

Transcripts, Captions, and Descriptive Audio

It is often believed that transcripts and captions are helpful only for people who are deaf, and descriptive audio only for those who are blind. In fact, captions, transcripts and descriptive audio can help all students follow, comprehend, and retain information found in educational videos.

Finding and using videos with captions, transcripts, and descriptive audio available is an important aspect of UDL. Students with varying learning styles can choose the interaction that enables them to best understand the information.

Transcript

A transcript is a written or text-based record of dictated or recorded speech. For educational purposes, they can contain additional relevant information, such as descriptions or comments.

Transcripts can benefit students with learning disabilities by allowing them to review information and dialogue at their own pace. Students for whom English is a second language can benefit by gaining understanding they missed in dialogue, due to accents, dialect or other considerations. A distance student may choose a transcript rather than waiting for an audio or video to download over a slow internet connection.

Captions

When a verbatim transcript is timed to display with the video track, it displays on screen as a caption. Closed captioning refers to captioning that needs to be initiated at the viewers request. Open Captioning refers to captioning that always display regardless of user preference.

Captions can help students follow a video better, since when paired with audio, captions create a second, complimentary source of information. They can be especially helpful in classrooms where audio is poor, or on video's where accents are heavy or voices are very softly spoken.

Descriptive Audio

Audio description is a term used to describe the narration of key visual elements in a video or multimedia product. The description summarizes any visual information, including action, settings, and characters that are necessary to understand the video. It can be both subjective and artistic, depending on the intentions of the author.

Descriptive audio may point to important aspects of setting or context of a video that may be overlooked. Students benefit the most when the description of the video is made available in both text and audio form.