

Handy Handouts®

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Listen to Yourself: Auditory Feedback Devices

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What Is Auditory Feedback?

Auditory feedback refers to the sound(s) you hear after you perform an action. For example, if you drop a pencil, the auditory feedback you receive is the clattering sound of the pencil hitting the floor. We receive auditory feedback from many things we do, including typing, closing the door, hanging up the phone, turning on the water, and speaking.

Auditory feedback is critical for speech production. When infants are learning to speak, they listen to the people around them and try to imitate the sounds they hear. As they try to imitate speech sounds, they alter the sounds they make based on the auditory feedback they receive (the sounds they hear themselves making). As children grow and develop, auditory feedback continues to be an essential part of learning.



How Do Auditory Feedback Devices Work?

Auditory feedback devices are usually made up of a mouthpiece that is connected to an earpiece by tubing. When a student speaks into the mouthpiece of an auditory feedback device, the student's voice is channeled directly into his/her ear. Because the sound goes directly into the student's ear, he/she is able to hear his/her voice more loudly and clearly.

How Can a Student Benefit from an Auditory Feedback Device?

Auditory feedback devices can be useful for students. Below are some situations in which an auditory feedback device may be helpful for students' learning.



- **Develop phonemic-awareness skills** — Phonemic awareness is the knowledge that words are made up of sounds, and that sounds can be added, deleted, or changed in words to make new words. Strong phonemic-awareness skills are linked to later success with reading. With an auditory feedback device, a student can focus on the sounds that make up words and develop his/her phonemic-awareness skills.



- **Build reading skills** — As a student hears him/herself reading aloud, he/she is able to develop better reading skills. The auditory feedback a student receives from hearing his/her voice when reading aloud can help to improve reading accuracy, fluency, and rate. In addition, auditory feedback can help a student's phrasing and expression sound more natural.



- **Read aloud without disturbing others** — When a student uses an auditory feedback device while reading, he/she is able to hear his/her own voice even when speaking with a quieter volume. This allows the student to hear his/her own voice reading aloud without disturbing others.

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- **Minimize the effects of background noise** — When students are grouped together, as they are in a classroom setting, background noise is unavoidable. Using an auditory feedback device allows a student to focus on what he/she is learning by increasing the volume of his/her own sound production over the sound of the background noise.



- **Enhance auditory processing abilities** — Auditory processing refers to our ability to make sense out of the sounds we hear. An auditory feedback device channels sound directly into the student's ear, allowing him/her to hear sound more loudly and clearly, making it easier to process the auditory information.



- **Improve articulation**— Practicing articulation skills while using an auditory feedback device helps a student determine if he/she is producing the target speech sounds correctly.



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