

How do hearing impaired students respond to
classroom soundfield systems?

A case study of subjective student perceptions and speech discrimination data.

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May 2013

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This dissertation is submitted in part fulfilment of the requirements governing
the award of the Master of Arts in Educational Studies (Hearing Impairment)

ABSTRACT

Students typically have to listen and learn in classroom environments that are less than acoustically favourable. Accurate speech perception is a challenge for all students but disproportionately so for those with a hearing loss. Amplification technology such as classroom soundfield systems are designed to improve the listening experience for all students, including those with a hearing loss. Through the use of a semi-structured interview, this case study explores the views of two hearing impaired teenagers regarding the use of two different classroom soundfield systems. The results show that hearing impaired students perceive an audiological benefit from the use of classroom soundfield systems. However, student responses also showed that other factors need consideration, such as the aesthetic appeal, management and maintenance issues and social implications. These include the importance of a system looking modern and teachers using the equipment correctly and consistently. This study highlights the importance of on-going support and training for mainstream staff using classroom soundfield systems and the careful consideration of the aesthetic design of the equipment.