

## TIPS TO TRAIN SHORTHAND SPEED DICTATIONS

**Prof. Waldir Cury**

- Always train hard-to-trace words of each dictation (repeating it several times for many days - until you feel that you are writing in shorthand with no hesitation as to how to make the signs).
- Translate, either orally or in writing (preferably by typing into the computer) each dictation you write in shorthand. The translation will help you see your weaknesses, the words that need further training and thus, it will help you to get better at deciphering the shorthand signs. When translating, always seek to understand the sense of each sentence, the subject - this helps the translation a lot. The rule then is: Wrote in shorthand? Then, translate it! Remember: shorthand is not an end in itself. What is the purpose? It is the translation!
- When training dictations of a certain speed (i.e. 70 wpm), always train, at the same time, one minute at a speed above that (in this case, a minute of 75 wpm). I usually tell my onsite students that this tactic is to "push speed up". After training several dictations for one minute at 75 wpm, while still training dictations at 70 wpm, increase to 2 minutes at 75 wpm. And so on. When reaching 5 minutes at 75 wpm, start to train a dictation for one minute at 80 wpm.
- Try to accrue well at each speed. Do not be tempted to "cut corners". The rule then is: try to "digest" each dictation. Do not jump from dictation to dictation without having studied each one very well. No "hype" with dictations.
- Amazingly, the shorthand speed is less in the hand and more in the brain! What slows the speed and fluency down in a dictation are certain words that are more

difficult to trace, which generate doubts (hesitation) in the brain, when transforming the sounds heard into shorthand signs. Hence the need to make a list of those words from each dictation and train them well, until they cause no more hesitation at the time of shorthand, or more precisely, when drawing the words (outlines) in the brain.

- Because they are extremely valuable to speed, brief forms deserve a special attention. A practical way to study them is to do so in "rotation", that is, a continuous repetition. For example, in one day the student studies the brief forms of the letters "A and B". The next day, the brief forms of the letters "C and D ". And so on. When the student reaches the letter Z, start the whole procedure again that is, study again the brief forms starting at the letters "A and B ", after the letters "C and D" and so on. This pattern of continuous repetition of brief forms is important, because the greater the shorthand speed a student trains, the faster and more automatic the brief forms will be written in shorthand.
- The same is true for Special Initial and Terminal Signs (Prefixes and Suffixes). They have great importance with regards to speed. Therefore, they should be studied in a methodical and repetitive manner until the student knows them by heart, to the point of being able to write them without hesitation, without any doubt, very fluently and instantaneously.
- There is a trend of increasing the number of signs while speed is escalating. In the rush to quickly write in shorthand in order to simultaneously keep up with what is being dictated, the student ends up making the sign bigger than it should be, and the sign often turns out to be a real scrawl.
- To avoid the increase and distortion of the shape of the shorthand sign, the best solution is to make copies of the dictations slowly, observing the proportion and size of the signs. And while training hard-to-trace words repeatedly, try to do them slowly and at a smaller size. Here is where the rule fits well: if you want to run, first go slow!

- A great exercise, which represents a real antidote against large and misrepresented signs, is the “microshorthand”. It consists in making a shorthand copy of a text, seeking to make the signs very small, excessively small, in very narrow lines.