

An evaluation of the Comfort Audio radio system using a neck loop
with a small group of high school students.

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ABSTRACT

Despite the opportunity for early diagnosis and amplification for hearing loss, there was evidence to suggest that high school students still required support and intervention to achieve alongside their peers. As more deaf students attended mainstream education, a listening environment with a favourable signal to noise ratio was essential to the deaf student's access of a curriculum with high linguistic demands. The aim of this research was to evaluate the benefits and limitations of introducing a digital, wireless radio system within the high school setting. The findings from this study indicated that speech perception scores in noise increased with the assistance of radio technology. Students agreed that the aesthetic properties of a radio system were an important feature. Statistical analysis of speech perception scores indicated that there was significant benefit in using the Comfort Audio digital radio system to improve speech intelligibility in the classroom. The main conclusions drawn were that a radio system with a neck loop, making use of digital processing and transmission technology, could provide an accessible speech signal within noise and so improve access to the curriculum. Assessment of pupils' listening needs must take into consideration both objective speech testing and behavioural observation, together with subjective opinions of the students themselves.