

CLARKE

www.clarkeschool.org

Mainstream News

March 2008 ~ Volume 27, No. 6

Information about hearing loss for students, families and educators

Introducing Captioned Media in the Early Years: Preparing children for life-long access

As teens with hearing loss plan for life after high school, their readiness for this transition is going to depend in part on their ability to manage their communication access needs independently. It takes time to learn about the different access methods that are available, how to use them, how to go about getting them, and how to problem solve. We can better prepare students to become savvy consumers and self-advocates by initiating discussion and practice in the younger years. Waiting until the teen years can be risky, as this can be a time when students are likely to reject anything that makes them feel different. The use of captioned media is a perfect example of a tool that is worth introducing early on.

In our experience, it is common for captioned media to be included in a student's education plan at the middle and high school levels. This has to do with the fact that teachers use media more often as an integral part of their curriculum material and hold students responsible for information that is presented in a variety of forms. Less attention may be given to captioned media at the elementary level, in part because

"Like subtitles on movies, captions are a transcription of the spoken word into a written form that permits deaf and hard-of-hearing people to see what they cannot hear. Unlike subtitles, captions also provide descriptions of sounds, such as a bell ringing or a door slamming."
—National Captioning Institute

because videos and film clips are not used as often, or are thought of as "extras" and nothing a student will be tested on. It might also be assumed that captions are not useful until a child is a proficient reader.

In truth, the use of captioned media with younger children carries with it numerous opportunities. Through practice and discussion over a longer period of time, children can develop a deeper understanding of situations in which captioning is particularly helpful for them, even in cases where the child has strong auditory skills. Programs with no visual cues for speechreading (such as cartoons), challenging new vocabulary or

Continued on page 2

Upcoming workshops sponsored by
The Mainstream Center, CLARKE:

A workshop for teens with hearing loss

May 3, 2008
The Mainstream Center, CLARKE
Details to follow in our April 2008 issue

19th Annual Oral Transliterators Training Workshop

August 18–22, 2008
The Mainstream Center, CLARKE
View our brochure at:
<http://www.clarkeschool.org/content/mainstream/translit.php>

29th Annual Fall Conference "No Child (with hearing loss) Left Behind"

Navigating Through the Mainstream

October 23–24, 2008
Springfield, MA
For sponsorship and exhibiting opportunities contact:
Barbara Rochon 413-587-7313 v/tty
or brochon@clarkeschool.org

In This Issue


- Creative Kids Celebrate National Youth Art Month
- Claire Blatchford: Kids and Bluffing
- Clarke's Summer Programs for Children and Families

content information, heavy narration or narration by a person with an accent are just a few examples. Additionally, captioning is useful when background noise is present, room acoustics are poor, or there is poor sound quality in the video itself. Having the text visible in case an occasional word is missed or misheard can make a significant difference in overall understanding, to say nothing of captions providing yet another exposure to the English language.

Consistent use of captioning in the home and at school from an early age also helps to “normalize” it for family members, peers and teachers. When it becomes a regular part of the routine, everyone gets used to it and derives benefit from it. As one mother writes:

“For our family, captions really equate to access to the world. They allow my two children with a hearing loss to have access to educational material in the classroom, to entertainment and social events, and to critical information like the news and weather. And my hearing child’s language development has been an added benefit.”
(Michelle Rich, from her article “The Equal Access Journey,” available at www.dcmp.org/caai/nadh200.pdf.)

Over twenty years of research supports the benefits of captioning as a learning tool for all children, which makes the use of captioned media in the elementary years even more attractive (highlighted in the adjacent box). With this in mind, here are some ideas to set the stage for positive experiences with captioning in the early years:

1. Approach the use of captioning with a positive attitude. If a child senses that it is a hassle, he will learn to downplay its importance and be reluctant to request it as he grows older. When you encounter problems, see it as an opportunity to solve them together. Don’t give up!
2. Teach family members, school staff and the student to recognize the symbols commonly used to indicate that a film or program has closed captions. 
3. Turn it on and leave it on! You will not need to do anything for a program that has open captions; the words will always appear on the screen. However, a program that has closed captions means that the words are encoded in the program’s signal and must be “opened.” Learn how to activate the captions from the menu on your home/school televisions and

Continued on back of insert

Benefits of Captions

An excerpt from the article
“Read Captions Across America!”

By Bill Stark, Project Director for DCMP
January 2008

- Captions help children with word identification, meaning, acquisition, and retention.
- Reading captions is motivating to reading.
- Captions can help children establish a systematic link between the written word and the spoken word.
- Pre-readers, by becoming familiar with captions, will have familiar signposts when they begin reading print-based material.
- Captioning has been related to higher comprehension skills when compared to viewers watching the same media without captions.
- Children who have a positive experience in reading will want to read; reading captions provides such an experience.
- Reading is a skill that requires practice, and practice in reading captions is practice with authentic text.
- Captions provide missing information for individuals who have difficulty processing speech and auditory components of the visual media (whether this difficulty is due to a hearing loss or a cognitive delay).
- Students often need assistance in learning content-relevant vocabulary (in biology, history, literature, and other subjects), and with captions they see both the terminology (printed word) and the visual image.
- Captioning is essential for deaf and hard-of-hearing children, can be very beneficial to those learning English as a second language, can help those with reading and literacy problems, and can help those who are learning to read.

Full article available at
<http://www.dcmp.org/caai/nadh154.pdf>

Introducing Captioned Media *Continued from page 2*

- other media equipment. Make sure that more than one person in your family/on your staff knows how to do this. Some of us are more comfortable than others with technology, and every television/remote control is different. Don't hesitate to ask for help from someone with more technological know-how and to request a written copy of easy-to-follow, step-by-step directions that you can keep on hand. As the child gets older, teach him how to do this as well. This will enable him to become the "expert" and have the ability to assist a substitute teacher or babysitter, for example.
4. Introduce the use of captions as a tool to help everyone practice their reading and to refer to if they missed any words that are said, not specifically as an assist for the student with hearing loss.
 5. Don't limit the showing of captioned media to the classroom. If a film is going to be shown at a school-wide assembly or family event, such as a school-sponsored "movie night," choose captioned titles and make sure that those heading the event know how to activate the captions.
 6. Assess your collection of videos at home and at school. Are there titles that are popular with your children or that you show regularly that are not captioned? Look for captioned versions at your local library or video store or on the web. A few online sources include www.amazon.com and <http://shop.pbs.org>. Make it a policy that your school/family purchases only titles that are captioned from now on.
 7. Join the Described and Captioned Media Program. This is a free, government-sponsored video loan program open to families, schools and others whose use of the lending library will benefit at least one deaf, hard-of-hearing, blind, visually impaired, or deaf-blind student. Over 4,000 educational titles are available with closed captioning for those with hearing loss and description for those who are visually impaired. To get started, go to www.dcmp.org.
 8. Talk about the use of captioning at your child's educational planning meetings. Encourage the use of captions to be part of teacher trainings and include captioned media as an access tool in the IEP. Plan ahead for the coming year.
 9. Look for opportunities to teach all children about the value of captioned media. For example, the DCMP has partnered with the NEA (National Education Association) to sponsor Read Captions Across America™ in conjunction with Read Across America events held in schools and libraries nationwide each March. The DCMP Web site (listed in #7) includes links to this program and a host of activity ideas. Find ways to have fun with captions!
 10. When attending movie theaters as a family, learn about Rear Window® Captioning. Developed by The Media Access Group at Boston's public broadcaster WGBH, this system allows a person to view captions on a plexiglass panel placed on the seat back in front of them. Captions are only visible to the person using the system and do not obstruct anyone else's view. Visit <http://ncam.wgbh.org/mopix> for more information and a list of theaters in each state that have this system.



Captioned media will benefit students with hearing loss throughout their school years and for the rest of their lives. By displaying captions whenever media is shown at home or at school, children will have opportunities to practice using them without feeling singled out. The impact captions have on reading fluency, vocabulary development and motivation of young children, whether they have a hearing loss or not, is an added benefit and all the more reason to make them a regular part of viewing routines. ▶



Swimming in the Mainstream

By Claire Blatchford, author and teacher

Helping Kids Understand Why They're Bluffing

A child with hearing loss can bluff without knowing he's bluffing. Suppose you ask, "Where's your lunch box?" and he just nods. You repeat the question and he nods again. You ask a third time, maybe putting a different stress or spin on the words. This time he gets it and – finally – produces his lunch box.

Where was he when you were asking at the start? Thinking of something else? Day dreaming? Nodding because he usually nods? Nodding because he knows you're asking something and expecting him to respond, so he responds even though he has no inkling what he's responding to? Maybe it was a combination of all of them.

Showing a child he didn't hear something you said may, for him, be the start of realizing he has a hearing loss, understands more slowly than his peers with normal hearing, and a number of other unpleasant or painful discoveries. It may also mark the start of conscious bluffing. I don't think there's a single rule one can follow when it comes to helping kids understand what bluffing is, when, and why we do it. Except for knowing this child, being sympathetic, developing a sense of how much honest talk he can, and can't, take at a given time, and in this manner, letting him lead the way. I also think it's important not to "sugar coat" things. Children with hearing loss, even children as young as five and six, know as well as normal hearing children when we're talking to them out of genuine respect and concern and when we're talking out of pity. If they can't hear our words, they can see it and hear it

in our faces. Our faces can say, "I'm so sorry for you not being able to hear what's going on."

When I was a child my mother would sometimes ask, seemingly out of the blue, in the middle of dinner, "Did you get that?" when I quite obviously hadn't "gotten it."

She'd probe. "What are we talking about?"

One time, when about eight, I tried to wiggle out with, "I've forgotten."

The family found that hilarious. "I've forgotten... What was your question?" My father would declare with a look of befuddlement when my mother asked if he'd had a good day.

As I got older it began to dawn on me that I was isolating myself when I bluffed. I was losing out and this was, really, my choice. My mother wasn't always going to be there to pull me back in.

There was plenty of teasing of this sort in my family and it wasn't directed just at me but at my hearing brother too. While I think developing a sense of humor is essential—meaning in this instance being able to see one's situation as funny, even absurd – I don't recommend turning a bluffing incident into a joke. The fear of looking stupid when admitting one doesn't understand, may not necessarily make one more honest, it may make one more afraid. In other words, one may become an even more ingenious bluffer!

Most children with hearing loss are not thinking about any of this. They're simply trying to get through each day. If you see the child behaving as though he's getting the information and you know he really isn't getting it, you need to decide how direct you want to be. Every question you ask can awaken him little by little to his situation, his own tendencies, strengths, and weaknesses. My mother's very direct, "Did you get that?" made clear to me that pretending I'd understood when I hadn't could make things worse. "Worse" at that age meant having a story told over just for me in front of everybody else. So I did what I could to get it the first time. If I was having trouble I'd ask people to clarify before my mother could turn the spotlight on me. Speaking privately to the child, asking "Do you need help?" or "How are things going with you?" might be more appropriate.

As I got older it began to dawn on me that I was isolating myself when I bluffed. I was losing out and this was, really, my choice. My mother wasn't always going to be there to pull me back in. And people weren't going to turn it into a joke, they might decide I wasn't worth the trouble if I was going to fake it. Did I want to be part of the conversation (or the class, or the party) or not? Was being part of it more important to me than how I thought I looked to others? These are BIG questions for preteens, teens and even some adults. They may not be able to verbalize where they are and what's going with them, but the more they can talk about these things, exchange

Continued on back page

Clarke's Summer Programs 2008



Building friendships and confidence for over 25 years

Summer JULY Adventure 13-25

Two week program for deaf & hard of hearing children ages 9–13. Activities led by experienced teachers of the deaf. Recreation, arts & crafts, academics, hiking, swimming, field trips and more! Children will enhance their listening and communication skills while building friendships and confidence.



Family JULY Weekend 25-27

Weekend program for families of deaf & hard of hearing children ages birth–13. Meet other families, learn from Clarke professionals and enjoy our beautiful campus. Fun activities for children, parents and siblings!

For more information, contact the Program Information Office at (413) 584-3450 or info@clarkeschool.org.

CLARKE School for the Deaf Center for Oral Education

www.clarkeschool.org

Continued from page 5

Swimming in the Mainstream

stories, even laugh at what seemed like a disaster at the time, the less formidable these situations become. One also develops an awareness of whom one can turn to for help, whom one feels comfortable about asking for help. Then there's the discovery: most hearing people are glad to help, in fact want to help.

Furthermore, one also begins to see bluffing for what it is. There are really many forms of bluffing. An entire

newsletter, not just a column, could be written on the topic, for hearing people bluff too—and all the time! I discovered this when I taught in the mainstream and was relieved to realize it wasn't just me. What did I see? Many of the same things I've seen in children with hearing loss. When it's hard for kids to sit still and concentrate, when they're easily distractible, they'll bluff without bothering to conceal it. When it's hard for them to follow, because



The Mainstream News

is published eight times a year (August through May) by The Mainstream Center at CLARKE-School for the Deaf/Center for Oral Education. Subscription rates: \$30.00 for an individual, or \$85.00 per school (8 copies per issue). Send a check or money order to: *The Mainstream News*, CLARKE, 48 Round Hill Road, Northampton, MA 01060-2124. A limited number of back issues are available for \$3.00 per copy.

The Mainstream News is partially underwritten by a Friend.

Comments? Ideas?

Please let us know! Articles submitted and published entitle the author to a one-year subscription free-of-charge.



Melissa Griswold, Editor

Contact us:

The Mainstream Center at CLARKE
 Phone: 413-582-1121 V/TTY
 Fax: 413-586-6654
 Email: mainstream@clarkeschool.org
 Melissa Griswold, Editor
 David Manning, Director

of other sounds or things going on nearby or in the background, they'll bluff. When they're tired, they'll bluff. When they're worried or anxious, they'll bluff. When they're eager for class to hurry up and be over, they'll bluff. When they just plain don't care, they'll bluff. When they do care, they won't. Isn't it the same for you? ▶