

Implications of blended learning in first grade literacy: An action research plan

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## **Implications of blended learning in first grade literacy: An Action Research Plan**

The topic of my action research is the rotational blended learning model utilized in first grade during the literacy block. The purpose of this action research study is to collect local data on the implications of utilizing the rotational blended learning model during the literacy block in first grade in the Cleveland Metropolitan School District. I am hoping this research on a definitive blended learning model, chosen by most elementary schools in my district, provides data that will help gain buy in and momentum around promoting and implementing blended learning with intention and fidelity in our K-8 schools as an instructional model that has benefits to student outcomes. All students and educators in my district have one-to-one technology and we need to find ways to best utilize the tools we have.

### **Fundamental Research Question**

This study will explore how implementing the rotational model in the primary grades impacts learner outcomes. We are in year three of having one-to-one devices for our scholars and educators in my district, but we have yet to research whether or not the way we are utilizing devices in definitive ways has any implication for student outcomes. My action research plan aims to find answers to the following question: What are the implications of implementing station rotation blended learning model during the literacy block in first grade?

### **Summary of the Literature Review**

The literature on the various blended learning models and the implications of implementing blended learning as it relates to student agency and achievement left me with a

desire to do more research. I learned that the four recognized blended learning models are each unique, which gave me the opportunity to look into the literature and research that has been done around how the models have been implemented and the implications of implementing blended learning in a variety of education settings. I have read several published articles and books pertaining to blended learning, and discovering the various approaches and beginnings of research around blended learning. Although there is not much definitive research done on the rotational blended learning model in elementary schools, there is enough implication that this model can lend more time to the personalized learning experience.

After reviewing the literature and research on Blended Learning; specifically the implications of blended learning, how blended learning can promote personalized, anytime, anywhere learner agency, and opportunities for acceleration with blended learning, the benefits to improving schools through this approach outweigh the uncertainty and detriment of our traditional education system (Horn, Staker, & Christenson, 2015). With technology access for learners as the new norm, we have options for blended learning models that can personalize the learning experience, and promote learner agency of path, pace, place, and time. Improving our schools with blended learning can provide learner choice and agency, but how does this effect student achievement, especially in elementary school? If indeed providing student agency with blended learning can increase student achievement and accelerate learning for our youth, then we need to capture this through action research in very specific age groups, content areas, and defined learning models to truly know what we should promote to better our schools and the learning experience we are providing our youth.

## **Study Information**

In this action research, I plan to find out what implications implementing the rotational blended learning model in first grade during the literacy block will have on student perception of learning as well as student achievement. I will use both qualitative and quantitative research to conduct this work. I will keep student names and school names private, but will disclose the grade level and our district in my study. I plan to use two nationally normed standardized tests, NWEA Map Growth (See Appendix A) and AIMsweb (See Appendix B), to see if there are any implications on student achievement, and a technology survey (See Appendix C) to collect student perception of learning. Each with a pre and post checkpoint. I will gather this data on the testing portal reports pages, and through a digital tool (Pear Deck) for the technology learning survey. I plan to look at all sets of data, taking into consideration days students were in attendance, and compare the pre vs. post and also look at the trend data for the district on the named assessments over the past five years. For the technology survey, I will look at responses from pre vs. post, and our area superintendent will join me in this work of data analysis and future planning. I plan to discuss this in great detail with district leadership during our weekly meetings, and will collect reflection throughout the process and put together a documentary to share our journey at the end this action research.

## **Research Design and Research Methods**

I will be using a mixed method of both qualitative and quantitative research methods to ensure I have relevant action research data sources to share with stakeholders that make decisions in my district. I will collect and analyze both achievement data as well as “heartstring”

learner perception data to get a comprehensive look at the implications that blended learning has on our learners while pursuing a possible way to fully embrace my district's post-pandemic vision for learning and teaching.

*In a pursuit fo a more fair, just, and good system of education, we want each of our learners, both each of our scholars and each of their educators, to be individually and collectively presented with academically/intellectually complex tasks that are worthy of their productive struggle and allow them authentic opportunities to demonstrate their work and their learning of academic content and transferable skills in a joyful and adventurous environment. -CMSD Post-Pandemic Vision*

I will use qualitative data to capture the “heartstring” data of whether or not the learner perception of learning embraces joy, adventure and creativity. I also plan to use quantitative pre and post data collection to see if nationally normed achievement data is impacted. It is important to keep specific student, teacher, and school names anonymous, but will disclose grade level, content area, and school district in my work to define my study.

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

This action research study will collect both academic achievement data (quantitative), as collected through two nationally normed testing platforms, as well as learner perception data, collected through a technology survey (qualitative), to provide information that district decision makers value. The qualitative information will provide evidence of whether or not the rotational blended learning model, implemented during the literacy block in first grade, supports our district post pandemic vision for learning and teaching. This will be a key component to getting

buy-in from district leadership. The academic outcomes as well as the learner perception of the learning experience are both highly valued by our district leadership.

The quantitative measures will come from NWEA MAP growth benchmark testing and AIMSweb oral reading fluency benchmark and progress monitoring assessments. The NWEA MAP growth nationally normed benchmark assessment is given three times per year in the Cleveland Metropolitan School District first grade classes. This quantitative measure will provide reading achievement data from the fall as our pre assessment measure compared to the winter benchmark as the post assessment, to see if utilizing the rotational blended learning model during the literacy block in first grade has any implications on student achievement. (*See Appendix A to see NWEA reports menu*)

AIMSweb assessments will also be utilized to measure student achievement in reading. AIMSweb provides oral fluency assessments for first grade scholars to measure fluency and provides nationally normed percentiles. The AIMSweb benchmark assessments are given three times per year in first grade, and progress monitoring can be set up and given in between benchmark assessment windows for more information. I plan to use the same benchmark windows of fall for pre and winter for post to analyze any implications the rotational model may have on student achievement. (*See Appendix B for sample of AIMSweb benchmark report*)

I will also utilize a qualitative measure of a technology learning survey that will be given twice, once in the fall and once in the winter, to analyze student perception of the learning process when participating in a rotational blended learning model during the literacy block. (*See Appendix C for sample of technology learning survey*)

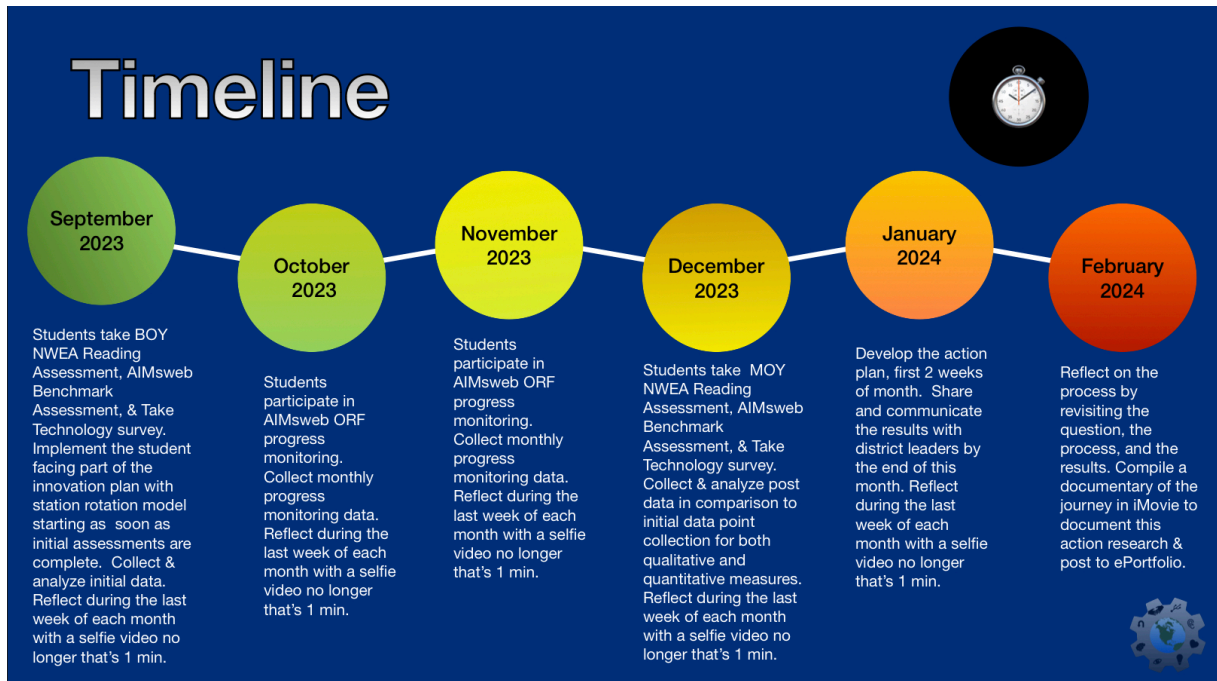
In pursuit of data that can influence educators in my district to disrupt our current educational system and intentionally use technology in the rational blended learning model to embrace student agency and personalization for accelerated learning opportunities, I plan to focus my action research on first grade literacy utilizing the station rotation model over a four month period of time to see if intentional implementation of blended learning during the literacy block in first grade has any implications on student achievement and/or student perception of the learning process with learner agency. This action research will provide specific, current, and local research data that will be shared locally with educators to create excitement and buy-in around full implementation of blended learning in the Cleveland Metropolitan School District.

### **Sharing and Communication Results**

As an administrator working with fifteen schools in my district, sharing and communicating the results of this action research with key stakeholders is vital to gain momentum on my mission to truly implement blended learning in our district elementary schools. This study values the input of scholars, classroom teachers, principals, and my network superintendent. I plan to collect pre and post assessment data of both quantitative and qualitative measures, as well as monthly progress monitoring checkpoints of one of the quantitative measures that is conducive to quick data checkpoints and capture reflection videos throughout the journey. At the conclusion of this action research, I plan to create a compelling presentation that includes infographics, comparison graphs, and a documentary video of the findings to present to central office staff, principals, and teachers that are interested in joining our pursuit with blended learning in our district. I have opportunities to share this at district leadership

meetings, principal professional learning days, and even at the school level for the fifteen schools that I serve.

**Timeline**



**May 2023-August 2023:** Begin implementation of innovation plan by onboarding educators into the innovation plan beginning phases to learn about blended learning with station rotation model.

**September 2023:** Students take BOY NWEA Map reading assessment, AIMSweb benchmark assessment, and take the technology survey to collect and analyze initial data. As soon as BOY assessments are finished, immediate implementation of the station rotation blended learning model during the literacy block will begin.

**October 2023:** Continue implementation of the rotational blended learning model during literacy block. Students participate in AIMSweb oral reading fluency progress monitoring and I will



collect and analyze monthly progress monitoring data on oral reading fluency. I will capture monthly reflection video of the process.

**November 2023:** Continue rotational blended learning model during literacy block. Students participate in AIMSweb oral reading fluency progress monitoring and I will collect and analyze monthly progress monitoring data on oral reading fluency. I will capture monthly reflection video of the process.

**December 2023:** Students take BOY NWEA Map reading assessment, AIMSweb benchmark assessment, and technology survey. Collect and analyze post data in comparison to initial data point for both qualitative and quantitative measures collaboratively with my area superintendent, participating school leadership principals, and participating first grade teachers involved in the study. I will capture monthly reflection video of the process.

**January 2024:** Develop the action plan (first 2 weeks) in collaboration with my area superintendent, participating school leadership principals, and participating first grade teachers involved in the study. I will share and communicate the results with district leaders by the end of this month by creating a compelling presentation with infographics, data comparison charts, reflection video footage, and participant testimonials. I will continue to reflect during last week of month and capture on video.

**February 2024:** Reflect on the process by revisiting the question, the process, and the results. Compile a documentary of the journey in iMovie to document this action research, share with district leadership, and post to ePortfolio.

**Final Reflection**

Conducting this very specific and targeted action research at the local level of my organization will give us a look at how this specific blended learning model works or doesn't work for our young scholars during the literacy block. The implications will give our district better insight for future planning and initiatives. I am in a position to elevate innovation in my district to better the learning experience for all learners and educators, and feel it is important to intentionally collect data, research, reflect, refine, and share out to continuously nudge our district to evolve and create a more fair and just system of education for the children and families in Cleveland, Ohio.

Learning how to properly plan, execute, reflect, refine, and share out during my studies at Lamar University has empowered me to have the content knowledge as well as the field experience with local research to move the needle with substantiated support. Developing an action research plan to capture the implications of my blended learning innovation plan is a vital step to capturing relevant evidence to help tell our implementation story and document the journey. Action research is a best practice to learn what works and doesn't work at a local level so that adjustments can be made. This action research will be very closely aligned to my literature review, and I am interested to see how larger data samplings and local data samplings compare.

### References

Harapnuik, D. (2018, June 14). COVA. Retrieved April 28, 2023, from

[https://www.harapnuik.org/?page\\_id=6991](https://www.harapnuik.org/?page_id=6991)

Horn, M.B., Staker, H. (2015). *Blended: Using disruptive innovation to improve schools.*

(Jossey-Bass) (First edition). Jossey-Bass.

Mertler, C. A. (2019). *Action research improving schools and empowering educators.* SAGE.

## Appendix A: NWEA Map Growth available reports

Logged in as [redacted]  
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**GROWTH REPORTS**    **REPORTS QUEUE**

Select a report to view or request. Requested reports will appear in the Reports Queue.  
 Just finished testing? Remember: if you tested today, you can request reports tomorrow.

Filter By: [reset filters](#)    Showing All Reports at the Class Level    Sort By: Recommended

**REPORT LEVEL**

- Student-level
- Class-level
- School-level
- All

**WHAT I'M DOING**

**Student Quick Search**  
 Search Student Profile or Student Progress Report for a single student.

**NORMS AND COMPARATIVE DATA**  
 NWEA MAP Growth Normative Data  
 Overview with status and growth charts

**Comparative Data to Inform Instruction**  
 RIT comparison charts across grades, including college and career readiness benchmarks (2-page PDF)

**Norms and Research Studies**  
 Detailed research briefs and the ASG and School Norms Calculators

**COMMUNITY**  
 NWEA Connection

**Class Profile**  
 - Interact with data for an entire class  
 - View student test details to determine who needs to take, retake, or complete their test  
 - Discover insights into class performance

**Class Report**  
 - Analyze class needs by instructional area  
 - View class performance for a term, including norm status rankings

**Learning Continuum**  
 - Group students by the skills and concepts they need to develop (Class view)  
 - Use to modify instruction for individuals or groups (Class view)  
 - View skills and concepts for all RIT bands (Test view)

**Class Breakdown by RIT, Instructional Area, or Projected Proficiency**  
 - Use to group students with similar instructional readiness levels for a subject (by RIT) or for the instructional areas within a subject (by goal)  
 - View projected performance on state and college readiness assessments

## Appendix B: AIMsweb ORF student dashboard

aimsweb PLUS  
 Catherine Duplisea

Benchmark Monitor Individual Reports Group Reports Student Management Account Management

Benchmark Comparison [redacted] Grade 1, Early Literacy, Fall '22

Roster Type: School Systems  
 District: [redacted]  
 School Level: All  
 School: [redacted]  
 Grade: 1  
 Class: [redacted]  
 Battery: Early Literacy (ELB)  
 Period: Fall '22  
 Comparison: National  
 Display: Percentile

Only students with no Composite scores  
 View / Refresh

Student (576)	Alert	Assess	Early Literacy Percentile	max %ile 99	%ile	LWSF %ile	PS %ile	WRF %ile	AV %ile	GR %ile
[redacted]			[redacted]		25	74	61	26		
[redacted]			[redacted]		25	46	92	26		
[redacted]			[redacted]		28	8	35	47		
[redacted]			[redacted]		28	2	61	12		
[redacted]			[redacted]		28	39	69	41		
[redacted]			[redacted]		28	12	22	18		
[redacted]			[redacted]		28			26		
[redacted]			[redacted]		28	34	98	22		
[redacted]			[redacted]		28	57	88	41		
[redacted]			[redacted]		28	14	96	26		
[redacted]			[redacted]		30	12	54	18		
[redacted]			[redacted]		32	46	1	36		
[redacted]			[redacted]		32	12	88	41		
[redacted]			[redacted]		32	6	2	30	6	
[redacted]			[redacted]		32	6	24	26		
[redacted]			[redacted]		32	31	69	41	58	
[redacted]			[redacted]		35	20	69	36		
[redacted]			[redacted]		37	4	48	50		
[redacted]			[redacted]		37	46	88	47		
[redacted]			[redacted]		37	5	77	58		
[redacted]			[redacted]		37	77	77	36		
[redacted]			[redacted]		38	26	84	47	85	
[redacted]			[redacted]		40	4		50		
[redacted]			[redacted]		40	46	92	58		
[redacted]			[redacted]		40	74	96	26		

Legend: Percentile Bands  
 1-10th 11-25th 26-74th 75-89th 90-99th

Appendix C: Sample questions from qualitative technology survey

