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## Effectiveness of Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) in Improving the Reading Comprehension of Grade Three Pupils

Dr. Minard B. Abenojar  
National Teachers College, Manila, Philippines  
Corresponding Author email: [minard123abenojar@gmail.com](mailto:minard123abenojar@gmail.com)

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### Abstract

**Aim:** This study aimed to determine the effectiveness of the Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) on improving the reading comprehension of Grade Three pupils at Toro Hills Elementary School.

**Methodology:** The experimental method of research was employed to evaluate the effectiveness of the Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) on improving reading comprehension. The main source of data came from thirty Grade Three pupils at Toro Hills Elementary School, selected through purposive sampling and divided into two groups: 15 pupils in the control group and 15 pupils in the experimental group. Pretests and posttests were used to measure reading comprehension levels before and after the intervention, with the experimental group receiving instruction through the DRTA method and the control group receiving traditional teaching.

**Results:** Directed Reading Thinking Activity was very effective in improving the reading comprehension of the grade three pupils. Table 5 indicates that DRTA is more effective than a traditional teaching in improving the posttest scores of the pupils.

**Conclusion:** This study concludes that the Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) significantly improved the reading comprehension of Grade Three pupils at Toro Hills Elementary School. The findings revealed substantial differences between the pretest and posttest results for both the control and experimental groups, as well as significant differences between the posttest results of the two groups.

**Keywords:** effectiveness, Directed Reading Thinking Activity, reading comprehension, conventional method

### INTRODUCTION

Several questions have triggered the researcher to pursue this study. What are the better methods of teaching among elementary school pupils that will enhance their reading comprehension performance? How do different teaching reading methods affect their studies? What are the hindrances that lead them to fail or lose interest in their studies? These are some questions that arose in the researcher's mind that motivated him to conduct of the traditional chalk and board method and the (DRTA) Directed Reading Thinking Activity method. This is to determine whether the DRTA is more effective than the traditional chalk and board method.

English in the Philippines has become one of the compulsory subjects starting from the grade 1 up to college (Carvajal & Sanchez, 2023; Carvajal & Sanchez, 2024; Salendab, Ocariza-Salendab & Sanchez, 2023; Sanchez, 2022; Sanchez, et al., 2024a). Pupils in the primary level particularly in third grade must have the capabilities in learning and using the Four Macro Skills in English (listening, speaking, reading and writing). This means that, English should be considered as one of the important subjects in the country (Dizon & Sanchez, 2020; Sanchez, 2020; Sanchez, 2023a; Sanchez & Sarmiento, 2020). As early as 8 years old, primary pupils must know how to understand language from a simple word to phrase to sentence. This is for their own advantage when they grow up. The four macro skills should be introduced to them and they should master each skill. Reading is one of the skills which are very essential. Reading skills are important for pupils in acquiring facts.



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As students grow into mature readers, their comprehension and thinking skills also mature. Reading comprehension involves the ability not only to read the lines but also the abstract step of "reading between the lines." However, the next crucial step involves higher order thinking that takes reading between the lines one step farther (Amihan & Sanchez, 2023; Amihan, Sanchez & Carvajal, 2023; Sanchez, et al., 2024b; Sanchez, Sanchez & Sanchez, 2023; Sanchez, et al., 2022). Good readers have the ability to read beyond the lines. Higher-order thinking skills enable students to do this and find the real value in the information they are reading. (Marshall, 2012)

Reading is definitely important for providing knowledge and information that can persuade the pupils to achieve the language acquisition. In school, many textbooks are being presented to the pupils that they need to understand. It is not enough just to know the meaning of the words in the text. Pupils need to be able to comprehend or understand well to gain the substance of the texts (Carvajal, et al., 2024; Muñoz & Sanchez, 2023; Sanchez, et al., 2024c). Nevertheless, applying a good reading activity and getting the positive outcome of reading is not as easy as pie. Reading phenomena can be found in the teaching and learning process in Toro Hills Elementary School. The researcher has observed among the grade III English pupils that their reading comprehension is still low. They usually complain that it is really difficult understanding the text.

There are many reading strategies employed at Toro Hills Elementary School during the teaching and learning that support the pupils in comprehending texts. These strategies somewhat influence the pupils' concentration in reading. Besides, pupils are expected to grasp the ideas of a particular text in order to acquire the information during the reading process. The pupils' thinking ways also need to be guided so they will not turn to unintended purpose of a text. This means that pupils must be guided and be able to comprehend a text during the reading process. To do so, there should be a strategy in reading that facilitates them.

There is widespread acknowledgment that children vary in the ease with which they can read the words on the page (Carvajal, Sanchez & Amihan, 2023; Salendab & Sanchez, 2023; Sanchez, 2023b; Sanchez, et al., 2024d). They also vary in their listening comprehension and reading comprehension. The focus of teaching for later reading development emphasizes comprehension and responses as children develop as critical and fluent readers, moving from learning to read, to reading to learn, engaging and interacting with a wide range of texts for purpose and pleasure. (Lucida, 2013)

There are different kinds of strategies in reading that can be imposed to assist the pupils in comprehending texts. One of them, called Directed Reading-Thinking Activity (DR-TA). DR-TA, is a strategy which attempts to equip readers with the ability to determine the purposes of reading, the ability to extract, comprehend, and assimilate information, the ability to make predictions to examine reading materials based on the purposes of reading, the ability to pass judgments, and finally the ability to make decisions based upon information gleaned from reading (Odwan, 2012). In line with this study, DR-TA is thought to be the strategy that provides way to facilitate students achieves reading comprehension.

The researcher had first known this reading strategy when he attended a seminar and finished three day training about "Teacher Training Workshop: Effective Pedagogical Approaches in Teaching Elementary English on January 25, February 1 and 8, 2014 at Ateneo De Manila University, Quezon City. The researcher was inspired and motivated to use this strategy to know the effect of DRTA to public elementary pupils particularly in grade 3.

Based on the problems and the proposed strategy, the researcher has become interested in conducting a study entitled "Effectiveness of Directed Reading Thinking Activity in Improving the Reading Comprehension of Grade Three Pupils of Toro Hills Elementary School".

There are some factors that influence pupils' reading comprehension. They are teacher factor, pupil factor and teaching and learning process factor.

- The first factor that influences pupils' reading comprehension is related to the teacher. A teacher should be able to facilitate the pupils so that the pupils are able to achieve the goal of reading. A teacher's ability and proficiency in managing and facilitating class enhances pupils' development and provide the encouraging atmosphere for them. Besides, the teacher should be able to determine the suitable and feasible strategies for the teaching and learning process. Implementing reading strategies, helping learners to understand the



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text, and managing the use of strategies are considered to be the important aspects in teaching second or foreign language reading skills. Classroom management and reading strategies used by the teacher should be put more attempt and attention in conducting encouraging classroom management and applying appropriate reading strategies to develop pupils' reading comprehension.

- The second factor that influences pupils' reading comprehension is the pupils themselves. Pupils are the target of teaching and learning process. Each pupil absolutely has different levels of proficiency in English. Some of the pupils have good proficiency, and the others have fair or even low proficiency. Their lack of vocabulary hinders them to understand the text easily. They suddenly drop their motivation when they see a long text before they read it. The pupils also find it difficult to distinguish between the main idea and the detail information. They also find difficulty in distinguishing between the detail information and the main idea of the text. All of the pupils' problems should be taken seriously by determining the most suitable treatment.
- The third factor that influences pupils' reading comprehension is related to the process of teaching and learning. It has been observed by the teacher based from the classroom management that some pupils may be busy talking with their friends, and some may be busy doing their own activities while the teacher is explaining the lesson. The process of teaching and learning is slightly disrupted by the noises from the pupils. In reading activities, pupils need sufficient input, the appropriate strategies and activities that can encourage them to comprehend the texts. The pupils read the text silently by themselves and then simply answer the questions based on the text without any further explanation to go deep with the ideas of the text. Sometimes, some pupils do not know the meaning of the question and there are no strategies to deal with this problem. The teacher tended to give all of the meaning of the difficult word without trying to invite pupils to find the meaning by themselves.

In recent years, considerable national attention has been focused on the interventions for preventing reading difficulties and fostering higher levels of literacy in all children. There have been two large-scale committee efforts to summarize the research on reading instruction. According to the result of the study of Wilhelmina (2012), good readers of all ages engage in conscious, active comprehension strategies before, during, and after reading. Before reading, for instance, they may define their goals for reading and consider what they already know about a topic and the structure of a text. During reading, they typically activate relevant prior knowledge, make connections among important ideas, construct and test hypotheses, paraphrase key points, and try to resolve any comprehension difficulties that arise. As they read, they may make notes in the margins or underline portions of a passage. After reading, they may reread or skim the passage, summarize it, or take notes. Good readers often continue to reflect on the meaning of a text long after they have read it. Finally, good readers use strategies flexibly depending on the type of text they read and their purpose for reading it. Much of the research on reading comprehension has centered on the question of whether it is possible to improve children's understanding and recall of texts by explicitly teaching them to implement the strategies that good readers use.

It is very crucial to know and address the deficiencies in reading comprehension. Toro Hills Elementary School is now facing serious problems in terms of reading comprehension. These are reflected in the performance in the standardized test, the National Achievement Test or Language Assessment for Primary Grades given by the department of Education. Hence, the researcher embarked on this study in order to find out the effectiveness of DRTA in improving the reading comprehension of the pupils.

### Objectives

This study aimed to determine the effectiveness of Directed Reading Thinking Activity on the reading comprehension of the pupils in Toro Hills Elementary School.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What was the performance of the Control group and Experimental group in:
  - 1.1 the pretest; and
  - 1.2 the posttest?
2. What significant difference existed in the performance of the control group in the pretest and posttest?
3. What significant difference existed in the performance of the experimental group in the pretest and posttest?
4. How significant was the difference in the performance in the posttest of both groups?
5. How effective was DRTA in improving the English reading comprehension of the respondents



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## Hypothesis

1. There is no significant difference between the pretest and posttest results of the:
  - 1.1 Control group
  - 1.2 Experimental group
2. There is no significant difference between the posttest results of the control and experimental groups.

## METHODS

### Research Design

In order to have a comprehensive view of the effectiveness of DRTA in improving the reading comprehension of the grade three pupils in English at Toro Hills Elementary School, Quezon City, the experimental method of research was used. This method offers the most effective means of establishing casual influences on a phenomenon of interest. Subjects were randomly selected and assigned to experimental treatments.

### Population and Sampling

Thirty grade 3 pupils were selected as the main participants in the study. The samples were selected from 2 lowest sections of grade three classes. Fifteen pupils of each class who found difficulty in reading comprehension and had below average grades on the previous grading periods were identified and chosen as respondents.

### Instrument

The primary source of data for this study was the teacher-made test. The pretest was given before the conduct of the experimentation stage while the posttest was given after the researcher used the two strategies: the DRTA for the experimental group and the traditional method for the control group.

The pretest and posttest were used to compare the levels of comprehension of students in terms of knowledge, understanding and process after the series of lesson using DRTA. The test was

### Data Collection

The data were gathered, read, and analyzed following the objective of the study and in adherence to all protocols in the conduct of research.

### Treatment of Data

Pretest and Posttest scores of the control group and experimental group were encoded and processed using SPSS V.17. The following treatments were employed:

1. Mean. This was used to measure the pretest and Posttest level of performance of the pupils. The formula is:

Where:

X = Mean

$\Sigma X$  = Sum of scores

n = Number of cases

$$\bar{X} = \frac{\sum X}{N}$$

2. Standard Deviation. This was used to find the degree of dispersion of the students' level of performance. The formula is:

$$S = \sqrt{\frac{\sum (X - \bar{X})^2}{N}}$$

where S = the standard deviation of a sample,  
 $\Sigma$  means "sum of,"  
X = each value in the data set,  
 $\bar{X}$  = mean of all values in the data set,  
N = number of values in the data set.



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3. T-test for paired samples. The correlated t-test was used to determine the significant difference in the pretest and posttest of the experimental and control groups. The formula is:

Where:

$$t = \frac{\sum d}{\sqrt{\frac{n(\sum d^2) - (\sum d)^2}{n-1}}}$$

= sample means of the pretest

= sample means of the posttest

= difference between the pretest and posttest score of each pupil

= number of pairs

=  $n - 1$

= .05

4. T-test for independence. Independent T-test for large sample sizes was used to determine the significant difference of the mean scores in the pretest and posttest of the experimental and control group. The formula is:

$$t = \frac{\bar{x}_1 - \bar{x}_2}{\sqrt{\frac{s_1^2}{n_1} + \frac{s_2^2}{n_2}}}$$

where  $\bar{x}_1$  = mean of sample 1

$\bar{x}_2$  = mean of sample 2

$n_1$  = number of subjects in sample 1

$n_2$  = number of subjects in sample 2

$$s_1^2 = \text{variance of sample 1} = \frac{\sum(x_1 - \bar{x}_1)^2}{n_1}$$

$$s_2^2 = \text{variance of sample 2} = \frac{\sum(x_2 - \bar{x}_2)^2}{n_2}$$

To categorize the performance of the pupils in the pretest and the posttest as revealed by their mean scores, the scales below were used.



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Range of Scores		Achievement Level
11 – 15	=	Excellent
6 – 10	=	Average
0 – 5	=	Poor

### Ethical Considerations

The researcher ensured that all research protocols involving ethics in research were complied with for the protection of all people and institutions involved in the conduct of the study.

### RESULTS and DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the analyses and interpretations of the data gathered from the results of the pretest and posttest administered to the third grade of Toro Hills Elementary School, in the Division of Quezon City during the school year 2015-2016. The information obtained from the instruments used were logically arranged in response to the questions given in the statement of the problem.

#### Mean performance of the control group and experimental Group

The mean performance of the two groups was determined through the Pretest and Posttest.

**Pretest.** Table 1 shows the mean performance of the control and experimental groups in the pretest.

Table 1

**Performance Level of the Two Groups in the Pretest**

Experimental Group				Control Group			
Score	Frequency	Percent	Interpretation	Score	Frequency	Percent	Interpretation
11-15	0	0.00	Excellent	11-15	0	0.00	Excellent
6-10	0	0.00	Average	6-10	0	0.00	Average
1-5	15	100.00	Poor	1-5	15	100.00	Poor
Mean	2.80		Poor	Mean	2.73		Poor
SD	0.941			SD	1.223		

It is shown in the table that out of 15 respondents in the control Group as well as in the experimental Group, nobody got a score of within 6-15 all of the respondents got 1-15 scores. This reveals that the respondents in the control group and the experimental group had poor reading proficiency. The control group got a mean of 2.73 points while experimental group scored 2.80 points which were both given verbal description of poor.

From the data, it can be said that respondents were not far from each other in terms of mean in the pretest. The control group's mean was 2.73, while the experimental group's mean was 2.80 and their SD's were 1.223 and 0.941 respectively. They likely remained under the category as poor. This means that the reading proficiency was at the poor level.

The mean of two groups would reveal that at the beginning, they possessed the same level of reading proficiency skills. Seemingly, this could be the same reason that they obtained poor rating in the pretest. Justification for the equal distribution of the subjects in terms of their reading proficiency skills was reflected in the table.



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Posttest. Table 2 reflects the performance of the control and experimental groups in the posttest. It is good to note that the group where DRTA was used got an excellent performance in the comprehension test. This goes to show that the respondents in this group were able to develop the skills in comprehension.

On the hand, those in the control group were able to increase their performance from poor to average. It was observed that there was not so much change in the attitude of the pupils towards reading.

As shown in this table, eight or 53.33 percent of the respondents in the experimental group got scores from 6-10. This means that majority of the respondents in this group obtained average rating in the posttest.

There were seven or 46.67 percent who got excellent, with scores of 11-15 while no one got poor.

Table 2  
**Performance of the Two Groups in the Posttest**

Experimental Group				Control Group			
Score	Frequency	Percent	Interpretation	Score	Frequency	Percent	Interpretation
11-15	7	46.67	Excellent	11-15	2	13.33	Excellent
6-10	8	53.33	Average	6-10	8	53.33	Average
1-5	0	0.00	Poor	1-5	5	33.33	Poor
Mean	11.13		Excellent	Mean	7.20		Average
SD	2.264			SD	2.484		

On the other hand, there were eight or 53.33 percent of the respondents in control group who got scores from 6-10. This means that majority of the respondents in this group obtained average rating in the posttest. There were two or 13.33 percent who obtained scores which range from 11-15 which is equivalent to excellent performance; while five or 33.33 percent got poor performance with scores of 1-5.

The table likewise shows that the mean score of the experimental group was 11.13 which was interpreted as with excellent performance. On the other hand, the mean score of the control group was 7.2 described as average. This shows that the performance of the experimental group is higher than control group.

**Difference between the Pretest and the Posttest of the Control group**

Table 3 shows the significant difference between the pretest and the posttest of the control group.

Table 3  
**Significance of Difference between the Pretest and Posttest of the Control Group**

	Mean	Mean Difference	Std. Deviation	Computed t-value	Critical value	Decision	Interpretation
Pretest	2.73	4.47	1.223	9.376	2.0480	Reject Ho	Significant
Posttest	7.20		2.484				

The pretest and posttest result of the pupils exposed to conventional method of teaching reading were tested using t-test for correlated samples to determine if there was a significant difference in their performance. The pretest had a mean of 2.73 while the posttest had 7.20 showing a mean difference of 4.47. The result revealed that

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the computed-t value of 9.376 was greater than with the tabular value of 2.0480 hence the null hypothesis was rejected. It means that there was a significant difference between the pretest and the posttest of the control group.

There was a considerable increase in the reading performance of the control group from pretest to posttest. The increase guarantees that the traditional teaching strategies were effective in teaching reading. This implies that even the use of the traditional strategies would enable pupils to learn.

**Difference between the Pretest and the Posttest of the Experimental group**

Table 4 shows the results of the difference between the pretest and the posttest of the experimental group.

Table 4  
**Significance of Difference between the Pretest and Posttest of the Experimental Group**

	Mean	Mean Difference	Std. Deviation	Computed t-value	Critical value	Decision	Interpretation
Pretest	2.80	8.33	0.941	8.639	2.0480	Rejected Ho	Significant
Posttest	11.13		2.264				

The pretest and posttest results of pupils exposed to the DRTA or Directed Reading Thinking Activity shows the t-test for correlated samples. The pretest had mean of 2.80 while the posttest had 11.13 with the mean difference of 8.33. The results revealed that the computed-t value of 8.639 was greater or beyond the tabular value of 2.0480. This means that the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant difference between the pretest and posttest performance of the experimental group in reading comprehension was rejected.

A significant difference existed between the pretest and posttest of the experimental group. It explains that there was an improvement in the reading performance of the respondents after the experimental group was exposed to the strategy. The results imply that the DRTA is an effective strategy in improving the reading comprehension of pupils.

This study proves the views of Ya-Li Lai, Yu-Jung Tung, Shu Ying Luo (2011) that a number of studies maintain that English language learners' comprehension can be improved by fostering awareness of reading comprehension strategies. The findings of their study revealed two adults learners' utilization and understanding of reading strategies during reading. The first case indicated that a prolonged, regular, and constant reading strategy instruction is needed and more efforts need to be made regarding how to help struggling readers use more metacognitive strategies to comprehend English texts. The second case suggested that teachers should choose reading materials that are slightly above pupils' current English proficiency level in order to stimulate pupils to adopt more reading strategies to deal with more challenging English texts. In addition, pupils were often unconscious about their utilization of reading strategies; therefore, it is the teachers' responsibility to make students "visualize" the process of their own thinking. Teachers' demonstrations of think-aloud while reading can assist pupils in better understanding how to use reading strategies. These strategies were likewise used in this study; hence, the improvement of the respondents' reading comprehension.



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**Significance of Difference on the Performance of the Two Groups in the Posttest**

The table shows the significant difference on the performance of experimental and control groups in the posttest.

Table 5  
**Significance of Difference in the Posttest of the Two Groups**

The posttest result of the experimental and control group were computed using t-test for independent

Group	Mean	Mean Difference	Std. Deviation	Computed t-value	Critical value	Decision	Interpretation
Control	7.20	3.93	2.484	4.533	2.0480	Reject Ho	Significant
Experimental	11.13		2.264				

samples to determine if there was a significant difference between the posttest scores of both groups. The table shows that control group had mean of 7.20 while the experimental group had 11.13 with the mean difference of 3.93. It was found out that the experimental group manifested higher extent of learning than the control group their prior knowledge from the lessons. The control group also showed almost the same effect from the activities made by the teacher. The result revealed that the computed-t value of 4.533 was greater than t-tabular value of 2.0480 at 0.05 level of significance with 28 degrees of freedom so there was significant difference between the posttest results of the two groups.

This study conforms with the experiment study which was conducted to investigate the impact of direct instruction in reading comprehension strategies and the degree to which cooperative learning processes enhance pupils' learning. Pupils were assigned to instructional treatments or strategies for identifying the main ideas of passages. Treatments involved cooperative learning with direct instruction, direct instruction alone, and traditional instruction control. Pupils in the two instructional treatments which incorporated direct instruction on main idea strategies performed significantly better than experimental group of pupils in identifying main ideas of passages. This study also agrees Baker et al. (2013) describe the "compelling evidence indicating that explicit direct instruction has a positive impact on a range of students' academic outcomes, particularly for students who are risk for academic difficulties.

**Effectiveness of Directed Reading Thinking Activity in Improving Reading Comprehension**

It is shown in Table 5 that the experimental group had higher mean performance than those in the control group.

This indicates that DRTA is more effective than conventional method in improving the comprehension of the students. This result can be used to infer that DRTA results to a better performance in reading comprehension during achievement tests. The pupils to whom DRTA instruction was used performed well which resulted to an inference that DRTA is more effective in developing reading comprehension. Reading skills of the pupils through the use of DRTA, has improved. This means that the presence of DRTA yields better reading comprehension. The effectiveness of DRTA is evident in Tables 1 and 2. The control group got a mean score of 2.73 during the pretest and with a mean score of 7.2 during the posttest. The control group to the traditional method was used got a mean difference of 4.47. On the other hand, the experimental group who were exposed to Directed Reading Thinking Activity had mean score of 2.8 for the pretest and 11.13 for the posttest and with a mean difference of 8.33.

This time, by taking a look at the mean difference of the two groups, it is remarkably visible that the experimental group got the higher mean difference between the pretest and posttest. This means that DRTA instruction was effective compared to the traditional method of teaching English specifically in reading comprehension.



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The researcher focused more on the performance of the pupils in DRTA. This skill was the focus because reading is one of the basic skills of pupils in order to become globally competitive and effective learners.

In this study, it is shown that DRTA will pave the way for more doable and in-depth effective reading program.

Thus, the performance of the pupils considered above average; hence an effort to improve reading skills in the classroom has to employed. Likewise, based on the observation of the researcher, the pupils in the Experimental group became active in the discussion and in answering the questions after the reading activity. They became inquisitive as they also began to ask questions regarding the materials read. The pupils who used to be timid and shy in discussions became participative in the discussion.

## Conclusion

This study concludes that the Directed Reading Thinking Activity (DRTA) significantly improved the reading comprehension of Grade Three pupils at Toro Hills Elementary School. The findings revealed substantial differences between the pretest and posttest results for both the control and experimental groups, as well as significant differences between the posttest results of the two groups.

## Recommendation

Based on these positive outcomes, it is recommended that reading program heads introduce DRTA as a reading strategy. The school should incorporate DRTA in teaching reading lessons, and English teachers handling lower sections should use DRTA in their reading comprehension lessons. Furthermore, both DRTA and traditional strategies could be considered adaptive strategies to enhance reading skills among learners. These recommendations underscore the potential of DRTA to foster academic innovation and improve student performance.

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