



High-Quality Headsets Help Students Build Foreign Language Literacy Skills

Issue

Flintridge Preparatory School in La Cañada, CA, is a non-profit, independent college preparatory school for grades 7-12. Nestled at the base of the San Gabriel Mountains, the secondary school aims to prepare its nearly 500 students to have successful careers and lives after graduation.

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As Foreign Language Chair and Spanish Teacher at Flintridge Prep School, Manuel Nuñez understands the importance of technology to support learning & language development. Offering Spanish, French and Latin courses, including Advanced Placement (AP) classes, Nuñez wanted to make sure the school's multimedia lab and classrooms had high-quality headsets that would allow students to clearly hear the language and to practice their verbal skills.

In addition, the school's AP foreign language classes were using more digital curriculum, as opposed to printable activities and textbooks. These digital resources required students to have access to good quality headsets.

Implementation

“After reviewing many products, we decided to purchase the Califone USB Headsets,” Nuñez explained. The USB Headset (4100-USB) is designed specifically for school and classroom use. Leveraging the power of USB connectivity, using these headsets eliminates the need for a sound card. Ideal for high-speed Internet use, tutorials, language learning, and situations requiring isolated vocalized feedback, the headset has a unidirectional microphone, in-line mute and volume control, and ABS plastic earcups for durability and safety.

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In addition, the around-ear, ambient noise-reducing earcups deliver maximum protection against exterior sounds without added electronic circuitry and expense. These features reduce the need to increase volume, which protects students' ears and helps to keep them on task.



Results

The headsets are primarily used in the foreign language lab at Flintridge Prep School, where students can listen to activities on the computer and record conversations. “For example, our Spanish 1 students use the headsets to improve pronunciation and to listen to MP3 files that accompany our textbooks,” Nuñez said.

Students note the sound quality is better with the Califone headsets than with previously used headsets, and appreciate the individual in-line volume control. “The headsets have made a huge difference for our students, especially our AP students,” Nuñez concluded. “They feel so much more comfortable during their final exams because they can clearly hear the test questions. The headsets allow them to concentrate on the exam itself instead of the technology. In fact, our students mostly received 4 and 5s on their recent AP exam, with more than 90 percent doing extremely well.”