

Often people ask whether they need to caption videos used in their educational programs or on their websites. Here is a challenge for you to try: The next time you have an opportunity to enjoy a TV program or a movie, turn the volume off and watch for about 20 minutes. Try to figure out what the plot is, the characters' identities, and what are they doing. Now start again from the beginning, but this time with the sound on, you can even turn on the captions- if the program you selected is captioned. Were you close? Probably not. The dialogue is often just as important as the scenes in a movie.

Many instructors and trainers enjoy using videos in educational environments. Students also enjoy the opportunity to learn from different forms of course delivery, including video, if they can understand what is happening in the video. Let's return to the question, do we need to caption videos used in educational programs or on our websites? If you tried the challenge, now you know the answer to this question. It is yes, certainly, if you want people with hearing loss to be able to gain the benefit of learning and participating in the dialogue and the purpose for the video.

Outside of just being good business, captioned, accessible audio-visual media and course videos promote open, inclusive learning environments. The captions also provide access to many other individuals than just those with hearing loss. People who speak other languages can better understand your content when captions are also displayed. People in noisy environments or environments where there is purposely no sound are able to understand the content with captions. Also, people and children with reading or language disabilities are assisted with the content when captions are present.

Ensuring videos used in public settings, like our schools and websites are captioned is also a legal responsibility. Legislation that has been in place for many years actually makes it clear that we are to make programs and activities accessible. For more information, go to: www.section508.gov, it is amongst other laws that support accessibility.