

DE LA MORA Interpreter Training – 21 Day Program to Improve Simultaneous Delivery

(The following script is taken from a previously recorded video)

Hello, and welcome to our 21-day program to improve your simultaneous delivery. Congratulations on making it this far into the program - now we're going to put you to work. Let's put those weight-lifting skills to the test. We're going to help you on your potential by practicing your delivery with our system.

This is a 21-day program that you're welcome to listen to several times, whenever you need to, because you're going to repeat it every day for 21 days. The basic principle of what we do is to help you reinforce something that we talked about in our class in simultaneous. This concept is so important for us that we want to really make sure that you understand exactly how to improve your performance using this principal.

So, as a quick review, let's talk about simultaneous. We put this question mark on simultaneous, because when I first talked about simultaneous - and the first time as an interpreter that I heard the word "simultaneous" - I assumed, like many of us, simultaneous means "at the same time." So of course, when the original speaker started speaking, I thought that my job was to immediately start interpreting as soon as they said the first word. Well, very quickly I realized that was not possible.

I remember very well that the first time I tried to do simultaneous - unlucky for me, I'm a Spanish-speaker; I was going into Spanish - the speaker started, in English, with a list of adjectives, like "the long, hard, rocky, difficult..." I immediately discovered, "Uh oh. I really can't say anything, because I don't know the gender of the noun, and if I don't know the gender of the noun, I can't really use the adjectives correctly."

So, I had to wait. And I had to wait for a little bit until I had enough information so I could jump in. If I jumped in late, it stands to reason then that the interpreter then should finish late, because we start late. And I quickly discovered then that simultaneous is not really simultaneous, because even when the interpreter is listening - the original speaker - the interpreter is not speaking.

In other words, sometimes both the original speaker and the interpreter are going to be speaking simultaneously, but they're not going to be saying the same thing, because the interpreter should always be delayed. And it stands to reason that if the speaker stops speaking, the interpreter would mention two or three or four words after the speaker stopped, because they need to catch this lag of time with which they started.

This lag of time is called "decalage." Decalage is "it." The better the decalage, the better the interpreter. That has been my mantra for 20 years. The better the decalage, the better the interpreter. But it's taken me awhile to put together a system to help you improve your decalage. Let's talk about it from the very beginning.

If you're going to do simultaneous interpretation in court, in the United States, we all must agree that the source language that you're going to be listening to is always going to be English. And if you're going to be hearing English, then, as a simultaneous interpreter in a court of law, most of the time - I would say almost always (there are very few exceptions I can even think of) - the interpreter's going to be

interpreting into non-English. So, the target language is not going to be English - it's going to be your language of expertise.

So, the first thing we have to understand is this: because I'm going to be speaking a target language that is not English, and my main concern is to improve my decalage, how do I combine those two things? And this is what I want you to understand. Our system is a multi-layer, multi-purpose approach to interpretation in the simultaneous mode.

And the basis of it is called "shadowing." Now, shadowing is not a new concept in simultaneous interpretation; as a matter of fact, most people who teach simultaneous will mention shadowing. But there are some differences between most people and our system at De la Mora interpreter training.

The first and most important difference that I see in most other programs is that when they talk about shadowing, they recommend shadowing in English. I recommend the opposite. My reasoning is if you're going to be speaking non-English - if your target language is not English, what you should be practicing is to produce that language that is not English consistently while you're listening to a source. So, I'm going to say, let's shadow in our target language. So, depending on what your target language is, we're going to always shadow in that language.

In other words, shadowing meaning we're going to repeat exactly what the speaker is saying in the same language. And this has several reasons. Reason number one is I want you to invest most of your brainpower not on trying to determine or figure out how you're going to say a word or a group of words from one language to another; I don't want you to invest brain power on that right now. I want you to invest all of your brain power in following the speaker, because what I want you to improve is your decalage.

So, here's the deal: let's practice the one you feel the strongest in first. So, you pick your target language and then you select some media, because I need you to record 8 minutes of a native speaker of that language speaking that language. Now, it's important for training purposes that even if you are a native speaker, even if you are very good at reading, that you ask help from somebody else that is not you to read this material. So, the reason I say there's select media is that you have two options.

Option number one: you could find something that was originally written in that target language, and have somebody native that you know that can read well and follow instructions and help you out, to read it in front of a good recorder – recording, of this document. And you ask them to read it with good diction, punctuation, intonation, and most importantly, not too fast. Ask them to go slowly.

The other alternative is to grab something from media that is already recorded by native speakers. That could be the news from a YouTube video, or from the actual news, live from some source on the internet, or maybe a book. I've heard of some people using those audiobooks as their medium. You pick your media, but make sure it's a native speaker, and it's at least 8 minutes long.

Once you have selected the media and the target language, what you're going to do is go into your next step. And your next step is going to be increasing your decalage. What do I mean by that – increase the decalage? Well, at the beginning, I said it: the better the decalage, the better the interpreter. So, while we shadow in this first week, we're going to concentrate exclusively on our decalage.

Week 1 – Shadowing to Increase Decalage

Find or Record **8 minutes** of **native speech** in your **TARGET language**

Day 1: Shadow Without Decalage

Repeat what the native speaker is saying as they say it for 8 minutes. Use the **Kolb Cycle** to evaluate your performance (**Experience, Reflect, Conceptualize, Plan**). Ask yourself questions as if you were the person receiving the information for the first time: does it sound like someone I could understand? Does it make sense? Is the diction okay?

Day 2: Shadowing with Decalage (3 Words)

Using the **same recording as yesterday**, repeat what the native speaker is saying as they say it for 8 minutes with a decalage of 3 words. Make an effort to maintain that lag without being too aware of it.

Use the **Kolb Cycle** to evaluate your performance (**Experience, Reflect, Conceptualize, Plan**). Ask yourself questions as if you were the person receiving the information for the first time.

Day 3: Shadowing with Decalage (4 Words)

Using the **same recording as yesterday**, repeat what the native speaker is saying as they say it for 8 minutes with a decalage of 4 words. Make an effort to maintain that lag without being too aware of it.

Use the **Kolb Cycle** to evaluate your performance (**Experience, Reflect, Conceptualize, Plan**). Ask yourself questions as if you were the person receiving the information for the first time.

Day 4: Shadowing with Decalage (5 Words)

Using the **same recording as yesterday**, repeat what the native speaker is saying as they say it for 8 minutes with a decalage of 5 words. Make an effort to maintain that lag without being too aware of it.

Use the **Kolb Cycle** to evaluate your performance (**Experience, Reflect, Conceptualize, Plan**). Ask yourself questions as if you were the person receiving the information for the first time.

Day 5: Shadowing with Decalage (6 Words)

Using the **same recording as yesterday**, repeat what the native speaker is saying as they say it for 8 minutes with a decalage of 6 words. Make an effort to maintain that lag without being too aware of it.

Use the **Kolb Cycle** to evaluate your performance (**Experience, Reflect, Conceptualize, Plan**). Ask yourself questions as if you were the person receiving the information for the first time.

Day 6: Shadowing with Decalage (6 Words Again)

Using the **same recording as yesterday**, repeat what the native speaker is saying as they say it for 8 minutes with a decalage of 6 words. Make an effort to maintain that lag without being too aware of it.

Use the **Kolb Cycle** to evaluate your performance (**Experience, Reflect, Conceptualize, Plan**). Ask yourself questions as if you were the person receiving the information for the first time.

Day 7: Shadowing with Decalage (7 Words)

Using the **same recording as yesterday**, repeat what the native speaker is saying as they say it for 8 minutes with a decalage of 7 words. Make an effort to maintain that lag without being too aware of it.

Use the **Kolb Cycle** to evaluate your performance (**Experience, Reflect, Conceptualize, Plan**). Ask yourself questions as if you were the person receiving the information for the first time.

END OF WEEK ONE

Week 2: Dual Tasking

Day 8: Shadowing with Decalage / 1-100 Exercise

Using the **same recording as last week**, repeat what the native speaker is saying as they say it for 8 minutes with a decalage of 5-7 words.

While shadowing, **write down the numbers 1 to 100 on a notepad until the interpretation has ended**. You may write multiple sets of 1-100 – when you reach 100, start over again with 1.

Use the **Kolb Cycle** to evaluate your performance (**Experience, Reflect, Conceptualize, Plan**). Ask yourself questions as if you were the person receiving the information for the first time. Did you skip any information, or alter words? Analyze your sets of numbers as well: are there any you omitted or repeated?

Day 9: Shadowing with Decalage / Odd Numbers 1-101

Using the **same recording as last week**, repeat what the native speaker is saying as they say it for 8 minutes with a decalage of 5-7 words.

While shadowing, write down the **ODD numbers from 1 to 101 on a notepad until the interpretation has ended**. You may write multiple sets of 1-101 – when you reach 101, start over again with 1.

Use the **Kolb Cycle** to evaluate your performance (**Experience, Reflect, Conceptualize, Plan**). Ask yourself questions as if you were the person receiving the information for the first time. Did you skip any information, or alter words? Analyze your sets of numbers as well: are there any you omitted or repeated?

Day 10: Shadowing with Decalage / Even Numbers 2-100

Using the **same recording as last week**, repeat what the native speaker is saying as they say it for 8 minutes with a decalage of 5-7 words.

While shadowing, write down the **ODD numbers from 2 to 100 on a notepad until the interpretation has ended**. You may write multiple sets of 2-100 – when you reach 100, start over again with 2.

Use the **Kolb Cycle** to evaluate your performance (**Experience, Reflect, Conceptualize, Plan**). Ask yourself questions as if you were the person receiving the information for the first time. Did you skip any information, or alter words? Analyze your sets of numbers as well: are there any you omitted or repeated?

Day 11: Shadowing with Decalage / Alphabet

Using the **same recording as last week**, repeat what the native speaker is saying as they say it for 8 minutes with a decalage of 5-7 words.

While shadowing, write down the **letters of any alphabet you wish**. This can be the Greek alphabet, the English alphabet, whichever you choose. If you reach the end of the alphabet, start over from the beginning.

Use the **Kolb Cycle** to evaluate your performance (**Experience, Reflect, Conceptualize, Plan**). Ask yourself questions as if you were the person receiving the information for the first time. Did you skip any information, or alter words? Analyze your sets of letters as well: are there any you omitted or repeated?

Day 12: Shadowing with Decalage / Consonants

Using the **same recording as last week**, repeat what the native speaker is saying as they say it for 8 minutes with a decalage of 5-7 words.

While shadowing, write down the **consonants of the alphabet you chose for day 11**. This can be the Greek alphabet, the English alphabet, whichever you choose. If you reach the end of the alphabet, start over from the beginning.

Use the **Kolb Cycle** to evaluate your performance (**Experience, Reflect, Conceptualize, Plan**). Ask yourself questions as if you were the person receiving the information for the first time. Did you skip any information, or alter words? Analyze your sets of letters as well: are there any you omitted or repeated?

Day 13: Shadowing with Decalage / Name, Address, SS Number

Using the **same recording as last week**, repeat what the native speaker is saying as they say it for 8 minutes with a decalage of 5-7 words.

While shadowing, write down **your name, your address and your Social Security Number**.

Use the **Kolb Cycle** to evaluate your performance (**Experience, Reflect, Conceptualize, Plan**). Ask yourself questions as if you were the person receiving the information for the first time. Did you skip any information, or alter words? Analyze your sets of information as well: is there anything you omitted or repeated?

Day 14: Shadowing with Decalage / Complete Dual Task

Using the **same recording as last week**, repeat what the native speaker is saying as they say it for 8 minutes with a decalage of 5-7 words.

While shadowing, complete **all of the dual tasks from this week**. This means writing up from 1-100, then the odds from 1-101, then evens from 2-100, then the alphabet, then the consonants, then your personal information.

Use the **Kolb Cycle** to evaluate your performance (**Experience, Reflect, Conceptualize, Plan**). Ask yourself questions as if you were the person receiving the information for the first time. Did you skip any information, or alter words? Analyze your sets of numbers as well: are there any you omitted or repeated?

END OF WEEK 2

Week 3: Word/Meaning Substitution

In the third week, we're going to start working our brain into substituting meaning.

Day one of week 3, you're going to shadow - and remember, when I say shadow, it's shadow with decalage - and change, the first day, about one word every thirty seconds.

What I mean by "change" is using a synonym. So, let's say that in the first sentence, the speaker said something like, "The attorney approached the bench." You, the interpreter, are repeating it in the same language, assuming that you were shadowing whatever language other than English. I'm doing it in English for examples. You would hear the words, "the attorney approached the bench," but when it was time for you to say it, you might say "the lawyer approached the bench." You have changed one word for a different word that means the same thing, without stopping.

Now, this is the most important thing about word/meaning substitution: you have to list without stopping, meaning the person that you're listening to, the native speaker speaking non-English, is not going to stop for you to think which word you're going to change. So, what is the secret? The secret is that you don't have to say "lawyer" right away. You heard "attorney" and you have a moment to think, how are you going to substitute that? And what gives you that little bit of time? You're *decalage*.

Your decalage is going to give you that lag of time so you can immediately think, "Okay, how am I going to say..." And by the time you get to the point where you have to say "attorney," then you come up with the word, "lawyer." This sort of word substitution is what we will be focusing on this week.

Day 15: Shadowing with Decalage / Substitution Every 30 Seconds

Using the **same recording as last week**, repeat what the native speaker is saying as they say it for 8 minutes with a decalage of 5-7 words.

While shadowing, substitute a word the speaker uttered once every 30 seconds.

Use the **Kolb Cycle** to evaluate your performance (**Experience, Reflect, Conceptualize, Plan**). Ask yourself questions as if you were the person receiving the information for the first time. Did you skip any information, or alter words? When substituting the word, did you alter the meaning?

Day 16: Shadowing with Decalage / Substitution Every 15 Seconds

Using the **same recording as last week**, repeat what the native speaker is saying as they say it for 8 minutes with a decalage of 5-7 words.

While shadowing, substitute a word the speaker uttered once every 15 seconds.

Use the **Kolb Cycle** to evaluate your performance (**Experience, Reflect, Conceptualize, Plan**). Ask yourself questions as if you were the person receiving the information for the first time. Did you skip any information, or alter words? When substituting the word, did you alter the meaning?

Day 17: Shadowing with Decalage / Substitution Every 10 Seconds

Using the **same recording as last week**, repeat what the native speaker is saying as they say it for 8 minutes with a decalage of 5-7 words.

While shadowing, substitute a word the speaker uttered once every 10 seconds.

Use the **Kolb Cycle** to evaluate your performance (**Experience, Reflect, Conceptualize, Plan**). Ask yourself questions as if you were the person receiving the information for the first time. Did you skip any information, or alter words? When substituting the word, did you alter the meaning?

Day 18: Shadowing with Decalage / Substitution Every Sentence

Using the **same recording as last week**, repeat what the native speaker is saying as they say it for 8 minutes with a decalage of 5-7 words.

While shadowing, substitute **one word the speaker uttered in every sentence**.

Use the **Kolb Cycle** to evaluate your performance (**Experience, Reflect, Conceptualize, Plan**). Ask yourself questions as if you were the person receiving the information for the first time. Did you skip any information, or alter words? When substituting the word, did you alter the meaning?

Day 19: Shadowing with Decalage / More than One Substitution Every Sentence

Using the **same recording as last week**, repeat what the native speaker is saying as they say it for 8 minutes with a decalage of 5-7 words.

While shadowing, substitute **more than one word the speaker uttered in every sentence**.

Use the **Kolb Cycle** to evaluate your performance (**Experience, Reflect, Conceptualize, Plan**). Ask yourself questions as if you were the person receiving the information for the first time. Did you skip any information, or alter words? When substituting the word, did you alter the meaning?

Days 20 and 21: Shadowing with Decalage / Substitution as Often as Possible

Using the **same recording as last week**, repeat what the native speaker is saying as they say it for 8 minutes with a decalage of 5-7 words.

While shadowing, substitute **as many words as your decalage will allow**.

Use the **Kolb Cycle** to evaluate your performance (**Experience, Reflect, Conceptualize, Plan**). Ask yourself questions as if you were the person receiving the information for the first time. Did you skip any information, or alter words? When substituting the word, did you alter the meaning?

END OF WEEK 3

For this week especially, I strongly recommend that you use the same recording for all 7 days. We don't want to add an extra layer of re-thinking new words – rather, I want you to have success. This is because in neurophysiology, in training, psychologists agree that the brain learns better when the brain has success in something. And we all have experienced this - when it's some subject that I really cannot understand at all, I get frustrated and I might just give up.

It is important that your brain says, "Hey, I remember this word is coming," so it can develop a new and important skill for simultaneous interpretation - it's called anticipation. That's right. That's another level, another layer that we add to the training. Prediction is very important in simultaneous. And the more you are involved in the subject, the more expertise you have in it, the better you can predict what the next word could be - and that's why it's very important to practice with the same recording.

This is how we train for the 21 days. Of course, at the end of 21 days, start simultaneous exercises where you actually interpret - and when you interpret, you will hear a difference.

Happy training! We'll see you soon.