AP® Spanish Language
Teaching Listening Comprehension

Special Focus

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Page 14, 16: "Lluvias en Costa Rica dejan 18 muertos" from Radio de las Naciones Unidas, October 19, 2007 (http://www.un.org/radio/es/detail/6528.html). Used by permission of the United Nations.

Contents

Introduction

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The AP® Spanish Language Examination is an assessment designed to determine a student's overall level of fluency in Spanish. This summative language examination employs a variety of authentic assessments that require students to demonstrate competence and fluency in Spanish. Most recently, the examination has been revised to best assess authentic use of the language, and the spirit and intent of the new examination is based wholly upon assessing integrated language skills.

The four essential skills required to communicate fluently in a language are reading, writing, speaking, and listening. These skills are interconnected, and therefore the AP Spanish Language Examination does not assess them separately. Virtually every aspect of the examination requires students to integrate all four of these skills in some form in order to perform a particular task.

In preparing for the examination it is important that the teacher instruct, practice, and assess all of these four individual skills. Although ideally classes should be designed to integrate skills as much as possible, it is important to first ensure that all four skills are properly developed. One cannot simply assume that because a student can write fluently in a language, he or she can also speak it with the same level of competence. The skills may be intrinsically interrelated, but they certainly do not develop uniformly. In some instances it may be necessary to allocate more time and effort to master one specific area of competency than another.

Therefore, the intent of this unit is to focus predominately on *one* of the four essential skills: listening comprehension. Instruction, practice, and assessments have been specifically designed to hone listening comprehension skills. This unit can be used as a full AP Spanish listening comprehension unit, or components of the unit may be utilized for additional remediation in listening comprehension as needed.

The authors have made every effort to provide appropriate pedagogical research as well as practical suggestions for classroom strategies designed to develop listening comprehension skills.

As the title states, this special focus unit is based upon *integrating listening comprehension skills across the modes of communication*. There are several modes of communication that are assessed in the AP Spanish Examination, and consequently the unit is separated into five sections to address these modes:

- Pre-AP® Listening Comprehension Skills
- General Strategies for AP Spanish Listening Comprehension
- Listening Strategies for Multiple-Choice Assessments
- Listening Strategies in Preparation to Speak
- Listening Strategies in Preparation to Write

Finally, although listening comprehension prompts on the AP Spanish Language Examination will inevitably vary in style, format, and content, the authors have endeavored to address a variety of means in which listening comprehension can be assessed. It is the intent of the authors to provide not only research-based theory but also practical strategies that can be readily employed and also further adapted to address all styles of listening comprehension assessment.

Pre-AP® Listening Comprehension Strategies

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The Challenge of AP® Listening Comprehension

Success on the AP Spanish Language Exam requires highly developed listening comprehension skills—skills that cannot be achieved in a one-year AP course. Success depends on vertical teaming—the coordinated work of all the teachers from the beginning levels through the AP course. To make the goals of equity and access to AP success a reality, we need to provide ALL students at every level the opportunity to develop strong listening skills.

To start teaching with the end in mind, all teachers in the program must be familiar with the AP Exam, and in particular with the role listening comprehension plays on the test. Four separate parts of the test, totaling 60 percent of the score, rely to some extent upon the student's ability to understand spoken Spanish. A description of those AP Spanish Language Exam tasks that include a listening component follows.

Multiple-Choice Listening (20%) This section includes a series of short and long dialogues and narrations testing a student's ability to comprehend the main idea, understand details, make inferences, make predictions, and infer social relationships. The test consists of 30 to 35 questions and lasts around 30–35 minutes.

Formal Writing (Integrated Skills) (20%) One of the three sources students must incorporate in their formal essay is an audio recording, which is played

only once. Students must take notes and refer to the source in their essay, synthesizing rather than merely summarizing.

Informal Speaking – Simulated Conversation (10%) Students participate in a conversation, creating 5–6 responses of 20 seconds each to audio prompts. Students follow a functional script, reacting to the recorded stimulus. The task requires real-time processing for immediate response; the thread of the conversation may include unexpected twists requiring accurate listening comprehension and quick thinking.

Formal Oral Presentation (Integrated Skills) (10%) One of the two sources for the formal oral presentation is an audio recording played only once. Students must take notes and refer to the source in the oral presentation, comparing rather than only summarizing.

There are additional challenges. The listening passages include a broad variety of regional accents and cover a wide range of academic, social and cultural topics. The recordings may include background distractions such as music or ambient noise, and may have a rapid rate of delivery as is normal in radio news.

Pre-AP Strategies

To start preparing students for these challenges from the start, I have outlined 10 strategies that teachers of beginning and intermediate levels can use to build students' listening skills starting at the beginning levels. The strategies, sample activities, sources, and rubrics proposed here are meant to contribute to the lively exchange of ideas and experiences among teachers. I encourage teachers to try these and other strategies and share your successes and difficulties via the AP Electronic Discussion Group, and department and professional meetings.

Principles for Building Listening Comprehension

Strategy 1: Teach in Spanish and teach about the Spanish-speaking world.
Strategy 2: Get the most out of **textbook listening materials**.
Strategy 3: Design listening activities that provide **evidence of engagement**, including note taking.
Strategy 4: Use **authentic materials, with scaffolding tasks.**
Strategy 5: Develop **generic tasks** for listening, and use them often.

Strategy 6: Vary the evaluation of listening tasks making it appropriate to the purpose of the task.

Strategy 7: Develop your skill at finding appropriate **listening materials on the web**.

Strategy 8: Get students **speaking with native speakers** early on, and use technology to share their conversations with classmates.

Strategy 9: Teach and **practice component skills** like recognizing cognates, listening for gist, etc.

Strategy 10: Create **a culture of listening** in your classroom and program.

Strategy 1: Teach in Spanish, and teach about the Spanish speaking world.

From Spanish I onward, *use Spanish to teach*. Teach and use the words and expressions needed for classroom routines right from the start. Classroom instructions and interaction is authentic communication, and is comprehensible, because it is "here and now." Established routines help minimize the need for English explanations. Team with your whole department to educate administrators, counselors, and parents about your approach. Praise and grant occasional random rewards for attentive students who immediately follow instructions given in Spanish.

The more students know about the countries, cities, regions, physical and human geography, history, art, conflicts, challenges, and traditions, the better equipped they will be to understand authentic listening passages produced in and for the cultures of the Spanish-speaking world. Throughout the program, we need to build students' knowledge of the Spanish-speaking world. Assign students a country, and then periodically ask them to report to the class about that country, regarding the topic at hand. For instance, in a unit on the environment, students report on the park system, endangered species, or environmental challenges of "their" country. In a unit on careers, have them research and report on two or three large employers in the country, or an aspect of the economy of the country. In a unit on food, each student can provide details of the national cuisine. This type of reporting can begin at the earliest levels, with research in English, Spanish, or both.

Strategy 2: Get the most out of the *textbook listening materials.*

Use the listening activities in your textbook, then reuse them and recycle them. Consider having "listening quizzes" or "listening tests" separate from other elements to emphasize its importance. Include easy, short passages and longer, more difficult

ones. On tests, sometimes you can use listening passages you have done previously in class, but with different questions. This will reward students for paying close attention during practice activities that are not for a grade.

When the textbook provides "listen along" audio recordings of reading passages, start the activity by listening to a minute or two without looking at the written text, just to let students see how much they can "catch" without reading. Have students jot down the words they hear on a piece of paper, then share with class, writing a list on the board. Then read along, and do textbook reading activities. Then go back over the list. Praise the class on how much they could hear, and note to them how their skills improve throughout the year. The next day, listen again without looking, and see if they feel they understand more. The goal is to build students' confidence in their ability to improve their listening skills.

Strategy 3: Design listening activities that provide evidence of engagement, including note taking.

Students should DO something while listening in order to provide evidence of engagement. Ideas for types of evidence follow:

- note familiar words
- write down all numbers you hear *(good for weather reports, sports news, economic news)*
- check words heard off a list *(prepare the list ahead of time, or have students predict words they might hear)*
- fill in a chart with information
- fill in a partial script *(leave out cognates, familiar words, or numbers, etc.)*
- write down answers to basic *who, what, when, where, why* questions
- answer prepared true/false or multiple-choice questions
- use "thumbs up" or "thumbs down" to answer yes/no questions

Attachment A (p. 13) provides a simple chart students complete as evidence of engagement while listening to a series of interviews with native speakers found on a University of Texas Web site.

Strategy 4: Create scaffolding tasks to help students to approach authentic materials from the start.

Use authentic listening passages, full speed right from the beginning levels, but scaffold the activity by at first providing tasks that support, rather than test, students' understanding. To make the listening more accessible to students, choose

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passages on topics you are working on in your textbook. You can pair authentic listening passages with short written texts on the same topic, providing background knowledge, especially if the material or setting is unfamiliar to students. Provide students with unusual names of people, organizations, or locations mentioned in the passage, as these names are especially difficult to catch.

Use a listening process, analogous to the reading process, including the following steps.

A. Prelistening activity

Activate prior knowledge of vocabulary or the topic; make predictions based on a headline, photograph, or theme; personalize by relating to students' experience; connect to studies in other classes. Tell students the topic, encourage brainstorming of known vocabulary, then offer to preteach five vocabulary words they don't know but think they'll need to understand the program. You could get the class to make a list of 10 words, and then you could translate the 5 words they decide they need the most.

B. Have students listen with a purpose, providing concrete evidence of their comprehension. Focus student attention on specific elements, and require each student to show evidence of what was heard. Build in opportunities to hear the listening passage more than once. Provide extension tasks for those who have completed the first task on the first listening, letting others continue to focus on the basic skill. At times, provide transcripts to follow when listening, to help students recognize words they know when they see them, in the stream of speech.

C. Cooperative listening

After students provide some evidence of what they hear themselves, have students share their results ORALLY with a partner, noting the partner's answers *in another color*, for instance, using a green pen. This will allow you to distinguish what was gathered independently from the details students got from a classmate. Be sure to require all students to note or check off what their partners heard, even if the students already wrote down what they themselves heard. On a final listening, or with a transcript, students can verify what was actually in the recording.

D. Apply/connect

Have students use the information gained in listening in another task such as writing a summary, making a comparison, making a prediction,

connecting to personal experience, reflecting on the learning process, writing about strategies, etc.

Attachment B (p. 14) illustrates scaffolding by using the listening process in a simple "Checklist" activity. Novice-level students can successfully listen to an authentic source to develop the ability to *recognize known vocabulary in the stream of authentic speech*. The students simply listen to a passage and check words they hear, and skip words that are not in the passage. Then they compare lists with a classmate, listen again, and finally check their work against a script. The checklist and two colors of pens will allow the teacher to evaluate each student's engagement in the activity, independent and cooperative listening skills, and the ability to extend or apply what was learned. The sample activity in the attachment was designed around a Radio Naciones Unidas report on torrential rains in Costa Rica.

Strategy 5: Develop generic listening tasks and use them often.

Many Web sources have high-interest audio news and information with accompanying written information. When the files are available to download and save on a computer, teachers can develop activities around these sound files, and keep them for future use. But it is difficult to find the time to prepare specific questions about today's news each week, and many great Web sites have audio files that are not available for downloading and that may not be available for reuse next year. Generic tasks cut down preparation time and allow the listening task to become routine, which will help build confidence.

Attachment C (p. 18) *Pesca las palabras* can be used to engage novice listeners in any authentic listening source. The sample activity in attachment C was used to listen to a BBC Mundo report on domestic workers in Latin America in a Level 2 class.

Attachment D (p. 21) is a generic form to use while listening to any audio or video newscasts, and is based on the journalistic questions *who, what, when, where, why,* and *how.* For interest, vary the prelistening task and the application task according to the topic of the newscast you choose. The video news broadcasts found on the Web site Univision.com provide a wealth of short listening segments to use with this form.

Strategy 6: Vary the evaluation of listening tasks, making it appropriate to the purpose of the task.

When BUILDING listening skills, use a process-oriented rubric such as the Formative Listening Comprehension Evaluation rubric (Attachment E, p. 22). This rubric evaluates four areas:

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- Engagement
- Independent listening
- Cooperative listening
- Application of information gained through listening

This formative rubric recognizes the importance of attention to the whole listening process. It can be used to assess any of the listening tasks involving the listening process outlined in Strategy 4.

When EVALUATING listening skills, teachers should use more objective measures, such as multiple-choice questions. Alternatively, students can take notes and answer open-ended questions or summarize. Then teachers can use a more product-oriented rubric, evaluating the students' ability to capture the main idea, understand most details, make predictions and inferences, and use linguistic cues to infer social relations.

When INTEGRATING skills, teachers should create tasks that require students to listen, then use the information the students hear in writing and speaking tasks.

Strategy 7: Develop your skill at finding appropriate listening materials on the Web, and share your findings with others.

Work with your technology department to ensure that all teacher and student computers at school have the necessary software to view and listen to Web-based materials. With one teacher computer and speakers, all students can hear sound files on one computer. If you have the ability to project onto a large screen, you can share video clips from your computer with students. Encourage the library and computer resource center to make headphones available for students to borrow, so they can do their listening there. If you have a teacher Web site, include links to Web sites with audio. Many Web page programs also allow you to upload audio files to your site.

Some excellent Web sources for listening follow:

Radio Naciones Unidas http://radio.un.org/es/

This is an excellent source, since files are not copyrighted, the archive is searchable, many programs have transcripts, and files can be downloaded to your computer.

Click on *Abrir archivo* to view a list of recent short news items. Click on the title of the news item to see the transcript. RIGHT CLICK on the file button and click on "Save Target As," then navigate to the folder in which you want to store the

file. The actual sound file should download onto your computer's hard drive, or to a flash memory stick if you so indicate. You can then play it off your computer, burn a CD, etc.

The archive is searchable, so you can enter a term such as *arte, comida, Peru,* etc., to help find material on topics you are studying.

BBC Mundo http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/spanish/news/
The site contains a wealth of text, multimedia, video, and audio materials, much of it organized by topic. Studio 834 provides interviews with speakers from all over the Spanish-speaking world, and many interviews include scripts. Use this resource to familiarize students with regional variations in accent.

Radio nuevos horizontes http://www.nuevoshorizontes.org
This site has a searchable archive of programs on a variety of culture, traditions, health, immigration, arts, literature, and personal finance topics. Free downloads of audio only; CDs available for purchase, with transcripts.

Langmedia http://langmedia.fivecolleges.edu/collection/lm_spanish.html.
Students can view short videos of native speaker interaction, from a variety of countries. Good for novice students for comprehension and odeling, and for comparing accents from a variety of countries.

Uteach proficiency exercises http://www.laits.utexas.edu/spe/siteindex.php
Here students can view short videos of native speakers doing performance tasks on a variety of topics at the novice, intermediate, and advanced levels.

Language Acquisitions Resource Center at San Diego State University
http://larc.sdsu.edu/voces. Videotaped interviews with women from Guatemala and Mexico present students with a variety of voices and experiences. The worksheet available at nflrc.hawaii.edu/voces provides a good example of showing evidence of engagement.

Univisión http://www.univision.com
Enter "videos" in the "Uniclave" window and for a searchable collection of videos of one to eight minutes' duration with news, entertainment, and more.

Radio Caracol de Colombia http://www.caracol.com.co/
Has an audio archive link on the left-hand menu.

Strategy 8: Get students to interview and record native speakers, and share their recordings with classmates.

Across the country, students in more and more communities today have the opportunity to use Spanish outside the classroom. Students can consider interviewing neighbors, parents' co-workers, school personnel, etc. Handheld cassette recorders, microcassette recorders, digital voice recorders, certain mp3 players, computers, digital cameras, some phones, and iPods and other devices can be used to record voices. If your department can invest in even five digital voice recorders, you can lend them to students to do their interviews. Have your beginning students interview a native speaker, write a transcript of the conversation, and share the audio recording with classmates. Keep the interviews simple at first, focusing on the topic of the current chapter or unit. For example, in a chapter on foods, the class can come up with a short questionnaire, for example:

- ¿Cuál es una comida típica de tu país?
- ¿Cuáles son los ingredientes?
- ¿Cómo se prepara?
- ¿Cuál es tu comida favorita?

Reflect with classmates on accents, regional vocabulary, and other characteristics and how they effect pronunciation. At the intermediate level, include in your planning learning the language needed to call to request the interview, set up an appointment, and write a thank-you letter in Spanish.

See attachment F (p. 23) for sample materials for an interview project from a Level 2 unit about jobs.

Strategy 9: Target component skills for listening.

Focus your listening activities on component skills and strategies for listening. Here are some suggestions:

Skill	Discourse type	Task type
gain familiarity with regional variations	interviews with people from various countries (BBC Mundo Estudio 834)	Mark a transcript where regional differences in pronunciation, vocabulary, verb forms, etc., are evident.
recognize familiar vocabulary in the context of speech intended for native speakers	news and information	check list activity "Pesca las palabras"

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Skill	Discourse type	Task type
recognizing cognates in the stream of speech	news and information texts The topic of health often has many cognates.	Prepare a cloze passage by eliminating cognates; students listen and complete. Students listen and note as many cognates as they can.
inferring social relationships from linguistic clues	recorded interactions between native speakers such as those on the Langmedia Web site	Note and discuss the linguistic clues.
listening for main idea, detail	news and information texts	Prepare a T chart on the board, with "Main idea" and "Supporting detail." Listen, and then ask what students understood. Have class decide where each piece of information should go.
comprehending specific information	news and information advertisements	Complete charts, fill in blanks, write numbers heard, and answer prepared multiple-choice or open-ended questions.

Strategy 10: Create a culture of listening in your classroom.

"Tweak" your classroom oral activities so they require students to listen actively to each other. For instance, expand your "Think – Pair – Share" activities to make them "Think – Pair – Share – Compare." Have students share what the partner said, not what the student reporting said. Then after hearing from several students, ask another student to compare. For example, on Monday morning, students think about what they did on the weekend, pair with a partner to say what they did, and report to the class what their partner did. After hearing four to six students' activities, ask another person which two students had the most similar weekends or which two had the most different weekends, or what all the students had in common. This activity, in addition to providing evidence of listening comprehension, practices the comparison and synthesis skills so important to the formal essay and formal oral presentation tasks.

Tune into the mp3 generation. Encourage students to include Spanish music on their digital music players, and seek out Spanish language podcasts. As technology allows, create your own podcasts of lessons, explanations, or poems you are studying, and encourage students to put them on their iPods. Garage Band (for Mac) and Audacity (a free download for PCs) allow you to make your own audio programs. Even if you haven't learned the tools yet, many of your students have. Get them to show you, and start listening!

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Attachment A: Provide evidence of engagement – Fill in a chart

Listening source – University of Texas Spanish Proficiency Exercises
http://www.laits.utexas.edu/spe/beg06.html

Preparación: Con una pareja, escribe una lista de trabajos, oficios y profesiones en español.

_____

_____

_____

_____

- Ahora escucha a las seis personas hablar del trabajo de sus padres o parientes. Usa tu bolígrafo para anotar los que escuchas.

Nombre	Lo que hace el padre	Lo que hace la madre
Ejemplo simplificado		
Nativo hablante Beatriz Luna Torres		
Alejandro Ernesto Madgits		
Regina Ruiz		
María Ángeles Fernández		
Fernando Camacho		
Apuntes para MI presenación oral		

- Habla con tu compañero. Usa tu bolígrafo VERDE para añandir información que escuchó tu compañero.
- Escucha otra vez para verificar tu trabajo.
- Aplicación: Escribe los trabajos de dos personas que TÚ conoces. Luego describe sus trabajos oralmente _(graba la descripción para tu portafolio)._

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Mi Nombre	Lo que hace _____	Lo que hace _____

Attachment B: Sample "Checklist" activity based on the Radio United Nations news piece *Lluvias en Costa Rica.*

Transcripción – reporte de Radio Naciones Unidas, 19 de octubre de 2007. http://www.un.org/radio/es/detail/6528.html

Nombre _____ Fecha:_____

A. Preparación. ¿Qué tiempo hace aquí hoy?

_____

B. Escucha. Usa tu bolígrafo AZUL y marca con una palomita (√) azul las palabras que escuchas.

C. Lee tus palabras a tu compañero. Escucha las palabras de tu compañero. Marca sus palabras con una palomita (√) verde.

Palabra	Yo escuché √	Mi compañero escuchó √ en verde	Leímos en el texto
sol			
calor			
lluvias			
nieve			
días			
años			
nación			
aguas			
más			
menos			
ayuda			
ríos			

Palabra	Yo escuché √	Mi compañero escuchó √ en verde	Leímos en el texto
institución			
agencias			
comunicación			
necesidades			
emergencia			

D. Anota números que escuchaste en el reporte.

_____

_____

E. Anota 5 palabras que escuchaste que NO están en la lista.

_____

_____

F. Lee la trascripción del programa. Marca en la última columna las palabras que están en el pasaje.

G. APLICACIÓN

Compara el tiempo en Costa Rica con el tiempo aquí.

_____

_____

_____

Engagement	4	3	2	1
Independent listening	4	3	2	1
Cooperative listening	4	3	2	1
Application	4	3	2	1

Lluvias en Costa Rica Dejan 18 Muertos

Transcript for Checklist Activity – Reporte de Radio Naciones Unidas, 19 octubre de 2007. http://www.un.org/radio/es/detail/6528.html

REAL   DESCARGAR   IMPRIMIR

Las lluvias torrenciales de los últimos días en Costa Rica, han dejado 18 muertos y cuantiosas pérdidas materiales.

El Coordinador Residente del Sistema de la ONU en esa nación, José Manuel Hermidas, describió los efectos adversos que han tenido las aguas sobre el territorio costarricense.

"Han habido inundaciones severas en varias partes del país. Todo el litoral del Pacífico está afectado y también en el Valle Central. De los 81 cantones en Costa Rica, 65 se han visto afectados."

Los daños provocados en las cosechas y las redes viales han sido estimados de manera preliminar, en más de 70 millones de dólares. Según el Representante del PNUD, las agencias de la ONU en Costa Rice se encuentran listas para ofrecer la ayuda que pueda requerirse.

"Hemos estado en estrecha comunicación con el ente nacional responsable para atender las emergencias, que es la Comisión Nacional de Emergencias. Hemos ido a una reunión con ellos, además de las comunicaciones continuas por teléfono y nos han dado una lista de las necesidades más urgentes. Hemos informado a OCHA con una solicitud, de parte del coordinador residente, para poder acceder a fondos para poder, entre otras cosas, comprar algunos de los requerimientos mas urgentes que según la comisión nacional de emergencia son camillas y mantas."

El representante de la ONU en Costa Rica, dijo que las necesidades de alimentos de los damnificados, están siendo resueltas por el gobierno y compañías privadas.

Attachment B: Teachers' Notes

Objective

Identify familiar vocabulary in the stream of authentic speech.

Prelistening – Ask students ¿Qué tiempo hace hoy? ¿Llueve mucho aquí? Discuss a bit about weather, at students' level. Then pass out paper, and have students write about today's weather.

Listening

Instruct students to listen carefully, and CHECK in BLUE or BLACK pen, any words on the list that they hear. Ask if they want to listen again, and repeat.

Pair students and tell students to read the words they checked. Tell partners to use a GREEN PEN to check the words their partner heard. *DO NOT let them look at each others' papers. This is the cooperative listening part—they listen to their partners' answers and record.* They should check all words the partner heard, even if they think the word wasn't there. Then tell them they will listen again, and they should check to see if this time they hear words they didn't last time. These should be circled in green pen.

Post-listening

Pass out the transcript so students can read and see which words in fact were there.

Application

Even beginning students can make a basic comparison with words like *también, pero, más,* and *menos.*

Students staple their paper to their partner's paper and pass both in. You score on the rubric in Attachment E, which includes Engagement (followed directions and completed all listening tasks), Independent listening (how accurate student was on the first listening, indicated by checks in blue or black ink), Cooperative listening (includes the green checks, which generally correspond to partner's paper and circled words, showing the ability to recognize the words once alerted to their presence), and Application (the post-listening Reflections task).

Attachment C: Generic Listening Task

¡Pesca la palabra!

Tema:_____

Notas de la preparación _____

_____

_____

_____

Yo escuché	Mi compañero escuchó

Conclusiones

_____

_____

_____

_____

	4. Clearly meets expectations	3. Meets basic expectations	2. Approaching expectations	1. Does not meet expectations
Engagement				
Independent listening				
Cooperative listening				
Application				

Attachment C: Pesca la Palabra – Lesson Guide

Long-term goals (claims):

- Recognize familiar vocabulary in the stream of speech.
- Comprehend speech intended for native speakers.

Specific objective:

- Recognized familiar vocabulary and cognates when heard in the stream of speech in authentic sources.

Level:

- Novice (Spanish 1 and 2)

Teacher preparation

Find an authentic listening passage relating to a current chapter theme or topic. Prepare the link on your computer, or download the file. Select a one- to two-minute "chunk" of the program to focus on, noting the time marker in your media player for easy access. Select chunks with a good variety of words students have studied, as well as cognates.

Photocopy the generic ¡Pesca la Palabra! handout, filling out the theme and pre- and postlistening tasks prior to photocopying the form, if you wish. *Once students are familiar with the procedure, they can create their own forms on notebook paper.*

Classroom procedures

Prelistening: Chose an appropriate selection of prelistening strategies:

- Read the theme/title of the presentation and ask for predictions about the program.
- Show a photo or object related to the topic and describe it.
- Predict content.
- Brainstorm known vocabulary.
- Offer to preteach five vocabulary words they don't know but think they'll need to understand the program. You could get the class to make a list of 10 words, then pick only 5 to translate for them.
- Hacer predicciones - ¿Qué van a escuchar?

Use the "Notas de la preparación" for students to show evidence of engagement in the pre-listening activity. *Instruct them to write a description of the picture, or list the vocabulary the class brainstormed, or write their predictions of what will be in the passage.*

Listening

Students listen and jot down words they comprehend in column 1; they can listen twice if they wish.

Pairing: Pair students. Students take turns reading words from their list.

- If your partner says a word that is already on your list, put a check by it.
- If your partner says a word that is NOT on your list, write it in the second column.
- If your partner says a word that IS on your list, put a check by the word, in the second column.

Listen again

If you hear a word your partner said, put a check by it in the first column.

Postlistening

The generic form has a place for conclusions. Depending on the difficulty of the passage and the level of the students, create a closing task.

- Summarize in English (or Spanish)
- Personalize (e.g., Describe el tiempo en nuestra ciudad hoy)
- Reflect (Was task difficult or easy? Why? Observations on the accent of speaker, etc.)

Evaluation – Use the rubric in Attachment E.

Attachment D

Generic listening activity for News Program. For example, use with Univision.com video segments.

Noticias de la semana
Antes de escuchar Fecha _____ Fuente _____ País _____ Titular_____ ¿Qué sabes sobre el tema? _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ **Apuntes** ¿Quién? ¿Qué? ¿Cuándo? ¿Dónde? ¿Cómo? Resumen/comparación/personalización/opinión _____ _____ _____ _____

Attachment E

Formative Listening Comprehension Rubric, evaluating the listening process

HAVE PAIRS STAPLE PAPERS TOGETHER AND TURN IN. GRADE ON THE RUBRIC.

	4 .Clearly meets expectations	**3. Meets basic expectations**	**2. Approaching expectations**	**1. Not meeting expectations**
Engagement	Written evidence and teacher observation provide evidence of full engagement throughout the listening activity.	Notes and teacher observation show evidence of engagement; attention may wander, at times.	Notes and teacher observation show partial evidence of engagement; off-task behavior or lack of attention detract from engagement.	Notes and teacher observations show evidence of sporadic engagement in listening activities.
Independent listening	Independent comprehension clearly meets expectations for level.*	Provides some evidence of independent comprehension; relies on classmates and total class discussion for some information.	Provides little evidence of independent comprehension; relies heavily on partner work and class discussion for information.	Prevents very little to no evidence of independent comprehension; may attempt to copy classmates' work.
Cooperative listening	Shows clear evidence of sharing, listening, and note taking during pair interactions.	Shows some evidence of sharing, listening, and note taking during pair interactions.	Shows partial evidence of engagement in cooperative listening tasks.	Contributes little to cooperative listening activities; may be off task and may distract classmates.
Application	Creatively and accurately uses information from listening in concluding tasks.	Uses information from listening to complete concluding tasks.	Uses minimal information from listening in completing concluding tasks.	Provides little evidence of listening in completing concluding tasks.

*Expectations vary by task and level.

16	100	10	70
15	95	9	65
14	90	8	60
13	85	7	55
12	80	6	50
11	75		

Attachment F: Interview Activity

As designed, this activity is appropriate at a Level 2 or higher.

Goals

- Use simple, familiar phrases to communicate with Spanish speakers in the community.
- To obtain speech samples from a variety of native speakers for in-class listening.
- To learn about jobs that are done by Spanish-speaking community members.
- To comprehend a variety of native speaker voices talking about a familiar topic.

Procedures

Preparation:

- Teach and practice questions needed to get information about an adult acquaintance's job (see handout below).
- Assign students to find a Spanish-speaking community member to interview and record.

Technology note – Many students have digital cameras, digital video cameras, phones, microcassette players, laptops, iPods with the iTalk microphone, mp3 players with voice recording capability, or other technology for recording the conversations. Our department has purchased a limited number of Olympus digital voice recorders (at around $70 each), which are lent out to students for one night if they have no other means of recording the conversation. Students are given a week or two to get the interviews to allow for technical problems. The following Web site has information on Olympus digital voice recorders. http://www.olympusamerica.com/cpg_section/cpg_voicerecorders.asp

Project:
Students record their interviews and transcribe them on the ENTREVISTA handout.

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Sharing:

In class, students share their interviews. Classmates fill in the chart with details about each conversation they hear.

Evaluation:

Based on completion of interview, accuracy of transcript, and note taking during the in-class sharing.

Thanks to Lucinda Salinas, Alamo Heights High School Spanish 2 teacher, for sharing this activity. Used with permission. Created to use in conjunction with the Holt textbook Exprésate Level 2.

Mi entrevista con ...

Ud.: Clase, quiero presentarles a _____

Ud: ¿A qué se dedica Ud.? o ¿Qué clase de trabajo realiza Ud.?

Él o Ella: _____

_____

_____

Ud. ¿Qué tipo de preparación se necesita para esta profesión?

(Fui a – I went to)

Él o Ella:_____

_____

_____

Ud. ¿Cómo le ayuda el español en su trabajo o su vida?

Él o Ella:: _____

_____

Ud. ¿_____?
Otra pregunta, UD. escoja.

Él o Ella: _____

_____

_____

ISALINAS – ALAMO HEIGHT HIGH SCHOOL – 2007

Nombre de su compañero	¿Vecino, amigo de la familia,etc...?	el oficio	Dime algo…

Attachment G: Lesson Guide

Goal – Familiarize students with regional accents.

From level one, engage students in listening to diverse voices.

1. **Preparation**
   - Copy the scripts for three interviews. Suggested source is BBCMundo's Estudio 834
   - http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/spanish/programmes/estudio_834/
   - Javier Zanetti, soccer player from Argentina
   - Sara Baras, flamenco dancer from Spain
   - Willie Colón, musician from New York (Puerto Rican ancestry)

2. **Materials**

   Photocopies of scripts; highlighters.

3. **Procedure**
   - *Prelistening.* a. Provide name, profession, and country. b. Ask for predictions about what students might hear. c. Students scan transcript to check on predictions, and find words they understand.
   - *Listening.* Have students listen to each sample while following on their copy of the transcript. They should highlight any words or sounds that seem "different" from what they are used to hearing. Compare impressions and listen again.

4. **Debrief**

   Avoid generalizations like "in Spain, they speak like this," or "Cubans pronounce it like this." There is a great deal of regional and personal variation within countries. Make comments and observations about the ways the students hear THIS particular speaker pronounced at this particular moment. The goal is to increase the students' comfort with variations, not to teach the specific characteristics of specific regional accents. (That could well be a different lesson at another level). Students write one or two sentences about each speaker's pronunciation, and how easy or difficult the speaker was to understand.

5. **Evaluation**

Based principally on engagement as evidenced by notes taken on prelistening, highlighting on the transcript, postlistening conclusions, and teacher observation of participation in classroom discussion.

Attachment G

Transcripts of segments from BBC Mundo Estudio 834 (4/7/06, 6/2/06, 4/21/06)

Sara Baras – bailarina de flamenco

Habla con BBC Mundo después de hacer dos obras de baile, "Mariana Pineda" y "Juana la loca."

BBC: ¿Qué aprendiste después de casi, según entiendo, 800 representaciones entre las dos?

Sara Baras: Pues sí, pasamos las mil. Fueron más de quinientas representaciones de cada una, o sea que aprendí muchísimo. El hecho de trabajar al lado de directores tan importantes como Luis Pascual y Luis Olmos, ha sido algo que me ha llenado de cosas nuevas, de cosas de teatro, no solamente de baile. Y ahora es como si apreciara mucho más un quejido, o hacer de mí misma, porque el hecho de meterte en el personaje de alguien te va acostumbrando a expresarte siempre pensando en alguien. Cuando de repente no tienes nada que contar, sino simplemente bailar es algo muy diferente. El haber hecho "Mariana Pineda" y "Juana la loca" creo que me ha enseñado mucho más de lo que yo pensaba, no sólo a nivel de espectáculo, sino por mi baile.

BBC: Y dos mujeres excepcionales en esos dos espectáculos… ¿Qué es para ti una mujer excepcional? ¿Cuáles serían los atributos de una mujer que, como tú, es excepcional en lo suyo?

Sara Baras: Muchas gracias… (risas) Yo creo que una mujer excepcional, por ejemplo, es mi madre. Creo que una buena persona, una persona con inquietudes, inteligente, generosa, una persona que da algo más, ¿no? Creo que sobre todo las madres me parecen mujeres excepcionales. El amor que puedan dar no lo comparo con nada.

Willie Colón se considera un creador de la salsa. Nació en Nueva York, nieto de puertorriqueños. Tengo entendido que el 2006 es el año de tu retiro, que estás pensando en guardar definitivamente tu trombón. Quería preguntarte si realmente te retiras o seguirás en las tarimas hasta que el cuerpo aguante.

W.C.: (Risas)...No es exactamente un retiro, tengo algunos proyectos a los que quiero dedicarme y no puedo hacerlo mientras estoy de gira con la orquesta. Ahora estoy en el proceso de grabar un LP, puede ser mi último y yo creo que me mantendría siempre apegado a la música, la producción y la composición. Son cuarenta años de viaje... al final de este año puede ser.

BBC: Muchos dicen que la edad de oro de la salsa no volverá y que incluso no falta mucho para que desaparezca como género rentable en el negocio de la música. Cómo lo ves tú, ¿la salsa está muriendo, se está transformando, está cambiando a otro género?

Colón: Bueno, esa es la ley natural, pero yo tengo confianza que algo viene, todo lo viejo es nuevo y de lo nuevo uno se cansa después de un rato. Yo creo que es un ciclo, especialmente cuando la tecnología ha cambiado, que se puede grabar un buen LP en el sótano o en el garaje con una computadora que no es tan cara. Eso va a permitir que de nuevo, como en mi época, surjan productores independientes porque uno de los problemas ha sido que las grandes corporaciones han ido adquiriendo todos los sellos (discográficos) pequeños, entonces matan la competencia y también la honestidad y la razón de ser de la música, una música que nace de la esquina del barrio. En verdad no entienden la esencia y el por qué la música era tan rentable y es tan importante.

Javier Zanetti juega futbol profesional en Italia, pero es de Argentina. Él estableció una fundación para ayudar a niños pobres en Argentina.

BBC: ¿Qué significa Pupi, de dónde viene ese nombre?

Javier Zanetti: Pupi es un sobrenombre que me pusieron López y Caballero cuando comencé a jugar fútbol en el club argentino Banfield. Después le pusimos ese nombre a la fundación. Hace cuatro años que comenzamos y sinceramente hemos hecho muchísimas cosas para recaudar fondos para estos chicos: partidos a beneficio, calendarios, pulseritas con los colores de Argentina, etc. Todo esto para ellos, para seguir fomentando y haciendo crecer los proyectos que tenemos en mente.

BBC: Según tenemos entendido son unos cien los niños que reciben asistencia diaria en la fundación...

Javier Zanetti: Sí, en estos momentos hay más de cien chicos de tres a cinco años — los que nos estuvieron acompañando durante estos cuatro años, ahora

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tienen siete, ocho - además trabajamos con los hermanos de estos chicos y con los padres. Queremos un poco cerrar el círculo, para ayudar a todas la familia en las distintas problemáticas que se pueden presentar.

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General Strategies for AP® Spanish Listening Comprehension

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Introduction

Teaching and assessing listening comprehension are perhaps the most challenging components of the AP curriculum, due in great part to the many variables that affect a student's ability to comprehend spoken Spanish: the physical classroom environment and school equipment, learning styles, note-taking skills, regional dialects, etc. Many teachers may assume that they are assessing "listening comprehension" when in fact they are assessing listening and cognitive reasoning skills. Listening may be part of the exercise, but the inevitable tasks of reasoning, critical thinking—even the kinesthetic connection to writing—are factors that can drastically affect the outcome.

In essence, two of the major obstacles in solely assessing listening comprehension are first determining which factors may impede a true assessment of listening comprehension, and then making every effort to offer students the opportunity to mitigate these variables. This will help to provide a true baseline for students, and teachers will have a better understanding of whether they need to remediate listening or focus more on reasoning and critical thinking strategies. Teachers must know what students hear in order to then address how to analyze and synthesize the information presented orally.

Eliminating Variables

Although it may appear to be obvious, there are several issues that the classroom teacher must evaluate and address prior to administering a listening comprehension assessment. First and foremost, it is imperative that students are provided with the best possible equipment and physical space for listening comprehension. If no language lab is available, a classroom should be optimized for a listening environment: Students should be provided with headphones and a listening center, the room should be quiet, comfortable, and free from distractions such as PA announcements and hallway activity. (I can vividly recall an adept AP Spanish student who performed poorly on one of the practice listening comprehension assessments for no particular reason. I evaluated the listening comprehension segment, tried to determine if the regional accent was overwhelming, and even took the test myself. Exasperated, I finally asked the student why he did so poorly. His response: "I was watching the garbage truck picking up the dumpster outside the window." By simply drawing the blinds, his scores improved remarkably.)

Once the classroom space and physical environment has been evaluated and addressed, it is important to know and understand each student's learning style. Most people tend to rely heavily on visual references in order to supplement auditory comprehension. An example might be how teachers themselves process information at a faculty meeting. If the principal states an outline and a deadline for a project with no visual reference whatsoever, it is more probable that the staff will misinterpret and/or forget the information stated. Although we have developed coping skills such as taking notes and asking clarifying questions, it is more likely that the request will be taken seriously and acted on in a timely fashion if it is written as well. Another example is when teachers are assigning homework. If teachers state what the homework will be without writing it on the board, there will inevitably be confusion for some (if not all) students. Of course there will be some who will diligently write down the assignment and ask a question if confused. Others, however, will remain silent and may not understand or remember the assignment.

Therefore, one essential preassessment that should be done early in the school year is to have students determine their learning style. There are many assessments readily available, and one particularly detailed assessment is the Index of Learning Styles (ILS) developed by Richard M. Felder and Barbara A. Soloman of North Carolina State University. The Web site address is www4.ncsu.edu/unity/lockers/users/f/felder/public/ILSpage.html, and it provides a free, 44-question Web-based assessment for students to determine their learning styles. Students should use this information

to better understand how they learn and process information, and teachers should discuss in the classroom how to best prepare for listening comprehension with the understanding that each student learns differently.

Once the teacher and students understand their learning styles, the next step is to help auditory learners further hone and process their listening skills, and to provide the more visual learners with coping skills necessary to compensate for their discomfort with being assessed for listening comprehension. A student who "doesn't like" listening comprehension and who "performs poorly" on these assessments may struggle due to personal learning style—and not due to Spanish language aptitude. We all have students who can read and write very well in Spanish, but who are not proficient in listening comprehension and/or speaking. It must be surmised that these students do not have a deficiency in Spanish, but rather in processing auditory information. Teaching more Spanish will not make them better listeners. On the contrary, teachers must make a conscious effort to help students develop coping skills and to help the students feel more at ease with the style of assessment.

Pretesting Listening Comprehension

After addressing physical space and learning style, it is important to give a comprehensive listening assessment in Spanish to obtain a baseline and to observe student test-taking strategies. It is best to utilize assessments that model what will be tested on the AP Spanish Language Examination, and AP Spanish–style listening comprehension assessments with resource kits are readily available for purchase and do quite well for student preparation. AP Central® has audio files available and sample assessments as well for teacher use in the classroom. Regardless, teachers should pretest listening comprehension with short dialogues and narratives, and also medium-to-long narratives and dialogues. I recommend giving students an overview of how they will be pretested, and to recommend that students take notes when necessary.

During the actual pretest it is a good idea to observe student behavior. Perhaps more valuable than the data from the pretest is the observation of student test-taking skills; i.e., which students took thorough notes and which ones just listened? What did the notes look like—were there lists, graphic organizers, and other visual aides? Which students were easily distracted and/or were unable to focus? Did students simply look for words written in the multiple-choice answers that were said in the dialogue ("word recognition"), or did they first interpret the information and then use process of elimination to select the best possible answer?

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Most likely, the students who performed the best in the assessment were the ones who were taking notes, who were focused, and who concentrated on understanding and interpreting the information instead of just attempting to recognize words that matched the ones in the answers provided. Obviously, basic proficiency in Spanish is essential, and a student who does not have the proper skill base from prior classes will be at a complete loss. However, assuming that students have had the proper prior training (for more information, please refer to the AP Vertical Teams® and Pre-AP publications on the AP Web site), the issue at hand will be to teach students to be better listeners.

Teaching Listening Skills

Once a baseline for listening comprehension has been established, the task of honing listening skills and forming coping mechanisms begins. The first step is to help students create their own system for listening. I have found it very helpful to model good test-taking skills as a way to broach the topic of how to tackle the listening component. After the students take the initial pretest in listening comprehension, I take the test myself in front of the class. I copy the answer key onto an overhead transparency, and we play the test out loud. As the dialogues are played, I take notes on the overhead or the board, and create links and graphic organizers. I then model the answer selection on the overhead using the process of elimination, and explaining why certain answers are wrong while referring to my notes.

Often students will start to discuss the thought process, and it becomes an interactive class where students generate ideas and discuss what they did for that particular dialogue or narrative. At times students will volunteer to direct the next dialogue, and I allow them to model their thought process for the class. The essential component to that particular lesson is that students see how to process information that is presented verbally, that they observe and evaluate techniques that worked (and didn't work). At that point, they should begin to develop a routine for listening comprehension that works for them. I finish the lesson by having students tell me what they intend to do differently next time to perform better.

For the next listening comprehension activity I eliminate the variable of the multiple-choice questions. This gives students the opportunity to focus directly on the dialogue or narrative and to employ their personal listening strategies. The class begins by brainstorming various note-taking techniques. Next, students are asked to listen to a 10-minute narrative and to take notes on the essential information. When the narrative ends, students are allotted 15 minutes to summarize the narrative in

their own words (in Spanish). We then read our summaries out loud, and by sharing we realize what may have been missed, what was truly essential, and what impeded our understanding. Students should begin to realize that deficiencies in vocabulary, perhaps dialects, the rate and speed of the speaker, and background information may be impediments for comprehension.

Practice

When students understand the impediments to comprehending a dialogue or narrative, the task then becomes practicing, and learning by trial and error. Unlike writing or grammar, there is a limit to skills that can be *taught* for simply listening. Essentially, once distractions have been eliminated, the format of the assessment is familiar, and note-taking skills have been instructed and reviewed, the only way to improve is through continual practice.

Practicing listening comprehension should be frequent, varied, authentic, and routine in order to truly prepare students for the examination. In reality, there should never be an AP Spanish Language class where listening is not an integral component of the class itself. It is important to note that not all listening activities have to be assessed formally, but it is important that they be assessed in a variety of ways.

Visual Versus Nonvisual

Although there are many ways to present listening, it is best to separate listening comprehension activities into two categories: those with a visual aid and those without. The listening activities that allow for a visual reference may be easier for many students, as they provide a frame of reference and therefore some level of comfort. Using segments from Spanish television, a podcast, or watching a PowerPoint presentation can function as a less threatening form of integrating listening into the daily classes. It is vital to ensure that these activities be varied so that students do not get too accustomed to a particular dialect or vocabulary base. If utilizing segments of Spanish television is part of the class routine, make sure to access different programs and channels whenever possible. Have students "prelisten" by presenting the title or some background on the segment, and discuss what they could expect to hear. Most importantly, however, assess what they have heard. Assessments can range from a quick student synopsis to a formative written assessment to a class discussion. The assessment piece is essential nevertheless, and

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if students are allowed to listen without reflection they will lose their focus. I find that checks for understanding work best when they are creative and varied.

At some point students will need to be transitioned to listening comprehension activities that do not provide a visual reference. This tends to be more difficult, and therefore requires more attention to what will be used as a sample. One way to introduce nonvisual listening comprehension is to read a story for homework, and then the next day listen to it on tape without seeing the text. As students get used to stories on tape, have them read half the story the next time. When they come to class the next day, discuss what was read and make predictions for what the ending may be. Then, listen to the end of the story, and have students summarize (either written or verbally) what happened. Eventually the class can move to books on tape, and the written text can be withdrawn completely.

Here are some additional ideas for integrating listening comprehension into the regular classroom setting:

- Have students read current events in Spanish to the class so that some get to speak while others listen. (Sometimes by reading aloud it helps students to make the connection between the written and spoken language.)
- Listen to music and radio excerpts—discuss the lyrics to a song after hearing it
- "Listen" to TV with the screen turned around.
- Practice "direct" response questions from exams.
- Create "role-play" scenarios: a doctor's office, the airport ticket counter, a jewelry story, etc. The teacher should play one role, and have the student play the other (the teacher can modify the situation so that the students are required to listen and not just predict the next question).
- Draw a scene that is described.
- Play games like telephone or "taboo."
- "Create" a story with the class, and have each student add to the story, moving throughout the classroom.
- Ask students to write about their favorite book (anonymously), and then read the samples aloud so that the class can guess who it may be.

- Read and analyze a favorite poem in Spanish.

Essentially, there are many options for practicing listening comprehension without being static or formal. These types of activities tend to be less threatening and less stressful, and are usually more engaging for the class as a whole. Once again,

however, it is essential that all activities end in some form of assessment or evaluation, even if it is only an oral summary of the activity and its outcome. I also try to make a conscious effort to always provide a reason for the activity, relating the skill development to something that will be assessed more formally in the future.

Eventually, as students become acclimated to both visual and nonvisual listening comprehension I begin to incorporate more formal AP-style assessments. Practicing short, medium, and long dialogues and narratives then becomes a regular routine in class, and it can be helpful to have students lead the review of answers. I provide the script from time to time, and modify the assessments on occasion to avoid being caught in a routine. Students should turn in their notes for review, and they should be more accountable for proficiency as the year progresses.

Listening to Complete a Task

Although there are many varied ways of practicing listening comprehension in the classroom that will inevitably help with communication in the language, it is important to keep in mind that in an AP Spanish class the end goal is to demonstrate proficiency on the AP Spanish Examination. Therefore, once a foundation has been established and listening skills have been developed, it is necessary to begin to focus on how to listen in order to address a specific task in Spanish.

As stated in the previous article, there are four separate parts of the AP Spanish Examination that require listening comprehension in order to demonstrate mastery:

1. Multiple-Choice Listening
2. Formal Writing (Integrated Skills)
3. Informal Speaking–Simulated Conversation
4. Formal Oral Presentation (Integrated Skills)

These sections comprise a combined total of 60 percent of the examination, and consequently, competence in listening comprehension is imperative. It is equally important, however, to understand that each section assesses a different skill, and that listening is a vehicle in addressing the particular task. At some point it is necessary to instruct and practice each of the four tasks.

Listening for Multiple Choice

Twenty percent of the AP Spanish Language Examination is composed of multiple-choice listening comprehension questions. This is the first part of the examination, and it typically consists of about 30–35 questions. Even though it is considered one

section of the examination, in reality there are several different possible formats that can be employed for assessment:

- Short Dialogues
- Short Narratives
- Long Dialogues
- Long Narratives

Each of these sections is assessed the same way—with multiple-choice questions—but strategies should vary for instructing and practicing since they are somewhat different in delivery. For example, a 90-second dialogue between two friends at the supermarket would elicit a very different set of questions than an eight-minute narrative discourse on the Lacondon Maya population of Tabasco and Chiapas.

General Multiple-Choice Concerns

Perhaps the first place to begin in order to prepare for this section is to teach multiple-choice test-taking skills. Students must understand that there are factors and strategies particular to multiple-choice questions that should not be overlooked. I prepare students with these instructions:

1. The answer is stated clearly on your paper, but so are other answers that were designed to truly test your comprehension. Do not pick an answer without considering the others.
2. This is a process of elimination exercise. You must be able to eliminate other answers in order to arrive at the correct response.
3. Do not guess unless you can eliminate two of the four options. This section of the test allows you to skip, and it is not necessary to answer every question. Guessing randomly will most likely hurt your grade.
4. Be wary of answers that may deceive you because they contain the same vocabulary (word recognition).
5. Do not infer things that you do not hear. Some questions are designed to trick you with inferences and connections that seem plausible but that are not supported by the speech sample.
6. Do not try to "anticipate" the question entirely based on the stated answers. Instead, try to form a frame of reference for the dialogue or narrative and listen with intent.

During the course of the year it may become apparent that students struggle with multiple-choice questions and not listening comprehension. Teachers should be aware of this variable and take appropriate measures to remediate the real impediment. If multiple-choice questions are presumed to be causing difficulty, perhaps a dialogue or narrative should be modified to be assessed in another form. If it is confirmed that it is the style of questioning, and not the listening comprehension skill, that is detracting from student performance, there must be a concerted effort to instruct and practice multiple-choice test-taking skills.

Dialogue Versus Narrative, Short Versus Long

Having addressed the general multiple-choice test-taking techniques that are inherent to the AP Spanish Language listening comprehension section, the next step is to prepare students for the variety in style and delivery, and the subtle (and not so subtle) nuances associated with each one. There are several possibilities in format that require students to engage particular listening strategies. Furthermore, these strategies must be modified and adapted depending on whether the speech sample is a dialogue or a narrative, or whether it is "short" or "long."

Chapters 3, 4, and 5 of this publication will provide more detailed research from the National Capital Language Resource Center and how to best optimize listening strategies for a particular activity. As a preface, however, it should be noted that an individual's particular listening comprehension strategy will affect how he or she performs on this particular section. Dialogues are different than narratives for several reasons, and a short sample requires a different listening strategy than a longer sample.

The table on the following page highlights some of the more notable distinctions:

TABLE 1: DIALOGUES VERSUS NARRATIVES

	Short (2 minutes or less in duration)	**Long (Over 2 minutes in duration)**
Dialogues	• Speakers show inflection in voice. • Frame of reference is stated prior to speech sample. • Does not require extensive critical thinking or metacognitive skills. • Does not require students to make references or to draw extensively on background knowledge. • Questions are frequently directly addressing facts presented in the dialogue.	• Speakers show inflection in voice. • Frame of reference is stated prior to speech sample. • May require critical thinking or metacognitive skills. • May require students to make references or to draw on background knowledge. • Questions may directly address facts presented in the dialogue and also may require students to make inferences or draw conclusions based on what they have heard.
Narratives	• Speaker most likely will not show much inflection in voice. • Frame of reference is stated prior to speech sample. • May require critical thinking or metacognitive skills. • May require students to make references or to draw on background knowledge. • Questions may directly address facts presented in the narrative and also may require students to make inferences or draw conclusions based on what they have heard.	• Speaker most likely will not show much inflection in voice. • Frame of reference is stated prior to speech sample. • Will require extensive critical thinking or metacognitive skills. • Will require students to make references and to draw extensively on background knowledge. • Questions will directly address facts presented in the narrative and also may require students to make inferences or draw conclusions based on what they have heard.

As illustrated in the table, it can be deduced that these nuances do indeed require students to activate and employ different strategies in order to best address the task at hand. I suggest that students be made aware of these nuances and that they practice different styles in order to make appropriate adjustments to their listening strategies. Chapter 3 of this publication will further discuss listening comprehension strategies for multiple-choice assessments.

Listening in Preparation to Speak

Perhaps the most natural and ordinary function of listening in any language is to communicate orally. The speaking sections of the AP Spanish Language Examination

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are designed to test a student's ability to communicate in Spanish, both informally and informally. Naturally, listening is fully integrated into both parts of the speaking section of the examination. Given the dramatic difference in style between the two sections, however, the role of listening comprehension is drastically different for each section.

Informal Speaking (Simulated Conversation)

Comprising 10 percent of the examination, this section of speaking is designed to model a conversation. Students are provided with a schematic outline of a conversation, and they are directed to interact, per se, with the aural prompts provided. For this section the role of listening comprehension is to follow the course of the conversation, based upon the frame of reference provided.

Perhaps the best way to practice listening skills for this section of the examination is to hold similar conversations in class. Utilizing directed response–style questions can serve as an entry into a dialogue, and this can be one of the more enjoyable and creative parts of a conversational class. Some suggestions when practicing simulated conversations in class:

- Start with easy themes and questions, but then move on to more difficult scenarios.
- Make sure to create questions and answers that require students to draw on different tenses, registers, and vocabulary.
- Don't always ask predictable questions—make sure students are paying attention to what you ask.
- As a twist have students "create" simulated dialogues to use in class.

Formal Oral Presentation (Integrated Skills)

This section of the speaking portion of the examination (10 percent of the final grade) is designed to assess a student's ability to provide a formal oral presentation to a class. Students must draw from written and auditory prompts that they must analyze and synthesize in the form of an oral presentation. In this particular section, the role of listening comprehension is for students to hear another perspective on a theme that will be provided in the form of a written prompt, and accompanied by written sources. Listening in this section serves the function of providing an additional perspective—sometimes in support of the written text, but also sometimes in contrast to the written sources. In order to best prepare for this section of speaking, students must learn to take notes and to draw inferences and conclusions, not unlike

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skills required for the long narrative. Although it can be argued that students do not need to fully understand the oral prompt when addressing the class, it should be noted that proficiency in Formal Oral Presentation is judged upon integrating the various sources into the speech sample. Failing to address the auditory selection will not only detract drastically from a student's grade, but it may also render the sample incomplete, if not inaccurate. Practicing formal presentations in class is essential, but the listening component must not be overlooked. Students should be made aware of the AP Spanish Language rubric used to assess Formal Oral Presentation, which can be found on the AP Central Web site. In addition, Chapter 4 of this publication will specifically address listening comprehension in preparation to speak.

Listening in Preparation to Write

The formal writing section of the AP Spanish Language Examination is designed to assess a student's ability to analyze and synthesize information presented from both written and auditory sources in order to write a written, formal sample. This section of the examination determines 20 percent of the overall grade. Much like the Formal Oral Presentation, the role of listening comprehension is supportive. In essence, the listening comprehension component is a vehicle for gathering supporting (or contrasting) evidence to form a writing sample. It should be understood that even though the title of the section is Formal Writing, in order to formulate a thesis statement and to fully address the task at hand, listening comprehension is vital.

Since the listening component of this section (much like Formal Oral Presentation) is usually similar to a long narrative in style, the best way to practice is to employ strategies for long narratives. Essentially, students will need to practice listening for overall meaning, taking notes that can be transitioned into a written essay, and maximizing any previous background knowledge that may provide additional substantiation for the prompt provided. Although this section is predominately designed to assess formal writing, once again the rubric used to assess the writing sample clearly addresses integration of the auditory source. Therefore, the listening comprehension component of this section must not be dismissed as inconsequential. Chapter 5 of this publication will further address listening in preparation to write.

Conclusion

As previously stated, listening comprehension is perhaps the most difficult component to instruct and assess. Unfortunately, all too often it is overlooked or simply dismissed as an assessment component in the curriculum of a language class. As a result, listening comprehension is regularly assessed but frequently not taught. Practice may be limited to formal assessment or simply incidental checks for understanding in class; yet, to be successful on the examination, students will require a more formal and varied approach to understanding and developing listening strategies.

Given the direct and indirect impact that listening comprehension will have virtually every section of the AP Spanish Language Examination, it is imperative that teachers address listening comprehension as a primary skill that must be properly instructed, practiced, and assessed. It can not be deduced that fluency in writing, reading, or speaking will translate into mastery in listening comprehension. So many factors, ranging from physical space to learning style to dialect, can affect one's ability to comprehend speech. It cannot be assumed to be a natural byproduct of Spanish class, and it is incumbent that we instruct, practice, assess, and give feedback for listening comprehension so that students can develop this skill in tandem with the other three.

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Listening Strategies for Multiple-Choice Assessments

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Introduction

Listening comprehension does not mean exclusively listening to a message and understanding the words that are being said. It includes complex mechanisms that the listener must employ in order to totally and fully comprehend the message being conveyed. Among these mechanisms, listeners must decipher the codes that are embedded in the message, along with the connotations, the tone, the intonation, and the context, among other elements. The listener must perceive the message, decode it, and identify or understand the message. Also embedded in the text are cultural aspects as well as contextual factors that must be recognized to "interpret" the message correctly.

The basic process needed in any listening comprehension activity is auditory retention. By this we mean the use of memory, decoding, and understanding. The short-term memory is needed to retain the information delivered in the message while the meaning is retained in the long-term memory. The listener decodes the series of utterance, words, and sounds, and then the text becomes coherent. The listener is not passive but active in this process. The listener is giving meaning to the series of sounds that are heard, anticipating what will follow and capturing the purpose and meaning of the message. A series of long-term memory mechanisms are put into place to perform these processes. These processes occur at the subconscious level. Associations and connections are made that establish meaning and an interpretation of the message. The type of message, the context, the situation, logical connections,

the purpose of the message, the main idea and subordinating ideas, as well as the logical organization of the information, among other factors, assist in decoding the message and establishing comprehension.

For our purposes, the message presented in the listening section of the AP Exam can be placed in two categories: prepared and everyday oral messages. By this we mean messages that are conveyed in an academic setting and those that are conveyed in an everyday setting. These messages could be natural or artificial. In the natural setting, there is interaction, spontaneity, and repetition; sentences may not be well structured or developed, or they may be incomplete. In a prepared message, an exchange of ideas or responses is not expected or not generally expected. For example, recordings giving information on times of departure and arrivals, radio or TV commercials, news reports, and weather reports are all forms of communication that provide information to the listener without offering an opportunity for interaction. This type of message is artificial and not spontaneous. Generally speaking, there is a lack of background sound and the information is compact. Messages can be classified according to their communicative purpose as static, dynamic, or abstract. An example of static communication is communication that includes description, instructions, etc. A dynamic communication includes narrations, and abstract communication conveys opinions, ideas, and beliefs. On the AP Exam, all of these communicative purposes are utilized.

The National Capital Language Resource Center in Washington, D.C. http://www.nclrc.org/essentials/listening/developlisten.htm, offers a section on its Web page under the heading The Essentials of Language Teaching that presents the essential goals and techniques for teaching listening. Under this heading, the goals identified are those common to most Spanish instructors: "…producing students who can use listening strategies to maximize their comprehension of aural input, identify relevant and non-relevant information, and tolerate less than word-by-word comprehension." Some specific suggestions for developing listening activities taken from this Web site http://www.nclrc.org/essentials/listening/developlisten.htm are noted in the next section.

Teaching Listening: Developing Listening Activities

As you design listening tasks, keep in mind that complete recall of all the information in an aural text is an unrealistic expectation to which even native speakers are not usually held. Listening exercises that are meant to train should be success oriented and build up students' confidence in their listening ability.

Construct the listening activity around a contextualized task.

Contextualized listening activities approximate real-life tasks and give the listener an idea of the type of information to expect and what to do with it in advance of the actual listening. A beginning-level task would be locating places on a map (one way) or exchanging name and address information (two way). At an intermediate level, students could follow directions for assembling something (one way) or work in pairs to create a story to tell to the rest of the class (two way).

Define the activity's instructional goal and type of response.

Each activity should have as its goal the improvement of one or more specific listening skills. A listening activity may have more than one goal or outcome, but be careful not to overburden the attention of beginning or intermediate listeners.

Recognizing the goal(s) of listening comprehension in each listening situation will help students select appropriate listening strategies:

- Identification: Recognizing or discriminating specific aspects of the message, such as sounds, categories of words, or morphological distinctions
- Orientation: Determining the major facts about a message, such as topic, text type, or setting
- Main idea comprehension: Identifying the higher-order ideas
- Detail comprehension: Identifying supporting details
- Replication: Reproducing the message orally or in writing

Check the level of difficulty of the listening text.

The factors listed below can help you judge the relative ease or difficulty of a listening text for a particular purpose and a particular group of students.

How is the information organized? Does the story line, narrative, or instruction conform to familiar expectations? Texts in which the events are presented in natural chronological order, that have an informative title, and that present the information following an obvious organization (main ideas first, details and examples second) are easier to follow.

How familiar are the students with the topic? Remember that misapplication of background knowledge due to cultural differences can create major comprehension difficulties.

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Does the text contain redundancy? At the lower levels of proficiency, listeners may find short, simple messages easier to process, but students with higher proficiency benefit from the natural redundancy of the language.

Does the text involve multiple individuals and objects? Are they clearly differentiated? It is easier to understand a text with a doctor and a patient than one with two doctors, and it is even easier if they are of the opposite sex. In other words, the more marked the differences, the easier the comprehension.

Does the text offer visual support to aid in the interpretation of what the listeners hear? Visual aids such as maps, diagrams, pictures, or the images in a video help contextualize the listening input and provide clues to meaning.

Use prelistening activities to prepare students for what they are going to hear or view.

The activities chosen during prelistening may serve as preparation for listening in several ways. During prelistening, the teacher may:

- assess students' background knowledge of the topic and linguistic content of the text
- provide students with the background knowledge necessary for their comprehension of the listening passage or activate the existing knowledge that the students possess
- clarify any cultural information that may be necessary to comprehend the passage
- make students aware of the type of text they will be listening to, the role they will play, and the purpose(s) for which they will be listening
- provide opportunities for group or collaborative work and for background reading or class discussion activities

Sample prelistening activities:

- looking at pictures, maps, diagrams, or graphs
- reviewing vocabulary or grammatical structures
- reading something relevant
- constructing semantic webs (a graphic arrangement of concepts or words showing how they are related)
- predicting the content of the listening text
- going over the directions or instructions for the activity
- doing guided practice

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Match "while-listening" activities to the instructional goal, the listening purpose, and students' proficiency level.

"While-listening" activities relate directly to the text, and students do them during or immediately after the time they are listening. Keep these points in mind when planning while-listening activities:

If students are to complete a written task during or immediately after listening, allow them to read through it before listening. Students need to devote all their attention to the listening task. Be sure they understand the instructions for the written task before listening begins so that they are not distracted by the need to figure out what to do.

Keep writing to a minimum during listening. Remember that the primary goal is comprehension, not production. Having to write while listening may distract students from this primary goal. If a written response is to be given after listening, the task can be more demanding.

Organize activities so that they guide listeners through the text. Combine global activities such as getting the main idea, topic, and setting with selective listening activities that focus on details of content and form.

Use questions to focus students' attention on the elements of the text crucial to comprehension of the whole. Before the listening activity begins, have students review questions they will answer orally or in writing after listening. Listening for the answers will help students recognize the crucial parts of the message.

Use predicting to encourage students to monitor their comprehension as they listen. Do a predicting activity before listening, and remind students to review what they are hearing to see if it makes sense in the context of their prior knowledge and what they already know of the topic or events of the passage.

Give immediate feedback whenever possible. Encourage students to examine how or why their responses were incorrect.

Sample while-listening activities:

- listening with visuals
- filling in graphs and charts
- following a route on a map
- checking off items in a list

- listening for the gist
- searching for specific clues to meaning
- completing "cloze" (fill-in) exercises
- distinguishing between formal and informal registers

Below is another section borrowed from the NCLRC Web page with strategies for developing listening skills: http://www.nclrc.org/essentials/listening/stratlisten.htm:

Teaching Listening: Strategies for Developing Listening Skills

Language learning depends on listening. Listening provides the aural input that serves as the basis for language acquisition and enables learners to interact in spoken communication. Effective language instructors show students how they can adjust their listening behavior to deal with a variety of situations, types of input, and listening purposes. They help students develop a set of listening strategies and match appropriate strategies to each listening situation.

Listening Strategies

Listening strategies are techniques or activities that contribute directly to the comprehension and recall of listening input. Listening strategies can be classified by how the listener processes the input.

Top-down strategies are listener based; the listener taps into background knowledge of the topic, the situation or context, the type of text, and the language. This background knowledge activates a set of expectations that help the listener to interpret what is heard and anticipate what will come next. Top-down strategies include:

- listening for the main idea
- predicting
- drawing inferences
- summarizing

Bottom-up strategies are text based; the listener relies on the language in the message, that is, the combination of sounds, words, and grammar that creates meaning. Bottom-up strategies include:

- listening for specific details
- recognizing cognates

- recognizing word-order patterns

Strategic listeners also use *metacognitive strategies* to plan, monitor, and evaluate their listening.

- They plan by deciding which listening strategies will serve best in a particular situation.
- They monitor their comprehension and the effectiveness of the selected strategies.
- They evaluate by determining whether they have achieved their listening comprehension goals and whether the combination of listening strategies selected was an effective one.

Listening for Meaning

To extract meaning from a listening text, students need to follow four basic steps:

- Figure out the purpose for listening. Activate background knowledge of the topic in order to predict or anticipate content and identify appropriate listening strategies.
- Attend to the parts of the listening input that are relevant to the identified purpose and ignore the rest. This selectivity enables students to focus on specific items in the input and reduces the amount of information they have to hold in short-term memory in order to recognize it.
- Select top-down and bottom-up strategies that are appropriate to the listening task and use them flexibly and interactively. Students' comprehension improves and their confidence increases when they use top-down and bottom-up strategies simultaneously to construct meaning.
- Check comprehension while listening and when the listening task is over. Monitoring comprehension helps students detect inconsistencies and comprehension failures, directing them to use alternate strategies.

The above recommendations and suggestions offered on the NCLRC Web site have been proven to develop listening comprehension ability and can be applied at any ability level. As recommended in AP guidelines, the instructor should choose authentic materials and situations to prepare students for listening comprehension. There are innumerable sources of authentic materials for listening exercises and practice on the Web. I will just suggest a few Web sources that are useful for these purposes.

The BBC language Web page at http://www.bbc.co.uk/languages/spanish/: This Web site offers instructions on how to connect to Spanish TV and connect to news, entertainment, and the BBC Mundo news, among other resources for students.

How Can I Watch Spanish TV Programs?

On the BBC

BBC Learning Zone broadcasts Spanish language-learning series on a regular basis, between Monday night and Tuesday morning from 1–6 a.m., on BBC Two. Web site: www.bbc.co.uk/learningzone/langtravel/

BBC Four, a digital channel, occasionally shows films in Spanish as part of its World Cinema strand. Web site:www.bbc.co.uk/bbcfour/

Satellite channels

TVEi, Televisión Española Internacional, is the international service of the Spanish public broadcaster. It offers a mix of news, chat shows, quiz shows, sitcoms, drama, and documentaries.

- **Sky subscribers**
  TVEi is currently broadcast as part of the Entertainment bundle on Sky channel 795. The audio for Euronews on channel 528 can also be switched to Spanish by changing the audio settings.
- **Non-Sky subscribers**
  You may opt for a non-Sky satellite system to receive free-to-air TV, including all the BBC channels. Besides TVEi, you may get other Spanish channels, such as news channel Canal 24 Horas and regional networks. Packages start around £150 plus installation as a one-off payment. Please consult your local satellite installer for details, stating you'd like to receive the Spanish channels.

Online

Some Spanish TV stations also relay their signal via their Web site. The reception quality is lower than that on a TV and can be marred by heavy traffic on the Internet, causing breakups in reception. This depends not only on the speed of your connection but also on the quality threshold the signal is sent out by the broadcaster.

You will also need some extra software, Windows Media Player, and Real Player. Windows Media comes as standard with any Windows operating system. You'll have to download Real Player. For a step-by-step guide, please visit BBC Webwise: http://www.bbc.co.uk/webwise/askbruce/articles/download/.

- **Live TV**
  Andalucía TV: http://www.canalsur.es/web/portada, click on the link to "TV."
- **News**
  Follow the links to the individual news stories on these TV channel sites, then click on "video" to watch the news reports.
  - Antena 3 Noticias: http://www.a3n.tv
  - Informativos Telecinco: http://www.informativos.telecinco.es/
  - Telenoticias – Telemadrid: http://www.telemadrid.es/informativos/
  - EiTB Actualidad: http://www.eitb.com/castellano/

Under the section "Better Listening," the BBC site presents five steps toward listening comprehension.

- These activities will prepare you for "real life" listening, so you'll hear people speaking at a natural pace.
- You need to have sound on your computer. Find a quiet moment to listen and adjust the volume so that you can hear the sound clearly.
- To complete them, you will have to be familiar with Spanish *numbers* and *times* and simple words for *food*.

The Language Links Web page offers various Web links to authentic materials that can be utilized in developing listening comprehension skills: http://www.langlink.net/langlink/detail.aspx?id=spanish.

Another page of interest for authentic sources of material for listening comprehension is El huevo de chocolate: http://www.elhuevodechocolate.com/index.html. This site was originally developed by a young girl and her father. It has excellent links to music, games, fables, word games, etc. It is very creative and can be used in many different ways to create interest and develop an appreciation for the Spanish language and its magic.

The University of Texas has a site dedicated to the development of oral proficiency. The address is http://laits.utesxas.edu/spe/sup09.html. This site offers role-play situations with native speakers who enact real-life situations and present a

variety of dialects and forms of pronunciation. It is useful for students who may need a visual clue to help them while advancing their listening ability. There are six levels of proficiency targeted so that students in the class can advance according to their own comprehension level.

These are just a few suggestions for sources of authentic material available on the Web. AP Central provides many suggestions, as well as resources available to teachers to help students develop listening skills.

Some additional resources on the topic of teaching listening are available at the NCLR Web site http://www.nclrc.org/essentials/resources.htm#speak.

Listening Strategies in Preparation to Speak

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Listening and the Free Response: Speaking Tasks

One of the greatest challenges that the new AP Spanish Language Examination presents is the integration of skills. No longer are the four essential skills tested in isolation; rather, students read and listen when preparing to produce a written or oral free response. While the tendency might be to focus on writing or speaking—the skills involved in production—in order to help students achieve success in the free-response portion of the exam, the ability to listen effectively is also critical.

In the "Free Response: Speaking" section of the exam, students are asked to demonstrate their ability to speak in both an informal and a formal setting. This is done through a simulated conversation, which "integrates listening and speaking in an informal setting of a conversation role-play" and the Formal Oral Presentation, which integrates listening, reading, and speaking, and asks students to "…give an oral presentation in a formal and/or academic setting."[1] For each of these tasks, the skill of listening is an integral component, without which no student can hope to successfully demonstrate speaking proficiency. Much of the "evidence" of proficiency in the speaking tasks, as described in the Course Description on pages 35 and 38, relate directly to listening skills. In both the Simulated Conversation and Formal Oral Presentation, students must demonstrate evidence of their ability to "recognize cultural elements implicit in oral texts…" and "interpret linguistic cues to infer social relationships." Additionally, in the Simulated Conversation, students must

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1. The College Board, *AP Spanish Language Course Description* 2008, 35.

work within a given context. Successful execution of the conversation is largely a function of comprehension of the speaker on the recording, the ability to interpret what has already been said and predict what might be coming next. In the Formal Oral Presentation, students must also "identify and summarize the main points and significant details and make appropriate inferences and predictions from a spoken source." Once again, their success depends in large part on their understanding of the aural source. Therefore, it is essential that we prepare our students to listen in preparation to speak in a variety of settings.

Listening Strategies

It is important that students are equipped with a variety of listening strategies in order to be able to cope with the different settings in which the information is presented. Research presented by the National Capitol Language Resource Center (NCLRC) contends that students must "…adjust their listening behavior to deal with a variety of situations, types of input and listening purposes"; therefore, it is vital that they "…develop a set of listening strategies and match appropriate strategies to each listening situation"[2]. Listening strategies can be broken down into three categories: bottom-up strategies, top-down strategies, and metacognitive strategies.[3]

Bottom-Up Strategies

Bottom-up strategies, according to the NCLRC, are text based. That is, students focus on individual words, sounds, and grammar in order to create meaning. These strategies are especially helpful when an aural selection is particularly complicated, and the overall meaning is not clear. By focusing on key words or phrases, students are often able to construct meaning or at least to make an educated guess as to the general idea that is being presented.

Top-Down Strategies

Though bottom-up strategies certainly facilitate comprehension, at the AP level, top-down strategies will also be frequently employed. These strategies are listener based, and require the listener to use his or her background knowledge in order to form expectations and interpret what is heard. The NCLRC has identified four top-down strategies: listening for the main idea, predicting, drawing inferences, and

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2. The National Capital Language Resource Center. "Strategies for Developing Listening Skills" (2003, 2004), http://www.nclrc.org/essentials/listening/stratlisten.htm (accessed October 27, 2007).
3. Ibid.

summarizing. Each of these strategies should be familiar to teachers of AP, as they make up a large part of what is tested over all sections of the exam.

Metacognitive Strategies

In addition to bottom-up and top-down strategies, metacognitive strategies help students to "…plan, monitor and evaluate their listening."[4] These are an essential part of the development of students' listening skills. When taught to self-assess the strategies they chose to use, and whether or not those strategies facilitated their comprehension of the aural source, they will learn which strategies are most effective based on the given task or situation. When practiced throughout the year, this self-evaluation will soon become automatic, and will serve to increase students' confidence and success as they move toward the AP Spanish Language Examination.

None of these strategies, however, should be used in isolation. In order to be successful, students must "select…strategies that are appropriate to the listening task and use them flexibly and interactively. Students' comprehension improves and their confidence increases when they use top-down and bottom-up strategies simultaneously to construct meaning."[5] In other words, it is essential that students draw on their entire repertoire of skills, rather than depending on a single strategy or type of strategy. Students must become active listeners who can move from one strategy to the next in order to extract the most meaning from auditory information.

Although it is clear that listening is inextricably tied to the speaking samples that students will produce for the exam, the question remains: When skills are integrated, how can students focus their practice on listening skills in order to improve? To answer this question, we must look at each speaking task individually, as each requires students to listen with a different goal in mind. These goals—the purpose for listening—will guide them to use different listening strategies in order to anticipate content and predict what information they might need in order to complete the task.

Simulated Conversation

As stated in the introduction, the goal of the Simulated Conversation is to have students take part in a role-play of a conversation in an informal setting. Students are given a written outline and must work within the given context of the conversation. Listening skills are critical for this task, as they will use auditory information to first

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4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.

prepare themselves and make predictions about what the conversation might involve. Then, during the course of the conversation, their listening skills will help them to follow the conversation, and any turns it may take, so that they can continue within the parameters indicated in the outline.

There are four key strategies—encompassing each of the three categories of listening strategies—that students should learn to apply to the listening portion of the Simulated Conversation:

1. Activate background knowledge.
2. Make predictions based on background knowledge.
3. Listen for key words and phrases.
4. Monitor comprehension, adjust predictions, and use alternate strategies when necessary.

The first two strategies come into play before any speaking occurs. Prior to beginning the conversation, students listen to a phone message or another recording in order to orient themselves within the context of the conversation. This is the first critical moment when their listening comprehension skills come into play. If students are unable to determine the context of the conversation, then the exercise becomes much more difficult. Effectively, the student is "blind," and would have little way of predicting how the conversation might go.

While listening to the initial recording, students should listen carefully for any words or phrases that activate their background knowledge of a particular topic. This background knowledge would then lead them to make predictions on the type of grammar and vocabulary that they could expect to hear or should be prepared to use. For example, the initial recording might be from a friend who is calling for advice on completing his college applications. Based on their background knowledge, students might predict that they will hear and use vocabulary having to do with school, the university, and future plans. Also, because they are being asked to give advice, they might predict that they will be asked to use the subjunctive tense, commands, or the future tense.

Once students have been introduced to the context through the initial recording and have reread the outline in order to help them to predict the course the conversation might take, they must then continue to use listening strategies throughout the conversation in order to stay within the topic and react and respond appropriately to the speaker. During the conversation, students must continue to listen carefully and apply their background knowledge to what is being said. They should

also continue to make predictions based on what they have just heard. Additionally, listening for key words and phrases, especially questions, is essential for responding appropriately in the conversation. Finally, students should use the metacognitive strategy of self-assessment, even during the course of the conversation, to identify gaps or errors in comprehension, adjust their predictions when new information is presented, and even to begin using a different listening strategy when necessary.

Ideas to Practice Listening for the Simulated Conversation

1. Many teachers still have copies of past AP Spanish Language Exams or AP practice books that include exercises from the old format of the exam. Why not put these to good use? The Direct Response Questions—the task that the Simulated Conversation replaced—can be a great way for students to practice making predictions and responding to aural clues that guide them to use certain grammar and vocabulary, without overwhelming them with the extra information included in a conversation. To begin the lesson, have students activate their background knowledge by first giving them the category that each question relates to: for example, *la salud* or *la universidad*. Before hearing the questions, students can take time to brainstorm related vocabulary, or even to try to predict what types of questions they might hear. Then, as they are given the questions, students must listen carefully to what is being asked, and demonstrate their comprehension through their oral response.

2. While students will eventually "interact" with a recording on the exam, holding informal conversations in class can help students practice their listening skills, even if it is in a less structured way. Ask students to pair off into small groups of two or three and give the class a topic, such as *la familia*. Before beginning the conversation, have each student individually come up with three questions related to the topic that they might want to ask their partner during the course of the conversation, but encourage them to make the conversation as natural as possible. Set a time limit for the conversation (5–8 minutes) and have students speak for that entire length of time. At the end, test their comprehension by having students report something new that they learned about their partner from the conversation.

3. Finally, require students to actively practice listening strategies when practicing the Simulated Conversation. After listening to the phone message or other initial information, stop the recording and have students

write or discuss their predictions of what the conversation might be about and the types of vocabulary or grammar that they might have to use. Then, as they are listening to the conversation, have them try to jot down key words or phrases that they hear which also provide them clues. After they have finished practicing the conversation, have them deconstruct their finished product using the metacognitive strategies: Were their predictions accurate? What were some of the key words they heard that facilitated their comprehension? If there were things that they did not understand, what might they do differently next time? At first, these exercises could be done as a class, then in partners, and then individually. Eventually, this overt guidance can be phased out as students get into the habit of using the strategies so that, by test time, they are second nature.

Formal Oral Presentation

The goal of the second speaking task, the Formal Oral Presentation, differs significantly from that of the Simulated Conversation, and therefore requires the use of different listening strategies in order to complete the task successfully. As its name suggests, this task is a simulation of an oral presentation given in an academic setting, in which students "describe, narrate, and present information and/or persuasive arguments on general topics…" and "use information from sources provided to present a synthesis and express an opinion."[6] For the Formal Oral Presentation, there are three listening strategies that students should be prepared to apply:

1. Activate background knowledge.
2. Make predictions and decide in advance what to listen for.
3. Listen for main ideas, and ignore what is irrelevant.
4. Monitor comprehension, adjust predictions, and employ alternate strategies when necessary.

Prior to listening to the aural source, students are provided with a topic, or question, that will be the basis of their presentation. They will also read a written source. Before listening, students should use these resources to activate their background knowledge of the topic and make predictions about what information they might hear in the aural source that would best support their opinion or argument. Then, as they listen to the second source, they will be prepared to ignore irrelevant details. By narrowing their

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6. The College Board, *AP Spanish Language Course Description* (2008), 38.

focus and listening only for this essential information, students will be more likely to extract only those main ideas that are most relevant to their presentation. This is crucial for two reasons: First, it will keep students from becoming overwhelmed by the amount of information presented, which can lead to errors or gaps in comprehension. It will also reduce the likelihood that summary will outweigh analysis of the topic, an error that can lower a student's score significantly in this section of the exam. Finally, it is important to continuously engage in self-evaluation and to monitor comprehension so that errors in comprehension can be caught early and predictions and strategies can be adjusted accordingly.

Ideas to Practice Listening for the Formal Oral Presentation

1. In order to prepare for the unique challenge of the Formal Oral Presentation, students must practice listening to news stories that provide the same formal register and advanced vocabulary that they will encounter on the AP Spanish Language Exam. Current events are a great way to provide students with opportunities for practice, and there are many Web sites that have video clips and audio files of the day's news stories. (See the Appendix, p. 63, for a list of helpful Web sites.) Every so often, present an interesting clip to the class. First, help students to activate their background knowledge by giving them the title of the story and the name of the source. Before listening, have students make predictions on what it might be about. As they listen, have students take notes on the information that is presented. Encourage them not to try to write down everything they hear but rather only the information that seems relevant to the main idea of the report. (Toward the beginning of the year, it may be a good idea to allow students to listen to the report twice; the first time to determine what the main idea is, and the second to take notes on the relevant information that supports it.) After listening, have students try to summarize the main idea out loud in only a few precise sentences in order to test their comprehension. If there were misunderstandings, try to determine together where errors in comprehension were made. It may also be helpful to have a basic transcript of the source ready in order to facilitate this evaluation.

2. Similarly, students can research their own current event in the audio/video format that they then present to the class. Have students bring the file to class so that the others can hear the original version, as well as the presenter's explanation. Afterward, the class can assess together whether

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or not their classmate captured the main idea and presented the appropriate information.

3. Finally, require students to actively practice these same listening strategies when practicing the Formal Oral Presentation. Prior to listening, students will have read the question and the written source. Therefore, students should already have an idea of how they are going to present the information or their argument. When listening to the aural source, the challenge is to extract relevant information that will help them to compare or contract the ideas presented in each source. When practicing, give students a moment to activate their prior knowledge and make predictions after reading the question, the written source, and the title of the aural source. Have them brainstorm and write down their ideas about what information they should be listening for. While listening to the source, students should continue to take notes on what they hear. When they have finished listening, have students summarize the main idea of the source and two or three important pieces of information that they heard in order to test their comprehension. Then, have them prepare and give their presentation. At the end, have students evaluate their work and their understanding, discuss what worked and what didn't, and what they might do differently next time.

Why Use Authentic Sources?

Since the implementation of the new AP Spanish Language Exam format, a shift has been made from the use of sources written specifically for students of Spanish as a foreign language to authentic sources, which are written by Spanish speakers for Spanish speakers. Because all of the sources found on the AP Exam will be authentic, it is important that students also are exposed to authentic sources as they practice for the exam throughout the year. In terms of listening, specifically, one of the "claims" of what an AP student can do is "comprehend Spanish intended for native speakers in a variety of settings, types of discourse, topics, styles, registers and broad regional variations."[7] Without consistent practice that exposes students to this type of variety in auditory sources, they will fall well short of this claim. Finally, authentic language is inherently complex in terms of vocabulary, structure, and the rate at which someone speaks. During the test, as in life, students must use all listening strategies available to them to cope with these differences and to work toward comprehension.

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7. The College Board, *AP Spanish Language Course Description* (2008), 4.

Conclusion

Now that the Free Response: Speaking section of the new AP Spanish Language Exam calls for the integration of language skills, it is clear that without the ability to listen effectively, demonstrating proficiency in speaking would be much more difficult. Students' success when participating in the Simulated Conversation, or when giving a Formal Oral presentation, depends first and foremost on their ability to comprehend main ideas and details presented aurally in a variety of different settings, registers, and types of discourse. Therefore, it is essential that we equip our students with a broad repertoire of listening strategies—including top-down, bottom-up, and metacognitive—that they can use to facilitate their comprehension and, as a result, demonstrate evidence of mastery in speaking.

Appendix

BBC Mundo

http://www.bbcmundo.com
- Besides a wealth of articles in print, the BBC Mundo Web site also has links to audio and video files of current events.

Radio de las Naciones Unidas

http://www.un.org/radio/es/
- *Radio of the United Nations* offers many audio files of varying lengths that can be played directly from the Web site or downloaded onto the computer.

Radio Mundo Real

http://www.radiomundoreal.fm/rmr/
- This site also offers audio files of differing lengths that can be played from the Web site or downloaded onto the computer. For most files, at least a partial transcript is included.

Univision Radio

http://www.univision.com/content/channel.jhtml?chid=10383&schid=10596
- Contains links to various AM and FM radio stations throughout the United States that post video reports from local Univision television stations as well as audio files.

Listening Strategies in Preparation to Write

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Introduction

In the fields of applied linguistics and second language acquisition, it is a commonly held view that successful listening in a second language (L2) requires a learner's active involvement in anticipating, perceiving, and processing both the language and the message that it encodes. Such work involves using cognitive and metacognitive strategies and skills, including critical thinking. Rather than seeing listening as one of four discrete skills (i.e., speaking, reading, writing, and listening), we have come to understand listening as a macroskill that integrates a wide range of subskills or microskills. We also realize that in the real world, speakers rarely engage this macroskill as an end in itself but rather as a means to some other goal. Furthermore, it is often the case that in achieving this goal, the macroskill of listening will be used in combination or in tandem with one or more other macroskills. Our multimedia-rich culture accentuates this point. For example, if my goal is to go to a movie with a friend, I will likely view (watch and listen to) a movie trailer on the Internet, but I will also use the macroskills of Web navigating and reading to find a Web page and select a trailer to view. After viewing I might use the macroskill of writing to compose an e-mail to describe the movie and invite my friend to join me.

The recognition that we rarely use macroskills in isolation has implications for L2 pedagogy: If our goal is to enable learners to carry out real-life activities through the language, then our lessons cannot be limited to the practice of an isolated macroskill or one of its subskills as ends in themselves. We must provide learners with opportunities for integrated skills development through carrying out authentic tasks

with the language. In this article I will focus on the integration of the macroskills of listening/viewing and writing. Specifically I will discuss preparing students to listen to (and view) authentic L2 sources as a step in the task of presentational academic writing. I will begin by reviewing the research literature on the macroskill of listening and various factors that interact with it that can affect learners' success. I will then discuss a variety of activities for developing this macroskill in the classroom. Finally, I will offer a list of resources where teachers can find authentic L2 listening texts to develop their own materials.

Listening: What Does the Research Say?

Research on L2 listening points to two main types of mental processing involved in comprehension: bottom-up and top-down. Bottom-up processes employ a learner's linguistic knowledge to decode the structure of a text to arrive at meaning. The learner builds meaning up from the structural foundation, i.e., from sounds to words to phrases to the relations between them. By contrast, top-down processes begin with the knowledge of the topic, culture, context, and the world that the learner brings to the text. As the learner reads the target text its words, phrases, and concepts are assimilated into the learner's conceptual framework. Here sounds, words, and phrases do not serve as building blocks to meaning but rather as links between knowledge bases, the text's and the learner's, and it is through making these connections that the learner is able to comprehend the meaning of the text. Exactly how these two processes interact is largely unknown, but a number of empirical studies suggest that the extent of use of one or the other process is a function of a learner's proficiency level. Learners of lower proficiency seem to rely more heavily on bottom-up processes than do those at a higher level (Conrad 1985). However, even as learners' proficiency grows, when faced with a more challenging text, they tend to rely more heavily on bottom-up processes (Bacon 1992; Wolf 1987). Based on these results, researchers believe that successful L2 listening requires the skilled interaction of both bottom-up and top-down processing mechanisms, where learners generally attend to meaning (top down) until a breakdown in understanding requires a temporary shift of attention to form (bottom up) (Nunan 1999; O'Malley et al. 1989; Vandergrift 2003).

Indeed, much of the research on L2 listening has focused precisely on the types of strategies that successful L2 listeners use in executing top-down and bottom-up processes, and how best to teach these strategies to learners to improve listening comprehension. These strategies are typically grouped into two categories: cognitive and metacognitive. Cognitive strategies refer to the mental actions students employ

to understand a text. These can be form focused, such as listening for present or past tense *(hablo* versus *habló)*, or they can be meaning focused, such as filling in information gaps in the text from context or background knowledge. Metacognitive strategies are those that manage the use of cognitive strategies, i.e., which to use, when to use them, etc. Empirical studies of L2 listening have shown that the use of both types of strategies is associated with successful comprehension, and some indicate that more skilled L2 listeners make significantly greater use of metacognitive strategies than their less skilled peers, suggesting that learners who are more consciously active in the process of managing their use of listening strategies are ultimately more successful at comprehending L2 texts (Goh 1989; O'Malley et al. 1989). The prevailing opinion is that helping learners to become skillful users of both cognitive and metacognitive strategies in the process of L2 listening will benefit their comprehension and, more importantly, will help them become more autonomous in the learning process (Nunan 1999; Vandergrift 2003). I will now describe in greater detail some of the specific strategies that have been found to be most effective in L2 listening.

Cognitive and Metacognitive Macrostrategies

There are a large number of different cognitive and metacognitive strategies that have been claimed to be effective for developing successful L2 listening comprehension. While on the whole research has not yet been able to provide consistent empirical results to prove these claims, a fair amount of research points to five such strategies that appear to hold significant potential: planning, inferencing, elaboration, self-monitoring, and self-evaluation (O'Malley et al. 1989; Vandergrift 2002, 2003; Wendon 1998).

Planning is a metacognitive macrostrategy that prepares the learner for comprehending the text as well as carrying out the language task associated with it. Executing this strategy involves developing an understanding of the type of text to be listened to, the depth and breadth of prior knowledge that might be necessary to understand it, and the type of information that the task requires to be extracted from the text. Making initial predictions about the text's meaning is an important part of planning. Vandergrift proposes that effective planning also includes the learners' making a conscious decision of how to allocate their attention while listening, in this way determining, for example, whether to attend strictly to meaning and ignore unknown forms, or perhaps to listen specifically for certain types of linguistic or informational clues.

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Self-monitoring and self-evaluation are also metacognitive macrostrategies. Through self-monitoring, learners evaluate and reevaluate their comprehension of a text during the listening process. Substrategies include checking one's comprehension against initial predictions and perhaps adjusting them, verifying and correcting one's assumptions based on understanding, and checking the consistency of one's interpretation throughout the listening process. Self-evaluation refers to learners' conscious reflection on their strategy use. Self-evaluation helps learners to become aware of the types of strategies they employ, which ones are more or less successful in any given type of listening task, how they improve in their management of strategies, and ultimately how the strategies help them more successfully comprehend the L2.

Finally, inferencing and elaboration are cognitive macrostrategies that are employed to resolve comprehension problems that arise from both explicit and implicit features of the text. Explicit features are anything in the text from a sound, word, or phrase to an idea or concept that pose an obstacle to comprehension for the learner. Implicit features are the informational gaps that represent assumed knowledge. Speakers typically address their listeners assuming a certain amount of shared knowledge and therefore do not express every detail necessary for comprehending their message. These gaps can understandably be bigger and more frequent for L2 learners when they are listening to authentic L2 texts. Through inferencing the learner uses clues found within the text to resolve comprehension difficulty (Vandergrift). For example, learners can use the context of a sentence or paragraph to guess at the meaning of an unknown word. Likewise, learners can use a speaker's tone of voice or gestures to guess at the meaning of a word or phrase, or even at the intention of a speaker. Elaboration differs from inferencing in that through elaboration, learners resolve comprehension problems by using their extra textual knowledge, that is, their own knowledge of language, culture, context, and the world. For example, an Argentinean speaking of a ski vacation in Bariloche in July may initially cause confusion for the North American Spanish learner. To resolve this confusion, the Spanish language student would have to consult her own knowledge of Argentinean geography to realize that Argentina is in the Southern Hemisphere, where it is winter in July, and furthermore, that there are mountains for skiing in Argentina.

A discussion of cognitive strategies for L2 listening, particularly for L2 listening in preparation for writing, would not be complete without a discussion of note taking. Indeed many teachers believe it to be useful, a fact that is underscored by the large number of academic Web sites dedicated to note-taking strategies. Note

taking is a cognitive macrostrategy that can facilitate online (i.e., during listening) comprehension by stimulating cognitive processes involved in encoding and transforming information, and it can help learners manage attentional resources (Dunkel 1988; Kiewra 1989). Notes themselves can provide learners with a written record of the text that can be used for recall and offline (i.e., before/after listening) processing. Empirical research on L2 note taking has proven to be a complex task and thus has not yet been able to provide consistent evidence of its effect on either comprehension or retention. It has also failed to provide evidence of the effectiveness of explicit instruction in note-taking strategies for L2 listeners. What the research does tell us, however, is that note taking is not a strategy easily transferred from the L1 to the L2 (Dunkel 1988; Kiewra 1989). The process of comprehending the L2 itself places a significant burden on the learner's cognitive resources, often making it very difficult for him or her to juggle the additional task of writing down notes of any significant quality (Chadron et al. 1994; Faraco, Barbier, and Piolat 2002). Furthermore, certain note-taking substrategies have been argued to be significantly more cognitively taxing than others. Paraphrasing, for example, requires learners to search either their L1 or L2 to reformulate the message they heard. Not only is this challenging, but taking the time to do it can distract learners from information that follows. Overall this research suggests that the more challenging a text is for the learner's proficiency level, the less likely it will be that the learner can take quality notes, and therefore the less likely it will be that these notes will facilitate comprehension or retention (Ellis 2003). At the same time, the research does not deny the potential effectiveness of note-taking strategies if both the listening text and task are controlled for the learner's proficiency level.

The inventory of L2 note-taking strategies is itself rather large. Some strategies, however, are rather similar to the metacognitive macrostrategies we have already reviewed. For example, planning can be an important part of note taking. As learners anticipate content, they can make notes of their predictions, which, in turn, may serve as an outline for subsequent online note taking. Through careful planning, learners can also try to focus on concepts that will be important to note down while listening. Note reviewing is similar to self-monitoring. After students complete their listening and note taking, they can review notes to identify gaps in the information, at which point they might apply the cognitive strategies of inferencing or elaboration to fill in missing information. Organizational strategies can, depending on the nature of the listening text, be employed online and offline. Such strategies help students to maintain the order of information noted and the relationship between bits of

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information as presented in the text. They include numbering, using arrows to connect information, visually separating different ideas, and highlighting important information with underlining, boxes, or some other mechanism. Other note-taking strategies address the efficiency of the process, i.e., to avoid writing down every word and to rather select the information most critical to the purpose for listening. Such strategies include focusing on content words (as opposed to function words like *el* or *la*), using abbreviations and symbols, and paraphrasing. Finally, L2 learners can strategize the choice of language (L1 or L2) for note taking, switching between the two as issues of efficiency would dictate. For example, some learners can more quickly and easily paraphrase certain things in their L1, whereas they might find it easier to write certain content words or examples in the L2 exactly as they hear them.

So far I have discussed important variables in L2 listening from the perspective of what the learner can bring to the task. However, it is important to recognize that several characteristics of the text and the task itself can impact a learner's success.

Other Factors That Affect Listening Comprehension

Listening texts can be classified or described in a number of ways. In the context of classroom language teaching. Perhaps one of the most common is to talk about the authenticity of a text. While definitions of the authentic criterion can vary, we generally understand it to mean listening texts that are created by native L2 speakers for the purpose of communicating to an L2-speaking audience, and not to classroom L2 learners. In reality, authenticity is a continuum. On the extremely authentic side, we would find texts like L2 movies, news, TV, conversations among two native speakers, etc. On the other extreme, we find material created solely for classroom L2 learners, much like many of the listening materials that accompany commercially produced textbooks. Somewhere in the middle, closer to the authentic side, are texts such as interviews we record with native speakers to use with our class, or an interview a student does in the L2 with a native speaker. They don't occupy a place at the authentic extreme only because if the speaker is aware that the intended audience is an L2 learner, he or she is likely to consciously or unconsciously modify his or her language to make it more comprehensible in a way he or she would likely not do when speaking to another native speaker. Many L2 teachers are reticent about using listening texts located toward the more authentic end of the continuum because of the difficulty and perhaps frustration they may hold for students. Listening materials created specifically for learners can be controlled for vocabulary and grammatical features, unfamiliar regional accents, speed, etc.; in short, they can be tailored to

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the learners' proficiency level so that learners can feel successful by comprehending them, rather than feeling overwhelmed about how much they still do not know. These materials can be useful classroom tools; however, they must not constitute the majority of the learners' L2 listening experiences. As creative as they may be, they typically lack many of the linguistic features characteristic of authentic language. If our goal is for students to comprehend authentic L2 texts, then we must engage them in practice with texts from the authentic side of the continuum. At the same time, we must structure this practice so that learners can feel successful at it and lose their fear of approaching authentic L2 listening situations.

Authentic texts differ with respect to their genre, and research suggests that some genres present the learner with more challenges than others: Dialogues can be easier to understand than monologues (Shohamy and Inbar 1991); narrative monologues that relate events in a chronological sequence appear to be easier for learners than those that present events out of sequence (Brown 1995); and narrative monologues can be easier to understand than expository ones, particularly those that are originally written to be read, such as news broadcasts (Shohamy and Inbar 1991). In the multimedia age, we can also distinguish texts that are accompanied by visual support, such as speakers' gestures, subtitles, or images. Research indicates that not just any visual will enhance listening comprehension; in fact, the "talking head" visual typical of news broadcasts does little to facilitate learners' comprehension of the news being related (Brosius 1991; Gunter 1980). Visual clues must enhance the oral text by providing redundancy or elaboration of the information in order to be helpful. Other important features of the text are, of course, the nature of the language it presents (grammatical constructions, level of vocabulary, standard versus regional language, etc.), the accent of the speakers and the learners' familiarity with the accent, and the speed with which the language is spoken. Unfortunately, there is no clear hierarchy of difficulty to guide language teachers in their selection of texts; rather, the difficulty level of any given text will result from a combination of all of these factors, and ultimately how they interact with the learner's proficiency level as well as the characteristics of the task.

The task refers to what it is the learners will have to do with the listening text. Perhaps the most common type of listening task employed in language classrooms are those that require learners to listen and then do something with the information without any opportunity to interact to resolve difficulty in understanding. However, there are other possibilities, and a great deal of research suggests that when learners have the opportunity to interact with a speaker, or even other listeners, to clarify

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understanding before having to demonstrate comprehension, they are generally more successful (Gass 2003; Pica 2005; Pica et al. 1987). A final distinction can be made between skill-building tasks and authentic tasks. Skill-building tasks are those that focus on specific macro or microskills and strategies in the listening process. Examples of skill-building tasks include having learners listen to a text to identify markers of past or present tense, or to practice certain note-taking strategies. Authentic tasks have a real-world orientation and require learners to carry out listening tasks similar or identical to those they will carry out in real life. One of the tasks that classroom L2 learners most certainly need to carry out in the L2 is that of presentational writing, and so a perfect example of an authentic listening task is asking students to listen to several texts and gather information from them to write a report. It is important to emphasize that both skill-building, and authentic tasks are needed to help learners develop their L2 listening comprehension, and the classroom should provide both with the ultimate goal of learners being able to independently carry out authentic listening tasks outside of the classroom.

From Research to the Classroom

The previous discussion holds many important implications for teachers wanting to help learners develop L2 listening skills in preparation for academic presentational writing. The most fundamental is that listening development materials must go far beyond the listen-and-answer-the-questions paradigm that predominates in most commercially produced textbooks. Teachers need to explicitly teach students about L2 listening strategies, and then create activities that promote the practice of active listening through conscious strategy use and experimentation, self-management, and self-evaluation. In creating these materials teachers must be acutely aware both of their students' developing proficiency and the features of the text and task that may challenge their learners' level; activities must be tailored according to their students' needs. Students must be provided with multiple opportunities to practice a variety of different strategies over a range of different authentic text types, and teachers' assessment of L2 listening must include formative assessment of skill and strategy development (i.e., multiple opportunities to practice, get feedback on progress, and apply feedback) as well as summative assessment of learners' ability to carry out the tasks. Of course, many of these features can and should be incorporated into a chain of activities associated with the same listening text.

I will now present examples of skill-building and authentic tasks targeted at strategy development and discuss the features of each. The first is a skill-building task

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that targets a bottom-up strategy for comprehending authentic texts. The text is one in which a native Spanish speaker describes preparations that she normally makes for a hosting a party. The vocabulary and grammar of the text should not present a great challenge to the intermediate learner. Most of the vocabulary is limited to names of food items, and of the few verbs used, the majority are the infinitive and present tense of high frequency verbs like *poder, ir,* etc. Furthermore, the speaker explicitly sequences the discourse with markers such as *lo primero que vamos a hacer, por ultimo,* etc. What is challenging about this text is the speaker's pronunciation: She aspirates her *s* at the end of syllables and words, and deletes her *d* when it occurs between vowels, such as in *ensalada* and *pescado*. These features are typical of millions of Spanish speakers around the world, including Spain, and are therefore found in many types of authentic texts. However, they are rarely if ever explicitly taught to students and thus create an obstacle to their comprehending what, in this case, would otherwise be a fairly easy text.

In my own experience I have found that explicitly teaching students to recognize these features helps them understand not only the particular target text, but others in which the feature is present as well. Before listening to the text, students should be given a brief lesson on this feature of native Spanish pronunciation. Examples can be modeled from other texts or by the teacher herself. After this, students are asked to listen to the text and complete the activity displayed in Activity 1. Students will listen to the text three times. The first time they will simply try to hear the words in the list. After this step they can interact with a partner to compare lists and practice the pronunciation. They then listen a second time and try to identify any words they missed the first time. It is important to note that not all of the words in which the pronunciation features occur are on the list, thereby allowing students to apply what they have learned about this pronunciation feature to identify the remaining words in the text that feature this pronunciation. After completing this activity, students can continue on to work with the text's meaning content. This activity should be followed up in a subsequent class by another with a text presenting similar pronunciation features. The follow-up activity can incorporate the metacognitive macrostrategy of planning by providing students with the topic of the text and telling them that the speaker will demonstrate the same pronunciation feature. Students can then be asked to brainstorm and predict some of the vocabulary words they might hear, and then consciously practice the way in which the words will likely be pronounced.

Learning can be measured by repeating the same type of activity as the first (Activity 1) and checking progress between the two. This type of activity can be

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applied to teaching students to listen to other pronunciation features, as well as to other grammatical or lexical features whose comprehension can present a significant challenge for the learner.

ACTIVITY 1

Preparativos para la fiesta
1.Escucha una primera vez y pon una marca al lado de cada una de las palabras que escuchas:

____ tendríamos	____ les
____ asistir	____ pescado
____ invitados	____ ensalada
____ más o menos	____ helado

2. Compara tu lista con un(a) compañero(a) y luego comenta la pronunciación que escuchaste para cada una de las palabras que marcaste.

3. Escucha otra vez y pon una marca al lado de cualquier otra palabra de la lista que escuches esta vez.

4. Escucha una tercera vez y trata de identificar otras tres palabras que demuestran la pronunciación que estudiamos.

_____   _____   _____

Clearly, however, the bulk of our listening activities must move beyond this microstrategy to the teaching and practice of top-down, cognitive, and metacognitive macrostrategies. The following, adapted from Vandergrift (2003), provides a model. The target text is a news broadcast on the topic of immigration. Note that this particular text works best when learners are studying or have studied immigration or topics related to it. In this way the vocabulary of the text would be more accessible.

The first thing to be noticed about the activity is that it explicitly calls to the learners' attention the fact that they are using strategies to aid in their comprehension of the text. To implement the activity, the instructor asks the students to think about the topic and explicitly write out (in the table provided) predictions about content, including vocabulary items they might hear. The activity proceeds to a first listening/viewing, where students are asked to explicitly note (in the table) which of their predictions turned out to be correct. After listening/viewing once, learners are then asked to interact with a partner to compare predictions and comprehension outcomes. This part of the activity allows learners to negotiate the meaning of the text, as well as to fill in information gaps by elaboration (by using their prior knowledge about immigration) and inferencing (by recalling the text and visuals to check for consistency of comprehension). This step also serves to encourage self-monitoring of comprehension.

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After Step 6, the teacher can facilitate a class discussion about the content of the report. Students can share their ideas and the teacher can confirm the students' comprehension of the text. Critical to this conversation, however, is a discussion of the strategies that each student used to comprehend the text, and how well he or she believe each worked to facilitate comprehension. Finally, students are asked to complete the table with some reflections on the effectiveness of their strategy use and what strategies they might try to employ in the future.

Activity 2

Marcha a favor de los inmigrantes

Vas a ver un informe sobre el tema de la inmigración y una marcha que se llevó a cabo en Irving, Texas.

Estrategias: Planes y predicciones

1. En la casilla *a*, escribe tus predicciones sobre el tipo de información que esperas escuchar. Escribe al menos tres cosas específicas.
2. Ahora escribe en la misma casilla *a* una lista de algunas de las palabras y/o frases que crees que vas a escuchar en el informe. Escribe al menos 5.
3. Ahora vas a ver el informe una vez. Trata de no preocuparte por comprender cada palabra. Mientras escuchas, pon una marca al lado de las palabras e ideas de tu lista (casilla *a*) si las escuchas. En la casilla *b,* apunta otras palabras e ideas que comprendes.

a. Primeras predicciones	b. Primera vez	c. Segundas predicciones	d. Segunda vez	e. Para mejorar

Estrategias: Modificar predicciones

4. Trabaja con un(a) compañero(a) y compara tus predicciones con las suyas. Hagan lo siguiente:
   a. Comenten lo que comprendieron del informe.
   b. Escriban una breve lista de la información que los dos comprendieron.
      i.
      ii.
   c. Escriban una lista de los desacuerdos que tienen entre ustedes y de lo que no comprenden todavía del informe

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            i.

           ii.

    d. Piensen en el tema, las imágenes y lo que los dos saben del tema de la inmigración. ¿Cómo puede ayudarles a resolver los desacuerdos y comprender mejor el informe?

    e. Escriban nuevas predicciones en la casilla *c*

    f. Identifiquen las partes del informe a las que tienen que prestar atención especial la segunda vez que escuchen.

5. Escucha el texto una segunda vez. Marca en la casilla *c* las predicciones que puedas confirmar y apunta en la casilla *d* todas las cosas nuevas que comprendas.

6. Después de escuchar la segunda vez, escribe un bosquejo del informe. Menciona los temas y por debajo algunos detalles que apoyan esos temas.

Estrategias: Reflexión

7. Reflexiona sobre el proceso de comprensión y las estrategias que usaste para comprender el informe. Mira las casillas y piensa que lo que pudiste comprender en cada etapa. ¿Te ayudar a comprender el informe tus predicciones? ¿Que aprendiste en la discusión sobre las estrategias de comprensión? Apunta en la casilla d algunas estrategias que vas a usar en la próxima actividad de comprensión auditiva.

Note that Activity 2 incorporates note-taking strategies into its steps. In Steps 1 and 2 learners plan for what they will hear, and they create a written guide for their first listening/viewing, which should reduce some of the difficulty of online note taking, which takes place during Step 3. Step 4 teaches additional offline note-taking strategies, such as self-monitoring, elaboration, and inferencing. The self-monitoring is the checking of the notes against initial predictions as well as for internal consistency, while the elaboration and inferencing is the writing down of the missing information. Finally, students are asked to again plan for listening/viewing by creating an outline to support online note taking.

Activity 2 also demonstrates a flexible model for both formative and summative assessment. As a formative assessment tool, teachers should repeat this activity with a variety of texts over a period of time. After each activity instructors collect the table and outlines to check for how well learners are making predictions and modifying them, and how these correlate with their final outline of the text. Comments and

feedback should be given each time. Learners keep these materials in a portfolio, and after a period of time both students and the instructor refer back to them to assess progress. A summative assessment could be made at the end of a term by evaluating progress across the range of activities completed, or instructors could use this same activity but omit the discussion of text content and strategies, and then assess comprehension based on the final outline provided. It is important to note that Activity 2 can be modified in a number of ways to meet the needs of different groups of students as they encounter more, or less difficult texts and as they progress through different proficiency levels. With more difficult texts, teachers can allow for a third listening/viewing opportunity and also for more peer interaction and negotiation. For example, learners can be paired up to collaboratively complete both Steps 5 and 6. In addition, teachers can stop the video halfway through a listening/viewing and ask students to confirm and/or modify their predictions up to that point, further highlighting self-monitoring strategies. When it becomes appropriate, the teacher can begin to push learners toward more independent listening by gradually reducing the listening/viewing opportunities and peer negotiation steps.

Let's now consider how to move from these skill-building tasks to the task of consulting aural and audiovisual texts as input for presentational writing. Activity 3 represents a typical academic writing task that learners might have to carry out in a Spanish class.

Activity 3

La contribución de los latinos a los Estados Unidos:

Vas a escuchar/ver tres textos sobre diferentes personas y grupos latinos que se han destacado en nuestra sociedad. Luego, vas a usar lo que aprendes para escribir un ensayo sobre el impacto que ya han tenido y que van a tener los latinos en los Estados Unidos.

Textos:

1) Despierta América conversación sobre 7 jóvenes destacados;
2) documental sobre Franklin Chang Díaz;
3) Reportaje sobre la población hispana en Dallas, Texas.

We will presume that the task ties in with a topic students have been studying and that they will have been prepared for it in terms of the linguistic and cultural knowledge required to carry it out.[8] Since this task involves three different listening/

8. I assume, for example, that if a text presents pronunciation features that can be particularly challenging for listeners, pretask, skill building activities such as that modeled in Activity 1 would have already been covered.

viewing texts, the activity sequence of planning and monitoring described in Activity 2 should be repeated for each text. During each planning stage, students should be encouraged to think about the writing goal and pay particular attention to the types of ideas and supporting details they will need to get from each text. Teaching can further support this process by brainstorming with students what they know about the genre each text represents, and how this might impact the ways in which the information will be presented, as well as any potential difficulties the text might present for the learners. For example, in preparation for viewing/listening to the *Despierta América* text, teachers might explain to learners that it comes from a television morning show. They would then ask learners what they know about these kinds of shows, such as how many speakers might be presenting information, whether there might be live interviews, whether there will be images that provide contextual clues to the text's message, etc. Because learners will be incorporating information from each text into their writing, students should be advised to keep orderly notes with the names of each video/listening text marked on the top of each page.

Following the planning, listening/viewing sessions, and the subsequent opportunities for monitoring comprehension and revising notes, Step 6 of Activity 2 can be replaced with a final note-reviewing phase. At this time, students write a brief summary of the text based on their notes and what they recall from their listening sessions. This cycle is repeated for each text until all the texts have been viewed, at which point a final review session is held in which learners try to identify the connections between the information presented in the different texts to arrive at some preliminary conclusions for writing.

As was the case in Activity 2, any of the steps can be modified for the students' level and experience with this type of task. For example, the first times that learners engage in this type of task the teacher can provide a skeleton outline, which lists the major points made in the text with space underneath for students to fill in the details that exemplify or support that point. Alternatively, after the final note-reviewing phase described above, the teacher can present students with model notes, which students compare against their own to identify differences in the type of information noted. A class discussion can follow on strategies for how to improve the accuracy of the information noted down. As learners demonstrate more ability with this type of task, the supporting activities can be further modified to push students to greater autonomy. One way of doing this would be to give students a writing task and ask them to find two to three listening/viewing sources with which they will research the topic. Class or small group discussion in the planning phase would then focus on the

types of texts for which students should search to find reliable sources of information. In this final section, I will briefly discuss sources of authentic L2 listening texts.

Resources for Authentic Texts

Modern technology provides us access to a variety of sources of authentic Spanish listening/viewing texts for the classroom, and of course, the Internet is one of the largest. Through the Internet, we can view movie trailers, listen to podcasts, watch Spanish speakers' home movies, view interviews and news broadcasts, and even watch and purchase television shows in Spanish. Many of the Web sites that house this content offer search engines for their databases to facilitate finding material on a specific topic. YouTube, Yahoo/Telemundo, Univision, and Apple iTunes are all good examples.

The Internet is not the only source of material, however. Digital television recorders make it possible to record anything on television, and if one subscribes to a Spanish satellite package, the possibilities are only limited by the fair use policies that govern the recording and showing of the material. Finally, we must recognize that we do not teach a foreign language. Spanish is alive and well and spoken by close to 30 million people in our country alone. Finding listening material in Spanish is as easy as engaging a Spanish speaker in the community in a conversation. Quality recordings can easily be made today on digital video recorders or iPods and then brought to class both by the students and the teacher. The possibilities are vast, and our classroom listening activities should seek to cover the range of texts that learners are likely to encounter outside of the classroom.

Conclusion

The second language researcher, David Nunan, has described L2 listening as the "Cinderella skill," highlighting the fact that it has received far less attention in second language research than has speaking or writing. It is perhaps also fair to say that listening skill development receives unequal treatment in Spanish textbooks as well. Many of the commercially produced Spanish textbooks fail to provide the type of L2 listening development that research suggests is necessary. While some fall short in the way of explicit strategy training, others fail to provide the range of authentic texts necessary to prepare students to be truly successful outside of the classroom. It is incumbent on teachers, therefore, to create materials to support their students'

learning. The research reviewed and the models and suggestions presented provide a starting point for teachers to experiment with a range of different types of activities.

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