Captioning Guidelines and Resources

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MassBay is committed to providing accessible content. Captioned videos provide accessibility for students who are deaf or hard of hearing in compliance with Sections 504 and 508 of the Rehabilitation Act.

In addition to making content accessible to deaf or hard of hearing students, captioning provides additional benefits to all students when part of inclusive or universal design. Students who are English language learners or have learning disabilities also benefit from captions. Captions can improve comprehension and retention by providing both visual and auditory experience for students. Finally, captions mean that students can access their material in any environment, like the library or a coffee shop, where sound is not welcomed.

Q. What are my responsibilities as a faculty or staff member when sharing video content?

Faculty are responsible to ensure that the videos shown in class are captioned. Faculty should seek to source content for courses that is already accessible. All videos on publicly available websites should be captioned.

Q. Are captions and subtitles the same?

No. Subtitles and captions are not the same. Captions are the textual representation of audio content. They communicate spoken dialogue, sound effects, and speaker identification.

Q. Are the "auto captioning" and "CC" tool on YouTube and other websites sufficient?

No. Auto-captions are often not accurate and do not meet the ADA requirement of 99% accuracy for captions. There are ways to add accurate captions to YouTube and other online videos on user-created content. Refer to YouTube's help for more information. You may also submit a Helpdesk ticket to request a consultation.

Q. I have a transcript of the video production. Is that sufficient?

No. A transcript does not provide equal access because the viewer is asked to read along while watching the video and it is not possible to do both at the same time. However, transcripts are useful for creating accurate captions. In addition, transcripts can make content accessible for students who are both deaf and blind by converting the transcript into Braille.

Q. I have a video I want to show that is not captioned. What should I do?

The first step is to reach out to the publisher of the content to see if a different or newer captioned version is available. You should also check with the MassBay Library at AskALibrarian@massbay.edu, they may be able to source a captioned version or provide

comparable material that has been captioned. If no captioned version is available, it may be possible to add captions to the existing version. Since you would need to copy the video to another medium to add captions, it is necessary to obtain permission from the copyright holder. You may submit a Helpdesk ticket to request a consultation.

Q. I created my own content that I need captioned. What should I do?

To caption a video, please send it with a request for closed-captioning to the IT Help Desk at helpdesk@massbay.edu. The turn-around time for captioning is generally 24-48 hours (from the third-party captioning provider, depending on length) and up to another 48 hours from IT.