

FACILITATING STUDENT WRITING PROFICIENCY USING CONTEXTUAL TEACHING AND LEARNING METHODOLOGY INCORPORATING VISUAL STIMULI

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Abstract

This study aimed to explain the implementation of Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) in teaching writing skills and explain the advantages of picture usage in teaching writing through CTL. The study employed a qualitative design with observation and interview as the data collection technique. The observation was used to investigate the implementation of CTL, while the interview was conducted to find out teachers' responses on CTL. The participant of this study was an English teacher of the tenth grade of MA Assalam in the academic year of 2020/2021.

The results showed that in implementing CTL in teaching writing, the teacher built the learners' background with the contextual phenomenon, and then the teacher had students to think contextually through the pictures. In the writing process, students attempted to connect the pictures given by the teacher with the context of their writing. The utilization of CTL supported with pictures facilitate students in learning writing, and the study pedagogically implied to be a reference for teaching writing as the students may be assisted to build ideas and pattern for writing.

Keywords: Contextual teaching and learning, writing skill, English language teaching

INTRODUCTION

Effective teaching requires educators to continuously update their knowledge of various teaching methodologies. Familiarity with diverse teaching approaches is essential for achieving educational objectives. Teaching models serve as valuable frameworks to guide both teachers and students toward academic success. A teaching model is a structured plan or pattern that aids in the facilitation of teaching and learning processes (Joyce, 1996).

One such approach is Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL), which aims to engage students actively in the learning process. CTL helps teachers relate subject matter to real-world contexts, thereby motivating students to apply their knowledge practically. This approach is particularly beneficial in addressing real-life challenges, such as improving writing skills, by making learning materials more relevant and accessible (Fadillah et al., 2017).

Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) is a pedagogical approach that emphasizes learning within real-life contexts. It aims to make education more relevant and engaging by connecting classroom lessons to students' everyday experiences. The effectiveness of CTL in assisting students to learn by bridging the gap between abstract concepts and tangible real-world applications (Nawas, 2018). Additionally, Crawford (2001) introduces the REACT strategy within CTL, encouraging students to relate, experience, apply, collaborate, and transfer knowledge contextually. The practical application of CTL in teaching writing has shown promise in improving students' understanding and engagement with the subject matter (Crawford, 2001).



Writing competence is a crucial skill that involves the ability to effectively communicate ideas through written language. It encompasses various components such as content, rhetoric, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics. Writing serves as a means of communicating complex ideas effectively, requiring proficiency in various writing stages like planning, drafting, revising, and editing (Richard and Renandya, 2002). Despite its challenges, writing offers numerous benefits, including the expression of experiences and thoughts (Yusuf et al., 2018).

In educational settings, various text types are commonly taught to develop students' writing skills. These genres include descriptive, recount, narrative, expository, explanation, procedure, and review texts, each serving different purposes. Descriptive texts, for example, aim to vividly portray a person, place, or thing, typically following a generic structure comprising identification or introduction followed by detailed descriptions. Descriptive texts play a significant role in helping students develop descriptive writing skills and evoke readers' sensory experiences.

To relate to this research, the researcher chose some scientific literature about the relevance of previous studies which report some influences on the research. attempted a study to support students' learning in writing class by addressing a problem in organizing text. The quasi-experimental design of her research, titled "The Effectiveness of Scientific Approach and Contextual Teaching and Learning Approach in Teaching Writing," targeted lower secondary school students in Yogyakarta. Indrilla's study (2018) focused on Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) and assessed participants through writing tests. The results showed that the use of CTL produced effective outcomes, with students achieving different scores. This study shares similarities with the current research proposal, which also focuses on CTL to enhance students' writing, but the current proposal plans to investigate the implementation of CTL in writing classes more deeply, particularly through interviews to understand teachers' perceptions.

Writing competence increasingly demands critical thinking, which requires intense focus. Nawas conducted a study titled "Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) Approach through REACT Strategies on Improving the Students' Critical Thinking in Writing" to explore this. The study investigated ninth graders at Madani Islamic School using an experimental design with 40 participants. The findings indicated that the CTL approach significantly improved students' writing competence. While this study is theoretically aligned with the current research proposal, which also utilizes CTL to aid student writing, the methodologies differ. Nawas (2018) employed an experimental design, whereas the current proposal will use a qualitative approach, including interviews, to gain comprehensive insights into the effectiveness of CTL.

Improving students' academic writing skills contextually is a challenging yet significant endeavor. Madjid et al. (2017) conducted a study titled "Improving Academic Writing Skills through Contextual Teaching Learning for Students of Bosowa University Makassar" in 2017. The participants were Civil Engineering students, and the results qualitatively showed that most students passed the assessment, demonstrating that CTL effectively helped learners write contextually. The current research proposal shares the focus on CTL and its design but plans to use interviews to further understand why CTL enhances students' writing abilities, addressing a gap in Madjid et al.'s research.

The use of pictures in teaching and learning can effectively meet learners' needs. Gutiérrez and colleagues (2015) explored this in their study "Using Pictures Series Technique



to Enhance Narrative Writing among Ninth Grade Students at Institution Educativa Simon Araujo." Their action research aimed to improve narrative writing for ninth graders using picture series in experimental and control classes. The findings showed that picture cards improved students' writing. This study is similar to the current proposal in its goal of enhancing students' writing through pictures, but it focuses on lower secondary school students, while the current proposal aims to develop writing skills in upper secondary school students.

Contextual pictures can significantly boost students' writing development by sparking their curiosity. Nggolaon and colleagues (2015) conducted an experimental study at Senior High School 1 at Buko to examine this. Using T-tests, they found that contextual images improved students' writing skills. Both this study and the current proposal investigate the use of picture cards in writing classes, but the current proposal employs a qualitative study, while Nggolaon's research was experimental. The proposal aims to provide a deeper understanding of the process through interviews.

Writing, considered the most challenging of the four main language skills, requires effective teaching strategies to help learners achieve their goals. Apsari's study (2017) demonstrated that picture cards supported various writing class activities, improving students' writing processes and vocabulary. This study used a descriptive qualitative design, with participants including an English instructor and seven students. The findings revealed that using picture sequences could enhance students' writing abilities. The current proposal aligns with Apsari's research (2017) in exploring picture cards to improve writing, but it differs in focusing on descriptive texts rather than recount texts.

Singh and colleagues' study (2017), "ESL Learners' Perception on the Use of Picture Series in Teaching Guided Writing," investigated how students perceive picture cards used in writing classes. An experimental design with 30 learners and interviews showed positive student perceptions. Picture series boosted students' motivation and helped them generate ideas during pre-writing, resulting in longer passages. The current proposal similarly aims to observe teaching and learning with picture media but focuses on understanding teacher perceptions through qualitative methods, offering a different perspective from Singh's research on student perceptions.

The research topic entitled "Facilitating Students' Writing Performance Through Contextual Teaching and Learning Approach with Pictures" is of paramount importance due to its relevance in addressing key challenges identified in previous studies. Indrilla's research (2018) demonstrated the effectiveness of Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) in improving writing outcomes among lower secondary school students. Similarly, Nawas' study underscored the importance of CTL in enhancing critical thinking skills, crucial for writing competence. Madjid et al.'s research (2017) highlighted the contextual effectiveness of CTL in improving academic writing skills, suggesting its potential to address writing challenges across various disciplines. Moreover, Gutiérrez and Nggolaon's studies (2015) emphasized the role of pictures in enhancing writing development, indicating the potential of visual aids to stimulate student curiosity and improve writing skills. Additionally, Apsari's research (2017) showed that picture sequences supported writing activities and vocabulary development, further emphasizing the significance of incorporating visual stimuli in writing instruction. Singh et al.'s study further reinforced the positive impact of picture series on student motivation and idea generation. Thus, the proposed research aims to build upon these findings



by investigating the combined effects of CTL and picture media on students' writing performance, thereby offering valuable insights into effective teaching strategies for enhancing writing outcomes.

In the context of writing, especially for upper secondary school students, CTL has shown promise in enhancing both creative and innovative learning. Setiawati et al. (2018) argue that CTL fosters a communicative environment where students can share their experiences and observations, thus enriching the writing class. Writing, a crucial skill for English learners, is vital not only for academic purposes but also for personal and professional communication. The significance of writing is underscored in various contexts, including religious texts like the Quran, which highlights the power of the written word in human life.

In Indonesia, English is a mandatory subject, encompassing four key skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Among these, writing is often perceived as the most challenging, requiring extensive practice and attention. The complexity of writing involves not just idea generation and organization but also the ability to translate thoughts into coherent text. Hasani (2016) notes that writing instruction must address structural, technical, and contextual aspects to be effective.

Despite these efforts, many upper secondary school students struggle with contextualizing their writing. This issue often results in poorly structured and less meaningful texts. As Madjid et al (2017) emphasize, writing should be an integrative process that combines clarity and contextual relevance. To address this, six text types are commonly taught, with descriptive texts being particularly significant. However, many students, especially English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners, face difficulties in composing descriptive texts accurately.

Teachers also encounter challenges in teaching writing effectively. As Tarigan (1990) points out, even creative teaching techniques can fall short if students are not engaged or contextually aware. Therefore, it is crucial for teachers to adopt effective strategies, such as CTL, to facilitate better understanding and application of writing skills.

Given these challenges, this research explores the potential of CTL in enhancing students' ability to write descriptive texts. CTL helps students connect their learning to real-life situations, thereby making abstract concepts more tangible. By incorporating contextual clues and media, such as pictures, CTL can significantly improve students' writing skills. Pictures serve as a simple yet effective medium to stimulate learning and facilitate the writing process, as highlighted by Sudjana (2013).

This study aims to investigate how CTL, supported by pictures, can improve students' writing skills. It seeks to provide insights into the practical application of CTL in the classroom, offering a potential solution to the challenges faced by students and teachers in writing instruction. The research addresses the implementation of CTL, its advantages, and the role of media in facilitating effective writing education. Through this study, the researcher hopes to contribute to the development of more effective teaching strategies that enhance student engagement and learning outcomes in writing.

The proposed study holds significant promise in addressing critical challenges prevalent in writing instruction, particularly among upper secondary school students. With a focus on Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL), the research endeavors to enhance students' proficiency in composing descriptive texts, a vital component of effective communication. By grounding classroom lessons within real-world contexts and incorporating media such as



pictures, the study aims to make abstract concepts more tangible and relevant, thereby fostering deeper engagement and understanding. This approach not only addresses the common struggle of students in contextualizing their writing but also provides practical solutions for teachers grappling with effective writing instruction. By offering insights into the implementation of CTL and the role of media in writing education, the research contributes to advancing educational practices and promoting better learning outcomes. Ultimately, the study seeks to empower both educators and students by providing them with tools and strategies to navigate the complexities of writing, ultimately fostering critical thinking, communication skills, and academic success.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative research design, specifically a descriptive qualitative approach, to delve into the intricacies of implementing Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) in teaching descriptive text within a writing class. Qualitative research was chosen due to its ability to capture the richness and complexity of real-life educational contexts, offering deep insights into the experiences, perceptions, and practices of teachers and students. The descriptive qualitative method was particularly suited for this investigation as it allowed for a detailed examination of the contextual nuances of CTL implementation and its impact on student learning outcomes.

The participants of this research consisted of English teachers from the tenth grade of MA ASSALAM during the academic year 2020/2021. Data collection encompassed both primary and secondary sources. Through non-participant observation sessions, the researcher systematically documented the application of CTL supported by contextual pictures in teaching descriptive text. An observation checklist was meticulously designed to capture various aspects of teaching practices, such as instructional strategies, student engagement, and classroom interactions. Additionally, interviews were conducted with the English teachers to gain deeper insights into their pedagogical approaches, challenges encountered, and perceptions regarding the effectiveness of CTL in enhancing students' descriptive writing skills.

Data analysis employed descriptive techniques to uncover the nuances of CTL implementation and evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of using pictures in teaching writing through CTL. The analysis process involved meticulously reviewing observational data and interview transcripts, identifying recurring themes, patterns, and variations in teaching practices and perceptions. Through systematic coding and thematic analysis, the researcher synthesized the findings to draw meaningful conclusions about the effectiveness of CTL in teaching descriptive text and the role of contextual pictures in fostering student engagement and improving learning outcomes.

By adopting this comprehensive methodological approach, the study aimed to provide valuable insights into effective teaching strategies for enhancing students' descriptive writing performance. Furthermore, the detailed examination of CTL implementation and its impact on student learning outcomes contributes to the existing body of knowledge on innovative pedagogical practices in language education.



FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

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The Implementation of Contextual Teaching and Learning

The acknowledgment of Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) as a pivotal strategy for enhancing English proficiency underscores its significance in this study. The researcher meticulously detailed various explanations and guidelines to monitor the implementation of CTL, particularly when integrated with visual aids to facilitate students' writing skills.

At the outset of each teaching session, the teacher's introductory remarks elicited enthusiastic responses from students, setting the stage for engagement. By linking new material to prior lessons, the teacher reinforced learning outcomes and aided in information retention among students. Central to the teaching approach was the deliberate incorporation of contextual activities, designed to stimulate active participation and comprehension. These activities aimed to provide real-world relevance, fostering an environment conducive to effective teaching and learning.



To promote interactive engagement, the teacher frequently prompted students to describe their surroundings, leveraging visual aids to enhance comprehension and participation. Observations revealed the functional effectiveness of employing pictures, facilitating students' understanding and task comprehension. Additionally, students were encouraged to explore and interpret the contextual relevance of provided images, deepening their understanding of the learning material. This iterative process of contextual exploration and interpretation formed the cornerstone of CTL implementation.

Guided by the teacher's instructions, students were tasked with contextual thinking, aligning their expressions with depicted scenes. The teacher provided illustrative samples to aid students in understanding task requirements, fostering alignment between instruction and comprehension. Subsequently, students independently organized descriptive texts based on their interpretations of provided images. Throughout this process, the teacher provided support and clarification to ensure students grasped task objectives effectively.

Upon completion of written texts, students' work underwent evaluation by the teacher, focusing on aspects such as social function, generic structure, and language features. Feedback and suggestions were provided to enhance writing skills and understanding. The culmination of each teaching session involved a reflective review, wherein teacher and students jointly assessed learning processes and outcomes. This reflective practice aimed to consolidate learning experiences and identify areas for improvement.

These procedures exemplified the application of CTL supported by visual aids to enhance students' writing competence. Subsequently, the study explored both the advantages and disadvantages of this instructional approach in teaching writing, providing a comprehensive analysis of its effectiveness in the classroom setting.

The Advantage or Disadvantage of The Implementationn of Contextual Teaching and Learning Supported with Pictures in Facilitating Students Writing

To find the advantage or disadvantage of the implementation of Contextual Teaching and Learning supported with pictures in facilitating students writing, the researcher reported the question which was five items which highlighted the employment of Contextual Teaching and Learning supported with the picture to teach writing; the participant was only one teacher who taught the English skill of writing for graders X.

At the initiation of each instructional session, the teacher's introductory discourse invariably elicited enthusiastic responses from students, thereby setting a vibrant tone for engagement. By seamlessly intertwining new concepts with previously covered material, the teacher not only solidified learning outcomes but also facilitated information retention among students.

A core tenet of the teaching methodology employed was the deliberate integration of contextual activities, strategically designed to elicit active participation and enhance comprehension. These activities were tailored to imbue real-world relevance, thereby fostering an educational environment conducive to efficacious teaching and learning. In fostering interactive engagement, the teacher routinely prompted students to articulate their surroundings, harnessing visual aids to amplify comprehension and participation. Observations underscored the functional efficacy of utilizing images, which notably facilitated students' understanding and task comprehension.

Moreover, students were actively encouraged to delve into and interpret the contextual relevance of the provided images, thereby enriching their grasp of the learning material. This



iterative process of contextual exploration and interpretation emerged as a cornerstone of CTL implementation. Under the guidance of the teacher's directives, students were tasked with contextual thinking, aligning their expressions with the depicted scenes. To scaffold understanding, the teacher furnished illustrative samples, thereby aiding students in discerning task requirements and fostering alignment between instruction and comprehension.

Subsequently, students independently crafted descriptive texts predicated on their interpretations of the provided images. Throughout this process, the teacher provided requisite support and clarification to ensure students effectively grasped task objectives. Following the completion of written texts, students' work underwent meticulous evaluation by the teacher, focusing on salient aspects such as social function, generic structure, and language features. Feedback and constructive suggestions were proffered to augment writing skills and deepen understanding.

The culmination of each instructional session entailed a reflective review, wherein both teacher and students collaboratively assessed learning processes and outcomes. This reflective practice served to consolidate learning experiences and pinpoint areas warranting improvement.

These delineated procedures underscored the implementation of CTL bolstered by visual aids to augment students' writing acumen. Consequently, the study delved into both the merits and demerits of this pedagogical approach in teaching writing, offering a comprehensive analysis of its efficacy within the classroom milieu.

"Picture can stimulate and provide the information" (Participant 1)

However, the students struggled to interpret the picture fully due to its lack of color.

"Lack of color in the picture limits a proper interpretation" (Participant 1)

In addition to the teacher's response via a structural interview, the researcher provided a number of findings. They were as follows:

Those reports were some general findings that the researcher could narrate where the response was positively given to report what and why Contextual Teaching and Learning accompanied with the picture gave any advance effect to the students to write the information clearly.

The results gleaned from the structured interview underscored the teacher's adeptness with the concept of Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL), particularly in its application to enhancing students' writing proficiency. This pedagogical approach was seen as instrumental in guiding learners to grasp the intricacies of writing, reflecting the teacher's deep understanding of its significance in language instruction.

When queried about the challenges students faced in writing prior to the implementation of CTL, the teacher highlighted vocabulary limitations and difficulties in organizing grammatical structures as primary concerns. These insights shed light on the specific areas where CTL could offer targeted support, addressing fundamental language comprehension and composition issues.

Furthermore, the interview provided insight into the teacher's perception of teaching and learning through the use of contextual materials. The teacher emphasized the importance of



providing students with real-world contexts to facilitate deeper understanding and engagement with the writing process. By grounding instruction in familiar contexts, the teacher aimed to create meaningful learning experiences that resonated with students' lived experiences.

The teacher's positive assessment of CTL's effectiveness in teaching writing was evident, citing its ability to facilitate clear text organization and comprehension. This sentiment underscored the practical benefits of integrating CTL into language instruction, aligning teaching strategies with students' backgrounds and enhancing their overall comprehension of the material.

Moreover, the interview shed light on the role of visual aids, particularly pictures, in supporting contextual writing instruction. The teacher acknowledged the value of visual stimuli in stimulating critical thinking and aiding in information organization, thereby enhancing students' writing proficiency.

However, the interview also addressed potential drawbacks associated with the use of pictures in writing instruction, such as the limitations posed by monochromatic or insufficiently detailed visuals. Despite these challenges, the teacher expressed overall agreement regarding the benefits of integrating pictures into writing instruction, particularly when accompanied by CTL principles.

In summary, the interview findings provided a comprehensive understanding of the benefits and challenges associated with CTL implementation in teaching writing. The teacher's insights offered valuable reflections on the effectiveness of this instructional approach, underscoring its importance in promoting meaningful learning outcomes in the writing classroom.

The discussion of how and why Contextual and Learning in teaching writing supported with the picture was based on the following table which each of the information came from the teacher who taught writing in tenth grade. It was as follows:

In line with question number one, the researcher could explain that the obstacle before employing Contextual Teaching and Learning were such as the students were deficiency of vocabulary knowledge to deliver numerous insights in English, and how the information was functionally structured because of grammatical structure, i.e., by the time the learners were required to demonstrate the text, they don't have any capabilities to formulate as they haven't much information how the texts were systematically organized.

Therefore, the teacher – based on question number 2 – tried to solve those obstacles by means of using an authentic teaching approach, e.g., the teacher possibly asked them to understand as well as to strengthen their background of insight in order to contextually understand the material given in the classroom. This automatically made the learners felt easily learn any substantial material especially mastering writing ability since learning how to write was how the information was composed. Consequently, the information ought to be familiarly understood among the learners.

Related to the utilization of Contextual Teaching and Learning, the information showed that its application to teaching writing ability was knowingly effective. The teacher opined such that because the service of Contextual Teaching and Learning in teaching writing enabled the learners to organize easily the written information. In addition to its advance, the implementation of Contextual Teaching and Learning encouraged them to systematically write what the learners essentially wanted to produce.



Additionally, the positive response of the idea of Contextual Teaching and Learning supported with the picture displayed that it bore abundant benefits of information which could be determined as the support for the learners to write properly.

The subsequent reason why Contextual Teaching and Learning gave the students a chance to do critically in any level of writing was that this approach guided them to familiarly understand the concept of writing competence. Thus, the good production was the result of powerful guidance of Contextual Teaching and Learning.

Then, a number of advanced advantage and disadvantage of Contextual Teaching and Learning go together with a picture to extend the students' competence of writing such as the employment of pictures in the approach of Contextual Teaching and Learning to teach writing ability that this media could give any stimulation to achieve the information whereas the teacher couldn't find any interpretation when this media was not designed colorfully. In the other words, the absence of such colors inside the picture influenced to misperception of information from the learners.

Those some experiences that could be further discussed where the researcher could generally assume that the utilization of this scientific approach enabled both teacher and learners to gain some positive achievement such the learners were simply capable of structuring the idea based on their daily background of insight while the teacher could encourage them to critically think beyond their basic information.

In how this issue was in line with the theory reviewed by the researcher, the writer might discuss that the findings reported were adequately similar to the accessible theory. According to Jack C. Richard, the application of Contextual Teaching and Learning was able to facilitate the students to act contextually in case of writing the information.

Based on the phenomenon observed in the classroom, the researcher could report that the implementation of the approach employed supported with the picture to teach writing was quite facilitative where the learners then were supportive to easily write a descriptive text. Furthermore, this realization of teaching approach accompanied by the picture was similar to the previous studies such as the following information.

The result of this report, the realization of Contextual Teaching and Learning supported with the picture was that most learners were commonly facilitated to write a descriptive text. The texts were written by the students definitely showed functional as well as meaningful since the content of the manuscript was contextually accomplished.

Similarly, the previous study reviewed by the researcher was equally comparable in scope of the result. This finding had similarity with the result of the approach employed by Nawas where this effect was significant to enhance students' writing competence as the result of the employment of Contextual Teaching and Learning. Moreover, Contextual Teaching and Learning to teach writing's competence influenced the quality of students' writing since the writers at that issue serve the media of pictures to maximum the students' product

In accordance with the implication of the Contextual Teaching and Learning for the pedagogical issue, this approach was helpful and supportive to realize the students' writing as long as the teaching approach employed by the teachers tried to engage with the students' contextual background to maximumly strength their competence to think and identify the phenomenon existed. The capability of how to write properly and contextually as the result of the empowerment of Contextual Teaching and Learning applied by the teachers accompanied by the picture.



Moreover, the teachers were advantaged within teaching or transferring the material to the students because of this approach; the teachers then effortlessly got easy to give the material since this procedure of the approach basically served contextual issue where the facilitator no need to conventionally used any classic media.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

This study delved into the practical application of Contextual Teaching and Learning (CTL) in the realm of education. It offers a comprehensive summary of the first research problem, which examined the efficacy of employing CTL methodologies in teaching writing. Students were guided to compose descriptive texts within a contextual framework, supplemented by visual aids. Despite initial challenges reported by teachers regarding students' proficiency in organizing descriptive texts, the utilization of CTL yielded notable advantages.

CTL demonstrated significant benefits among students, primarily in terms of motivation and information accuracy when prompted by visual stimuli. However, it also revealed limitations, particularly in cases where the lack of colorful images hindered comprehension.

Moreover, this research underscores the strength of CTL in enhancing writing skills, emphasizing its role in unifying textual formulations and facilitating students' understanding of text structures. It highlights the potential of integrating visual aids provided by teachers to encourage effective text organization.

Looking ahead, this academic inquiry suggests avenues for further exploration. Future studies could explore the application of CTL across diverse English language proficiency levels and skills, leveraging various media accompaniments to enhance learning outcomes. Furthermore, recognizing the efficacy of integrating appropriate media in teaching and learning processes may offer students manifold advantages, warranting continued investigation and implementation in educational contexts.

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APPENDIX

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1. Students' Task





