EFFECTS OF SEMANTIC MAPPING, THINK PAIR STRATEGIES AND GPA ON STUDENTS' DESCRIPTIVE PARAGRAPH WRITING ACHIEVEMENT

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Abstract: The success of the learners in learning a language is their ability to write, and the successful teaching of writing is affected by the strategies employed. The purpose of this research was to investigate the effect of Semantic Mapping (SM), Think Pair Share (TPS) strategies, and Grade Point Average (GPA) on descriptive paragraph writing achievement of Education Technology students of Baturaja University. Thirty-six second semester students were equally divided into two groups. One group was instructed through SM strategy, and the other was taught using TPS strategy. Both groups were classified based on students' GPA. To determine the effectiveness of the teaching strategies, a writing test of descriptive paragraph was administered. The results showed that both SM and TPS strategies could improve students' writing achievement significantly. However, SM strategy was more suitable for high level students; meanwhile TPS strategy was more suitable for low level studentThe success of the learners in learning a language is their ability to write, and the successful teaching of writing is affected by the strategies employed. The purpose of this research was to investigate the effect of Semantic Mapping (SM), Think Pair Share (TPS) strategies, and Grade Point Average (GPA) on descriptive paragraph writing achievement of Education Technology students of Baturaja University. Thirty-six second semester students were equally divided into two groups. One group was instructed through SM strategy, and the other was taught using TPS strategy. Both groups were classified based on students' GPA. To determine the effectiveness of the teaching strategies, a writing test of descriptive paragraph was administered. The results showed that both SM and TPS strategies could improve students' writing achievement significantly. However, SM strategy was more suitable for high level students; meanwhile TPS strategy was more suitable for low level students.

Keywords: *semantic mapping, think pair share, grade point average, writing*

English, the lingua franca of the world, has become a tool for International communication and used in many aspects of human life, such as tourism, technology, diplomacy, and scientific research (Brown, 2000, p. 122). Nowadays, the need for mastering English has been increasing due to the strengthening position of English as the International communication. It is used as the working language in 85% of International Organizations (Crystal, 2003). Practically, the company needs people who have certain skills to do an action and also English to communicate and support the action. It is supported by the data from World Bank (2010, p. 34) that the core skills, such as math and literacy, computer skill, thinking skill, English skill, and behavioural skill are very important for the Indonesian workers. Additionally, Hirose (1992) claims that there were large numbers of college graduates worked in the companies were lack of basic skill. It infers that English is not only for the students of English department but also for non English department students.

Writing is an important part of English skills which should be emphasized on teaching learning process in the classroom. It is because students will not be able to write if they do not learn how to write. This statement is supported by Harmer (2004, p.3) who says that people acquire the spoken language naturally, but they have to learn consciously the ability to write and being able to write is a vital skill for 'speakers' of a foreign language as much as for everyone using their own first language.

Speaking is one of productive skills that tends to be considered as the obvious final product of learning a language, a foundation of almost everything that is really significant in life, and to judge someone's intelligent (McNulty, 2009). Then similarly, Harmer (2004, p.245) assumes that language learners are called as the success learners when they are able to use the language in a good written form. Moreover, Nur (2003) says the ability to communicate in a foreign language clearly contributes to the success living in global era. In addition, within the last decade, the demands for writing in all the academic areas have an impact on globalization (Malakul & Bowering, 2006). Students and graduates will become more aware of how important the writing is in order to apply for an employment. Indeed, the needs to have writing skill should become a priority in the education field.

Unfortunately, Indonesian writing skill is still low. Alwasilah (2001a) stated that many researches claimed that not only ordinary people who do not deal with books or science every day, but also intellectuals in Indonesia were lack of writing. It is proved by the productivity in producing and publishing the book in each year. Annual report October 2013 – October 2014 from International Publisher Association (IPA) showed a number of books published in Indonesia were 30.000 in a year. It is still low compared with other countries in the world, such as United Kingdom (UK); they were able to publish 184.000 books. Moreover, United States (US) published 304.912 books, China published 444.000 books, and Russia published 101.981 books. In addition, Taufik Ismail's study showed that writing competence of the Indonesian's student is the lowest in Asia due to lack of reading of the

students (cited by Sudaryat, 2010, p. 86).

A fact reveals that the low writing ability is generated by difficulties in writing. First, Nurgiyantoro (2012, p. 422) states that writing skill is more difficult to achieved than the other language skill even for native speaker. Second, Alwasilah (2001b) found that writing is the most neglected subject at school and it is the most difficult language skill to be learnt by students and to be taught by teacher. Moreover, Myles (2002) claims that most students in ESL' writing classes hate to this lesson because they have difficulties in getting started, finding the right words, and developing topics when they began to write and express their ideas.

Setiawan (2008) shows that writing is the most difficult academic lesson and most students in Indonesia at the university level avoid this activity. The level of their writing is low; their difficulties are not only in arranging the sentences grammatically, but also in choosing the suitable words in their composition. In addition, writing is difficult for the students because they were lack of reading.

At the Education Technology Study Program within Baturaja University, the process of teaching and learning English towards students of Education technology did not focus on teaching productive skill, especially writing a paragraph. They only focused on teaching the basic skill of English, like vocabulary and grammar. Students were rarely to write a paragraph.

The survey that was done by the researcher found that 45 out of 59 or 76% second semester students of Education Technology Study Program claimed they were unable to write in English, 17 % students claimed that they were able to write in English, and 7% of them claimed that they were master to write in English well. Lack of vocabularies, grammatical problems, and difficulty in getting started and developing the idea were their problems in writing a paragraph. It can be inferred that most of the students of Education Technology Study Program within Baturaja University were unable to write in English well. Similarly, the data from pre-test score proved the survey result that they were really unable to write in English well. There were only 19% of total samples who can reach score above 50, and 81% got below 50.

The students' writing achievement is affected by the strategies which are employed to them. Ormrod (2012, p.157) states that the instructional practices have a significant impact on how students mentally process classroom material and thus also on how effectively students learn it. Furthermore, Asmari (2013) found that the students who used effective writing strategies performed better in writing achievement. In line with this, Rachmawati (2013) on her research found that there was a correlation between students' language learning strategies used and their academic performance; the more student employs language learning strategies, the better her/his academic performance.

Saeid (2014, p. 479) mentions on his article, "Use learning strategies are important to facilitate the learning process, recall and retention and a significant positive relationship exists between learning strategy and achievement." It infers that the teachers' strategy in teaching learning determine the students' success in

learning. In addition, Abhakorn (2008, p. 195) states that the successful language learners use an array of strategies, matching those strategies to their own learning style and personality and to the demands of the task in the context of cultural influences. In order to make the students have ability in writing, the teacher should be able to find a good strategy in teaching learning process.

There are many strategies that can be applied by English teacher in teaching writing. Semantic Mapping (SM) strategy and Think Pair Share (TPS) strategy are the examples. SM, as one of the strategies in teaching writing, can be used to demonstrate the relationship between ideas. Since semantic mapping builds on students' prior knowledge and is an active form of learning, it can be a very effective teaching tool. Furthermore, it is a strategy for graphically representing concept that portrays the schematic relation that composes a concept (Estes, 1999). It is in line with what Piaget said in Crawford, Saul, Mathew, and Makinster (2005, p.2) that students learnt by making sense of the world in terms of the concept they already have, so the teacher should begin a lesson by drawing the students' prior concept and showed them how to inquire question, seek, and examine information.

According to Speidel (1982, p. 35, as cited in Octaria and Sumarsih, 2012), the making of Semantic Mapping is a procedure for building a bridge between the known and new information. As one of the strategies in teaching writing, SM will help students identify important ideas, how their ideas fit together, and provide an alternative format to the outline. It helps the students to overcome their problems in writing because they can imagine and write the entire ideas related to topic, so this technique can help students to develop their ideas in writing. In addition, researches conducted by Wailing (2004); Al-Jarf (2009); Boyson (2009), Mah (2011), Mansoor, Fahim, and Amir (2011); Riswanto and Putra (2012); Ahlberg (2013); Siddiq (2013); Al-Shaer (2014); and Prahasanti (2014) found that using Semantic Mapping could improve the students' writing skill. Indeed, this strategy help students organize information using a map and enables students not only visualize relationship but also categorize them as well.

Another strategy, TPS strategy, is designed to motivate the students to tackle a problem by collaborated with other students first, then work individually. In line with this, Vygotsky (1978) states that students are capable of performing at higher intellectual levels when asked to work in collaborative situations than when asked to work individually. Moreover, group diversity in terms of knowledge and experience contributes positively to the learning process. This strategy requires students to "Think" individually about a topic, exchange the ideas with "Pair", and after that "Share" ideas with classmate. Siburian (2013); Sumarsihi and Sanjaya (2013) found that the improvement of the students' achievement in writing was caused by the application of TPS strategy.

This study was aimed to see to see the effectiveness of using Semantic Mapping and Think Pair Share strategies without neglecting the influence of the students' grade point average level toward students' writing achievement in descriptive writing.

METHODOLOGY

In this research, researcher used an experimental method by applying factorial designs. Researcher chose 2x3 factorial design since the researcher measured two strategies of writing, namely Semantic Mapping and Think Pair Share strategies; and three level of Grade Point Average (GPA), i.e. high, average, and low GPA. The students' of Exp. 1 group got the treatmentt by using Semantic Mapping strategy, meanwile the students of Exp. 2 group got the treatment by using Think Pair Share strategy for about 2.5 months (including the pre-test and post-test; each meeting consisted of 90 minutes).

The population of this research was the second semester students of Education Technology Study Program of Baturaja University in academic year 2014-2015, with the total number 59 students from 4 different classes. Stratified random sampling technique used by the researcher in assigning the sample of the research. First, the researcher classified the students based on their GPA. They were classified into three groups (High, Average, and Low). Students who got GPA above 3.50 were classified into high level students; 2.76 – 3.50 were classified into the average level students, and below 2.76 were classified into low level students. There were 18 students who classified into high level students, 29 average level students, and 12 low level students. Finally, researcher randomly chose 6 students from each level to be the sample of the research.

To collect the data, a writing test was administered to all students before (pre-test) and after (post-test) intervention. The students were asked to write a descriptive paragraph at least 100 words in 60 minutes. The scoring criteria covered the understanding of topic sentence, support/ detail, proof of discussion, spatial order, and sentence skill. Two raters were asked to score the students' writing by using descriptive writing assessment taken from Rcampus. Inter-rater reliability test using Pearson Product Moment Correlation coefficientt was conducted to see the correlation between the two raters' score. All the data obtained data were converted into percentages ranging from 1-100. The achievement of the students was categorized as follows: Excellent (80-100), good (70-79), average (56-69), poor (40-55), very poor (<40) (Buku Pedoman FKIP UNBARA, 2014, p. 12). Inter-rater reliability test using Pearson-Moment Correlation coefficient was conducted to see the correlation between the two raters' scores.

In this research, the data were analyzed by using t-test and two way ANOVA. Paired sample t-test was applied to see whether or not there was a significant difference on student' writing achievement between before and after intervention in Exp.1 and Exp. 2 groups. Independent sample t-test was used to see whether or not there was a significant difference on writing achievement of all variables in pre-test and post-test score between Exp. 1 and Exp. 2 groups. To see the interaction effect between students' GPA and the strategies exposed to them (SM and TPS strategies) toward their writing achievement, two way ANOVA was used. Meanwhile a Stepwise regression analysis was used to see the contribution of each aspect of descriptive writing.

FINDINGS

Table 1

Distribution of Students' Writing Achievement (Exp.1 and Exp.2 Groups/ N=36)

Level of Achievement	Post-test		
	Mean	Frequency (%)	SD
Excellent (80 – 100)	80.00	4 (11%)	0
Good (70 – 79)	73.18	11 (31%)	2.76
Average (56 – 69)	62.73	11 (31%)	2.84
Poor (40 – 55)	51.00	10 (28%)	3.94
Very poor (< 40)	-	-	-
Total	66.72	36 (100)	9.54

Table 1 presents the result of the students' writing achievement after the intervention was done. It shows that the mean score was 66.72, with the distribution of scores as follows: 31% of the students were in average level of achievement, 28% students in poor level level of achievement, and 11% students in the excellent level.

Based on the students' responses to SM and TPS strategies in post-test, it was found out that most students have already used the strategy exposed to them. In general, their achievements are in fair level.

Table 2
Score Distribution of SM and TPS Strategies Applied by Students (N=36)

Aspect	Mean	1 Need Att %	2 Fair (%)	3 Good (%)	4 Ex (%)	Total
TS	2.89	-	13 (36.)	16 (44.)	7 (19	36 (100)
S/D	2.67	-	12 (33.)	23 (63.8)	1 (2.7)	36 (100)
PD	2.57	-	18 (50)	18 (50)	-	36 (100)
SO	2.56	-	20 (55.)	16 (44.4)	-	36 (100)
SS	2.18	2 (5.5)	27 (75)	7 (19.4)	-	36 (100)
Tot	2.57	1.12	50	44.4	4.4	100

As shown in Table 2, the distribution of the strategies used is as follows. For the aspects of Topic Sentence (TS), 36% students are in fair level, 44.44% is in good level, and 19.44% is in high level. For Support/ Detail (S/D) aspect, 33.33% of them is in fair level, 63.89% in good level, and 2.78% is in high level. For the aspect of Proof of Description (PD), 50% of the students are in fair level and 50 % is in good level. Then, for the aspect of Spatial Order (SO), 55.56% is in fair level and 44.44% is in good level. The last is for Sentence Skill (SS) aspect, still 5.56% of the students are in need attention level, 75% is in fair level, and 19.44% is in good level.

To know whether there was a significant progress in students' writing achievement as the result of their being trained for about 2.5 months, paired sample t-test was used to analyze the pre and post-test scores.

The result of paired sample t-test analysis showed that students' mean difference of pre-test and post-test in Exp.1 was 19.86 with standard deviation of 4.15. Meanwhile Paired sample T-test in Exp. 2 was 22.50 with standard deviation of 6.30. The significant result for both groups was supported by the value of the level of significance 0.000, in which it was lower than 0.05. It infers that both strategies enhanced students' writing achievement in writing descriptive paragraph.

Table 3
Result of Paired sample t-test of pre-test and post-test score in Exp.1 and Exp.2 groups

Var	PAIRED SAMPLE T-TEST			
	Mean dif Exp 1	Sig value	Mean dif Exp 2	Sig value

W-TOT	**19.8**	**0.000**	**22.5**	**0.000**
TS	6.66	0.000	8.19	0.000
SD	3.75	0.000	3.47	0.000
PD	3.88	0.000	3.33	0.000
SO	3.61	0.000	4.16	0.000
SS	1.80	0.011	3.33	0.000

The result of independent sample t-test showed that students' mean difference of pre-test in Exp. group 1 & Exp.2 groups was 2.083 with the significant result 0.618. Meanwhile the students' mean difference of post-test score in Exp. 1 and Exp. 2 groups was 4.861 with the significant result 0.170. It means that there was no significant difference on students' pre-test and post-test score for both Exp. 1 and Exp. 2 groups. For more details, see Table 3.

Table 4
Result of Independent sample t-test of pre-test and post-test score in Exp.1 and Exp.2 groups

Variables	INDEPENDENT T-TEST			
	Mean dif of pre-test between	Sig value	Mean dif of post-test between	Sig value
W-TOT	**2.083**	**0.618**	**4.861**	**0.170**
TS	0.416	0.637	1.944	0.090
SD	0.833	0.437	0.555	0.487
PD	1.25	0.248	0.694	0.362
SO	0.555	0.609	1.111	0.152
SS	0.972	0.344	0.556	0.507

The result of two-way ANOVA showed that F value of GPA was 27.178 with Sig. 0.000. Meanwhile F value of Strategy was 4.966 with sig. 0.033. In addition, F value of GPA*Strategies was 4.128 with sig. 0.026. From the result, it can be concluded that there was a significant interaction between students' GPA and strategies used on their writing achievement (Table 5).

Table 5
Interaction between students' GPA and Strategies

Var	Sum of squares	Mean Sq	F	Sig
GPA	2196.87	1098.4	27.1	0.000
Strategies	200.684	200.6	4.96	0.033
GPA* Strategies	333.681	166.8	4.12	0.026

In addition, it was found that there was a progress on students writing' achievement from pre-test to post-test scores for both Exp.1 and Exp. 2 groups. Specifically, The gain score between pre-test and post-test score for the High students' GPA in Exp.1 group was 20.42, then for average students' GPA was 20.00, and for the low students' GPA was 19.17. Meanwhile for the high students' GPA in Exp.2 group was 20.00, 19.17 for the average GPA' students, and 28.34 for the low GPA' students. To sum up, the best progress in Exp.1 group was achieved by High GPA students, and in Exp.2 group was achieved by low GPA students.

Since there was significant progress in writing achievement after the implementation of the strategy exposed to the students in each group, stepwise regression was applied to analyze the contribution of each aspects of writing.

For Exp. group 1, the highest contribution is in *topic sentence*

(78.3%), proof of descriptions (15.4%), sentence skill (5%), sentence order (0.4%) and support/detail (0.9%). Meanwhile, for Exp.2 group, the highest contribution is in the aspect of *proof of descriptions (83%)* followed by *topic sentence (13.5%), sentence skills (1.9%), support/details (1.1%),* and *spatial order (0.5%).*

DISCUSSION

The data analysis of the students' writing achievement after the intervention showed that the students as a whole were in the average level of achievement, mean 66.72 (see table 9), as measured by the standard level of achievement in Baturaja University. Although there was a significant improvement on students' writing achievement before and after intervention, more than one-fourth of the students still in poor level of achievement. This might happen because the lecturer did not provide them with many of English reading materials related to education and technology. Since the students were lack of reading, they have no sufficient input to write. In addition, they were also lack of writing practice. Although they were not the students from English Department, they still need English skills especially reading and writing skill to face this global era. Reading skill is important for students to absorb and update the information related to education and technology. Meanwhile, writing skill is very important for them to summarize the information that they got. The global era is characterized by the development of technology, for example the usage of laptop, gadget, social media, and internet. Students can access the information anytime because internet provides a lot of information and data, and many of them are written in English. In line with this, Morris (2003) stated that the field of science and technology also rely on the English language, and 86,5 % of the documents on the websites is written in English. So by reading English articles in the journals, the students are expected to be able to absorb and keep up with the development of science and technology.

Writing skill is also important for the students when they want to pinpoint the information that they receive from reading and expressing their own ideas through making summaries and paraphrases. These activities will help them when they want to transfer the information to other people. Furthermore, the students of education technology usually produce some products like modules or teaching media for their thesis, but they seldom join national or international seminars to promote their products. If they are able to write in English well, they can promote and publish their products to the larger community. By publishing their thesis, they have given the contribution to the development of education and technology.

Moreover, the result of Paired sample t-test indicated that SM and TPS strategies enhanced students' writing achievement. It was proved by the significant progress that the students had after the intervention. The mean of the students' post-test score of the writing achievement was higher than that of their pre-test. In addition, the result of independent t-test showed that there was no significant mean difference on students' post-test score between these two groups. It means that SM and TPS

strategies were equally good in teaching writing. These finding were similar to the finding of Riswanto and Putra (2012) and Siddiq (2013) who found that SM strategy was an effective strategy to improve students writing achievement; and Siburian (2013) who found that TPS strategy was an effective strategy to improve students' writing achievement.

Furthermore, the findings above were also supported by some experts, namely Jane Piaget and Vygotsky. First, Piaget cited in Crawford (2005, p. 2) stated that the students learnt by making sense of the words in term of the concept they already have, so the teacher should begin a lesson by drawing the students' prior knowledge and showed them how to inquire questions, seek, and examine information. It is in line with Speidel (1982, p. 35), cited in Octaria & Sumarsih, (2012) who claimed that the making of semantic mapping is a procedure for building a bridge between the known and new information. Students in Exp.1 group began their writing process by activating their relevant prior knowledge, then built up a new learning. They started their writing process by gaining, developing, and organizing their ideas about a certain topic. They passed all of the writing processes by themselves as stressed by Piaget cited in Brown, (2001, p. 13) that the importance of individual cognitive development as relatively solitary act.

Second, Vygotsky (1962) as cited in Bounchard (2005, p. 9) suggested that students learnt best when their learning is scaffolding. He also emphasized the importance of language in interacting with people. In other words, what a learner can do today with support, they will be able

to accomplish independently in the future. In line with this statement, William and Burden (1997) as cited in Arbakhorn (2008) claims that learning occurs first through interaction with other people, then individual. The activities in TPS strategy represent the theory of Vygotsky.

In Exp.2 group, students were allowed to discuss and exchange their ideas with pair, generate as many ideas as possible, and building a comment or idea from another student. In brief, SM and TPS strategies were equally good to be implemented in writing class since these strategies represent the Piaget and Vygotsky's learning theories.

Furthermore, the result of analysis by using two way ANOVA showed that there was a significant interaction of students' GPA and each used strategy (SM and TPS) on students' writing achievement. Since there was a significant interaction between students' GPA and each used strategy (SM and TPS) on students' writing achievement, the researcher continued to analyze the significant difference in students' writing achievement based on their GPA. From the computation, it was found that the best progress in Exp.1 group was achieved by High level students, followed by Average, and Low level students. Meanwhile the best progress in Exp.2 group was achieved by Low level students, followed by high and average level students.

Semantic Mapping strategy was more suitable to be implemented to the high level student. It was proved by gain score achieved by the high level students in Exp.1 group was above average and low level students. The activities in SM strategy focused on how student gain, develop, and organized their ideas independently

before they began to write. Students in Exp.1 group passed all of the writing processes by themselves as stressed by Piaget cited in Brown (2001, p. 13) that the importance of individual cognitive development as relatively solitary act. Since this strategy guided the students to work individually, high level students could be more concentrated without being bothered by the other students. They can develop and organized their ideas by themselves, without wasting time in making sure that everybody agrees with their ideas. In addition, studying alone means that nobody would be able to interrupt them when they were doing their writing.

Meanwhile TPS strategy was more suitable to be implemented to the low level students. It was proved by the gain score achieved by the low level students in Exp.2 group was above high and average level students. Students in Exp.2 group achieved the highest progress because they helped by high/ average students in the process of gaining and exploring the idea. They can exchange their ideas, discuss each other, asking for clarification and clarifying, and generate as much ideas as possible to get better result and deeply understanding. Since low students got many sufficient inputs after discussing with their pair, they could write a paragraph easily. They did not get frustration because they have known what they were going to write about. This finding was in line with Clifford (2012) that students with low level achievement improved when working in diverse groups.

The result from multiple regression analysis showed that all of the aspects in writing descriptive paragraph have contribution on students' writing achievement.

However, the highest contribution in Exp.1 group was in the aspect of topic sentence; meanwhile the highest contribution in Exp.2 group was in the aspect of proof of description.

The highest contribution on students' writing achievement in Exp.1 group was in the aspect of topic sentence. Students in Exp.1 group drew their ideas into a concept, namely semantic mapping. They started their mapping as a form of deductive order that going from their main ideas to the supporting sentences. They started from the general down to specific. They put their main ideas on the top of their mapping then developed it with many specific detailed. A topic sentence is an important part of a paragraph because it expresses a paragraph's main idea and can help the reader more readily understand a paragraph's purpose. Without topic sentences, paragraphs often lack of coherence and place an increased burden on the reader to determine a paragraph's main point. It was in line with Hogue (2008, p. 38) states that the most important sentence in a paragraph is the topic sentence. It tells the reader what the topic of the paragraph is. In other words, it tells the reader what he or she is going to read about. Furthermore, it also needs especially when readers are under pressure to read quickly and efficiently. Realizing the importance of topic sentence in a paragraph, Indiana University (2014) stated that the vast majority of the paragraphs, however, should have a topic sentence.

On the contrary, the highest contribution in Exp.2 group was in the aspect of proof of description. Proof of description is the descriptive words used by the students to describe the topic and reach the five senses of

writing. There was an old adage says "two heads are better than one." Since the students in Exp.2 group were gaining and exploring their idea with pair, they got much more ideas for their writing. They developed the topic provided by the lecturer in the inductive form that going from discussing and collecting many specific detail from their pairs. They started from the specific to general. They discussed, exchanged, and generated as many ideas as possible then collected it as their sufficient inputs to write. A proof of description is very important in writing descriptive paragraph because too little detail produces boring and abstract paragraph. In short, an effective paragraph develops the main idea with enough detail to hold the reader's attention and explain the writer's ideas.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and interpretations above, some conclusions could be drawn. First, SM and TPS strategies were effective to improve students' writing achievement. Second, Semantic Mapping and Think Pair Share strategies were equally good to be implemented in teaching writing. However, SM strategy was more suitable for high level students. Meanwhile TPS strategy was more suitable for students of low level of achievement. Furthermore, although there was a significant improvement on students' writing achievement after the intervention, the studnets were in the average level of achievement.

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