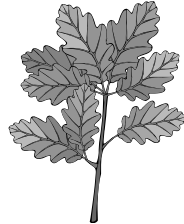


GAVILAN COLLEGE

Initial Validation Report For The Gavilan English As A Second Language Objective Test And Oral Interview Performance Assessment



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Introduction

Gavilan Community College currently uses the CELSA instrument along with multiple measures such as amount of prior English instruction to place students into appropriate English as a Second Language (ESL) classes. Gavilan ESL faculty felt that the range of skills tested by the CELSA did not match the skill range of classes offered at the college. To improve assessment accuracy, the faculty are developing an objective test (the Gavilan ESL test or GESL) and a performance assessment (the Oral Interview) that would focus on more beginning level skills than the CELSA addresses. The intent of the ESL faculty is to gain initial approval of the GESL and Oral Interview and incorporate them into the placement process along with the CELSA. The student would begin with the Oral Interview with lower scoring students then taking the GESL and higher scoring students taking the CELSA. After the scoring of the objective test, the interviewer (an ESL faculty member) would determine a final placement based on the Oral Interview score, the objective test score, and additional personal factors obtained via the interview process.

This report provides preliminary evidence of validity, reliability, and freedom from bias and outlines plans to track the appropriateness of judgmentally set cut scores and to test for disproportionate impacts. The report is organized by criterion and each component of the assessment is addressed for each criterion as appropriate. CELSA is an approved second party test that will be discussed when necessary but the focus of the evidence will be on the GESL, a locally developed objective test, and the Oral Interview, a locally developed performance assessment.

Background on Gavilan ESL curriculum

Gavilan College has a range of ESL classes that focus on writing/reading, listening, and speaking. Beginning level classes integrate these skill areas while higher level classes focus on one of these skills and are intended to be taken as a trio (although not necessarily simultaneously). Table 1

shows the Gavilan ESL curriculum with classes grouped by faculty determined skill level. These skill levels are used in selecting or developing assessment instruments and setting cut scores. The skill range covered by the curriculum makes it difficult for any single test to adequately differentiate between skill levels and has led to the objective of creating an assessment instrument that can differentiate within the beginning skill levels.

Table 1. Gavilan ESL curriculum (abridged for clarity).

Level	Class
Low Beginning*	ESL 501 Survival ESL I ESL 502 Survival ESL II ESL 503 Survival ESL III ESL 510A Basic ESL ESL 510B Basic ESL
High Beginning	ESL 521 Basic Listening and Speaking ESL 522 Fundamentals of Reading ESL 523 Fundamentals of Writing and Structure
Low Intermediate	ESL 531 Intermediate Listening and Speaking ESL 532 Reading and Vocabulary Development ESL 533 Development of Composition and Structure
High Intermediate	ESL 541 Intermediate Listening and Speaking ESL 542 Reading and Vocabulary Development ESL 543 Development of Composition and Structure ESL 546 Introduction to Computers for ESL Students
Advanced	ESL 552 College ESL Reading ESL 553 College ESL Composition ESL 555 Grammar Review ESL 556 Information Competency for ESL Students ESL 561 Communication Skills for College ESL 563 Composition and Reading

* The 501-502-503 sequence is equivalent to the 510A-510B sequence.

Overview of the GESL and Oral Interview

The GESL test is a timed 40 minute, 51 item objective test with a cover page containing instructions and three example problems. This test is intended to test basic academic English skills such as vocabulary, verb tense and conjugation, and word order. Test administration procedures

require a trained administrator in a standardized group format with accommodations available as necessary. Electronic scoring is currently being developed and will be available if the GESL gains initial approval.

The Oral Interview is a performance assessment that consists of ten questions each of which is scored with a rubric on a four point scale from zero to three. The interview is designed to test listening and speaking skills and to gather personal data for use as “multiple measures”. Full time ESL faculty will conduct the interviews one-on-one with students after a norming session to standardize scoring. Copies of the GESL test and Oral Interview forms accompany this report. The Oral Interview has a Form A and B that contain the same questions in slightly different order and are considered equivalent.

Validity and Fairness

Content Validity

A previously conducted content review of the CELSA and background questions that were used as a multiple measure helped identify areas of concern in that test in relation to the offered curriculum. ESL faculty interpreted the results to indicate that the CELSA focuses on what Gavilan defines as the High Beginning and Low Intermediate levels while having relatively less emphasis on Low Beginning, High Intermediate, and Advanced levels. Concern was greater about the Low Beginning Level as many placements are in that range while most students enter the High Intermediate and Advanced levels by moving through the curriculum.

Three ESL faculty conducted a content review following the development of test items for the GESL and the Oral Interview (Table 2). Faculty members were satisfied that the combination of the GESL and Oral Interview covered the desired skill areas sufficiently for the intended ESL levels. Further the faculty were validated in their impression that an Oral Interview performance assessment tested important language skills not addressed by an objective test.

Table 2. GESL and Oral Interview content review.

Level	Skills	Subskills	GESL Questions		Oral Interview Questions	
			Average Count	% of test	Average Count	% of test
ESL 510A/501/502						
	Respond to oral cues		0	0%	1	10%
	Respond to written cues		1	2%	0	0%
	Greetings and basic phrases		1	2%	0	0%
	Provide personal information		3	6%	1	10%
	Pronunciation		0	0%	1	10%
	Grammar		0	0%	1	10%
		Be verb	3	6%	0	0%
		Demonstrative Pronouns	2	4%	0	0%
		Descriptive Adjectives	1	2%	0	0%
		Frequency adverbs	1	2%	0	0%
		Has/Have	5	10%	0	0%
		Subject Pronouns	3	6%	0	0%
		Possessive Adjectives	2	4%	0	0%
		Prepositions	4	8%	0	0%
		Present progressive tense	6	12%	0	0%
		Simple present tense	11	22%	1	10%
		Singular and Plural Nouns	2	4%	0	0%
		Subj./pronoun/verb agreement	2	4%	0	0%
	Basic Vocabulary/Spelling		0	0%	0	0%
		Actions	3	6%	1	10%
		Articles	2	4%	0	0%
		Body/health	1	2%	0	0%
		School	1	2%	1	10%
		Clothing	3	6%	0	0%
		Occupations	1	2%	0	0%
		Family	1	2%	1	10%
		Shopping	0	0%	0	0%
		Transportation/Directions	1	2%	0	0%
ESL 510B/502/503						
	Respond to oral cues		0	0%	1	10%
	Respond to written cues		1	2%	0	0%
	Respond to and use greetings and basic phrases (employment, recreation, etc.)		0	0%	0	0%
	Provide personal information		0	0%	0	0%
	Pronunciation		0	0%	0	0%
	Grammar		0	0%	0	0%
		Aff/Neg/Ques/Sentence	12	24%	0	0%

Level	Skills	Subskills	GESL Questions		Oral Interview Questions	
			Average Count	% of test	Average Count	% of test
		Patterns				
		Future tense	2	4%	0	0%
		Infinitives	2	4%	0	0%
		Object Pronouns	1	2%	0	0%
		Past Tense: be, reg/irreg verbs	10	20%	1	10%
		Modal "Can"	4	8%	0	0%
		Count/Noncount Nouns	0	0%	0	0%
		Comparative Adjectives	1	2%	0	0%
		Imperatives	1	2%	0	0%
	Basic Vocabulary/Spelling		0	0%	0	0%
		Housing	0	0%	0	0%
		Neighborhood - DMV, Post Office	0	0%	0	0%
		Travel	0	0%	0	0%
		Employment	3	6%	0	0%
		Food	0	0%	0	0%
ESL 521, 522, 523						
	Vocabulary and Idioms		1	2%	0	0%
	Speak clearly to be understood by native speaker		1	2%	0	0%
	Can Discuss basic themes		0	0%	0	0%
	Read silently for main idea		0	0%	0	0%
	Punctuation		0	0%	0	0%
	Grammar		0	0%	0	0%
		Simple and Compound Sentences	0	0%	0	0%
		Simple Time Clauses	0	0%	0	0%
		Past Progressive Tense	0	0%	0	0%
		Who, Whom, Whose	0	0%	0	0%

Test Bias

A bias survey of the Gavilan ESL assessment was conducted in ESL 553, Advanced ESL Composition I, during Spring 2004. Students reviewed the 51 test items and 3 example questions of the GESL objective test and the 10 Oral Interview questions and were asked to indicate if they felt any of the items were biased against them or offensive to them. The demographics of participating

students are shown in the tables below. These students were largely representative of students who would interact with the GESL and Oral Interview for assessment.

Table 3. Ethnicity of students participating in bias survey.

Ethnicity	Count
Latino	19
Asian	3
African-American	0
Filipino	0
White, non-Hispanic	0
Other	1
Refused	1
Total	24

Table 4. Gender of students participating in bias survey.

Gender	Count
Female	18
Male	4
Refused	2
Total	24

Table 5. Disability status of students participating in bias survey.

Disability	Count
No	21
Yes	1
Refused	2
Total	24

Table 6. Age of students participating in bias survey.

Minimum	Median	Maximum
19	26	42

Overall, student comments about test items concerned clarity and providing personal information. There was no indication of concerns with respect to personal, cultural, religious, or lifestyle bias. Specific results for each component are discussed below.

GESL Bias Results

Of the 54 total items (3 examples and 51 test items) 17 or about 30% received at least one comment. Some of the comments do not address bias but rather address test clarity. Other comments indicate that students may have been unclear about what was being asked by the test. For example, item 36 was identified as biased as it appeared to be requesting personal information. The actual task expected in the question is to select the grammatically correct word to complete a sentence and does not actually request private information. This exemplifies what seems to be the main thrust of concern for students: the revelation of personal information. As the objective test does not actually require the disclosure of personal data, there does not appear to be evidence that any of the test items are biased. However, there were some good suggestions for improving item clarity such as the image presented in example I, which should be reproduced in color only.

Oral Interview Bias Results

Six of the ten Oral Interview questions received at least one comment with respect to bias. As with the objective survey, comments centered around potential discomfort with providing personal information in response to questions such as “what is your social security number” and “tell me about your family.” It is felt that these concerns are mitigated by being asked in the context of the assessment/orientation/registration confine where personal information is guaranteed to be held in confidence and at least some of which is necessary for enrollment processing. In addition, students are instructed that the main point of the questions is to determine their listening and speaking skills and that they are not required to give sensitive information. Finally, some of the questions such as “how many years did you go to school in your country” and “how many years did you study English” are important profiling questions to provide information for placement in addition to oral interview and objective test scores.

Cut Scores

A committee of four current full time ESL faculty met to establish initial cut scores for the GESL and Oral Interview. Based upon a review of the skills required to succeed in each class level, the faculty reviewed the GESL and Oral Interview items and determined how well students of various skill levels would perform on each item. From that information, they determined the likely score range for students of each skill level. If initial approval is given, further validation of the appropriateness of the judgmentally set cut scores will be conducted by obtaining criterion and/or consequential validity data.

Table 7. Initial cut scores for Oral Interview.

Score	Percent	Level	Objective Test to be given to determine class placement
0-13	0-43	Low Beginning	GESL
14-17	47-57	High Beginning	GESL
18-22	60-73	Low Intermediate	CELSA
23-26	77-87	High Intermediate	CELSA
27-30	90-100	Advanced	CELSA

Table 8. Initial cut scores for the GESL.

Score	Percent	Level	Class
0-13	0-25	Low Beginning	501/510A
14-22	27-43	Low Beginning	502A/510A
23-27	45-53	Low Beginning	502B/510B
28-37	55-73	Low Beginning	503/510B
38-51	75-100	High Beginning	520

Reliability and Errors of Measurement

The reliability of the GESL objective test was calculated from 77 tests experimentally administered Fall 2003 to prospective ESL students. The split halves approach gave a reliability of 0.93 and Cronhach's alpha was 0.92 indicating the test has high reliability. The standard error for

the GESL objective test appeared to be reasonable within placement levels to support the claim that the test is stable and reliable as seen in Table 9 and Table 10.

Reliability for the Oral Interview will be provided by a norming session where raters review an audio taped interview and score according to a rubric. Raters would discuss the scoring and then review a second taped interview so that all raters agree upon the proper scoring criteria. All raters would be current ESL faculty. Data that could be used to calculate an interrater reliability coefficient has not been collected but would become a part of the norming session to help ensure its efficacy.

Table 9. Overall descriptive statistics of the GESL test.

Measure	Value
N	77
Minimum	1
Maximum	46
Mean	17.06
Std. Error	1.16
Std. Deviation	10.22
Skewness	0.91
Kurtosis	0.52

Table 10. Standard error of the GESL overall and within placement level.

Score	Level	Standard Error of Mean	Mean	N
0-13	501/510A	0.56	8.92	37
14-22	502/510A	0.64	18.57	21
23-27	502/510B	0.55	24.88	8
28-37	503/510B	1.30	30.83	6
38-51	520	1.38	42.00	5
Total		1.16	17.06	77

Testing Special Groups

The college is prepared to provide alternative forms of all of our assessment instruments as necessary and appropriate to accommodate students with disabilities. Gavilan has a dedicated lab with specialized staff and equipment to assist visually and hearing impaired students, appropriate furniture for mobility impaired students, and extended time opportunities for verified learning disabled students.

Disproportionate Impacts

Reliable demographic data was available for 52 of the 77 prospective students who experimentally took the GESL. Of the 52, 98% were Hispanic and 2% Asian making it difficult to detect disproportionate impacts by ethnicity without a larger sample. Also, none of the test takers claimed an identified disability. However, preliminary analysis the relationship of GESL placement by gender and age was possible. Of the 51 with known genders, 75% were female and 25% male with no significant differences in placement level with the GESL by gender (Chi-square (4) = 3.82, $p = 0.43$). Age also did not appear related to GESL level (Spearman's rho = 0.091, $p = 0.52$). The data suggest that at least for gender and age, no disproportionate impacts are apparent due to the GESL.

Data on student demographics and placements are routinely collected and continuously evaluated to detect and attempt to correct disproportionate impacts. If the GESL and Oral Interview gain initial approval, placements will be examined by demographic group and if differential placement is detected, appropriate corrective action will be taken.