"Discussion and Collaboration on Accommodating Students with Sensory Disabilities Since COVID."

Friday, July 22, 2022, 9 am EST

DISABILITY.ILLINOIS.EDU
Tina Cowsert, M.S.ED, MSLIS, NBCT
Ann Fredricksen, MSLIS
AGENDA

- Roles
- Services we provide
- Pre-Covid/Post-Covid
- Receiving Services
- Campus Supports
- Vendors and Software
- Discussion/Breakout
- Knowledge Share
- Questions/Suggestions
Who are we?

Tina Cowsert
• Access Specialist for d(D)eaf/HoH, B/LV, & Speech students
• Supervisor/Coordinator of Interpreting & Live Captioning Services
• BS in Deaf Education from Illinois State University
• National Board Certified Teacher (NBCT) in Language Arts K-9
• M.S.Ed in Educational Administration from Eastern Illinois University
• MSLIS in Library Information Sciences from University of Illinois
• Sole FTE responsible for Interpreting & Live Captioning at UIUC
Who are we?

**Ann Fredrickson**
- Coordinator of Accessible Media Services (AMS)
  - Text Conversion
  - Captioning
  - Audio Description
- MSLIS from University of Illinois
- Captioning since 2012
- Sole FTE responsible for captioning
d(D)eaf/Hard of Hearing & Blind/Low Vision Services

- Live Captioning
  - CART
  - Typewell
- Closed Captioning
  - Lecture Capture Captioning
- Interpreters
  - Live and Remote
- Audio Description
- Text Conversion

- Note-taking software
- Testing Accommodations
  - Extended time
  - Computer/AT software
- Transportation
- Lighting/sound machines
- Academic Coaching
- Counseling
- Housing Accommodations
- Access to PowerPoints & Notes in class
Types of Captions
TYPES OF CAPTIONS: CLOSED CAPTIONS (1 OF 6)

• Captioning created after a video is produced or recorded; it should be verbatim—FCC state 99%.
• It will include sound effects and speaker identification when needed.
• They can be toggled on and off by the program or television/hardware.
Types of Captions: Open Captions (2 of 6)

• Captioning created after a video is produced or recorded; it should be verbatim.
• It can include sound effects and speaker identification when needed.
• They cannot be toggled off.
Types of Captions: Live Captions (3 of 6)

- Live captions or CART/Typewell/C-Print like in a courtroom and are used for “live” events such as daily news.
- A transcriber is creating the text in real-time and displaying that text to the user.
- It can be verbatim or meaning for meaning depending on the type of live captioning.
TYPES OF CAPTIONS: SUBTITLES (4 OF 6)

• The written representation of the spoken dialogue in the video.
• They can be a translation of what is being said from one language to another.
• It does not necessarily include sound effects and speaker identification. They might be able to be toggled on and off.
TYPES OF CAPTIONS: AUTOGENERATED CAPTIONS (5 OF 6)

• Computer uses voice recognition to create captions on the fly
• Not typically ADA compliant.
• Microsoft translator
• YouTube/Streams
• Live Transcribe (phone app)
• Web Captioner (Chrome-uses mic)
If closed captioning or live captioning is not available for a video/live event, an Interpreter for the Deaf can interpret in the client's preferred format:

- American Sign Language (ASL)
- Signed Exact English (SEE)
- Etc.
The World with COVID-19
Text Conversion Before Covid

- Converted 24000 pages
- Delivered 273 books plus extras
- Used repositories/online resources
  - Access Text Network
  - Hathi Trust
  - Bookshare
  - Internet Archive
  - AIMHub
- Student software
  - Kurzweil
  - SensusAccess
- Conversion
  - AbbyyFineReader
- Work done in office
  - 2-4 student workers
  - 2 office support staff and 1 professional
  - 6 computers in office and 2 shared with captioning
Text Conversion During/Post Covid

- Converted 85,889 pages
  - Mostly from library
- Delivered 215 books plus extras
- Used repositories/online resources
  - Access Text Network
  - Hathi Trust
  - Bookshare
  - Internet Archive
  - AIMHub

- Student software
  - Kurzweil
  - SensusAccess
  - Read&Write
- Process
  - AbbyyFineReader
  - Work done remotely through remote access
    - 2-4 student workers
    - 2 office support staff and 1 professional
    - 4 computers in office
Audio Description Before COVID

Planning mode
• No requests for accommodations
• Joel Snyder came in 2011 and taught 10-15 staff members about AD
• Since then a group of us worked on short videos that were sent out to everyone from the Chancellor's office (welcome, holiday, good luck)
• We'd each create description then meet to combine and edit to create script.
• Student voice (Journalism, Theater, Media)
• Post on YouTube
• 2017 AMS hired worker to practice AD on educational videos.
Audio Description during/post Covid

Planning mode
• Have had 1 request
• Working with department to have TA/Faculty do descriptions
• AMS staff watches videos/reads slides and marks where descriptions need to be added
• Descriptions added to transcripts at appropriate points
• Trying to get department to work ahead
• Even suggested that department might want to outsource
• Fall 2022- we might have 2 more students needing some AD
Closed Captioning Before COVID

- Most done in office
  - ~20 student workers
  - ExpressScribe w/ foot pedal
  - CaptionMaker
  - Basecamp
  - Priority list on whiteboard/Word doc

- Process
  - 1 student: Transcribe
  - 1 student: Format and timecode
  - Quality check done by me

- 3 computers in office and 2 shared with text conversion
- 5 laptops with workers working remotely through VPN
- 2017 we started getting lecture captures
- 100-120 hours of video a semester
- Summer/Fall 2019 I finished creating DIY Captioning Course on Canvas
- Students contacted professors first
Closed Captioning start of Covid (1 of 11)

• **March 2020**- end of semester 100-120 hours
• Students who we hadn't served needed accommodations
• Remote workers
  • Assistant Provost for Educational Innovation reached out-workers across campus
  • University committed to pay student workers regardless of actual work

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<tr>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>Hours of video captioned</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2019</td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spring 2020</td>
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• Used DIY Captioning Course as training for workers
• 43 extra student workers
• Process (Kaltura)
  • Split video in half
  • Assign two workers to edit each half then check each other's
  • Third student would check entire file

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What we initially learned.

• Didn't like Katlura's automatic captioning.
• Many STEM courses with instructors with thick accents.
• Sometimes we'd be waiting on one worker to finish up multiple half files.
• I didn't get to keep everyone's employees.
• As soon as I had a class schedule, I contacted instructors and asked about how they would use videos.
• Was allowed to hire 1 half time Office Support Associate to help (~19hrs).
Closed Captioning during Covid (4 of 11)
What we initially learned.

- Work all remote (**Fall 2020**)  
  - 40+ student workers (text conversion workers cross-trained)  
  - Using personal computers  
- Tweaked training to include instructions for Otter.AI  
- Otter.AI starting Fall 2020  
  - Problem: no video and can't fix timing  
- Process:  
  - 2-3 workers assigned to class to  
  - Asked not to check something they transcribed
New Policy **Fall 2020:**

- If a student is attending live remote class, they need to request live captioning if they need captioning for the lecture.
- AMS was not be able to handle lecture captures for all the remote courses that are live and recorded but continued to provide closed captioning on all asynchronous material and videos shown during lectures.
- If a class is missed, students were told to contact AMS and we'd add those on a case by case basis.
- Encourage students to request instructors turn on the automatic captioning within Zoom or use live captioning.
Closed Captioning during Covid (6 of 11): And things kept changing

- STEM courses and accents were still a problem
- Otter.AI started giving us more problems with timing.
- Investigated Descript.com which was created to make podcasts accessible then morphed into video creation/editing.
- **Spring of 2021** switched to Descript.com
  - Includes filler words
  - Has video
  - Can fix timing (although time intensive)
- As we needed more hours in Descript we bought more "drives."
  - Ended up with about 4-5 drives.
- By the end of the semester, I was given permission to hire a full time Office Support staff member to the team.
Closed Captioning during Covid (7 of 11): When should we contact Instructors?

• New Policy **Fall 2021**
• About a week or two after advance registration, AMS will contact professors in which they have a registered student with closed captioning accommodations. We ask them if and how they will be using video in their course.
• AMS staff has access to student schedules.
• Many of our students would wait until the week before the semester started or the first week of the semester—made staffing hard.
• If the professor is recording live lectures, we always email the student and ask if they want it closed captioned. If it was a in-person lecture, it gets slightly lower priority than something this is completely online. Asynchronous material is highest priority.
And we keep trying to be more efficient

- **Fall 2021** University of Illinois wanted as many courses to be in person as possible.
- AMS didn't necessarily want student workers in the office though.
- Professors saw the benefits of recording lectures, especially with students needing to isolate/quarantine.
- Emailed professors over the summer but didn't get a large response.
Closed Captioning during Covid (9 of 11)
And we keep trying to be more efficient

• Most done remotely
  • 40+ student workers
  • Using personal computers
  • Some chose to come in
• Continue to use Descript.
  • Added more drives.
  • Didn't add entire semester worth of videos at once.
• Switched to Teams for priority list using tasks list.
• Added Descript training to our online training including trouble shooting.
• **Spring 2022** first two weeks all remote.
• There is always a short turnaround between fall and spring but taking the initiative did seem to help.
• There were a few times the University decided to go remote due to snow.
• Added 4 more drives to Descript.
• At the end of the semester, we were given permission to hire 2 extra help employees for up 40 hours a piece for Fall 2022.
Most done remotely
  * 60+ student workers
  * Using personal computers
  * Training must be done in person

Switched to Excel that is linked in Teams for priority list.

Two courses we outsourced to CART and then aligned the text and watched through for quality (yes it was needed).
Interpreting & Live Captioning Services Pre-Covid (1 of 9)

Interpreting
- 1 Civil Servant FTE Senior Staff Interpreter
- 12 Extra Help UIUC Interpreters
- Vendor Companies (In-person & Remote services)
  - Deaf Services Unlimited
  - Luna Interpreting Services
  - Chicago Hearing Society
  - Your CC Group

Live Captioning
- CART
  - Remote
  - ACS Captions/Ai-Media
  - Deaf Services Unlimited
  - White Coat Captions
- TypeWell
  - In person (1 transcriber)
  - Remote
  - ACS Captions/Ai-Media
Interpreting & Live Captioning Processes Pre-Covid (2 of 9)

Interpreting & Live Captioning Process
- Requestors filled out a webtools form that went directly to our email inbox.
- We manually entered information into an excel spreadsheet.
- We contacted UIUC interpreters and Live Captioner first, then we contacted vendors if no one was available.
- We kept track of jobs/event information on "When to Work." (Whentowork.com is an employee scheduling software/app)
- Once the event was filled, we sent the requestor a finalizing email with details of the event.
Interpreting & Live Captioning Services During Covid (3 of 9)

- Increased to 2 Civil Servant FTE Senior Staff Interpreters providing
- Increased to 16 Extra Help UIUC Interpreters
- Continued with Vendor Interpreting & Live Captioning Companies, but we increased our requests with these vendors

Barriers:
- Getting students to respond in a timely manner
- Getting professors to respond in a timely manner AND provide their Zoom links
- Permissions on Zoom links for interpreters and live captioners to join
- Substitute Interpreters & live captioners having issues with their emails having permissions to join class on Zoom.
We sent emails out to all students asking, "What services do you need? How are things going? and What do you need assistance with?"

We kept track of responses in Excel.

For in-person classes now meeting online, we offered students the choice of Otter.AI on Zoom, Live TypeWell, Live CART, or remote Interpreting.

In 2020 we had as many as 90-140 classes with remote live captioning or interpreting services.
We trained students how to use remote services. (1:1 meeting with me)
We purchased & provided microphones as needed for Live Captioning.
We provided training for interpreters who did not have remote interpreting experience to make an easy transition.
We filled UIUC interpreter and live captioner schedules first, then went to vendor companies for coverage. (Based on student preferences)
Interpreting Requests:
• We recreated our online request forms to automatically enter all information into our master Excel spreadsheet.
• We added administrative time to the Civil Servant Interpreter job description to help process job requests.
• We added administrative time to a current Civil Servant employee to help process live captioning requests.
• Working with IT team to create a new system for intake, processing, and finalizing requests so all the steps are in one place. (Once this new system is established, we will drop When to Work).
Interpreting Data (7 of 9)

*2019-20* numbers do not include all the cancelations from the Covid-19 Pandemic, there would have been more hours.

*2020-21* interpreting numbers are in addition to the vast increase in TW/CART.

*2021-22* saw a significant drop in interpreting due to a decrease in the numbers of Deaf students who use ASL.
Live Captioning Data (8 of 9)

*2019-20 data line is from June 2019 through March 2020.

*2020-21 increased significantly due to the Covid-19 pandemic. (March 2020 through May 2021)

*2021-22 decreased due to a reduction in online courses and more hybrid and in-person classes.
What We've Learned:

1) **Communication is KEY!** Reach out (numerous times) to students. Make sure they understand what is available and ask what they need. **Increase our availability** to students.

2) **Train students how to use technology.** Make sure to answer their questions clearly and place directions in writing.

3) For students who were not registered prior to the pandemic, make sure the registration process is clear and accessible.

4) Allowing **leniency in current documentation requirements** until more current ones can be accessed is best. (Allow provisional services)

5) Allow **electronic** communication, services, & sharing of resources.
University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign **Campus supports (1 of 2)**

- **Campus provided laptops** to anyone (staff/faculty/students) who needed it
- Speech Hearing Sciences did [research on how masks impact speech](#) with microphones.
- **Summer teaching institute** to train professors how to switch from in-person to online and best meet student needs
- Hired an [ADA IT Coordinator](#) for campus to make sure software was accessible
- DRES provided **clear masks** for professors and students who needed them
- Extended class add/drop and pass/fail deadlines
University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign Campus supports (2 of 2)

- Provided ground-breaking routine **Covid-19 testing**, numerous testing sites, and mask mandates on campus for all UIUC faculty, staff and students.
- The Counseling Center and DRES provided **mental health services online through tele-health.**
- The library provided **digital copies of materials** for students when requested.
- Campus established a **Covid Care Unit** of sectioned-off residential hall rooms for students sick with Covid and provided food, medicine, and health care.
Vendors and Software (1 of 3)

- **When to work**
  - We are developing new system with IT

- **Remote interpreting**
  - Deaf Services Unlimited
  - Luna Interpreting Services
  - Your CC Group

- **Live Captioning**
  - ACS Captions/Ai-Media
  - Deaf Services Unlimited
  - White Coat Captions
Closed Captioning Software
• Kaltura
• Amara.org
• CaptionMaker
• ExpressScribe
• Otter.AI
• Descript.com
• Streams
• ClassTranscribe
Text Conversion
• AbbyyFineReader
• Kurzweil
• EquatIO
• Read&Write
• SensusAccess
Discussion/Breakout Questions:

1. What barriers did you face when Covid started?
2. What solutions did your campus provide that were helpful?
3. What barriers are you still addressing?
4. Are accessibility concerns now in the forefront of your university administration's future planning? What are your concerns?
5. What questions do you have for us?

*We will compile all answers into a Word Document and make it available along with this PowerPoint presentation to attendees*
Disability Resources & Educational Services

- DRES Website: [www.disability.illinois.edu](http://www.disability.illinois.edu)

- Tina Cowsert
  Email: tcowsert@illinois.edu

- Ann Fredrickson
  Email: ajfredr1@illinois.edu