Key Considerations

1. In addition to virtual classrooms, it is important to be proactive and ensure that access to cancelled events can be arranged if they are to be re-established through online formats. This may require working with committees and institutional teams to secure interpreting, captioning, and transcribing services in advance.

2. Whether lectures are live-streamed or recorded, remote captioning, transcribing and/or interpreting services need to be arranged. Some service providers are accustomed to working remotely and may be able to assist in setup if necessary, in addition to troubleshooting with IT departments.

3. For real-time and live streamed lectures that are being recorded, some platforms allow for captions to be integrated during the live presentation. Zoom and Adobe Connect are two examples, which also allow for the lecture to be recorded.

4. Clear communication and acquainting students to the processes of online learning is key.

General Points to Consider

☞ Recorded lectures can offer additional flexibility by allowing for post-production captioning and may alleviate challenges with internet and technology. If there are challenges with securing service providers, recorded access may increase the opportunities for interpreted sessions since access may be asynchronistic in nature.

☞ The availability of service providers to deliver online access such as TypeWell transcribing or CART real-time captioning could become challenging during this time of increasing demand. You may wish to consider other transcribing/ captioning services or hire remote service providers in other provinces if the demand for local providers becomes too great.

☞ In addition to establishing access through remote speech-to-text services – TypeWell or CART, it will be important to establish remote interpreting services, which happens less frequently in our institutions. Working with faculty, IT support, and interpreters to determine the technical arrangements (mics, web cams, and stable internet connections) will be essential.

☞ Another option to consider is outsourcing to local companies that specialize in video remote services, which may also be a viable alternative in some cases. *Please let us know if this becomes a service that you will need to explore, and we will be happy to work with you in this regard.*

NOTE: Allow advance access to course materials and the Learning Management System (LMS) whenever possible. The more preparation time that service providers have, the more familiar they will be with the content and the better they will be able to support their student.

Technical and Logistical Factors for Remote Access

Setup

☞ A strong internet connection is very important for instructors, students, and service providers. While hard-wired connections are more reliable than wireless connections, not everyone will have access to hard-wired internet. Even the best connections can still have delays, lags, or connection issues. Plan for such complications with the knowledge that they can happen.

☞ Anticipate that the chosen online platform may be experiencing a high volume of traffic or that your Wi-Fi connection may be overloaded. This can slow down the speed of service.

☞ Verify what devices and technology students and providers have available for accessing online instruction. Essential needs include high-speed internet, laptops, tablets, webcams, microphones, and headsets.

TIP: If possible, it is beneficial for institutions to standardize which platforms they expect instructors to use. If there is only one platform, it will reduce the amount of troubleshooting that IT services has to do.

☞ Allow time for testing to troubleshoot and ensure remote access is effective and running smoothly for students and service providers (i.e. mics, internet) and that there is easy access to platforms such as D2L, Canvas, and Blackboard.

☞ For hard of hearing students who use assistive listening devices with hearing aids or cochlear implants, consideration for additional devices to access the audio is important. Equipment loans may be essential. Having the student connect their listening devices via Bluetooth or hard-wire may be preferable to relying solely on the computer speaker system.

Service Providers

☞ Services providers may be able to work remotely from their homes or offices. You may also have the option, depending on institutional policy, to have the service provider in a classroom or office at your institution if the protocol around social distancing can be met. This may reduce the difficulty of troubleshooting if problems occur.

☞ Ensure that service providers have the correct permissions to access to online content and the LMS, including pre-recorded or live-streamed classes. Since many providers are contracted and do not automatically have access to the LMS, work with faculty or IT departments to arrange access as needed if providers do not have institutional credentials. Adding service providers as "guests" may not suffice and may require changing the status to "co-host" or "instructor" to enable effective access.

Online Platforms

☞ A comparison of video chat apps found [HERE](#). Zoom ranks the highest. For video conferencing platforms such as WebEx, Zoom, BlueJeans, Adobe Connect, full consideration of their features and limitations is important.

☞ Any online platform can have challenges. For example, WebEx defaults to live microphones, so in a live class, it can take time for students to get used to turning their microphones off.

☞ Chat features are a helpful way for students to ask questions.

☞ WebEx and other platforms are also especially effective in short term situations such as hosting office hours. There are ways to embed WebEx meetings in your LMS so that the meeting is instantly accessible by all your students. Generally, this is done by adding an activity or resource to your LMS.

☞ The following link has a good description of things to consider when working with remote real-time captioning. [REMOTE CAPTIONING FOR EVENTS](#)

Interpreting, TypeWell Transcribing, and CART Captioning

Best practices for remote speech-to-text transcribing services (e.g. TypeWell or CART) may already be established at your institution for in-class use. When all parties are connecting remotely, it will be important to assess if the chosen platform (WebEx, Zoom etc.) is able to connect and sync the real-time captions on the screen.

For how to set up a remote captioning professional in a Zoom meeting, [CLICK HERE](#).

For information on language interpretation in Zoom meetings and webinars, [CLICK HERE](#).

Tips from TypeWell

☞ You can isolate the transcribing window so that it is always viewable while watching the online content. This can be done using an extension through Google Chrome, called FloBro (short for "floating browser") that lets you keep a specific browser page pinned on top of all your windows. [CLICK HERE](#) for more information.

Interpreting

☞ Remote interpreting is less common than transcribing and captioning services, but providers have used online platforms such as Zoom or Skype to facilitate this service. Check to see if your platform has a split screen view so that the student can watch the online presentation and keep the interpreter's video feed on screen.

☞ Some institutions are successfully providing remote interpreting services using Zoom. The interpreter is added to the connection like any of the other students and listens to the live instructions while interpreting into ASL. The Deaf or hard of hearing student will then bring the interpreter's video up on their computer in full or split screen mode with the interpreter and instructor in the largest screen.

Other Tips and Considerations

☞ In Zoom, a participant can "pin video", which keeps the person that is pinned large on the screen. This can then be made to be full screen if the student needs it larger for ease of finger spelling. The view can also be set so that the student can see other people at the same time. We do this with 2 interpreters participating so they can team. See a demo HERE.

☞ Google Meet also works in a very similar manner and can provide fairly accurate captioning. When paired with the interpreter, the student will have extra support to know who is talking.

☞ For Deaf students who use sign language, ensure that the interpreter can be seen on the screen. In some platforms, the picture of the interpreter is very small and problematic to see. Discuss and test this with the student and service provider or video relay service if you choose to work with one. Many platforms allow you to "pin" the interpreter on screen to be seen at all times.

Online Materials and Activities

☞ Pre-recorded lectures that are uploaded need to be interpreted, transcribed and/or captioned.

☞ For real-time and live streaming lectures that are also being recorded, some platforms allow for captions to be integrated during the live presentation. Zoom and Adobe Connect are two examples that also allow the lecture to be recorded.

☞ If a Zoom meeting or webinar is recorded and saved to the cloud, Zoom can generate captions for the archived video using automatic speech recognition (ASR). These require editing before they're suitable for publication, or be considered to provide equitable access. However, the ASR process can save substantial time over captioning the video from scratch.

☞ Other platforms also allow for live-stream captioning to be included into Learning Management Systems such as Learning Hub -aka D2L, Canvas, Blackboard Collaborate etc.

☞ Your IT department can be a source of tremendous support in helping navigate these challenges. Additional support and tutorials can be found at the sites as well, including:

- Zoom
- Canvas
- Blackboard (choose the appropriate platform and type "accessibility" in the search box)
- Learning Hub (D2L/Brightspace)
- WebEx

Captioned Media

General considerations

☞ Auto captioning services, such as those seen on YouTube, are not considered to be equal access as the quality is not reliable and has a very high error rate.

☞ Industry standards are clearly explained through sites such as Described and Captioned Media Program: https://dcmp.org/ or Kaltura: www.kaltura.com.

☞ When possible, using videos that are already captioned is a great solution. Find videos that are already captioned properly to minimize any delays in access. Some resources include DCMP, AmazonPrime, Netflix, Kanopy, Hulu, and YouTube.

External resources

To have materials and recorded lectures captioned through external sources, common options include:

- Kaltura: www.kaltura.com

- REV Service: https://www.rev.com/

- Camtasia offers a lot of features, including the ability to record and type in captions. You can also insert questions within the presentation.

- Closed captions in Google Slides **-** Google Slides now has a closed captioning feature when presenting your next lecture or presentation. It uses your computer's microphone to detect your voice and transcribes it in real time as you are presenting. Learn more: Present with closed captions in Google Slides.

- Microsoft Word offers a "Dictate" setting that can provide speech-to-text in some situations

TIP: if using voice recognition software to create auto captions to be edited after, test the software beforehand. Certain syllables may need stronger pronunciation than normally. You wall also want to check for profanity, which some services have a setting to filter out.

Internal Captioning

If you are captioning short videos internally, some resources for this are:

- http://www.captioningkey.org/quality_captioning.html

- Recorded Captioning Style Guide

Frequently Asked Questions

How can we add sign language interpreters in "live" online courses?

Yes! Give the remote interpreter(s) access to the video platform service (e.g., Zoom or GoToMeetings) or LMS (e.g., Canvas or Blackboard). Ensure that students are aware of and have enabled the features to choose how the videos appear on screen (gallery, side-by-side, etc.), that they have any necessary permissions, and that they know how to set up their preferences to view the interpreter and instructor.

If for any reason the interpreter is not able to login to the preferred LMS/online course platform, consider a multi-platform approach. For example, the student can be logged into LMS (e.g. Canvas or Blackboard in one window and an interpreter on an online video platform (e.g., Zoom, FaceTime or other video service).