

E-MAIL FROM A SHORTHAND STUDENT:

Hello professor. This week I started training dictations at 80 wpm and a doubt came up. The higher the speed gets, you end up being a little late, that is, you are not “instantaneous” with the dictation and thus, it starts getting more and more difficult to store everything in mind as to what is being dictated and sometimes I consciously skip a few passages of the text. How would an experienced stenographer solve this issue? Regards.

PROF. WALDIR CURY’S ANSWER

Hello dear student!

What is happening to you is perfectly normal. It happens to all students and it also happened to me when I was a student. At each speed level that we increase, the faster will be the sketching of the signs in the brain. Scientifically speaking, the brain must create then, in order to make these signs at a speed of 80 wpm, new "synapses", new "brain connections." And this takes time; requires training. You will then have to “mature” at a speed of 80 wpm.

I usually make the following comparison: each new speed that increases, is exactly like the water we put to boil: it will heat, heat, heat, and only when it reaches boiling point, it begins to boil. But to reach the boiling point (that is, in shorthand the maturity of a specific speed) takes time and a lot of “fire” (training).

The difficulty you're experiencing with 80 wpm, you will probably experiment with 85, 90, and so on. It's like if you were telling your brain when you begin studying a new speed: well, now you're going to do everything even faster! The brain will then listen to the sounds of words and will turn those sounds into shorthand signs faster than at the speed of 75 wpm. This is the first point: to increase speed. Everything, at 80 wpm, will be faster.

The second point: certain words cause the brain to hesitate when transforming sounds into shorthand signs. This mental hesitation is what slows the fluency down, not only at lower speeds, but mainly in the speed you're now trying to overcome. So what must be done? Underline the words that are "hindering" fluency, that are generating doubts at the time of making the outlines, and study them repetitively, during a good

number of days. And of course, while systematically repeating the words of that dictation, repeat the same dictation as well.

The rule is: repeat, repeat, repeat! Repeat until the brain has no more doubt or hesitation when writing such dictation in shorthand. And this should be done with every dictation. This is exactly why these dictations were made: exactly to turn you into a shorthand speed champion! At every dictation you train intensively, the more you become skilled in the art of shorthand; you will, so to speak, "be maturing."

The systematic and intensive training, methodically performed every day, is the only way to acquire a skill. I study classical guitar at a Music Conservatory. For every song, every music sheet, hours and hours of training are necessary, repetitions after repetitions. And I have some songs I'm already "scraping" (LOL).

So it is not only with shorthand; it is also the same with a musical instrument, swimming, volleyball, soccer and learning a language. There are no miracles. There is training, hard training and very hard training!

I also usually use the expression "it is necessary to throw yourself body and soul into the study of each dictation".

A shorthand regards!

Prof. Cury