



An Evaluation of Computer Assisted Instruction in ESL

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In Fall 2000, the Gavilan ESL department introduced computer assisted instruction in the form of the English Language Learning and Instruction System (ELLIS) by Cali. Inc. This software supplements instruction and is intended to increase success and retention. An initial search of the ERIC database did not immediately reveal an evaluation of this software at other colleges. A further literature review may reveal such studies.

Success and retention rates from Fall 1998 and Fall 1999 combined were compared to rates in Fall of 2000 using a 2-proportion Z test with a one-tailed hypothesis. Only in ESL 555 did we find a significant increase in success. No class showed a significant increase in retention. Success and retention declined in some classes but not significantly if one used a 2-tailed hypothesis. ESL 561 was not offered in Fall 200 and so could not be included in the comparison. Data for Fall 2001 is not yet available.

A limitation results from students not being randomly assigned to conditions. Examining demographic characteristics of GPA, educational level, age, gender, and ethnicity revealed the groups were roughly equivalent for these variables strengthening the case for their comparability.

	Fall 1998 and Fall 1999			Fall 2000			Success		Retention	
	Success	Retention	N	Success	Retention	N	z	p	z	p
ESL510A	65%	83%	92	54%	78%	68	1.38	0.08	0.74	0.23
ESL510B	51%	78%	87	57%	86%	37	0.63	0.26	1.07	0.14
ESL521	67%	79%	63	71%	90%	31	0.42	0.34	1.33	0.09
ESL531	63%	88%	48	52%	83%	23	0.83	0.20	0.55	0.29
ESL541	79%	92%	39	63%	78%	27	1.48	0.07	1.69	0.05
ESL553	51%	81%	47	70%	90%	20	1.43	0.08	0.93	0.18
ESL555	43%	77%	47	72%	72%	18	2.14	0.02	0.37	0.36
ESL561	63%	63%	16	na	na	0	na	na	na	na