

# UTILIZING CAPTIONED FILMS FOR TEACHING COMMUNICATION SKILLS

By

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The purpose of this article is to encourage teachers of the hearing impaired to consider the use of captioned films as a tool for the teaching of communication skills (auditory training, visual communication, and speech). Two questions will be addressed:

1. What films might have value in an auditory training, visual communication, or speech lesson?
2. How can the teacher analyze a particular film's auditory training, visual communication, or speech teaching potential?

## **What films might have value in an auditory training, visual communication, or speech lesson?**

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The subject headings contained with the *Catalog of Educational Captioned Films for the Deaf* provide an initial resource for the teacher attempting to identify films for use in a communication skills class. The teacher should be imaginative in film selection, but needs to keep in mind that subject headings and film titles may be deceiving. Reading the film descriptions in the body of the catalog, reading the suggestions in the lesson guide, and previewing the film are all necessary steps when assessing a film's speech teaching value.

EMOTIONS and HUMAN RELATIONS are subject headings which list films that may be effective for encouraging student use of auditory and visual skills and for speech skills related to voice and rhythm. To convey various moods and feelings, actors must change their facial expressions, gestures, voice quality, intensity, and pitch, as well as phrasing, rate, intonation, and stress. These changes could be pointed out in the film by the teacher, discussed by the class, and practiced by the students. Activities

such as altering the meaning of a sentence by changing moods or feelings, and thus communication behaviors, could be used as a follow-up to the class discussion. Video taping the students or tape recording them could provide more variety in lesson procedures and allow students the opportunity to identify, through vision or audition alone, the speaker's emotional state.

FABLES, CHILDREN'S LITERATURE, and POETRY are other subject headings in which films could suggest mood changes and, therefore, voice and rhythm changes as discussed in the previous paragraph. These and other captioned films may have soundtracks with the voices of several actors or actresses or a narrator who must use different voices to identify a change in the character speaking. This would be of further value for voice and rhythm work and for auditory training. Having the children act out the dialogue of the captioned film could also be an enjoyable means of practicing communication skills.

Still other potentially useful subject headings are SAFETY EDUCATION and COMMUNITY LIFE. The soundtracks of these films sometimes have environmental sounds that are related to safety tips or an aspect of community life. For example, these films could be used as a meaningful basis to discuss and introduce a variety of traffic noises, such as an ambulance, car horn, or fire truck.

RHYME, NURSERY RHYMES, and RHYTHM are familiar topics to teachers of communication skills, and films found under these heading are sure to have value for developing all aspects of speech. Listening to, identifying, and pronouncing rhyming words can provide excellent practice for articulation of vowels and consonants. Listening to and repeating rhythm patterns, pronouncing new vocabulary items from nursery rhymes, and acting out the rhymes are all often-favorite activities of children. The captioned film will provide a variation in media presentation for these frequently introduced topics.

Hearing-impaired students often enjoy music. The subject headings of CAROLS, MUSIC, and POPULAR SONGS list several films that could be utilized in a communications skills class. Listening for particular instruments, vocal versus instrumental music, solo versus group singing, various rhythmical patterns, and particular vocabulary or phrasing of the song are activities which can be challenging to the hearing-impaired student. Learning to sing the songs can help articulation, voice, and rhythm problem areas.

There are captioned films, which utilize a bouncing ball to indicate the number of beats each syllable of a word is prolonged in a song or rhyme. These films are listed in the catalog under several of the subject headings already discussed, although a single listing of all these films is not provided in the catalog. The lesson guides for these particular films stress their applicability to speech and rhythm classes. The films are listed below along with their lesson guides.

1. CFD477, *Animal Fair*, American Edition, p. 7
2. CFD585, *Country Mother Goose*, Wisconsin Edition, p. 253
3. CFD224, *Jingle Bells*, Baxter Edition, p. 441
4. CFD481, *A Mother Goose Medley-Songs With Numbers*, Florida Edition, p. 83
5. CFD586, *Romantic Mother Goose*, Wisconsin Edition, p. 257
6. CFD224, *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer*, Baxter Edition, p. 444
7. CFD588, *Sun, Wind, and Rain*, Wisconsin Edition, p. 261
8. CFD225, *This Land Is Your Land*, Baxter Edition, p. 447
9. CFD225, *You Are My Sunshine*, Baxter Edition, p. 449

The *Living Language Series* of captioned films was produced with particular needs of the hearing impaired in mind. These films utilize delayed captioning and frequent upper body front views of individuals to encourage the development of speech reading skills. Other aspects of visual communication, such as attending to gestures or cues from the environment, are presented in these films. A grouped list of these films may be found under the “film description” portion of the catalog.

Many films have been suggested for use by referring to the above subject headings. Some will be of value to a particular speech lesson, and others, because of language level, rate of presentation, children’s interests, or other reasons, will not be appropriate. The teacher must systematically review each film and analyze its potential use in the communication skills class.

## **How can the teacher analyze a particular film’s auditory training, visual, communication, or speech teaching potential?**

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At the end of this article, a form for “Analysis of a Captioned Film for Auditory Training, Visual Communication, and Speech” is presented. This form would be completed during, or immediately after, the preview of a selected film. Following the basic identifying information at the top of the page, communication skills are divided into five major areas: auditory training, visual communication, articulation, voice, and rhythm. Each major area is then subdivided into aspects with which a captioned film may be concerned. A small block to the left of each subdivision is to be checked when a teacher would like to draw attention to that subdivision. Room for comments is available. Completed forms are provided for referral at the end of this article.

Several of the major area subdivisions may require explanation. Development of auditory skills can be influenced by the soundtrack of the captioned film. SYNCAP indicates that the original soundtrack has been removed and replaced by a new soundtrack. This new soundtrack is “syn”chronized to go along with the “cap”tions. The voice substituted for all speaking parts is typically male. The presence of singing, instrumental music, or a particular song could be mentioned in the analysis, as could the presence of particular environmental sounds or language to which the student could attend auditorily.

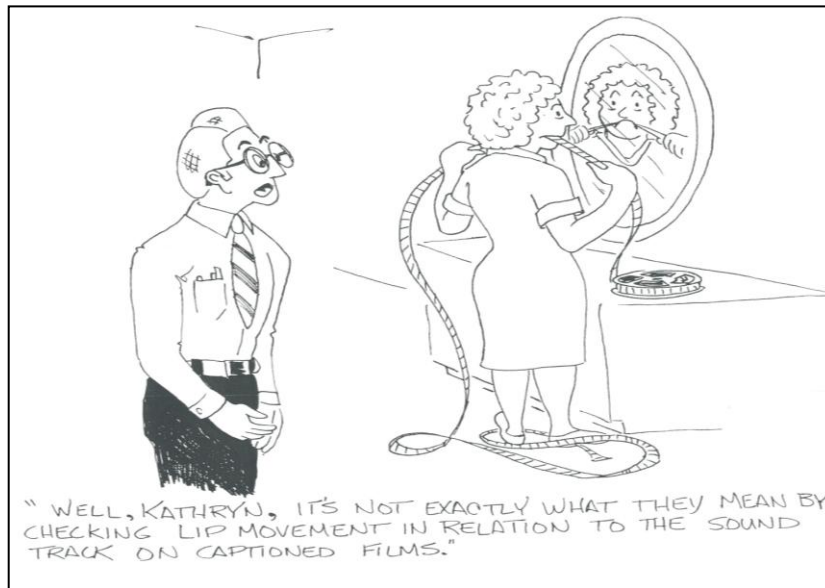
Visual communication training should take into account lip movements and their visibility, along with their relationship to the soundtrack. Many films provide opportunity to observe gestures, facial expressions, or other body movements as they influence communication. Particular environmental scenes may also be useful to note as a referent for class discussion about what topics might be discussed in a particular location.

Articulation, voice, and rhythm all contribute to speech intelligibility, and their subdivisions are well-known to the teacher of communication skills.

By completing the provided analysis, the teacher will have a permanent record of those aspects of a film, which could be used as a basis for a communication skills lesson, and thus a method for determining the teaching potential of the film.

## Conclusion

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Captioned films provide the teacher of the hearing impaired a motivating and enriching tool that can be utilized to enhance a teaching unit in any subject area. It is hoped that after reading this article, the teacher will begin to systematically analyze captioned films for their value in teaching communication skills as well.

# ANALYSIS OF A CAPTIONED FILM FOR AUDITORY TRAINING, VISUAL COMMUNICATION AND SPEECH

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CALL NO. \_\_\_\_\_ TITLE: \_\_\_\_\_

CFD LESSON GUIDE: \_\_\_\_\_ LEVEL: P \_\_\_\_ I \_\_\_\_ A \_\_\_\_ TIME: \_\_\_\_\_

	AUDITORY TRAINING	COMMENTS
	SYNCAP	
	MUSIC	
	ENVIRONMENTAL SOUNDS	
	SPEECH/LANGUAGE	

	VISUAL COMMUNICATION	COMMENTS
	LIP MOVEMENTS	
	GESTURES, FACIAL EXPRESSIONS	
	ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS	

	ARTICULATION	COMMENTS
	CONSONANTS	
	VOWELS	
	BLENDS	
	NO. OF SYLLABLES	

	VOICE	COMMENTS
	QUALITY	
	PITCH	
	INTENSITY	

	<b>RHYTHM</b>	<b>COMMENTS</b>
	ACCENT	
	EMPHASIS	
	TEMPO OR RATE	
	PHRASING	
	INTONATION	

## ANALYSIS OF A CAPTIONED FILM FOR AUDITORY TRAINING, VISUAL COMMUNICATION AND SPEECH

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CALL NO. CFD 429      TITLE: Our Angry Feelings

CFD LESSON GUIDE: Callier 97    LEVEL: P √    I         A         TIME: 12 min.

AUDITORY TRAINING		COMMENTS
√	SYNCAP	Yes
√	MUSIC	No
√	ENVIRONMENTAL SOUNDS	NO
	SPEECH/LANGUAGE	

VISUAL COMMUNICATION		COMMENTS
√	LIP MOVEMENTS	Lip movements not synchronized with narrator or captions. Some close-ups can be speech read, although aren't captioned. "Oh boy, am I happy!"
√	GESTURES, FACIAL EXPRESSIONS	Angry, happy, and sad moods are stressed.
√	ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS	Objects malfunctioning give clues to possible frustration and mood change.

ARTICULATION		COMMENTS
	CONSONANTS	
	VOWELS	
	BLENDS	
	NO. OF SYLLABLES	

VOICE		COMMENTS
√	QUALITY	Adult male narrator with strong, clear voice.
√	PITCH	"      "      "
	INTENSITY	

	<b>RHYTHM</b>	<b>COMMENTS</b>
	ACCENT	
	EMPHASIS	
	TEMPO OR RATE	
	PHRASING	
√	INTONATION	Although not emphasized in the movie, the teacher could stress possible voice and rhythm changes associated with mood changes.



## ANALYSIS OF A CAPTIONED FILM FOR AUDITORY TRAINING, VISUAL COMMUNICATION AND SPEECH

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CALL NO. CFD 725 TITLE: Country Mother Goose (Baa, Baa Black Sheep, Little Boy Blue, Little Bo  
Beep, Mary Had a Little Lamb

CFD LESSON GUIDE: Wisconsin 253 LEVEL: P √ I      A      TIME: 5 min.

AUDITORY TRAINING		COMMENTS
√	SYNCAP	Yes
√	MUSIC	Piano accompaniment
√	ENVIRONMENTAL SOUNDS	Metronome ticking
	SPEECH/LANGUAGE	

VISUAL COMMUNICATION		COMMENTS
	LIP MOVEMENTS	
	GESTURES, FACIAL EXPRESSIONS	
	ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS	
√		Illustrations of the nursery rhymes are shown.

ARTICULATION		COMMENTS
	CONSONANTS	
	VOWELS	
	BLENDS	
√	NO. OF SYLLABLES	Bouncing ball counts out each syllable (beat)

VOICE		COMMENTS
√	QUALITY	Clear, strong voice model

√	PITCH	Adult male singer
	INTENSITY	

<b>RHYTHM</b>		<b>COMMENTS</b>
√	ACCENT	Durational changes and intensity changes in the music help reflect both accent and emphasis.
√	EMPHASIS	
√	TEMPO OR RATE	The tempo at which the rhymes are presented might be a little fast for some children.
√	PHRASING	Phrasing is frequently stressed by changes in captions and illustrations.
√	INTONATION	The singing of the nursery rhymes provides good modeling for all aspects of rhythm.