

PETIT GUIDE POUR ORIENTER LE TRAVAIL D'ENTRAÎNEMENT DES ETUDIANTS EN INTERPRETATION

Il m'est apparu plutôt clairement au fil de ces derniers mois que nombre d'étudiants en M1 et M2, souhaitant s'entraîner au mieux pour renforcer leur techniques en interprétation, leur langue A et éventuellement leur langue B (actuelle et potentielle), ne savent pas trop comment s'y prendre ni quels entraînements il convient de privilégier. J'ai donc pensé qu'il serait utile de coucher sur papier quelques idées de pistes et d'exercices utiles pour tout le monde.

J'espère que vous avez tous compris que les heures de formation et d'enseignement offertes par votre école ne peuvent jamais être plus que la partie émergée de l'iceberg, et que si vous vous en contentez, vous n'avez pratiquement aucune chance de devenir interprète ! Il faut dès aujourd'hui vous débarrasser de l'idée qu'assister aux cours fera automatiquement de vous des interprètes – mobilisez votre énergie, votre volontarisme et votre imagination pour vous autonomiser.

Pensez à vos cours formels comme des occasions de bilan et d'accès à des formateurs chevronnés, mais retenez que même si l'athlète olympique (que vous souhaitez être sur le plan linguistique) recourt à un entraîneur spécialisé, celui-ci ne peut qu'observer et désigner des pistes d'entraînement. Ce sont les muscles et les tendons de l'athlète, et pas ceux du coach ou de l'entraîneur, qui permettront la réussite olympienne, et c'est à l'athlète lui/elle-même de fournir les efforts longs, fréquents, ciblés, réfléchis et soutenus qui seuls permettront de se muscler, d'acquérir de la résistance et de la technique.

Ici, c'est VOTRE cerveau qui doit s'aguerrir et acquérir les pistes neuronales qui sont les préalables à l'interprétation (surtout en simultanée), et il n'y a pas de raccourci : la seule méthode pour ce faire c'est de très nombreuses heures d'entraînement, seul ou avec d'autres, ponctuées d'évaluations et de bilans donnés par des professionnels expérimentés qui savent où la barre se situe, et comment corriger le tir si c'est nécessaire. On dit communément que pour acquérir une compétence d'expert pointu il faut une moyenne de 10.000 heures d'entraînement et, bien que l'on n'attend pas autant de vous pour lancer votre carrière, il faut comprendre – aujourd'hui même – que pour vous le prix de la réussite est au moins plusieurs centaines d'heures de pratique dans des conditions réelles.

Pendant vos entraînements, inspirez-vous aussi du texte, en **annexe 1** ci-dessous, sur les méthodes d'entraînement efficaces employées par les spécialistes et experts en tous genres.

Voici une petite liste des exercices qui vont vous aider (même si chaque cas, chaque objectif et chaque cerveau est différent – si vous voulez me consulter pour confectionner un planning

personnalisé en fonction de vos circonstances et de vos ambitions particulières, je serai bien entendu ravi de vous aider):

- 1) Ecouter beaucoup la radio (NPR, BBC Radio 4 et World Service, pour l'anglais) parlée, parfois avec une concentration exclusive, parfois en toile de fond de vos activités routinières (vaisselle, repassage...). L'avantage ici est que vous n'aurez pas d'indices visuels, ce qui va vous habituer à saisir la langue (passive) au vol, et en écoute plus active à parfaire la richesse lexicale de vos langues actives. En écoutant la radio tout en faisant autre chose, vous entraînez votre cerveau à traiter et à comprendre vos langues passives avec une partie seulement de vos capacités mentales – là il s'agit du but à atteindre en cabine, afin de libérer vos neurones pour la compréhension et le traitement, les tâches premières de l'interprète (pour qui la restitution doit aller plus ou moins de soi).

- 2) Faites de la simultanée à partir de vrais discours où l'orateur ne fait pas de concessions du fait d'être interprété(e). Utilisez ordi et écouteurs, enregistrez-vous et contrôlez votre prestation, ensuite faites contrôler régulièrement votre interprétation par un professionnel de la bonne langue A (s'il le faut en envoyant des fichiers par email). A cette fin, j'espère que vous trouverez utile la liste de liens en **annexe 2** ci-dessous.

- 3) Constituez un groupe d'entraînement avec d'autres étudiants, négociez l'utilisation d'une salle avec cabines et organisez des séances régulières en vous tenant au respect de ces rendez-vous, même quand vous êtes fatigué(e) ou que le cœur ne vous en dit guère ! Ici, vous pourrez vous exercer à la consécutive et la simultanée. Préparez et donnez des discours à tour de rôle (ce qui aura aussi l'avantage de vous entraîner à cet exercice essentiel, assimilé à la consécutive). Vous trouverez en **annexe 3** la description d'un tel groupe d'entraînement, celui-ci ouvert aux jeunes diplômés et pas aux étudiants.

- 4) Faites des traductions à vue tous les jours, seul(e) ou à plusieurs, en vous astreignant à trouver sans hésitation au moins 5 ou 6 versions différentes de chaque phrase (en langue A), en faisant varier vocabulaire, syntaxe, et constructions grammaticales. Vers la langue B éventuelle, 3 versions, encore une fois dans la foulée et sans temps de latence, pourra suffire comme but. Ici, vous allez accroître la souplesse de votre maîtrise lexicale et l'agilité de votre esprit..

- 5) Faites des consécutives de 4 minutes, de préférence devant un public, composé soit de vos collègues soit de 'consommateurs purs' ne possédant pas la langue source – un tel procédé s'est avéré très motivant pour les étudiants, car il les met en position réel de 'truchement' ayant un rôle clef pour que le message soit transmis...

- 6) Faites beaucoup de 'shadowing' (voir texte en **annexe 4** ci-dessous), à partir de beaux discours dans votre langue A et votre langue B éventuelle. N'oubliez pas que même votre langue maternelle ne sera pas encore d'une richesse suffisante pour interpréter en conférence de manière convaincante. En outre, cet outil est le meilleur possible pour acquérir et renforcer une langue B. Le 'shadowing' permet, à condition d'en faire des dizaines d'heures et d'y introduire progressivement d'autres charges mentales, de mettre en place les automatismes et réflexes linguistiques essentiels.

Quand vous travaillez en groupe, soyez constructifs dans votre feedback, mais soyez aussi francs et exigeants, car c'est seulement ainsi que vous progresserez ; tentez de ne pas vous contenter de répertorier les erreurs de langue, mais cherchez à débusquer les failles éventuelles de l'écoute, de la compréhension et du raisonnement qui sont à l'origine des erreurs, omissions et imprécisions.

Il est plus important de faire des entraînements tous les jours (en vous accordant quand-même un jour de repos hebdomadaire..) que d'en faire à outrance. Je recommanderais que vous vous exerciez en moyenne 90 minutes par jour, en deux tranches de 45 minutes, toutes disciplines confondues ; les jours où vous n'avez pas cours, faites-en le double. Essayez d'acquérir la faculté de vous concentrer rapidement et à 100% pendant vos entraînements, et de vous détendre tout aussi intensément (!) lorsque vous en avez besoin !

Alors, confectionnez-vous un plan d'études écrit et raisonné, et suivez-le, même les mauvais jours – c'est ainsi que vous réussirez, et pas autrement, je le répète...

ANNEXE 1

Article (by Cal Newport):

“If You’re Busy, You’re Doing Something Wrong: the surprisingly relaxed lives of elite achievers”

The Berlin Study

In the early 1990s, a trio of psychologists descended on the Universität der Künste, a historic arts academy in the heart of West Berlin. They came to study the violinists.

As described in their subsequent publication in *Psychological Review*, the researchers asked the academy's music professors to help them identify a set of stand out violin players — the students who the professors believed would go onto careers as professional performers.

We'll call this group the *elite players*.

For a point of comparison, they also selected a group of students from the school's education department. These were students who were on track to become music teachers. They were serious about violin, but as their professors explained, their ability was not in the same league as the first group.

We'll call this group the *average players*.

The three researchers subjected their subjects to a series of in-depth interviews. They then gave them diaries which divided each 24-hour period into 50 minute chunks, and sent them home to keep a careful log of how they spent their time.

Flush with data, the researchers went to work trying to answer a fundamental question: *Why are the elite players better than the average players?*

The obvious guess is that the elite players are more dedicated to their craft. That is, they're willing to put in the long, Tiger Mom-style hours required to get good, while the average players are off goofing around and enjoying life.

The data, as it turns out, had a different story to tell...

Decoding the Patterns of the Elite

We can start by disproving the assumption that the elite players dedicate more hours to music. **The time diaries revealed that both groups spent, on average, the same number of hours on music per week (around 50).**

The difference was in how they spent this time. **The elite players were spending almost three times more hours than the average players on deliberate practice — the uncomfortable, methodical work of stretching your ability.**

This might not be surprising, as the importance of deliberate practice had been replicated and reported many times (c.f., Gladwell).

But the researchers weren't done.

They also studied how the students scheduled their work. **The average players, they discovered, spread their work throughout the day.** A graph included in the paper, which shows the average time spent working versus the waking hours of the day, is essentially flat.

The elite players, by contrast, consolidated their work into two well-defined periods. When you plot the average time spent working versus the hours of the day for these players, there are two prominent peaks: one in the morning and one in the afternoon.

In fact, the more elite the player, the more pronounced the peaks. For *the best of the best* — the subset of the elites who the professors thought would go on to play in one of Germany's two best professional orchestras — there was essentially no deviation from a rigid two-sessions a day schedule.

This isolation of work from leisure had pronounced effects in other areas of the players' lives.

Consider, for example, sleep: **the elite players slept an hour more per night than the average players.**

Also consider relaxation. The researchers asked the players to estimate how much time they dedicated each week to leisure activities — an important indicator of their subjective feeling of relaxation. By this metric, **the elite players were significantly more relaxed than the average players,** and the best of the best were the most relaxed of all.

Hard Work is Different than Hard to Do Work

To summarize these results:

- The average players are working just as many hours as the elite players (around 50 hours a week spent on music),
- but they're not dedicating these hours to the right type of work (spending almost 3 times less hours than the elites on crucial deliberate practice),
- and furthermore, they spread this work haphazardly throughout the day. So even though they're not doing *more* work than the elite players, they end up sleeping less and feeling more stressed. Not to mention that they remain worse at the violin.

I've seen this same phenomenon time and again in my study of high achievers. It came up so often in my study of top students, for example, that I even coined a name for it: **the paradox of the relaxed Rhodes Scholar.**

This study sheds some light on this paradox. **It provides empirical evidence that there's a difference between *hard work* and *hard to do work*:**

- ***Hard work*** is deliberate practice. It's not fun while you're doing it, but you don't have to do too much of it in any one day (the elite players spent, on average, 3.5 hours per day engaged in deliberate practice, broken into two sessions). It also provides you measurable progress in a skill, which generates a strong sense of contentment and motivation. Therefore, although hard work is hard, it's not draining and it can fit nicely into a relaxed and enjoyable day.
- ***Hard to do work***, by contrast, *is* draining. It has you running around all day in a state of false busyness that leaves you, like the average players from the Berlin study, feeling tired and stressed. It also, as we just learned, has very little to do with real accomplishment.

This analysis leads to an important conclusion. Whether you're a student or well along in your career, **if your goal is to build a remarkable life, then busyness and exhaustion should be your enemy.** If you're chronically stressed and up late working, you're doing something wrong. You're the average players from the Universität der Künste — not the elite. You've built a life around hard to do work, not hard work.

The solution suggested by this research, as well as my own, is as simple as it is startling: *Do less. But do what you do with complete and hard focus. Then when you're done be done, and go enjoy the rest of the day.*

ANNEXE 2

LIENS UTILES

POUR L'INTERPRETE SOUHAITANT S'ENTRAINER

www.aiic.net

Une source très riche de ressources en tous genres pour les interprètes

www.interpreters.free.fr

Site français d'informations de tous types (y compris certains des articles de Chris) pour les jeunes interprètes : très utile !

www.interpreting.info

Nouveau forum et foire aux questions, gérés par l'Aiic – très utile, très varié..

www.nationalnetworkforinterpreting.ac.uk

Site britannique polyvalent, rempli d'infos intéressantes pour profs et étudiants

bootsinthebooth.blogspot.com/

Blog très intéressant et marrant, de la part (entre autres) d'une ancienne étudiante de l'ISTI

www.theinterpreterdiaries.com

Site fort intéressant et éclectique, très riche en enseignements de toutes sortes...

www.ted.com

Très bon site contenant beaucoup de discours très variés par d'excellents orateurs

www.ted.com/tedx

Comme dessus, mais cette fois des événements indépendants avec un choix de langues. Qualités de production pas toujours aussi bonnes que pour les manifestations TED 'normales'

www.thersa.org

Un peu comme TED, mais avec une multiplicité d'interventions en audio et en vidéo, souvent plus longues que chez TED ou TEDx

www.apple.com/support/itunes-u

iTunes U contient des centaines de cours, de conférences et de vidéos plus utiles et instructifs les unes que les autres. Je CROIS que l'on ne peut les exploiter sur que plateforme Apple, mais je n'en suis pas sûr....

www.nato.int (> 'organisation' > 'member countries')

Site général avec mp3 et mp4, liens vers les sites individuels des organes officiels de chaque pays membre

www.natochronicles.org

Bons films documentaires sur les diverses opérations actuelles de l'OTAN

www.podcast.ft.com/index

Podcasts sur divers sujets d'actualité, et d'ordre général

www.ft.com/lexicon

Dictionnaire anglais-anglais de termes financiers souvent très spécialisés

unterm.un.org

Base de donnée de l'ONU, avec bon moteur de recherche, intégrant des traductions dans toutes les langues de l'ONU...

ANNEXE 3

Interpreters in Brussels Practice Group 2013

Interpreters in Brussels Practice Group is a practice group for professional interpreters or recent graduates based in Brussels, aimed at honing both simultaneous and consecutive interpreting techniques through group practice and mutual feedback. It relies upon the commitment of each participant who has the opportunity to practice both techniques and in return gives speeches in their mother tongue. Moreover, each participant receives and gives peer feedback on the interpreting performance.

Being a voluntary group, everyone plays a key role and can provide suggestions in order to meet specific needs and participate actively.

The idea behind the group took shape when I first moved to Brussels and I was looking for fellow colleagues to practice simultaneous and consecutive skills over the year. Thanks to the great response from professionals and the invaluable support of some EU accredited conference interpreters, I decided to further develop the idea and set up the group.

The Hogeschool Universiteit Brussel (HUB: it.ly/1bYtbvu) provides the interpreting lab, fully equipped with standard interpreting booths and TELEVIC units with virtual recorder VACS and MP3. Colette Storms is the Head of the interpreting department at HUB.

The group meets twice a month: the second and fourth Wednesday of each month, from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.

The groups are organised according to the number of participants and their language combination, thus guaranteeing everyone to practice both simultaneous and consecutive skills.

We usually prepare eight speeches per session covering at least four languages, i.e. four speeches 12-15 minutes long for simultaneous practice and four speeches 8-10 minutes long for consecutive. When we don't have a native speaker, we use online videos or online speech repositories.

We record all our speeches and upload them on *Interpreters in Brussels Practice Group* Youtube channel (bit.ly/18DSM6Q) and Speechpool (www.speechpool.net), an online learning tool developed by Sophie Llewellyn Smith, an AIIC member.

We also have a Facebook page where we share any information and/or questions relevant to our profession: on.fb.me/1bH30b3

The content of the practice session depends on the participants themselves and varies according to their needs and objectives. Participants can request to work on a specific topic or terminology and practice their return. Moreover, senior interpreters working for international institutions or on the private market often participate in our sessions by giving speeches and providing targeted feedback.

The composition of the group is varied but always proficient and high-quality, ranging from EU ACI interpreters, international organization staff interpreters, freelancers and recent graduates.

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ANNEXE 4

“Shadowing” - what, how, when, why?

The technique and practice of shadowing is an indispensable tool for both the budding and the experienced simultaneous interpreter, but it is a controversial technique and is often misunderstood or discounted. In my opinion, however, all interpreting professionals would gain greatly from spending time both considering and practising the art of shadowing.

In this brief text I shall endeavour both to describe the technique and provide some hints as to its use.

Shadowing is useful into all the interpreter's active languages, 'A' and 'B', and can be employed to correct and refine a multitude of interpretation weaknesses – accent, delivery, voice quality, vocal range, emphasis, 'cleanliness' of rendition, confidence etc. etc.

However, it is important that shadowing:

- be carried out in a graduated, thorough and reasoned way
- be regularly supervised and/or assessed by both the practitioner and his or her teachers, supervisors or colleagues
- be carried out over many hours and in each of the linguistic combinations that it is desired to enhance
- be coupled with more conventional training techniques

The technique consists of spending many hours in a real or virtual booth shadowing an able and fluent speaker of the target language. As the goal is to replicate the neurological and intellectual demands of simultaneous interpretation, a simple laptop/ipod/headphone combination will suffice, in the absence of a true booth. Using MP3/MP4 or flash files, DVDs, CDs or audio cassettes, choose speakers who are expressing themselves in their mother tongue and who have an excellent mastery thereof, without strong regional accents, and with a gift of oratory which allows full expression of the native cadences of the language. It cannot be over-emphasised that your chosen speaker must be carefully selected, as a function of accent, elocution, delivery, register etc.

This is an excellent technique at many levels, as (this being a marked trend among recent neuro-linguistic and neurological expert studies) shadowing involves some 80% of the neuro-linguistic operations involved in simultaneous interpretation, the only factor missing being that of language transfer.

Shadowing initially involves repeating the words of the speaker without modification. This allows the interpreter's brain, ears and mouth, working as they do in concert, to begin to reproduce the sounds and rhythms of the target language, without conscious mental effort, and begins to create the 'linguistic muscle memory' naturally acquired by children learning their own tongue. This will require many tens of hours of actual speech production – it is essential that the language actually be voiced, or the exercise is useless.

It is also recommended, in the case of an actual or potential 'B' language, to shadow with a text, as it is true to say that we cannot hear or apprehend what we do not know, and if we do not hear all the articles, prepositions, and smaller sounds that make a native speaker sound native, we will not reproduce those sounds in our shadowing, and will lose much of the potential benefit. Here again, it is useful to record your shadowing, and then replay it, comparing it to the text.

The prime goal of the exercise is to accustom brain, ears and mouth to the flawless and (eventually) effortless production of the sounds and cadences of what may be (in the case of a 'B') a foreign language. The goal here is to establish a new network of synapses and neuronal pathways, this being an essential stage in the interpreter's acquisition of each new language combination. It should not be

thought that all lessons learned in the successful mastery of one combination can simply and instantaneously be transposed to another – many hours of actual practice are required for each language pair, and there are no shortcuts!

Let's now begin to look in a more concrete way at the actual practice of the technique.

While shadowing, it is important to experiment with differing levels of **time lag** or 'recol' (say from 0.5 to 5 seconds), introducing a certain elasticity to reflect the fluctuating demands imposed by the speaker and to train the brain to cope with larger or smaller linguistic buffer spaces in the language combination being employed.

At the same time, gradually introduce **expressions of your own**, allowing for varying semantic (but of course not substantive) distance from the speaker. At one extreme you may wish to decide in advance to modify one or two words per sentence, and at the other to leave only one or two words unchanged.

In order to approach, in the 'B' language, the facility which characterises an experienced interpreter's work into his/her mother tongue, it is also important to train both voice and brain to ensure acceptable linguistic production while mental processing efforts are required elsewhere.

To this end, it is useful while shadowing to practice (for example) writing **numerical sequences** involving fixed gradations (1, 3, 5, 7... or 1, 6, 11, 16, 21 etc.), which can then be self-checked after the exercise, along with the recorded interpretation.

Another variant might involve writing down **poems or song lyrics**, which the interpreter knows by heart, while interpreting. Using increasingly complex sequences is doubly fruitful, and the goal, evidently, is to guarantee an acceptable level of linguistic production even while mental processing efforts are devoted to other, more noble, tasks such as actually understanding and transposing concepts and ideas! Such exercises are useless, of course, unless both spoken and written productions are assessed for accuracy and acceptability.

Many interpreters experience difficulties, in the booth, in adopting a **register or 'persona'** which differs from their own, and shadowing can be very helpful in acquiring these more thespian-related skills which can so often make the difference between a good and an excellent interpretation. Thus, shadowing speakers who are expressing joy, grief, anger, sorrow or enthusiasm, will begin to instill the required 'muscle memory' that will allow the interpreter (when the chips are down and lack of the appropriate vocabulary or register would severely damage the credibility of the interpretation) appropriately and confidently to transmit the entire message and sentiments of the speaker. To this end, it is useful to shadow speakers who are expressing strong or even excessive emotion, without fear of drifting into caricature, given that there will always be a filter or some loss of intensity between 'shadower' and 'shadowee'.

The above exercise is of particular utility in the interpreter's 'B' language, as its extended practice helps to instill native accent and provide a more nearly instinctive feeling for register and vocabulary, in sensitive contexts where any such failures would have serious consequences. For accent correction purposes, it is preferable initially to shadow language-learning tapes/CDs, etc., because the texts are spoken slowly, thus all sounds can be easily discerned. In addition, the texts employed are simpler, but grammar and syntax are correct. An added advantage is that the text will be available to read during shadowing.

It is also useful to spend time shadowing **fast speakers**, as it is true to say that many (usually inexperienced) interpreters have difficulty in simply delivering even their native language rapidly, clearly and without stumbling, especially when obliged to adopt a cadence which is not their own. It goes without saying that this difficulty is exacerbated into the 'B' language.

It is my hope that the above hints and descriptions will help you in your interpreting life, and endow you with increased facility and confidence in all your active languages, and in all registers. I should again stress the importance of shadowing, and of spending considerable amounts of time on this

exercise, to enable the brain to integrate it in a reflexive, automatic way, clearing the way for more complex intellectual operations while actually interpreting.