

Using Hearing Assistance Technology (HAT) in the Classroom: Why, When, and How?

What are the benefits of HATs?

- Improved “signal to noise ratio”: These systems make it easier to hear the person who is talking over all of the background noise.
- Soundfield systems/Classroom Distribution Systems provide amplified speaker volume for everyone in the room to hear.
- Personal systems reduce the distance sound has to travel to get to students’ ears to just the distance between the mouth of the person talking and the microphone.
- HATs make it easier for students to hear what they are supposed to hear over all of the noise they are not supposed to hear.



When should HATs be used?

- Any time a student is supposed to tune in to one speaker
- Younger classes: circle time, story time
- Older classes: lectures, class discussions

When should HAT NOT be used?



- Any time there is not one clear speaker who all students need to listen to
- Younger classes: Center time and free play
- Older classes: Independent work time when teachers circulate and provide help to all
- Any time the teacher does not want the student to overhear everything he or she says

How is effective HAT use managed?

- Identify times when the teacher is the key speaker and all students need to hear.
- Teachers need not be the “keeper of the microphone”: Share it with other students and adults when they participate in class discussions.
- Turn the microphone off when there is not one key speaker or signal to listen for.
- Discuss the possibility of multiple transmitters for use during small group activities in classrooms with multiple students with hearing loss.

References

- Bess, F. H., & Humes, L.E. (2003). *Audiology: The fundamentals* (3rd ed.). Baltimore: Lippencott Williams & Wilkins.
- Cole, E.B., & Flexer, C. (2007). *Children with hearing loss: Developing listening and talking: Birth to six*. San Diego: Plural Publishing Inc.