpreting.

Keynote and train at an upcoming regional education interpreting conference.
It’s incredibly gratifying to see this important area of community interpreting professionalize. After all, education settings fall under the same Title VI language access requirements as health care and legal settings. Immigrant families and their children who don’t have the same access to the education system’s complex structures, policies, and practices face real harm. The diversity of terminology, setting, and cultural and legal dynamics is every bit, and sometimes even more, complex than in health care interpreting. Interpreters, translators, and bilingual staff are in dire need of training, support, and resources.

**WE DON’T NEED A NEW WHEEL**

The good news is that education interpreters don’t need to start from scratch. They have almost 50 years of the hard-won professionalization of legal and health care interpreting specializations on which to lean. (See Figure 1 above.) For many currently working in seeming isolation, it’s important for them to get connected to the broader profession. Likewise, those of us who have worked diligently over these past decades to build the infrastructure of legal and health care interpreting should be proactive and generous in making those connections in return.

Without a doubt, education interpreting is a specialized area that merits the creation of its own framework. Much like interpreting in mental health settings is considered an advanced part of health care interpreting, education settings pose unique challenges that need the development of targeted protocols, strategies, and terminological resources. At the same time, it falls squarely under the community interpreting umbrella. In the U.S., we’ve come a long way in our understanding of the interpreter’s role, how to apply ethics, appropriate adaptations of modes and other skills, as well as handling complex cultural and environmental dynamics. Now it’s time to welcome education interpreters into the fold and work collaboratively with them. ◆

**NOTE**


**Katharine Allen** is a health care and community interpreter with over three decades of experience interpreting, training, and designing curricula. She is co-president of InterpretAmerica and a regular contributor to its blog (http://bit.ly/InterpretAmerica). She is the lead developer and licensed trainer for The Indigenous Interpreter 60-hour training course. She has helped train interpreters for medical missions in Mexico. She teaches for the Glendon College Masters in Conference Interpreting Program and the Professional Interpreter Online Program. She is co-author of *The Community Interpreter International: An International Textbook* and *The Medical Interpreter: A Foundation Textbook for Medical Interpreting*. She has an MA in translation and interpreting from the Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey.

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Augmented Translation

Common Sense Advisory (CSA, commonsenseadvisory.com) coined the term “augmented translation” some time back, and while I always felt that I understood what it meant, I never really looked into the specifics. Now I have and think it’s an interesting term that we’re all better off being acquainted with (whether we like the term or not).

Merriam-Webster defines “augmented” as “made greater, larger, or more complete” and “augmented reality” as “an enhanced version of reality created by the use of technology to overlay digital information on an image of something being viewed through a device.” (This is the context where most of us have encountered “augmented” recently, which is not to be confused with “virtual reality.”)

Though it may sound a little spacey and very unlike “crotchety” St. Jerome’s style of translation, “augmented translation” might still be a pretty good fit. After all, we do use a lot of digital information to aid us in our work, and we’ve done so for a long time. The difference between now and, say, five years ago when the term wasn’t in use is that there is more digital data in additional formats available to us now than there was previously.

After a number of emails back and forth between CSA and myself regarding when “augmentation” starts and how valid this concept is across language combinations, they were kind enough to send me this definition:

CSA research contends that augmented translation isn’t completely new. Translators have long used web searches, external terminology databases, product information repositories, and other such items, but working with these required stepping out of the translation environment to carry out some action, thus disrupting their cadence. The difference with augmented translation is the degree of integration with external informational resources, such as term discovery, outside machine translation (MT), and semantic linking within the tool, which prevents the need to leave and hunt for information.

The part the market research firm emphasizes is that this does put the translator back in the center. In it, MT and all the other parts are suggestions designed to add additional, contextually relevant information, but the translator is in control. CSA research chose the term “augmented translation” on the model of industrial “augmented reality” tools that allow you to take a tablet or phone or goggles and view a device or assembly and have overlays of things like sensory data, part names, part numbers, disassembly or assembly instructions, or diagnostic steps you should take.

Spacy? A bit. But I like it. Quite a bit, actually. I love the fact that translators are in the center and use just the tools that help them drive the process. This is also well exemplified by Figure 1 below (also generously provided by CSA).

We’ve been using terminology management, project management (whether on our own or through the client), and translation memory for a long time. “Adaptive neural MT” is also a reality for many of us, and (hurray!) it’s not driving the process. Instead, it’s just one more valuable tool for the translator—not primarily through post-editing, but as a resource that can be harvested for fragments of various sizes. (I probably would have said “Adaptive neural MTs” just to emphasize that there could be more than one engine at a time, but then you would have to add a plural ending to TMs and termbases as well.)

Automated content enrichment is defined as “a new technology that scans content to identify the concepts, dates, places, and other information in it, then links them to online resources” (i.e., manual web research in an automated fashion). This is not something many of us deal with a lot at this point, but I can certainly understand and appreciate that this is gaining importance.

And here’s a good example of where I want to make a point if I were introducing someone to the concept of augmented translation. All translators do it to some degree, but no one does it as much as is possible, particularly because “possible” is an ever-moving target. In reality, there are so many approaches to translation and translation technology (whether by our choosing or because some technologies just might not be available or accessible in our language combination or geographical location) that we all have to put on the suit that fits us. And sometimes it might be only a boot or two.

Figure 1: How Augmented Translation Works

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NOTE

Jost Zetzsche is the author of Translation Matters, a collection of 81 essays about translators and translation technology. Contact: jzetzsche@internationalwriters.com.
Work Smarter, Not Harder

I remember when I got my very first freelancing job. I was sitting on the bed in my tiny apartment in Luxembourg, where I had been living for a few months while an intern at the Italian Translation Unit of the European Parliament. It was late afternoon, and all of a sudden I heard my email notification go off. I was so excited after reading that message! A friend working in the opposite language combination had recommended me to a company who needed an English-Italian translation. And just like that I had my first client and could call myself a working translator!

When the internship ended, I started actively looking for more clients so I could launch my freelance career. I didn’t know much about the business side of the profession, so I worked on my résumé and sent marketing emails to potential clients. I began receiving a few translation projects a week.

At the beginning I felt compelled to accept any job that landed in my inbox, even if it didn’t pay well or I didn’t enjoy the topic. I did this for what seemed to be legitimate reasons: “What if this is the last work-related email I get?” “What if my clients find other translators?” “What if my clients no longer have a need for translation?”

When I got married and moved to the U.S., most of my work routine stayed the same. Another thing that remained unchanged were my fears and doubts, despite the fact that I had a few regular clients by that point. Yes, being a translator was a real job and I was able to make a living, but those “what if…” questions were still at the back of my mind.

Fast-forward a few years. I had been a freelancer for a while, knew what I was doing, and had gained a lot more confidence. I knew the next job would come, I had good clients, and enjoyed everything about freelancing. But then life happened! My husband and I had our first baby and I had to learn how to find a new work/life balance. I started working part-time and, to my surprise, my income seemed to stay the same.

The more I thought about it, the more I realized that I had just learned to work smarter and be more productive with the time I had available.

Whether you have small children, elderly parents, a second job, or other commitments that prevent you from working full-time, or perhaps want to increase your income working the same hours, the following tips will help you maximize your profits. (Please note that I mainly work with translation agencies, so some of these tips might not apply if you only work with direct clients.)

GENERAL PRODUCTIVITY TIPS

Work when you’re most productive.

Some people are morning people, some night owls. If you don’t know when you’re most productive, put yourself to the test.

Translate 1,000 words of similar difficulty at different times of the day and see what happens. I’m usually most productive and focused during the day, so I rarely work after dinner.

Check and adjust your work environment. Before having kids, I was more productive at home. I went to my desk and started typing. The few times I tried to work at a coffee shop, I realized it wasn’t for me. I kept taking breaks to look around, hummed the song playing in the background, got distracted by people’s conversation, or went and got a brownie, etc. Today, with two little kids running around at home, it’s better for me to be away from my home office.

Some people enjoy working in perfect silence (noise cancelling headphones, anyone?) while others prefer music, background noise, or rain simulators (e.g., those available from rainymood.com, noisli.com). It’s important to pause and think about how to make your environment work to your advantage.

Limit interruptions.

Especially if you work from home, you need to train family and friends and set boundaries. In the same way, you need to train yourself: stay away from social media and other distractions and focus on work. For example, you can block time-wasting websites on your computer using a browser extension (I use StayFocused on Chrome), write down tasks for later, and mute your phone and email. A great time management strategy is the Pomodoro Technique, a time management method developed by Francesco Cirillo in the late 1980s that uses a timer to break down work into intervals, traditionally 25 minutes in length, separated by short breaks. So, just set a timer to work for 25 minutes and take a short break for five minutes.

Figure 1: Make sure to track your jobs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PO / WO #</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Client</th>
<th>Deadline</th>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Quoted Quantity</th>
<th>Unit of Measure</th>
<th>Actual Hrs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11111</td>
<td>CTA</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>2-Mar</td>
<td>Translation</td>
<td>4,450</td>
<td>words</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22222</td>
<td>Contract</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>2-Mar</td>
<td>Editing</td>
<td>3,738</td>
<td>words</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33333</td>
<td>GDPR</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>1-Mar</td>
<td>Translation</td>
<td>3,890</td>
<td>words</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44444</td>
<td>Divorce</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>10-Mar</td>
<td>Proofreading</td>
<td>12,500</td>
<td>words</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55555</td>
<td>Deposition</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>2-Mar</td>
<td>Interpreting</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>hours</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“Business Practices” will alternate in this space with “The Entrepreneurial Linguist.” This column is not intended to constitute legal, financial, or other business advice. Each individual or company should make its own independent business decisions and consult its own legal, financial, or other advisors as appropriate. The views expressed here are not necessarily those of ATA or its Board of Directors.
INDUSTRY-SPECIFIC PRODUCTIVITY TIPS

Track your jobs effectively. Do you have a clear idea of what you make more money doing? Is it translating a medical article for Client A, or editing an information technology manual for Client B? To find out, examine your projects over the past year. Hopefully, you’ve tracked your projects accurately. If you haven’t, it’s really important for you to start doing so with the next job you get and with every single one after that.

Here’s how I do it. Every time I receive a job, I list it on a spreadsheet. I specify the service (e.g., translation, editing, or interpreting), the topic (e.g., human resources, contract, or privacy policy), the client, and other useful information, such as the purchase order number, deadline, word count, and rate. Then I divide the total amount charged for one specific job by the number of hours worked. By doing so I can assess which clients, services, and topics are more profitable for me. (See Figure 1 on page 26 for an example. Please note the numbers on the chart are made up.)

With this information clearly stated in writing, when two jobs land in my inbox and I can’t take both, I know immediately which one is going to be more profitable and can make an informed choice.

Only work in the areas where you’re strongest. With limited availability, it’s smart to focus only on the jobs that pertain to your area(s) of expertise and leave other areas that you could work on but you’re not as good at to someone else. It will probably be more profitable for you to wait for that one good job that you can do quickly rather than use your time learning a new specialization, researching terminology, and making sure your end product is top quality. For instance, I know that I can translate a 6,000–7,000 word clinical trial agreement in less than two days. Since it’s my specialization, I know I can produce great work at a fast pace. If I know I don’t have many hours in my working week, I’ll select the projects based on my expertise.

Apply an urgent/rush rate. Just like you pay for faster shipping for online purchases, you can apply a higher rate for urgent or rush jobs. You shouldn’t feel like you’re taking advantage of your client. On the contrary, you’re providing a fast service they desperately need. And if it’s not that urgent after all and the clients aren’t willing to pay your rush rate, perhaps they can push the deadline to accommodate your schedule. Either way, it’s worth trying to find a good solution that fits both parties.

Apply a minimum rate. If you’ve never thought about applying a minimum rate for smaller jobs, this is the time to do it. It’s usually standard practice in our business, and for a good reason. No matter how small the job, it often takes longer than you think. Let’s say the client would like you to translate/proofread 50 words for a project someone else had already worked on. By the time you exchange a few emails, read all the instructions, do minimal research, ensure the terminology is consistent, send files back, and answer any follow-up questions, applying a minimum rate will be well worth it.

Prioritize time spent on emails. For years I made it a business practice to answer every email in my inbox. I tried my best to be responsive and found great joy when my clients exclaimed, “Wow, that was fast!” With time and experience, I started to prioritize which emails I answered first, which ones could wait, and which ones didn’t need a reply. The first email category to be dropped in my priority was mass emails. Give your time and energy to responding first to emails from existing clients. This will go a long way in terms of establishing solid business relationships. Don’t fall for the email rabbit-hole!

Use the time zone and summer or holiday seasons to your advantage. If you can, be available when your colleagues are offline. Being an Italian native in the U.S., I often receive small to medium job requests in the afternoon (evening in Italy) for the following day. My time zone gives me an advantage over my colleagues based in Italy who have already signed off for the day. Similarly, you can be available during the summer months or major holidays, or even on the weekends, when you know most of your colleagues will be unavailable.

Never stop marketing and networking. When you have less time for paying work, it’s tempting to neglect administration work or marketing activities. You should resist this temptation! It’s essential to always set time aside for contacting potential clients, keeping up with market trends, and attending relevant events.

Develop good relationships with trusted colleagues. We all go on break at some point, whether it’s for vacation, sick days, a family emergency, or other reasons. A smart way to ensure the continuity of your business is to temporarily refer your clients to someone else. This is specifically true for direct clients who often have no idea where to find another translator, but it’s also true for translation agencies. If you’ve worked with a particular project manager for months or years and suddenly become unavailable, they might appreciate the referral instead of having to choose from a pool of unknown translators in their database.

Initially, implementing these tips will seem like a lot of work. However, it will lead to creating new habits that will make you more productive. With greater productivity and efficiency you’ll have a better chance of either increasing your earnings or working less hours and keeping your income steady.

NOTE

Silvia D’Amico is a freelance translator working mainly from English into Italian. After training at the Italian Translation Unit of the European Parliament in Luxembourg, she spent a few years working on projects for the European Union. In recent years, she has specialized in clinical trials and the translation of corporate materials. She currently serves as secretary of the Northeast Ohio Translators Association (an ATA chapter). Contact: silvia@damicotranslations.com.

The second edition of the *Bilingual Law Dictionary/Diccionario Jurídico Bilingüe* (Merl Publications, 2018) is a welcome addition to the now well-populated bibliography of legal dictionaries in the Spanish>English combination. Unlike translators in many other languages, we Spanish>English legal translators are fortunate to have a wealth of specialized resources from which to choose.

This dictionary, vastly upgraded from the first edition (2014) and the glossary that preceded it (2007), covers criminal, civil, administrative, and international law. It includes more than 5,000 main legal entries and their corresponding single or multiple equivalents. There are more than 900 examples, as well as over 1,700 definitions and more than 2,000 synonyms, antonyms, and abbreviations. It contains terms from all English- and Spanish-speaking countries. (Although, from the perspective of a translator who works exclusively into U.S. English, it might be considered a detriment that terms from the U.K., Ireland, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand must be weeded out once an equivalent is found, but this is a minor inconvenience.)

The second edition also corrects some typographical and other errors that appeared in the earlier edition, although it’s still not entirely free of typos.

**Coverage: What’s Included**

At the beginning of the dictionary is an explanation of how the entries are constructed and a list of the abbreviations used. The entries frequently contain examples of the terms used in context and additional explanations of related legal concepts. In many cases, a functional equivalent or specialized glossary is provided, rather than just a single equivalent term.

Although it’s sometimes awkward to work these lexical expansions into a sentence, especially when interpreting in court, it’s the only way to guarantee precision when a concept in one legal system must be conveyed to someone from a different legal system in which the concept is nonexistent. An example would be “racketeering,” which is translated as *extorsión e intimidación organizada* (“organized intimidation and extortion”). Similarly, *prescriptibilidad* is translated as “ability to own a right by adverse possession or to extinguish an obligation by lapsing.”

In some cases, in addition to a full but cumbersome descriptive term, a more succinct—but not quite as precise—equivalent is given. For example, “misprision” is translated as *dejar de reportar la ocurrencia de un delito grave* (por alquien que no participó en el ilícito), or “failure to report the commission of a serious crime (by someone who did not participate in the illegal act).” The definition is followed by a succinct glossary that covers the most important elements *ocultamiento de delito* (“concealing a crime”).

**Slang:** The dictionary also includes legal jargon or crime-related slang not likely to be found in legislation or a penal code. For example, two equivalents are provided for “railroading a suspect”: one a descriptive term in a formal register, *acusar penalmente sin tener suficientes pruebas* (“charging a crime without sufficient evidence”), and the other a functional equivalent in a register closer to that of the source term, *llevarse a un sospechoso entre las patas* (“dragging a suspect into something”). On the other hand, the informal terms *secuestro exprés* (used in Mexico) and *secuestro al paso* (used in Peru) are rendered as “short-term kidnapping (to forcefully demand withdrawal of funds from bank cash machines),” but no English term in the equivalent register is provided. Unfortunately, it’s not always possible to convey meaning as succinctly as we would like, and the flavor of a vivid expression is lost in the translation.

**Cross-Referencing:** The *Bilingual Law Dictionary/Diccionario Jurídico Bilingüe* draws on a broad spectrum of sources, including monolingual and bilingual dictionaries, legal treatises, constitutions, codes, legislation, and regulations from all Spanish- and English-speaking countries. Individual entries feature citations of relevant sources, which are listed in the extensive bibliography at the end. There are also appendices with common abbreviations and Latin phrases, and even a description of each country’s legal and political system.

**Problematic Terms:** When evaluating a dictionary, I always look up terms I’ve had difficulty finding in the past and terms I know to be problematic to see how (or if) the author has dealt with the issue. In this case, I found equivalents for terms such as “date rape,” “profiling,” and “stalking,” but not “sexting,” “wobbler,” or “wet reckless.” I checked terms from my personal glossary of Spanish legal terms that have plagued me throughout my years as a Spanish>English legal translator and found good solutions for *resolución motivada* (“decision based on reason”) and *acción de tutela*, as it is used in Colombia (“action to enforce constitutional protections”). However, I didn’t find terms such as *ley estatutaria*, *ultraactividad*, or *vocal semanero de ingreso*.

For those, I’ll have to be content with my
own solutions. Another thing I look for in a dictionary is “fillers,” terms that are well known, not specialized, and could be found in any general dictionary. This volume is refreshingly free of such terms, so every page is worth the investment.

OVERALL USEFULNESS
Overall, I found this dictionary is a good supplement to those written by Javier Becerra, Guillermo Cabanellas and Eleanor Hoague, Dennis McKenna, Sandro Tomasi, and Tom West (see the list below), but no one dictionary serves all purposes. Besides, even in this day of Google searches and the bounties of the internet, you can never have too many dictionaries!

ADDITIONAL REFERENCES

Holly Mikkelson is professor emerita in the Graduate School of Translation, Interpretation and Language Education at the Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey. She is a certified court interpreter and ATA-certified Spanish<>English translator who has taught and practiced translation and interpreting for over four decades. She is the author of the Acebo interpreter training manuals and numerous books and articles on translation and interpreting. She has consulted with many state and private entities on interpreter testing and training, and has presented lectures and workshops to interpreters and related professionals throughout the world. Contact: hnikkelson@gmail.com.

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  - San Diego, CA
Ergonomics for ATA’s Certification Exam: Unspoken Advice with Untold Benefits

Shortly after I took the computerized version of ATA’s certification exam in 2017, I received an e-mail from one of the proctors—whom I had thanked for stepping up to proctor at the last minute—in which she commented on the contrast between my “ergonomic” setup and the hunched posture of my fellow test takers. It would make for a great ad, she mused.

I had to laugh. I didn’t go into the exam with ergonomics in mind, but having seen the difference a few ergonomic upgrades to my home office earlier that year had made in my focus and overall well-being, it seemed like a no-brainer to apply the same principles to ensure my comfort and efficiency during the exam.

It may have seemed silly to focus on the details of a workstation I would only use for three hours, but the proctor was right: it ended up making all the difference, not only in terms of comfort, but more importantly, in terms of efficiency and state of mind. If you’re anything like me, sitting up straight and looking directly ahead fosters greater confidence and alertness than does being stooped over a mess of pages and books. Perhaps there’s something to be said after all for social psychologist Amy Cuddy’s widely discussed research on the impact of body position on our confidence and, in turn, our chances of success.¹

While ergonomics wasn’t at the forefront of my mind going into the exam, it’s now the first thing I mention when colleagues ask for advice on how to prepare. There’s plenty of guidance out there on the theoretical side of the assessment, but how often do we hear about the importance of a comfortable and efficient workspace?

By sharing some of what worked for me on exam day, I hope to encourage others to discover the difference that straightening up and finding comfort and confidence can make, both during the exam and in our everyday work.

ERGONOMICS: IT’S ABOUT MORE THAN COMFORT

Before we get into the details, let’s consider why ergonomics matters. In short, it goes well beyond physical comfort.

First, what is ergonomics? The authors of an article in the January/February 2017 issue of The ATA Chronicle point out that the concept encompasses more than “office chairs, keyboards, and computer mice.”² As cited in that article, the International Ergonomics Association (IEA) defines ergonomics as being concerned with the optimization of “human well-being and overall system performance”—that is, it’s about a lot more than a comfortable office chair.

In fact, one of the three branches defined by IEA is “cognitive ergonomics,” which is concerned with mental workload, human reliability, and the interaction between humans and computers. We’ll come back to this later.

For now, let’s look at recommendations for improving efficiency and performance through one of the more obvious branches: physical ergonomics.

Laptop Height: My number one recommendation is to ensure that your computer screen is at eye level. Most of us set our laptops directly on the desk in front of us, forcing us to angle our necks downward to see the screen—a posture that has been shown to exert a detrimental amount of strain on the neck over time.³

If you work with a laptop on a regular basis, you might consider investing in a laptop stand, which will serve you well not only on exam day, but also in your everyday work. There are many to choose from, but it’s worth procuring one that you can easily carry with you to the exam or when working away from home. I use the Roost Stand,⁴ a favorite among digital nomads for its transportability: it collapses into a baton that’s just over a foot long and it weighs a feathery 5.5 ounces. It’s also height adjustable. (See photo at left.)

If you’re in a pinch on exam day or you aren’t sold on investing in a new gadget, you could just as well set your laptop on a large book or two—dictionaries work wonderfully.

Do keep in mind that you’ll need an external keyboard and mouse for either of these setups. There are affordable options out there, and I consider it a worthwhile investment, price notwithstanding.

Page Holder: Unlike the source texts in a translator’s daily work, which are almost invariably in digital format, exam passages are on paper and cannot be typed into the computer.

So what to do? Ideally, for the same reasons discussed above, the source text should be positioned at eye level. For this purpose, I used a small, dome-shaped page holder during the exam to prop up the source texts. (See photo above.) I purchased mine on www.etsy.com, but you can find one at just about any major office-supply retailer by searching for a “page-up holder.” Most are priced at under $10. You may need to set the holder on top of a dictionary to match your screen height.

Not only will this relieve neck pressure, it’ll save you time and trouble when glancing from sheet to screen.

Earplugs: Consider bringing earplugs to the exam to block out noise. Chances are you’ll be absorbed in your work, but you never know when the clackety-clack of a keyboard or the hum of a fluorescent light will distract you. Here’s where...
cognitive ergonomics come in: decreasing distraction lightens cognitive load, allowing you to focus on the task at hand.

**Review Techniques:** Speaking of cognitive ergonomics, the exam involves the demanding cognitive task of not only translating, but also reviewing, two dense texts in the span of three short hours. This means no opportunity to review with fresh eyes, which is a crucial step in actual practice. And without a computer-assisted translation tool or other application to help break the text into segments, the task becomes even more prone to errors. The accidental omission of a word or an entire line of text can be hugely detrimental. The good news is that these errors can be avoided by employing some simple review techniques.

One of these is to enlarge your font size: try increasing it 300% by using the zoom feature on your word processor (i.e., WordPad or TextEdit, the two applications permitted for use on the exam), or by increasing the font size to 72 points. This will help you catch errors you may otherwise overlook after staring at your translation for so long.

Another tip for getting a fresh perspective: change the typeface itself. Finally, try reading the completed text “aloud” in your head, or reading it backwards—two old copy-editor’s tricks.

**Miscellaneous:** With the big ones out of the way, here are a few final pieces of advice to optimize ergonomics during the exam and help you focus on your work:

- Keep your feet flat on the floor, if possible. You may be able to choose from different chairs the day of the exam, but don’t count on it.
- Make sure your elbows are at a right angle when typing. Consider bringing a pillow to sit on for this purpose.
- Have water on hand (drink it).
- Take at least one stretch break. Do a forward bend and gently stretch your arms, legs, and neck to get your blood flowing before returning to the task with fresh eyes.

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**NOTES**


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**FINAL WORD**

As the authors of the aforementioned article in The ATA Chronicle propose, taking ergonomics into account “will allow translators to do what they do best instead of wasting time and energy dealing with non-ergonomic conditions, interfaces, and tools.” What better opportunity to conserve time and energy than during the rigorous three-hour ATA certification exam?

I may have been amused by the proctor’s comment about my setup, but it cost me nothing to implement these simple principles, and the benefits of certification are already evident just one year later.

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