THE IMPACT OF COMPUTER AIDED ASSESSMENT FOR IMPROVING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNERS' WRITING

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ABSTRACT

The article is dedicated to carry out the small research, which is focused on improving students' writing progress in EFL classroom with the help of two different assessment methods. This topic will be useful for EFL teachers, who want to conduct effective writing lessons. The objectives of the article are to clarify which method is effective and useful for both students and teachers.

Keywords: 1, EFL- English as a foreign language 2, washback 3, validity 4, technology-based assessment 5, self-assessment 6, computer-aided assessment.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Advancements in technology have greatly influenced how students write, the ways they interact with readers, and the genres they create. In order to reflect real-world writing behaviors in the assessment setting and to be able to generalize students' performance from the assessment to their true writing ability, the current study learn the impact of computer aided assessment in academic writing for English as a foreign language learner. As English as a foreign language (EFL) population in many countries continue to grow significantly, the need for language learning for students' academic success in universities has become increasingly self-evident. Holistic assessment procedures usually lead to subjective and vague descriptions of students' language level, such as beginner, intermediate, advanced (Ellis & Larsen-Freeman, 2006). Objective measurements (e.g., the number of error-free T-units) used in foreign language production and proficiency research provide precise specifications of students' improvement. (Housen, Kuiken, & Vedder, 2012; Norris & Ortega, 2009; Wolfe-Quintero, Inagaki, & Kim, 1998);

Besides that, daily assignments at university help students to improve their academic knowledge, as well as it requires different resources, such as time, paper and ink, for instance, when students get homework to write an essay, thesis or story, they come back home and write their assignment, it can be handwriting or typed on computer. After completing the task, they need to print it out or just submit handwritten form to the teacher. Above mentioned, it demands a lot of time, paper and ink. In the EFL writing curriculum, class sizes are often expanding and teachers' workloads are mainly high (Kellogg, Whiteford, & Quinlan, 2010). Physically and logically, teachers are not able to provide students with high quality assessment. In teachers' side, human factors play crucial role while assessing students' assignments. After heavy

working day, teachers need to continue their work at home too. Tones of written assignments wait for scoring and feedback. Additionally, even teacher tried to check students work objectively and give holistic score and feedback, she or he may miss some of the grammar, selling or punctuation mistakes, it influences the quality of assessment. When it comes to hand written assignments, it is quite difficult to check plagiarism and it requires lots of time to score one student's essay. Since these years, teachers worked under pressure with checking assignments, scoring them and writing feedbacks. This system did not help to improve education system, because regularly having vague assessment setting and not giving proper feedback to written essays influenced students to decrease their grades in English classes. As a result, students exposed very poor academic writing performance. There some problems which need to be stated in this article and will be given some recommendations to solve them.

In order to identify the reliable results and finding solution for these problems. The small experiment has been conducted among second grade students at National University of Uzbekistan, the major of the students is English language and literature.

2.0 MATERIALS

Research materials have been designed according to course syllabus. Two types of assessment materials are selected; paper-based and computer-based.

Subject: writing

Number of groups: 2

Number pf students: 12 -in each group

Gender of the students: mixed

Types of the lesson: face-to-face

Level of the student: intermediate

Duration of the research: 1 month

Lesson 1 how to write descriptive essay

Lesson 2 narrative essay

Lesson 3 opinion essay

Lesson 4 solution essay

Each lesson students are given home assignments to write essay which they are learned in the lesson. Students are expected to meet requirements which are written on the rubric. One of the rubrics is attached as a sample.

Sample rubric for lesson 1 descriptive essay

You will be assessed by using this rubric:

|	Excellent (9-10)	Good (7-8 points)	Poor (1-6 points)
Content	Student described "The most challenging situation in my academic life" and wrote at least 300 words. Student explained important parts of the event clearly, and used vivid images to describe characters place and event.	Student described "The most challenging situation in my academic life" but wrote less than 300 words. Student explained some parts of the event, and used vivid images to describe characters place and event.	Student did not complete the given assignment and wrote less than 300 words. Students used vague images to describe characters, place and event.
Language	The student did not make any grammar mistakes, used correct word order, complex structure and appropriate vocabulary. .	Student made grammar mistakes used correct word order, simple structure and inappropriate vocabulary.	Student made a lot of grammar mistakes, used incorrect word order, simple structure and inappropriate vocabulary.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

In order to provide validity and reliability of this research, two different assessments are chosen for two groups; group A and B. first one is called traditional assessment, it is used for the

students in group A. There are instructor explains the topic to the A group, have a small practice without any technological tools, after that, teacher starts to explain orally how to submit home assignment by reading loudly rubric and asked students to jot down if they want. According to this method, home assignment should be submitted on paper for the next lesson. Form of the essay is optional; it can be typed on computer then print out it or handwritten form. Second type of assessment is computer aided assessment, it is used for the group B students. Explanation of the topic in the B group was the same as A group, however, in the practice part, teacher used different type of technology-based for classroom assessment and practice such as kahoot, testmoz and others. That helped to check students understanding quickly without human factors and wasting time to wait for teacher' correction. When it comes to home assignment, teacher did not explain anything in the classroom, instead of to send an amount of time to explain how to write the home assignment, teacher just told that they may find their home assignment on their Edmodo platform. All the instructions and rubric are uploaded on the platform and available for everyone. Besides that, on the platform, students can see available dates to submit the assignment and in which format they can type or upload the task. When it comes to rubric, it divided into two criteria; content and language, in the content criterion, students are expected to use vivid images, interesting plot and should have on topic without digression, then it must be minimum 300 words. In the language criterion, it consisted of five main sub-criteria, they are grammar, spelling, word choice, punctuation and plagiarism.

4.0 RESULTS

The section 1.1 is dedicated to analyze the descriptive statistics of the students' written assignments in Group A. section 1.1 shows that almost all of the students wrote their assignments on topic, only 10% could not meet this requirement. 70% students wrote interesting plot events, but, only 20% students used vivid images when described the most challenging situation in their academic life. When it comes to meet the minimum word limit, only 40% students met this point.
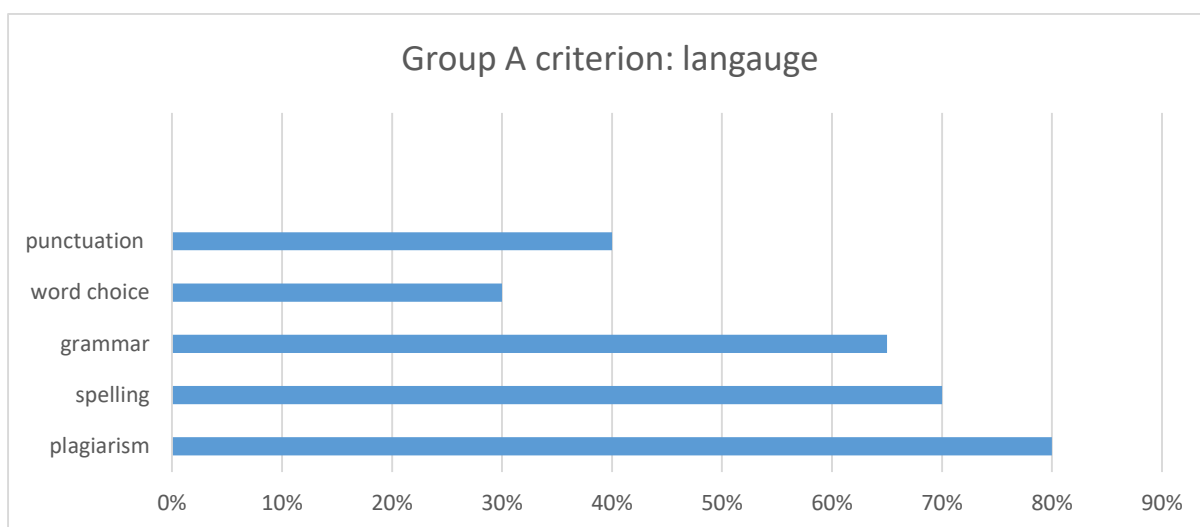
Section 1.1
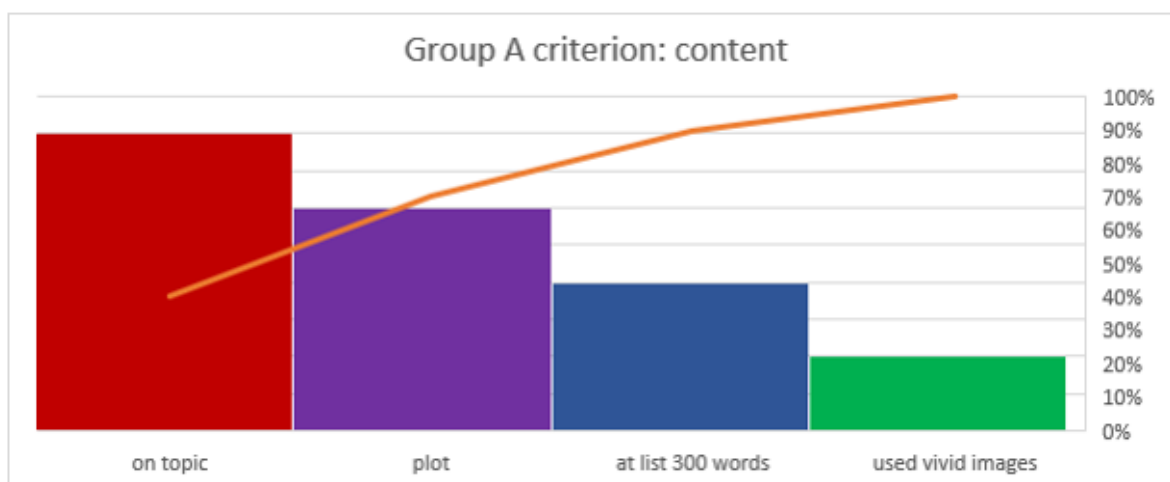
When it comes to section 1.2, there are students' writings are assessed according to language criterion. Students showed high inclination to plagiarism. 50% students just took ready texts

from internet and wrote on the paper. 30% of them copied from other students' assignments, total 80% plagiarism. Besides that, 70% learners made simple mistakes on spelling. Surprisingly, they write difficult words correctly, but made mistakes most common words, such as aer-are, yeaterday-yesterday. Fasst- fast. Students' grammar accuracy is also low, around 65% learners made mistakes in tenses, passive voice and conjunctions. Very few students used improper words which were not suited to the context. 40% students missed punctuations and it influenced to change the meaning of the text.

Section 1.2

The bar graph in the section 1.3 shows how group A progressed during the month in writing class. Overall, what stands out from the graph is that there were slight growth in both criteria
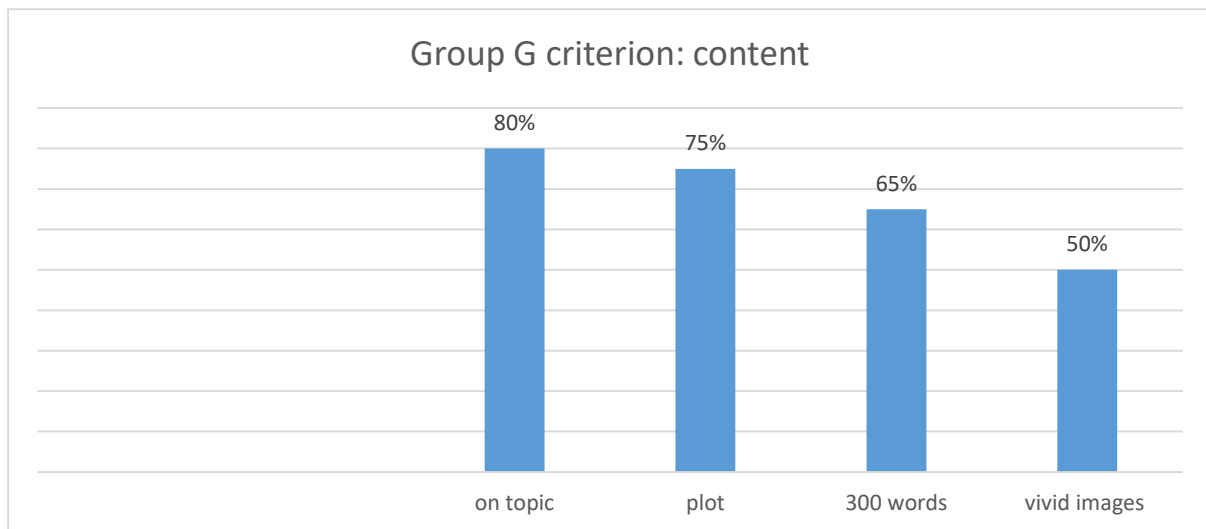
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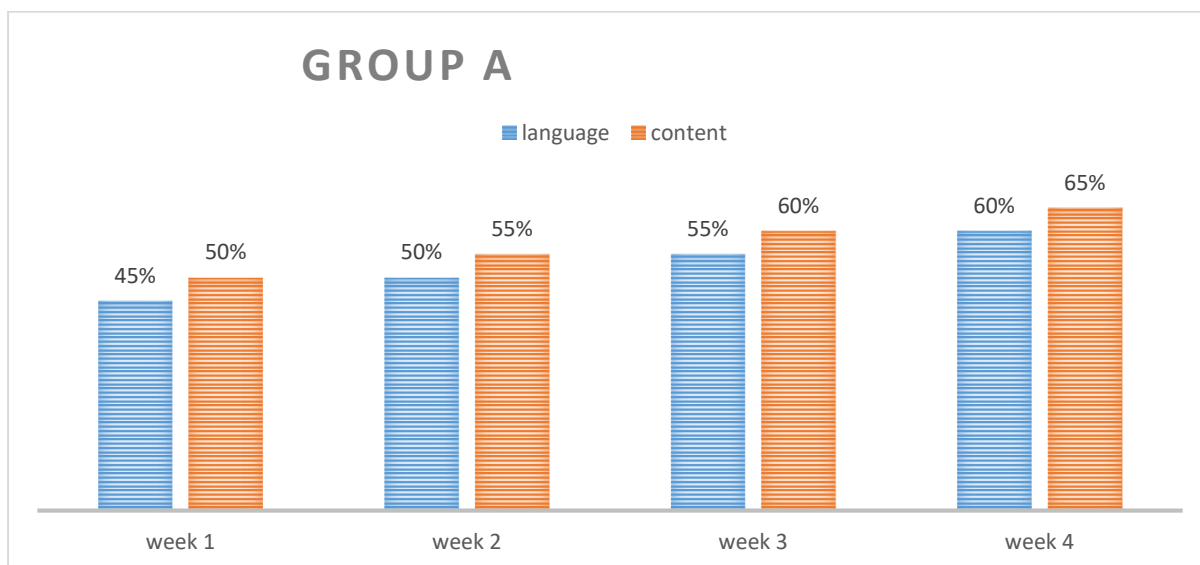
The section 2.1 is devoted to analyze the descriptive statistics of the learners' home assignments in Group B. the bar chat shows that 80% students wrote their assignments on topic as the same result as Group A. 75% students could write interesting plot events. In contrast,

only 20% students used vivid images when described the most challenging situation in their academic life. When it comes to meet the minimum word limit, only 40% students met this requirement.

Section 2.1

Looking at the statistics of the section 2.2, there are students' writings are assessed according to language criterion. 35% students made huge mistakes in word choice compering to other sub-criteria. They are tried to use advanced words but the words were not suited to the text. 30% learners made mistakes on grammar rules, they mainly used incorrect compound nouns, articles and complex sentences. When it comes to plagiarism, only 20% students are coped from internet resources. Interestingly, copied sentences are mainly famous people's mottoes, quotation, which are not paraphrased. In contrast, fewest mistakes are made on spelling and punctuation (10% and 5% respectively).

Section 2.2
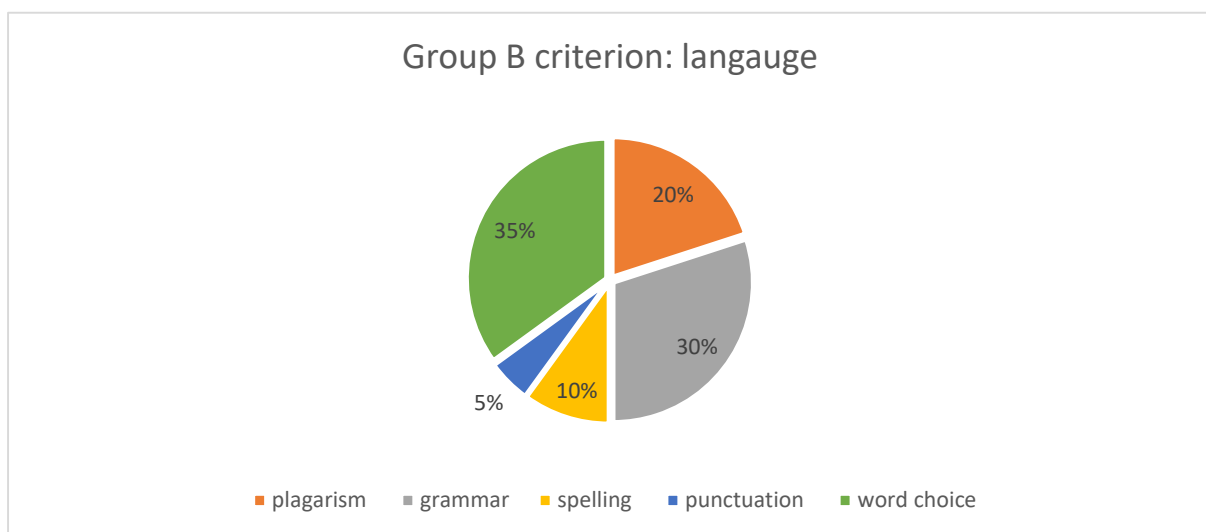
The bar chat in section 2.3 gives information about students' writing statistics in four weeks. Overall, there were considerable upward trend in both criteria. In week 1, students showed the lowest outcomes (language 45% and content 50% respectively), however, to come week 4 students language skills in writing increased to 89% and content of the writing 90%.

Section 2.3
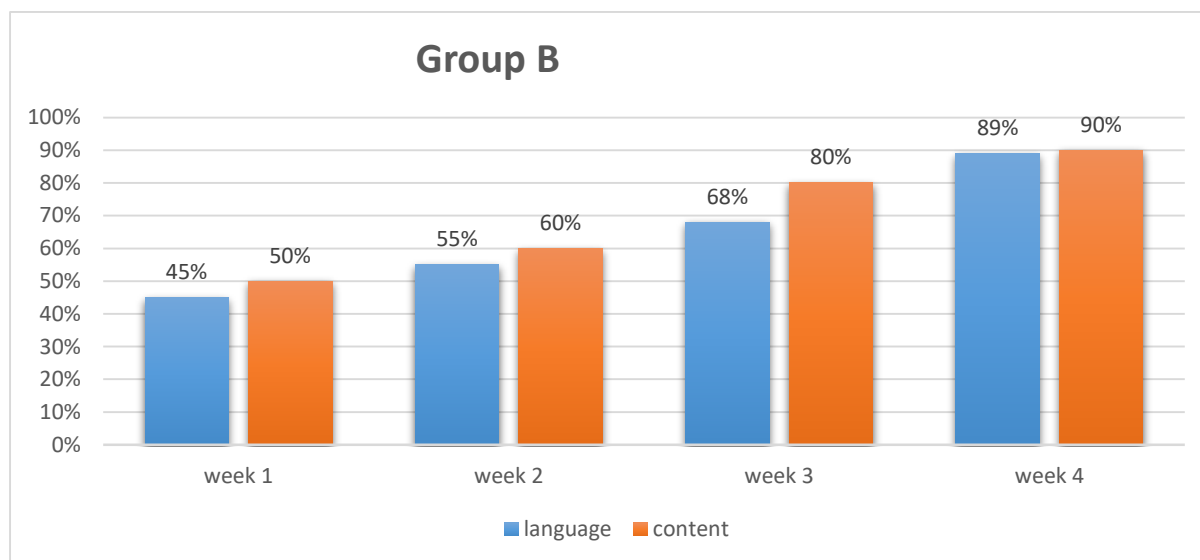
Group B

5.0 DISCUSSION

During the one-month students' progress in writing are observed and used two different assessment methods for groups A and B. the main goal is to identify which method is effective and helps to improve students' writing skills Above mentioned, for group A, traditional method was used and students could not correct their mistakes during the month, they repeated the same mistakes every time. It shows that they did not understand where their mistake and why he or she got this score. Besides that, students did not receive written feedback instead of that they got oral feedback when teacher announced students' scores. Moreover, learners received his or her feedback and score in the classroom, in front of the other students, that emerged negative washback on the students. In one group may assembled different personality students, some students can be easygoing and extrovert, some learners can be shy and reserved. When shy students got low score and other his/her class mates listened it, the student may get de-motivated. Additionally, in group A, students weekly progress is very slow, it is mainly because of time. Students submit their home assignment next to the lesson and get scores and feedback again next lesson after submitted day. Nevertheless, they just listen their score and get oral short feedback, it is difficult to keep the feedback in mind for weeks. Except this, before getting the score for the first assignment, they need to write second assignment, when they submitted their second assignment, they get feedback and score for the first assignment. It is very complicated and waste of time.

For the Group B, computed aided assessment used for both classroom and home assignments. Students did few mistakes in language sub-criteria comparing to group A. it is common thing that Microsoft word has its own spelling and punctuation and simple grammar correction, it automatically shows with red if it is incorrect spelled, show blue if it is punctuation mistake.

Besides that, on internet has many websites to check grammar accuracy and plagiarism such as Grammarly and plagiarism checker. EFL learners may use this kind of websites and learn where they are doing mistakes and what a correct version of this mistake is. Moreover, Edmodo, Canvas and other online teaching and learning platforms help also teacher to check students' work. Platforms check grammar, plagiarism, punctuation, spelling mistakes automatically and for example, teacher can find all students assignments one place and see they are submitted on time or later, instead of collecting them in the classroom, carrying all papers home, if one student's work is not found, teacher may think to lose it in somewhere. Another crucial thing is that, students get feedback and score privately in their private account and can see where they made mistake or from where they plagiarized. Additionally, students can submit the home assignment after the lesson or until the next lesson instead of waiting teacher's next lesson.

6.0 CONCLUSION

Students and teacher feel inconvenience to work with paper-based assignments. Most of the developed countries have already transferred their assessment setting to online form with the help of different linguistic tools such as canvas, google classroom, Docebo, blackboard learning and so on. However, developing countries especially, Cantal Asian countries are still keeping their traditional assessment system and mainly use paper-based assignments. First and foremost, giving fully developed instruction about the task is the most important one. Students need to understate what kind of written assignment are expecting from them. For giving clear description, rubrics are the best tool. Once students start to write the assignment, the know first of all what they should do, they take the rubric, read it carefully, clarify that how many words need to write, what about parts of the assignment, each part need to meet what kind of criteria and others. The second problem is checking process. Some teachers feel embarrassed, when they use online platforms or web sites for checking grammar, spelling and punctuations. Many cases, they try to avoid the kind of checking platforms. However, above mentioned, there are human factors such as exhausted, being sick or having bad mood, these kinds of factors decease the quality of assessment. Using properly online platforms for checking students work is absolutely helpful thing for both teachers and students too. When it comes to third problem is scoring. It is considered vital part of the assessment setting. When teachers are assessing students work, they have to score them according to the criteria on the rubric. One of the common situations in many educational settings is to announce students' scores in classroom, in other words, telling students' score and mistakes in front of the class. It emerges negative washback towards teacher and the subject which she or he is studying. Last but not list problem is giving feedback. Feedback is one of the vital elements of teaching and learning process that helps both teachers and learners enhance the quality of teaching and learning process. Hattie (2009) mentioned that feedback was among the most powerful influences on achievement. So, instructors should consider feedback as a vital part of their teaching (van der Kleij, 2019). According to Shadiev & Yang (2020) feedback is information that a student receives about their language learning and most commonly refers to information about their language production. It should provide information about what the students have achieved compared to the learning goals. By doing so, the learners are expected to know what they need to enhance and give their effort to reach the learning goals. However, teachers sometimes do not know how to give effective feedback that can help their students improve their ability especially in writing skills. Previous research by Junining (2014) which focused on the formative feedback in writing, mentioned that in current practice, giving feedback in writing classes tends to be

conventional such as correcting grammar, spelling and editing instead of giving more emphasis on the purpose, audience and text type. She highlighted that formative feedback would be the best one for students' writing. On the other hand, the researcher sees that corrective feedback is also important in writing skill.

According to the research results, computer aided assessment showed highly positive effects to improve students' writing performance. It provides and emerges convenient learning and teaching system for both students and teachers.

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