

Getting Creative in the Classroom: School Outreach Winner Marcelo Pelliccioni

By Tess Whitty



The School Outreach Program is proud to present Marcelo Pelliccioni as the winner of the 2010-2011 ATA School Outreach Contest.

Based in Hartford, Connecticut, Marcelo is an English→Spanish translator with over 20 years of experience. He is originally from Rosario, Argentina, where he earned bachelor's degrees in translation and education. After immigrating to the U.S. 12 years ago, he also received a doctorate in education.

Educating Students and Peers Alike

Marcelo is devoted to both education and linguistics and is an avid supporter of ATA's School Outreach Program. He knows that we need to reach out to educate others about our profession, and every time he gets the chance he does so himself. He teaches Spanish and French at Bristol Middle School in West Hartford and English as a second language at Tunxis Community College in Farmington,

Connecticut. In addition, Marcelo educates his fellow teachers on how to find interpreters and translators to communicate with their students' parents. He also interprets for his school district, translates educational documents, and gives presentations about translation and interpreting in other schools in his community.

Opportunities for Everyone

Marcelo wants students to understand how powerful they are and how much they develop their potential for future growth when they learn a foreign language. In his experience, he has remarked that students from more affluent districts are exposed to foreign languages at an early age, both through school and in private. In less privileged districts, the students may not have the same educational opportunities, but many of them grow up in a bilingual environment. "The beauty is that all students, regardless of which school district they go to, may poten-

tially have the chance to become a translator or interpreter," he explains.

Marcelo also stresses the importance of reaching out to the community at large by explaining to teachers and others how to find translators and interpreters to help with events so that the minority language population can participate.

Hands-On Learning

During his winning presentation at Bristol Middle School last June, Marcelo began simply by showing the word "languages" with arrows connecting to the words "translator" and "interpreter." Focusing on languages in general, he started a discussion around this word with the students—for example, which language had the most speakers, how languages are created, and how they evolve.

"The students loved to listen and talk about languages in general because they could make connections to their own lives," Marcelo says. "Who does



Marcelo Pelliccioni engages students in a demonstration of medical interpreting at Bristol Middle School in West Hartford, Connecticut.

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not have a family member or friend who came from another country speaking a different language?”

This simple method was very effective in engaging the students. Knowing that students love props, Marcelo brought a lab coat and a stethoscope to explain medical interpreting, a gavel and a gown to explain court interpreting, plus copies of the Harry Potter books and the movie *Avatar* in several languages.

Marcelo encouraged the students to explain why the words “translation” and “interpreting” are connected to the word “languages,” and then discussed the similarities and differences between the words and professions. He prepared various scenarios so that students could use role-play to demonstrate the differences between a translator and interpreter.

He divided the students into groups

and gave each group a slip of paper with a situation that they needed to represent. The students could role-play the situation and use the props that he had brought. During this exercise, the students came up with the idea of having the school nurse participate. They explained to the nurse what they were trying to do and taught her about the difference between translation and interpreting. The nurse told Marcelo that she was going to pass along what she had learned to the other nurses in the district.

A Professional Outlook

Marcelo is a true professional and used his background in teaching to motivate the students. He notes that in particular, the students were very excited and motivated to learn about various careers involving languages. “The students learned that anything

they eventually study when they go to a university, they may be able to relate to translation and interpreting,” he says.

Marcelo’s own children are bilingual middle school students and study a third language with him. He teaches his children that they can become translators or interpreters in the future. He encourages them to use their own knowledge to translate, rather than using online translation programs. Knowing that students are tempted to use technology—and that they often misuse it when it comes to translation—he teaches them to spot mistakes made by online translation programs.

Parent-teacher conferences present another opportunity for Marcelo to advocate careers in translation and interpreting. When immigrant parents come with their bilingual children, he guides the children to help with interpreting for their parents. He explains the act of interpreting to the student and the parents and stresses the need for it.

When he is not teaching, Marcelo combines business with pleasure by visiting clients around the world. He recently launched MAP Translation Services, providing English↔Spanish translation services in fields such as science, technology, education, law, finance, and business. The company is comprised of a group of professional translators based in the U.S., Argentina, and other countries worldwide. More information can be found at www.map-translations.com.

About ATA’s School Outreach Program

The School Outreach Program encourages all translators and interpreters to visit their local schools and help prepare the next generation of professionals in our field. Why? Because an astonishing number of teachers in U.S. schools are not ➡

aware of the number of interesting and profitable careers in translation and interpreting. Some educators are so unfamiliar with our profession that they cannot distinguish between translation and interpreting.

More than ever, language capabilities are important to our national security, diplomacy, and economic success. It is up to us to tell students about potential careers and the professional standards for qualified translators and interpreters.

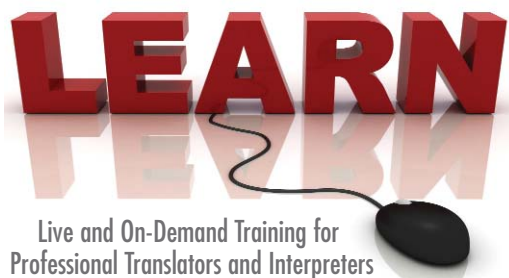
From grade school to graduate school, not only can translators and interpreters just like us educate the next generation of language professionals, but also the next generation of clients. The winner of the School Outreach Contest is presented with a

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certificate of recognition and a voucher for the registration to that year's ATA Annual Conference. The School Outreach Committee also sends letters to the winner's local representatives informing them of the award and encouraging them to recognize the winner.

For more information on ATA's School Outreach Program and how to enter the 2011-2012 School Outreach Contest, see page 39 or visit www.atanet.org/careers/school_outreach.php or e-mail Meghan McCallum at meghanraymccallum@gmail.com.

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ATA Webinars
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March 7, 2012

12 Noon Eastern Time

Com a mão na massa: Recursos online para pesquisa e tradução inglês-português

Speaker: Isa Mara Lando

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