

The shorthand study is a little like this.

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A student begins a shorthand course. There are two well defined steps in the shorthand learning process: learning shorthand signs and speed training.

In the first step, the student begins to learn the first shorthand signals, forming some words. He is overjoyed, completely pleased. And he moves on. As he advances in lessons, he performs a series of "technically" prepared exercises to help in the assimilation of signs.

The study moves on. New signs are learned. Doubts arise here, there, everywhere.

More lessons. More exercises. Supplementary exercises! At each step, tests to appraise the assimilation of rules and shorthand signs.

“Professor, something interesting is happening to me: sometimes I’m walking down the street, I look at a sign and start writing in shorthand the words from the sign in my mind!” The other day I caught myself writing in shorthand moving my fingers in the air... Is this normal?”

“Not only normal, but also very important”, answers the professor. “It is a sign that you are totally engaged in the learning process of shorthand signs and your mind does not want to miss a single opportunity to train...”

Abbreviations to memorize! The order is: repeat, repeat and repeat!

The study moves on. New exercises, new lessons, more tests.

Taking greater care in the perfection of signs! Otherwise, it will be impossible to translate!

Readings! Difficulty in reading shorthand signs. Signs that, even trying to understand the meaning of phrase, it is impossible to translate! Frustration... Motivation from the professor. New encouragement! Just keep on going... “One day I’ll get there...”

The study moves on. Difficulties here, small victories there.

Finally the method is learned! Learned?! Yes... but not that much! It is necessary to go even deeper...!

The learning process continues. More signs to assimilate!

Sometimes, our memory betrays us. Whew! ... What is the sign for the termination “bility”?

The professor, experienced in such sudden memory lapses and, without demonstrating any impatience, repeats the termination “bility” to the student. The professor knows that he will have to repeat as many times as necessary! The professor knows that he will have to repeat uncountable times the terminations, signs, abbreviations, because that is his role as a professor: be the facilitator of the learning process, the motivator!

Finally, it’s time to write in shorthand. Copies, copies and more copies! Copies from newspapers and magazines excerpts, from everything else. It is necessary to copy in shorthand, to write in shorthand! Shorthand is learned through shorthand.

Copy, copy correction! The effort to assimilate signs must go on! The enhancement and the correction of signs must go on! And it will for a long time! This is what happened in the alphabetization of common orthography and this is how it will be in the “alphabetization” of shorthand. A skill is obtained by: applied study, training, training and more training! No discouragement, right?

Great! It’s time to start the shorthand speed training! Today, for the first time, I wrote a dictation in shorthand! Can you believe that I am actually writing in shorthand? Yeah, but what a shame, I can’t write the whole 5 minute dictation in shorthand! I’m only able to perform one or two minutes. After that, I begin to miss some words...

The professor steps in: “This is the way! Everybody faces this! Keep training the dictations so that, little by little, you will grow into such speed. At each new speed increase, you will have the sensation that “I’m not getting there”. But with continuous study, with methodical training...”

Wow! The method learning process has not been overcome yet! I’m already in 60 and still have a bunch of questions! Sure! Do you know why? Because the method learning process phase is still under development and it will last a good long, long time! And this is also true with common orthography. Do you know how to write that word? Is it with an “F” or “PH”? Hmm...you got me!

New doubts on signs come up at each moment. “Professor, how do I write such word in shorthand.... should I use biconsonantal or triconsonantal signs?” Professor, what is the conventional sign for “for example”?

“Professor, today I brought a list of doubts.... Can we go over them now or do you prefer to do it later?”

“I prefer to do it now. The explanations to your doubts may also suit other students. It’s important that you clear these doubts...”

Sometimes some “contesting” students appear. “Professor, this week I was home and suddenly I thought of something: you said that “[...]” and “[...]” are written the same way in shorthand. But isn’t the sound of these two words different? In “[...]” don’t we hear the sound of two vowels? Well, if there is the sound of two vowels, “in my modest opinion”, I would have to put a point indicating the sound of two vowels...”

So the professor answers, happy to note the interest from the student: “Technically speaking... yes, but there is no need at this point, because in the translation you will know, by the meaning, that the verb is in the plural...”

There are also the “creative” students that bring a proposal of new signs for the method. “Professor, I’ve noticed that, when I write in shorthand, the terminations “[...], [...] and [...]” appear a lot. Don’t you think we should invent a special sign for such termination? It would result in huge graphic savings and greater speed!” The professor thinks about the suggestion and approves it: a new sign then is incorporated to the method!

Every professor-student interaction is valuable and results in great benefits. After all, the shorthand method is like a live language: always in constant change, in constant enhancement. New words come up, new abbreviations are created. Some years ago no one used to talk about “Human Rights”. Today, the expression “Human Rights” is normally mentioned in speeches. A conventional sign is, therefore, necessary and created. Only a shorthand “d” with two points below. What a fabulous graphic savings! How this really helps in speed.