



Consecutive Interpreting: A Short Course — a new textbook by Andrew Gillies

A “one-stop shop” for interpreter trainers, collating facets of consecutive interpreting that they can use to structure their curriculum, plan their classes, and organise their students' practices.

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Many in the conference interpreting community will have seen that Andrew Gillies has produced a new textbook. Gillies is best known for his earlier publications: [*Note-taking for Consecutive Interpreting: A Short Course*](#) (2nd edition, Routledge, 2017) and [*Conference Interpreting: A Student's Practice Book*](#) (1st edition, Routledge, 2013). This latest offering, entitled [*Consecutive Interpreting: A Short Course*](#), has also been published by Routledge as part of its [*Translation Practices Explained*](#) series.

Trainers and practitioners are sure to have some questions about this new textbook. As a trainer who makes extensive use of Gillies' previous two textbooks and who has taken a close look at this new one, here are my responses to some of these questions.

Is this new publication a revised edition of Gillies' textbook on note-taking technique?

This is the first question that is likely to arise, and also the easiest to answer. **No, this is definitely not a revised version of *Note-taking for Consecutive Interpreting: A Short Course*** (as a matter of fact, the second edition of that well-known title came out just two years ago). This book is a different publication altogether.

I can understand the potential for confusion, as the titles are very similar, and the publishing house has given the two books, which form part of the same series on translation practices, the same look and feel both on the cover and on the inside pages, so at first glance this might seem to be just an update of the previous note-taking book. But let me repeat that this is NOT the case.

Gillies' first publication, *Note-taking for Consecutive Interpreting: A Short Course*, focuses (as the name implies) almost exclusively on helping readers develop and/or improve their system of notes. This new book goes well beyond what gets jotted down on the notepad, and tackles all of the various facets of consecutive interpreting (more on that in a moment).

Who has this book been written for: students, trainers, novice interpreters, seasoned practitioners, or perhaps all of the above?

Like Gillies' other two textbooks, **this new publication can be read by different audiences in different ways**, although some might derive more benefit from it than others. The *Student's Practice Book* published in 2013 is primarily aimed at students of interpreting and, by extension, their trainers. The original *Note-taking for Consecutive Interpreting: A Short Course* is for both these groups as well, but can also be used as a workbook, in a "teach yourself" approach, by practitioners who would like to improve their note-taking skills.

This new book, *Consecutive Interpreting: A Short Course*, while presented in a similar workbook-style format, might be slightly more geared toward the interpreter trainer—someone who is looking for guidance on how to teach all of the facets of consecutive interpreting in a methodical, structured way. Students are not likely to have the pedagogical underpinnings needed to make the most of the material presented, and practitioners (who presumably already will have a solid consecutive technique overall) might know they need to work on a certain aspect of their consecutive interpreting technique—such as their delivery, memory, or analytical skills—but may not feel that this broad-ranging book serves their specific needs.

Having said that, interpreter trainers will find in *Consecutive Interpreting: A Short Course* a "one-stop shop", a handy compendium of the various facets of consecutive interpreting that they can use to structure their curriculum, plan their classes, and organise their students' practice.

The textbook ably covers consecutive interpreting from all angles: not only does it address the traditional progression of skill acquisition from listening and analysis through consecutive without notes (memory) to full note-taking, it also includes matters related to preparation, delivery, protocol, practicalities, and more.

I already have Gillies' other two textbooks. What is new in this book for me?

It is true that there is some overlap between Gillies' various textbooks. **Those familiar with *Note-taking for Consecutive Interpreting: A Short Course* will recognise some of the material** presented here in the sections on memory, analysis, and note-taking technique, among others. Also, some of the exercises in this book have equivalents in the *Student's Practice Book*. But as I see it, this new book offers the added value of placing this familiar material into an overarching structure that covers all of consecutive interpreting technique, expanding on or adapting the material as necessary to produce a coherent whole.

For those considering a purchase, it is also important to note that *Consecutive Interpreting: A Short Course* offers two completely new chapters, on reformulation and effort management, that you won't find anywhere else in Gillies' books. These are two hugely important, perennial topics in conference interpreter training, and it is probably worth checking out this new book just to get Gillies' take on them. Also, the last chapter, on digitally-assisted consecutive interpreting, offers a brief overview of the use of tablets, smartpens and real-time transcription by interpreters. Obviously, there are plenty of resources available online on new technologies in interpreting, so one doesn't necessarily need to buy this textbook to learn about them. Still, any compendium of consecutive interpreting-related matters really does need to include these topics to be complete. New technologies are rapidly gaining traction in our profession, and they are bound to take on increasing importance in the years to come, so Gillies has done well to include at least a brief reference to them here.

To wrap up: what I appreciate most, as a trainer and curriculum developer, about *Consecutive*

Interpreting: A Short Course is that **it can help guide trainers' thinking about the components that must be covered in any consecutive interpreting training program.** For those who might not have taught consecutive technique before, this book offers a game plan that will help them design a complete program and offers material and exercises that can be “plugged in” to their teaching modules where needed. For those who already teach consecutive interpreting, *Consecutive Interpreting: A Short Course* can help identify potential gaps in their course content and provides information and exercises to help fill these gaps. I, for one, am very pleased that this book has been produced, and grateful to Gillies for the effort he has put into it. It has earned itself a place on any interpreter trainer's bookshelf and, like his other publications, is bound to be a reference for the profession for years to come.



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