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Learning by Hearing? examines technological framings for communication and identity issues over time, with a particular focus on children with cochlear implants in Swedish mainstream schools. In Sweden, mainstream school placement has increased dramatically during the last decade. There exists however a lack of knowledge regarding how everyday life looks like for children in mainstreamed settings.

This thesis aims to contribute with new perspectives to this by presenting both a sociohistorical overview of the development of the field of deaf and hard of hearing, and a glimpse of classroom communication and interaction in mainstreamed settings. The thesis empirical data consists of archival material and video recordings of mundane life in classrooms, which taken together illuminate how everyday life can be like for individuals with hearing loss, particularly children with cochlear implants. The sociohistorical analysis is conducted on the periodicals of three Swedish non-governmental organizations during the period 1891 to 2010. This shows how different technologies in several ways have impacted the communication of people with hearing loss and their interactions with others, and how the discourses surrounding the technologies also affect the construction of various identity positions. In turn, the micro-analyses of interaction in two mainstream classroom settings illustrate that audiologically-oriented and communicatively-linked technologies play major roles in everyday interaction by both facilitating and limiting the participation of pupils with cochlear implants. Taken together, the studies presented in this thesis shows that the everyday lives of children with cochlear implants in mainstream schools is complex, and it is technologies in use that frame the conditions for their participation in interaction and communication.