# Designing a Blended Public Speaking Course Using Web 2.0 Tools

**Zailin Shah Yusoff, PhD**

**Ainol Haryati Ibrahim, PhD**

**Nik Aloesnita Nik Alwi. PhD &**
**Hafizoah Kassim, PhD**

Universiti Malaysia Pahang
Malaysia
*zailinshah@ump.edu.my*

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# TEACHING PUBLIC SPEAKING TO L2 LEARNERS

➤ One of the most often cited challenges to mastering public speaking skills is public speaking anxiety.

➤ In addition, there are claims that public speaking anxiety for L2 learners is even worse because the speeches have to be given in a second language.

➤ It is thus, suggested that L2 learners' problems in production may be eased if they are given time to plan before they begin to speak.

➤ Therefore, when teaching students oral presentations, it is important for the instructor to provide opportunities for them to practice delivering prepared, extended presentations or speeches in class.

# SKILLS PRACTICE TO REDUCE SPEAKING ANXIETY

▶ Public speaking scholars agree that skills practice is essential in reducing speech anxiety and developing public speaking skills. Practice enables individuals to identify and address speech-related problems or concerns prior to delivery.

▶ Skills practice must be realistic and authentic

▶ It should include the process of:

    1. audience analysis

    2. speech outline

    3. speech practice (with & without audience)

    4. feedback (content, language & delivery)

# CHALLENGES FOR SKILLS PRACTICE IN THE PUBLIC SPEAKING CLASSROOM

- Engaging an authentic audience

- Time-constraints especially for skills practice

- Thus, an innovative way would be to utilize available technology and web 2.0 tools are explored. Podcasts using Multiply or vodcasts using YouTube have been recommended (Ainol & Zailin, 2012, 2014).
  - They could also be effective tools for practice or rehearsal, in the public speaking classroom, providing students with the opportunities to review their speeches, and also to broadcast their speeches to a broader range of audience. Thus the speech preparation process becomes more real, in comparison to the process of preparing speeches to be delivered in the classroom, with only peers and the instructor as the "audience". In other words, podcasting enables the learners to have realistic practice sessions, as recommended by the experts.

# THIS STUDY

▶ Examines the effects of skills practice conducted in a blended learning environment to reduce students' level of public speaking anxiety and improve their public speaking performance.

▶ **Research Questions**

1. Is there a significant difference between students' level of public speaking anxiety before and after skills practice in a blended-learning environment?

2. Is there a significant difference between students' speech performance before and after skills practice in a blended-learning environment?

3. What are the students' perception of skills practice in a blended-learning environment?

# THE BLENDED LEARNING MODEL
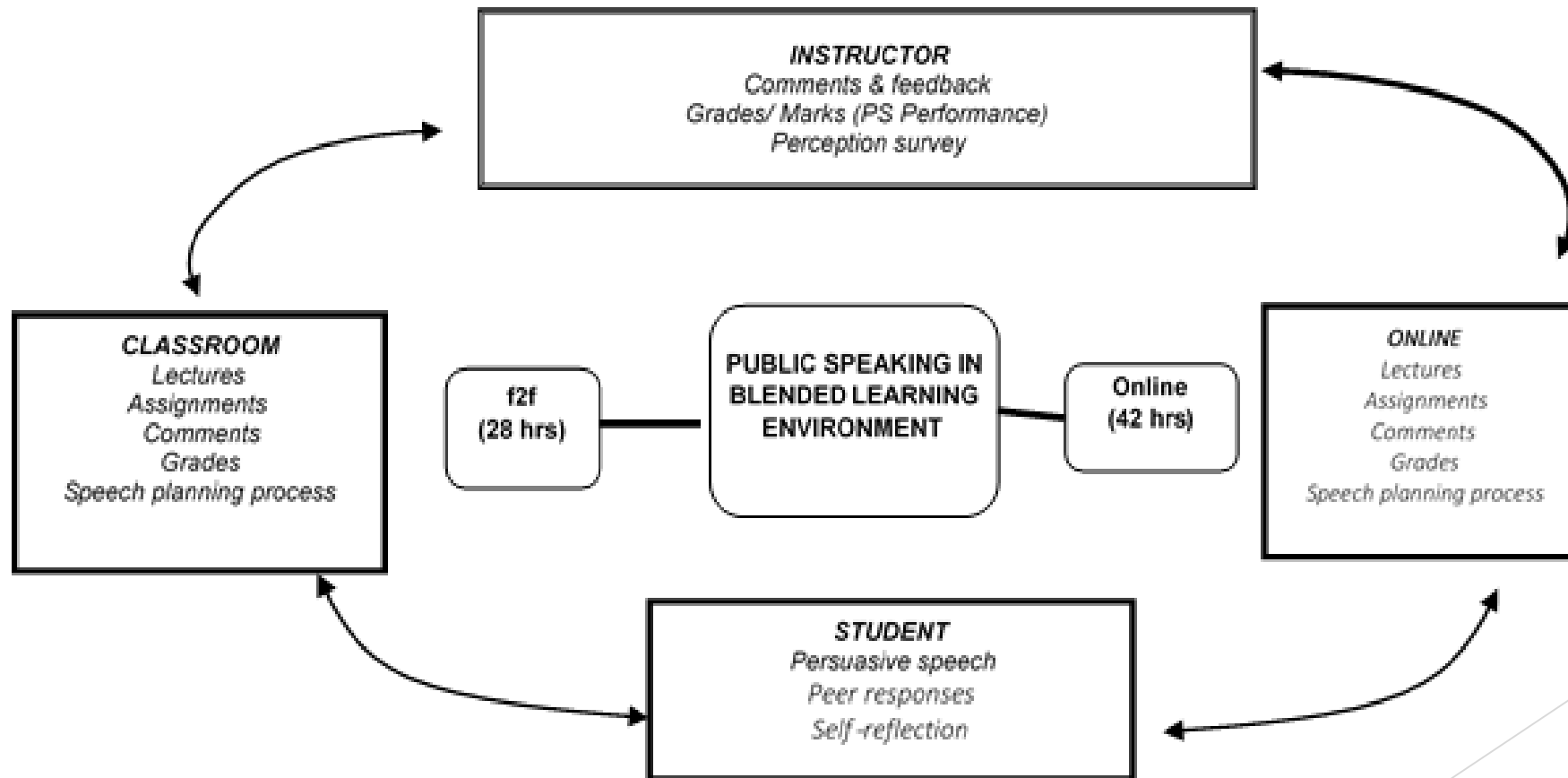
# ONLINE COMPONENT OF SKILLS PRACTICE

- Record Speech Practice
- Upload on YouTube & link to individual wikispaces
- Receive feedback from peers
- Revise speech according to feedback
- Upload again
- Receive feedback from peers & instructor
- Revise speech according to feedback
- Upload for grade

(Do for 2 Persuasive speeches)

# METHODOLOGY

| | |
|---|---|
| Research design | Exploratory, used one group pretest-posttest design. |
| Participants | **Twenty-two (22) students; 5 male and 17 female from one intact class at a university in Malaysia, participated in the study. They were enrolled in the Public Speaking course, which was an elective course at the university** |
| Data collection instruments | 1. Personal Report of Public Speaking Anxiety (PRPSA)<br>2. a validated speech performance marking scheme (CSEEF)<br>3. an adapted version of survey questionnaire by Elgort, et al. (2008) |
| Data analysis | 1. A Wilcoxon test was conducted to evaluate whether there was a reduction in the students' level of public speaking anxiety<br>2. A Wilcoxon test was conducted to evaluate whether there was an improvement in he students' public speaking performance<br>3. Frequencies & percentages were calculated to gauge perception on the blended approach and tools used |

# FINDINGS (1): Public Speaking Anxiety

| | N | Mean Rank | | Z | P |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| One group pretest-posttest | 24 | Positive Ranks<br>Negative Ranks<br>Ties<br>Total | 6<br>17<br>1<br>24 | - 2.192 | 0.028 |

The results indicated a significant difference between pre- and post-tests, where the mean rank for negative ranks was 17 and the mean rank for positive ranks was 6 (z= - 2.192, p < 0.05). Thus, it could be concluded that <span style="color:red">the anxiety level of seventeen students was reduced</span> (because their post-test was less than their pre-test), whereas six students experienced an increased level of anxiety and one student faced no change in their anxiety level at the end of the treatment.

# FINDINGS (2): Speech Performance

| | N | Mean Rank | | Z | P |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **One group pretest-posttest** | 26 | Positive Ranks 17<br>Negative Ranks 7<br>Ties 2<br>Total 26 | | – 3.426 | 0.001 |

The blended learning approach elicited a statistically significant improvement in public speaking performance of the students (Z =-3.426, p < 0.05). Seventeen students showed <span style="color:red">significant improvement in their speech performance</span>, while seven students deteriorated in their performance and one student's performance remained the same.

# FINDINGS (3): Perception of Utilizing BLE and Web 2.0 tools

| Perceptions | Percentages (%) | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | SA | A | N | D | SD |
| I like using Wikispaces for this course. | 31.8 | 63.6 | 0 | 4.5 | 0 |
| I like uploading my speech practices on YouTube | 9.1 | 31.8 | 45.5 | 4,5 | 9.1 |
| I think uploading my speech practice online helps me improve my speech performance | 4.5 | 40.9 | 40.9 | 9.1 | 4.5 |
| I feel that I had effective online interactions with the instructor in this course. | 0 | 0 | 13.6 | 68.2 | 18.2 |
| I feel that I had effective online interactions with the other students in this course. | 0 | 0 | 4.5 | 77.3 | 18.2 |
| I feel that I am in control of my learning in the course. | 0 | 9.1 | 18.2 | 63.6 | 9.1 |
| I feel that I actively participated in the course. | 0 | 0 | 31.8 | 45.5 | 22.7 |
| I feel that I took advantage of learning opportunities and resources in the course. | 0 | 0 | 9.1 | 54.5 | 36.4 |
| I feel that I developed knowledge and basic concepts about public speaking in the course. | 0 | 0 | 9.1 | 68.2 | 22.7 |
| I feel that I learned to think critically about this course. | 0 | 0 | 22.7 | 72.7 | 4.5 |
| I used rehearsal strategies such as podcasting in this course. | 0 | 18.2 | 36.4 | 45.5 | 0 |
| I am satisfied with my performance in this course. | 4.5 | 9.1 | 45.5 | 27.3 | 13.6 |

# FINDINGS (3): Summary

▶ Majority of the participants liked using Wikispaces for the course (95.4%).

▶ Some of the participants liked uploading their speeches on YouTube (40.9%), used rehearsal strategies such as podcasting (18.2%) and that they thought it helped improve their speech performance (45.4%),

▶ Other participants did not feel as positively about the effectiveness of the online component of the blended learning environment. For instance, the participants did not feel that there was an effective online interaction either with the instructor (0%) or their peers (0%).

▶ Some participants also did not feel that they: participated actively (0%), took advantage of the learning opportunities or resources (0%), and developed knowledge and basic concepts about public speaking (0%) in the course.

▶ Very few of the participants said that they had control of their learning (9.1%) or learned to think critically (0%) in the course.

▶ As a whole, only 13.6% of the participants were satisfied with their performance in the course.

▶ In summary, the participants seemed to **like the blended learning course and the online component**. However, they **were rather reluctant to engage in the public speaking tasks online and did not feel that it helped improve their speech performance**.

# DISCUSSION

▶ To a certain extent the use of BLE and web 2.0 tools was able to assist students to reduce their public speaking apprehension and indirectly helped them perform better in delivering their speeches.

▶ Nevertheless, it can be seen from both results that a small percentage of the students were not able to reduce their anxiety (Finding 1) nor improve their public speaking performance (Finding 2). Findings also indicate that students were not that optimistic about using web 2.0 tools for their course tasks and activities even though they generally liked using them.

▶ These findings raise the questions of the effectiveness in using Web 2.0 tools for students' skills practice. Furthermore, it points to the direction of the adverse effects of learning using technology although the students' performances showed significant improvements and their public speaking anxiety was significantly reduced.

▶ Thus, it may be concluded that these improvements could be the result of the face-to-face component of the blended learning course. This calls for further exploration on the actual effects of the students' positive performance.

# RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

▶ An approach that results in the reduction of public speaking anxiety and improvement in speech performance is worth exploring especially in the ESL classroom for speaking poses various challenges. It is recommended that further studies could take these recommendations into consideration:

  ▶ Include in-depth interviews

  ▶ Include Think-aloud protocols and/ or dialogue journals

  ▶ Analyze feedback provided

  ▶ Analyze revisions made

  ▶ Increase number of participants

# TERIMA KASIH



THE RESEARCH TEAM _ MALAYSIA