

1st + 2nd yr Span
(College) in California

from EM 10 May 06

0438-1

TABLE 1
Students' Reported Evaluation and Selection of LC Strategies

Area	Strong Response 60-100%	Moderate Response 30-60%	Weak Response 0-30%
EFFECTIVENESS (1) What makes a good listener?	Understands gist (90%) Word recognition (88%) Vocabulary (83%) Uses background knowledge (80%) Focuses on details (65%) Pronunciation (65%)	Guesses at meaning of word (50%)	
EFFECTIVENESS (2) What strategies do students report themselves using?	Understands gist (79%) Uses background knowledge (66%)	Recognizes words (50%) Focuses on detail (40%) Mentally sounds out word or phrase (39%)	Focuses on grammatical structures (14%)
CONFIDENCE How do students evaluate their ability to comprehend a text?	Knows if comprehension is occurring (90%) Uses background knowledge (70%)	Relates new info to old info in text (42%) Recognizes difference between main and supporting ideas (45%)	Anticipates, guesses, or infers what comes next (16%)
DIFFICULTY What makes a LC task difficult?	Combination of words into phrases (78%)	Recognizing words (52%) Recognizing grammatical structures (50%) Text type (46%) Understanding the gist (38%) Using background knowledge (50%)	
REPAIR What repair strategies do students report using?	Continues listening actively for clarification (84%) Uses next segment to understand previous one (83%) Guesses at meaning of word or phrase (77%)	Immediately recovers lost concentration (62%) Listens passively (62%)	Gives up listening entirely (11%)

All of the subjects seemed to know what makes a good listener, but they differed in the evaluation of their own strategy use. This kind of information is important for the classroom because when the learners are aware of what is needed to learn effectively, they are more likely to engage the skills necessary to perform a task. However, if learners are not aware of their own limitations as a learner or of the difficulty of the task at hand, then taking preventative measures to anticipate or recover from failed comprehension can hardly be expected (Baker & Brown, 1984). For example, although half of the subjects recognized the grammatical structures as an element of difficulty, only a few of them reported focusing on grammatical structures during the LC process. A challenge facing the teacher of today is to help the learner close the gap between recognizing elements of difficulty

and effectively engaging the appropriate strategies to overcome those elements.

The area of *confidence*, which was also addressed by the first research question, included six statements that reported the learners' evaluation of their ability to understand the spoken FL. The purpose was to provide a measure of the degree of confidence the listener has in the FL. As indicated in Table 1, most of the subjects reported knowing when they understood something and when they did not (90%). These numbers would seem to indicate that, from a global perspective, the subjects in this study were confident listeners, although their self-evaluations could reflect an unrealistically high level of confidence.

Further investigation of the specific questions revealed that the second-semester students expressed the greatest lack of confidence.

TABLE 2
Reported Use of Individual Repair and Effectiveness Strategies by Semester

		Repair Strategies		
		strongly agree/agree	neutral	disagree
When listening to Spanish, if I don't understand something,				
1 I keep on listening actively and hope for clarification further on.				
		strongly agree/agree	neutral	disagree
1st semester		77%	11%	11%
2nd semester		91%	7%	2%
3rd/4th semesters		78%	13%	9%
2 I guess what the word or phrase might mean based on the context.				
		strongly agree/agree	neutral	disagree
1st semester		68%	21%	11%
2nd semester		83%	15%	3%
3rd/4th semester		75%	17%	8%
3 I listen closely to the next segment to see if it provides additional information I can use to understand what I missed.				
		strongly agree/agree	neutral	disagree
1st semester		75%	14%	11%
2nd semester		89%	8%	2%
3rd/4th semesters		83%	17%	0%
4 I find myself thinking about the segment and passively listening.				
		strongly agree/agree	neutral	disagree
1st semester		54%	32%	14%
2nd semester		51%	29%	20%
3rd/4th semester		46%	32%	22%
5 I lose my immediate train of concentration, but try to recover my concentration right away.				
		strongly agree/agree	neutral	disagree
1st semester		65%	14%	21%
2nd semester		53%	36%	11%
3rd/4th semesters		78%	9%	13%
6 I give up trying to comprehend the passage.				
		strongly agree/agree	neutral	disagree
1st semester		0%	21%	68%
2nd semester		11%	26%	63%
3rd/4th semesters		13%	35%	52%
7. If I don't understand what someone says to me in Spanish, I ask them to repeat what they said.				
		strongly agree/agree	neutral	disagree
1st semester		73%	25%	3%
2nd semester		84%	7%	9%
3rd/4th semesters		87%	4%	9%