CART in Alberta

By Kelly Klapstein

CART stands for Communication Access Realtime Translation.

CART stands for Communication Access Realtime Translation, and has changed the lives of many people who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing. With CART, you can see a translation that is being created in realtime on a computer screen. The translation is created by a shorthand writer (called a CART provider) who is either present onsite or online via an Internet connection.

A CART provider is similar to a court reporter who works in a courtroom, however, realtime captioning is a faster, more challenging job. CART providers develop computer dictionaries so that their shorthand typing instantly translates even the most complex technical terminology at speeds well over 280 words per minute.

CART service can be corporate or educational. In a corporate setting, captioning is provided for media, public events, meetings, etc. In an educational setting, the CART provider will sit in a classroom or listen from another location (remote captioning) by streaming online. With remote captioning, the teacher wears a microphone. The student has a separate laptop or tablet. The captioning appears on the screen while the CART provider listens and types.

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In Alberta, government funding provides complete access to CART for students who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing at the post-secondary level (i.e., after high school). Although there have been several students in Alberta high schools with CART access, limited school board budgets can prevent access to the service. The average fee of a CART provider is $100/hour. Most CART

providers work as freelancers, however, there are several private companies in Alberta as well.

To bring CART into your child's classroom, it will be necessary to advocate strongly to the school board and obtain additional funding if necessary. Because of the speed of reading required to use CART, secondary students in Grades 7 – 12 would benefit the most. The success of CART with younger students would be dependent on their ability to multi-task: listen, read quickly, write notes and attend to classroom discussions.

To obtain a reputable educational CART provider with appropriate credentials for your child's needs in the classroom, contact the Alberta Shorthand Reporters Association (ASRA). The ASRA (www.asraonline.com) will also direct you to the agencies at the various post-secondary educational institutions in Alberta if your child will be attending university or college.