UNIT 1

Element 3 – Learning Outcome 3

TRANSCRIPT: REAL-TIME SUBTITLES

IN LIVE TV.

A TESTIMONIAL

BY D'ARCY MCPHERSON – PART 2

Table of contents

1   Slide 1

LiveTextAccess. Training for real-time intralingual subtitlers.

2   Slide 2

This is Unit 1. Understanding accessibility. Element 3. Embedding accessibility in working environments.

3   Slide 3

In this video lecture, we show the second part of a testimonial by D'Arcy McPherson, a real-time intralingual subtitler from Canada. He will talk about real-time subtitles in the TV context.

You can also watch the interview on the same topic made with Evan Dorrestein.

My name is Piero Cavallo from the Internationale Hochschule SDI München, in Germany. I have prepared this video lecture in collaboration with Rocío Bernabé Caro, also from SDI München, and the European Federation of Hard of Hearing, in short, EFHOH.

4   Slide 4

On completion of the training sequence, you will be able to advise customers about how to best set up an accessible real-time working environment for persons with hearing loss in the trained working contexts and settings. To achieve that, we will show testimonials and interviews of professionals.

5   Slide 5

The agenda is very short. First, I am going to introduce our invited speaker, D'Arcy McPherson. Then, I will illustrate the topics of the interview. Finally, this video lecture ends with a summary.

Please note, that this is the second part of the lecture.

6   Slide 6

First of all, let me introduce you D'Arcy McPherson.

7   Slide 7

D'Arcy McPherson is a broadcast captioner and court reporter from Canada. During his career, he also worked in other countries.

He is now the director of Hansard Services, at the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia, in Canada.

He uses a stenotype machine to provide real-time subtitles.

8   Slide 8

Let me give you some information before watching the second part of the video.

9   Slide 9

In this second part of the video, D'Arcy answered some questions that we sent to him before using a webcam. He talks about how to best set up in order to provide accessibility with real-time subtitles in live TV, or broadcast captioning, as he calls it.

He starts giving suggestions to future professionals entering in the field. We will see the importance of building a network, of providing accurate subtitles and of getting certifications.

We will also learn about the three P's for success: Practice, Punctuality, and Preparation.

Finally, D'Arcy makes some forecast on the future of the profession and the role of artificial intelligence.

10   Slide 10

Ok, let's watch the video now!

[TESTIMONIAL VIDEO STARTS]

In terms of additional considerations, I mentioned finding a mentor through your firm. Another way to do that is through associations or Facebook groups. I wouldn't be here speaking to you now if I hadn't attended the Intersteno conference. The last one that was held publicly in Sardinia. I met a lot of people there, and that was a really good experience. I learned a lot from different environments and people who perform the work in different ways. Facebook groups or different types of connect, networking groups, are really useful places and can target your specific interests quite nicely. I'd recommend looking into those, as well. There are lots of them. And one of the other things that I think is important to know is that, prior to do any job, you should try and get as much information as possible, not only from the employer, but from the other people that you may be working with, or if you want to just be-- not connected with a firm and freelance, then understand what's meant by that, as well. I've talked a little bit about consumer needs and expectations. In addition to people with hearing loss, a large number of people who rely on captions are people whose first language is not the one that you may be writing. In my case, that's English. And so that's an important consideration too: that there are people out there who are relying on you to better understand the language. They may be hearing, fully hearing, but they may not understand the particular language as well, That's another dynamic to consider. People who are... able to hear, may be look at your captions, and critiquing you in a way to understand, "Why is that not written exactly the way that person said something, or the way I heard it?" Because there may be times that you have to work around something. For instance, if you know a word isn't in your dictionary, instead of say... "dodecahedron", which would take a long time to spell out with individual letters, you could say a "multi-sided shape" and the message would be conveyed, but the person who hears would think, "OK, that's not what was said." there is some latitude, but it's also important to understand that you should be as accurate as possible, That type of editing on the fly is great if you're stuck, but it's not encouraged. The object is, obviously, verbatim. And to try and convey the messages as accurately to the person who's relying on the captions, as the person who heard the spoken words and the ambient noise heard it as possible. One of the other aspects of... being a broadcast captioner is wanting to be able to give comfort to the people that you're working for, as soon as possible. So, if that means-- if you're applying for a job, and your employer doesn't know you, but wants to know more about you, one of the ways to do that is with a demonstration of your education, your skills and abilities, and that includes certification in certain instances. Certification doesn't exist for everyone in every jurisdiction, but for those that it does, it's one way to present yourself as saying, "I have committed to... improving myself professionally and this is a demonstration of that. And I have also the-- I've passed tests at certain levels and you can expect that as a minimum standard for me." It's something that I certainly encourage to people who are in the field, who may have been in it for a long time. It's also something that... companies who may be applying for contracts can find useful as well, if

they have a body of people on their team who have... certifications. Sometimes contracts, that are being put out for tender are asking for that specifically. If you can add your list of qualifications, that can really help your company out in terms of getting more contracts and then you get more work. So, it's a win-win. And there's certainly a direct benefit. The-- One thing that I want to emphasize too is that there are, I think generically, three P's for success, and for the broadcast captioner that is absolutely true. Those three P's are: Practice, Punctuality and Preparation. You need to practice your skills on a daily basis. I've been doing this for decades and it's still important for me to practice. Broadcast captioning is not my full-time job, but I want to be able to do an excellent job, and as excellent a job as someone whose job it is full-time when I'm doing it. So, I practice. And it's-- Some people think that, when they finish school and they finish their program, "I'll never have to practice again because I've achieved that level." The level needs maintenance, and you need to maintain those levels in order to perform the job. Hopefully I'm preaching it converted already, but it is very important and it's something that I encourage people to do. Preparation is another big part of the job. Going into any type of broadcast captioning task you'll want to either have-- if you're doing news, any type of daily events, you want to be well read, be well aware of the current events that are going on, the names that may come up, the proper names that are are going to be in the top stories. Really in any of the stories most... broadcasters have a website that you can check and see the latest news there and usually that will be reflected in the show that you're broadcasting. Sporting events, award shows, religious programming. All of that has specific vocabulary. It's the responsibility of the broadcast captioner to have put in time, to ensure that the words that are potentially able to come up come up-- come up correctly, and, you know, spelled properly. And the third "P" is punctuality. This is maybe self-evident, but it needs to be really brought home: that if you're doing a show that starts at 10 o'clock in the morning, you can't show up at 10:05. You have to be ready on air and tested 10 to 15 minutes prior, at least, in my instance, that's our protocol. So, you dial into the master control, and you run a test on both the audio and the encoder, connectivity. And then you're ready to go. If there's a problem, you have master controls number. You can immediately communicate with them. Sometimes your connection will give out for whatever reason: either there's an electrical outage in the neighborhood and that affects your output. Then you may have to redo that section again and they can set you up. But those are the three P's, at least for me, are: "practice", "punctuality", and "preparation". In terms of the future and what I think broadcast captioning has to look forward to, I know that in-- there's often a debate about artificial intelligence and that, you know, there's no need to go into this field, because one day artificial intelligence will do everything. We don't need to invest in training closed captioners, broadcasters speech captures. I tend to disagree with that. Artificial intelligence has been around for about 20 years and it's made significant advances and it's amazing in a lot of ways, but the total benefit that a live human brings to... to the table is, in my

opinion, something that's far away from artificial intelligence, at least at this stage. The general information that I've heard is that it's a long way from… from being something that would actually replace the human person. So, I feel confident that the limitations that exist with artificial intelligence will be a huge hurdle to overcome. If someone is qualified, conscientious, and brings superior and excellent skills to the table, I think that they have a long and solid future to look forward to. As a professional, I think it's important to continue to always strive to offer more than artificial intelligence can. So developing skills, our perception and understanding of different environments and offering the service quality and flexibility that artificial intelligence can't, I think will always keep us at the forefront of the pack. So, that's the end of my broadcast captioning spiel. If any of you have any questions, feel free to reach out to me. I'm happy to do so.

11   Slide 11

The summary.

12   Slide 12

To briefly sum up the suggestions that D'Arcy shared with us, we can say that is very important for a subtitler to build a network of other experts working in the same or in different settings. This can be done via social media or by attending workshops and conferences. This will let you grow professionally, as you will know how other people work, and learn from them.

Then, we learned that if you are stuck during a job, workarounds are a good way to continue. For example, if a word is not in your dictionary, you can use a synonym or a circumlocution. But remember that who is relying on the subtitles is expecting that you type or respeak as many words as possible. So, verbatim is the goal.

Moreover, we have seen how important certifications are in order to let employers know that you are a valuable professional. Certifications are also good for companies to be proud of having a skilled professional in their team.

For a real-time subtitler the three P's for success are: Practice, Punctuality, and Preparation.

Practice, because you need to practice your skills on a daily basis, in order to do an excellent job.

Preparation means that you need to prepare for the job you are going to do. Specific vocabulary and proper names are just some examples.

The third P is Punctuality. This means that, when you are going to subtitle a show, you need to be prepared and set up prior starting the job.

Finally, D'Arcy made some forecasts on the future of the profession. Will artificial intelligence ever replace professional real-time subtitlers? Well, no. At least for now. Even if artificial intelligence has made many improvements over the last decades, the human contribution is still needed. So, if someone is qualified, they have a long and fruitful future to look forward to. But, it is important to always strive to offer more than artificial intelligence, as suggested by D'Arcy.

13   Slide 13

Exercises.

14   Slide 14

The exercises for this video lecture are in the Trainer's Guide and the PowerPoint file of part 2.

15   Voiceover

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