

**THE ONLINE SHORTHAND COURSE,
LAUNCHED BY PROF. PROF. WALDIR CURY,
IS A HUGE SUCCESS!**

(After completing eight months of the Online Shorthand course launched on the Internet, Taquibras interviewed Prof. Waldir Cury, the author of the course.)

(This interview was given in 2005.)

Taquibras - Professor Cury, eight months ago you launched an Online Shorthand Course on the Website "taquigrafia.emfoco". Why launch an online course?

Prof. Cury - The story is interesting. And I can even say that "every cloud has a silver lining". Well... I tried to find a publisher to publish the new version of my shorthand textbook of the Maron method, and all the feedbacks from the publishers were negative, that is, none of them were interested in publishing it. The book was really superb, both from the pedagogical point of view as well as visually, containing a modern layout and a series of pictures. My intention with this book was to make shorthand learning a playful experience, with interesting, enjoyable exercises like multiple choice exercises, exercises to correlate, etc. In this edition, I had inserted all the improvements I had made in the method that were achieved over the years of teaching the method.

Since no publisher agreed to publish it, for a long while I tried to figure out another way. That was when I came up with the idea to launch an online course on the Internet! To place a course on the Internet, I would neither have to depend on the approval of any publisher, nor would I need distributors. I would edit, publish and distribute the course myself, using this powerful release media called the Internet. And with such a tool I would be able (as I can do so now) to disclose shorthand nationwide as well as anywhere around the world, mainly for the Portuguese speaking countries.

Taquibras - How's the online shorthand course coming along?

Prof. Cury - It's coming along just fine! I was surprised with the number of people who are interested in learning shorthand and are signing up in the course. The Registration form was attached to the course on September 11 last year. We are now in May. Therefore, it's been eight months. In these eight months 1612 students have already signed up wishing to learn shorthand. And that is without considering those who start doing the course but do not sign up. I say this because I often get emails from students asking me to clarify a certain point of a lesson, and when I check the registration forms, I do not find the student's name there. The daily sign up average is 15 new students. But there were peak days. For example: on April 23rd there were 33 new students and on April 24th there were 37 new students.

Taquibras - Where are all these people from?

Prof. Cury - From all over Brazil, from several states, country towns and towns whose names I have never heard of. In summary, they come from places where there are no shorthand courses or professors. This was also one of the main goals I had in mind when I launched the course on the Internet: provide a course for people who have a great desire to learn shorthand, but have neither courses nor professors nearby. There are also students from Portugal, Argentina, Mexico, United States and Colombia. This is the power of the Internet, an advertising tool with no boundaries.

Taquibras - How do people get to know the online course?

Prof. Cury - This was also a question that I put in the registration form, because I was curious to know. And the great majority answered that they heard about the course navigating the Internet, searching websites. But, for some time now, many people are starting to answer with the word "recommendation". I mean, many people have begun to recommend the course to friends and acquaintances. The course is being spread from one person to another. Recently, there was an interesting fact. A large number of

secretaries registered in the course. I discovered, through one of them, that the online course was recommended to them by the Secretary Course management.

Taquibras - What are the students' education levels?

Prof. Cury - One of the fields when filling out the registration form is exactly that: education. And I was really surprised - but delighted at the same time - to see the different levels of education. There are students that have incomplete Elementary Education, those that have completed High School, others with an incomplete College Degree, as well as many others that have College, Post-Graduation, Masters, Doctorate or PhD Degrees. And it is also interesting to note that there are a number of people signing up for the course who have the most diversified professions.

Taquibras - So according to what you are saying, the problem with shorthand is not then the arrival of technology, but the lack of publicizing. Is that it? What seems to be the actual problem is the lack of publicizing?

Prof. Cury - Exactly. I always mentioned that, the problem with shorthand is the lack of publicizing and because of this, many people do not know what shorthand means and thus, are unaware of its vast and diversified use. Wouldn't it be great if everyone knew the two methods of writing: the slow (conventional writing), and the short and quick (shorthand) writing? What advantages wouldn't the students have, specially university students, for example, if they knew how to write in shorthand! They would be able to make quick notes on lessons and lectures. Who knows one day the Ministry of Education may endorse the idea and introduce shorthand as a subject in the school curriculum?

Taquibras - The Online Shorthand Course is completely free. The person simply signs up and starts studying. Why is it free?

Prof. Cury – Well...The Online Shorthand Course has two purposes:

1) to offer a shorthand course for all those who really wish to learn shorthand, but have no professor/teacher or course nearby;

2) to disclose shorthand to the greatest possible number of people. So I thought: if I charge for a shorthand course on the Internet, I will be forming - in advance - a barrier that is, I would be limiting the learning only to those who would be able to pay.

Well... other professors/teachers may have an online course and charge for it and one day, I may do so as well (something I already do for classroom courses). But at the moment, the purpose of the online course is merely and solely to spread shorthand and reach the greatest possible number of people.

Taquibras – Couldn't the online courses replace classroom courses?

Prof. Cury - I think that both can “live” together. I developed the online course, but I also have classroom students. And many of those who come to me seeking a shorthand course, when I suggest to them to study through the online course, specially because I do not have any available time, they tell me they prefer a course with a professor/teacher. The truth is that not everyone is fit to do a distance learning course: not every student has the knack for self-study. An online course is mainly a self-taught course that is, for students who have self-discipline and perseverance as well as for those who can even motivate themselves when facing some sort of difficulty. These type of students do not need the motivation from a classroom professor/teacher.

Taquibras - A curiosity that many people have: How are you being able to put shorthand signs of all the lessons on the computer screen?

Prof. Cury - In two ways. Sometimes I use the scanner, specially when it comes to a text that is written in shorthand. When I have to mix, in a Word page, text and shorthand signs, I use a Tablet. At first, it was difficult to work with the Tablet, because I had no "know-how". Then, I got the “hang of it” and now, I can work very well with it. To save time, I developed a library of shorthand signs made with the Tablet. In this

case, I go to the library, select a sign referring to a sound, click on "copy/paste", join other pieces of sounds, and finally, "group" them to form a word. If you want to duplicate such "grouped" word, just "copy/paste" again. In fact, it is a bit of hard work (not to say "painstaking"), but it is heartwarming work, because it is done with a lot of devotion.

Taquibras - Are there already tangible results in these eight months?

Prof. Cury - Yes, several. And it makes me very happy. I received Evaluation Tests for correction (the student can either scan them or send them by Mail) and the result so far, is beyond expectations. Some tests have practically no errors; others have minor flaws (like changing a sign for another, a very common mistake, even for classroom students). Some really surprised me because they were so perfect, the signs so well designed - a clear demonstration that the student a) has "the knack" for shorthand, b) is self-taught, and c) is studying the way it should be done, that is, in a very dedicated and methodical manner. The tests I have received so far have made me very happy. If the student has learned, it is because the methodology applied is good and the explanations are clear.

Here's an example of the result from the online course in a video sent by the student Alexandre Souza, from the city of Vitoria, he is already writing dictations in shorthand at 85 words per minute.

http://www.taquiografia.emfoco.nom.br/videos_demonstracoes_ditados_velocidade.htm

Taquibras - Congratulations, Prof. Cury, for your initiative. Taquibras will always be available to help you with this valuable work of spreading this beautiful art, this amazing useful form of writing called shorthand.

Prof. Cury - I just have to thank Taquibras for its incentive not only regarding the online course, but also regarding the website “taquigrafia.emfoco”. I think this is a very important union because it is culturally enriching and consequently amplifies the publicizing of shorthand.

Finally, I selected a few sentences (from many sent to me) written by online students, when they signed up:

- “It’s fantastic to be able to learn online, because where I live there are no courses like this.” (Professor - City of Nova Friburgo/State of RJ)
- “Thank you for putting this knowledge available... Without your dedicated work it would not be possible.” (Physician - City of Sinop/State of MT)
- “I find it so amazing and open-hearted that it stimulates me. I believe that knowledge should always be repassed, because it exalts us and helps others. I appreciate the opportunity that is being given to me, because I'm totally touched by the love for shorthand that you transmit through this magnificent work you have presented! Congratulations!” (Environment Designer- City of Belo Horizonte/ State of MG)
- “Offering an online course makes learning possible for people who cannot attend a classroom course due to lack of time because of their day-to-day routine.” (Professor – City of Contagem/State of MG)
- “I’ve had many difficulties taking messages, but reading about shorthand interested me. Browsing the Internet, I found the online course. It is going to help me a lot, because I’m not able to attend a course outside my city.” (Secretary – City of Francisco Beltrão/State of PR)
- “I found the initiative of publicizing shorthand on the Internet simply fantastic, specially with the development of the Online Shorthand Course. The idea is brilliant! Congratulations!” (Professor – City of Salvador/Sate of BA)
- I do the shorthand course because I like to write down everything that happens in the classroom and thus, I need to write faster and faster. Last week I went to the Superior Court of Justice of the State of MG (TJMG) to attend hearings, then I saw the stenographers working and found the method they use very interesting. (Law Student - City of Belo Horizonte/ State of MG)