



Comic Media Facilitates Narrative Writing Skill Development in Junior Students

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Abstract. General Background: Writing is a complex language skill requiring grammar, vocabulary, and structured expression, often challenging for junior high school learners. Specific Background: In sports talent classes at SMP Negeri 2 Sidoarjo, students face difficulties in English writing, prompting the integration of comic media as a teaching tool. Knowledge Gap: Despite prior studies highlighting benefits of comics in language learning, limited evidence exists regarding their classroom implementation and associated challenges in specialized learning contexts. Aims: This study aims to examine the application of comic media in teaching English writing and identify challenges encountered by teachers. Results: Using a qualitative case study with observation, interviews, and document analysis, findings indicate that comic media supports students in understanding narrative structure, generating ideas, and actively participating in writing activities. The instructional process, including pre-writing, writing, and post-writing stages, was implemented effectively. However, challenges include difficulties in explaining material, students' limited vocabulary comprehension, and issues in forming heterogeneous groups. Novelty: This study provides contextual insight into the integration of comic media within sports talent classes, highlighting both pedagogical benefits and practical constraints. Implications: The findings suggest that comic media can facilitate writing instruction, but successful implementation requires addressing instructional clarity, vocabulary support, and classroom management strategies to optimize learning outcomes.

Keywords: Comic Media, Writing Skills, Narrative Structure

1 Introduction

Writing is a complex skill that requires the writer's thoughts and opinions as well as knowledge of grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Arranging words and sentence patterns to create good sentences involves grammar and vocabulary, both of which are important elements in writing. According to Gabetta, when people write, they will encounter the essence of learning and understanding. This means that writing skill is a trait that allows a writer to express his or her ideas verbally in a meaningful way. This shows the importance of the content and language used by the author so that readers can easily understand it [1].

The process of writing effectively involves several steps. According to Liran et al., writing stages are divided into three, namely: pre-writing stage, writing stage, and editing stage [2]. The pre-writing stage is the first stage in writing activities, including the stage of determining the topic or idea to be written. The pre-writing stage can be evaluated based on the title prepared by the students. The writing stage involves

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developing a topic or idea into a complete essay, including scene structuring, problem formulation, data processing (discussion), and compiling a bibliography. Then, the last stage is the editing stage. It involves improvements or modifications to the resulting writing, as evidenced by the use of language in students' scientific writing [3].

Junior high school students frequently encounter challenges in their English language study, including comprehension of written materials and language proficiency [4]. In fact, students who do not like English classes may have poor English skills due to various problems. Therefore, the problems faced by some students are increasingly complex. Learning must also provide opportunities for students to communicate both actively and passively. In the context of writing, what the teacher needs to do is to be careful in choosing the writing materials, techniques, and media. Writing media can provide student-centered learning concepts and be more effective in supporting learning activities in the classroom. Writing media that is appropriate to the students' environment will greatly influence students' learning outcomes. If the media used suits the students' characteristics, it will surely make the students become more enthusiastic and motivated to learn. Media is one component of communication, especially as a message transmitter or communication-oriented communicator. One of them is comic media [5].

The use of learning media can spark new desires and interests, stimulate learning activities, and even have a psychological impact on students' motivation. Learning media has great potential to encourage students to actively engage with the learning material delivered by the teacher. According to Amrizal [6], students are better at writing stories using comics; with comics, students can easily come up with ideas and develop them as they write. In addition, using comics, students can improve their sentence structure, arrange text in the correct order, use the right words, and use capital letters and punctuation correctly.

The use of several comic media concepts needs to be taken into consideration while using comics, as these could provide teachers with an excuse to include comics in their lesson plans: (1) Comics are thought-provoking, energetic, and amusing; (2) they promote a variety of abilities, such as mental, social, cultural, and cognitive; (3) they can be applied to instruct kids at different academic levels (4) they are applicable to the instruction of numerous academic topics; (5) They may aid in the development of higher-order thinking skills (including sequencing, forecasting, inferring, synthesizing, analyzing, and evaluating). (6) They boost pupils' interest in multimodal texts. (7) They educate students about the different forms of multimodal creation and communication. (8) They are effective tools for teaching a language of interest. (9) Their visually represented content is considerably simpler to understand and remember. (10) They can be used to teach reading, writing, speaking, and listening abilities. In addition, according to Synder, comic media are considered good when they have simple presentation of material, the language used is good, the storyline presented is interesting, and the comic uses an attractive appearance [7].

In the study, the researchers conducted initial observations at SMP Negeri 2 Sidoarjo. The school has accommodated students who have sports talent. For this, the school assigns students with sports talent to the same class. Sports talent classes are special classes for students who have interests and talents in sports. Sports talent classes are a place for early athlete development. Specifically, the school has provided one sports talent class for each academic year. Sports talent is an important thing to do. The World Conference on Education and Sports for Culture of Peace (1999) states

that sports are schools of life and can be schools of peace. Sports are a good tool to introduce habits of honor. Sports talent efforts are contained in Law No. 3 of 2005 concerning the National Sports System, article 25 paragraph 1, where in its implementation, educational sports are carried out as a systemic and continuous unit with the goal of national education organized by competent sports teachers/lecturers and supported by facilities and infrastructure. However, in its implementation, sports classes encounter various problems, problems with the application of media tools for sports class students, and are often encountered in the implementation of sports classes, especially in writing skills. SMP Negeri 2 Sidoarjo is one of the pioneer schools that runs sports classes. However, since the beginning of running a sports class media, it has not been known how the implementation of media in sports classes at SMP Negeri 2 Sidoarjo will be. SMP Negeri 2 Sidoarjo is a junior high school that excels in sports, beating another school with a sports class in the Sidoarjo area, which can capture students' interests and talents in sports and create young athletes who excel. However, this school still faces many problems in its implementation. The sports classes that are held must meet factors that cannot be ignored, such as competent learning in their field. This is an obstacle for SMP Negeri 2 Sidoarjo due to limited resources.

Based on observations, most students have difficulties in learning English writing. In this case, to overcome problems related to students' writing, the teacher attempts to create and apply comic media with the hope that the media can help students overcome students' writing obstacles. According to Brown's theory, one approach to measuring writing ability is to ask students to write essays based on pictures [8]. Comics fulfill this feature because comics are a series of illustrations that students can use to quickly gather concepts, so that students are motivated to learn.

The following teaching tool was proposed by Edmund for instructing pupils using comics media as a teaching technique [9]. Before reading, the teacher distributes copies of the comic to every student. After that, the teacher allows the class to peruse the comic for a few minutes without having to read the text in detail. The next instructor asks the class to guess the comic's subject and primary character. In addition, the teacher should remind students that comics use words and visuals, and how comics combine language and images to convey ideas. Students should base their predictions on visual pictures. After reading the comic, students are expected to think of some questions they would like answered in class. After reading the full narrative aloud, the teacher and students have a conversation based on the given information and questions. For the post-reading activity, the next instructor goes over the prior questions with the class and gives group responses. After the teacher distributes the worksheets, students work in groups to finish them. The teacher then reviews the assignments and discusses the students' responses.

There are several previous studies related to the present research. The first is the study conducted by Rizki [7]. The study was qualitative research, which was conducted at Medan Junior High School. The results of the study revealed that the use of comic media in language teaching improved students' vocabulary, understanding of grammar, and reading skills. Another previous study is Faizah's study [8]. The study was descriptive qualitative research, and the focus of the study was on the application of comic media in writing recount texts. The findings showed that writing English recount texts using English comic media was more effective and useful for junior high school students. Then, the third study is the study completed by Mustadi [10]. The study examined the implementation of comic media for teaching. The results of the

study proved that the implementation of comic media was effective; however, it had limitations related to integration with technology. The comic media needed technological facilities such as laptops or computers.

The purposes of the study are to reveal the implementation of comic media for teaching English writing at SMP Negeri 2 Sidoarjo and the obstacles faced by the teacher in using the media. More specifically, the researchers formulate the research questions as follows:

1. How is comic media applied for teaching English writing?
2. What challenges do teachers face when implementing comic media for teaching English writing?

2 Method

2.1 Research Methods

This study uses a qualitative case study research method. A case study is an excellent way to learn more about complex situations, and researchers can evaluate how various people responded in that situation. According to Wisusanto [11], a case study is a research method to obtain as much knowledge as possible about a process, program, event, or activity. In this study, the research location was at SMP Negeri 2 Sidoarjo. The school was chosen because the researchers discovered that the English teacher had implemented comic media for teaching English writing to facilitate students with sports talents.

2.2 Subject

The research explores the experiences of the teacher in implementing comic media in her teaching. The participant in the present study is one of the English teachers from SMP Negeri 2 Sidoarjo.

2.3 Data Collection

This study used observation, interviews, and documents to collect data. Creswell [12] wrote that data collection in qualitative research requires obtaining respondents' consent to collect their data and information. In addition, observations contain the results of observations in writing narrative texts, and interviews contain obstacles in implementing comic media. The interview list was made by Dian Novita [13]. Then, the researcher used semi-interviews. Furthermore, documents were used as evidence of the implementation of comic media in English narrative text writing classes.

Table 1. Data collection technique

Stage	Description	Time	Purpose
Observation	Observing English teachers during the learning process.	First week	Identify teaching methods and interactions in the classroom
Implementation	Using comic media in class 8 sports talent	2 meetings/4jp	Assessing the use of comics media

Continued **Table 1.**

Stage	Description	Time	Purpose
Interview	Interviewing the English teachers	March 19, 2024	Gather insights and opinions from teachers about the use of comic media

2.4 Data Analysis

The purpose of this research is to find out how comics are used in teaching writing. The researchers used observation and interviews to collect data [14]. The first instrument is observation. Knowing the facts that occur in accordance with accepted ideas without manipulation is suitable in this situation. The researchers used an observation checklist adapted by Koth [15]. With a few changes that include an evaluation of how the application of comic media has been implemented by one of the English teachers. In accordance with the stages of fact-checking, the observation list is adjusted to seventeen observation questions. The first step is to reveal each statement on the observation list, including how English teaching using comic media is implemented in the classroom. The second step is to identify how the application of comic media is in accordance with the theory. Non-participatory observation is used in this study, where Observers are "outside looking in," meaning that researchers are present but not involved in the action, and they try to minimize contextual impacts through their presence. Here, researchers can track learning development by examining student speech patterns, class performance evaluations, and documentation, which is often called triangulation [16].

The collected data will be transcribed into written form to facilitate classification. The research data is analyzed using an analysis method that is divided into four stages, namely: writing down the results of observations and interviews that have been carried out, applying comic media based on existing theories, reducing data checking to validate the classification steps, and making conclusions from the results of the analysis [11].

The second method involves interviews focused on asking questions to obtain information. Interviews are used to validate and elucidate information gleaned from checklist observations. The interviews in this study are adapted from Li [17] and use a semi-structured format. Semi-structured interviews are conducted to learn about the difficulties teachers face when incorporating comic media into the classroom. This is done in order to get data from the respondents with the method used allowing researchers to add new questions and explore the answers given by respondents [18]. This interview aims to find problems openly by asking the teacher to give her opinions on how the challenges are in implementing comic media in the classroom.

The three steps of the analysis process used to investigate the data in this study are data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions or verification. Summary is one example of data reduction. The findings of the observation results are compiled to determine how comic media is applied in the classroom. The labeling of the outcomes of observations is known as data presentation after being reduced to determine how comic media is applied in the classroom. The conclusion is a summary of all the things discussed after going through the two previous stages.

3 Results and Discussion

3.1 Results

Comic Media Applied for Teaching English Writing. The purposes of the present study are to describe the implementation of comic media for teaching writing and to scrutinize the challenges faced by the teacher in implementing the comic media for teaching writing. The following are the findings and discussion of each research question.

3.2 Discussion

Based on the research that has been carried out, it is known that the implementation of comics is dependent on the learning plan. During the implementation process, the teacher carries out learning activities using a comic press. For more details, the activities are as follows: initial activities, core activities, and final activities. The learning activities carried out in this study consist of three main activities: initial activities, core activities, and final activities. In the initial activities, the teacher invites students to pray first, takes attendance, does ice-breaking related to the material to be taught, and conveys the learning objectives to be achieved today. Meanwhile, in the core activity, the teacher conveys the learning activities. In the meeting, the teacher delivered material on the definition of writing, the definition of comics, the definition of characters, and the setting of the story, as well as steps in predicting the contents of the story, including predicting characters and settings. In predicting the contents of the story, the teacher gave students time to skim and interpret the title of the story presented by the teacher. In the next meeting, the teacher delivered follow-up material from the meeting, namely regarding concluding the story's content. In the core activity at the meeting, after delivering information to students, the teacher provided training guidance by giving students worksheets to predict the story's content during the pre-writing and writing stages. Based on the results of the students' work, they were asked to present their work in front of the class. However, this was for the next meeting. At the next meeting, in the guiding phase, the teacher asked students to read the comic sheets distributed to each student, which contained the contents of the Timun Mas folk tale. To deepen students' understanding of the material presented, the teacher provided feedback to students by holding a question-and-answer session around the material that had been studied. During the meeting activities, students formed groups and worked on classifying the Timun Mas storyline according to the text structure in the columns. In the final activity, the teacher provided further training, namely improving the predictions made through intensive writing. During the meeting, the teacher provided an evaluation sheet to conclude the contents of the story based on the comic media that had been read. After the evaluation, the teacher and students concluded the learning that had been carried out and ended the lesson. The observation of learning actions was carried out by one observer based on the teacher's activity observation sheet. The implementation of learning carried out by the teacher in the study was done by the learning implementation plan which had a very good level of implementation. The implementation of learning using comic media took place well in the lesson plan previously made by the teacher. The implementation of writing learning applied by the teacher used a direct learning model, and the learning implementation procedure with two meetings was also well implemented. The teacher

has also implemented the writing procedure well. Abidin stated that the writing procedure in teaching consists of pre-writing activities, writing activities, and post-writing activities[19]. The implementation procedures for writing learning have been carried out well, namely:

Pre-Writing Activities. Pre-writing activities are carried out by the teacher. Before writing activities, the teacher provides stimulation to students so that they are interested in writing and directs their attention to activating student schemata related to writing texts. The teacher provides an initial description of the story in the comic and, after that, gives LKS Pre-writing, whose questions are about predicting the contents of the story, namely, determining the text structure according to the narrative text about the contents of the writing that students want to know before intensively writing the entire writing and predicting the contents of the story in the comic. This pre-writing activity is carried out by the teacher at the meeting.

Writing Activities. Writing activities are also conducted during the meeting after students have finished creating questions and predicting the story, where the teacher instructs and guides students to write intensively all the text in the comic. This activity is carried out to answer questions that are already in the LKPD and prove the truth of the predictions made by students.

Post-Writing Activities. Post-writing activities were conducted at the next meeting. Before the post-writing activities, the teacher guided students to read the entire comic about Timun Mas intensively. After that, the teacher distributed an evaluation sheet to measure students' learning outcomes regarding the conclusion of the writing content. The implementation of writing learning using comic media and the writing procedures applied by the teacher at the meeting were carried out well. The implementation of learning at each meeting shows that using comic media in writing learning can help make it easier for teachers to implement story learning. With this media, students are more active and enthusiastic about learning because comic media is a tool for conveying information in learning that plays a role in making it easier for students to read comprehension. In addition to conversations, comics also contain colorful pictures that can attract students' attention and interest in reading. So that they can understand the contents of the story in the conversation, they are also assisted by interesting pictures. Comic media has a variety of story contents; therefore, teachers must be able to adjust the comic to the material that will be delivered to students. As expressed by Nurgiyantoro, comics are illustrated stories with little writing; the writing in comics only explains the pictures. Metalanguage: sometimes there are even pictures without writing because the pictures speak for themselves [20]. From his statement, it can be concluded that with the existence of comic media, students can more easily conclude the contents of the story because there are pictures that explain the contents of the story. This research is relevant to the study performed by Pitoy, who argues that comic media stories can be a communicative tool for language exposure. The exposure alone could help students understand the particular details of a written assignment. It implies that using comics can help students fully comprehend the plot of the comics and convey that plot in their writing. The use of comic media in education has been proven to be beneficial for developing students' writing skills [21]. Writing a draft supported According to Ulfa & Kareviati [22], comics help students find ideas, gather information, and complete their texts. Comic media not only

increases student engagement through vivid visuals but also encourages those who are less interested to think creatively and write narrative text structures. In addition, the use of comic media can help students understand and use language expressions effectively. Overall, comic media is an effective medium for teaching writing skills.

From the results of learning to write using comic media at meetings, there was an increase. This is because the implementation of learning carried out by teachers runs optimally with its use. The comic media used is also able to make it easier for teachers to explain the material for students to conclude the contents of the story. As expressed by Sudjana and Rivai, a comic can be defined as a form of cartoon that expresses characters and plays a story in a sequence that is closely related to images and is designed to provide entertainment [23]. Final activities and follow-up must be carried out based on the planning that has been made by the teacher. Teachers need to plan and carry out final activities and follow up effectively, efficiently, flexibly, and systematically. Final activities in learning are not only interpreted as activities to close the lesson but also as activities to assess student learning outcomes and follow-up activities. Follow-up activities must be taken based on the process and results of student learning. Must be taken based on the process and results of student learning. In general, final activities and follow-up learning that must be carried out by teachers include: assessing the results of the teaching and learning process. Giving assignments or exercises that are done outside of class hours. Providing motivation and learning guidance [22]. Based on the results of student learning assessments, individual or group learning programs carry out enrichment or improvement programs that are carried out outside of class hours [24]. These activities are a series that cannot be separated. While the time available for these activities is relatively short, teachers need to organize and utilize time as efficiently as possible for these activities. So it can be concluded that comic media can make students enthusiastic and more active in ongoing learning and make it easier for students to understand the contents of the story. Students find it easier to conclude the contents of the story they have read because the comic Activities during the learning process carried out by the teacher went well. After all, they were involved in the activities that had been planned in the form of learning devices, namely in the Learning Implementation Plan (RPP).

3.3 Finding

The Challenges Faced by The Teacher in Implementing Comic Media. This section presents the empirical results of the study, especially those that answer the formulation of the problem of challenges in the application of comic media. The following are the findings obtained from the interview:

The interview was conducted on March 19, 2024, at SMP Negeri 2 Sidoarjo. The interviewee was the teacher teaching class VIII at SMP Negeri 2 Sidoarjo and has worked there since 2015. The teacher used learning media to carry out learning activities in class. The media used is comic media. In implementing learning media, the teacher described the obstacles experienced. The teacher said that the challenge faced by the teacher is "Instructions explaining the material to be studied." "Sometimes I have given a detailed explanation of the material to be studied, but some students still don't understand," added the English teacher. The text has clear content and organization (identification and description). However, the grammar usage and mechanism are still unclear and have misspellings. The vocabulary used is

standard to describe the topic. The English teacher admits that the main obstacle related to vocabulary is structures. Students' lack of vocabulary is mainly a problem in the learning process related to narrative texts. "In addition, students' performance in writing narrative texts could determine their ability to implement the material through the learning process," added the English teacher. The text has clear content and organization (identification and description). However, the grammar usage and mechanism are still unclear and have misspellings. The use of vocabulary is standard to describe the topic. The second challenge is that some students do not understand the language in the script. And the last challenge is determining heterogeneous groups, not homogeneous ones.

Discussion. In addition to the use of comic media, comics also present challenges in teaching writing. Therefore, it is important to understand the difficulties of using comic media in teaching writing. The challenges faced by teachers in implementing comic media in sports talent classes at SMP Negeri 2 Sidoarjo, At the learning meeting, there were still obstacles in the learning process.

These obstacles include: The teacher's instructions explaining the material to be studied are intended to create a conducive learning environment for students so that learning objectives are achieved effectively and efficiently. When the class is disturbed, the teacher tries to restore it so that it does not become an obstacle to learning activities. The ability to explain is the collection of data clearly and concisely that is analyzed methodically to identify similarities between one complaint and another, resulting in the desired level of understanding. For example, among causes and effects, define with an example or with something that is not well understood. The ability to explain is one of the most important components of a teacher's activities with students in a classroom, and structures typically dominate communication and have a passive effect, such as providing information, ideas, or facts. Nevertheless, this needs to be considered to maximize student understanding and teacher effectiveness.

Resource Person A. noted that students have varying abilities when it comes to understanding the material that has been explained by teachers. Teachers can help students who are unable to participate in learning activities in a variety of ways. For example, they might bring up the subject and patiently answer questions based on the information that is provided to them, or they can encourage the student to read the information that has been explained.

According to E. Mulyasa, the ability to explain is a teacher's skill in creating a conducive learning climate and controlling it if there is a disruption in learning [25]. The ability to explain is the most basic thing that must be done by a teacher to create an effective and efficient learning atmosphere so that learning objectives in the classroom can be achieved optimally. Suharsimi Arikunto states in his book that the purpose of the ability to explain is so that students can learn in an orderly manner so that learning objectives are immediately achieved effectively and efficiently [26]. Another obstacle is that some students do not pay attention to the teacher's explanation but instead make a fuss themselves. This is because some students do not consider comics as a relevant strategy for learning, and there is minimal information about the use of comic strips in language learning. According to Fischer, there is resistance to the use of comics as a learning medium because comics are entertaining [27]. Thus, comics are not suitable for use in writing learning in the classroom. However, Fischer said that he insists the use of comics is not only for entertainment

but also to improve students' critical thinking skills [27]. Comics can involve students in the learning process, which leads to their developing critical thinking skills. In this case, students will try to be involved in the learning process and understand the events that occur in each panel. Another obstacle is that some students do not understand the language in the script. The researcher provides a brief explanation of the pedagogical consequences of vocabulary learning for students' language development. One of the key components of vocabulary acquisition methodologies is self-regulation. For students to speak in English, they must follow the guidelines. Promoting their language proficiency through practice with friends or coworkers has a significant impact on the learning environment created for them [28]. Creating an English language environment is a practical way to help learners get more language input. The teacher factor as a language model is an important part to be considered in students' language learning. As conveyed by Kacani and Cyfeku [28], three factors influence vocabulary acquisition: teacher skills, learner skills, and language features. Therefore, of the three factors, teachers are prioritized as students' helpers for language development. In the context of classroom learning, one way to help learners acquire language is to equip them with various vocabulary learning strategies [29]. Since learners are the subjects of classroom learning activities, teachers need to equip them with learning strategies to help them learn independently in order to make them aware of their out-of-class learning sessions. In a heterogeneous group learning system, students work together with other students, learning on their own and helping other students in the group to learn as well. In heterogeneous groups during the learning process, students do not need to learn directly from their teacher; instead, they can learn actively from other students, a process known as peer teaching, which is more effective than teacher-directed instruction. Heterogeneous group education teaches students how to work together in groups to achieve a common goal. Situation Cooperativa is a component of student learning to achieve group goals. Student learning is togetherness as they achieve goals; each member of the group is heterogeneous with all members of their group so that the student learning atmosphere is more active. Previous research found that when applying comic media, students often lack ideas for writing. According to Chaikovska, students may struggle to decide what to write [27]. Furthermore, even when they have an idea, they have difficulty developing it into a complete series that forms a good story. Thus, according to Mahir et al., teachers can carefully select topics that are appropriate to the student's proficiency level. This can cause further complications for teachers if students have different levels of proficiency, interest, or readiness. If that happens, teachers must be flexible with topics to meet the different interests of students. According to Suwastini, teachers must also implement differentiated learning to facilitate students with different levels of proficiency and readiness so that the most competent students remain challenged while lower-achieving students are not left behind. It can be concluded that there is a significant influence when using comic media as a teaching tool for writing comprehension of narrative texts, based on the findings and discussions in the previous chapter.

4 Conclusion

Learning using comic media has been implemented well by the previously prepared learning plan. The teacher has successfully integrated comic media into writing

learning, thus helping to improve students' ability to summarize the contents of the story being studied. The use of comic media in writing helps to increase student engagement and their interest in learning. This medium not only conveys information through text but also through colorful images that attract students' attention, making it easier for them to understand the contents of the story. The teacher carried out the learning process well, including pre-writing activities, intensive writing, and post-writing activities. This included providing initial stimulation, guidance while writing, and final assessments to measure student learning outcomes. Although the implementation went well, there were several obstacles, such as controlling the class and understanding the teacher's instructions. The teacher faced several challenges while implementing comic media in teaching writing. Instructions explaining the material to be studied. The second challenge is that some students do not understand the language in the script. And the last challenge is determining heterogeneous groups, not homogeneous ones. By reflecting on these challenges and adopting specific strategies, the teacher was able to improve the implementation process, making the learning experience more effective and enjoyable for the students. Thus, the discussion concludes that the use of comic media in writing learning is an effective approach and provides great benefits in increasing student engagement and understanding of the subject matter.

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