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**THE PROFESSIONAL ENVIRONMENT
AT THE ST. PETERSBURG SCHOOL
OF CONFERENCE INTERPRETING
AND TRANSLATION**

Interpretation and translation, highly demanding professions intellectually, require that their practitioner demonstrate certain specific character traits, foremost among which is curiosity — an eagerness to learn continuously, to acquire new information, and to improve the mastery of both one's mother tongue and foreign languages. These are the traits that a professional school, if it aspires to be successful, should develop in its students, encourage in its trainers, and take into account when planning its curriculum and various activities throughout the academic year.

This paper attempts to provide an insight into the ways a professional environment is achieved at Herzen University's St. Petersburg School of Conference Interpreting & Translation.

First of all, it is created by its trainers, who are all freelance interpreters/translators with well-established reputations in the market, including experience at international organizations (many have passed UN and EU tests for freelancers). The 'professionals for professionals' requirement is indispensable, because only a craftsman can produce worthy disciples. To impart any kind of skill, one should possess it, and the skills of interpretation and translation are no exceptions.

At the same time, the unique environment of a professional school makes it possible to invite language professionals from diverse institutions, including international organizations, with their specific institutional cultures and mediation practices. Actually, this diversity is a boon to the program: it offers broader exposure and requires prac-