



## From the President

**Jiri Stejskal**

President@atanet.org

## Ornament in Prosperity and Refuge in Adversity

### The cryptic-looking title

above is Aristotle's description of education; education is also the subject of this column. As you may have noticed, my past three columns discussed the first three objectives stated in ATA's bylaws. It is a timely coincidence that we review the fourth objective now, because it dovetails nicely with Nick Hartmann's column in this issue in which he gives a preview of ATA's 49th Annual Conference, November 5-8 at the Hilton in the Walt Disney World Resort in Orlando, Florida. The fourth objective is "to stimulate and support the training of translators and interpreters." Our Annual Conference does just that, with up to 17 concurrent sessions running for three days, covering a great variety of topics—see for yourself in the *Preliminary Program* enclosed with this issue.

This particular objective was a subject of discussion by the Board at the January Annual Planning Day. Are we really talking about "training," or do we mean "education?" As members of a language organization, we are sensitive to semantic differences, and while the intent of the objective has not changed, we should make sure that what we say is what we mean. The two terms are not interchangeable, even though they are often used as synonyms. In general, education is about *knowledge*, while training is about *skills*. For example, you might want your adolescent children to get sex education at school, but probably not sex training. More succinctly, "education is what survives when what has been learned has been forgotten" (B.F. Skinner). Changing the word "training" to "education" throughout ATA's bylaws is likely to be one among many proposed changes presented to you for adoption at the Annual Conference in Orlando.

This is not to say that our Association's objective is to impart knowledge exclusively to the detriment of skill development. Many sessions at the Annual Conference are hands-on, and our professional development seminars also lean toward training. It is the Board's opinion, however, that the stress should be on education, because it

doing their jobs. At the same time, most of us consider it perfectly normal that translators and interpreters can acquire their knowledge and skills on the job, and many of us are competent translators and interpreters who did exactly that. However, for the public to view us as professionals, we need to have a solid educational base with strong programs,

---

**In general, education is about *knowledge*,  
while training is about *skills*.**

---

is not only about conference sessions and seminars, it is also about stimulating and supporting educational programs both within and outside of our organization. Several of ATA's institutional members offer courses in translation and interpreting ("interpreting" also being a candidate to replace "interpretation" in the bylaws). Notably, two of these offer doctoral programs—Binghamton University in New York and Kent State University in Ohio. ATA offers a comprehensive online list of its institutional members who offer translation and interpreting programs. (See [www.atanet.org/careers/T\\_I\\_programs.php](http://www.atanet.org/careers/T_I_programs.php).) In addition, an international list is maintained online by Anthony Pym's Intercultural Studies Group under the auspices of the Fédération Internationale des Traducteurs. (See <http://isg.urv.es/tti/tti.htm>.)

Education is also a critical component of the status of our profession. Last month, we looked at regulation and how it relates to the way the public perceives translators and interpreters. We can once again look at physicians and lawyers for whom education in their respective fields is a prerequisite for

career opportunities, and public awareness. As the leading translators and interpreters association in the U.S., we need to provide educational opportunities, encourage future generations of translators and interpreters to equip themselves with the requisite knowledge before entering the profession, and maintain solid and mutually beneficial relationships with institutions offering translation and interpreting programs. As the title of this column suggests, education can be just a feather in one's cap when times are favorable to us. However, today we are competing on a global scale. Without education, we will have a hard time coming out on top.



*ata*

For information about ATA's 49th Annual Conference, please see the *Preliminary Program*.