

***Digital Technology Advances for Consecutive Interpreting  
A New Dimension in Note-taking Training and Assessment***

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***Abstract:***

The debate about the development of note-taking skills in the training of interpreters has always occupied an important place in the T&I industry and the academic field. As the technique remains highly personal and individual, some instructors and practitioners are sceptical or neutral about the necessity to teach note-taking. Others tend to promote its systematic instruction as a kind of code superimposed on language. Whether we teach it or not, a consensus seems to exist that note-taking is a necessary tool for any interpreter and must be seen as a crutch whose function goes beyond the simple help to overcome memory deficiency.

Rules for effective note-taking have been defined and modelled (e.g. Rozan, Ilg, Seleskovitch) so that instructors can design training tools to develop their students' skills. But not much has been done to find relevant ways of evaluating the learning process in the acquisition of such skills. It is generally the quality of the consecutive interpretation and the final notes (the product) which allow instructors to give feedback and to assess their trainees. Such a product evaluation is often made without clearly distinguishing the memorization and the note-taking qualities of the interpreter. One possibility to evaluate the note-taking process has so far often been to video record the interpreter at work and to compare the recording with the speech from which notes were taken.

However, today's digital technology provides instructors with means to follow and assess the process of note-taking, either in self-evaluation or peer-evaluation contexts. New technology tools bring a new light to trainers but also to professionals eager to evaluate and improve the quality of their work in consecutive interpreting. The purpose of this paper will be to present such technology (e.g. digital pens) and show how training and assessment in note-taking can be improved.

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