Blended Learning in Kindergarten: An Action Research Plan

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This research topic has a significant and relevant meaning in my current position and many other educators. The education system is in a state where it is believed that kindergarten students are best taught through worksheets. “The truth is worksheets are a very one-dimensional way to learn, but we are not raising one-dimensional kids” (Busy Toddler, 2018). Instead, a blended learning approach, specifically using station rotations, will provide students with a wholesome learning environment. Not only will this approach improve student engagement, thus academics, but it will also allow students to work on their social-emotional needs that are equally as important for young learners. Although this issue could be relevant for any grade level, this action research will explicitly focus on kindergarten. Correctly implementing blended learning station rotations will provide students with an authentic learning environment with genuine collaboration with their peers and fewer distractions at the teacher’s small group station. Thus, a more effective and engaged classroom with successful wholesome students.

Fundamental Research Question

Blended learning is not a matter of meshing a few good things that work and miraculously thinking change will happen. Instead, using the station rotation model, will create a classroom where one station is individualized learning with online software that personalizes instruction, another station is the teacher’s small group to focus on specific needs, and the last station includes collaborative activities with opportunities to work together and receive peer feedback (Hattie, 2007; Harapnuik, 2020). This type of learning stems from the fundamental

parts of human nature. Harapnuik asks, “What if we focused on helping all learners learn how to learn? What if we focused on helping all learners continue to be the autodidacts they actually were when they were young children?” (Harapnuik, 2020, 17:18 - 17:35 min). Blended learning station rotations will allow young learners to have this kind of learning. This action research plan will focus on **how blended learning station rotations will increase overall student engagement and achievement in kindergarten compared to worksheets.** Therefore, this paper will communicate my fundamental research question, discuss information directly related to my study, and provide a timeline for implementation, data collection, communication of results, and reflection. In addition, what perceptions kindergarten students have on this type of student-let classroom will also be explored.

Study Information

This study aims to determine the relationship between blended learning and student engagement in a kindergarten classroom. Data will be collected, and students will be observed during a vital part of any kindergarten classroom’s day, small group station time. Engagement during this time of day is crucial because the teacher can hone in on specific skills students need to succeed in a small group. The problem arises when the teacher focuses on behavior and redirection of other students who are not engaged in their independent learning stations. The teacher will use the blended learning station rotation model, where one station will be students using an individual technology device. Another station will contain a worksheet that the students are asked to complete independently, and the teacher’s small group will be the final station. The teacher will use the observation tally chart and compare the number of times she had to redirect students in the technology station to the number of times redirection was needed while

completing the worksheet. Data collection will occur through observation and will be recorded by the teacher. Due to the challenges in measuring engagement with test scores or grades, using this mixed methods approach will provide a combination of both qualitative and quantitative measurements to gather the appropriate data. This section will discuss the research design chosen for the study, the research method and type of research selected, and the type of data collected regarding this study.

Research Design

This action research study will use a mixed-method design. A quantitative approach will be used for the first research question, engagement during blended learning station rotations. An observation tally chart will measure how many times the teacher had to redirect students when they were using a device or student-centered station versus how many times the teacher had to redirect students when asked to complete a worksheet. For the follow-up question regarding student perceptions, a qualitative approach will be used. Students will be interviewed, and polls will be used to collect and measure data.

Research Method

This study will utilize an observation tally chart (see Appendix A) to gather data regarding on and off-task behavior during stations. This chart will contain a location where the teacher can mark off-task behavior in each station. This will translate to a level of engagement once the data is complete. This observation will be in a period of ten to fifteen minutes while the students are in stations. The teacher will also interview the students in the kindergarten

classroom (see Appendix B for questions) and complete a whole group poll (see Appendix C) to gain insight into how the students felt about the different stations.

Data Collection and Analysis

This study will use an observation tally chart to compare quantitative data between two different station rotations in a ten to fifteen-minute time period. Both data groups will be in a blended learning kindergarten classroom during station time. The first data group will utilize the technology station, while the second will complete a worksheet independently. Students in both data groups will be given an interview at the end of their station time to determine if the technology station is more engaging than the station that contained the worksheet. All students will complete a poll when they return to whole group to determine how much they feel they were actively engaged in their appropriate station.

Literature Review Summary

Blended learning allows the student, teacher, and experiences within and outside the classroom to mold a student's education and life. Through various learning materials, explorations, and meaningful connections, students will not be limited to what the teacher thinks they may or may not know. My literature review examines a variety of articles, scholarly cites, and books on why blended learning in kindergarten is essential to a student's educational career and beyond, the importance that needs to be placed on students having a choice in their learning, and why the station rotation method is the best approach of blended learning in a kindergarten classroom. Research to signify how students would make leaps of success if blended learning was implemented in kindergarten and followed throughout their entire educational career would

be an intriguing project to continue. Regardless of age, allowing students to thrive in this learning environment will show success below a standardized test.

Other Phases of Research

After data collection is complete, the remaining portions of the research process will translate the data and further investigations. This section of my paper will discuss when the plan will be implemented, how the results will be shared, and how reflection will influence further research and classroom instruction.

Implementation Timeline

Due to the type of data that is being collected and assessed for this action research, a timeline with longevity will not be appropriate at this time. In future studies, action research for blended learning station rotation engagement leading to overall kindergarten success would be relevant to follow and assess with the data collected from this current research.

Sharing and Communicating Results

Results will be communicated and shared with Goliad Elementary principal and assistant principal, elementary campus reading specialist, as well as the kindergarten team on campus. Results will also be documented online at https://www.rodriguezb.com/ . Results will be utilized to open conversations regarding the implementation of appropriate blended learning station rotations throughout all kindergarten classrooms in the district. In the future, discussion and implementation in all grade levels across the district will be explored because of this action research and future studies.

Final Reflection

Results from this study will influence further studies on engagement leading to overall student success in kindergarten. The study will also affect other studies on the importance of student voice, choice, and ownership within a student-led classroom.

Blended learning allows kindergarteners to make meaningful connections through both their successes and failures. Adapting this learning approach, especially kindergarten, will empower students to look for answers long after their educational career. This is the importance of this action research and future studies that will follow. Although this may be one classroom in one campus, this study's potential to change the world is significant. These young learners will one day be our leaders...let's provide them an appropriate learning environment to do that.

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Appendix A

Observation Chart

**Tally off-task behavior*

Date:	*10- 15 minute time period*	Total
Technology Station		
Worksheet Station		

Appendix B

Interview Questions

1. What was the task you were asked to complete at your station?
2. Did you complete the task?
3. Did you enjoy the station you were at previously?
4. Which station is your favorite?
5. Why is that station your favorite?

Appendix C

Poll / Survey

Student Engagement

briir.29@gmail.com (not shared) Switch account

Working with others makes me feel:

- ◯ 😄
- ◯ 🙂
- ◯ 😕
- ◯ 😠

Completing a worksheet makes me feel:

- ◯ 😄
- ◯ 🙂
- ◯ 😐
- ◯ 😠

During the technology station, I feel:

- ◯ 😄
- ◯ 🙂
- ◯ 😕
- ◯ 😠

During the STEM station, I feel:

- ◯ 😄
- ◯ 🙂
- ◯ 😕
- ◯ 😠

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