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| 1 | <p>Where does use of SSE fit? Some of our community here who use BSL mix it with SSE?</p> |
| | <p>SSE, or Sign Supported English, is a bit of a middle ground between BSL and English. This is using BSL signs, but following the grammatical order and structure of English. For example, in English you would say "My name is..." but in BSL you sign, in order, "My name, what...". SSE would be to use the sign for "me" and "name" to sign, in order, "My name is...". There are also some signs that are specifically SSE, and not used in BSL, such as "because". SSE is used in a few different circumstances, people with english as their first language who are learning BSL will usually use SSE until they become fluent, interpreters may use SSE if it's clear that is understood better by those they are interpreting for, or fluent BSL users may use SSE in order to be better understood by others who are not fluent, or when they don't know the sign for something.</p> |
| 2 | <p>We are really actively building our offering for D/deaf audiences and members of staff. Currently, we don't have anyone who openly identifies as deaf in our team, but we want to produce materials to teach people BSL internally. We have members of staff who are able to speak BSL. What are your thoughts on a BSL speaker who isn't deaf being the person who is featured in videos educating others on BSL terms relevant to our industry/shows? We do work with our local Deaf Institute, but price and availability is a barrier for these adhoc/internal videos.</p> |

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| | <p>It will always be the best option to have a deaf person who is confident and fluent in BSL as their first option to teach your team about BSL, and understanding BSL, to ensure that the teacher is able to translate fluently, but also include knowledge of Deaf culture, identity, characteristics, and jargon. If it proves difficult to find a Deaf BSL user who is fluent or due to budget constraints, then it is worth exploring a BSL Interpreter who is qualified Level 6, or if your staff member is a CODA (Child of Deaf Adult). However it is worth checking in with them to ensure they feel comfortable representing the information, and it would be sensible to preface the videos by explaining the person's relation to BSL if they are not deaf. E.g. are they a CODA? Did they grow up knowing BSL from immersion in the deaf community, or did they learn it as adults through classes? BSL isn't standardised, so the BSL that your internal member knows may not be the same BSL that everyone else uses, and this context of their point of view will be important to ensure people being trained are aware that they may come across people using BSL differently, and that that doesn't mean they are using it wrongly.</p> |
| 3 | <p>We are curious if the nature of open/closed captions on videos may be a barrier for some people in terms of digesting long sentences of text (often quite quickly). Might some deaf audiences prefer a different option?</p> |
| | <p>The best practice conventions that Stagertext use are determined by and informed by deaf audiences' preferences. One of the best practice conventions includes keeping subtitles short, targeting two short lines instead of one long line, in order to be easier to skim quickly. Some neurodivergent people may prefer subtitles without the access elements for easier processing, but we haven't had feedback from deaf audiences that the access elements contain too much information, as often they rely on that information. The feedback that we have from deaf audiences is that the access elements are useful and needed.</p> |

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| 4 | <p>I love the idea of available closed captions in different languages for live performances. Would it be complicated to achieve this from a technological point of view? Do you know of any venues already offering this option?</p> |
| | <p>Translation is outside of Stagertext's expertise, we focus on access rather than translation. However, the platform we use to provide live subtitles (streamtext) is able to translate the live subtitles into other languages, but bear in mind this translation is provided by AI. Stagertext regularly work with a company called MyClearText, who provide translation live subtitling, and would be much more knowledgeable on the technical requirements. To be fully translated and live subtitled, you would need to have a translator translating the audio feed, and then a live subtitler live subtitling that translated audio feed.</p> |
| 5 | <p>To get end-to-end accessibility will require a lot of investment for a lot of people, both in terms of one-off spending (e.g. tech for open captions in a venue) and ongoing costs (professional subtitlers as new content comes in). How should small and/or budget-conscious orgs/venues best spend their money? How will people know how or what to prioritise?</p> |

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| | <p>I would recommend focussing on your existing audience and immediately local audience. If you have a nearby school with a large population of Deaf children using BSL, then focusing on BSL provision for school trips would be effective. If you have a large population of older people nearby, then focusing on subtitles with large/legible text and transcripts would be more effective. Develop an understanding of who in practice is going to use your space and resources, and focus on making it accessible for them, and build in evaluation so you can build the successes into funding bids as a proven track record, to then expand your provision. Accessibility is a journey, so be gracious and allow yourself to progress without expecting to get everything right at once.</p> |
| 6 | <p>How does D/deaf people respond back? And what is the difference between Subtitles and Captioning? Thank you.</p> |
| | <p>Subtitles' and 'Captions' are used in different ways by different people! Unfortunately there is no global agreement on the definitions! Stagertext uses captioning to refer to the captions we provide in theatre specifically, because these are created through a seperate process to live subtitles and digital subtitles, have slightly different best practice conventions, and are displayed on different screens. Subtitles as we use the term are specifically for videos, content that is pre-recorded, and live subtitles are specifically typed live by a Speech To Text Reporter</p> |
| 7 | <p>Can u explain what a sound label is please</p> |

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| | <p>A sound label is a description of a sound in a video, so that deaf audiences who might not hear the sound, or might hear a distorted version of the sound, will know what it is. For example, if in a video there is a sound of someone knocking on a door that comes from somewhere off screen, deaf audiences wouldn't have any visual cue telling them that someone is knocking on a door, so a sound label that says [Door knocking] will provide the same information as the sound.</p> |
| 8 | <p>Some of our deaf community said that the online systems are not accessible as their English isn't good enough, they said they would prefer to book in person.</p> |
| | <p>This is a situation where looking at the information density or considering a BSL interpretation video that explains how to use the booking system, and translates the information could be useful. If you've got a feedback relationship with BSL users, you may even want to workshop with them to simplify the online booking system so it's more accessible to them. Make it really clear which seats will have the best view of an interpreter or captions at the performance, and you also want to include some functionality that allows them to add a support worker as a contact.</p> |
| 9 | <p>Do you have any recommendations for awareness training for our staff?</p> |

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| | <p>Stagetext offers Deaf Awareness training, we can provide this as a bespoke service, or we often provide free sessions during Deaf Awareness Week and Captioning Awareness Week. Get in touch with Olivia Durkin at Olivia@Stagetext.org to find out more</p> |
| 10 | <p>Who at stagetext do we email with event info and how far in advance?</p> |
| | <p>If you have a captioned, live subtitled, or subtitled event that you would like listed on the Stagetext website, you can submit this on our website under the venue section for theatre or talks, or please send this to enquiries@stagetext.org. There's no deadline of how far in advance you have to send it to us, although if it is very short notice we may not get it up in time before the event, and there is less opportunity for our audiences to see it, so the sooner the better!</p> |
| 11 | <p>As a venue most of the events here are only on for one day, and are from visiting companies. Unfortunatley most promoters aren't as passionate about offering access provision, do you have any advice on how we manage this as a venue?</p> |

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| | <p>It will depend on the dynamics of whether you are hiring them to perform in your space or if they are hiring your space to perform in, but I would recommend considering making the accessibility a requirement in your procurement contract. i.e. as a venue you have a commitment to accessibility, and so require any events to be accessible as a matter of policy. You can have an information kit that includes statistics about deaf audiences, as well as testimonies of local deaf audiences that can help bring people round, so you cover all angles</p> |
| 12 | <p>Do you have any 'best practice' or innovative examples of making live music events accessible to D/deaf audiences (beyond a hearing loop). Thanks</p> |
| | <p>Attitude is Everything is a charity working to make live music accessible to deaf and disabled people. They have a guide on providing DIY access: https://attitudeiseverything.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/DIY-Access-Guide-digital.pdf.</p> <p>The main challenge when it comes to captioning music events is that that some parts are scripted (the lyrics), and some parts aren't (any other speech e.g. in between songs). This means it can be hard to caption the event from end to end, as there may be a trade-off between providing scripted speech in time with the music, (but not including the speeches in between songs) and live subtitling everything, which wont be timed.</p> |
| 13 | <p>Any experience/advice on using new AI tools that translate videos to BSL?</p> |

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| | I'm afraid I don't, other than some Deaf people who have spoken about it, and said that it is lacking in the contextual awareness of facial expressions that are critical to BSL. |
| 14 | Do you have any experience of organising events that are both accessible and bilingual (so, in our case, English and Welsh)? Or can point us to organisations that do this well? We're obviously keen to ensure our events are accessible but we're finding it challenging putting on events that are accessible in both languages. |
| | Stagetext's focus is on accessibility within English, as our primary funder is Arts Council England, so I'm afraid I don't have much experience in combining translation with accessibility. However, the platform we use to provide live subtitles (streamtext) is able to translate the live subtitles into other languages, but bear in mind this translation is provided by AI. To be fully translated and live subtitled, you would need to have a translator translating the audio feed into welsh, and then a welsh live subtitler live subtitling that translated audio feed. I would suggest speaking to MyClearText, who we work with regularly, who do offer translation as part of their services. |
| 15 | Have you got any advice on subtitling videos created for children who are learning Spanish, so they can see the English and Spanish at the same time |

