

# TEACHER LIBRARIANS: TURN ON THE CAPS!

**W**ith this year's National Literacy and Numeracy Week (25–31 August) fast approaching, Tim Lohman and Anne McGrath from Media Access Australia want teacher librarians to participate in a campaign to turn those captions on!

Teacher librarians are uniquely placed to make a real difference in students' educational outcomes thanks to your ability to lead and practically facilitate accessible education in your schools.

In turning captions on, you not only contribute to the success of National Literacy and Numeracy Week but also to students' ongoing access to teaching and learning in all its forms. Why not bring your colleagues on this journey by displaying cap that! posters in your library, and through discussing captions in staff meetings, newsletters and on your school's intranet?

A common response to the idea of having captions for all video content is that 'captions are only of use for students who are deaf or hearing-impaired'. While captions are indeed essential for these students, captions are also hugely beneficial for a whole range of other students: visual learners, diverse learners, those with learning difficulties, and those who have English as an additional language or dialect (EAL/D).

If we consider the curriculum co-development role teacher librarians have, it is clear that a trusted, informed voice on education accessibility can positively influence the understanding principals and other senior staff members have of the need for captioned video content when considering curricula. And the need is very real.

As at 2004 there were almost 12,000 students in Australian schools who were deaf or permanently hearing-impaired. Students can also suffer from fluctuating hearing impairment through everything from the common cold to middle ear infections (Otitis Media) or the more troublesome glue ear. Providing captioned video content ensures these students can understand new concepts as well as acquire and use knowledge.

Australian classrooms are also populated with diverse learners, as well as those with learning disabilities, with literacy issues, and those with a language background other than English. The use of captioned video content is a way to expand the number of ways in which these students can learn and assist in overcoming any factors which inhibit their ability to learn.

Similarly, captioned video content also supports the current 'multimodal' approach to learning. This approach recognises that students can be oriented toward visual, auditory and kinaesthetic learning. Captioned video content directly aids visual learners and auditory learners, while kinaesthetic learners benefit through the use of video content used to demonstrate knowledge in follow up discussions and activities.

Teacher librarians also play an important role in being a nexus for captioned video content. Your information skills are invaluable for time-poor classroom teachers or for members of staff who may lack the technical nous or knowledge of where to source captioned content.

Many teachers, for example, may be unaware that captions can now be found on a large percentage of DVDs, television programs, subscription TV and online catch-up TV services.

There are resources available as part of the 2014 cap that! campaign site ([www.capthat.com.au/resources](http://www.capthat.com.au/resources)). These resources include lesson plan examples for maths, science, English, history and geography based on the Australian Curriculum, a guide on where to find captioned videos, and how-to videos on captions.

Teacher librarians are in a unique position to ensure that accessible education is considered at both the curricula and classroom levels. Arguably the best way to ensure accessible education is to make sure that all video content used and supplied for classroom use has captions.

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