

## FOR QUICK NOTES, SHORTHAND IS UNBEATABLE!

By: Waldir Cury

Last Monday afternoon, I attended the German class at the Goethe Institute. I'm doing KDS (*Kleines Deutsches Sprachdiplom*), an advanced level course. My classmates are all university students. When I made my presentation, I said I was a retired parliamentary stenographer and shorthand professor.

One of my colleagues asked me then what exactly was shorthand. I provided a short explanation and at the end, I asked them: "Could you imagine if all university students knew shorthand? They could quickly jot down notes of the main points of the classes and lectures..."

They asked me then: "But what about the recorder? Isn't it better to record?"

I replied: "Yes, no doubt. There is the recorder. But there are two serious problems regarding the recorder. **First:** the recording must be perfect. **Second:** does a university student have time and patience to listen to all the classes again? Wouldn't it be a waste of time listening to the whole class again, considering that, in this case, not only the relevant points would be reviewed in the listening, but all the irrelevant ones as well.

A colleague then said: "*You're right. This happened to me. I asked my mother to buy me a recorder and I started recording all my college classes. When I got home, I listened to the recording. The recording was very bad, full of noises from people who were talking in the room. Sometimes, as the teacher walked about, I couldn't even hear what had been said, because the voice was far away. What happened? I stopped using the recorder.*"

I said: "That is exactly where shorthand comes in! Well, look... you did the recording to enable you to further listen to the relevant points... the points that interested you the most. You neither were successful with the recorder nor would you be with common writing, which is very slow. But definitely, with shorthand, you would

have been able to jot down all the main points, not only of one of the classes, but of all of them and lectures as well. And to do that, you would only have had to depend on a pencil and a paper!"

I also remember a classroom shorthand student who was a Law student. When I talked to her about the problem of recording classes, she said: "That's exactly what happened to me. At home I have a lot of cassette tapes that I recorded in my Law classes. Because of my lack of time, I never listened to them."