

**DEVELOPING ENGLISH WRITING MATERIALS
FOR THE SEVENTH YEAR STUDENTS OF SMP NEGERI 2
SINGARAJA, BALI IN THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2009/2010:
A DESCRIPTIVE QUALITATIVE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT**

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ABSTRACT

This research was aimed at developing materials for teaching *Writing* skill for the seventh grade students of SMP Negeri 2 Singaraja. This research was conducted in a response to the fact and previous empirical studies which found that the available coursebooks neither meet the school-based curriculum nor the criteria of good materials.

This is a descriptive qualitative research. The research followed the R&D model proposed by Dick&Carey. The procedure of this research comprises analyzing the students' needs and instructional practices, collecting resources for the development, evaluating existing materials based on SBC and criteria of good materials, developing materials based on SBC-based syllabus and criteria of good materials proposed by Tomlinson, experts' judgment, field testing, revising, and developing the final product. The data were collected through rubrics response by the teacher, interview conducted to the teacher and students, and observation. To assure the validity and reliability of the data, the investigator employed triangulation method.

In general, the result of this research shows that the developed materials are compatible to both the school-based curriculum and the criteria of good materials proposed by Tomlinson. The materials are presented in two manuals, teachers and students' manual.

Key Words: Materials, material development, criteria of good materials, school-based syllabus, and Dick and Carey model of R&D.

**PENGEMBANGAN MATERI MENULIS DALAM BAHASA INGGRIS
UNTUK SISWA-SISWI KELAS VII SMP NEGERI 2 SINGARAJA, BALI
PADA TAHUN AJARAN 2009/2010: SEBUAH PENELITIAN DAN
PENGEMBANGAN DESKRIPSI KUALITATIF**

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengembangkan materi pembelajaran untuk keterampilan menulis dalam Bahasa Inggris bagi siswa kelas VII di SMP Negeri 2 Singaraja. Penelitian ini merupakan tindak lanjut terhadap temuan penelitian-penelitian sebelumnya menemukan fakta bahwa buku-buku teks yang digunakan oleh siswa-siswi belum relevan dengan KTSP dan beberapa kriteria yang dipersyaratkan.

Studi ini berjenis deskriptif kualitatif. Prosedur pengembangan materi pembelajaran menggunakan model yang direkomendasikan oleh Dick & Carey yang meliputi analisis tujuan dan kebutuhan akan pembelajaran, mengevaluasi materi pembelajaran yang digunakan siswa, mengumpulkan sumber-sumber pengembangan materi, mengembangkan materi, merencanakan dan mengadakan uji lapangan, mengevaluasi materi yang telah diuji, merevisi produk berdasarkan hasil evaluasi uji lapangan, dan mengkonfirmasi hasil revisi serta memproduksi hasil jadi.

Data diperoleh dengan menggunakan rubrik penilaian, *interview*, dan observasi. Untuk menjamin validitas hasil penelitian, triangulasi data, metode, dan investigator dilakukan di dalam penelitian ini.

Data menunjukkan bahwa materi pembelajaran yang dikembangkan memenuhi komponen-komponen silabus berdasarkan KTSP dan kriteria materi yang bagus. Materi pembelajaran diproduksi dalam bentuk manual untuk guru dan siswa.

Kata Kunci: Materi, pengembangan materi, kriteria materi yang bagus, silabus berdasarkan KTSP, dan model pengembangan materi Dick dan Carey.

1. INTRODUCTION

The government regulation of Indonesian Republic on National Education System number 20 year 2003 emphasizes that the system of national education has to guarantee equality in education opportunity, quality improvement, and relevance and efficiency of educational management to equip the citizens to overcome challenges locally, nationally, or internationally (Undang-Undang Republik Indonesia No. 20, 2003). In addition, an educational reform which is well-organized, focus, and sustainable is needed in terms of educational system, curricula, learning materials,

teaching learning strategies, as well as teaching learning approach.

Regarding the need for educational reform, a good quality of education, especially English education, is basically determined by adequate and appropriate materials delivered within the process of teaching and learning. The more effective the materials delivered in the teaching learning process, the better the quality of the education will be. By having effective materials during their learning experience, the students will be beneficially facilitated to practice on the four language skills because the materials encourage them to use the language through material-related activities. Moreover, their real

practices will aid and prepare them well for real use of language for communication, communicative competence.

Ideally, material and material-related practices or exercises should match the requirements of standard competency as well as basic competency reflected in each of the indicators stated in the school syllabus. This should be fulfilled since the syllabus as the representation of school-based curriculum is as a blue print of what have to be conducted in the teaching learning process regarding particular levels of education, particular settings, and particular student needs and characteristics. Thus, the selection of teaching learning materials as well as their related exercises is supposed to be conducted carefully.

The steps of the selection comprises: need analysis, collection of appropriate sources of materials, need-based evaluation, material design, try out, and reflection. All of them have to refer to the standard of competencies, basic competencies, and indicators presented in the school syllabus.

As previously mentioned, the need for effective teaching materials for real use of the language, especially English, is highly required. The effectiveness of the materials can be identified by considering their practicality, compatibility, and usefulness. Thus, all materials should be properly designed in order to be highly functional, easy to be applied, matched with standard of competencies, basic competencies, and indicators stated in the school syllabus and curriculum, and beneficial for the students' future life. In addition, materials should promote students to learn and practice the real use of the target language.

Unfortunately, teaching learning materials, especially writing materials for the seventh year students of junior high school in Buleleng district, which are practical, compatible, useful, and which meet the school curriculum (School-based Curriculum) for effective teaching and learning has not been adequately available yet (Sawitri, 2009). Though there are so many sources of teaching and learning materials from various media, most of the materials, instructions, list of teaching learning

activities, and exercises, however, are still mainly textbook-oriented and promote lack of real practice. Some of the materials do not promote authentic tasks, so that the students have little chance to practice writing naturally and appropriately. Most of them offer writing practices written on an exercise book or pieces of paper with full guidance and assistance from the teachers. This could actually be done by asking the students to write on a postcard, design an invitation card by using used materials, send and receive short message via short message service, and the like. By doing these, the students, in this case, would recognize the real use correspondence as well as use the target language in context. It could be said that related teaching learning activities within the existing textbooks do not really encourage students to practice and do not reflect the real use of the written language (e.g. students are supposed to write all of the written assignments in their workbook rather than on a postcard, invitation card, notes, etc).

Similarly, instructions given are often ambiguous, so that the students do not exactly know what and how they should fulfill the requirements of

the instructions. Thus they find difficulties in understanding the instructions which results their failure in doing the assignments as follows.

“Study these sentences.

Writing statements and questions that begin with *when*.

1. Yesterday I studied English in my room.
2. We heard music in our room last night...”

It could be seen that there is no clear requirement of fulfilling the need for the bold-typed instruction considering that there is another statement following that instruction which seems to be *another* or *additional* instruction. This tends to make the students confused about what to do. Moreover, the contents of the exercises or assignments, especially writing assignment, given to the students should be revised. The reason is that they tend to be cognitive-based by only asking the students to rearrange the existing words into sentences or sentences into a short paragraph; filling in the blank texts with available words or phrases; and providing or issuing very limited open-ended questions (e.g. where, how, which, etc). As a

consequence, the students' critical thinking and creativity would not be encouraged. Thus, more challenging materials are needed to be developed for effective writing practice of a real target language use. A research on developing materials for teaching English Writing for the seventh year students of junior high school at SMP Negeri 2 Singaraja, then, needs to be conducted. This research was only conducted until the proposed materials were field tested once, evaluated, revised, and produced. In other words, this research and development was conducted until a prototype of materials with a limited field test was produced.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study is a research and development (R&D)¹. The findings of research are used to design new systematically field-tested, evaluated, and refined products and procedures until they meet specified criteria of effectiveness, quality or similar standard (Gall et al., 2003; Gay et al., 2009). The aim of this research is to

develop field test²-based writing materials for the seventh year students of SMP Negeri 2 Singaraja, Bali. The present study is a descriptive qualitative research because the data obtained from the research instruments are described systematically and clearly in words based on specified criteria of the school-based syllabus and criteria of good materials proposed by Tomlinson (1998). This study was conducted at SMP Negeri 2 Singaraja, Buleleng-Bali.

The objects of this research were teaching learning materials recently used in writing course. The participants of the present study were thirty two students, 17 males and 15 females, of the seventh year and a female English teacher of SMP Negeri 2 Singaraja, Bali in the academic year 2009/2010. Based on a random sampling conducted to seven classes of the seventh grade students of SMP Negeri 2 Singaraja, this research was conducted in VII.B.

The followings are the procedures of this research derived from Dick & Carey's model of R&D (Dick &

¹Gall, Meredith D, Joyce P. Gall and Walter R. Borg. 2003. *Educational Research*. U.S.A: Pearson Education Inc.

² Dick, Walter and Lou Carey. 1985. *The Systematic Design of Instruction: Second Edition*. England: Scott, Foresman and Company.

Carey, 1985; 2001 in Gall et al., 2003).

1. Identifying the requirements of the output and the outcome of the teaching learning process by considering the Competency Standard, Basic Competencies, and Indicators of *Writing* skill stated in the syllabus of the school based on the curriculum implemented (known as KTSP³ stands for Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan or School-based curriculum).
2. Identifying the criteria of good book proposed by Tomlinson.
3. Identifying the problems and some weaknesses of recently-used textbooks and worksheet as a starting point for developing materials.
4. Designing a blue-print for developing new materials by considering and combining the elements gathered from the syllabus, theory of good materials proposed by Tomlinson, problems stated above, and empirical studies.
5. Planning and designing the materials.
6. The materials were physically designed into two kinds which were a *manual for teacher* and a *manual for students*.
7. Planning and designing the research instruments.
8. Experts' judgment.
9. Sampling the class as the setting of the field test.
10. Training the teacher on how to use the manual containing newly-developed materials.
11. Field testing and observing the class.
12. Distributing rubrics to the teacher, interviewing teacher and students.
13. Analysing the result of the field test and revising the materials based on the result of the rubric response, interview, and observation.
14. Confirming and consulting the result of the analysis with the teacher, students and two supervisors.
15. Producing and publishing the end product of the newly-developed materials.

³ BSNP. 2006. Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan. Jakarta

The design of this research could be

seen in the following figure.

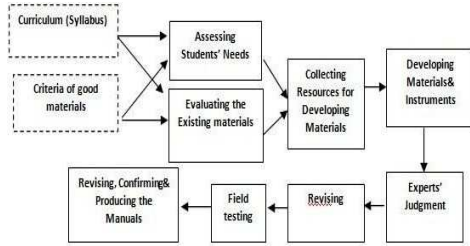


Figure 2.1 Proposed R&D Model

The above design is, in fact, the modification of Dick and Carey's R&D model as below.

Dick and Carey Design Model



Figure 2.2 Dick and Carey's R&D Model

The data were obtained by reviewing findings of some related empirical studies which analyzed the compatibility of the existing materials toward school-based curriculum in general and school-based syllabus in particular as well as their compatibility toward certain criteria of good materials. The results of the analyses were then used as bases to develop the proposed materials. In addition, an observation to the recent textbook and students' worksheet used by the seventh grade students and an informal interview to the

teacher were also conducted in order to find out some more potential problems.

The data were collected by using two kinds of rubrics especially designed based on school-based syllabus and based on the criteria of good materials. These rubrics were responded by the teachers after the field test and needed in order to assess the compatibility, validity and reliability of the newly developed writing materials. Likert scales with four categories comprising *Strongly Agree*, *Agree*, *Disagree*, and *Strongly Disagree* were applied for this purpose. These two rubrics were used and responded by the teacher who had implemented the materials in the classroom.

Interview guides for teachers and students were also used in the interview after the implementation of the proposed materials to identify the compatibility, practicality and the usefulness of the developed materials for both teachers and students. An informal interview to the English teacher was also conducted before and after each session of the field test in order to identify any potential problems regarding the implement-

ation of the proposed materials in the real classroom setting.

A classroom observation was conducted during the implementation of the materials and the result was recorded on field notes for the same purpose. This was needed in order to obtain more comprehensible data regarding the implementation of the proposed materials in the classroom sessions. This was also used to obtain additional observable data which might not have been obtained by the other two previously mentioned instruments, rubrics and interview guides.

All data from the observation, informal interview, and review of related empirical studies regarding the development of topics, materials, material-related exercises, activities, and teaching techniques were qualitatively described.

The data obtained from the rubrics and interview guides were descriptive qualitatively analyzed by using percentage of frequency by using the formula as follow.

$$\text{Percentage} = \frac{\text{Frequency of Response}}{\text{Total Item}} \times 100\%$$

In line with the validity of this research, *data*, *methodological*, and

investigator triangulations were conducted.

3. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Some or most topics presented in certain coursebook and students' worksheet, based on the empirical study and expert's analysis, still do not meet the school-based syllabus of related schools in terms of the order of the related topics or the systematical order and the content of the materials regarding the competency standard, basic competencies, and indicators stated in the syllabus. For example, the topics of the first semester based on the syllabus were designed to be presented in the second semester in the coursebook or vice versa

The problem, in this case, has to do with the arrangement of the topics presented for each of the semesters. This happened because the coursebook authors and publishers did not carefully recognize the content of the currently implemented syllabus.

To overcome this problem, several topics proposed based on the school-based syllabus implemented to the seventh grade students of SMP Negeri 2 Singaraja, Bali. These topics

were provided as alternative which helped the teacher whenever he or she needed additional topics to be delivered to the students. The topics were also carefully developed to meet the requirements and the indicators, basic competencies, and competency standard stated in the syllabus for each semester.

Based on the syllabus, the texts genres to be developed were only two namely descriptive and procedure texts.

The syllabus-related topics developed in this study are *Writing a Letter* and *Writing a Short Message* for the topics of instruction and introduction; *Healthy and Unhealthy Food* and *New Year Celebration* for a short description, a short procedure, and listing things; *My Birthday Party* and *Sport Competition* for greeting card and announcement; *The Most Interesting Place* for descriptive text; and *How To* for procedure text writing. The first four topics are the topics for the first semester. The rest are supposed to be delivered in the second semester.

Beside not appropriate arrangement of the materials, limited sources of materials was also the problem

faced by both the students and the teacher. It was found out that, recently, the same book or worksheet was used several years by different freshmen. This means that for years, the students from generation to generations have learned the same materials referring the same book or students' worksheet they have used. The students got less various materials. This was getting worse when the book or worksheet had been filled in partly or fully with answers or responses written by previous users of the book or worksheet.

The materials developed are *letter writing, messaging, listing things, designing cards and invitation, describing and comparing things, and expressing procedures.*

The availability of these proposed materials were to overcome the limited sources of teaching learning materials and exercises. So that, the developed syllabus-related topics, materials, activities, exercises, and implemented teaching learning techniques could be used as renewal alternative teaching learning sources of materials. Thus, teaching learning process could be enriched and refreshed.

In line with the activities, the teacher admitted that most of the previous teaching learning activities were done in the classroom with a very limited time. In addition, the activities were still mainly in the form of tutoring, asking and answering questions, discussion, quizzes, and test. The students had limited opportunities to practice writing and the teaching learning process was still teacher-centered.

Regarding the above phenomena, habit formation, by which the students learn both in and outside of the classroom, was promoted in developing the proposed activities in this research. The reason is that they should be encouraged to learn more from their environment and not merely textbook-limited material oriented. In other words, an attempt to make the students practice and practice all the time and to make every practice meaningful for them is the grand idea of developing the activities. Thus, they feel learning as a need and make it as a habit to get meaningful result, be competent in writing.

Meaningful activities like a simple survey or observation, a small

project, a short interview, and the other techniques of getting information were designed in this study to be assigned to the students before they started writing. By doing one or some of these, the students would supposedly be able to get involved in a real lives of their own since they deal with closely-related activities to their lives and gathered with everyone in their surroundings, to improve their interpersonal skill in communication, and to minimize their boredom due to dynamic settings and activities of learning experience.

Furthermore, most teaching learning process was also admitted to give a limited opportunity for active enrolment of the students in their learning (e.g. teacher's dominance and textbook oriented).

The activities offered in the manuals are *brainstorming*, *practice*, *sharing*, *concluding or summarising*, and *homework*. All the activities were designed to promote active involvement of the students. By developing the activities to be student-centered, it is hoped that the students would have more opportunities to practice writing, socialize, share ideas, express ideas,

and ask related questions if there is any both inside and outside of the classroom settings.

The activities and exercises were, in addition, developed to be gradable, in terms of level of difficulties and personel. This was purposefully proposed to suit the students' readiness and differences (i.e. characteristics, learning styles, levels of achievement) so that students' anxiety and feeling unsecured during the teaching learning process could be minimized or even eliminated. The activities related to the exercises were designed to be three different types comprising *easy*, *average*, and *difficult*. Easy type was suppose to be given to low achieving students. Average one was designed to be delivered to the middle achieving students. And, the difficult one was dedicated to those considered as high achieving students.

In terms of personel of doing the activities, the students were asked to work in group, in pairs, and then individually from begining until the end of each meeting session of the proposed materials. This was conducted in order to give the same opportunity to both dependent and

independent students to fulfil the task and do the practice. They were also supposed to share and exchange ideas, knowledge, experience, and expertise during the process of writing by working in pairs or in groups. This is also a good chance for the students to get closely to know each other and to socialize.

In the proposed materials, adequate examples or models for students were provided before doing exercises/ task. Some instructions in doing exercises were brief and clear, so that the students exactly know what and how to fulfill the requirements of the instructions.

Moreover, one way of enriching students' stock of vocabulary and training their sensitivity to develop and construct ideas into sentences or paragraphs is by having them write. They should be encouraged to practice writing various genres (i.e. descriptive, procedure) with various topics (e.g. describing places, persons, things, animals, writing the procedure of sending texts via handphone, procedure of using electronical appliances, cooking various culinary, etc.) continuously and intensively which encourages them to use various

types of vocabularies for a habit formation. As a result, it is hoped that they will be well prepared with this stock of vocabulary, more sensitive and capable in developing and constructing ideas whenever they communicate in English in written form or even orally.

The proposed topics, materials, activities and exercises, based on the criteria proposed by Tomlinson (1998), were also developed to be challenging and interesting. The topics were designed to be closely related to the students' life (e.g. short message exchange, birthday and new year party, favorite food, etc.) so that they would not find any difficulty in learning and practicing.

The materials were also dedicated to offer and promote various exercises and activities (i.e. done in group; in pairs; and individually, done inside and outside of the classroom by doing observation; interview; sharing, etc.), so that the students would learn more to use the target language in relation to developed topics. Consequently, they would continuously be exposed to the use of the target language, in this case mostly written language.

Various exercises and activities could also hopefully make the students not get bored to the monotonous ones they had had in their recent coursebook or worksheet. The gradable types of the proposed materials and exercises related to the topics could also accommodate students' different learning styles and intelligences (i.e. those who are field dependent could work in group or in pairs, meanwhile the field dependent students have been facilitated through individual task). At the same time, the proposed topics through the materials and exercises led students' autonomy by encouraging them to do the exercises individually, during the teaching learning process or at home, after they had worked in groups and in pairs.

Concrete and colorful pictures or photographs for material-related exercises were also added to both manuals by which students could easily connect their association, imagination, thought, and learning focus to topics, activities, exercises, and materials.

Several icons and titles of the activities for related exercises were also designed. These were created in

order to give particular hints or clues to both the teacher and students toward kinds of activities and exercises they were dealing with.

The procedure of using the manuals was additionally designed in order to give a brief and clear guidance for the teacher and students on the way how to use the manuals.

Most teaching, based on observation and informal interview, was dedicated for tutoring and students had really limited action in practicing their writing competences, teacher-centered, by which the students enrolment in active learning was ignored. They could also have been encouraged to work in groups, in pairs, and individually in order to accomodate their differences in learning styles, level of achievements, as well as level of readiness.

The materials, activities, and exercises proposed in this research were arranged to encourage the students to apply process approach. The focus of the semantic mapping or mind mapping was to make the students relate some relevant ideas and vocabulary. This was done in order to make their sentences or paragraphs coherent to a certain topic

or the main idea they were writing about. Finding, developing ideas, and vocabulary building which were mostly recommended in the brainstorming and sharing activities were considered several attempts for the purpose of semantic mapping. In these kinds of exercises and activities, the students practiced to connect related vocabularies, ideas and meanings of them with the central ideas or topics of their writing work.

POWERS, which stands for *Pre-writing, Organising, Writing, Editing, Revising, and Sharing*, is another strategy implemented in conducting the proposed topics, materials, activities, and exercises.

Some features of CLT approach which could also been found in these proposed manuals are meaning and contextualization are emphasized, attempts by learners to communicate with the language are encouraged from the beginning of instruction, materials organization is determined by the content, function, and meaning that will maintain students' interest, possible use of the native language is acceptable where feasible and translation maybe used when students find it valuable or necessary;

especially for those of low achieving, activities and strategies for learning are varied according to learner's needs regarding the requirements of the school-based syllabus, and communicative competence comprising linguistic; sociolinguistic; and discourse competences, with an emphasis on fluency and acceptable language use, is the goal of instruction. Context-based accuracy is prominent.

The strategies implemented in these proposed materials were adapted mostly from those of CLT which focused on *Constructivism* by making students doing and practicing something, having them doing exercises, composing paragraphs, demonstrating, sharing ideas, etc; *Inquiry* by which the students were asked to observe, interview, collect data, analyze and present or display the results in the form of reports or pictures; *Questioning* which was mostly presented in the pre and post activities of the proposed materials in the form of *brainstorming* and *summarising*; *Learning Community* by which the students worked in pairs, small and large group activities; *Modeling* which was mostly presented

in the forms of written examples and some of oral by teacher or prospective students; *Reflection* which was done at the end of the meeting by both the teacher and students by summarizing or concluding entitled *What Have You Learned*; and *Authentic Assessment* by which the focus of the assessment was on both process and product.

In terms of learning, the proposed materials accommodated behaviorists' theory which believes that all behaviors are acquired as a result of conditioning.

Both types of conditioning were implemented in these proposed materials. *Classical Conditioning* was implemented by providing students with three different sets of activities and exercises which could be chosen based on their level of understanding and achievement. They should not be afraid of being unable to deal with the materials, to get involved in learning activities, and to fulfil the requirements of the exercises. By proposing this within the learning materials, their feelings and emotions were conditioned for easier, more practical, useful, comfortable, and more meaningful learning. They would supposedly not feel anxious

and fear due to the level of difficulty they ought to face.

Operant conditioning or *instrumental conditioning* was also promoted by suggesting the teacher to give rewards (i.e. score bonus, candies, or praise) to those who did best or very well performance and participated positively during the classroom sessions.

Based on the findings on validity by using rubrics, interview guides, and observation represented above, there was no need to revise the materials in terms of the content, based on the result of evaluation regarding the compatibility of the materials with the school-based syllabus, and compatibility, practicality, usefulness and physical lay out, regarding the result of the evaluation on the basis of the criteria of good materials proposed by Tomlinson.

As previously explained, the result of the rubrics showed that the teacher agreed that the content of the materials comprising topics, activities, exercises, and teaching learning approach and strategies, met the school-based syllabus. In addition, she also admitted that the materials superficially met the criteria of good

materials in terms of *consistency, format, organization, attraction, and font types and size.*

The result of the rubrics was in line with the result of the interview, conducted toward both the teacher and the students. The data obtained from the teacher and students through the interview had led to the conclusion that the proposed materials were proven to be compatible in content and superficially.

The result of the observation, moreover, proves similar data. The result of the observation conveys that there is no fundamental problem of implementation of the materials in the classroom sessions.

Data triangulation proves that the proposed materials meet both the school-based syllabus and the criteria of good materials proposed by Tomlinson. The three methods including rubric, interview, and observation lead to the same conclusion. Furthermore, the validity and reliability of the developed products to be used as alternative materials could be guaranteed because the four experts, the teacher, the students, and the researcher approved

the compatibility, practicality, and usefulness of the products.

Final revision was conducted as a result of the input gathered from the experts, teacher, and students. The final product was, then, confirmed to all sources of data stated above to obtain final approval.

Finally, topics, activities, exercises, materials as well as implementation of the teaching learning techniques were developed in the form of teaching learning manuals.

4. CONCLUSION

The products of this research offered special features and advantages. The products promoted students' learning (inside and outside of the classroom), encouraged the real use of the target language, accommodate students' diversities (e.g. learning styles, level of achievement), and combined learning and art (e.g. designing cards, drawing and writing). The products were also process and product-oriented, student-centered, compatible with the syllabus and criteria of good materials, meaningful, contextual or real life (e.g. authentic tasks), challenging with various

materials, lovely, inspiring, and attractive with colour and stimulating images and photographs.

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