

Past Posts



*The PEPNet
Past Posts is a
compilation of
the most
frequently
discussed topics
on the PEPNet
listserv.*

Providing Speech-to-Text Transcripts to Students and/or Instructors

The posts in this document reflect the different decisions schools have faced regarding the provision of speech-to-text transcripts to the student and/or instructor across a variety of situations (i.e. transcripts produced by CART, C-Print, or TypeWell). These transcript related issues include: should a school pay speech-to-text providers to edit transcripts? Should transcripts be provided to a student using speech-to-text services who was absent from class, or, should transcripts be provided to an entire class?

The 2009 PEPNet Postsecondary Interpreting and Captioning Survey asked survey participants if they provide transcripts and to whom. To view the results of the survey, please go to http://resources.pepnet.org/files/280_2010_3_24_18_17_PM.pdf and scroll down to page 17.

November, 2010

Providing transcripts to students

It seems from the PEPNet 2009 survey about interpreting and speech-to-text services that the overwhelming majority of institutions provide students that use C-Print/TypeWell/CART a copy of the transcript to use as notes. What is your institution's reasoning behind doing so? If you do not provide a copy of the transcript, what is your institution's reason for that? Any feedback would be greatly appreciated.

***Texas A&M University
College Station, TX***

Oftentimes a transcript is provided because of a couple of reasons.

1. If a student is reading and taking notes, they may miss something as it scrolls off the screen, whereas a hearing student can listen and take notes at the same time.
2. If there are errors within the live CART display, these can be cleaned up, along with Spell check, for a more complete, accurate final product from which the student may study.
3. If a student must look away from the CART screen for other visual cues, such as writing on a blackboard or PowerPoint presentations, for example, again, they may miss the accompanying explanation of those visual cues and will have the transcript later to review.

I'm sure there are other reasons that I'm just not thinking of at the moment.

Coast to Coast Captioning

We routinely give our students transcripts. Occasionally, we have other DSPS students in the same class, and another department asks for us to provide a copy to the other student. Otherwise, we give our students strict instructions that they are not to share transcripts with anyone else.

Also, on rare occasions, instructors ask for transcripts for various reasons, and I tell captioners they're welcome to share transcripts with them.

Perhaps students could be taught how to look for key words in CART notes. It is very easy to find what you are looking for that way. Just a gentle suggestion.

If you are in Word, just click on Find (Control-F) and the little box comes up. You can find the word every time it comes up.

Captionears.com

We provide students with the transcript but will also find a student notetaker to take notes in place of the transcript if the student requests. The transcript from CART is lengthy and does not work well for notetaking purposes. Students feel that they are reading a book (50 pages+) just to find the main points from the lecture.

TypeWell transcripts, on the other hand, are well suited for notes. We usually do not provide notes for students who use TypeWell and allow them to use the transcript for notes.

***The University of Vermont
Burlington, VT***

I would caution you to think clearly about the purpose of each component of the accommodation for each specific situation rather than making a blanket determination about whether one will or will not provide a transcript. Depending on the kind and quality of the live "transcript" and how you define "notes," this may affect what you decide to do.

If the purpose of CART/TypeWell/C-Print (or other speech-to-text technologies) is to provide meaningful real time access to spoken communication, then you have to answer the question of how a "transcript" (i.e. the product you would be providing post-event) is part of this. How does having a transcript make communication accessible in real time (if that is the goal)? If you're using a skilled CART provider, then the answer is probably that it doesn't do anything: the communication is long over. For example, having a transcript afterwards does not assist the student in making comments during class or in asking questions during class. In fact, it does nothing meaningful during the session itself.

The benefit of a "transcript" is solely after the fact, and therefore you have to think about whether you really need to provide them for the primary need. Now, there may be other needs, and there may be concerns about the live "transcript" that warrant considering providing a permanent copy afterwards. If the provider is providing deficient access in real time--and there could be many reasons for this other than lacking skills required for the setting--then maybe you are providing something to make up for this deficiency, such as a transcript. But this takes away from the real need and what should be your focus: providing meaningful communication access in real time. It would make more sense to fix that part so that the speech-to-text is accurate and meaningful rather than making up for problems by giving a transcript later on.

Regarding not being able to take notes while receiving a live transcript, I think it would probably depend. Since the text on the screen persists for some time, you would have to see how the student is functioning in the setting. Of course, another solution is to provide a notetaker: the notetaker provides notes, the speech-to-text worker provides real time access. This makes sense if you believe that notes and a transcript are not only not the same but serve different purposes. Notes are condensed, a transcript is the full-on conversation and is therefore not condensed and probably less useful for studying (but not always).

Con't on page 3

If you're providing a transcript in lieu of notes, think carefully about that. A student may want notes and not a transcript. Or a student may want the transcript because they trust it more because it's *supposed* to be "what was really said." Or they may want the transcript because it's in electronic form and more easily searchable.

If the cost of a transcript is a factor hovering in your mind, the cost issue is, again, separate from addressing the primary need. After you've figured out what the need is and the various ways you could mitigate it, then cost can be considered. But dwelling too much on cost in the beginning can skew one's thinking away from considering what the effective means there are for providing access for the student.

***San Francisco State University
San Francisco, CA***

As a long-time user of CART services (since 1994), I want to add that, believe it or not, the text does NOT always *persist* on the screen long enough for me to take my own notes. I've often tried taking my own notes, but the text scrolls up quite rapidly, especially if you have a skilled captioner and your instructor speaks rather quickly (or does not pause long enough between sentences or main concepts) and by the time I finish writing down what I need to write down, the text is already near the top of the screen or gone. Then, I have to quickly read the remaining text that is almost near the top to determine what else to write down. There have been several instances in which I find myself missing a few lines because I cannot write fast enough to keep up with the fast-scrolling text.

If writing notes can be done without getting your eyes off of the CART provider's computer screen (such as having your own laptop to type your own notes provided that you can type without looking at the keyboard), it would be a great solution. However, some faculty frown upon students bringing in their own laptops to take notes for a number of reasons that I do not need to get into for this post. Perhaps one way around this is to produce an accommodation letter informing the faculty that the student needs to use a laptop computer in class for notetaking purposes.

A notetaker may work, but for some students, they prefer to take their own notes for a number of reasons. With a transcript, they can take their own notes outside of the classroom or fill in the gaps in their notes that they took in class.

The bottom line is, we need evaluate the student's need for CART transcripts on a case-by-case basis.

***San Francisco State University
San Francisco, CA***

Alice asked about reasoning for distributing transcripts. Here are a few notes copied and pasted below, directly from messages left by the 2009 survey participants. Some relate to your question, Alice, others I left in as food for thought.

- Any consumer - regardless of setting (ex. faculty member in a staff meeting - if they request a transcript, we provide it)
- Except when note taking services are available and work well.
- We occasionally share transcripts with disability services students if they are in the same sections with deaf/hard of hearing students
- Not offered, but infrequently given to professor or other student using disability services for specific reasons
- For an additional fee
- Will provide transcript to the instructor if requested.
- If there are multiple students needing a note taker in the class then a transcript is send to them as well.
- If in the class.

Con't on page 4

- A deaf student receives a copy of the transcript if disability documentation supports additional accommodations (LD/ADD, etc). Student does not automatically receive the transcript simply because they use real-time captioning in the classroom. Other students with disability may receive a transcript if criteria for print accommodation has been documented and approved by Disability Specialist.
- We will give to an instructor if they request it, but we do not automatically provide
- To the coordinator or services if requested
- We encourage the professor to post the notes on BlackBoard for the entire class to use.
- copy goes to instructor IF they request it. Copy to other students on case by case basis - this does not happen often.

**PEPNet-Midwest
University of Wisconsin—Milwaukee**

March 2010

Providing transcript and notetaker notes simultaneously

I am wondering if any schools have approved the use of a transcriber AND a notetaker simultaneously. We have a student requesting both but we generally do not give notetaker for students who use a transcriber, however we do provide notetakers for those who use interpreters. Any feedback would be helpful. Thanks!

**University of Maryland
College Park, Maryland**

We provide a notetaker only when the transcription is being done in CART. The CART transcript (20+ pages) is too long for the student to read through just to get notes so I will sometimes provide a volunteer notetaker in this situation. We would not provide a notetaker and TypeWell because the TypeWell transcript (3-4 pages) works well for notes. In this case, it is the student's responsibility to read through the TypeWell transcript and highlight the main points. If the student has a difficult time doing that, we use it as an opportunity to educate the student on how to do this which ultimately improves the student's academic skills.

**University of Vermont
Burlington, VT**

We use volunteer student notetakers for our students, and we do encourage students receiving transcription services to consider using a notetaker, as well. The reason is to capture information that may be written on the board or presented in other forms, but not necessarily "narrated" in the lecture. Usually a good student in the class will provide helpful notes. Sometimes volunteer (student) notetakers are not suitable.

In a single incidence we decided to pay a notetaker for a student while receiving transcription services. I made that decision after counseling with the student and observing in the class. I found that the information spoken in the lecture was scanty, while there were numerous formulas and diagrams written on the board. The verbal content of the lecture included vague references to formulas and diagrams, so the transcript did not have details to indicate what was being performed while writing on the board. Other students in the class were having difficulty following the instructor and were not able to provide sufficiently clear notes that included clear and adequate information not included in the transcript. The student using transcription services had sought tutoring but could not find anyone who was knowledgeable in the subject (economics) and she had met with the professor outside of class. However, due to the professor's thick accent, she was still missing information and unable to get adequate help outside of class to supplement what she was missing in class. Unfortunately, there was no other professor teaching that class for that semester. Therefore, we secured a paid notetaker with some knowledge of the subject to allow her to get more beneficial notes from the lecture.

**Georgia Perimeter College
Atlanta, GA**

Con't on page 5

February 2010

Providing transcripts if student is absent

We use TypeWell on our campus for many deaf and hard of hearing students. Lately, some of our students have stopped attending class on a regular basis. We are a bit concerned because they have a detailed transcript when they do not attend class. If the student were using a sign language interpreter, the interpreter would have left the class and the student would have missed the information. Do any of you have policies on students missing class and getting transcripts? Or notetaking for students who are not present in class?

***University of Vermont
Burlington, VT***

Nearly all the schools I work with hold the same policy for TypeWell services as for Interpreter services. If the student is absent, we do not provide services. We wait a given amount of time, and if they do not show up, then we exit the class or go offline.

Strada Communications, Inc.

Our students sign our policies and procedures when they register with us. In our policies and procedures it details that a transcriber will not begin typing until the student arrives in class. So not only do our students not receive a transcript when they miss class, but they do not get a complete transcript when they arrive late.

We are considering in upcoming semesters not giving a transcript at all and just having the accommodation be real-time communication access and allowing those students to obtain note-taking services like students who use sign language interpreters. I am curious how many other institutions do not give students a copy of the transcript.

Our student note-takers are also told they are not to give their notes to the student they have agreed to take notes for if the student was not present in class. This is harder to enforce, but the policy is there.

***University of Maryland
College Park, MD***

I'm a C-Print Captionist at Cornell University. Our policy is that if the student isn't in the room the captionist isn't typing. If we know a student will be missing a class we don't go, and if a student is more than 15 minutes late without notice the captionist leaves (occasionally a student will send us a text message saying they're running late, and as long as we have that notice we wait for them).

The only time students get notes when they aren't in class is if the professor provides something like that for ALL students in the class. For instance, in one class the professor recorded all the lectures, and provided copies to the students for review before the exam. In that case, our student received a transcript of the audio for any missed classes.

***Cornell University
Ithaca, NY***

Here at the University of Tennessee we have the same policy for transcribers that we do for interpreters: if the student is a no show, after waiting 15% of the class time we will leave. If a class has begun and the student is not present, we do not start typing until they show up and pick up their reader laptop/pda. We tend to view transcribing as real time communication access and if they choose not to be there in real time, then it is their choice not to get that access. Since their hearing peers would not get a transcript of the class if they were absent, this puts the deaf/hard of hearing students on a level playing field.

***University of Tennessee,
Knoxville, TN***

July 2009

Paying captionists to edit transcripts

Do any other schools pay additional time for transcribers to prep for class or edit their notes? If so, how much additional time are they given?

***University of Vermont
Burlington, VT***

I provide approximately 45 minutes to prep & edit per class. This is dependent on the difficulty of the course content.

***University of Tennessee
Chattanooga, TN***

We do not pay for editing notes. We consider it a real time accommodation. We do provide the notes to students after class if they want them. They can bring a flashdrive to download and in some cases the transcriber may email them. But that is not the accommodation, we just do it as a courtesy.

As far as prep, we look at that individually. If the transcriber shows a real need for prep time we consider it, but we do not just do a set time per class.

***Tulsa Community College
Tulsa, OK***

We provide 1/3 of the class time for prep. We do allow for edit time also but don't have a *limit* on that. It's not been a problem thus far.

***University of Tennessee
Knoxville, TN***

At our campus we pay the C-Print captionists one hour per week per course to prep and edit the notes.

***Miami Dade College, Kendall Campus
Miami, FL***

February 2009

Providing transcripts to entire class (and instructor)

My colleague just passed this on to me. What your reactions please. In one of my student's (hearing impaired) Business Law class yesterday, the professor asked the captionist if she could give her notes to the other students in the class. The captionist explained they are hired through the disability office for one student and that is the only student entitled to the transcript.

The professor proceeds to make this huge display of abusing the system. She suggests everyone in the classroom to email the disability office and demand a copy of the notes. Some of the other students in the class do have disabilities and they are entitled to those notes. She announced "when you receive your responses, please bring them to me and I will handle it from there."

So, how would you respond to this? I was given this information by the captionist and apparently I am to expect several emails from students demanding notes. Obviously, the answer is no but I am looking for the best response.

***Southeast Community College
Lincoln, NE***

Con't on page 7

It seems that this is more than just an issue of "who owns the notes", particularly as the instructor didn't bring that up during her rant.

It seems, more at issue, is the instructor's understanding of what an accommodation is (not), her attitude toward the captionist (putting the captionist into a perceived adversarial position), putting the students in the middle of it (by telling them to email you and she would "handle" the responses), and drawing unneeded attention to the Deaf/HH student (who may also now feel uncomfortable).

You could do a couple of things. Wait until students email you, tell them no and the reasons why and wait for the instructor to try to "handle it". Or, probably better, contact the instructor and explain that you learned there seemed to be a problem in the class regarding notes/captioning and go from there.

The fact that the instructor feels that somehow there is an "abuse of the system" should to be addressed. Who does she think is abusing the system? The captionist? The student getting the accommodation? The disability services office? What "system" is being abused? Would she feel this way if there was an interpreter in the classroom, rather than a captionist? Does the instructor understand what a real-time transcript might look like (pages and pages) and that the student using them is really, in a sense, doing more work slogging through them to get pertinent information than her hearing students?

And, as I mentioned this before, if this becomes a service that an instructor would like to provide to all students, I would want to discuss sharing the cost of the service. I'm guessing that it would become the expectation of the instructor that the service be provided regardless of whether the Deaf/HH is in class on a particular day. A way to avoid any announcements of "there will be no notes next week Tuesday as the student has let me know he won't be here because he has a Biology field trip, so be sure to come to class that day so you don't miss my lecture", is to have the captionist there all the time, as a service that the instructor/department is providing to all students as a part of Universal Design.

Does anyone else see there was a little irony in the fact that this was a Business Law professor? Apparently the class had not gotten to the chapter on ADA, etc.

***Chemeketa Community College
Salem, OR***

At the U of MN we've struggled with this question as well. We talked about the transcript being an accommodation - for the student. So, it would "belong" to the student. Then an instructor asked for a copy to post on the course web page for everyone to see/use. What the?!

My own struggle with the question revolves around UD. I'm no expert on UD but it seems that providing the transcript takes a step toward UD in that classroom. If more people than the consumer can benefit, why not provide it? (Because it tilts the playing field again. Because the instructor might edit the transcript. Because other students will stop taking notes. Because it's a C-Print transcript and people don't understand what C-Print is FOR. Because, because, because...)

In the end, I'm not sure what's a good answer here. BUT I would love to hear other people's thoughts about how providing the transcript contributes to a UD environment.

***University of Minnesota
Minneapolis, MN***

I have had similar issues happen at my institution. Faculty have requested transcripts to post on blackboard for class use. Some faculty use it to evaluate the progression of the class and help organize themselves.

I agree that this does support the goal for UD. I have provided the faculty member with the transcript; however, I remind faculty that the transcript is not verbatim. If the professor is posting this for class usage, you

Con't on page 8

could include a disclaimer on each transcript stating this is meaning for meaning and is to be used for academic study only. Hope this helps.

***University of Tennessee
Chattanooga, TN***

At SHU, I do allow the professors to have a copy upon request, but they are restricted from putting the notes on blackboard or distributing the notes in any way.

Our thinking is as follows: If the notes are posted on blackboard, then the students may not see the value in taking their own notes and/or in going to class - "because the captionist person takes them". The captionist is not to be the secretary for the whole class; but rather, the purpose behind the captionist is to provide access to information the person with the disability can not get at as a result of his or her disability (but perfectly able bodied students have access to).

Many times, when we provide notes to the professors, it is to assure them that the captionists are making them look silly. I can't tell you how many times I've been asked "does the captionist record all my umms and ahhs". There is something about being recorded via the captionists that makes many professors uncomfortable at first – until they become familiar with how the process works.

***Sacred Heart University
Fairfield, CT***

Here at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, students are generally only allowed to save their transcript immediately after class by bringing their own disk or portable stick drive (there may be some exceptions, although it is rare). We feel it is appropriate if they save it the day of class because then it is considered a "real-time" accommodation. Our speech-to-text providers do not edit transcripts nor will send it to students at a later date (only if there was a technical problem that prohibited a student from saving it to their personal drive that day, but they can't request transcripts from several weeks or so ago).

Our students are strongly encouraged to use a notetaker even when using speech-to-text services. Information shown visually (such as on a PowerPoint or written on the board) will not be transcribed. The speech-to-text provider only records what he/she hears in the classroom. If the class is an hour in length, the transcript will often also be more than 10 pages long. Our students actually appreciate having notes which highlight the main points of the lecture instead of having to read through pages of information.

Instructors have asked us for copies of the transcripts and we oblige when they make the request - they've asked for a variety of reasons. We think the speech-to-text services are not considered a "notetaking" service, and these two are in fact two different types of accommodations we offer.

***University of Wisconsin—Milwaukee
Milwaukee, WI***

I would not think that it would ever be the responsibility of a captionist to get email addresses of all students, then email notes to the entire class. I'm not sure that it would be a FERPA violation to share the email addresses of all the students, but students add and drop classes all the time. Keeping track of that would certainly not be the responsibility of a captionist.

On the other hand, if it is decided that the transcript will be made available to all students, then the transcript can be sent to the instructor to disseminate as he/she decides (web board, email, etc.). This also prevents the captionist from being the one who may be asked questions regarding the notes, the class, any assignments, etc. (people tend to just hit "reply" and as the person sending, the captionist would be getting all of these replies).

At some point, I may also want to discuss who is paying for the captionist? At least discuss sharing the cost

Con't on page 9

with the department that the instructor works in. Two reasons for this: 1) All the students are benefiting from the transcript and it will become an expectation that some of those students rely on and 2) My guess is that the instructor will expect those notes, regardless if the student using them for an accommodation is there or not. As it stands now, if a Deaf student does not go to class, we do not provide the service for that class (transcriber, interpreter, notetaker, etc.).

On a side note, I think that a captionist providing a verbatim transcription of a class would be really difficult for a remedial type of class to use as notes. On the other hand, TypeWell which provides a meaning-to-meaning transcript might be more beneficial.

***Chemeketa Community College
Salem, OR***

My understanding is similar to what has been posted. The notes actually belong to the professor and if the request is made by the professor, it is easy enough for the captionist to get email addresses and send notes out to the entire class. We have used that strategy in the past, in particular for remedial classes where it may be more challenging to identify a peer notetaker and the fact is, all students will benefit from the service. And yes, I agree, promoting Universal Design whenever possible is in everyone's best interest.

***Bergen Community College
Paramus, NJ***

I consulted with an instructor here who is also a lawyer. He laughed. When we figure out the laws regarding intellectual property and how it might apply to all of these situations we will be the experts. He told me many schools have a policy regarding intellectual property, but it is just that, a policy, and probably not a clear answer to any of these questions.

***Chippewa Valley Technical College
Eau Claire, WI***

I just don't see how posting the transcript is any different than professors choosing to post podcast. Profs choice.

I agree with you. I know a number of professors here at MSSU that are beginning to put their notes on blackboard to insure students get the information they feel is important. And, how many students with disabilities are out there but not utilizing our services/accommodations. If you truly believe in UDL, this is an ideal situation.

***Missouri Southern State University
Joplin, MO***