

TikTok Lexical Contents in Use: Attitudes among Bachelor of Arts in English Language (ABEL) Students

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ABSTRACT

The rise of TikTok as an educational tool has opened new avenues for vocabulary development among its users. This study explored the vocabulary levels and attitudes of 90 first- and second-year AB English Language (ABEL) students towards TikTok videos containing vocabulary content. Participants engaged voluntarily in a mixed-method research design, incorporating pretests and posttests, treatment, and interviews. Quantitative data were analyzed using T-tests, frequency, and percentage, while qualitative data underwent thematic analysis to uncover participants' cognitive, affective, and behavioral attitudes. The findings revealed a notable improvement in the participants' vocabulary knowledge, as demonstrated by higher posttest scores following the use of TikTok videos. Despite some challenges with the application, participants generally held positive attitudes towards the treatment, recognizing its contribution to their vocabulary enhancement. The study suggests that both English teachers and students could effectively use TikTok videos with lexical content for vocabulary teaching and learning. Additionally, the study highlights the potential for future research to investigate the role of TikTok videos in aiding non-English speakers with foreign language acquisition and other language skills, as this study focused solely on vocabulary development among English language majors.

KEYWORDS

Affective attitudes; behavioral attitudes; cognitive attitudes; familiarity level; tiktok lexical contents

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, technological advancements in computer-mediated communication environments have significantly enhanced English language teaching and learning. Social Networking Sites (SNSs) such as TikTok now offer unique opportunities that were previously unavailable in traditional educational settings. These platforms, which support synchronous and asynchronous text, voice, and video discussions, are increasingly being utilized both inside and outside English language classrooms (Alwi, Adams, & Newton, 2012).

Today's 21st-century students use social media for various purposes, including entertainment, socialization, information, and education (Yang, 2020). Among these platforms, TikTok stands out for its extensive use in educational contexts (Gangaiamaran & Pasupathi, 2017). Its influence is evident in its significant impact on users' development, as TikTok videos have been shown to foster students' motivations and interests in English learning (Xu, Yan, & Zhang, 2019).

TikTok's popularity is not just for its entertainment value but also for its potential as a language learning tool. It reaches a wide audience and offers diverse content, including short

videos focused on expanding vocabulary. For example, some TikTok videos demonstrate verbs by showing individuals performing actions while mentioning what they are doing.

Vocabulary is fundamental to learning a second language, as it underpins the four primary language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Huyen & Nga, 2003). To master vocabulary, students need to understand word meanings, forms, grammatical behavior, etymology, collocations, registers, connotations, and frequency. Effective vocabulary instruction aims to help students comprehend unfamiliar terms, learn new words, and use them in both oral and written communication (Cahyono & Widiati, 2008). Vocabulary learning ties together the four macro abilities, enabling fluent and effective communication in a second language.

Experts emphasize that vocabulary acquisition involves more than just memorizing words; it encompasses understanding their meanings and usage in everyday language and sentences. This holistic approach is critical for platforms like TikTok, which can provide rich, contextual learning experiences (Rahman, 2021). Students with an extensive vocabulary generally excel in language tasks and interact more effectively, underscoring the importance of robust vocabulary skills in academic and social contexts. Consequently, it is essential to develop efficient teaching and learning strategies to foster vocabulary growth. Interactive tools, contextual learning, and engaging content, such as those found on TikTok, can significantly enhance retention and comprehension. Repetition, active engagement, and timely feedback further reinforce learning (Alfadda & Mahdi, 2021). However, Khlaif and Salha (2021) stressed that it is crucial to balance the use of digital platforms with traditional educational resources to prevent over-reliance and ensure a well-rounded learning experience. Integrating these strategies within classroom activities can optimize vocabulary acquisition, providing students with the necessary tools for effective communication and academic success.

Despite these scholarly ideas, it remains challenging for teachers to organize learning components to meet objectives (Rahman, 2021). Students also struggle to build and comprehend new vocabulary, often finding it difficult to integrate these words into their speech. This gap highlights the potential of using TikTok videos to address these challenges. Students can enhance their vocabulary by accessing TikTok videos, whether with or without their teacher and inside or outside the classroom.

Previous studies, both foreign and local, have explored the use of TikTok to improve vocabulary among elementary and secondary students (Xiuwen & Razali, 2021; Rahman, 2021; Bernard Ining, 2021; Rahmawati & Anwar, 2022; Erwani, et al., 2022; Kusuma Wardani, 2022; Mauriza & Siregarwoud, 2022; Zuleta Alvear, 2022). However, there is a strong need to investigate this phenomenon among tertiary students. Despite being a crucial aspect of language acquisition, vocabulary learning is often overlooked among college ESL students, making it challenging for them to acquire new words. Rahmawati and Anwar (2022) argue that vocabulary learning is time-consuming and challenging, and it could be more engaging with the use of social media platforms like TikTok, which offer a wealth of English vocabulary content.

This study aims to explore how TikTok can either facilitate or hinder vocabulary learning among AB English Language (ABEL) students by examining their attitudes towards using the platform for this purpose.

Statement of the Problem

The study is primarily designed to investigate the attitudes of ABEL students on the use of vocabulary contents on Tiktok. This paper, specifically, sought to address the questions as follows:



1. What is the familiarity level of the students regarding the lexicons/ words lifted from the Tiktok contents as evident in the pretest and posttest?
2. Is there a significant difference between the results of pretest and posttest?
3. What are the attitudes of the participants towards the use of Tiktok lexical contents in terms of affective, behavioral, and cognitive?

Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in the Communicative Competence Theory, along with Baker's (1992) and Brown's (1994) Theories of Attitudes.

The Communicative Competence Theory highlights the importance of functional communication and the proper use of language. It encompasses an individual's ability to understand language and grammar, cultural knowledge, communication skills, and the ability to bridge language gaps. This theory posits that adequate exposure to English is crucial for improving second language learners' ability to use the language effectively in real-life situations. TikTok's short videos can increase young people's exposure to English vocabulary, helping them enhance their communication skills in the digital age, regardless of their location or environment.

Baker and Brown's Theories of Attitudes consist of three components: affective, behavioral, and cognitive. The affective component relates to the emotions or feelings associated with an attitude object. The behavioral component involves previous actions or experiences with the object. The cognitive component encompasses the beliefs, thoughts, and characteristics associated with the object. These theories provide a framework for understanding the attitudes of learners towards using TikTok for vocabulary development.

RESEARCH METHODS

This section recapitulates the research design, locale of the study, population and sampling, instrumentation for data gathering, and statistic tools for data analysis.

Research Design

This study employed a mixed-method design with a one-group pretest-posttest approach to evaluate the impact of TikTok videos on vocabulary learning. The research incorporated both quantitative and qualitative methods to provide a comprehensive analysis of AB English Language (ABEL) students' attitudes towards TikTok's vocabulary content. Wisdom and Creswell (2013) suggest that this mixed-method approach allows for a more thorough examination of research questions.

The study used a pretest-posttest design to measure vocabulary knowledge before and after exposure to TikTok videos. The quantitative phase focused on comparing pretest and posttest scores to determine the effect of the treatment on vocabulary knowledge. The qualitative phase explored students' attitudes—*affective, behavioral, and cognitive*—toward using TikTok for vocabulary development.

Locale of the Study

The research was conducted at Mariano Marcos State University, College of Arts and Sciences (MMSU-CAS) in Batac City, Ilocos Norte, targeting AB English Language students.

Population and Sampling Technique

The study involved 90 first- and second-year ABEL students, with 45 participants from each year. These students were selected through total enumeration, as they represented the most

recent ESL learners, providing a relevant sample for evaluating vocabulary knowledge and attitudes.

Instrumentation for Data Gathering

Two primary instruments were used: pretest and posttest questionnaires and an interview questionnaire. The pretest and posttest comprised 30 items divided into two parts: a 15-item fill-in-the-blank section and a 15-item sentence construction task. These instruments assessed students' familiarity with vocabulary from selected TikTok videos. The results were categorized into Excellent, Good, Average, Poor, and Very Poor based on familiarity levels.

The interview questionnaire, adapted from Baker (1992) and Brown (1994), included three questions addressing affective, behavioral, and cognitive aspects of students' attitudes. A pilot test confirmed the reliability of the questionnaires with a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.86.

Data Collection Procedures

- *Downloading:* The researchers downloaded 27 TikTok videos from two content creators, selecting 30 vocabulary items for the study.
- *Ethical Approval:* The study received ethical clearance from the University Research Ethics and Review Board.
- *Consent:* Permission was obtained from the College Dean, Department Chair, English teachers, and students.
- *Pretest:* Conducted in English classes, this assessed students' vocabulary familiarity before the treatment.
- *Treatment:* Participants watched the TikTok videos over one week during their English classes, with sessions lasting 30 minutes.
- *Posttest:* Administered in a similar manner as the pretest to evaluate vocabulary knowledge after the treatment.
- *Interview:* A semi-structured interview with 20 randomly selected students (10 from each year) explored their attitudes towards TikTok's vocabulary content. Each interview lasted 3-5 minutes and was recorded for accuracy.

Statistical Tools for Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using frequency and percentage to describe vocabulary familiarity levels and a t-test to compare pretest and posttest results. Qualitative data were analyzed through thematic analysis to identify themes in students' attitudes toward TikTok's vocabulary content. Data were securely stored on Google Drive and will be deleted after five years.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings of the study on the impact of TikTok videos on students' vocabulary knowledge and their attitudes towards the use of this platform.

Students' Familiarity with TikTok Vocabulary

Table 1. Familiarity level of students on Tiktok lexical contents in pretest and posttest

Familiarity Level	Score	Pretest F	%	Posttest F	%
Excellent	25-30	0	0.00	19	21.11
Good	19-24	5	5.55	37	41.11
Average	13-18	22	24.44	33	36.66

Poor	7-12	39	43.33	1	1.11
Very Poor	0-6	24	26.66	0	0.00
Total		90	100.00	90	100.00

Table 1 reveals the students' familiarity with vocabulary from TikTok videos before and after the intervention. Initially, 39 participants (43.33%) scored poorly on the pretest, 24 (26.66%) had very poor familiarity, 22 (24.44%) were average, 5 (5.55%) were good, and none were excellent. This distribution indicates that a significant portion of students had limited vocabulary knowledge, emphasizing the need for targeted vocabulary instruction. Rahman (2021) highlights the ongoing challenge for educators to effectively organize learning components to achieve vocabulary teaching objectives.

However, posttest results showed a notable improvement. After exposure to the TikTok videos, 37 students (41.11%) achieved a good familiarity level, 33 (36.66%) were average, 19 (21.11%) were excellent, and only one student (1.11%) had a low familiarity level. None scored very poorly. This dramatic shift suggests that the TikTok videos were effective in enhancing vocabulary knowledge. Lialikhova (2014) supports this, noting that TikTok videos can significantly improve vocabulary learning by providing contextual usage examples.

Significant Difference between Pretest and Posttest

Table 2. Significant difference of Pretest and Posttest

	Mean Score	Standard deviation	Mean Difference	t-stat	p-value (2-tailed)
Pre-test	10.03	4.77	10.33	-21.82	<0.001**
Post-test	20.37	4.53			

**Significant at 1%

Table 2 demonstrates a significant improvement in vocabulary knowledge, as evidenced by a paired sample t-test. The mean posttest score was substantially higher than the pretest score, with a mean difference of 10.33, and this difference was statistically significant at the 1% level. This indicates that the TikTok videos had a considerable positive effect on students' vocabulary acquisition. Alwehaibi (2015) asserts that videos can create an engaging learning environment, which aligns with the study's findings that the students' vocabulary knowledge improved significantly. The mean posttest score of 20.37 was notably higher than the pretest score of 10.03, corroborating the findings of Afidah, Nurul, Novi Kumala Sari, and Hanifah Hanifah. (2021) that higher education students have positive attitudes towards using TikTok as an educational tool.

Students' Attitudes toward TikTok Lexical Contents

The study aimed to explore students' attitudes toward using TikTok videos for vocabulary acquisition, focusing on affective, behavioral, and cognitive dimensions. Analysis of the interview transcripts reveals the following significant findings:

Affective Aspect

Affective learning involves how learners' feelings and experiences shape their attitudes and actions (Miller, 2005). Participants reported varied emotional responses to using TikTok for learning new words:

Feeling Grateful. Participants expressed recognition, finding TikTok a valuable tool for learning vocabulary. For instance, Participant 1 felt overwhelmed with gratitude, stating,

“Actually, the new method that was given to us was very effective because I can feel that through watching TikTok, we can learn something and it is easier for us to understand it because it was relatable, especially that the person in that video was something that scintillating.” Participant 10 also testified to feeling grateful for learning new words through TikTok. This supports Solomon’s (2021) finding that TikTok’s innovative approach to education merges technology, kinesthetic movement, and social collaboration. TikTok’s blend of entertainment and education is seen as highly beneficial (Pratiwi et al., 2021).

Feeling Interested. TikTok was perceived as an interesting and engaging learning platform. Participant 2 shared, “It’s interesting because I can learn from applications, not just traditional sources.” Participant 6 echoed this sentiment, saying, “I feel interested on knowing that there is something that I can learn more about TikTok.” These views reflect Carnegie Mellon University’s (2021) finding that social media can enhance engagement and motivation.

Feeling Enjoyed/Entertained. Participants highlighted TikTok’s entertainment value in learning. Participant 3 noted, “Learning new words is actually fun using the TikTok application since the creator can explain further what the dictionary can, which makes learning a lot easier for me.” Similarly, Participant 12 felt entertained and more focused while using TikTok for vocabulary learning. Statements from participants illustrate that TikTok made vocabulary acquisition enjoyable and engaging. Omar, B., & Dequan, W. (2020) sustain this, noting TikTok’s immersive and entertaining nature enhances learning.

Feeling Happy and Excited. TikTok reduced learning pressure and brought joy. Participant 5 stated, “I feel happy and at the same time, I’m excited because I got the chance to answer the things that I have an answer during the pretest.” Participant 9 also felt happy after learning new words, recognizing the future benefits of this knowledge. The said participants are pleased and excited about their progress, with TikTok providing a fun and effective way to learn (Escamilla-Fajardo et al (2021); Hayes et al., 2020). Further, the platform generated excitement about learning new words. Participants 5 and 6 felt thrilled by TikTok’s novel approach, indicating it effectively captured their interest.

Feeling Easy. TikTok was perceived as an easy and accessible platform for learning new vocabulary. Participant 11 mentioned, “Trying a new method in learning vocabulary words using the TikTok application, it felt easy because it was easier to gain knowledge because it’s like one on one with your teacher,” finding TikTok as convenient learning tool, likening it to a one-on-one teaching experience. It notes that TikTok’s integration into the daily lives of young users makes it an accessible learning platform.

Feeling Motivated. TikTok enhanced learning motivation. Participant 14 shared, “I feel more motivated to learn new words using the TikTok application, rather than reading a book because being honest, I’m really not that productive in gaining new words by reading but through TikTok, I am more motivated to learn new words with the use of it,” expressing increased inspiration to learn new words through TikTok compared to traditional methods, highlighting its effectiveness in driving student engagement (Steinmayr & Spinath, 2009).

Feeling Great. Participants 15 and 18 felt great about using TikTok for learning vocabulary. Participant 15 remarked, “It feels great. Trying a new method for learning new vocabulary words using the TikTok application. Because we are in an era where we use technological advancements, where we invest our time and learning with these methods or learning with these applications,” This implies that they deemed TikTok provides a great learning experience, combining technological advancements with entertainment to make learning more engaging.

Feeling Informed and Relieved. Participant 17 felt informed and relieved by using TikTok for vocabulary learning, appreciating its fun and educational aspects (Herlisya & Wiratno, 2022).

Feeling Surprised. Participant 7 was surprised by the depth of vocabulary learned through TikTok, reflecting the platform's capacity to introduce novel and unexpected words (Khalaf & Salha, 2021).

Feeling as Usual. Participant 8 found TikTok's educational use to be familiar, indicating its integration into their learning routine.

Feeling Challenged. Two participants found learning new words on TikTok challenging due to unfamiliarity with the vocabulary. Participant 4 said, "It's quite challenging for me since I am not really familiar with those words. It gives me a lot of learning and information about the given words." Despite this, participants managed to expand their vocabulary, demonstrating TikTok's capacity to push boundaries (Alqatani, 2015).

Feeling Ignorant. Participant 13 felt initially ignorant due to unfamiliar words but ultimately found TikTok's engaging format helpful in overcoming this barrier.

Generally, the study highlights TikTok's effectiveness as a learning tool, enhancing students' vocabulary acquisition in an enjoyable and motivating manner. While some challenges were noted, most participants found TikTok to be a valuable, engaging, and effective educational resource. This is consistent with Feng and Chen's (2009) assertion that emotional engagement significantly impacts learning attitudes and outcomes.

Behavioral Aspect

The behavioral dimension of the study focuses on participants' past behaviors and experiences with TikTok as a tool for learning English vocabulary. All participants expressed eagerness to continue using TikTok for this purpose. They viewed TikTok as a highly engaging platform that enhances their learning experience. For instance, Participant 2 eagerly anticipated learning more vocabulary through TikTok, citing its interesting and diverse content. Participant 14 also noted their excitement about following content creators and enjoying the platform's educational value.

Participants' enthusiasm for TikTok is supported by their daily use of the app, which they found beneficial for learning new words. Participant 4 highlighted TikTok's effectiveness in vocabulary acquisition due to its daily usage, while Participant 3 appreciated how TikTok introduced useful words for everyday conversations. This fervor confirms Alfadda and Mahdi's (2021) theory, which suggests that behavioral intentions influence performance. TikTok's engaging features and compelling content make it a new, effective mode for learning English vocabulary. As noted by Zcharias (2004), such resources indirectly enhance students' language skills, affirming the positive attitude toward TikTok as a learning tool.

Cognitive Aspect

The cognitive aspect examines the perceived benefits and drawbacks of using TikTok for vocabulary learning. The notable gains are as follows:

Easy Access. TikTok's portability and accessibility were highlighted as major advantages. Participants appreciated the ease of accessing vocabulary content through TikTok, compared to the heftiness of traditional dictionaries. For instance, Participant 2 mentioned, "It is easy, accessible and portable since there's a lot of heavy dictionaries we have to carry to learn other English words, but TikTok is portable and accessible for a lot of people." Participant 12 stated, "I think the benefit of it is the accessibility of the application." Participant 2 emphasized the app's convenience, while Participant 12 noted its overall accessibility.

Easy Understanding of Words. Participants found TikTok effective for understanding new words. For example, Participant 3 shared, "As someone who reads books, it benefits me in a way that some unfamiliar words are easier to understand." Participant 12 added, "There were some words on the pre and post-test that weren't really familiar. With the help of



TikTok, it helps me understand each term easier because it even provided some examples and how to pronounce the new vocabularies.” These signify that Participant 3 appreciated how TikTok helped clarify unfamiliar terms, and Participant 12 valued the app's ability to provide examples and pronunciation.

Vocabulary Skills Enhancer. TikTok was recognized for enhancing vocabulary skills. Participant 5 said, “I got the chance to add new words to my word bank for future use.” Participant 19 answered, “TikTok short videos contain English material content that helps expand our English vocabularies.” Participant 20 supplemented, “After learning vocabulary words through TikTok, I think it really improved my vocabulary and is very useful because it has endless possibilities for educational practices.” These imply that Participant 5 believed that TikTok helped expand their word bank, and Participant 19 held it as a valuable resource for growing English vocabulary. Participant 20 even remarked on the app's effectiveness in a short period.

Practical Application in Writing. Participants found TikTok useful for applying new vocabulary in writing. Participant 15 stressed, “I can apply the new vocabulary I learned whenever I write something and use this new vocabulary to communicate and educate others,” underscoring that the vocabulary learned through TikTok could be used in academic writing and communication.

Entertainment Source. TikTok's engaging and entertaining nature added value to the learning process. Participant 6 responded, “Learning vocabulary through TikTok makes it fun and engaging.” Participant 13 pointed out, “While learning, you're being entertained at the same time.” Participant 6 enjoyed the combination of learning and entertainment, while Participant 13 acknowledged the potential for forgetting learned words if not applied immediately.

Easy Facilitation of Learning. TikTok simplified the learning process. According to Participant 1, “It's easier for me to learn new words by listening to or watching them on TikTok rather than reading.” This shows that he found the app an easier alternative to traditional reading methods, enhancing vocabulary learning through engaging videos.

There are also perceived drawbacks (e.g., over-reliance, absence of guaranteed feedback) of using TikTok for learning, according to the participants.

Too Much Dependence. A concern raised was the potential over-reliance on TikTok. Participant 17 answered, “I am only afraid that people might be dependent on this application in a way that they won't search for other information outside the application.” The said participant is worried that users might depend too heavily on the app and neglect other sources of information.

Lack of Feedback. Participants also noted the lack of immediate feedback on queries. Participant 11 mentioned, “The only drawback is if you don't understand a certain topic, you ask a question but may not receive guaranteed feedback, so you might still end up using Google.” This means that while TikTok is useful for learning, it does not provide the guaranteed feedback that might be available through other educational resources.

It can be deduced that TikTok emerged as an effective tool for vocabulary learning, offering numerous benefits such as easy access, enhanced understanding, and practical application. However, challenges such as potential over-dependence and lack of feedback must be addressed to improve the platform's reliability. This aligns with Khlaif and Salha's (2021) view that TikTok can produce high-quality e-learning content if these issues are managed effectively.

CONCLUSION

The study revealed a notable improvement in vocabulary knowledge among first- and second-year AB English Language students following the use of TikTok as a learning tool. The pretest results highlighted a general lack of vocabulary proficiency among participants, with only a few demonstrating strong vocabulary skills. However, posttest results showed a marked increase in familiarity with vocabulary, indicating that TikTok effectively enhanced participants' lexical knowledge. This improvement was statistically significant, demonstrating TikTok's efficacy as an educational tool for vocabulary acquisition.

Participants generally held positive attitudes towards using TikTok for learning. They reported a range of emotional responses, including gratitude, interest, enjoyment, excitement, and motivation. These reactions suggest that TikTok's engaging and innovative content successfully stimulated their interest in expanding their vocabulary.

From a behavioral perspective, all participants expressed eagerness to continue using TikTok for vocabulary learning, appreciating its fun and effective approach. Cognitively, TikTok provided several benefits: it facilitated an engaging and efficient learning experience, was easily accessible, and offered vocabulary knowledge applicable to future use. However, some drawbacks were noted, such as potential over-reliance on the platform and the lack of guaranteed feedback for user inquiries. These limitations indicate areas for improvement but do not diminish TikTok's overall value as a vocabulary-learning resource.

The study has pedagogical implications such as: (1) integration into curriculum; (2) professional development; (3) content creation; (4) parental and institutional involvement; and (5) student awareness. Firstly, English language teachers are encouraged to integrate TikTok into their curriculum as a supplementary tool for vocabulary instruction. Its engaging nature can enhance traditional teaching methods and increase student motivation and participation. Secondly, educators should receive training on how to effectively incorporate social media platforms like TikTok into their teaching strategies. This includes understanding how to select high-quality educational content and leveraging TikTok's interactive features to enhance learning. Thirdly, content creators on TikTok are encouraged to focus on educational content and engage actively with learners. Creating content that addresses common questions and provides feedback can further enhance the platform's educational value. Fourthly, schools and educational institutions should consider involving parents in discussions about the educational benefits of TikTok, promoting its use as a supplementary learning tool. Providing guidelines for safe and effective use can help maximize its benefits while mitigating potential drawbacks. Lastly, students should be encouraged to view TikTok as a valuable educational resource, not just a source of entertainment. Promoting a balanced approach to using social media for learning can help students utilize these platforms more effectively.

Future research should explore (1) TikTok's effectiveness in developing other language skills, (2) assess its impact on diverse learner populations, and (3) conduct longitudinal and comparative studies to evaluate its long-term effects on vocabulary retention and overall language acquisition. Firstly, future studies should investigate how TikTok can be used to develop other language skills, such as listening, speaking, and writing. This can provide a more comprehensive understanding of its effectiveness as a language learning tool. Secondly, research should extend to non-English language learners and diverse educational contexts to assess TikTok's applicability and effectiveness across different languages and learning environments. Finally, longitudinal studies examining the long-term impact of TikTok on vocabulary retention and language acquisition can provide deeper insights into its educational efficacy and potential for sustained learning. Comparing TikTok with other digital learning tools and traditional methods can help determine its relative effectiveness

and identify best practices for integrating digital media into language education. Overall, while TikTok presents a promising avenue for vocabulary learning, ongoing evaluation and adaptation will be crucial to maximizing its educational benefits and addressing its limitations.

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