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LINGUA MINDS
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Implementation of Effective Strategies to Develop Oral Expression in English as a Foreign Language in Undergraduate Students

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ABSTRACT

This educational intervention addresses difficulties in oral expression among undergraduate Physical Education students at the University of Colima who are evaluated through the B1 Preliminary (PET) speaking exam. Diagnostic data collected from students and teachers revealed that anxiety, limited communicative practice, and low confidence significantly hinder oral performance. In response, a six-week intervention grounded in Communicative Language Teaching and Sociocultural Theory was designed and implemented. The intervention integrates task-based speaking activities, peer interaction, and scaffolded support aligned with the academic context of students. The project aims to enhance fluency, confidence, and communicative competence in English within a public higher education setting.

KEYWORDS: Speaking, undergraduate studets, anxiety, English

SUMMARY:

This intervention project focuses on addressing the persistent difficulties in oral expression in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) among undergraduate students in the Physical Education and Sports program at the University of Colima, Mexico. Although students are evaluated each academic term using the B1 Preliminary (PET) speaking examination, institutional evidence shows that many students struggle to meet the expected standards, particularly in terms of fluency, confidence, pronunciation, and interaction competence. These challenges are linked to limited exposure to communicative English, high levels of speaking anxiety, large mixed-ability classes, and few opportunities for meaningful oral practice.

The project followed a qualitative intervention design beginning with a diagnostic phase. Data were collected through two questionnaires administered to students and English teachers, aiming to identify perceptions of the speaking exam, readiness f students, and factors affecting oral performance. Findings highlighted psychological barriers, linguistic limitations, and instructional constraints as key elements hindering speaking proficiency.

Based on this diagnosis, it was designed and implemented a six-week instructional intervention within regular English class hours. The intervention is theoretically grounded in Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) and Sociocultural Theory (SCT), with particular emphasis on the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). It integrates task-based speaking activities such as role plays, peer interviews, storytelling, and interactive games, all contextualized to the professional reality of Physical Education students. Activities follow a structured sequence of pre-task preparation, collaborative task performance, and post-task reflection and feedback.

The intervention seeks to foster a supportive learning environment that promotes active participation, peer collaboration, and scaffolded oral practice. By situating language use in authentic, discipline-related contexts, the project aims to enhance communicative competence in students, reduce speaking anxiety, and improve their performance in formal oral assessments within public higher education.

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