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ACCESS & INCLUSION

A publication of the National Association of Educational
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LANGUAGE JUSTICE AND EQUAL FOOTING



NAETISL

ACCESS & INCLUSION

A publication of the National Association of Educational Translators and Interpreters of Spoken Languages

The National Association of Educational Translators and Interpreters of Spoken Languages exists to strengthen family engagement by connecting emergent bilingual families, school administrators and faculty, and educational translators and interpreters of spoken languages with research-based information about language access and language justice in early childhood and K-12 settings.

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Our Mission is to establish a collective understanding of the standards, qualifications and certification requirements for educational translators and interpreters of spoken languages to enhance English Learner family engagement, student achievement, and meaningful home-school connections.

Our Vision is to support language access and language justice in early childhood and K-12 educational settings through highly qualified and nationally certified educational translators and interpreters of spoken languages.

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From the Chairperson

The idea of creating a national organization to highlight the essential role of professional interpreters and translators in education surfaced in conversations among language access advocates, educators, interpreters and translators over five years ago. We remember being discouraged from highlighting this distinct profession as it was seen as a form of ancillary support and not as the representation of inclusive schooling practices that it is.

A year later, we see the results of dozens of listening sessions with our stakeholders, educators, emergent bilingual families, interpreters, translators and language justice advocates. As our partnerships and network of professionals grew stronger, we began to collaborate to draft our National Code of Ethics, drawing upon the work already accomplished by the Minnesota Department of Education, and involving representatives from 25 states and 14 languages in the process. In 2020, we became a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and began to create essential tools to foster family engagement through quality communication.

We just hosted our Inaugural Conference and after seeing our Board and Founding Members volunteer their time as guest speakers, conference organizers, moderators and so much more, I am more convinced of NAETISL's strength and vision. The level of teamwork, encouragement and genuine interest in meaningful and impactful collaboration will continue to help us build the strong foundation needed to support schools, emergent bilingual families, and educational translators and interpreters of spoken languages. Thank you to all those who contributed to this first issue of *Access & Inclusion*! We are honored that you chose our newsletter to lift your voices. Enjoy our first issue!



From the Editor-in-Chief



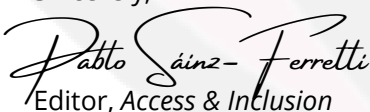
This is an exciting time to be a translator and an interpreter in educational settings. More than ever, the role that we play in making sure students and their families have access to a quality education has taken a front seat.

As editor-in-chief, I want to welcome you to the first issue of the *Access & Inclusion* newsletter, the official publication of National Association of Educational Translators and Interpreters of Spoken Languages (NAETISL). As an active school district translator and interpreter I can attest that the articles we received to publish in this first issue are very hands-on. I'm already putting into practice some of the tips and suggestions included in these pages.

I'm sure that my colleagues will find these articles helpful in making our jobs even more effective. And school administrators, staff, and families will also find something in here for them. Translation and interpreting in educational settings are not only activities that should interest those of us working in these roles, but also everyone involved in a child's education. Please, I invite you to continue submitting your articles for future issues of *Access & Inclusion*. The deadline for our winter edition is September 30th.

During the pandemic, many inequalities in education became more obvious. As translators and interpreters in educational settings, we are helping bridge those gaps that have permeated the educational system in the United States for many decades.

Sincerely,



Pablo Sáinz-Ferretti
Editor, *Access & Inclusion*

Translator and Interpreter, San Ysidro School District, San Diego, CA



Painting an Inaccurate Picture

by Leonidas Vives

It is well-known that meaningful participation of families in the special education process results in better student outcomes. Interpreters play a crucial role in language access, equity and collaboration in the assessment and special education process. As required by the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act (IDEA), full informed consent comes to mind when spoken language interpreters do not receive specialized training before facing the complex vocabulary, abbreviations and jargon that characterizes special education.

When language interpretation does not consider cultural differences, along with linguistic differences, communication is negatively impacted. Understanding linguistic variations and idiomatic expressions in their language becomes even more important when parents absorb information about the specific needs that a school seeks to address in support of their child.

An interpreter recently shared how he felt hesitant to interpret the term “special education” during a meeting because he assumed that the family would not consent to the school providing services to support the child’s educational success.

The interpreter was culturally aware and conscious that special education as we know it here in the United States, differs greatly in other countries. Sadly, stigma, discrimination and isolation of people with disabilities in other countries are very common. Emergent bilingual parents may be fearful of the special education process, especially if interpreters are not confident in their abilities to provide accurate interpretation.

Unfortunately, the parent in this particular story did not receive an accurate picture of the school’s intentions and efforts to support her child. Instead, for years, the parent thought her child was receiving extra tutoring instead of the special education services he received for a long time. Multicultural families and school personnel have the right to be supported by bilingual personnel who take their responsibility as trusted communicators seriously. Trained and qualified interpreters cannot filter, edit or adjust a message to protect or shield families or schools from the information. As with any other profession, interpreters and translators in education must abide by a Code of Ethics and protect the autonomy and advocacy skills of the parents and the school personnel with whom they collaborate.

Our interpreter in this story learned and grew from this experience. He allowed this moment in his professional life to be a springboard for growth and understanding of the ethical behaviors that spoken language interpreters must reflect. Let us continue to paint an accurate picture for parents and schools to ensure that informed consent is protected.

RESOURCE: Check out NAETISL’s Code of Ethics and Standards of Practice for Educational Translators and Spoken Language Interpreters: <https://naetisl.org/code-of-ethics> The Code of Ethics was published in 2020 drawing upon the work accomplished by the Minnesota Department of Education over five years. School district representatives, early childhood professionals, interpreters, translators and emergent bilingual families from 25 states and 14 languages contributed with their feedback and insight to this collective understanding of our standards as interpreters and translators.

Valar Dohaeris

Suggestions for Schools to Advance from Language Access to Language Justice

by Khan Do



As a recent *Game of Thrones* fan, I find that the phrase Valar Dohaeris (“All men must serve,” in the fictional language known as High Valyrian) adequately encapsulates the altruism and selflessness that needs to drive our collective efforts to move the needle from Language Access to Language Justice in Special Education. If you are a parent like me, nothing else can matter more than the next generation’s well-being. That is why my children’s language rights are so dear and near to my heart.

During NAETISL’s recent Inaugural Conference, Ana Soler (Ph.D. in Special Education Student and NAETISL Chairperson) shared several useful recommendations worth reviewing in light of classroom literacy studies from bilingual special education. These include practical implications from some neurodiverse students, researchers, and educators. As Ana stated, our collective efforts toward “moving the needle” must focus on inclusive schooling practices. When it comes to our Special Education students, it truly takes a village to raise a child. Below are two recommendations. (Please consult the cited resources, below, for a more detailed insight into these and other recommendations):

1. Conduct a school-based language support Needs Assessment

When seen as a “continuous improvement cycle” (Cuiccio & Husby-Slater, 2018) reviewing evidence-based strategies, such as the Optimal Learning Environment (OLE) Project assists teachers with “guiding principles in designing language and literacy instruction for bilingual students labeled learning disabled” (Ruiz, Vargas, & Beltran, 2002). One such principle is to foster the use of students’ primary language in literacy lessons.

“If students are not talking or typing, find other ways to observe them. Please find out about their past, proclivities, how they spend their time, and what gives them joy. [...] Favorite and familiar

themes create fertile ground for us to initiate and sustain efforts to practice academic and social skills that do not come easily” (Rentenbach, Prislovsky, & Gabriel, 2017). “Finding out where individuals with ADHD feel most competent and at ease also provides a good footing for trust and connection,” and holidays such as Ramadan, Christmas, Hannukah, or traditional festivals like the Chinese Lantern Festival or Indian Diwali provide plenty of opportunities to “let students know that human excellence comes in all packages – so they are invited to be themselves” (ibid).

2. Use only trained, qualified and (eventually!) nationally certified interpreters

Encouraging the use of the Special Needs student’s primary language seems to imply respect and appreciation for the sociocultural aspects of non-English languages present in the community. This presents an opportunity to promote standard practices when, for instance, contracting language service support professionals to assist in special education-related meetings between teachers and parents. Professional interpreters in education can serve as cultural mediators. While they cannot provide their opinions, suggestions or advice, they can provide cultural and language insight before or after the meeting, if needed.

Creating those spaces for our neurodiverse students is crucial in these complex times, and altruism will go a long way towards creating a sense of belonging and reducing isolation for all our neurodiverse students (and their parents).

Valar Dohaeris!

“If you are a parent like me, nothing else can matter more than the next generation’s well-being.”

Cultural and Linguistic Dilemma Corner



***Access & Inclusion* will feature dilemmas and situations shared by interpreters and translators working in early childhood and K-12 settings, with the hope of strengthening a network of support and guidance.**

Do you have a story to share? Please email naetisleditor@gmail.com ensuring that confidentiality is protected and identifiable information is removed.

"I have learned to keep conversations outside the interpreting session to a minimal and, from the beginning, introduce myself as the interpreter. When I started my career as an interpreter in a school, I did not do this and parents would ask me to "not tell the teacher," which placed me in a difficult situation. Now, once a meeting is over, I make sure the parent finds their way back to the front office on their own and avoid having additional conversations without involving the school personnel. Interpreters have specific roles, but we also have the responsibility to keep everyone informed of what we hear."

"I live in the same community where I work. I am seen and I am known. I have been cornered at the grocery store by parents who attempt to ask me questions about a meeting we had. I have to gently remind them that I cannot discuss anything without the rest of my school team present. Confidentiality should always be in the front of our minds, especially if we live in a close-knit community."

"One skill I need to continue working on is making sure that teachers remain involved in the conversation when I interpret. Last school year I was interpreting during a parent-teacher conference and the teacher started explaining how they used graphic organizers in class to work on writing skills. The parent was not sure what a graphic organizer was and I took it upon myself to explain it and even give her examples! Meanwhile, the teacher was left behind in the conversation, wondering what the parent and I were talking about. I realized my mistake and now ask teachers to provide examples if the parent asks for clarification. This is a way of respecting everyone at the meeting and understanding that I am relaying messages and not creating them."



The Impact of Qualified Spoken Language Interpreters in Special Education Settings

by Ana Soler

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) mandates that psychoeducational testing be conducted in the child's native language as part of evaluation for special education services. Optimally, the assessment process of an early childhood or K-12 emergent bilingual student should be conducted by a professional who is proficient in the student's native language and English. This would allow the bilingual professional to understand better the student's language dominance and different strengths in particular language domains.

Accurate assessment of the child's languages directly from the professional will aid in ensuring a reliable and valid eligibility process that rules out language acquisition as a reason for the child's academic difficulties. The lack of sufficient bilingual professionals qualified to conduct accurate psychoeducational evaluations in a student's native language is one of the reasons trained interpreters are called upon to assist, and why they are crucial participants of the assessment process.

Errors can occur when interpreters do not have sufficient knowledge of assessment terminology and protocols, and are unable or unwilling to clarify cultural differences that may arise during the referral or evaluation process. Specific and intentional training for both interpreters and providers ensures that high-quality evaluations and assessments accurately capture the voices of families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Interpreter bias during the assessment process can also influence results and affect the validity of evaluation instruments. The combination of using biased assessment tools that have simply been translated but not culturally validated, and an interpreter not familiar with assessment terminology and protocols, may prove to be detrimental for a child.

Untrained interpreters may give additional prompts and cues during the assessment process, invalidating a standardized tool. Variations within languages may also influence how an interpreter determines a correct or incorrect answer, yielding inaccurate assessment results. Lastly, untrained interpreters may have a cultural expectation to protect the child from a negative evaluation result which contributes to a distorted summary of academic performance and cognitive abilities.

Qualified and trained spoken language interpreters deserve to have the professional tools necessary to provide quality services. Our emergent bilingual families and schools depend on it!



"Specific and intentional training for both interpreters and providers ensures that high-quality evaluations and assessments accurately capture the voices of families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds."

RESOURCE: Check out NAETISL's Best Practices to find information about working effectively with spoken language interpreters:
<https://naetisl.org/best-practices>



Calling All Contributing Writers

If you are an educator, emergent bilingual parent, educational translator or spoken language interpreter, or language access and language justice advocate, we want *Access & Inclusion* to be your platform! Our newsletter is published quarterly and the deadlines for submitting articles are:

Fall: June 30th
Winter: September 30th
Spring: January 31st
Summer: April 30th

Please follow the guidelines below and email your article to **naetisleditor@gmail.com**

Your title should be brief and your article should be no more than 2,500 words

Include your name along with a biography (less than 200 words)

Please include a professional photo of yourself (JPEG) to include in the article

Articles promoting a product, a training or a service will be rejected.

Our focus is to accept articles that help advance the profession of spoken language interpreters and translators in education.

Possible topics:

- Translating documents in early childhood and K-12 settings: Challenges and opportunities
- Suggestions to collaborate with interpreters during parent-teacher conferences
- Ethical dilemmas
- Role boundaries dilemmas
- Interviews with school administrators about their language access perspectives
- Interviews with emergent bilingual families about their language access perspectives
- Interviews with interpreters and translators about their language access perspectives
- Challenges and opportunities in special education interpreting
- Translating Individualized Education Plans: Challenges and opportunities
- Disciplinary hearings: Experiences and lessons learned
- Glossary and vocabulary building for translators
- Articles highlighting languages of lesser diffusion

Only original articles will be accepted.

If you include references, please use the APA Publication Manual 7th Edition
Authors whose articles are accepted will receive a 25% discount on one NAETISL professional development opportunity for educational translators and interpreters of spoken languages.

Cultural Brokers: Successful Strategies to Bridge the Gap Between Diverse Parents and Schools

by Taylor Svete

Meaningful family engagement is critical to student success. However, the usual approaches we think of today (Parent-Teacher Association meetings, parent-teacher conferences, and open house events) tend to make parents feel excluded from their children's education process, especially those from marginalized families.

Cultural brokers are school staff, community-based personnel, or volunteers who work with parents of diverse students to:

- *Support the school's agenda and expectations for student achievement;*
- *Connect families with educational resources and information; and*
- *Advocate with school staff for changes or to deescalate conflict.*

How can cultural brokers support more equitable parent-teacher relationships for meaningful collaboration with culturally and linguistically diverse families? Traditional "best practices" build parent-school relationships mostly via one-way communication (from school to family, i.e., written notices in backpacks or robocalls from the district), individualized interactions with parents concerning their own child's academic progress (versus group interactions that discuss the success of all students), and the school principal or district administrators as the sole decision-makers. Emergent next practices build upon these traditional strategies with cultural brokering between parents and schools, but they add collective and relational components.

Reciprocal cultural brokering strategies consider family needs when shaping an education program, rather than depending on the opinions of school and district staff about what parental involvement should look like. Reciprocal cultural brokering that supports diverse parent engagement might involve sitting down at the table to hear from families directly and including a family's knowledge and cultural experience in a plan for supporting their child's academic improvement.

Successful cultural brokering can also be collective and relational. Creating a welcoming and inclusive environments, such as family-dedicated spaces within schools, enables parents to share their experiences as bicultural families and to organize and advocate for change as a group or on leadership boards.

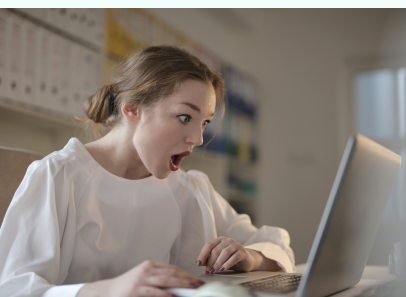
The work of cultural brokering transcends interpretation, translation and administrative support efforts. Cultural brokers have the power to create more equitable collaboration and two-way engagement between schools and diverse families by integrating parents into the decision-making process for educational programs and building more inclusive and supportive academic environments for multicultural students.

"Reciprocal cultural brokering strategies consider family needs when shaping an education program, rather than depending on the opinions of school and district staff about what parental involvement should look like."

RESOURCE: Check out this fact sheet with useful phrases that NAETISL has developed with the help of parent advocates and culturally and linguistically diverse families: <https://naetisl.org/for-families>. It is available in 13 languages and describes the basic knowledge and skills that families should expect from professional interpreters/translators in education. The fact sheet also includes a list of useful phrases families can use during a meeting involving an interpreter.

¡Ay Bendito!: Outcomes of Inaccurate Interpretation in Education Settings

by J. Lee



The choice of becoming a whistleblower is never an easy one. It requires a certain level of bravado, intestinal fortitude, and moxie to disclose unethical and potentially illegal behavior, all while risking retaliatory measures by a corporate employer or at the hands of a federal/state/local government agency. In fact, "many countries recognize whistleblowers' role in reducing corruption and improving integrity." The Educational Translation and Interpreting arenas are certainly not immune to labor-related exploitation, corruption, and dishonesty. Case in point: Three Mexico-based educational and medical interpreters made the following statements about a US-based language service company under contract with the states of New York and Michigan:

*"You just get tired of knowing that no matter how hard you work, you're never going to get more than \$4 an hour [...] As far as the training is concerned, that was very insufficient." – Orlando**

*"Most of the people that work for that company, it is because they didn't have any other option to find a job." – Becker**

*"I'm against the whole system of how they contract interpreters in Mexico through outsourcing so they can pay less [...] We do a job that should be better paid." – Jacob**

If "sparse training and loose security measures for confidential calls" are treated as normal situations in educational interpreting, inaccurate interpretation will (and does) emerge as a by-product. Whether we are involved in Special Education as professional linguists, as school officials, or as parent engagement advocates, please make no mistake about it.

Consider the impact of ignoring applicable legislation related to Special Education, such as the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ("FERPA"), the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act ("IDEA") or the Americans with Disabilities Act ("ADA"). As an example, a Spanish-English interpreter who has never come across these federal laws during training could conceivably treat some of these acronyms as if they were Spanish-language homonyms ("IDEA" as "idea - thought"; "ADA" as "Hada - Fairy, or mythical being with magical powers"). Granted, this is an arguably absurd scenario for any professional linguist worth

her/his/their salt, but an underpaid/unappreciated interpreter could, at best, fail to assist parties in navigating linguistic and/or cultural dilemmas, or at worse, incorrectly render these legal pillars of Special Education into the target language.

The gamble of allowing untrained interpreters in special education settings could translate into time and money-consuming Language Access-related claims down the road. ¡Ay bendito!

Another inherent risk in hiring bilingual individuals to serve as Educational Interpreters: neglecting the complexity of source-language and target-language syntax, grammar, morphology, or the nature of educational terms. Speaking the target language does not make a person an interpreter any more than driving a vehicle makes a person a mechanic. A student who is allowed to provide interpretation during an educational meeting may have his/her/their own interests in mind and could very well omit or modify source language information during the process of interpretation.



The author recently contacted Mr. Eric Adams, Ms. Kathryn Garcia, and Ms. Maya Wiley (three leading candidates in the New York City mayoral election race) regarding the above-mentioned allegations and what they would do, if elected to office (as of press time, no response has been received). Let us hope that the actions and words of these brave whistleblowers will eventually translate into concrete steps that will benefit all Special Education stakeholders in the Big Apple and beyond.

*** Identified by first name or nickname for anonymity**

Do you share our vision? Become a Member of NAETISL

Our Mission

To establish a collective understanding of the standards, qualifications and certification requirements for educational translators and interpreters of spoken languages to enhance English Learner family engagement, student achievement, and meaningful home-school connections.

Our Vision

To support language access and language justice in early childhood and K-12 educational settings through highly qualified and nationally accredited educational translators and interpreters of spoken languages.

Benefits:

Discounts on our annual conference and professional development opportunities for interpreters and translators in early childhood and K-12 settings.

Free admission to our Virtual Intersections sessions to collaborate on the development of policies and best practices.

Future issues of our quarterly newsletter, *Access & Inclusion*, with information and research on the impact of interpreters in education, language justice, cultural and linguistic dilemmas, and news about language access champions.

Invitation to participate in one of our Standing Committees to define our national certification requirements and promote practical tools to support schools, English Learner families and interpreters and translators.

<https://naetisl.org/membership>

**National Association of Educational
Translators and Interpreters
of Spoken Languages**

NAETISL



Presents:

Learning Through Practice Series

**Fundamentals of
Simultaneous
Interpretation in K-12
Settings**



Presenter:

Javier Castillo

**August 16, 2021
5pm - 7 pm EST**

**\$36 NAETISL Members
\$60 Non-Members**

Register at:

<https://naetisl.org/events>

Javier is president of Castillo Language Services, Inc. in Greenville, NC. He is a Federally Certified Court Interpreter, NC AOC certified court interpreter, a Certified Medical Interpreter, (CCHI) and contract interpreter for the U.S. Department of States. He is the President of the Carolina Association of Translators and Interpreters, Head of the U.S. Chapter of IAPTI International Association of Professional Interpreters and Translators, and on the Board of Directors of the National Association of Judiciary Interpreters and Translators.

**National Association of Educational
Translators and Interpreters
of Spoken Languages**

NAETISL



Presents:

Learning Through Practice Series

**Note-Taking Techniques
and Strategies for
Interpreters in
K-12 Settings**



Presenter:

Nanyi Mateo

Nanyi Mateo is a Spanish Medical Interpreter Certified by NBCMI. She is the founder and lead instructor of InterpreMed.com, a community learning website for interpreters. She teaches her innovative note-taking symbol system with Transinterpreting.com, one of the largest online interpreting schools in California. She is an online instructor of a 60-hour medical interpreting course with American Against Language Barriers (AALB), a non-profit organization in Chicago. She currently works as an interpreter quality assurance agent, video remote, and over-the-phone interpreter for different agencies across the United States.

**September 13, 2021
5pm - 7 pm EST**

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Register at:

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**National Association of Educational
Translators and Interpreters
of Spoken Languages**

NAETISL



Presents:

Learning Through Practice Series

**Collaborating
with School
Psychologists**



**Presenter:
Dr. Anarella Cellitti**

**October 18, 2021
5pm - 7 pm EST**

**\$36 NAETISL Members
\$60 Non-Members**

**Register at:
<https://naetisl.org/events>**

Dr. Anarella Cellitti has a Bachelor's degree in education from the Instituto Universitario Pedagógico de Caracas, her M.Ed. and Ph.D. in Elementary/Early childhood education are from the University of South Carolina. In addition, she holds an M.A. in psychology from the University of Houston, Victoria.

Currently, she is an Associate Professor in the School of Education at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. She is a Licensed Psychological Examiner and has been assessing bilingual students for many years in several school districts in Arkansas.

**National Association of Educational
Translators and Interpreters
of Spoken Languages**

NAETISL



Presents:

*Learning Through Practice
Series*

**Introduction to
Translation: Special
Education and Other
School Documents**



Presenter:

**Jeannette Houchens,
CMI-Spanish, CI**

**November 15, 2021
5pm - 7 pm EST**

**\$36 NAETISL Members
\$60 Non-Members**

Register at:

<https://naetisl.org/events>

Mrs. Houchens, has 20+ years of experience in the Language Service Industry. She has worked as a Spanish/English translator and interpreter for different fields, including Social Services, Health Care, Mental Health, Court, & Education. She has strengthened and expanded her career achieving certification in Medical and Legal Interpretation. For the past few years, Mrs. Houchens has specialized in educational interpretation and translation, assisting local school districts on providing important information to their non-English speaking families in their native/ preferred languages. Mrs. Houchens is the president and founder of HIT Services, an interpretation and translation company in South Carolina, dedicated to the provision of quality language services in the area and to the promotion of professionalization for interpreters in all fields. She continuously supports interpreters on obtaining the training and certifications needed to serve our community. She currently serves as a board member for the Carolina Association of Translators and Interpreters (CATI), and as SC Chair for the International Medical Interpreters Association (IMIA).

**National Association of Educational
Translators and Interpreters
of Spoken Languages**

NAETISL



Presents:
***Learning Through Practice
Series***

**Speech-Language
Impairments and
Learning Disabilities:
Terms to Know**



**Presenter:
Ana Soler**

**December 13, 2021
5pm - 7 pm EST**

**\$36 NAETISL Members
\$60 Non-Members**

**Register at:
<https://naetisl.org/events>**

Ana Soler has been a curriculum developer, interpreter, translator, and trainer for over 25 years. She has authored curricula nationally including the Intercultural Parent and Youth Leadership Program, the Interpretation Academy for Bilingual High School Students, the Arkansas Interpreter Credential in Education course, a 40-hour certification preparation course for medical interpreters, and various online courses for the University of Georgia. She is currently pursuing her Ph.D. in Special Education with a focus on the impact of interpreters and translators in K-12 settings.