

Audio Description for All: Serving the Low Vision Spanish-Speaking Community in the United States

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Abstract

Audio description (AD), narrative description of key visual elements for visually impaired or blind audiences, is provided in English in the United States; however, Spanish-language AD is almost nonexistent. Because Spanish is the most spoken and fastest growing non-English language in this country, training translation students to provide AD in Spanish fills a gap for the visually impaired Latino population. This article shows how a project on AD for the theater was used in a community-based course at Montclair State University (New Jersey), what challenges we encountered, and how those challenges were overcome. I also provide a step-by-step program plan to help implement such initiatives. In addition to learning about AD, I guided my students to reflect critically upon language, arts, and accessibility in the multicultural reality of the United States.

Keywords: audio description, Spanish, theater, community engagement, accessibility



The Community-Engaged Teaching and Learning (CETL) Fellows Program at Montclair State University (MSU) conjoins MSU and various communities in mutually beneficial endeavors pertaining to pedagogy, scholarship, and applied project work. The program's purposes are the following: (a) to nurture a culture among MSU's educator/scholar/practitioners that values civic and/or political engagement and (b) to foster participants' topical learning with regard to issues, concepts, and applied techniques of community-engaged pedagogy (including but not limited to service-learning), community-engaged scholarship (including community-based/participatory action research methods), or community-engaged activities that build partnerships and infrastructure that strengthen communities' civic and/or political fabric. CETL fellows meet monthly throughout two academic years, as well as regularly in learning-partner pairs or small groups, and regularly use functions of Canvas (the university platform to manage courses) to share content, coordinate project work, and facilitate collaboration.

During the first year, fellows attend plenary sessions where they learn about concepts, issues, and techniques of community-engaged teaching and learning, and conceive and begin work on specific projects related to pedagogy, research, and/or application. Throughout this work, they are supported by learning partners, who are fellows in the program's second year. In this fashion, each fellow is assigned a mentor in a group of five or six fellows who meet once a month to discuss strategies of community-engaged pedagogy and share challenges experienced in community-based projects and possible solutions. In addition, fellows also attend sessions where guest speakers present models of community engagement. During the second year, fellows continue their project work while serving as learning partners for the cohort of first-year fellows.

These activities culminate in a newly created or revised community-engaged course, conceived in collaboration with a specific community partner or partners. These service-learning courses engage students in collaborative and academically based experiential learning activities that meet

community needs. Each course provides opportunities for students to reflect on their service experience in order to gain a better understanding of course content and discipline at the same time that they enhance a sense of civic responsibility and personal growth. Service-learning courses at MSU are generally associated with community organizations (community partners) in the Township of Montclair and other surrounding communities, such as New York.

AD as a Service-Learning Course

I was admitted to the CETL Fellows Program in July 2019. The purpose of my project was to create a course where students could learn the theory and practice of audio description (AD) in movies and the performing arts and bring that service to the Spanish-speaking visually impaired population in the tri-state area since Spanish is the second most used language in this country and a growing need for it is present in every aspect of life. I therefore designed a new course on AD for the 2019 spring semester (January 18–May 8, 2019). The course ran for 14 weeks with weekly classes of 2½ hours each Tuesday, 5.30–8:00 p.m. There were 26 students in that class. I gave them the choice of working in movies or in theater. Nine students decided to work in theater, and the rest of the class wanted to work in AD for movies. With that in mind, I devoted about six weeks to the theory and practice of AD in Spanish and 7 weeks to put into practice what was learned in the classroom by engaging a group of volunteer students in a community-based project. Therefore, the main objective of the course was twofold: (1) to teach students about AD and (2) to raise awareness among them about visual impairments and disabilities (on the difference between impairments and disabilities, see Ellis, 2018) and accessibility to the arts.

Once I created a syllabus for the course, the next step was to identify the community partnership to develop my AD project for the theater. Thus, I began by identifying potential partnerships in the area. After a thorough search, I decided to talk with the Repertorio Español in New York City. The Repertorio Español (<https://repertorio.nyc/#/>) is an off-Broadway theater that has been offering Latin American, Spanish, and Hispanic-American theater productions in Spanish for more than 50 years. This company is a nonprofit organization run by a board of trustees. I made an appointment with the artistic director, Rafael Sánchez,

to discuss the possibility of offering AD in Spanish for one of their plays. He immediately loved the idea and was willing to present it to the board. He even suggested that an ideal play to be audio described in Spanish would be *El coronel no tiene quien le escriba* by Gabriel García Márquez and suggested a date that would not interfere with the regular classes; it could be done at the end of the academic semester so that students had enough time to write the script, rehearse, and perform appropriate outreach work. The date set was May 5, 2019.

This play was first performed in this theater in 1971, and it is still being performed today. The novel *El coronel no tiene quien le escriba* (García Márquez, 1958) is the only work by García Márquez that the author himself authorized for adaptation to the stage. This play was especially suitable to be audio described because it is loaded with poetic symbolism and visual images. Therefore, it posed an interesting challenge to students who would be audio describing it and making it the focus of their critical thinking project. Students faced a number of problem-solving tasks: what Spanish language variety to use for the AD, taking into account the mixed Spanish-speaking audience in New York and that the play is written by a Colombian author; how to convey visual images through words to evoke the same emotions (conveying the play's focal topics: poverty, hope, death, social injustice) among sighted and non-sighted theater audiences; and what lexical choices to make among different varieties of Spanish, among others.

Step-by-Step Program Plan

The following steps make up the process that I followed in this course to develop the project of AD in Spanish for a live theater performance. These steps are just basic recommendations and should be adapted to fit the needs of the community and of the academic course.

Step One: Writing the AD Script in Spanish

After selecting the play to be audio described, the first step in the project is writing the AD script. In order to do that, students first needed to familiarize themselves with the novel and the historical and cultural context of that work. My students read *El coronel no tiene quien le escriba* in Spanish as well as some journal articles about García Márquez's poetic symbolism

(Anderson, 2000; Gilgen, 1981; Kooreman, 1993; Maturo, 1972; Rolfe, 1973; Sampson, 2018). In addition, they studied some performance guides for the play such as the one by Gies (1989). These performance guides are very useful because they pose questions and activities about the main characters, plot, and symbolism of the play.

All these elements can be used in class to discuss what visual aspects should be included in certain scenes, what adjectives to use to describe a character's facial expression or gesture, or even the speed of the location in specific sequences according to the rhythm of the play. For example, at the climax of the play when the colonel is about to pronounce his last words, we decided to shorten the audio description that initially had been more detailed in order to give his words more prominence.

We commented on these readings in class, and then we scheduled one day to go to the theater and attend the performance as a class group. Students had the opportunity to meet the artistic director who facilitated our access to the script; we also obtained a video of the performance so that we could practice our AD in class without having to go in person to the theater to practice every week.

With those materials, we devoted a whole class (2½ hours) to comparing the novel with the play, and to reflecting on the adaptations made by the director and what aspects would pose a challenge to be audio described. Then, we divided the script among the nine students who were participating in the theater project. The duration of the play was 1 hour and 15 minutes, so each student was assigned approximately eight minutes of the play (see Table 1).

Once each student individually did their part writing the script, one student was appointed as script master; she was the person in charge of creating a Google Doc where all participants in the group could read others' pieces of the script. Google Docs allowed us to work on the project simultaneously and share our thoughts on the choices made. This streamlined all of our editing and made the process so much easier. Once the Google Doc was created, we scheduled our first meeting to start reading the script out loud and check whether it worked and every description fit the time frame. Since our general weekly class was on Tuesday, 5:30–8:00 p.m., we decided to meet right before our

class, that is, on Tuesday 4:00–5:30 p.m., every week for 6 weeks.

These sessions were truly helpful from both an academic and a personal point of view. We learned from each other, and we discussed multiple issues related to lexical choices, relevant information to be included, and what not to include. At first, students wanted the script to include everything that was seen since they had the time to do so between characters' lines. However, after listening to the whole AD script once, we realized that the pace and introspective nature of the play should leave space for the visually impaired audience to savor and experience the sounds and music of the performance. Music (Colombian vallenato, Spanish guitar) and sounds (rain, thunder, coffee being brewed, coughing, breathing, crying) are very powerful and meaningful in this play, so no words should be uttered on top of them. In the same fashion, we realized that we had a tendency to include too many details and overload the AD with information, rather than letting the public assimilate the many symbolic images that the characters' dialogue represented.

Another aspect that we usually discussed in these sessions was Colombian Spanish lexical choices versus Peninsular Spanish equivalents. For example, the colonel wears a jacket, and we had a long discussion about what word should be used in the AD. Since the play is written by a Colombian writer and meant to be enjoyed by Latino audiences in New York, we decided to use the Colombian word, *saco*, and not *chaqueta*, as it would be in Spain. However, on other

Table 1. Allocation of Running Time

Projecto Teatro	
Valentina	0-8:40 minutos
Ivonne	8:14-17:09
Beatriz	17:10-25:40
Colleen	25:41-33:40
Vanessa Dutan	33:41-41:49
Vanessa Carrillo	41:50-49:55
Karen	49:56-58:32
Jennifer	58:33-1:06:52
José	1:06:53-1:15:13

Note. Table showing how running time of the play was allocated among students.

occasions, the Colombian word could be confusing for the audience, and then a more neutral word should be chosen. For instance, the colonel is using the typical Colombian *chocolatera* (a brass jar) to brew some coffee for his wife. However, saying “chocolatera” could confuse the audience, making them think he would be preparing chocolate instead of coffee, so we decided to use *jarra* instead (see Figures 1 and 2). Being aware of and discussing such lexical choices both enriched the students’ vocabulary and made them think critically.

Writing an AD script for the theater is very different from writing one for a movie. Unlike movie scripts, which require time codes to insert the audio description, in live performances you need cues to insert the audio-described message. In a play, the cues can be music, the last word of a character’s dialogue, or a sound effect, such as rain. In our case, we left the time frame codes of the video of the play just as a reference, but we added the corresponding cue in order for the voice talent to know when she should start audio describing.

Step Two: Voice Talent

Once the AD script is written, the voice talent person needs to be appointed. In our case, there was a general consensus about who would be the voice to audio describe our script: Vanessa Carrillo. Not only does she have a very melodic and pleasant voice, but her pace when talking is calm and serene, conveying a majestic rhythm to the play that matched the dignity of the main characters.

We thought about having several voice talents who would take turns in the voiceover process during the play, but we rejected that idea since hearing different voices for the same AD might confuse blind audience members. We therefore decided that Vanessa would be the only voice talent for the 1 hour and almost 20 minutes of locution. However, we assigned two voice talent assistants (Valentina Becerra and Karen Cruz) who would be there to help Vanessa with the script or replace her in case anything prevented her from completing the voiceover (see Figure 3). In the two general rehearsals Vanessa performed the whole voiceover for the duration of the play with



Figures 1 and 2. Blind Patrons Touching the Brass Jar or Chocolatera



Figure 3. Voice Talent and Her Assistants

Note. Vanessa Carrillo between her two assistants: Valentina Becerra to her right and Karen Cruz to her left.

no problem at all; however, on the day of the event, in the middle of the performance, she urgently needed to go to the bathroom. The bathroom was located on the first floor and she was on the fourth floor. She ran to the stairs as fast as she could during a part where no descriptions were needed, but before she returned, a couple of descriptions needed to be voiced over. Valentina read them, and almost nobody seemed to notice.

Step Three: Rehearsals

Although the AD script and the voiceover can be practiced in class with the video of the performance, it is necessary to have at least a couple of rehearsals in the actual theater. For this project, we went twice to New York to practice the AD embedded in a real performance at Repertorio Español where six students in the project (the other three were in the voice talent room) would play the role of the nonsighted patrons.

We encountered several issues in the first rehearsal. First of all, in the video that we had been using in class, the role of the colonel was played by the famous Colombian actor Germán Jaramillo (Figure 4). However, when we went to the actual performance, we learned that this actor had been replaced by another one, Sebastián Ospina. Even though he, too, is a superb actor, he has a different acting style: a faster pace that does not instill the solemnity that the previous actor conferred. This affected the AD that we had prepared in several ways. Many of the descriptions no longer fit since Sebastián did not leave so many empty spaces for the voice talent to read her part. Also, he did not perform some of the movements and actions that Germán Jaramillo used in the original performance. Because of these changes, Vanessa realized that she could not speak some of the lines in the AD script. She had the very challenging role of rapidly observing what was happening on stage and modifying the AD if necessary.

Second, there was not a dedicated sound-proof booth where the voice talent could see the stage. She had to perform the live AD on the fourth floor of the theater in a room full of furniture and costumes with almost no ventilation. She only could see the stage through a 12-inch black-and-white monitor (Figure 5). This arrangement made it difficult for her to describe the new actor's actions and movements since she could hardly see him on that tiny monitor. In fact, the monitor did not offer a full view of



Figure 4. Flyer for the Play

the stage, so if actors were doing something on the sides or lateral parts of the stage, Vanessa would not see that.

Third, for audio transmission, the Repertorio Español used older devices that broadcast through infrared emitters to headsets. It is the same equipment that is used for simultaneous interpreting when the theater offers English translations of the performances. In the first rehearsal, the students sat in the first rows where the nonsighted audience would be seated because we thought the signal and audio would be better in the first rows. We were wrong. There was sound interference from the stage speakers and



Figure 5. Voice Talent Team With Monitor
Note. Voice talent team working. Black-and-white monitor shows what happens on stage.

from the cell phones in the audience (even though they were silent). We could hardly hear what Vanessa said and, to top it off, the devices' batteries ran out in the middle of the performance. It was a complete disaster.

After that first rehearsal, Rafael Sánchez gave us his feedback about some aspects of the AD script and explained why the equipment did not work properly. He reassured us that he would contact the technicians and everything would work for the second rehearsal. And he did so. When we went to Repertorio Español for the second rehearsal 2 weeks later, Rafael explained that we needed to adjust the volume in the devices so that it was just in the middle (not very high and not very low) and told us that we needed to sit the blind patrons not in the first rows as we had thought, but right in the middle of the orchestra seating area where there were fewer sources of sound interference from the stage. So, students sat in various parts of the orchestra seating, they made the volume adjustment indicated by the artistic director, and the devices were fully charged when we arrived. The quality of the sound was so much better. We could hear Vanessa clearly, and the AD was great.

Step Four: Community Outreach

One of the most important and time-consuming tasks in a project like this is the community outreach component. Our project would not have any value without a community that could benefit from it, so it was mandatory to reach out to the potential organizations and centers interested in an event such as the Spanish AD project for the theater.

To that end, each of the nine students in the project was assigned at least three organizations and associations dealing with accessibility for the arts, the Latino population, or persons with visual impairments and disabilities to contact via email, telephone, or even in person. These organizations included Visions, Lighthouse Guild, New Jersey Commission for the Blind, Computers for the Blind, and the Andrew Heiskell Braille and Talking Book Library, among many others.

Students reported some disappointment in this task since usually emails were not answered, phone calls were not returned, and people were just too busy to attend meetings organized by my students in those centers. We also learned that most Latino blind

people living in New York need help in basic needs such as going to the grocery store or the doctor, and not so much with theater or entertainment. Finally, we assembled a group of 12 blind and legally blind people who were interested in attending our event on May 5. Some of those people could not use public transportation, so two students (Jennifer Gutiérrez and José Díaz) picked them up in their residences and brought them to the theater. In two cases we had to pay for their performance tickets as well.

Step Five: Advertising and Marketing

Advertising the event is key to the success of community-based projects. Social media (Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter), Latino radio stations, and Hispanic newspapers were the media we used to advertise our event. The Andrew Heiskell Braille and Talking Book Library (a branch of the New York Public Library) was especially helpful in marketing the project. In particular, Nefertiti Matos, the Library's director of accessibility, offered to publish the program book insert of the play in braille for free (see Figures 6 and 7).

Step Six: Preshow Experience

An amazing addition to the play itself was the preshow tactile experience that students prepared in the theater lobby for the blind patrons to enjoy before the performance. The theater provided a miniature replica of the stage so that blind patrons could get a sense of where each element was set up (Figure 8). Further, we discussed in class what key objects in the performance were crucial to understanding the multiple layers of meaning and symbolism of García Márquez's play. Students identified five main objects (Figure 9): the umbrella with holes that the colonel uses (Figure 10), the corn the colonel feeds the rooster (blind patrons hear the shaking of corn inside a jar several times in the play, so the corn in the preshow experience lets them identify the sound with the object; Figure 11), the portrait with the son's picture (Figure 12), the brass jar (Figures 1 and 2), some rooster's feathers that student Vanessa Dután got from a poultry market in New Jersey, and a sample of the wired wall of the rooster's cage (Figure 13). This last object is especially symbolic since the walls of the house where the colonel and his wife live are exactly the same as the walls of the rooster's cage, thus symbolizing the imprisonment experienced



Figure 6. Performance Program in Braille



Figure 7. Nefertiti Matos With Braille Program That She Created



Figure 8. Miniature Stage



Figure 9. Main Objects for the Tactile Experience



Figure 10. Umbrella With Holes That the Colonel Uses



Figure 11. Blind Patron Feeling the Corn That the Colonel Feeds the Rooster



Figure 12. Portrait of the Colonel's Son

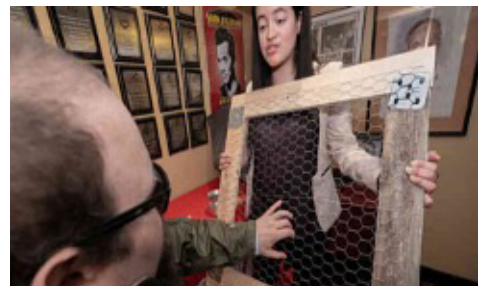


Figure 13. A Sample of the Wired Wall of the Rooster's Cage

by the main characters.

In order to have someone to assist each blind or legally blind person attending the play, I assigned one student per blind patron so that they would feel comfortable and could be guided into the preshow experience (see Figures 14 and 15). I had previously shown videos about how to lead blind people and how to offer them assistance when finding their seats in the theater, going to the restroom, using the AD devices and headsets (Figures 16 and 17), and so on, so students knew the protocol in advance. Students were also given the names of the patrons so that attention was personalized from the moment they stepped into the theater lobby.

Once visually impaired individuals arrived in the lobby, the corresponding student would guide them toward the tactile experience and let them touch the objects without telling them what they were or why they were exposed to them. We let the blind patrons touch, smell, and feel the objects, and we let them know that during the play they would realize why those objects were im-

portant. The purpose was to let them make their own inferences and interpretations without revealing too much of the message of the play.

Step Seven: Q&A Session

Right after the play, it is advisable to have a Q&A session where nonsighted audiences can give feedback about different aspects of the event. Reception studies is a crucial area in any AD practice (Di Giovanni & Gambier, 2018), and we should always keep in mind that we teach AD mainly for blind people, so we need to know patrons' opinions about it.

In our case, our visually impaired public commented on a variety of issues from technical features of the AD equipment to the quality of the voice talent. For example, a couple of blind people complained about the headsets. These were not ear-padded, but the type of buds that you insert inside the ear, so they are somewhat uncomfortable. Others suggested that all sound should be transmitted through the headsets, not only the AD soundtrack, since it was



Figures 14 and 15. Students Assisting Blind Patrons



Figures 16 and 17. Blind Patrons and AD Equipment

Note. Students Beatriz Gamarra (left) and Ivonne Reyes (right) helping blind patrons with the AD equipment.

somewhat difficult to hear the characters' dialogue with earbuds in the ears. Another group of visually impaired people were more interested in aspects of the play itself and the characters, so they were asking the cast, the artistic director, and me about different historical and literary layers of the play (Figures 18 and 19). The experience that was most highly praised was the tactile show. Finally, very positive comments were also made on the quality of the AD itself and, above all, Vanessa's voice and melodic enunciation.

Step Eight: Reflection Paper

In the community-engaged teaching and learning program, critical reflection by students plays a central role. The critical thinking component should be embedded into the academic material and the service activities that students carry out through a series of problem-solving situations. These elements should lead to a structured reflection piece at the end of the course. There are different models for designing critical reflection in a service-based course. One of them is the DEAL model proposed by Ash & Clayton (2009) and Ash et al. (2005). The DEAL model consists of three sequential steps: (1) Description of experiences in an objective and detailed manner, (2) Examination of those experiences in light of specific learning goals or objectives, and

(3) Articulation of Learning, including goals for future action that can then be taken forward into the next experience for improved practice and further refinement of learning.

These steps were incorporated into the questions students needed to answer at the end of the semester (Appendix). These reflection questions made up 30% of the final grade of the course. I divided the sets of questions into five groups: the AD script-writing process, the process mode (individual vs. group work), verbal and nonverbal language, accessibility and community, and quality assessment. Each student submitted their answers in writing and also made an oral presentation to the whole class.

Next, I would like to share some insightful comments from the students' reflection papers. First, I would like to highlight that this group of students really reflected critically about the role of observation and selection in AD. In AD it is important to decide what not to say, and it was a group decision-making process to identify what was relevant and what was not. For example, in the scene where the colonel is talking to the lawyer about hiring another lawyer, there is a moment where the lawyer stands up and raises his voice to the colonel, who remains sitting (Figure 20). Is it relevant to say that the lawyer suddenly stands up? After some discussion, the group concluded



Figure 18. Q&A With Cast Members and Artistic Director Rafael Sánchez (with crossed arms)



Figure 19. Dr. García-Vizcaíno With Cast Members During the Q&A

Note. Dr. García-Vizcaíno with Sebastián Ospina to her right and actress Zulema Clares to her left.



Figure 20. Lawyer Talking to the Colonel



Figure 21. The Wife Drags the Chair in *Despair*

that it was relevant because his position was a mark of a power relationship at that moment. Likewise, in Figure 21, we had to decide whether it was relevant to mention the way the colonel's wife is dragging the chair. Students reached the conclusion that it was relevant since that would be a sign of her fragile health.

Other interesting critical reflection from students was the following:

Our challenge was to focus on the needs of a person without vision but we all used our vision first instead of only listening. This may have made our project a bit more challenging because the visual component was embedded in our minds instead of the feelings of the words themselves. People with limited vision feel the world through their senses of touch and hearing; their needs and priorities are very different from ours. It may have helped us in our work with the audio description if, from the initial phase of the project, we relied more on our listening skills instead of mainly our visual perceptions. Also, since we were working with a piece of literature that was not written as a play, the language needed to be focused on first. García Márquez's language is so rich and descriptive, that it may have been advantageous to listen first to the audio of the play to feel it first without seeing it. As a group, we focused intently on the visual aspect of the play, without allowing to the play to speak for itself. This literary piece is so rich in descriptions, but we tended to focus only on the visuals instead

of just supplementing the spoken word. The joy of this play was the simplicity of the set and props and the presence of the rich dialogues and language. So, in retrospect, I think we may have approached this project in a different way if we listened to the play first instead of intently focusing on what we saw: The greatest challenge for us was seeing! (Colleen O'Rourke)

In response to the questions on cinematic versus standard AD (Fryer & Freeman, 2013) in Section V of the reflection piece (see Appendix), one student offered an interesting reflection:

We did try to use a more creative approach throughout the project and we were careful in our choices of adverbs and adjectives. In areas where we could, we used the cinematic AD. For example, in the funeral procession we mentioned how they were moving toward or away from the audience. These types of descriptions allow the client to "feel" being part of the audience. I personally enjoy the creative AD approach and it also allows for a richer AD vocabulary. (Colleen O'Rourke)

Final Thoughts

The event was very successful, based on the reviews that it received (Palma Mir, 2019; Strother, 2019; "A Truly Magical Performance," 2019). From my own academic viewpoint, it was a tremendously rewarding experience for me and my students, let alone the visually impaired audience who could enjoy this performance. I was truly impressed by the dedication and maturity of each one of the students in the group. All of them were exceptional and so professional in every task assigned. The group had many external challenges in their lives, full-time jobs, heavy course loads, and families, but each and every member put forth their most sincere and professional effort to go to New York City for the rehearsals and work extra hours on campus editing the script and practicing voiceover. However, the part I am most proud of is realizing what wonderful human beings my students are: The kindness with which they treated blind patrons, the patience they showed with them at all times (see Figures 22 and 23), and the pro-

professionalism they displayed at every stage of the event made the whole experience so worthwhile.

The project was so outstanding at so many levels that I nominated this group of MSU students for the American Council of the Blind (ACB) Audio Description Awards in the category Performing Arts, and they won such an award. The award ceremony took place on July 9, 2019, at the National Convention of the ACB in Rochester, New York, and I was there to receive this honor on behalf of my students (see Figures 24 and 25).

In conclusion, this community-based course

proved to be an extraordinary way to put academic knowledge and professional training in service to Spanish-speaking visually impaired individuals. Moreover, it proved to be useful in making students more sensitive about disabilities, more aware of the importance of accessibility to the arts, and excited about the career opportunities that AD presents. Actually, some of these students have started to work on AD projects for ONCE, the Spanish national organization for the blind, and others will continue collaborating with the Repertorio Español to make more theater projects accessible to the low-vision population in New York.



Figures 22 and 23. Students Assisting Blind Patrons

Note. Students Beatriz Gamarra and Ivonne Reyes accompanying and being attentive to our blind guests.



Figures 24 and 25. Receiving the Performing Arts Award From the American Council of the Blind, July 2019

About the Author

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Appendix. Reflection Paper

I. The AD Process (10%)

1. What was the hardest part of writing the script? Why? Please, be specific.
2. What was the most rewarding part? Why? Please, be specific.
3. How did you overcome challenges during your research? Identify at least three difficulties that arose during the project and explain how you solved them.
4. What, if anything, would you change about your research process this semester?

II. The Process Mode: working alone vs working in groups (10%)

1. What were the differences in the writing process of the AD script when you did it with the whole group during class time or in meetings versus when you worked on your own? Which mode do you prefer in this type of AD script writing activity?
2. How did you navigate multimodal tools (voice-over script, images, sound, music) on your own? Was it different when you were working with a classmate or the group? Were you able to learn better with your classmate or not?
3. How was the revising and editing process when working on your own? Why?
4. Were there any other differences in motivation, attitude, learning experience between the collaborative and the individual? Please explain.

III. Focusing on verbal and non-verbal language (20%)

1. What was the hardest part of writing your script regarding language (i.e. selection of adjectives, adverbs, matching time and words, etc.)? Why?
2. Do you feel your level of Spanish has improved by writing this script and doing this project? How? Please, be specific.
3. How did you deal with gestures and facial expressions? What cultural challenges did you encounter here? Use the article by Mazur (2014) to elaborate your answer.
4. What, if anything, has your project made you notice about language that you did not notice before?

IV. On Community (10%)

1. After taking this course and having done your final project, how do you see the role of Spanish language supporting the visually-impaired community in your project?
2. Do you think this is important to pay attention to? Why or why not?
3. What other initiatives could be done to make art accessible to people with visual impairments?

V. On Quality Assessment (50%)

1. After having done the experiment on Cinematic AD vs. Standard AD (Fryer & Freeman 2013), please report here in detail the results of your experiment.
2. What do you think about having a more cinematic and creative approach to AD?
3. What elements of these: language choice, voice talent, objectivity vs subjectivity, and the use of silences would you consider more important when it comes to evaluate the quality of an AD? Discuss in detail.
4. After having read the article “Creative description: The impact of audio description style on presence in visually impaired audiences” [Walczak & Fryer, 2017], explain here what you understand by assessment the quality of an AD and assessing its effectiveness. Give examples of how quality and effectiveness of your AD in your project would be achieved and how they could possibly be measured.

5. After having read the article by Walczak & Fryer (2017), explain the concept of “presence” in AD: What is it? Do you consider it important? Can you give examples in your final project when this concept of presence could be relevant?
6. Read the article “Testing audio narration: The emotional impact of language in audio description” by Ramos Caro (2016) that can be found in the folder “Lecturas” in Files, Canvas. Explain the main and secondary ideas of the article and apply them to your AD final project.