"Pardon?" What Was That?" Cool Tools for Closed Captioning Options for Online Classes

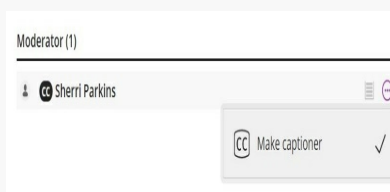Published 9/22/2020 by Ashley Ribbel

by Sherri Parkins, Counselling and Accessibility Services and the Teaching & Learning Centre
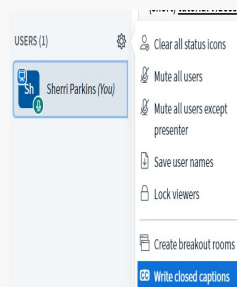
in the September 2020 issue

Online learning has both benefits and challenges, as the past 6+ months has had us all experience. Both synchronous and asynchronous learning formats can present moments of confusion as the sound on our computers cuts off or the cacophony of household noises that seem to surface at the critical time in a meeting or class means that we miss critical information.

Recording your lectures means that students who are experiencing such issues may review the content, but what can you do "live" while teaching? Live Closed Captioning can clarify those distorted sounds!

Perhaps you have noticed the "Make captioner" function in Blackboard Collaborate Ultra or BigBlueButton:

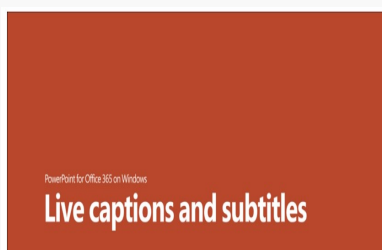The make-captioner option in Blackboard Collaborate Ultra

The write-closed-captions option in BigBlueButton

In both of these platforms, Closed Captioner would be a professional live captioner (or someone who can type what is being said during the session).

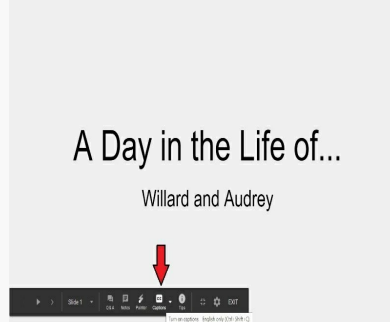Let's check out some other live transcription cool tools:

PowerPoint for Microsoft 365 and **PowerPoint for the web** have the option to display subtitles when presenting. For instructions on how to do this, watch the Live Captions & Subtitles video:
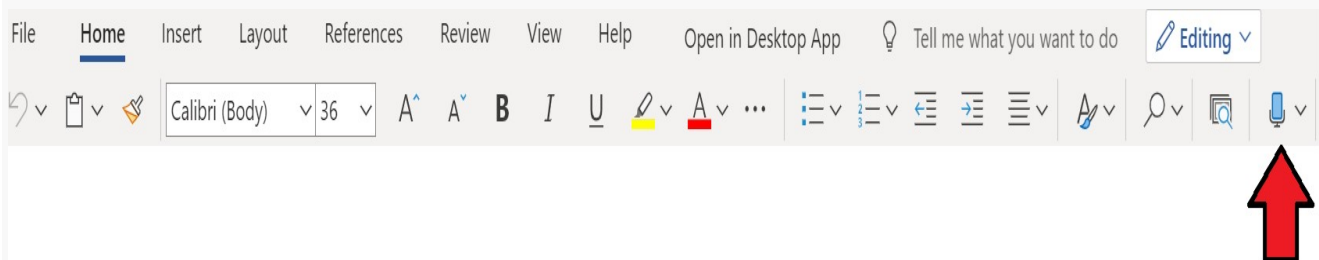
Or consult the Automatic Subtitles in PowerPoint for Microsoft 365 webpage.

Google Slides also has live closed captioning that can be turned on while presenting:
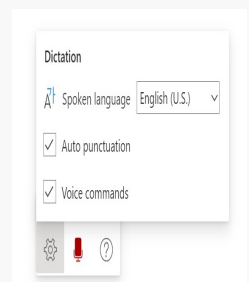

If you are presenting other materials, **Word for Microsoft 365** also has a Dictate function on your Home ribbon.

You can change the settings to have automatic punctuation.

By resizing the Word for Microsoft 365 document, you could run it along anything that you are presenting.
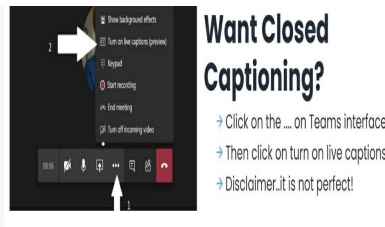
Otter (Otter.ai) provides live transcription while it records. The free account allows for 600 minutes per month with a maximum of 40 minutes in length per recording. You can display the live transcription along with other materials as you teach. The transcription punctuates, time stamps, indicates different speakers, and can be used in other platforms. Recordings can be shared.

If you are using **Microsoft Teams** as an online classroom platform, you can display the "Live captions" on your screen while you teach.

Have you already recorded your class and now are looking to add closed captioning?

Upload your class recording to **Microsoft Stream** for automatic closed captions. To see how to set this up, visit the Automatic Closed Captions on Microsoft Stream webpage.

A searchable transcript is also displayed beside the video in Microsoft Stream. An important note! If you are going to share the closed-captioned video, don't download it and send/post a copy. The closed captioning will not be part of the downloaded video. Use the share information generated by Microsoft Stream so the closed captioning remains part of the play back. You can download a caption file for use in other platforms.

If you prefer, you can add closed caption to a recorded lecture using the automatic closed captioning on YouTube; see Add Your Own Closed Captions.

The use of Closed Captions is one example of how the Universal Design for Learning principle of Multiple Means of Representation can benefit many of us!

View the September 2020 issue of the Academic Newsletter.

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tags : counselling-and-accessibility-services, educational-technology, educational-technology-tools, september-2020, teaching-and-learning, the-teaching-and-learning-centre