

From: Stephanie D < > @yahoo.com>
To: gdwarner@mindspring.com
Subject: Practice technique
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G.D.,

I train with a home-study program called Realtime Reporting and Captioning at Home. You can see it at www.courtreportinathome.com. It's owned by Linda Bland from Florida. I practice about 6 to 8 hours a day, so that helps a lot. But the thing that has really helped me is the practice regimen that Linda set up for me.

I spend 2 hours a day "dissecting" practice takes at my goal speed level. I type the first minute 3 times, read it back, and go over the outlines that I completely omitted, or got so wrong that I would not be able to read them back, until I can write them with ease. After this, I can type the first minute. I do this through the entire 5 minute take. Now that I am in higher speeds, I sometimes break it down to 30 second intervals.

I spend 2 hours a day practicing at one speed level higher than my goal speed, not stopping the dictation for any reason. I just try to get in all the words that I can. I know a lot of people do not recommend this, but it has really worked for me. It lets me hear new words and think about how to write them and forces me to write the outlines I already know a lot quicker. When I go back to my goal speed, I am able to type the familiar outlines so quickly that I have extra time on the more difficult ones.

I spend 30 minutes working on briefs, proper names, numbers, etc., 30 minutes practicing from television (I personally like HSN, QVC, and, of course, Court TV.), and another hour writing 5-minute and 20-minute takes at my goal speed level. If I have extra time, I divide it up between dissecting and high-speed dictation.

This regimen is not set in stone. I do change it around and add in or omit things from time to time. I try to spend about an hour or two per day studying for the WKT. On the two days a week that I work, I usually get in about 2 or 3 hours, and there are days when I don't get in any. Occasionally, I will add in about 30 minutes a couple of speeds lower to work on my realtime, but since I don't have CAT yet, it's kind of hard to tell EXACTLY where I am.

To me, learning this technique has been all about perception. The higher the speed I practice in, the slower my goal speed sounds to me. It's like the Olympic runners who train to run their distances faster than what they really need in order to win. That way, when competition comes, it feels like a walk in the park. Some reporters have told me that they never practiced at speeds higher than their goal, because dropping those words made them feel so inadequate. I try think about all of the words I AM getting.

Well, you wanted it, and you got it. That's how I did it. My realtime is not perfect by any means, but my main goal at this point is to get my steno outlines and all of the Q&A symbols correct. I know it's probably not good practice to some, but commas and periods are easy to place.

BTW, your website is great. I found a lot of informative stuff on there. I know that everything I've just told you goes completely against everything in "The Plateau," but, like you said, different techniques work for different people.

Stephanie

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