

Itinerant Teachers of the Deaf Perspectives on Barriers and Facilitators to Classroom Listening: Applications to the Listen to Learn (L2L) Assessment Framework

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Background: Listening is the gateway to learning in the mainstream classroom. However, modern classrooms are noisy, dynamic environments where listening is often challenging, especially for those with capacity limitations. It is therefore critical to understand the barriers and facilitators to listening and learning in the classroom so listening can be assessed and improved.

Purpose: This exploratory study gathered survey data from itinerant teachers of the deaf (IToDs) to better understand the impact of different classroom activities on children's listening and learning. These insights would feed into our newly proposed Listen to Learn (L2L) Assessment Framework.

Method: 109 IToDs completed a survey asking the proportion of time children aged 6-9 years spend in lecture-style lessons, guided-learning groups, and independent work; whether they expect this amount of time to change in the future; and what the positive and negative implications on the students' listening and learning are in each activity. A follow up survey completed by 36 IToDs further explored how strongly the IToDs felt about the implications from Survey 1.

Results: On average, 43% of time was spent in lecture-style, 26% in guided-learning, and 25% in independent learning, with guided and independent learning expected to increase in the future. In the lecture style, assistive devices worked well but there was less support for the student. In the guided scenario, background noise was problematic, but the student was engaged in discussions and could develop social skills. In the independent scenario, the quieter environment could be beneficial for the child's concentration, but it could also be isolating.

Conclusions: Overall, this study provided profound insight into the barriers and facilitators of listening to learn in active mainstream classrooms. The findings will be used to develop realistic assessment materials including a simulated classroom to assess the effectiveness of targeted interventions for children with listening difficulties.