

Blended Learning for Emergent Bilingual Students:

An Action Research Plan

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Emergent Bilingual (EB) learners need to show growth in their English proficiency every year along with growth in their learning. My Innovation Plan focuses on utilizing Blended Learning with Sheltered Instructional strategies to achieve this growth (Horn et al., 2014; Tucker et al., 2016; Vogt, 2016). Recent data from schools across the State of Texas, as well as data in my district, has shown that the Language Proficiency Domain of Speaking is an area of low growth for EB learners with the new computerized assessment system. Educators using Blended Learning instruction need to make sure that the instructional format of lesson activities is effective for increasing Speaking proficiency, and this can be achieved using my Action Research Plan (Mertler, 2022).

Fundamental Research Question

My fundamental research question is: how much do Blended Learning lessons (in any content area) that require learners to submit a spoken response following a specific academic protocol effect growth in the Language Proficiency Domain of Speaking for EB learners to prepare them for the state's TELPAS assessment? As an instructional coach of educators, I know that these professionals are constantly looking at instructional lessons and strategies to improve the learning for all of their learners. If the results from this research improve the English proficiency of Speaking with the target population of EB learners, this instructional method may correlate with improvement in the English grammar and speaking ability of all learners participating in a Blended Learning environment.

Summary of the Literature Review

My Literature review focuses on the educators of EB learners increasing these learners' English language proficiency in the domains of Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing by creating a shift in the learning environment through Blended Learning that leverages technology resources to give these learners choice, ownership, and voice in their learning (Harapnuik et al., 2018; Horn et al., 2014; Tucker et al., 2016). Additionally, my Literature Review narrows the focus on the benefits of Blended Learning for EB learners by highlighting how the research supports focused instruction on the proficiency area of Speaking to improve an EB learner's speaking ability (Ebrianti, 2018; Martirosyan et al., 2015; Rausch, 2015). It also discusses how Action Research can determine specific ways that Blended Learning can be utilized to provide differentiated instruction for these learners to promote growth in their speaking abilities (Mertler, 2022).

Study Information

For this study, there will be a pre-test and a post-test using released TELPAS testing questions in the Speaking domain on the grade level of the chosen student population (see Appendix A). In between the pre and post-testing, specific instructional activities created across content areas will be assigned that require EB learners to submit a recorded spoken response following a specific academic protocol in order to prepare them for the state's TELPAS assessment in the Language Proficiency Domain of Speaking (Appendix B). These recorded assignments for EB students will allow them to listen to their response and edit them just like they can on the state test. This capability will also allow the students to have the opportunity to think about how understandable their response is and vary the speaking pattern for a next or

future recording. Prior to the study, I will also go over last year's TELPAS Speaking Domain score with each of the EB students participating in the study to set a growth goal since Reflection and Goal setting are a part of our campus culture in Blended Learning.

Research Design

My research design is a Mixed Methods design requiring Qualitative and Quantitative data. I chose this design because I need the Qualitative data from educators in the work to gauge the quality and rigor of the lessons. I also need the Quantitative data based on student results to determine if the desired outcome of increased English-speaking proficiency is viable (Mertler, 2022).

I will design a survey for educators with EB learners to provide Qualitative data to see if the lesson activities created are of the quality and rigor needed to produce the desired growth in the proficiency domain of Speaking for their learners. To measure the educator's response, this survey will have questions with Likert scale ratings for each response in order to gauge the educator's thoughts on the quality and rigor of the assignments (see Appendix C).

I will use the TELPAS 4-point scoring rubric for the Speaking proficiency domain to provide Quantitative data from the student responses with each Speaking exercise. This rubric will be utilized to assess each student's response on the pre and post-tests in our district electronic testing system along with the lesson activities in our Learning Management System (see Appendix D; Texas Education Agency, 2023).

Data Collection and Analysis

Responses to the educator survey will be collected through a form that can be designed in either Google or Microsoft (see Appendix C). The data from these forms can be downloaded into an Excel spreadsheet for analysis.

Results will be analyzed to see if educators are in agreement with the rigor and design of the lessons matching up with the requirements of TELPAS based on the 4-point scoring rubric (see Appendix D; Texas Education Agency, 2023).

To collect the students' scores based on the TELPAS 4-point rubric for the Speaking proficiency domain, each student's score will be recorded in the district Learning Management System, and these scores will be pulled into an Excel document to compare the data over time during the 2nd nine weeks of school before the actual statewide TELPAS testing at the end of February (see Appendix D; Texas Education Agency, 2023).

These score results along with the score results from the pre-and post-test listed in an additional Excel document will be analyzed to see whether there is positive, flat-lined, or negative growth in the Speaking proficiency domain for EB Students. The timeline for my Action Research Plan is as follows:

- Implementation – October 2023
- Collect & analyze the data – October through November 2023
- Develop the action plan – mid-November 2023
- Share and communicate the results – December 2, 2023
- Reflect on the process – December 7, 2023

Sharing and Communicating Results

Our campus and district professional learning environment consists of a data-driven Professional Learning Community (PLC) culture that responds to the educational needs of students based on data and not the perception of the individual educators.

As stated in Collecting and Analyzing section, the Quantitative results will be in an Excel document with the TELPAS based rubric score of each students' response from their pre-test and post-test to share within a Professional Learning Community (PLC) of instructional coaches and the educators on the study's grade level. A collection of the individual student rubric scores from this study's various instructional activities will be in another spreadsheet to share with the PLC, too. These results will have my initial analysis that can be dissected and redetermined by the PLC.

The Qualitative data of educator responses will be shared in an Excel document to the same PLC of instructional coaches and educators on the study's grade level. The Qualitative data can be utilized to norm the instructional activities and the scoring of these activities using the TELPAS 4-point rubric as a grade level collective of educators. These results will have my initial analysis that can be dissected and redetermined by the PLC.

All of these spreadsheets with Quantitative and Qualitative results and final analysis from the PLC will be shared with the principal, district coordinator, and district EB Coaches since each will have an interest in the outcome of this study in order to share its results with their colleagues and faculties.

Final Reflection

After synthesizing and sharing the data, I will reflect with the educators participating in the study in order to look at either continuing the instructional practice or look at ways to revamp the instructional practice to make it more effective for another study (Mertler, 2022).

I will also reflect with the EB students in the study since Reflection and Goal setting is a part of our campus culture to show each of them their results. This also creates engagement in the Blended Learning environment with the EB learner (Harapnuik et al., 2018; Horn, 2014).

Finally, I will reflect with my principal, district coordinator, and district EB coaches to get their “feedforward” in regard to the instructional practice of the study to see if it can be replicated on additional campuses with EB populations.

Since research supports the premise that speaking influences writing, the work designed and vetted through this Action Research Plan could end up affecting the English proficiency of Writing for EB Learners, too, along with writing proficiency of all learners in the Blended Learning environment participating in the same instructional activities (Ebrianti, 2018; Martirosyan et al., 2015; Rausch, 2015). Thus, there is another component to be addressed by a future Action Research Plan.

References

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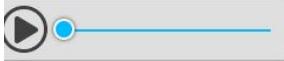
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Appendix A - Sample Pre and Post Test Questions

Look at the picture and read the directions below. When you are ready to speak, tell as much as you can.

- Explain what the boys were probably doing earlier and what probably happened.
- Describe what the boys look like now and how you think they feel.
- Tell what you think the boys will do next and why you think that.



GUEST, GUEST |

Read the directions below. When you are ready to speak, tell as much as you can.

Your class has two choices for a school project. The first choice is to clean up the trash, leaves, and branches around the playground and school garden. The second choice is to sort all the school's recycling into different containers for paper, plastic, and metal.

- First say which project you would like to do and explain why.
- Then describe what you and your class would need to do to complete that project.

Appendix B - Sample Speaking Assignment in Canvas LMS

Educator View

JAMES H ROSS EL-Year-202...

ELL Monitoring-Deschner > Assignments
> Speaking Assignment in Science for Un...

63 Students

Speaking Assignment in Science for Unit 1 - Lesson on Mixtures and Solutions

Published Edit ...

Home Announcements Modules Pages Assignments Discussions Quizzes Grades Files Collaborations Outcomes People Rubrics Syllabus Settings

Points 4
Submitting a media recording

Due For Available from Until

- Everyone - -

TELPAS 4 Point Rubric

Criteria	Ratings				Pts
Description of criterion	4 pts 1 point	4 pts 2 points	4 pts 3 points	4 pts 4 points	4 pts

Total Points: 4

Student View

JAMES H ROSS EL-Year-202...

Speaking Assignment in Science for Unit 1 - Lesson on Mixtures and Solutions 4 Possible Points

Home Announcements Modules

Attempt 1 In Progress NEXT UP: Submit Assignment Add Comment

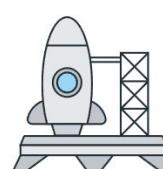
Unlimited Attempts Allowed

Details

Describe how a mixture is different than a solution and give an example of each.

- Remember to speak in complete sentences.
- You can use your scratch paper to prepare your response.

> View Rubric

 or 

Previous Submit Assignment

Appendix C - Educator Survey

Survey of Speaking Assignments

Educator Feedback

adeschnertxva@gmail.com [Switch account](#)



Not shared

* Indicates required question

How rigorous are the pre and post test questions? *

1 2 3 4

Not Rigorous

Very Rigorous

How rigorous is the Science Question for Unit 1? *

1 2 3 4

Not Rigorous

Very Rigorous

How aligned to the TEKS is the Science Question for Unit 1? *

1 2 3 4

Not Aligned

Very Aligned

What is the ease of using the TELPAS rubric for scoring? *

1 2 3 4

Not easily used

Very easily used

Do you have any suggestions for making this study more effective for the
Speaking proficiency of EB students? *

Appendix D - TELPAS 4-Point Scoring Rubric for 2023



Four-Point Speaking Rubric

As part of the TELPAS listening and speaking assessment, rubrics were developed to determine the score points that should be ascribed to a student's response based on their performance on each speaking test item. The rubrics demonstrate the number of score points that a student can achieve based on their performance on each speaking test item. Two different rubrics, a two-point rubric and a four-point rubric, are used to score different types of speaking items on the TELPAS listening and speaking assessment. Both rubrics are derived from the TELPAS proficiency level descriptors (PLDs). The rubrics demonstrate how a student will be assessed for speaking; however, the rubrics should not replace the Texas English Language Proficiency Standards (ELPS) or PLDs and should not be used in isolation.

	(1) A response at score point 1 may	(2) A response at score point 2 may	(3) A response at score point 3 may	(4) A response at score point 4 may
Completeness of Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> be silent and not attempt to address the task attempt to address the task, but may be limited to simple, high-frequency words and phrases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> address the task in a limited way by communicating simple, original ideas, using sentences and occasional phrases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> address the task somewhat successfully by generally communicating comfortably on common social and grade-appropriate academic topics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> address the task completely by communicating, with or without elaboration, on a variety of social and grade-appropriate academic topics
Syntax/Sentence Structure, Grammar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> consist of single words, short phrases and/or occasional short sentences seem memorized, formulaic and/or highly practiced include many grammar features of another language that inhibit communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> contain mostly simple sentences in the present tense – simple English language structures include grammar errors that limit communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> generally include the correct verb tense for the task, but have some errors, especially when using irregular or complex tenses demonstrate overall familiarity using basic grammar features and may include some complex grammatical structures include grammar errors when using less common language structures, which interfere somewhat with communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> generally include complex sentences and grammar structures nearly comparable to native English-speaking peers include grammar errors which rarely interfere with communication
Vocabulary/Word Choice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> be repetitive and not demonstrate an ability to use words to make an original message 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> rely mostly on high-frequency or basic vocabulary, but still convey an original message 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> include common abstract and academic vocabulary words include some details on familiar topics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> feature vocabulary at a level nearly comparable to their native English-speaking peers

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	(1) A response at score point 1 may	(2) A response at score point 2 may	(3) A response at score point 3 may	(4) A response at score point 4 may
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> be mostly limited to simple, high-frequency words and phrases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> rarely include details because of the student's limited vocabulary 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> include idioms or colloquialisms used by native English-speaking peers include abstract and academic vocabulary with minor, infrequent errors; word choice may occasionally still be awkward or imprecise
Pronunciation and Fluency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> include frequent and long pauses that may indicate that the student is struggling to communicate and/or has given up include pronunciation that is extremely difficult to understand 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> include pauses to search for words include some pronunciation errors that limit understanding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> include brief pauses when searching for words or attempting to restate or clarify include pronunciation errors but generally still be understandable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> include few brief pauses include few pronunciation errors; these errors rarely interfere with understanding
Use of L1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> be entirely or mostly in another language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> include some words in another language 		

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