COMPUTER HEADSETS FOR ONLINE LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION

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Clear communication is a vital part of teaching and learning a language!

Using a headset, rather than your device’s built-in microphone/speakers, improves intelligibility for you and for your listeners in two primary ways:

• By moving the microphone closer to your mouth
• By moving the playback speakers onto your ears
You may not need a headset if:

- You are working in a consistently quiet room
- Your computer’s built-in audio devices are high quality
- You can stay a consistent distance from your built-in microphone
What are the most important factors to consider when selecting a headset?

**COMFORT**
If possible, try on several models before making your purchase.

**CLARITY**
Ensure that both you and your listeners can hear subtle details.

**COMPATIBILITY**
What connectivity options does your device offer (ports, jacks, wireless)?

**COST**
Let CeLT know if you are having trouble finding a model that fits both your needs and budget.

CeLT has purchased a wide selection of headsets from our list of recommended models, so that instructors can come try them on and see how they interface with their devices.
**Headset Specifics/Terminology**

- **Monaural and binaural**: covering one or both ears
- **Frequency response**: the range of audio frequencies a headset can transmit
- **UC/MS**: designations which refer to pre-set features (Unified Communications or Microsoft Certified)
Wired and wireless: wireless technology includes traditional DECT wireless and Bluetooth

Control module: easy-access controls for volume and mute, usually either “in-line” or “on-ear”

Audio Processing/EQ: Nearly all offer some embedded equalization or audio optimization to better transmit the vital vocal frequencies

Noise cancellation (described in more detail on the following slides)
Noise Cancellation

- **Noise-canceling headphones**: Noise-canceling headphones remove noise in the background environment of the listener. Headphones can “cancel” noise in two ways:
  - **Active cancellation** uses additional small microphones to “listen” to the noise in your environment and emit waveforms that will cancel out the noise (requires batteries or power via USB)
  - **Passive cancellation** relies on acoustic isolation provided by foam or other padding in the headphones
Noise Cancellation

• **Noise-canceling microphone**: Noise-canceling microphones remove noise from the environment of the speech producer.
  
  • **Active cancellation** uses additional microphones to “listen” to the noise and will “subtract” those sounds from the signal your audience will hear.
  
  • **Passive cancellation** utilizes directional microphones, which pick up sounds coming from a specific direction (in this case, the direction of your mouth).
**Zoom-Specific Considerations**

Zoom includes several **built-in audio processing** options (to suppress background noise, etc.), which generally serve to subtly improve the overall audio quality but can be manually disabled.

Sometimes you might experience **temporary audio issues** due to transient problems with internet bandwidth, WiFi signal strength, or other hindrances. It may be necessary to **turn off video and go audio-only** for the remainder of your Zoom session!
CeLT has prepared a detailed list of headset tips and recommendations, accessible from the CLE Orientation page.

(https://cle.indiana.edu/news-and-events/fall-orientation.html)
Q&A
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