Maarifləndirmə fəaliyyətləri vasitəsilə L2 səviyyəsində danışıq təlimi

EOP (Peşə Məqsədləri üçün İngilis dili) kursu ilə bağlı hərtərəfli təcrübə

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Annotasiya Danışıq dili və danışıq öyrətmə on illər boyu tətbiqi dilçilik tədqiqatçıları tərəfindən daim araşdırılmışdır (Makkarti, 1998; Enn, 2001; Hyuz, 2002; Tornberi, 2005). L2 səviyyəsində danışıq nitqinin vacib bir komponenti olan danışıq bacarıqları və danışıq öyrətmə alimlərin də diqqətini daha çox cəlb edə bilmişdir (Makkarti, 1992; Riçardz, 2002; Tornberi və Sleyd, 2005). Bu məqalə yüksək peşə təhsili kontekstində EOP (Peşə Məqsədləri üçün İngilis dili) sinfindən bir qrup EFL (İngilis dili xarici dil kimi) tələbələrinə maarifləndirmə yolu ilə İngilis dilində danışıq öyrətmə ilə bağlı araşdırmanı təqdim edir. İlkin olaraq, müəllif məqalədə danışıq dilinin bəzi əsas sahələri və L2 səviyyəsində danışıq təlimi ilə bağlı yanaşmaları əvvəlki iki hissədə ciddi şəkildə nəzərdən keçirəcək və danışıq öyrətmə üçün zəruri olan maarifləndirmə fəaliyyətlərini təqdim edəcəkdir. Müəllif tədris məzmunu və tələbələrin tərcümeyi-halı barədə məlumat verdikdən sonra, EFL (İngilis dili xarici dil kimi) danışıq öyrətmə prosesi zamanı mövcud olan bəzi problemlərə diqqət yetirir. Nəhayət, son mərhələdə müəllif danışıq nitqi təhlilinin nəticələrinə əsaslanan mövcud İngilis dili dərsliyindən uyğunlaşdırılmış iş yerlərində danışıq öyrətməyə yönəlmiş hərtərəfli təcrübəsini təqdim edəcəkdir. Bundan əlavə, məqalədə müəllimlərin inkişafı üçün nəzərdə tutulan bəzi tövsiyələrə də diqqət yetiriləcəkdir.

Açar sözlər L2 səviyyəsində danışıq, maarifləndirmə fəaliyyətləri, kollecdə İngilis dili tədrisi

http://dx.doi.org/10.29228/edu.67

Məqaləyə istinad: Can Chen S. (2019) *Maarifləndirmə fəaliyyətləri vasitəsilə L2 səviyyəsində danışıq təlimi: EOP (Peşə Məqsədləri üçün İngilis dili) kursu ilə bağlı hərtərəfli təcrübə.* «Azərbaycan məktəbi». № 4 (689), səh. 39–52

Məqalə tarixçəsi: Göndərilib — 15.09.2019; Qəbul edilib — 07.12.2019

Teaching L2 Conversation by Awareness-raising Activities

An Integrated Practice of EOP Course

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Abstract Spoken language and teaching speaking have always been studied by researchers in applied linguistics filed for decades (McCarthy, 1998; Anne, 2001; Hughes, 2002； Thornbury,2005). As a significant forming part of L2 speaking, conversation competence and teaching conversation have also attracted much of the attention from scholars (McCarthy, 1991; Richards, 2002; Thornbury and Slade, 2006). This paper presents an action research on the teaching of English conversation by awareness-raising activity to a group of EFL (English as Foreign Language) students from an EOP (English for Occupational Purposes) classroom in the context of higher vocational education. Firstly, some key areas of spoken language and approaches for teaching L2 conversation will be critically examined in previous two sections; then, the writer will introduce the awareness-raising activities used in teaching conversation; next, the teaching context and students' profile will be briefed; some of the prominent problems existing in current EFL speaking teaching shall be pointed out; finally, the writer will present an integrated teaching practice focusing on conversational competence in workplaces, which has been adapted from an available vocational English textbook based on findings from spoken discourse analysis. In addition, some implications for teacher development will be pointed out in it.

Keywords L2 Conversation, Awareness-raising Activities, College English Teaching.

http://dx.doi.org/10.29228/edu.67

To cite this article: Can Chen S. (2019) *Teaching L2 Conversation by Awareness-raising Activities: An Integrated Practice of EOP Course.* Azerbaijan Journal of Educational Studies. Vol. 689, Issue IV, pp. 39–52

Article history: Received — 15.09.2019; Accepted — 07.12.2019

1.Introduction

Spoken language and teaching speaking have always been studied by researchers in applied linguistics filed for decades (McCarthy, 1998; Anne, 2001; Hughes, 2002； Thornbury,2005). As a significant forming part of L2 speaking, conversation competence and teaching conversation have also attracted much of the attention from scholars (McCarthy, 1991; Richards, 2002; Thornbury and Slade, 2006).

This paper discusses the teaching of English conversation by awareness-raising activity to a group of EFL students from an EOP (English for Occupational Purposes) classroom in the context of higher vocational education. Firstly, some key areas of spoken language and approaches for teaching L2 conversation will be critically examined in previous two sections; then, the writer will introduce the awareness-raising activities used in teaching conversation; next, the teaching context and students' profile will be briefed; some of the prominent problems existing in current EFL speaking teaching shall be pointed out; finally, the writer will present an integrated teaching practice focusing on conversational competence in workplaces, which has been adapted from an available vocational English textbook based on findings from spoken discourse analysis.

2. Key Descriptive Areas of Spoken Language

Based on McCarthy (1998), there are four key descriptive areas of spoken language: structural units and interactional features, generic features and contextual constraints. In this section, the two concepts: structural units and interactional features which are closely related to teaching L2 conversation are elaborated.

2.1 Structural features

Through a wide range of studies in discourse and conversational analysis, there are three fundamental structural units to all the spoken interaction: the transaction, the exchange and the adjacency pair. Transaction can be described as a unit of discourse, which can be identified by certain types of activity at their boundaries. For instance, teacher typically use some conventional makers (right, okay, now, so, etc.) to mark the transitions to new phases in the classroom. Exchange is the minimal structural unit of interaction, which includes Initiation-Response-Follow-up (IRF) (Sinclair and Coultthard, 1975 cited in McCarthy, 1991). Adjacency pairs can be defined as pair of utterances in talk which are often mutually dependent (McCarthy, 1991).

2.2 Interactional features

The interactional features can be summarized as linguistic devices that speakers manage the interaction in less obvious ways, turn-taking, discourse-marking

are central to such features. Turn-taking are the turn-constructional units which are minimal semantic units that can constitute one complete turn of talk. Discourse-marking is in connection with transaction-boundary marking but widely applied to convey many ideas in conversation. A finite series of lexical items (single word or phrase) can be used to signal many functions, such as "well" to serve as a disagreement marker. "you know" to signal the shared knowledge, "you see" to indicate proclaimed knowledge, "but"," so" to mean the topic shifting, "anyway" to refer to pre-closings and returning to interrupted topics.

3. Approaches for Teaching L2 Conversation

3.1 The direct approach

The direct approach for teaching conversation is to focus on the processes and strategies in casual conversation explicitly. It can be depicted as "planning a conversational program around the specific micro skills, strategies and processes involved in fluent conversation" (Richards, 1991). This approach emphasizes the need for instructional and form-focused state in the lesson cycle and still stresses the importance of giving learners opportunities to have conversations.

A program based on direct approach addresses many perspectives of conversation such as strategies for turn-taking, transactional and interactional purposes, differences between formal and casual conversational styles, use of conversational routines, fillers and repair strategies. In planning and developing a conversation program, such aspects can be seen as the goals and objectives based on language proficiency and specific needs of learners.

3.2 The indirect approach: teaching conversation by interactive tasks

The indirect approach assumes "learners can acquire conversational competence simply by doing it" (Thornbury and Slade, 2006, p.275). This kind of task-based approach to the teaching of conversation has been justified by second language acquisition research. One of the SLA researchers Hatch (1978 cited in Thornbury and Slade, 2006) ever states that leaners can know how to interact with others verbally when they learn how to do conversation; leaners acquire the competence underlying the ability when using the language in conversation for interacting with others. Pica (1987 cited in Thornbury and Slade, 2006) thinks that when learners are required to understand unfamiliar linguistic input and produce the comprehensible output, they are enabled to have opportunities to move beyond the current interlanguage level and attempt to modify, reconstruct their interaction with interlocutors until mutual comprehension is achieved.

Richards (2001) draws the conclusion that conversation class should basically provide opportunities for learners to participate in natural interaction by some communicative tasks and activities; it is no necessity to teach conversation in

real sense. In this situation, pair-work and group-work in peer-to-peer interaction are highly recommended in classroom and the focus of conversation class should be using language to complete a task rather than practicing language for its own sake.

3.3 Bottom-up and Top-Down Approaches

The bottom-up view of language in speaking represents developing conversational competence from instructing the basic phonemes, words and sentences separately before combining them into the larger units, which concerns with parts instead of whole and puts much emphasis on accuracy rather than fluency. While the top-down approach starts with the discourse and genre, the practitioner starts to instruct by the extended discourse (usually the whole conversations) rather than single utterances and makes students expose to examples of language use in context.

3.4 An Indirect Approach Plus

Both the indirect and direct conversation teaching approaches have their own features and theoretical groundings as being summarized previously; however, as Anne (2001) claims that with the emerging of communicative language teaching, the conventionally-used language models based on the written mode are not sufficient as the basis for teaching speaking. If teachers would like to engage students in more authentic language use, they need to gain more insights from the perspective of discourse analysis. Therefore, Thornbury and Slade (2006) put forward the indirect approach plus which combines features of indirect and direct approaches in the stages of performance and instruction. This approach involves learners in the exposure to authentic conversational input so that they are able to extract lexical chunks, conversational routines, discourse markers. Meanwhile, teacher's intervention should occur to promote "noticing" to make students focus on form whether at pre-, in-, or post-stage of conversation task, which leads to the design of awareness-raising activities in the next part.

4.Teaching L2 Conversation by Awareness-Raising Activities

According to Thornbury (2005), the awareness-raising activities have been defined as teachers are encouraged to use devices like recordings and transcripts to help learners notice their gaps in speaking. This section will elaborate the basic teaching procedures, the teaching materials and methods of awareness-raising activities based on the illustrations of Thornbury (2005).

4.1 Awareness-raising

The concept of awareness comes from cognitivist learning theory; as the prerequisite for restructuring learners' mental representation of the language, some extent of conscious awareness is necessary.

As mentioned by Thornbury (2005), learners cannot easily retrieve words at speed or achieve long, pause-free runs since they lack certain skills; however, in some cases, learners' language fluency is influenced by lacking of certain knowledge, such as what to say for changing of topic or how to respond to a difficult request appropriately. Therefore, activities designed to help learners uncover those gaps are called as awareness activities, which give learners chances to discover or even fill in the gaps by themselves.

Three steps are covered in the awareness activity: attention, noticing, and understanding. Attention requires learners to pay attention and to notice characteristics of the target skills; noticing is more than simply paying attention, it can be defined as "the conscious registering of the occurrence of some event or entity" (Thornbury, 2005, p.41). In the teaching context, students are required to notice the differences between language production and performance of novice leaners (or self-production and performance) and experts, which has been described as "noticing the gap".

(1) Using recordings and transcripts for noticing-the-gap activities

In order to raise learners' awareness of features of spoken language, they should be exposed to speaking recordings and transcripts as many as possible. However, some of the problems of recordings and pre-scripted transcripts should be noted: (1) they often lack of spontaneity and are only the superficial representative of real spoken language; (2) such performance effects like pause fillers, back-tracking and repair may be insufficient; (3) they always lack of authenticity since these recordings are designed to demonstrate some grammar structures and almost simplified to ensure intelligibility.

Therefore, except for noticing features of the exposed input, learners should get important information on their current proficiency by "noticing" their own output recordings through comparing their oral production with others. As Thornbury (2005) defines the noticing-the-gap activities as the events target to raise awareness of difference between the current competence of learner and the target competence; though the teacher can play the role in guiding the learner to notice the certain gaps and judging leaners' current language proficiency, the most effective gap noticing is probably initiated by learners themselves.

(2) Basic teaching procedures for awareness-raising activities

A basic but not prescriptive teaching procedures for awareness-raising activities can be applied to the teaching of spoken English. First, the teacher can activate background knowledge of students to help them establish the topic and/or the context of the speech event depending on the difficulty of the content; for instance, briefing the topic and the unfamiliar vocabulary items that occur in the recording; requiring learners to improvise a conversation on the same topic before playing the recording. Then, checking the gist and register: examining stu-

dents' understanding on main ideas by asking general questions and checking the register, including the tenor of speech situation, the degree of formality, the relationship between speakers and their relative social distance. Next, the teacher can check details by various of probing tasks, such as completing the table, filling in the grid or answering the multiple-choice questions; recordings can be played for many times if necessary and learners can have the chance to discuss with groups. After that, the handouts of transcript can be distributed among students for reading silently while listening the recording again; also, teachers should leave time for students to consult on the text about their unsolved doubts. At last, learners should have the foundation for guided noticing of selected features since they are sufficiently familiar with the text; at this time, learners can be directed to focus on language features by following those procedures:

- Identifying evaluative language by underling or circling in the transcripts
- Counting the frequency of discourse markers (e.g. you know, I mean)
- Classifying and identifying different discourse markers
- Matching idiomatic expressions in the text with their synonyms on a list
- Connecting pronouns in the text with referents
- Comparing and contrasting two versions of conversation and identifying any differences.

5. Problems on Teaching Speaking in EFL Classrooms in Vocational Education

5.1 Basic description on teaching context and students' profile

The Vocational English is a comprehensive EOP course designed for Year 2 students. The textbook of the course is English for Careers 2 published by Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press. The Listening & Speaking section aims to develop students' interactional competence in workplaces by providing relevant listening and conversation practices, which are based on typical workplace scenarios and relevant to unit topics, accompanied with some frequently used words and expressions.

However, given that the relatively lower English proficiency of students in higher vocational education, in particular, their weak ability in English listening and speaking, a great proportion of students in this course are demotivated learners and have already lost the confidence in English learning, especially in the listening and speaking sections.

Therefore, it is a challenging task to require students to finish the listening and speaking tasks only by completing exercises provided in the textbook without any design of activity.

5.2 Current problems on teaching English speaking in vocational education context

(1) The inactive classroom atmosphere results in students' unwillingness to speak.

Many practitioners in higher vocational schools just follow the teaching procedures provided by course or textbook syllabus and lack of creativity in speaking and listening instruction. Under this circumstance, the classroom atmosphere turns to be inactive which results in students' unwillingness to speak in class.

(2) The limited language proficiency prevents the oral communication.

As briefed in students' profile, learners in this context are in low language proficiency and learning motivation. Due to various reasons, they have gradually lost the interest of learning English; so, it seems to be very demanding for those low-proficiency learners to acquire the speaking and listening skills in English, not to mention the oral communication in class. Among most of the EFL classrooms in China, group discussion or free communication are the most common and popular speaking activities favored by teachers. However, considering learners' demotivation and limitation of language proficiency, it is nearly impossible to implement any oral communication activities without appropriate guidance and preparation in advance.

(3) The inadequate input leads to the silence of students.

Teaching English speaking among less proficient learners is not a simple task (e.g. students in higher vocational education) since teachers always encounter the embarrassment from the students' silence. The reason behind the silence might be that students are in short of adequate input both in linguistic and content level and not ready to speak out. For dealing with the embarrassing silence in speaking classrooms, it is worthwhile to think about transforming teaching methods and teachers' roles in traditional speaking classrooms and creating opportunities for students to attain sufficient input in order to produce abundant output, thus, to avoid the embarrassment in speaking classrooms.

6. Design and Rationale of the Integrated Teaching Practice for EOP Course

Bradford (1998 cited in McCarthy, 1998) ever said that it could bring a discourse-sensitive approach by combining the awareness-raising and more traditional exercises; moreover, as Thornbury and Slade (2006) report that materials designed only for receptive use could be incorporated into production activities if the authors do not offer any guidance on the highlighted language features.

The integrated teaching practice for the EOP course: English for Careers attempts to synthesize the teaching of speaking and listening by taking full advantage of the authentic listening materials and tasks as awareness-raising activities before advancing to the teaching of L2 conversation. The following part

Figure 1. Sample Syllabus of Speaking Section

Unit 1	Workplace	Having internal communication	Talking to supervisor about setting up a departmental meeting, showing a new colleague around the office; talking about work shift and appropriate dress code in the company
Unit 2	Meetings	Arranging meetings	Making a reservation for a conference room, discussing a meeting schedule, checking meeting preparations with the secretary, chairing meeting and giving comments

will illustrate the course design from several perspectives: objectives, syllabus, materials and teaching procedures; one sample lesson plan will be presented at the end.

(1) Objectives.

The objectives of teaching programs and materials always draw on a range of theoretical bases and combine elements from more than one paradigm. The overall objective of the course is to enable learners to participate in all kinds of conversations in workplaces and acquire various micro-skills of conversation from different theoretical perspectives. For instance, turn-taking, opening and closing, repairing, adjacency pairs and topic management in conversation analysis; conversational routines in speech act theory; degrees of formality, cultural and style differences from sociolinguistic approach; cooperative principles and politeness strategies in pragmatic.

(2) Syllabus.

In terms of the syllabus for the EOP course design, it mainly follows two methods of sequencing content: topic-based syllabus and transactional approach to conversation. The organization of different units are linked by various topics related to careers; such as, workplace, business meeting, business travel, money, band, quality, marketing and business-start-up; the internal unit content is connected with different transactional approaches to conversation, such as making arrangements to business meetings or booking plane tickets over the telephone (See Figure 1 for sample syllabus of speaking section).

(3) Materials.

Input materials: recordings and written transcripts of conversation extracts are provided to learners in the process of awareness-raising; these materials are usually either specially designed or authentic with recordings and set the model of certain conversational features. Though scripted dialogues provide the overall

structure and vocabulary of conversation, they rarely reflects the unpredictability, dynamism and linguistic features of natural spoken language; therefore, the learning materials should incorporate features of spoken language while still offer practical exercises for giving students' the feeling of doing and learning(McCarthy, 1998). In addition, after the listening tasks (the consciousness-raising process), stimulus materials for motivating students' conversational interaction should be developed in forms of role-play cards, discussion questions, prompts for ideas, useful words and expressions.

(4) Procedures.

As suggested before, direct and indirect approaches in teaching L2 conversation should be complimentary so the classroom practice is guided by the principle of "indirect teaching plus" which gives learners abundant opportunities to expose and participate in authentic conversation and encourages teachers to adopt the explicit instruction.

The three-element pedagogy of conversation model: instruction, exposure, practice has been sided by many researchers. Judd (1999 cited in Thornbury and Slade, 2006) advised to follow the procedure as raising cognitive awareness, developing receptive skills and producing language output when teaching the pragmatic competence. Furthermore, McCarthy (1998) considered that the follow-up in exchanges, the transaction boundaries and interruptions in conversation could not be simply taught by the traditional three Ps methodology (Presentation-Practice-Production). Therefore, an alternative methodology called "Three Is" (Illustration-Interaction-Induction) which emphasizes the function of noticing and supports the consciousness-raising approach before practice can supplement the conventional "Three Ps".

Concerning specific procedures of this model, the sequence of exposure, instruction and practice are less considered as long as all the three elements are contained in the program design. Exposure-instruction-practice model allows students to listen to audio recordings of conversation extracts followed by studying the specific features through reading the transcripts and incorporating language features into their own conversations; instruction-exposure-practice model instructs learners explicitly on features of conversation and makes them focus on observing how this feature functions in context before practicing conversation by themselves; exposure-practice-instruction makes learners listen to conversation extracts and produce similar dialogues, then teachers give feedback to students on their performances by pointing out the gaps before students repeat the practice again ; practice-exposure-instruction allows leaners to complete a conversational task before observing the same task performed by proficient speakers(by the audio-recordings or live listening), then noticing the gaps between the two versions and repeating the practice after receiving some instructions on language features.

Sample Lesson Plan for Speaking Section

Unit 3 Business Travel

Speaking & Listening

Topic: Arranging Business Trips

Teaching Objectives

- Learning how to book plane tickets over the telephone;
- Learning the conversation between the passenger and the staff of Airline ticket office.

Teaching Procedures and Materials

Warm-up and Activate Background Knowledge

- Do you know how to plan and arrange the overseas business trips?
- Do you have any experience of booking air or train tickets by the phone?
- If you are a clerk working for Airline ticket office, do you know how to communicate with passengers and deal with common inquires?

Flight No./ Airline	Departure/Arrival	Destination	Class	Price	Flight Type

Listen and Comprehension

- Mary Jones is booking an air ticket on the phone. Listen to the conversation and fill in the chart.
- Listen again and read the transcript, pay attention to useful words and expressions in booking the air ticket over the phone for both sides: travel agent staff and customer.

M: Northwind Airways, good morning. May I help you?
W: Yes, do you have any flights to Sydney next Tuesday afternoon?
M: One moment, please... Yes. There's one flight at 4:45 p.m. and one at 6:00 p.m.
W: That's fine. Could you tell me how much it costs?
M: Economy, business or first class?
W: Economy, please.
M: That would be $246.
W: OK. Could I make a reservation?
M: Certainly. Which flight would you like?
W: The 4:45, please.
M: Could I have your name, please?
W: My name is Mary Jones, that's M-A-R-Y J-O-N-E-S.
M: Now you have been booked, Ms. Jones. The flight leaves at 4:45 p.m., and your arrival in Sydney will be at 9:25 a.m., local time. The flight number is NWA 476.
W: Thank you.

Listen to the conversation between a passenger and a clerk at the Delta Airline ticket office and fill in the information form of the passenger.
Name:
Tel Number:
Flight Number:
Calling Date:
Intended Traveling Date:
Flight Departure Time:

Listen the recording again with the transcript and pay attention to useful words and expressions in communicating with passenger.

W: Good morning, Delta Airline ticket office. How can I help you?
M: Good morning. I booked an open ticket and my travel agent told me that I should confirm the ticket before I fly.
W: Yes, the airline requires the passengers to confirm their open tickets 72 hours before their intended traveling. Would you like to confirm your ticket now?
M: Yes, please.
W: Can I have your name, please?
M: The name is Shan Wang, which is spelled S-H-A-N, and W-A-N-G.
W: And your ticket number is?
M: It's PDK08065325.
W: When do you wish to fly?
M: I plan to fly on July 6. Do you have any tickets available on that day?
W: Let me see. Your flight is from Rome to Shanghai, and we have tickets available on July 6. Would you like to book it now?
M: Yes, please.
W: So your flight is DA1687 from Rome to Shanghai on July 6, Mr. Wang.
M: Thank you.

Controlled Practice: Complete the following mini dialogs with the help of the information given in brackets.
A: The China Airlines. May I help you?
B: Yes, _____ from New York to Boston tomorrow morning? (*Inquire about flight information*)
A: Do you want a_____ or _____ ticket, please? (*offer ticket types*)
B: One way, please
A: Which section would you prefer? _____, _____ or _____ class? (*offer types of seat*)
B: Economy, please.

Pair Conversation: Work in pairs, practice booking plane tickets over the telephone based on the clues provided in role play cards.
Role A: A Travel Agent

- Greet the caller
- Ask for the departure and destination city
- Ask about the time and date of departure
- Offer different flight options
- Offer the prices
- Confirm the information and close the conversation

Role B: A customer who wants to buy three one-way tickets

- State who you are and your intention of booking plane tickets
- Specify the departure and destination city
- List available times and dates
- Inquire about the prices of tickets for different flights
- Choose one flight and book three tickets

Useful Words and Expressions

Passenger
How many passengers? Adults, children, infants, seniors...
Time
When you do want to fly? Departure, arrival, delay, cancel...
Ticket
Do you want a... or a…?
Return (round-trip), one-way, multi-city (destination)…
Class
Which class/cabin do you prefer?
First class, business class, economy class
More Options
Do you want (to)...?
Upgrade class, promotions, non-stops, stopover...

Homework: Audio-recording the pair conversation and transcribing it into words with your partner by jointed efforts. Comparing your version to the audio recordings we have heard in class; can you find out any differences between the two? What shall we do to improve our conversational competence?

7. Conclusions

This paper introduces the integrated practice of combining listening materials and conversation practices together by awareness-raising activities, which has been developed for teaching speaking in an EOP class in the context of higher vocational institution. By reviewing and examining the key concepts on spoken language, speaking interaction and teaching conversation, the author designs the conversation course in vocational English classroom based on the notion of awareness-raising and relevant research literature of L2 speaking, which attempts to cope with some prominent problems emerging in teaching speaking in this pedagogical context.

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