

# Spreading the Word: Ana Safrin Wins 2009-2010 School Outreach Contest

By Meghan McCallum

## The School Outreach

Program is proud to present Ana Safrin as the winner of ATA's 2009-2010 School Outreach Contest.

### Back to School

An English→Brazilian Portuguese freelance translator based in Cooper City, Florida, Ana enjoys playing an active role in her daughters' lives, and when their school hosted a career day in November 2009, she took the opportunity to teach second- and third-grade students about the translation and interpreting professions. Her presentation was a truly eye-opening experience for the children, some of whom "didn't know about the wide range of languages in the world," she says.

### Connecting to Students

Though translation is not always easily understood by the very young, Ana succeeded in conveying the basics of the profession—and snagged the students' interest, too. Her secret: connecting the information to what the students were already studying. "They had been learning geography, so I brought out a map and pointed out all the places where Portuguese is spoken," she explains.

Ana also brought a copy of Audrey Wood's popular children's book *The Napping House* and its Portuguese translation to help the students associate a specific product with the task of translation. This visual example proved successful, as students were able to compare the source and translated texts side by side. The children enjoyed this hands-on experience and were able to make connections between the two books, she says. "They liked to see the real thing."

With a few bilingual students in the class, Ana was also able to engage the children in a basic interpreting demonstration. When she provided a word in English, these bilingual volunteers

would interpret that word for the class. This helped students understand the difference between translation and interpreting, and again gave the students an active role in the presentation.

Ana certainly made a strong impression. She recalls a later day when a young boy from one of the classes recognized her in town, crying out “Hey! You’re the translator!”

“It was great to know I had left such a mark on the students,” she says.

### Freelance Flexibility and Professional Development

When it comes to Ana’s everyday life, the flexibility of freelance work is important in simultaneously managing parenthood and a career. As a mother of three, Ana enjoys having the freedom to plan her work around her daughters’ schedules. And though the girls are years away from choosing careers, Ana recognizes the value of their language skills.

“I always say that they were born with a résumé,” says Ana of her bilingual daughters. Jokes aside, however, she stresses the importance of professional training for translators. While bilingualism is a great foundation, translators need to hone other skills as well.

“It’s not just about knowing two languages,” she adds. “A translator not only has to understand both languages, but also has to write well and have other techniques, too,” she adds.

When she first entered the profession, Ana enrolled in online translation courses that focused on many skills beyond the mastering of two languages. She encourages others interested in the profession to take advantage of such training opportunities.

More recently, Ana completed an online course in subtitling. While her specialties currently lie in marketing and legal translation, she is eager to



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learn more about other parts of the field. “My New Year’s resolution is to explore the subtitling market,” Ana says.

### Understanding the Basics

While translation courses are commonly geared toward students university age and higher, it is still important to help children understand the basics, Ana stresses. She recommends “bringing the profession to their world” by showing them how translation is already a part of their daily lives. Instead of showing

children a legal translation, for example, passing around a familiar product with a bilingual label is much more effective.

When Ana talks to young students about translation, she hopes to help them understand that translation is a professional option for them. She notes that adults and young children alike need to acknowledge that translation is not just a hobby—it is something these students can seriously consider for their future.

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### Now Open: 2010-2011 ATA School Outreach Contest

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