

TypeWell Times

Quarterly Newsletter for TypeWell Transcribers

Improve your vocabulary; learn a new word each week.

Dearth: an inadequate supply; scarcity; lack

Punctilious: precise; exact in the smallest particulars



Professional Duties of a Transcriber

As service providers working alongside professors, instructors and teaching assistants, it is important that we are seen as professionals in the post-secondary setting. To be treated as professionals we need to act accordingly. This means that we commit to providing quality service, adequately prepping the course material, maintaining confidentiality and being realistic about our skills and knowledge base. Accepting a contract to transcribe a course that deals with vocabulary and concepts that are way above your skill level and/or knowledge base is inappropriate and potentially interferes with a student's learning.

We are not in the classroom to learn, offer opinions, ask questions, be the student's *friend*, or take exams. We are being contracted to create an equal learning environment for all students by converting spoken material into meaningful chunks of text that are easy to read, absent of content errors and clearly formatted.

We need to regularly identify areas we want to work on. Some possible goals might be: reducing lag time; planning our sentences before we start to type them; and improving our use of referents instead of overusing pronouns.

Terminology

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| Deaf | Culturally Deaf students who use sign language as their primary mode of communication. |
| Hard of Hearing | Students whose hearing loss ranges from mild to profound and whose usual means of communication is speech. |
| Oral Deaf | Students whose preferred mode of communication is verbal and auditory and/or speech-reading. |
| Hearing Impaired | An outdated pathological term that implies something is broken and needs to be fixed. |

Without continual growth and progress, such words as improvement, achievement, and success have no meaning. *Benjamin Franklin*

Do not say a little in many words but a great deal in a few. *Pythagoras*

Resources to keep your skills up

For additional practice to keep your skills up or to improve your transcribing, here are some great online resources that will keep those fingers flying:

- Lectures in subjects including philosophy, physics, humanities, and many more can be found at <http://academicearth.org/>
- Lectures in technical subjects such as algebra, biology, banking, calculus, chemistry and computer science can be found at <http://www.khanacademy.org/> This link is also a great resource for practice material when learning the TypeWell Math mode.
- Different presenters speaking on hundreds of topics (10-20 min in length) can be found at <http://www.ted.com/talks>. Some videos rely heavily on visual information, which is good practice for incorporating visual orientation information for readers.



Negotiating Contracts

Have you had to negotiate a contract with a College or University but are unsure how to navigate the process? For information on roles and responsibilities check out the BC Transcribing Guidelines on PCAS' website: <http://www.bcit.ca/pcas/serviceproviders/> Rates of pay will vary between institutions depending on whether they hire under Collective Agreements or on a contract basis. Years of experience will be another determining factor.

'TypeWell Everywhere' could it be the solution?



Do you have a few months off between transcribing jobs and are concerned about keeping your skills up? Consider purchasing 'TypeWell Everywhere' software for Windows or Mac computers. Standard 'TypeWell Everywhere' software costs \$160 and includes the PAL so you can create your own abbreviations. TypeWell Everywhere Mini leaves out a few regular TypeWell features, like the PAL, and costs \$80. Both versions can be used in any program on your computer and are tax deductible!

<http://www.typewell.com/everywhere.form>

Preventing Repetitive Strain Injuries

What are Repetitive Strain Injuries?

Repetitive strain injuries (RSIs) are a family of injuries affecting tendons, tendon sheaths, muscles, nerves and joints. RSIs cause persistent or recurring pains most commonly in the neck, shoulders, forearms, hands, wrists, The term "repetitive strain" injury is misleading. Unlike other diseases, RSIs are not easily classified because they have a variety of causes and include injuries to different parts of the body. A number of terms are applied to such injuries including: repetitive injury, repetitive motion injury, repetitive trauma, overuse injury, cumulative trauma disorder, occupational musculoskeletal disorder and cervio-brachial disorder. The different terms indicate that such injuries involve repetition, and can be caused by force, rapid movement, overuse, static loading, excessive strain, uncomfortable positioning of limbs or holding one's posture in an unnatural, constrained or constricted position.

What are the symptoms of RSIs?

The feelings associated with RSI range from "a sense of discomfort" to "excruciating pain". General symptoms include:

- numbness, tingling and burning sensations
- dry, shiny palms
- clumsiness of the hands (loss of ability to grasp items, impaired thumb and finger dexterity)
- swelling around the wrist and hand
- wasting of the muscles at the base of the thumb
- aches and pains which may be strongest at night

Most workers are unfamiliar with repetitive strain injuries so everyday aches and pains are overlooked and no connection is made between the injury and the workplace. Aches and pains warn that a serious injury may be developing. If the causes are not eliminated or the worker removed from the job immediately, the damage can be permanent and irreversible. Sometimes the injury is crippling, leaving the worker in pain and possibly immobile for life.

Your best defense against RSI is putting your health first! Here are some things you should do to reduce your chances of injury when transcribing:

1. Assignments over one hour and a half are generally teamed, unless the class is lab-based with long breaks in transcribing. Teaming is determined on a case-by-case basis in collaboration with the Disability Services Coordinator. For dense, technical, and/or fast-paced lectures, a teamer may be needed in classes under one hour and a half.
2. Plan your schedule carefully and realistically. For example, do not accept three back-to-back one-hour classes that are not teamed, as you will not get sufficient rest.
3. Be aware of the physical demands of your non-transcribing activities (hobbies, housework, computer work, etc.).
4. Should injury occur, modify your schedule immediately as prolonged overuse will only worsen the injury.
5. Stretch your arms, hands, wrists, and neck before transcribing, as well as during breaks.

RSI Resources: AVLIC's Position-Prevention of Repetitive Strain Injury (May 2009)
<http://avlic.ca/members/resources>
<http://cupe.ca/rsi/repetitive-strain-injuries>

Transcriber Profile #1: Kristi Falconer

Kristi Falconer has been a Sign Language Interpreter for 17 years, a TypeWell transcriber for 6 years and a Coordinator of Services at the University of Victoria for 5 years. At one time Kristi had thought of getting into court reporting. However, after a career change and going back to school to become a sign language interpreter. She had long forgotten that career goal. It wasn't until she heard about TypeWell that she was reminded of her love of typing and how that skill could be combined with her passion for working with Deaf and Hard of Hearing students.

Kristi is an inspiration to those she meets through her commitment to her work and professional approach. She also commits herself to improving the lives of children and families in Tanzania, Africa through her non-profit organization, Signs of Hope in Africa. As founder and president, she has been instrumental in establishing a number of programs to support the health, education, and welfare of children, women, families and seniors living in a small village on the island of Zanzibar. To learn more about her organization go to www.signsofhopeinafrica.org

Kristi lives and works in Victoria BC with her 15 month old son, Kylen.

Post-Secondary Communication Access Services

Ministry of Advanced Education
British Columbia Institute of Technology
3700 Willingdon Ave, Burnaby BC V5G 3H2

Coordinator: Shirley Coomber
Phone: 604-432-8301
Email: shirley_coomber@bcit.ca

Jobsline Employment Registry
Sign up at pcas@bcit.ca

TypeWell Times Editors:	
Allison Sands	allisonksands@gmail.com
Kristi Falconer	kfshadow@shaw.ca