

Checklist for Evaluating Educational Software Programs

To help you determine how well the *Essential Learning Systems* program addresses your educational needs, CEI included the following “Checklist for Evaluating Educational Software Programs.” We adapted this checklist from an article by Dr. Beatrice Babbitt, Associate Professor of Special Education at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

	ELS	Other	Other
1. The program is in alignment with the district’s curriculum objectives. CEI can provide information about how <i>ELS</i> correlates to the district’s curriculum objectives for English Language Arts.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. The program adheres to the principles and logic of scientifically based reading research. The <i>ELS</i> program addresses each of the strategies documented in the NRP’s findings on scientifically based reading research.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. The program includes school site support. In addition to toll-free customer service, technical and educational support, CEI provides clients on-site support through visits with an Educational Consultant, as well as customized staff in-services and development presentations.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. The program provides ways of monitoring student performance. CEI gives each lab three evaluation instruments — the <i>ELS Placement</i> , which determines the appropriate starting lesson; the <i>Learning Efficiency Test-II (LET-II)</i> , which assesses memory efficiency; and the <i>Diagnostic Screening Test: Reading (DST:R)</i> , which labs administer twice a year to measure the reading comprehension increases of <i>ELS</i> students.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. The software is modifiable. Facilitators can change the flash speed, the program pulse, several presentation and response options, and the level and lesson numbers to accommodate the needs of different students in the classroom.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. The less clutter on the screen, the better. Developers designed simple screens for <i>ELS</i> , so students are less likely to become distracted or overwhelmed by the stimuli.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. The software provides helpful feedback. Each time students enter an answer, they hear one of several encouraging responses, such as “Perfect,” “Good Answer,” or “Almost. Let’s try again.”	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	ELS	Other	Other
8. Procedures match those being taught in school. <i>ELS</i> follows proven instructional strategies to help students improve oral language, phonemic awareness, phonics skills, print awareness, alphabetic principles, decoding, fluency, writing, spelling, vocabulary, and comprehension. Additionally, the program’s technology means teachers spend less time on direct, whole-class instruction and more time with individual students.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. The software has small increments between levels. One of <i>ELS</i> ’ strengths is that it continually reviews previously mastered material by combining it with newly learned material. The program also emphasizes mastery learning by requiring students to reach 100% proficiency of a specific skill before introducing a new skill.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. The software limits the number of wrong answers for a single problem. In <i>SHARE</i> , the student has four chances to respond correctly. After the first two mistakes, the computer voice encourages the student by saying “Close” or “Almost” and asking the student to try again. If a third or fourth attempt is necessary, the program provides additional visual or auditory cues to help the student.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. The software offers good recordkeeping capabilities. The <i>CEI Learning Manager</i> provides several printed forms and reports to facilitate recordkeeping and track each student’s progress. Additionally, lesson printouts show which words the student worked on, the number of attempts on each word, and the time spent on each activity.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. The software includes built-in instructional aids. Computerized instructional aids, such as illustrations, the repeat key, and the SHIFT key icon add to the students’ success on <i>ELS</i> . Additionally, the program includes worksheets, puzzles, and other comprehension activities to reinforce what the students learn on the program.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. The software simulates real-life solutions. In addition to the <i>ELS</i> software, <i>CEI</i> provides <i>Quick Tales</i> and <i>eQuick Tales</i> and <i>CEI Journal</i> software to ensure students carry over what they learn on the program. These activities require that students use their own experiences to write about <i>ELS</i> -related topics.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. The software is a learning tool, not the total solution! <i>ELS</i> combines computer time with a variety of comprehension activities to provide a well-rounded reading program.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>