

## American River College Externs: a 10+ year partnership with the Healthcare Interpreting Program

*Eleven ARC students speaking 3 different languages successfully completed Fall 2019 externship at UCDH*

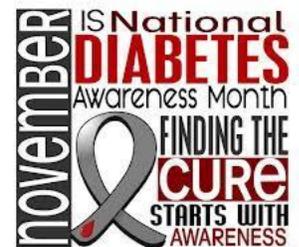
For over ten years now, UCDH Medical Interpreting Services opened its doors to more than 70 students from the ARC Healthcare Interpreting Program every fall. This year, we hosted a group of eight Spanish-speaking and three Russian- & Ukrainian-speaking students. The knowledge they gained in the classroom was tested at our healthcare facility, and all students loved the experience! Externs quickly came to realize that no matter how complex interpreting tasks may seem in the classroom, providing language services in real-life situations is even more complex! One of the students reflected on her experience:

"I would first like to state that I am incredibly thankful for this experience because it helped me develop deep confidence in my medical interpreting skills. I did not know how this opportunity would unfold at the beginning, but it definitely surpassed my expectations. For example, shadowing different staff interpreters allowed me to witness different approaches in delivering interpreting services. In turn, this provided me with more tools and perspectives that I was able to apply in future assignments. In addition, I was exposed to plenty of new medical conditions, procedures, and medication names that grew my medical knowledge reservoir. Further, Victoria, Veronica, and Carlos were all

great and always provided me with useful feedback after observing my performance. Their advice created an environment in which I grew professionally.

I would say that the most challenging aspect of this externship was learning how to control the flow of a session. During one of my assignments, I found it difficult to manage the flow of the conversation due to the number of people in the room, their tendency to all talk at once, and the lack of pauses given for interpretation. Although this assignment challenged me, I rank it as my top educational experience because I was able to develop new strategies for how to address this situation in the future. If I had to assess my performance, then I would say that my professional abilities and confidence both improved with each subsequent session. Lastly, I would like to thank all of the individuals that made this externship possible, fulfilling, and educational!"

*For those interested in the ARC Healthcare Interpreter Program, please go to this link:*  
<https://www.arc.losrios.edu/academics/programs-and-majors/healthcare-interpreting>



### November 2019 Calendar

*National Diabetes Month  
National Native American Heritage  
Month*

- 1 - All Saints Day (Christianity)
- 1 – World Vegan Day
- 1-7 – Animal Shelter Appreciation Week (US)
- 3 – Election Day (US)
- 10 – Mawlid an Nabi (Islam)
- 11 – Veterans' Day (US)
- 12 – Birthday of Guru Nanak Dev Sahib (Sikh)
- 15-22 – Hunger and Homeless Awareness Week (US)
- 16 – International Day for Tolerance
- 19 – National Rural Health Day (US)
- 21 – National Adoption Day (US)
- 26 – Thanksgiving Day (US)
- 26 – Day of the Covenant (Baha'i)

## Note-taking in Consecutive Interpreting: too much/too little; how and what to note-take

Source: [https://smartidiom.pt/en/note-taking-in-consecutive-interpreting-too-much-too-little-how-and-what-to-note-take/?cl=\(EMAIL\\_CAMPAIGN\\_12\\_12\\_2019\)&mc\\_cid=01afe9bf79&mc\\_eid=ebece451c0](https://smartidiom.pt/en/note-taking-in-consecutive-interpreting-too-much-too-little-how-and-what-to-note-take/?cl=(EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_12_12_2019)&mc_cid=01afe9bf79&mc_eid=ebece451c0)

I've always been real crazy about consecutive interpreting, but I realised early in life that it wasn't for me. Not because I give up easily in the face of challenges – anyone who knows me knows it's exactly the opposite; for me, every cloud has a silver lining and I always try to hope against hope – but because my “nervous and anxious” side (according to my Mom, I get the jitters) wouldn't let me be a happy interpreter, assuming that I had a knack for this art. So, after completing my degree in Translation – Interpreting programme – I automatically ruled out this activity from my professional life. This decision is a direct consequence of my strong personality: I don't do things half-heartedly and I wasn't cut out to work in something I didn't enjoy. If I like it, I do my best; if I don't, I find excuses and won't even start. Even so, I try to keep up to date with the best market practices and it is in this context that I leave you with some thoughts about what I have read over the years. This time, the topic of my thoughts is note-taking in consecutive interpreting. My aim is to share what I consider to be some of the strengths of successful interpreters.

As we know, interpreters are expected to have **much more than just language skills**. Besides having thorough knowledge of the target language (usually the foreign working languages), interpreters should also master their own **language and culture**, as well as the cultures of the foreign languages with which they work. There are also other significant aspects in interpreting: **ethical and professional principles; the role of the interpreter as a communication agent** and as the **liaison between languages and cultures**.

In consecutive interpreting, and for the most experienced interpreters, note-taking is, to a large extent, small in importance when compared with the constant efforts to analyse what is being said, understand its meaning and render it into speech in simultaneous interpreting. However, for the less experienced interpreters, note-taking is a tough hurdle to overcome. It is to the latter that this article is addressed.

### THE PITFALLS OF NOTE-TAKING

First and foremost, let me make it quite clear that the note-taking process is **not entirely perfect**. It can never replace the oral presentation we have heard earlier. Nonetheless, much of what we say is of little importance for the purpose of the conversation. The role of the interpreter in this note-taking process is, therefore, to **select what is being said** and to render only what will matter to the message recipients.

- This cannot be a **mechanical process**: the more mechanical the interpreter's notes, the lower the quality of the interpretation.
- Taking notes is **not the same as taking dictation**; it's meant to jog the memory of the interpreter when he/she has to render the interpretation.
- **Notes are short-lived** and can only be used within minutes after the speech to be interpreted is delivered. When the speaker finishes the speech, it is still fresh in the memory of the interpreter and the notes are there to jog his/her memory.
- **Notes are personal**; this is why they can only be used by the interpreter who jotted them down and only for a specific period of time.
- The problem with **too many notes** is that we might pay too little attention to the speaker's words. Rendition may, therefore, end up being a superficial speech with serious mistakes and easily avoidable contradictions.

### ADVICE ON NOTE-TAKING

Here is a list of measures suggested by professional interpreters:

- Take notes quickly – above all, don't wait for the “right” word because this is not the time to do this;
- Jot down words that are easy to understand in order to jog your memory when you have to render the speech;
- Avoid using loose pages or you'll end up with disorganised sheets of paper; instead, use 15 x 20 cm notepads;
- Write only on one side of the page;
- Use a pencil;
- Jot down readable notes so that when you're stressed about rendering the speech you won't waste time searching for the ideas;
- During rendition, always maintain eye contact with the audience;
- Use a large letter size that can easily be read from afar;
- Avoid using ambiguous abbreviations – for example, “ind” should not mean “independently” in some cases and “industrial” in others;
- Use existing symbols and never invent a symbol during the speech that is not easily recognisable;
- Change the structure of the notes using your good judgement, always respecting the cohesion of the speech and the speaker's intention.

*(To be continued in the next issue)*