
RESEARCH ARTICLE

Academic Diary in the Teaching of Oral Communication in Context

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ABSTRACT

This study assessed the effectiveness of the Academic Diary in the teaching of *Oral Communication in Context*. This study is a mixed-method in which the students' pre-post test scores are the quantitative figures, while the students' experiences in their use of Academic Diary form part of the qualitative data. The pre-post test scores of the students were used to identify if the application of the Academic Diary in the teaching of *Oral Communication in Context* could possibly elevate the students' learning and comprehension. Moreover, structured questions were used during the guided interview to get the students' experiences with regard to the usability, suitability, and efficiency of the Academic Diary. Statistically, the results revealed that there is a significant difference between the pre-post test scores of the students. Based on the extracts during the guided-interview, the findings conveyed that Academic Diary is usable because it enhances learning, is suitable because it stores learned information, and is efficient because it provides learners with learning guidance. This implies that Academic Diary in the teaching of *Oral Communication in Context* is effective in enhancing students' learning and comprehension of the most essential learning competencies. Therefore, it is highly suggested that educators may use the Academic Diary to keep track of the students' actual learning status for a tailored-fit intervention.

KEYWORDS

Oral Communication in Context, Academic Diary, mixed-method, post-test performance, pre-test performance

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1. Introduction

A diary is a collection of notes containing a significant and specific encounter of a person daily. This form of writing is a place where people can honestly express their thoughts and feelings over some time without being judged and criticized. In a diary, people can write anything they wish to record, such as their observations, experiences, realizations, learnings, struggles, and many more, in an organized manner. Since a diary serves as an archive of vital information based on an individual's perspective, educators may use the material as an assessment tool to achieve the quality of learning.

Educators can use the diary as an assessment for learning to reinforce the acquired knowledge during the discussion. After the summative assessment, learners have to record their daily learning encounters on what they have thought, what they feel over a day, and what they have realized at the unit's end. On this premise, teachers can track the students' learning conditions, justify their performance, and understand the learners' learning hindrances based on their academic diary content. Subsequently, teachers can come-up with tailored-fit interventions to address the students' learning gaps and barriers individually.

Because of the diary approach, researchers such as Zhang and Zheng (2017, 114-118) and Boileau et al. (2021, 46-62) obtained factual data from their respondents and objectively obtained the result by analyzing the respondents' responses individually. Zhang and Zheng successfully identify how academic stress and leisure activities influence college students' emotional well-being, while Boileau et al. explored how optimism and pessimism related to inter-individual differences in academic satisfaction and the association between coping and academic satisfaction at both the between- and within-person levels. Ideally, a diary reveals authentic information, and it can be helpful in identifying the learners' actual learning status.

In an Oral Communication course, learners learn the essential components of communication to effectively communicate in various situations and enhance communication efficiency upon overcoming difficulties when communication breakdowns occur (Rababah, 2002). It is indeed vital that classroom instructions must be enriched to ensure that learners critically comprehend the essential components of communication and are able to use it wisely.

However, even when instruction is carefully prepared, implemented, and delivered in a way that inspires students, the learning outcomes frequently bear little or no resemblance to what was intended (Wiliam, 2011, 3-14). It is the researcher's observation too that learners are so cooperative during the discussion, and they can explain the essential components well enough, but they tend to misuse or discard some of the essential communication components during the application stage, or at worst, they totally forget the acquired knowledge.

As a result, comprehensive communication is at risk. To provide an actual remedy, the researcher decided to use the diary approach, which is a written performance, to re-check if the students' comprehension is not superficial. According to the College Composition and Communication Committee on Assessment (1995, 430-437), writing serves several purposes both within and outside the classroom, including assisting students, assigning grades, placing students in suitable classes, allowing them to leave a course or series of courses, certifying mastery, and reviewing programs.

An academic diary plays an integral part in addressing the dilemma, especially in identifying the real learning condition of the learners. Through the diary, learners write scenarios using the communication's essential components, and they can make self-improvement based on the teachers' suggestions without feeling belittled and embarrassed. Teachers can give an actual and timely correction and guidance to whatever misconceptions and difficulties the learners face in comprehending communication's essential components. Learners can retain skills and knowledge gained in both cognitive and written because an academic diary serves as the secondary storage facility of information. Unlike other assessment tools, the diary creates an environment where learners tell a story about their learning encounters in the form of writing.

Generally, the academic diary is an effective tool for teachers to re-assess if students have an in-depth comprehension of the subject matter. On the other hand, teachers can give detailed and constructive feedback that can help learners grow individually.

2. Literature Review

This study emphasized the significant contribution of Academic Diary in the teaching and learning process since there are only limited existing studies in using the material specifically as a tool to reinforce learning; the majority of the studies are more on understanding the respondents' behaviour; improving their writing, listening, and speaking skills; exploring students' learning motivation; self-regulated learning and the like. The focus area of this study which is found unique from the other documented studies are the following: first, the post-test scores of the respondents in the essential learning competencies of Oral Communication in Context subject; second, the significant difference between the pre-post test scores of the respondents; lastly, the experiences of the respondents in terms of the usability, suitability, and efficiency of the Academic Diary.

Klimova (2015) found out that diary writing is an effective tool for students to self-reflect and gather teacher feedback for learning (pp. 549-553). Klimova even concluded that writing a diary is an unquestionably helpful method for the whole learning process. However, it is not as simple as it seems since not all students are willing to share their information with their teacher, and not all students are willing to write diary entries, as the course has shown. Nevertheless, writing diaries helps the teacher get students' input about their learning constraints and difficulties and for students to learn how to learn.

Furthermore, a diary gives an in-depth understanding of the things that are still superficial. Based on the study by Peterson et al. (2015), emotions have been shown to have a growing impact on how students learn and succeed academically (pp. 82-96). However, little is known about how complex these achievement emotions (AEs) are, how they differ with the evaluation process, or how they contribute to previous academic ability and student achievement outcomes. Thus, through the longitudinal diary study, findings expand their knowledge and give them detailed data about the relationship between achievement emotion, prior academic ability and achievement, and how emotion changes over an assessment period. In addition, Dairy also helps to understand the process of self-regulated learning. In the study conducted by Schmitz et al. (2006), they used standardized diaries to gather in-real-time information from respondents to understand self-regulated learning deeply (pp.64-96). The findings show the benefits of using structured diaries to collect ecologically valid data on everyday learning.

A diary is flexible because it is not only effective in offline learning but also in online learning. Rowden Quince (2013) said that structured-diary responses revealed that students set goals for themselves that included completing course assignments and managing their time, and they used a variety of learning methods to help them achieve their objectives. Students said the system was simple, adaptable, and effective. The findings indicate that using a self-regulated learning approach to improve metacognitive understanding and self-regulated learning skills in community college online students was successful. Students' effectiveness for

academic performance in online courses was positively influenced by increased metacognitive knowledge and self-regulated learning skills using the structured diary.

To support with, Clipa et al. (2012) expressed how diaries help for metacognitive strategies development, providing a clearer understanding of students' learning needs and the importance of focusing on metacognitive competency growth during initial university training (pp. 905-909). The material enables students to comprehend how they learn; in other words, it refers to procedures that encourage students to 'think' about their 'thinking.' Through the implementation of the academic diary in teaching the essential components of communication, students have to write what they think about it and think again if what they are writing is accurate.

According to Ma (2014), a diary is also an effective tool to enhance language competence, especially in listening and speaking (pp.101-113). In her study, she considers both internal and external contexts: the author's attitudes, motives, and feelings, as well as the unfamiliar country, its history, and the author's measurable experiences with people in that culture. She considers how the internal and external environments interact to influence her learning styles and strategies. She elicited that learning by listening to lectures and actively engaging in classroom discussions are challenging tasks for this introverted, reflective, and visual learner. However, her diary reveals that she eventually handled the various facets of her overall learning style and learned to use relevant techniques to become a more involved classroom participant.

Additionally, Chairunnisa (2017) claimed that writing diary activities develop the students' skill in writing recount text. In Chairunnisa's study, he used a written test, the academic diary, to collect data. The written exam was used to identify the students' writing skills and recount text after giving the treatment. The test outcome showed that the students' score in the pre-cycle test was 59.22, the students' score in the cycle I test was 68.22, and the students' score in the cycle II test was 73.17. The test's achievement showed that the procedure was effective because the outcome of the cycle II test was higher than the cycle I test.

Similarly, Adiyati (2018) claimed that writing a diary is an effective technique for developing students' writing skills. The result of her study shows a significant improvement in the students' written performances. In the first cycle, the students' average score was 67% only, and they did not reach the 70% standard writing skill of the SMK Muhammadiyah 5 Cakru Jember, but when she used the diary in the second cycle, it appears that the student's average score in writing was 80%, there was an increase of 5% which resulted in an above standard writing skill. Diary increases the students' skills and knowledge gained. Therefore, it can be an effective tool to increase the students' knowledge about the essential components of communication and improve their communicative competence.

Moreover, Lee et al. (2019) investigated the effects of dairy on the elementary students' science learning motivation, science academic achievement, and ecological sensitivity (pp. 387-394). The study results show that writing a science diary had a meaningful effect on the students' science learning motivation, science academic achievement, and ecological sensitivity. The use of a diary brings a positive impact on the students' life. Apart from that, Engin (2011) mentioned that diary is an appropriate tool for scaffolding (pp.296-306). During the author's research into pre-service trainees' construction of teaching skills, she realized that her research diary was scaffolding her research knowledge.

Generally, the cited related studies agree that diary is an effective tool to strengthen the knowledge gained and improve the skills acquired in different contexts. However, most of the studies used the diary as an assessment of learning that only actively involves student reflection on learning and monitoring his/her progress, but not involving student progress data to help and enhance student learning and advise instructional practices. Moreover, providing differentiated guidance and student input to help them improve their learning. The main reason why the researchers decided to use a diary as an assessment for learning is to improve the students' knowledge by addressing it individually with the help of their cordial nature.

3. Methodology

This study used a mixed-method research design which analyzed quantitative data taken from the students' pre-post test scores and qualitative data drawn out from their experiences in the use of the Academic Diary. The primary data were collected from one class of Senior High School students enrolled in the Oral Communication class in one of the National High Schools in Cebu Province. These students were asked for their consent prior to their participation in the said research.

Two data collection instruments were used. The first one was a researcher-made test for the pre-post test. Since a researcher-made test is a cognitive type of examination, it is not necessary to conduct pilot testing to test its validity; thus, the researcher only consulted assessment experts to evaluate if the type of examination and its content were fit to the targeted learning competencies and students' level. The second type of instrument is an interview guide used to extract the experiences of the students in their

use of the Academic Diary. In the treatment of the data section, statistical tests, specifically the t-test, the mean and standard deviation were used.

The ethical aspect of the research was strictly adhered to during the entire data collection. At the onset, the researcher clearly explained the rights and privileges of the said participants in taking part in the study. They were assured of their privacy and anonymity during the process. The participants were also aware that their participation in the study was voluntary. Lastly, all information collected was handled with the utmost confidentiality and was properly disposed of after the study was completed.

4. Results and Discussion

The findings of this study are presented in three main sections. The first is on the test performance of the students after their use of the Academic Diary; the second is on the relationship between the pre-post scores, and the third is on the themes about the students' experiences in their use of the Academic Diary.

4.1 Test Performance on the Identified Competencies

Twenty-nine students participated in this study. During the pretesting, the majority of the students (76.0%) needed improvement in explaining the nature and process of communication, almost a third of them performed low on differentiating the various models of communication, and a little over the majority (59.0%) were moderately good in analyzing various strategies to avoid communication breakdown, while 49.0% were found to be very good when examining samples of functions of communications as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Pre-test Results of the Experimental Group

Pretest	explaining the nature and process of communication	%	differentiating the various models of communication	%	analyzing various strategies to avoid communication breakdown	%	examining samples of functions of communications	%
Needs Improvement (0-2)	22	76.0	9	31.0	5	17.0	3	10.0
Moderately Good (3-4)	6	21.0	9	31.0	17	59.0	2	7.0
Good (5-6)	1	3.0	9	31.0	6	21.0	9	31.0
Very Good (7-8)	0	0.0	2	7.0	1	3.0	14	49.0
Outstanding (9-10)	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	3.0
TOTAL	29	100.0	29	100.0	29	100.0	29	100.0

As presented in Table 1, students' academic performances are unsatisfactory in the above-mentioned most essential learning competencies. Only a few of the respondents performed good, very good, and outstanding. A bigger percentage of their performances were more in favor of moderately good and needs improvement. According to Agarin (2021), modular learning affects their focus and attention behavior towards learning. Accordingly, students' learning in modular distance learning has a significant impact on their academic success. Apparently, not all students do their modules committedly. The majority of students and learners complete their modules purely for the sake of formality and to meet the requirements (Anzalado, 2021, 233-266). With this, teachers must be wise and creative enough on how to develop assessments that allow them to identify the specific needs of the learners and allow them to make individual interventions based on the students' actual learning discrepancies.

Moreover, the result of the post-test shows improvements showing 42.0% was very good to outstanding performance in explaining the nature and process of communication, 34.0% was good in differentiating the various models of communication, 31.0% was good at analyzing various strategies to avoid communication breakdown and was found to be very good (59.0%) when examining samples of functions of communications (See Table 2).

Table 2. Post-test Results of the Experimental Group

Pretest	explaining the nature and process of communication		differentiating the various models of communication		analyzing various strategies to avoid communication breakdown		examining samples of functions of communications	
		%		%		%		%
Needs Improvement (0-2)	3	10.0	6	21.0	7	24.0	0	0.0
Moderately Good (3-4)	5	17.0	8	28.0	8	28.0	1	3.0
Good (5-6)	9	31.0	10	34.0	9	31.0	6	21.0
Very Good (7-8)	5	17.0	4	14.0	4	14.0	17	59.0
Outstanding (9-10)	7	25.0	1	3.0	1	3.0	5	17.0
TOTAL	29	100.0	29	100.0	29	100.0	29	100.0

Evidently, the student's learning progress on the most essential learning competencies of Oral Communication in Context gained a noticeable and positive increase after using the Academic Diary. Indeed, Academic Diary helped teachers increase the learning status of the learners by addressing the students' learning gaps through individualized feedback because it has been found that feedback is widely regarded as an important tool for assisting students in their growth as autonomous learners who can monitor, analyze, and regulate their own learning (Ferguson, 2011, 51-62). Knowingly, that feedback should make students understand what good performance and goals entail; simplify the process of self-assessment or learning reflections; and give students high-quality information about their learning, as suggested by Ahea (2016, 38-41).

4.2 Significant Difference

There is a statistically significant difference in the performance of the students during the pre-test and post-test, as shown in table 3. This implies that the use of an academic diary in teaching oral communication in context is effective in enhancing the essential learning competencies of the grade 11 GAS students.

Table 3. Comparison of the Pre-test and Post-test Performance of the Experimental Groups

Competencies	Pretest		Post-test		P	Interpretation
	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean	Standard deviation		
• explaining the nature and process of communication	1.06	1.53	6.23	2.73	<.00000000026	Significant
• differentiating the various models of communication	3.76	3.76	4.62	1.97	<.00000000026	Significant
• analyzing various strategies to avoid communication breakdown	3.76	1.63	4.45	2.29	<.00000000026	Significant
• examining samples of functions of communications	6.10	1.97	7.28	1.41	<.00000000026	Significant

The numerical data were computed using the 2-tailed paired samples t-test. The difference between the pretest and the post-test scores was tested at a 5% level of significance ($\alpha = 0.05$). Since the p-values obtained in all the competencies are less than 0.05, there is sufficient statistical evidence to conclude that there is a significant difference between the pretest and posttest scores in all the competencies. The largest increase in scores was found in "explaining the nature and process of communication" with a 5.17 significant difference, followed by "examining samples of functions of communications" with a 1.18 significant difference, next

is “differentiating the various models of communication” with 0.87 significant difference, last is “analyzing various strategies to avoid communication breakdown” with 0.8 significant difference.

Results suggest that the Academic Diary could be an effective tool for enhancing learning and comprehension because the students have the privilege to reflect on their learned knowledge and acquired experience. In parallel to the conclusion of Yang et al. (2017, 2) in using the diary as a teaching method, “reflection diary feedback teaching method has positive impacts, fostering the development of the emotional processing and learning abilities that students need for their careers while helping them develop their initiative, as well as their communication, analytical and problem-solving skills.”.

4.3 Students' Experiences in the Use of the Academic Diary

The researcher used individual guided interviews to gather the experiences of the students in their use of the Academic Diary. There were 29 respondents in the study, yet, only 19 students were interviewed because the responses were already repeated. The data have reached their saturation level. The face-to-face interview with the respondents gave the researcher an idea about how the academic diary is useful, suitable, and efficient in their lessons.

Before the individual guided interview, the researcher gave consent forms to parents, asking for their agreement to allow their children to report to school during the data collection. Respondents were also sought for their consent to participate in the study. After the consent of the respondents and the parents were given, the researcher scheduled the participants for a 30-minute interview. The respondents were interviewed during their convenient and comfortable time and venue.

During the interview, the researcher used the conversation type. The respondents were asked about their academic life and other matters before asking about their experiences with the use of the academic diary. The interviews were recorded through the mobile phone recorder of the researcher upon the respondents' approval. Furthermore, the interview notes were transcribed and analyzed into themes in order to identify patterns of responses.

4.4 Generated Themes on the Use of the Academic Diary

Presented in the succeeding paragraphs are the emergent themes gathered from the interview. These themes are a way to enhance learning, storage of learned information, and provide learning guidance. Table 4 provides a summary.

Table 4. Generated Themes in Academic Diary

Generated Themes in Academic Diary	f	%
<i>Way to Enhance Learning</i>	11	57.9
<i>Storage of Learned Information</i>	16	84.2
<i>Provide Learning Guidance</i>	19	100

Way to Enhance Learning. One of the prominent themes that surfaced from the collected data is how academic diary enhances students' learning. Academic Diary helps them improve their learning comprehension of the essential learning competencies in Oral Communication because students are aware of what they have learned and what knowledge or skill they need to improve in a particular lesson. Table 3 revealed that after using the Academic Diary, students' learning gained a significant improvement. In “explaining the nature and process of communication,” the significant difference in their pre-post test scores is 5.17, followed by “examining samples of functions of communications” with 1.18 significant difference, next is “differentiating the various models of communication” with 0.87 significant difference, and lastly “analyzing various strategies to avoid communication breakdown” with 0.80 significant difference.

A Diary allows informants to participate in both recordings and reflect on their own actions, experiences, and behavior (Bartlett & Milligan, 2015). As reflection increases the depth of knowledge, identifies missing or deficient, personalized and contextualized knowledge, provides comparative references in learning, and helps learners build structural connections in knowledge and social connections among learners (Chang, 2019, 95-110).

Evidently, Academic Diary is usable in terms of enhancing learning because students are given explicit instructions on what area in a subject matter to learn, relearn, and unlearn. Favorably, students develop their critical thinking skills when explicit instructions

occur in the teaching and learning process (Marin and Halpern, 2011, 1-13). Sample transcripts from the interview are shown below:

Interviewer: What aspect of the Academic Diary becomes useful for you in your lesson? Can you explain this experience?

Student #4 : *"Makatabang siya sir paras among tun-an, makat-unan, og mahibaw-an sad namo kung unsa tong mga topics."* (Student 4 said that Academic Diary is useful because they will know what to study, what to learn, and what the topic is about.)

Student #1 : *"Makakuha dayon sa lesson sir, kay maka express manka sa imung na learn sir."* (Student 1 said that through Academic Diary, you could easily understand the lesson because you can express what you have learned.)

Student #19 : *"Ahmm... sa experience sir so far sa diary nakatabang gyud siya sa amoa sir kay maka share mig thoughts sa among kaugalingon kanang experience sa among kinabuhi.. dili siya ingon nga maka stress sir kay mapagawas nimo ang stress in making a diary sir."* (Student 19 said that Academic Diary is useful because they can share their thoughts and their experiences. In addition, Academic Diary is not stressful; instead he/she can express his/her stresses in life.)

Storage of Learned Information. Another prevalent theme is that Academic Diary serves as the storage of learned information. An academic diary serves its purpose, which is the secondary storage of information where learners can use it as their reference or notes. At the deeper levels of learning, active interaction with content, such as note-taking, appears to be the most beneficial (Bohay, 2011, 63-73). Note-taking could also assist students in remembering what they have learned, particularly on the important details of a subject matter (Bahrami and Nosratzadeh, 2017, 308-317).

Students find Academic Diary suitable based on their level because the activity simply asks about the knowledge they have acquired and what they have realized at the unit's end. The material did not pressure them to write beyond their learning parameters because there is no set of standards that can invalidate their expressions; instead, they have the freedom to freely showcase what they feel and what they think over a period. Bucholz and Sheffler (2009, 4) claimed that classrooms that promote emotional well-being provide a conducive environment for both learning and emotional growth. The transcripts from the interview are shown below:

Interviewer : What part of the Academic Diary was suitable or not suitable to you? Explain.

Student #7 : *"Suitable siya sir kay ang isuwat kato ramang what I have learned... Pwd sad nako magamit ang academic diary sir inig college nako."* (Student 7 said that Academic Diary is suitable because it solely contains what he/she has learned, and Academic Diary is even useful when she/he proceeds to college.)

Student #19 : *"Suitable raman sir dili man siay ingon nga makasamok gyud sir... ang nakabutang manggud nakabutang sa diary sir kay what I have raman sir kanang unsay experience nmo everyday kanang struggles nimo."* (Student 19 said that Academic Diary is suitable and not a burden because, in the Academic Diary, you will only put what you have learned and even your struggles.)

Student #9 : *"Gamit siya sir kay mabutang tanan nimong makat-unan sa oral com... kay important mana siya nga isuwat nmo tanang makat-unan para naa kay mahinumduman sa imung makat-unan niya naa sad kay notes para in case nga mag exam naa gihapon kay copy."* (Student 9 said that academic diary is suitable because you can write anything you have learned and it is important to write all you have learned so that you can remember the lesson and have some notes when there is an examination.)

Provide Learning Guidance. Another theme that emerged after the coding is its use as a learning guide. As defined by the Information Technology of the University of Florida, students are less likely to waste their time or grow irritated in doing their tasks when they are provided with learning guidance instead of merely grounding their performance with inaccurate or poorly understood concepts (extracted from the Gagne's book, *The Conditions of Learning*, first published in 1956).

The Academic Diary is perceived to be efficient in terms of time because the instructions in the learning interventions are explicit to the students. It is just easy for them to identify what learning task to comply with and what specific knowledge to enhance. Archer & Hughes (2010) highlights that explicit instruction is an organized, systematic, and effective methodology for teaching academic abilities and is one of the best instruments that educators may use in the effort to enhance students' academic performance. Moreover, learning intervention programs, whose major goal is to improve disadvantaged students' academic performance, have helped them develop (Othman et al., 2011, 367-371). The transcripts from the interview are shown below:

Interviewer : How does an Academic Diary help you finish your task on time?

Student #5 : “Nakatabang siya nako sa akong task sir kay naa raman siyay specific task.” (Student 5 said that Academic Diary is helpful in doing his/her task because there’s a specific instruction to do.)

Student #6 : “Gamit siya kay matagaan kog idea.. niya masabot gyud ang question sir ba kay tudloan ka unsaon pagbuhat.” (Student 6 said that Academic Diary gave him/her an idea on what to do and questions are understandable because you are well-guided.)

Student #9. : “Natabangan ko niya sir nga mahinumduman nako kato tanang gisuwat nakos academic diary... niya specific ang task kung unsay buhaton.” (Student 9 said that Academic Diary helped him/her to remember all the information he/she had written and the task is specific on what to do.)

Evidently, Academic Diary is a good avenue for teachers to provide good quality of learning because they address and improve students’ varied learning gaps through an individualized approach. Students may also improve the quality of their academic performance because they are given constructive feedback and explicit learning instructions to enhance their gained knowledge.

5. Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it can be concluded that the use of Academic Diary in the teaching of Oral Communication in Context has elicited positive gain in students’ performance because their pre-test and post-test scores were found to have a significant difference. Moreover, the student's experiences in the use of Academic Diary were found promising for it enhances learning, stores learned information, and provides learning guidance. Therefore, this can be viewed as an effective method of enhancing the learners’ knowledge of the most essential learning competencies of the Grade 11 GAS students. The Academic Diary can be used by instructors to monitor each student's progress in order to provide an actual and accurate intervention. However, the diary method can only be applied if the respondents will allow their respective teachers to read their diaries. It is hereby suggested that future researchers must use and improve the researcher’s Academic Diary for further real-time discoveries to contribute not just by enhancing students’ gained knowledge but also in other skills.

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