



Words of Wisdom from current and past staff interpreters ...

“Try to improve the cognitive abilities that interpreting requires.”

“Your ability to interpret will markedly improve when you manage to relax while doing the work.”

“Don’t focus what it takes to be a good interpreter, focus on what it takes to be a good test taker. The skills required of each are different.”



Upcoming Dates

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, our calendar of events is changing frequently. You will receive updates about changes to the calendar via email as we are able, but the best place to find a current schedule of events is on our online calendar.

[CLAS Online Calendar](#)

Interpreting Knowledge, Skills and Abilities

Court interpreting has its own special set of challenges but is very rewarding in the service it provides to the courts and community. The hearings range from minor traffic infractions to domestic dissolutions to criminal trials.

A common misperception is that simply being bilingual is enough to interpret in the courts. The task of interpreting requires 32 different knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) including cognitive: language skills, speaking skills, listening comprehension skills, interpreting skills, behavioral skills and reading comprehension skills.

For more information on interpreting KSAs, see [this document](#) published by the Judicial Council of California.

Importance of Short Term Memory

The role of short term memory while interpreting has been discussed by several researchers. For more information on memory, and exercises to improve short term memory see this [article](#) by SmartIdiom.pt.

Spotlight On

Each month we are featuring a member of CLAS staff to give you some encouragement and an idea of what it is like to work as an interpreter in court, or as a member of CLAS staff. This month, we are featuring Enrique Andrade, who is a Spanish staff interpreter in Washington County.

CLAS: Did you do any other kind of interpreting before becoming a court interpreter? If so, what kind and for how long?

Enrique: Medical interpreter for three years and television newscast for three years.

CLAS: How did you prepare to be a court interpreter? (Study methods, observation, creating legal glossaries? Etc.)

Enrique: I attended a 16 weekend intensive course with teacher, presenters and practicum. Three years doing the evening news Spanish simulcast. Being involved in bilingual education for one year.

CLAS: What are some of the biggest challenges you face while interpreting in the courtroom?

Enrique: Being able to hear clearly. Balancing intrusiveness vs. accuracy and completeness.

CLAS: What do you like most about being a court interpreter?

Enrique: The stimulation and challenge that doing a competent job takes.

CLAS: Any words of advice for prospective interpreters?

Enrique: Never underestimate the difficulty of the oral exam. Verify that the terms you are learning are correct and researched in at least three reputable sources. Listen to cultural programs from your country of origin and of the target language you are trying to achieve proficiency.