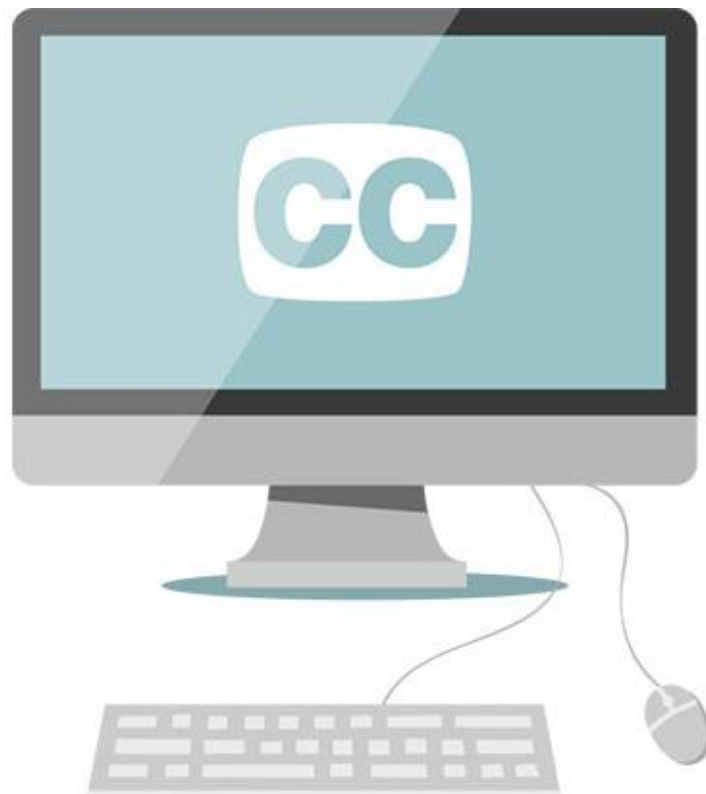


Closed captions, transcripts aid learning for almost all students

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New research has found that closed captions help almost all students. Credit: Oregon State University

Most college and university students who use closed captions and transcripts on video and multimedia find them helpful as a learning tool, despite them not regularly being made available, according to new

research from Oregon State University.

One of the first surveys of its type, of 2,124 [students](#) across 15 public and private universities nationwide, found that 98.6 percent of students say [captions](#) are helpful, with 75 percent of them noting that they use captions as a learning aid in face-to-face and online classrooms. For video transcripts, students referenced the tool as a learning aid 85 percent of the time.

More than half of students surveyed said captions help by improving comprehension. The most common reasons students use captions are to help them focus, retain information and overcome poor audio quality of the videos, while transcripts are often used as study guides and to find and retain information.

The national study, conducted by the Oregon State University Ecampus Research Unit in collaboration with 3Play Media, also shows that among the students surveyed, only 13 percent had registered with an office of disability services and less than 12 percent require academic accommodations. Of all respondents, 19 percent cited having difficulty with hearing and 37 percent have difficulty with vision.

"Many people associate the use of closed captions and transcripts only with disability accommodation, and that can mean they are not made widely available," said Katie Linder, director of the Oregon State University Ecampus Research Unit and author of the study. "One hope for this study was to help educate university administrators about how a range of students are using these tools, and that making them more available could help more learners."

According to Linder, closed captions and transcripts are now a [legal obligation](#) for universities that receive federal funding when they create videos for courses and for institutional purposes, to ensure that students

with disabilities have equal access.

"Despite this, many institutions do not understand the legal obligation, or they only associate these tools with disability accommodation and do not consider how they could be helpful to all students," Linder said.

The study found that almost 100 percent of survey respondents had at least one course, either face-to-face or online, that included some video content. However, more than one quarter of respondents were unsure about the availability of closed captions and almost one in five were not sure about the availability of transcripts for the videos in their courses.

"Not only is captioning often necessary for accessibility compliance, but, as the study shows, 75 percent of students use captions as a learning aid to improve their focus, retention, engagement and comprehension when watching videos for class," said Lily Bond, director of marketing at 3Play Media, a company that provides closed captioning, transcription and subtitling solutions.

"As the use of video in higher education becomes more commonplace, making captions and transcripts more widely available should be a priority for institutions."

The survey was voluntary, conducted online and contained 46 questions. All study participants were college and university undergraduate and graduate students, mainly undergraduate, over the age of 18, and the majority of them came from public, four-year institutions.

"In many ways, this study is just scratching the surface of what we know about how students use and perceive closed captions and transcripts in the college and university classroom," Linder said. "Additional research related to student use and perceptions of closed captions and transcripts is welcomed and encouraged."

A [summary](#) of the findings is available online at <http://bit.ly/2eKmswJ>, as well as a downloadable version of the full report.

Provided by Oregon State University

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