



UNIT 1

Element 3 – Learning Outcome 2

TRANSCRIPT: HEARING ACCESSIBILITY IN WORKING CONTEXTS: PART 1



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1 Slide 1

LiveTextAccess. Training for real-time intralingual subtitles.

2 Slide 2

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

3 Slide 3

This video lecture focuses on how to accommodate hearing accessibility features in working contexts. The information we provide can be useful for accessibility managers, event organisers, or any institution or person who wants to make an environment easy to use for all and possible to use for persons with a hearing loss.

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

4 Slide 4

On completion of this training sequence, you will be able to describe features that can be embedded into environments to make them accessible.

These features or accommodations that we mention will help you exploring the accessibility of working contexts and classifying them accordingly.

We have selected features that are transversal to all types of real-time communication situations.

We approach the topic from an end-user perspective. To do so, we include information from the Hearing Accessibility Guidelines published by the International Federation of Hard-of-Hearing People in 2021.

5 Slide 5

The agenda of this video lecture is very straightforward.

We will start by looking into the features one, by one by describing how they contribute to making participation easier, more inclusive and effective.

At the end, we will stress the main points in the summary.

6 Slide 6

Let's take a look at some accessibility features across real-time contexts.

7 Slide 7

Accessibility is an ability. That is the ability of a product, a service, etc., to be reached, used or entered by people with the widest range of abilities possible.

Real-time communication situations can therefore be defined and classified by this ability, the ability to be accessible.

Since the Convention on the Rights of Persons with disabilities, in short, CRPD, embedding accessibility in general and in real-time contexts has both, evolved and gained momentum.

As reported by Guozhong Zhang, in 2013, before the Convention, embedding accessibility into environments often meant creating "separated solutions". For instance, accessible rooms or websites were separated from the main building or the main website. In this line, access was being provided; however, the solutions were not necessarily inclusive. With the CRPD and the acknowledgment of accessibility as a human right, the approach became more holistic; towards integration.

Integrated solutions take a wider stand on accessibility. That means that they include accessibility features already in the planning stage and also aim at designing environments for all.

8 Slide 8

Improving hearing accessibility in real-time communication starts by knowing the needs and preferences of target users. This you have learnt in the previous lectures of Unit 1, so we will not repeat it here.

Then, the next step is to realize that hearing accessibility is more than providing a linguistic solution, such as, sign language, subtitles, or speaking loudly or using a microphone.

Hearing accessibility also means making a venue accessible by considering features, such as lightning and acoustics, and hearing assistive technology to improve access to sound through loops or FM systems, etc.

The way content is presented also plays a key role. This includes the communication skills of a speaker, of course, but also the communication as a whole. That is the program, the announcements during a conference, etc.

Lastly, providing access through real-time subtitling, which, as we have learnt already, is complementary to hearing assistive technology and not a replacement.

Let's take a closer look at these four categories now.

9 Slide 9

The set-up of a venue can impact the visual and aural fatigue of participants or visitors significantly.

Some of them may seem obvious to you, like good lighting and acoustics, but others, such as the seating position of the person with a hearing loss, might be less known to you and/or to persons without a hearing loss.

Aida, Marcel, could you expand on this first 3 venue features, please?

10 Slide 10

[Aida] I think, in general, the seating position of the person related the light in the room and also the acoustics. The light must come in from behind, so that the light will brighten up everybody else's spaces. This enables lip reading. And also it really must be good acoustics. There are different rules about acoustics from one country to another, but where I come from, we say that reverberation must not be more than 0.6 seconds. And this is very important because it affects the microphones in our HAs and also in our ALS.

[Marcel] Yeah, and sometimes the student is seating in front of the classroom, so close by the teacher, so that it is easier for the student to understand things, easy to see the face of the teacher, or reading the lips. You can say that a Hard-of-Hearing (HoH) person will not look into the light, because when you are sitting near the window, and an HoH person is in the other side of the room, sitting in front of you, and he looks to you, and you are sitting behind the window, then it is very difficult to see your face, and that makes very difficult to lip-reading, and also for the non-verbal communication.

[Aida] You can see at the picture here on the slide that there's an indication where the windows are. And you can also see where the crosses [are]: that is where the pupil with HL should be seated, with the back towards the windows. And also looking out to the other classmates, because that makes it faster to lip read and know who is in fact speaking in this classroom when you have a debate going on.

11 Slide 11

Venues can be equipped with hearing assistive systems and systems that convey visually information that is communicated via a loudspeaker.

Some examples are loops. Hearing loops or equivalent systems are often used in venues with big rooms such as theatres, cinemas, conference venues, concert halls. Users of hearing aids or cochlear implants with telecoils can receive the sound transmitted through the loop with less background noise. The drawbacks of loops remain the fact that the sound cannot be provided in stereo and their sensitivity to interferences.

Other types of loops are, for instance, neck loops, that a person can wear and use with personal devices such as mobile phones or audio-guidelines in museums. Desktop loops are another example. Desktop loops cover smaller surfaces and can be installed at information points or desks.

Venues can also be equipped with wireless connections through Bluetooth. This type of connection enables a quick and easy connection with hearing aids and relay ambient noise. This feature comes very handy at conferences to understand the speaker or at classrooms when other students are talking.

Another wireless connection are Infra-red systems, IR systems. Here the main issue is that the IR system needs a direct connection to the receiver. So, it is very important where the system is placed in the room and where the person with a HL with the receiver is sitting. The problem is that there must be a direct line, which cannot be interrupted. One advantage of IR systems, however, is that they do not cross walls. This means that the same frequency can be used in several rooms, and that the information stays in the room and is only available for the persons in that room.

Lastly, visual alarm or information systems should be installed to provide a written version of information that is presented through loudspeakers, for instance, fire alarms or notifications at theatres or at airports. The written information can appear on a screen in a common area or can be sent to a personal phone.

These were just some examples of equipment features for hearing accessibility. The International Federation of Hard-of-Hearing, in their accessibility guidelines, describe many others and their functionality.

12 Slide 12

Lastly, a feature that concerns the health of the real-time subtitler. That is their working conditions at the venue, be it a work station at a conference, an event, or in the classroom. Subtitlers work long hours under very stressful conditions. Therefore, organisers should provide them with a small but adequate workplace that includes a table to put their equipment, their bands, and notes, and bags, and also with a good quality chair.

Organisers should ask the subtitler in what part of the room they would like to sit. Many subtitlers prefer sitting close to the speakers, if they are not going to be working in the booth. This way they can see well the speaker and the slides and they can be more aware of their non-verbal communication. Of course, of utmost importance is that organisers provide subtitlers with a good and stable audio connection.

13 Slide 13

Some of the features that we have just discussed are as valid for online as for face-to-face contexts. However, there are also differences. We will discuss these differences in part 2 of this video lecture together with Aida. We will also discuss aspects that organisers, participants and speakers can implement to improve hearing accessibility.

OK, see you in part 2, then. Bye!

14 Voiceover

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