

# The Effectiveness of Using Padlet in Writing Skills of The English D1 Program for Engineering Students at The University of Muhammadiyah Gresik

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## Abstract

This study investigates the effectiveness of Padlet in improving writing skills for industrial engineering students in the English for Specific Purposes of the English D1 program at the University of Muhammadiyah Gresik. The research involved 50 students from the industrial engineering program. An explanatory sequential mixed-method design was used, combining a quasi-experimental approach for quantitative data collection and interviews for qualitative data. This design was chosen to assess Padlet's impact on students' writing skills. The findings reveal that Padlet is an effective tool for enhancing writing skills. The Mann-Whitney test result is 0.000, which is below 0.05, indicating the rejection of the null hypothesis and acceptance of the alternative hypothesis, confirming Padlet's effectiveness. Interview results further support this, as all participants agreed that Padlet significantly improves their writing skills. Additionally, the study found that Padlet primarily enhances students' skills in organization and content; Padlet's user-friendly features also facilitate the learning process. These features allow students to collaborate, organize ideas, and refine their writing effectively. Overall, the research demonstrates that Padlet is a valuable tool for improving writing skills in the students of the English D1 program, particularly in crucial aspects of writing.

**Keywords:** Padlet; Writing Skill; English Specific Purpose (ESP).

## 1. Introduction

English for Specific Purposes (ESP) is a form of English language learning that emphasizes developing language skills designed for a specific area of study, such as business, engineering, law, or medicine. According to Fitria (2023), the term "specific" in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) refers to learning English with specific goals in mind. Thus, ESP is designed based on the material of students' specific fields. In other words, ESP is a set of English materials that are designed to be suitable and based on the student's specific field of study. In ESP, students will learn English skills in their specific field of study. In teaching and learning ESP, as general English, the four skills should be mastered by the students, and one of them is writing. Harmer (2004:31) defines writing as the way to create language and express ideas, feelings, and opinions. On the other hand, Tarigan (2008:3) defines writing skill as one of the expressive and productive language skills that is used to communicate with others indirectly rather than directly. Writing is also a way of gaining control over your ideas and getting them down on paper (Lestari, 2018).

Writing skill itself has some components that have to be followed by writers. According to Jacob (2014:15), as cited in Musdir et al. (2018) stated that writing has 5 components. The five components of writing are Content, organization, language use or grammar, mechanics, and vocabulary. Content refers to what the writers write. An organization refers to

the text that is continued with another sentence. Language use or grammar involves the use of subject, verb, adjective, adverb, object, and the correct tense. Next, mechanics means the part that includes the mechanisms that are punctuation, spelling, and capitalization. The last is the vocabulary. Vocabulary is related to the correct word choice.

Among the four skills in English, the writing skill is considered a complex skill. It is considered a complex skill since it requires the ability to compose as well as understand texts, contexts, and readers (Hyland in Dollah et al., 2021). Wallace (2004:15) stated that writing is the final product after the students learn several stages of writing separately. The stages of writing itself are pre-writing, drafting, reviewing, and rewriting. It is no wonder that writing is considered a complex skill that includes a wide range of sub-skill abilities that must be mastered to write effectively.

Students, especially in ESP programs, should be able to write paragraphs appropriately with good content, grammatical rules, vocabulary, organization, and mechanics. Moreover, students of Engineering who join the ESP English D1 program are expected to be able to write properly. Descriptive text is one of the texts that students have to master based on the curricula of the ESP English D1 program at the University of Muhammadiyah Gresik. Descriptive text itself is a set of texts that contains a description of a certain object. The description can contain the characteristics, definition, location, etc. Gerot and Wignel in Ismayanti & Kholiq (2020) define descriptive text as a text whose purpose is to give the reader a good understanding of a certain object's physical appearance by describing it, together with specific individuals or places.

As a skill that is considered difficult for students to learn, engaging students in their interests and willingness to learn writing is an important thing that teachers should do first. So creatively thinking about the way to teach writing, constructing the strategy of teaching and learning writing, and choosing interesting media to attract the students' attention and interest in learning writing is an obligation. Besides that, other factors such as teaching methods and the availability of facilities support the teaching and learning process of writing skills (Mulyadi et al., 2021).

In this technological era, the media for teaching and learning that are technology-based and internet-based have been widely developed. Nowadays, social networking sites or Web 2.0 and Internet-based media resources, including blogs, websites, and applications, are widely used to provide and facilitate the teaching and learning process (Rony, 2021). Since the students nowadays are familiar enough with gadgets, the internet, and technology, the use of technology in the teaching and learning process will engage, facilitate, and make them interested. The use of technology will also create an enjoyable learning environment and provide a positive change in the teaching and learning process (Mulyadi et al., 2021). One of the technology-based and internet-based media that is already widely used is Padlet.

Padlet is a tool that provides a space for students to express their written ideas through an online tool. Musdir et al. (2018) define Padlet as a virtual sticky note where students can write, communicate, collaborate, and share with their friends in the class. On another hand, Rashid et al. (2019) stated that Padlet is a free web-based application that is available online and able to be accessed via computer or any mobile device with the use of an internet connection. According to Fuchs (2014) as cited in Taufikurohman (2018) the free multimedia-friendly wall from Padlet can be used to promote in-class participation and assessment in real time. Padlet itself provides spaces that are not only for writing but also for editing, giving responses, giving comments, et cetera. Other features given by Padlet enable students to upload pictures or even videos, like comments, share documents, and links, and make the post public or private. To participate in the Padlet, they do not need to be at their laptop or computer; they can access the Padlet through any device or gadget, such as a smartphone, iPad, tablet, etc. All the features will facilitate and stimulate the students to learn writing skills.

Several research have been conducted related to the effectiveness of Padlet as a medium in teaching and learning writing (Fadhilawati et al., 2020, 2022; Jong & Kim Hua, 2021; Meletiadou, 2021; Silva & Moya, 2023; Taufikurohman, 2018; Centro Posgrads et al., 2023; Dollah et al., 2021; Musdir et al., 2018; Rashid et al., 2019; Suparmi, 2022). Even, several studies have been conducted, mostly focusing on examining the variables in high school students and examining it quantitatively. Limited research examining the effectiveness of Padlet for writing skills in higher education students. As a result, researchers are eager to further investigate the effectiveness of Padlet in enhancing the writing skills of engineering students, particularly in the context of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), and how Padlet serves as an effective medium for learning writing.

The objective of this research is to give an in-depth understanding of how Padlet can be used as an effective medium for students' writing skills in the English D1 program for Engineering students at the University of Muhammadiyah Gresik, as well as any potential advantages. The use of mixed methods provides the students' opinions and perspectives, which also supports the data in this research through interview. The research questions guiding this research are: Is there any significant effect of using Padlet on the writing skills of the English D1 program for engineering students at the University of Muhammadiyah Gresik? And, how is Padlet effective for the writing skills of the English D1 program for Engineering Department students at the University of Muhammadiyah Gresik?

### **Writing Skill**

Writing is one of the most effective communication tools for expressing or sharing ideas for the remainder of our lives (Carrol et al. 2001: 3). This indicates that writing is a tool and a skill through which writers convey thoughts or information to readers. Unlike face-to-face communication, writing allows people to communicate through words and written sentences, enabling them to preserve records of their ideas, feelings, and insights beyond a single moment. Writing skill is considered to be a complex skill among the four skills of English as it requires the ability to compose as well as understand texts, contexts, and readers (Hyland in Dollah et al., 2021).

However, students, especially in ESP programs, often struggle with writing. Lestari (2017) notes that non-English department students frequently face difficulties in developing coherent paragraphs due to limited mastery of the components of writing. To address the challenge, the integration of technology will create an enjoyable learning environment and foster positive changes in the teaching and learning process (Mulyadi et al., 2021). One widely used technology-based and internet-based media is Padlet, which provides students with an interactive and collaborative platform to organize ideas, practice writing, and receive feedback more effectively.

### **Padlet**

Padlet was created in 2008 by Nitesh Goel and Pranav Piyush at the National University of Singapore as a research project, which Start-Up Chile, ImagineK12, and Y Combinator next supported. The platform evolved into a cloud-based software-as-a-service that hosts collaborative boards accessible globally (YourStory, 2021). Padlet is able to increase the students' writing achievements in procedural text. The research subjects also had a good attitude towards the use of Padlet in the teaching and learning process of writing skills (Fadhilawati et al., 2020).

Padlet is an application to generate an online bulletin board so that users can utilize it to present information on any issue (Musdir et al., 2018). Padlet is a free application that enables students to easily encourage learning and working on projects, whether individually or in groups, especially writing. The virtual board, usually called a 'wall', is very user-friendly and easy to use to write and share many things through its 'wall'. Padlet is also able to be accessed by numerous users from various devices, including laptops, personal computers, tablets, and smartphones, and can be used as an online whiteboard where students may post any type of information anywhere on the website (Meletiadou, 2021).

In terms of empirical evidence, early research findings demonstrated Padlet's potential in improving writing skills. Fadhilawati et al. (2022) examined the use of Padlet as a creative wall to enhance students' personal recount writing in a private university in Blitar. Using classroom action research, this research found a significant improvement in writing scores and revealed a positive student attitude toward Padlet as a learning medium. Thus, it is proven that Padlet has influenced the process of teaching and learning, especially in writing skills, indicating that Padlet-based instruction yields better outcomes than traditional methods.

### **ESP**

ESP is an approach to language learning tailored to learners' needs (Hutchinson & Waters, in Fitria, 2020). The term Specific Purposes refers to English that belongs to a particular discipline (Javid in Fitria, 2020). In this context, ESP can be defined as the integration of knowledge from a specific scientific field with English instruction. It emphasizes language learning that aligns with the skills required in a particular area of study. The design of ESP courses is therefore based on the needs of specific fields, making use of educational materials connected to a particular discipline, occupations, and activities. Moreover, ESP focuses on the use of language that is appropriate for those tasks in discourse, syntax, lexis, and semantics, and also highlights the specialized language that learners need to acquire (Farida & Asmaa, 2017; Ibrahim, 2016, as cited in Surani & Fatoni, 2019). Thus, ESP provides learners with the tools of linguistics that are required for academic and professional success.

## **2. Method**

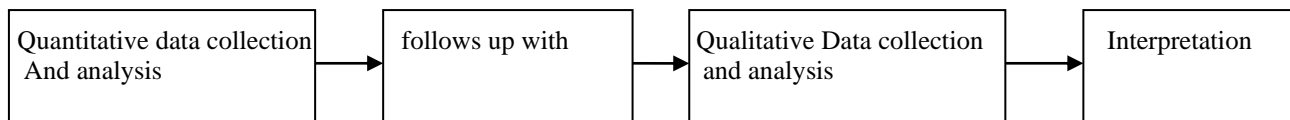
This research employs an explanatory sequential mixed method design to investigate the effectiveness of using Padlet as a medium on writing skills of students of the English D1 program for Engineering students at the University of Muhammadiyah Gresik, as well as how Padlet is effective in developing students' writing skills. The quantitative data were taken using a quasi-experimental design, and an interview was conducted to collect the qualitative data. The instruments used in this research are a pre-test, a post-test, and interview questions. In the pre- and post-test, students were asked to write two paragraphs of descriptive text about industrial tools. On the other hand, the interviews were done using questions adapted from Suryani & Daulay (2022). The data analysis was conducted using an independent sample t-test since the groups are independent, to determine whether there is a significant difference between the control group and the experimental group. On the other hand, in analyzing the qualitative data, the researcher recorded, transcribed, and translated the interview sessions into English before interpreting and describing the results to answer the second research question.

Fifty students participated in this research, with 25 students from Industrial Engineering as the experimental group and the other 25 students as the control group. This sample was taken using a non-probability sampling, specifically purposive sampling. Both of the experimental and the control groups are homogeneous. This is proven by the result of the Lavene statistic test, where the significant value is 0.615, which is greater than 0,05.

Table 1. The Homogeneity Test Result

Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
.257	1	48	.615

As an explanatory sequential mixed method, the quantitative data were collected and then analyzed first where then followed by the collection of qualitative data and which was then analyzed. This is then closed with the interpretation of those data.



Explanatory Sequential Mix Method Design (Creswell, 2012).

### 3. Findings and Discussion

#### a. Findings

In this study, the data obtained from the test and interview results are presented in both numerical and descriptive forms. The researcher used a pre-test and a post-test to collect the quantitative data and see whether there is a significant difference between the experimental group that used Padlet and the control group that used the traditional method in their writing skill. The first analysis conducted by the researcher is the descriptive analysis of the data. This analysis is conducted to know the statistics of the data. Using SPSS version 22, below is the result of the descriptive statistic analysis.

Table 2. Test of Descriptive Statistics.

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Pre-test Experimental	25	42	64	51.12	5.372
Post-test Experimental	25	55	92	78.28	7.045
Pre-test Control	25	31	59	50.80	5.817
Post-test Control	25	59	82	69.68	5.543
Valid N (listwise)	25				

Before testing the data to check for a significant difference, normality testing was performed to determine whether all the data were normally distributed. This is also used to decide whether to use an independent sample t-test or a Mann-Whitney U test. The normality test was done using SPSS version 22. Based on the table of normality tests below, the significance values in the Shapiro-Wilk test show that the results of the pre-test of the experimental group and post-test of the control group are bigger than 0.05, which means that the data are normally distributed. On another hand, the significance values in the Shapiro-Wilk test of the pre-test control group and post-test of the experimental group are lower than 0.05, which means that those data are not normally distributed. Thus, not all the data is normally distributed.

Table 1. The Normality Test Result

	Class	Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
The Score of Writing Descriptive	Pre-test						
	Experimental (Padlet)	.063	25	.200*	.985	25	.963
	Post-test Experimental (Padlet)	.133	25	.200*	.905	25	.024
	Pre-test Control (Conventional)	.160	25	.096	.877	25	.006
	Post-test Control (Conventional)	.077	25	.200*	.986	25	.976

Since the result of the normality test shows that not all the data were normally distributed, the hypothesis testing can not use the independent sample t-test to analyze the hypothesis. On the other hand, the Mann-Whitney test is used to analyze and test the hypothesis. The Mann-Whitney test itself is a set of tests used to determine whether there is a significant difference between two independent samples. The significance level of 5% is used in this research to prove the hypothesis with criteria as follows:

- Sig (2-tailed) < 0.05: The alternative hypothesis (Ha) is accepted, and the null hypothesis (H0) is rejected.
- Sig (2-tailed) > 0.05: The null hypothesis (H0) is accepted, and the alternative hypothesis (Ha) is rejected.

Table 2. The Hypothesis Test Result

	Writing Descriptive Score
Mann-Whitney U	84.500
Wilcoxon W	409.500
Z	-4.430
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.000

From the table, it can be seen from the table above that the Asymp. Sig (2-tailed) value is 0.000, where  $0.000 < 0.05$ . Thus, it can be concluded that the alternative hypothesis (Ha) is accepted and the null hypothesis (H0) is rejected. This means that there is a significant effect of using Padlet on the writing skills of the English D1 Program for Engineering department students at the University of Muhammadiyah Gresik.

After analyzing the quantitative data, as this research is an explanatory mixed method, the qualitative data is then analyzed. In this step, the qualitative data is analyzed through the data collected from interviews. In order to understand more in-depth how Padlet influenced and effectively increased the writing skills of students of the English D1 program, 6 students from different grade levels were interviewed.

### b. Discussions

The pre-test for both the experimental and the control groups is conducted to assess students' initial ability to write a descriptive text about industrial tools. In both the experimental and control groups, the students were asked to write two paragraphs of descriptive text describing the lathe machine. Students worked on the pre-test for one hour on a sheet of paper. There are three raters in charge of scoring. The result of the pre-test showed that the students have a poor ability to write descriptive text.

After conducting the pre-test, the treatment was given to both the experimental and the control group. During the treatment, the experimental group learned the writing skills focused on the descriptive text using Padlet as the main platform. Padlet became the class's main platform for all learning activities. In this treatment, students received material about descriptive text, played the vocabulary building games, received textual explanation and information about the descriptive text, and also practiced the writing skills, both in writing sentences and a full paragraph of descriptive text directly on Padlet. This platform also enables the students to explore many features, such as a collaborative wall, uploading pictures, and accessing images without moving to another application. These created a more engaging, interactive, and modern writing class that is in line with the students' proficiency with digital tools, and also increased their motivation for writing skills.

On the other hand, the control group experienced the same steps and activities in the class. However, the difference was the use of a traditional paper-based method. So, even though both groups were experiencing identical learning content and material, the absence of the digital tools, Padlet with all its interactive features, resulted in a more conventional classroom atmosphere. The treatment highlighted the difference between the technology-supported and the traditional method.

Before applying Padlet in the writing class, some writing problems were faced by industrial engineering students who participated in the English D1 program. This is evident from the pre-test results, where the highest scores in each class are 64 and 59. From the five writing aspects that were assessed using a rubric from Brown (2004), which are organization, content, grammar, mechanics, and vocabulary, the students mostly have errors in the organization of the text, the content of the text, and grammar.

After applying Padlet in the class, some improvements occurred in the students' writing skills. These improvements are either in students' writing skill aspects or the students' attitudes and motivations in the writing class. The improvement of students' writing skills can generally be seen in the previous descriptive statistic table. In the descriptive statistic table can be seen that there are improvements in the mean of the experimental students' pre-test and post-test. In the pre-test, the students' mean is 51.12, then in the post-test, the students' mean is 78.28. This means that the mean between the pre-test and post-test is increased for about 53%.

Since the Mann-Whitney test revealed the result of the hypothesis testing, where the alternative hypothesis is accepted while the null hypothesis is rejected, this means that there is a significant effect of using Padlet on the writing skills of the English D1 Program for Engineering department students at the University of Muhammadiyah Gresik. This also proves that Padlet is effective as a medium to teach and learn writing. This research result is in line with the results of the previous study, which found that Padlet is effective in increasing the students' writing skills. The previous study also found that students in the experimental group performed better, which means that there is a significant enhancement in the students' writing skills (Suparmi, 2022; Taufikurohman, 2018; Fadhilawati et al., 2020; Fadhilawati et al., 2022).

The role of Padlet in helping students to improve their writing skills cannot be separated from some factors. One of them is the ease of access to the use of Padlet. As an online platform, Padlet also offers the ease where students do not need to prepare writing materials, for example, paper or pencil; everything is directly from their phone or laptop. This is agreed upon by all interviewee students. This is confirmed by the students who were interviewed.

*X: Padlet is simple, because we don't need to create an account, directly click the link, and when we want to do the assignment, we just need to click to create a new sheet, write our name, then fill the assignment according to the lecturer's instructions.*

*X: In my own opinion, the opinion that I have experienced is that it is easy. The ease is that we don't prepare books or sheets that we usually prepare in a normal class. It's very easy. I think it's very easy. If we use Padlet, it's more like using a handphone that we usually use.*

*X: Yes, simple. Simple to access because Padlet is an online whiteboard platform that can be accessed through cellphones and computers.*

Padlet in writing class also offers students a new and fresh class environment that is more enjoyable for them than the traditional method. This is inseparable from the background of the generation and also the nowadays era. Students of industrial engineering who join the English D1 program are students from the second semester. They are the students from the generation that was born and grew up in the technological era, where they are pampered with the ease of technology, especially handphones and other kinds of gadgets. The habits of typing that are closely attached to their daily lives make them feel lazy to write that 'real' writing, just like how they did in the traditional method. Using Padlet also makes the interactions between the students and the lecturer lively and fun. Using the game through Padlet and the interaction between the lecturer and students during the teaching and learning is run well and is fun, rather than in a class that uses the traditional method. This is agreed upon by students in the interview session.

*X: Yeah, I keep up with the era anyway. So, I prefer to use Padlet. Because if using the traditional method, I'm too lazy to write. I'm too lazy to write, so I like using Padlet.*

*X: It's more fun using Padlet. Because Padlet can make student or lecturer interaction more fun.*

*X: More fun, more exciting, more interesting, because it's not complicated. It's very easy.*

The ease of use and access, the features, and the fresh and more lively class environment that Padlet brings and gives to students all lead to Padlet increasing the students' interest in a writing class. Here, students often assert that this is influenced by the Padlet that is available online on their gadgets. So, students tend to be more interested in the writing class when Padlet is employed as the medium to learn writing skills. Furthermore, students also be more active in participating in class activities, both exercises and practices. This is in line with how students stated their opinions related to Padlet, which can increase their interest in writing skills.

*X: Yes, absolutely can. Because it's simple and easy to use to do things there.*

*X: Yes. Because not everyone usually likes to write or likes to use cell phones, there are different opinions. It's just that it's easy to use a cellphone, it's like we hold a handphone, we often hold a handphone, so we just like it when (doing something) through a cell phone.*

On the other hand, in terms of writing aspects, Padlet can improve some students' writing. Among the five aspects of writing that are assessed using Brown's rubric are organization, content, grammar, mechanics, and vocabulary; the

aspect of organization improved significantly by about 78%. This aligns with the interviewees' opinions. Most of the students have the same opinion that Padlet can improve the students' writing skills in the aspect of organization.

*R: In your opinion, what aspects do you think Padlet can improve in your writing skills?*

*X: Organization. it's like we can explain according to what we want to describe. We are in a relaxed condition, so we can easily arrange our ideas. it's more... we just relax while we're doing this (task), so it (the idea) appears, like that.*

Padlet also makes the material of the class easily accessible for students. One of the factors that students revealed towards this is the ease of access and the simplicity of use of Padlet. This helps the students to reopen and use *the material* anytime and anywhere as long as they have internet access. The ease of access includes tidier material organization. Here, the teacher can also organize the material easily through the Padlet wall. It can be one wall for one meeting or et cetera, up to the teachers. This is agreed upon by all students.

*R: In your opinion, do you think using a Padlet makes the material easy to access?*

*X: Yes, easy to access since when the lecturer gave the material, we directly click and then enter the material, and we can reopen it if we need to, we can open it again and edit it also*

*X: The material is easy to access, so maybe the PPT material, the latest PPT slides, and others are available there already. We don't need to use an application, right? So, if we use Padlet, we go directly to the website, then we do the task directly, and we can submit the assignment. If we forget or something, we can open it again. We can do the assignment anywhere and anytime, of course.*

Even though several reasons revealed how Padlet is effective for the English D1 program for Engineering students at the University of Muhammadiyah Gresik's writing skills, there are some obstacles that students face during the implementation of Padlet in their writing class. The first obstacle is the internet access. Behind the ease of access, Padlet, as an online platform, indeed needs an internet connection to access it. This can be an obstacle for students since students ever faced internet connection issues during the implementation of the Padlet in writing class.

*R: Okay, what are the obstacles that you experience when using Padlet? Are there any obstacles that make it less comfortable to use?*

*X: One of them is the internet access factor, because sometimes there is no signal due to trouble.*

The second obstacle is the privacy of the answer. A student revealed that their answer can be seen by others. Especially, the students that not submitted their answers yet. It means that students who collected their answers first, their answers read by students who have not collected their answers yet. So, the risk of cheating is bigger than when the class employs the traditional method.

*X: Privacy should be improved because answers in Padlet can be seen by everyone.*

The third obstacle is related to the material. Students have different perspectives related to the material understanding. Students on the excellent and good score scale revealed that they understand the material well. Differently, although the material is easily accessible to students, some students still can not understand the material that the teacher explained well, in this case, the descriptive text related to describing industrial tools. This was stated by students who got fair and poor scores. But, along with their statement that stated that they could not understand the material well, they still stated that, actually, Padlet was good and able to encourage them to do their writing assignment. This means that it requires more of the lecturer's role in explaining the material.

#### 4. Conclusion

This study highlights the effectiveness of Padlet as an online platform to improve students' writing skills among the English D1 program in the University of Muhammadiyah Gresik's students. Padlet, as an online platform, provides spaces for students to write and express their ideas. The features and tools in Padlet bring a fresh and enjoyable writing class environment for students. This then leads to the enhancement of students' writing skills. This is strengthened by the result of the interview, students agreed that Padlet is a good medium to implement in the writing class. They also agreed that Padlet can increase their interest and writing skills in some aspects. They explained further that Padlet is easy to access, simple to use, more enjoyable than the traditional method, and makes the material easily accessible. That makes them prefer to use Padlet in writing class over the traditional method. Despite some challenges, such as the internet or privacy of answer issues, educators should integrate Padlet as one of their teaching media, especially in writing skills, as well as ensuring the support to prevent and reduce the risk of challenges, emphasizing the role of Padlet as an effective tool in creating a motivating learning environment for students.

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