

Do You Need to Transcribe and/or Caption Course Materials for ADA Accessibility? Suggestions from the Center for Teaching Excellence Instructional Design Team

Accessibility is important—and it's the law. But for many faculty members, the thought of creating lecture transcripts or video captions for an entire course is overwhelming. Don't worry. There are workable, relatively efficient options. Our instructional designers are happy to discuss any of following, provide tips, and help you select the approach that will work best for you. Funds are only available to faculty in certain circumstances.

- 1. Create the transcripts as you go.** Many instructors find it easiest to simply write out their lectures before recording them, so that creating the transcript becomes part of the process of developing the course. In fact, this approach is recommended as a best practice by many experts. Of course, this only works when you're preparing a lecture from scratch—if you're trying to make an existing lecture accessible—or if delivering a scripted lecture doesn't suit your teaching style—a different option may be more appropriate.
- 2. Ask your course GTA or student assistant to create captions/transcripts as part of his or her duties.** A teaching assistant can often caption/transcribe material accurately and quickly with relatively little guidance from you. Transcribing course lectures will also help a GTA learn the material thoroughly, which will help them excel in other duties associated with the course. If your course is not typically assigned a GTA, remember that you can use course revision or course development grant funds, if applicable, to hire one for this purpose.
- 3. For courses offered online.** The Office of Distributed Learning provides transcription and closed caption services. Transcripts/Captions are also reviewed and edited for accuracy. Contact the [Office of Distributed Learning \(ODL\)](#) at dlquest@mailbox.sc.edu or 803-777-7210 for more information.
- 4. Use voice-to-text software.** If you revise your lectures frequently, consider purchasing a software package such as [Dragon Naturally Speaking](#), the Premium version, which will convert your spoken words to text. Learning to use Dragon requires some training, and the transcripts it generates typically need editing and proofreading. If you have received course development funds, you may use those funds for this purpose. [Otter.ai](#) is another option. The cost is \$5/month with an education discount.
- 5. Use YouTube automatic captions.** YouTube automatically uses speech recognition technology to try to [generate captions](#), but they will not be entirely accurate and may not be ready when you upload the video. You will need to manually edit these captions and ensure their accuracy.
- 6. Check to see if versions of your course materials are already available in accessible formats.** While transcripts for your original lectures must typically be generated from scratch, many of the course materials may already be available transcribed and/or captioned: for example, all YouTube videos are captioned (although not always successfully), as are items in NBC Learn and many other library databases, and many textbook packages.
- 7. Contact the [Student Disability Resource Center](#).** Their staff can assist with some accessibility-related modifications to your course, especially if you have a student in your course with a registered disability that requires unique or extensive accommodations. Contact the SDRC at 803-777-6142 or sadrc@mailbox.sc.edu to learn more about their services.

Learn more about [captions and transcripts](#) on the Office of Digital Accessibility's Guides and Tutorials website.