

**THE APPLICATION OF LOCAL WISDOM IN LEARNING:
Teaching Descriptive by Using Palm-Mosaics
Creative Game**

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Abstract

This research is aimed at improving the seventh graders' achievement of SMP N 2 Kubu in descriptive writing in the academic year 2010/2011 through the application of The Palm-Mosaics Creative Game. The subjects of the research were the seventh grade students of SMP N 2 Kubu especially class VIIIE, on their even semester in the academic year of 2010/2011. The total numbers of the subjects were 20 males and 20 females. This is an action based research, which was conducted in two cycles. Each cycle consisted of three sessions. Altogether, there were four steps in every cycle, namely: planning, action, observation, and reflection. In each session of the treatment, there was the application of the Palm Mosaics Creative Game. Palm Mosaics Creative Game (PMCG) is a creative game which uses colorful palm leaves. We use the palm leaves because they are easy to find and safe. Easy to find because they are our local product and safe because we implemented the principal of go green safe the nature by recycling the rubbish. The data were obtained by using four kinds of instruments, namely tests, questionnaires, observation sheets, and informal interview. The data were then analyzed descriptively. The result of the study showed that the Palm Mosaics Creative Game could effectively improve the students' achievement in descriptive writing. The improvement was indicated by the

students' mean score of the test. In the pre-test, the mean score was 33.71(unachieved), it increased up to 52.00(unachieved) in Cycle I and 71.05(above the standard score) in Cycle II. Based on the result of the research, it could be concluded that The Palm Mosaics Creative Game was an effective technique to improve the seventh grade students' achievement in writing descriptive at SMP N 2 Kubu in the academic year of 2010/2011.

Keywords: descriptive writing, Palm Mosaics Creative Game.

1. Rationale

Research in improving students' proficiency in mastering English never stops. As what were done in both curriculum and syllabus for Junior High level, it was improved by the implementation of today's curriculum KTSP. KTSP is an operational curriculum developed by and implemented in each educational unit. KTSP consists of the purpose of education level of the education, structure and content of curriculum, educational calendar and syllabus.

KTSP is one form of realization of the policy, the decentralization of education to the curriculum actually correspond to the potential development of learners at the school in question in the present and future with consideration of local interests and national and global demands in the spirit of the School-Based Management.

By the implementation of this curriculum, teaching English is aimed at enabling the students to communicate both written and oral while the teaching learning process was done integrated. As what was stated by Brown (2002:48)

“Whole language has been so widely and divergently interpreted --- (a) the “wholeness” of language as opposed to views that fragmented language into its bits and pieces of phonemes, graphemes, morphemes, and words; (b) the interaction and interconnections between oral language (listening and speaking) and written language (reading and writing); ---.”

Based on the development principal above, a research was done towards the seventh grader of SMP N 2 Kubu in writing. Though the focus was in one skills but the application the learning process implementing integrated skills.

The research was done in class VIIE in academic year 2010/2011. Based on the preliminary observation during the learning process, it was found that the teacher were using a conventional technique. He asked the students to find a certain page in the workbook. He asked them to read, and translated the meaning into Indonesian. He explained the generic structure of the text and finally he asked the students to write another description about certain topic.

The result showed the students were failed in making a short simple descriptive. They spent much time to think what to write, how to write. When they were interviewed they said they

have no idea about that, they have limited vocabulary to explain about the topic, they were not sure how to put the structure, and writing was boring.

Based on the pre-test result it was found their mean achievement only reach for 33.71 (it was categorized as poor or unachieved). The results of this initial test indicated that they were having a quite serious trouble in mastering some writing aspects such as content in which the class average score was only reached 40.50 (mastery level 40.50%), Organization of 37.50, 25.00 for Grammar, Vocabulary of 37.00, Mechanism of 28.55. All categorized as poor achievement.

Based on the interview to the students, it was found some potential factors which influence their ability in writing short simple descriptive, such as:

- a. Difficulties in converting their words into English, organizing, putting correct grammar, spelling and punctuation.
- b. They found that learning English was not something interesting. So they had little motivation in learning English.
- c. The previous technique in teaching writing could not help them to be better in writing.

The result of questionnaire showed that their motivation in learning English generally and writing especially was low. Only

30% responded that they like English and only 12.5% responded that they liked writing, and only 4% responded that writing was easy. 87.5% of them hate of being asked to write. And they were less motivated.

A fine solution should be found in solving the students' problem in writing short simple descriptive. The technique should be the trigger if these problems, effective, interesting, innovative, and of course cost a little. As Vale and Feutem (2000) emphasized that:

“Technique should be regarded as a set of flexible and adjustable tools that teachers carry into a lesson, the overall attitude and approach to teaching should dictate the use of techniques and not the reverse. The mastery of one or more particular techniques will not change a dull teacher into one motivates his or her own class.”

Considering on the collaboration of the intended technique and the implementation of local wisdom, Palm Mosaics Creative Games fits the need. This study focused on the use of Palm Mosaics Creative Game to improve the seventh grade students of SMP N 2 Kubu in writing simple descriptive in the academic year 2010/2011. The hypothesis of the action is the Palm-Mosaic Creative game can improve the achievement of seventh grader of SMP N 2 Kubu in the academic year 2010/2011in writing a descriptive paragraph.

2. Theoretical Review

2.1 Integrated Learning

The goal of KTSP curriculum is to make the learners to be able to communicate. This curriculum was implemented under the CLT approach. We can focus on one standard competency but during the process we cannot separate the whole skills to be applied, because it is ridiculous to think that the skills can be taught in isolation.

As what is stated by Littlewood (1981) in Ratminingsih (2006: 7): communicative approach in learning should consider not only in terms of mastery of language structure including grammar and vocabulary but also in the introduction of communicative language functions. therefore communicative-based learning should integrate all aspects, both structural and functional aspects of language.

2.2 Communicative Learning

The most important thing to bring out the students with the learning goals is to experience fun learning. So, if the idea of learning is mainly 'reading dull text books, memorizing the facts, and answering questions', then it is time to toss the idea out of the window. It is not wise to treat 'learning' as a 'necessary evil' -- something that has to be bearded with in order to survive the exam.

Communicative activities are those exhibit the characteristics of the end of communicative continuum (Hammer in Surip, 1996). It can be said that teaching students a language by giving them such activity communicatively that are interesting and enjoyable can make them motivated to produce language they have master in real situation.

Communicative activities can be applied in the productive teaching. It means that it can also be used in written form. Furthermore Hammer in Surip (1996) gave a reference to design a communicative activity that is characterized by the following points: a). a desire to communicate, 2). a communicative purpose, 3). content not form, 4). no teacher intervention, 5). no material control. If an activity does not fulfill these requirements it is considered to be non-communicative activities.

2.3 The Importance of Writing

Writing is an active skill. Through writing we can communicate with others, express our ideas, and feelings. So it is important to teach the students how to write in a correct and fine way.

Raimes in Galuh (1997:2) points out that there are some reasons why teaching writing is considered important. One of them is writing reinforces the grammatical structure, idiom and vocabulary in which the teacher has been working in the

classroom. The other reason is when the students write they have chance to be adventurous in the language, with themselves and with the readers.

Meyers (2003) lists some steps in writing, namely: 1) Exploring ideas (considering occasion, subject purpose, and audience), 2) Pre writing (brainstorming and clustering), 3). Organizing ideas (selecting and outlining), 4) Writing first draft, revising draft (reviewing, reading aloud, predicting) and 5) Producing the final copy (editing, copying over, proofreading, and copying over again).

While Guth and Rico (2002) stated when writing, guides or manual takes the writer through a step-by-step writing process which it may mark off six stages, namely: 1) Preparation (sizing up the task and the answers), 2) Investigation (working up the materials with informal or formal research), 3) Organization (working out your strategy for laying out the material), 4) Drafting (putting your material into rough thought), 5) Revision (working an early draft in response to feedback and your own second thought), 6) Editing (polishing and fine tuning a final draft to get it ready for publication).

2.4 Teaching Writing in the classroom

As the subject of the research was the seventh grade students in which paragraph writing was new for them. It is

expected for the teacher to experience them step by step. As Youra (2003) stated inexperienced writers should have an opportunity to compose in school with help during the actual writing process in clarifying ideas, in closing, phrasing, and sometimes dealing with mechanical problems.

The teacher should give more attention towards the effort in giving them opportunity in writing. Concerning on the needs of the learners, Hammer (1998) stated some students acquire languages in purely oral way, but some of them benefit greatly from seeing the language written down. That is it. The teacher analyzes the needs and develop the most comfortable and effective technique to raise and to explore students' ability.

2.5 Descriptive paragraph

The primary purpose of descriptive writing is to describe a person, a place or an object in such a way that an imagery picture is formed in the reader's mind. It does not tell the reader that the flower is beautiful; it shows them the flower is beautiful. The reader feels like he/she is a part of the writer's experience of the subject.

Descriptive writing is used in all modes of writing (Expository, Narrative, and Persuasive) to create a vivid and lasting impression of the person, place or thing. Some prompts that teachers may use when they want a descriptive piece of writing

are: a) describe a place, a person, or an event, b). tell about a place, a person or an event, c). relate what happened about an event.

Characteristics of a good descriptive writing:

1. Good descriptive writing includes many vivid sensory details that paint a picture and appeals to all of the reader's senses of sight, hearing, touch, smell and taste when appropriate. Descriptive writing may also paint pictures of the feelings the person, place or thing invokes in the writer.
2. Good descriptive writing often makes use of figurative language such as analogies, similes and metaphors to help paint the picture in the reader's mind.
3. Good descriptive writing uses precise language. General adjectives, nouns, and passive verbs do not have a place in good descriptive writing. Use specific adjectives and nouns and strong action verbs to give life to the picture you are painting in the reader's mind.
4. Good descriptive writing is organized. Some ways to organize descriptive writing include: chronological (time), spatial (location), and order of importance. When describing a person, you might begin with a physical description, followed by how that person thinks, feels and acts.

2.6 Language Art Teaching

a. communicative learning through Language art

Learning English can also be done through art appreciation. Art is a field of study that has many branches. Most people like visual and performing arts. In visual arts, we can enjoy beautiful paintings and drawings by classic as well as modern artists. We can also read their life stories to know more about how they began to study painting or drawing until they could master their techniques. (http://englishland.or.id/04-readings/054-english_art.htm)

b. the use of Mosaics to improve learning

Mosaic is the art of creating images with an assemblage of small pieces of colored glass, stone, or other materials. It may be a technique of decorative art, an aspect of interior decoration, or of cultural and spiritual significance as in a cathedral. Small pieces, normally roughly cubic, of stone or glass of different colors, known as tesserae, (diminutive tessellae), are used to create a pattern or picture. (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mosaic>)

c. Local Wisdom to promote Education

Bali has many traditional art and culture. We are collaborating these aspects to promote meaningful learning process. As Mahindra stated in Bali the elementary students and

the Junior High School Students get additional schedule for learning local wisdom, including learning reading and writing Balinese language. In this subject they also learn how to be able to read and write on palm leaves to keep Balinese tradition.

Furthermore he stated writing on palm-leaves is not strange. The materials is not difficult to fins. We can make it or buy it. Even it available widely in Karangasem and Buleleng Regency. (*www.kapanlagi.com*)

d. Palm Mosaics Creative Game

Palm Mosaics Creative Game is a creative game and media package which uses colorful palm leaves mosaics. It is a communicative technique since it promote communicative activities. The students are active, and later they can do self learning. The researchers created a creative game to raise student's motivation in learning. They are divided into groups with the same things (colour, shape, etc.). Later they are expected to be able to define what they have. They can have their own product by combining the mosaics as they like. In the lower level they can learn to construct phrases, sentences and simple paragraph.

It fits for 10 to 14 years old learners since it requires active movements (motor skill) to raise fun. They can make interaction and work together. It is originally new technique implementing the principle of “go green safe the nature” by recycling the rubbish.

The students could make use the Palm leaves to make some simple and combination shapes. We use the palm leaves because they are easy to find and safe. It is easy to find because they are our local product and safe because we save the nature.

3. Research Method

This is a classroom action-based research. This study adopted Kemmis and Taggart (1998) models which carried out in 2 cycles and 6 sessions. Each cycle consists of four stages, namely: Planning, action, observation, and reflection. The subject of this research was class VIIE students of SMP Negeri 2 Kubu academic year 2010/2011 which consisted of 20 male students and 20 female students. The focus of this research was to improve students' skills in writing simple short descriptive paragraphs.

The data in this study were obtained from the test results, observations, questionnaires and interviews. Subsequently analyzed descriptively. Learning outcome data were analyzed by finding the mean score which converted into the student mastery level, they are excellent, very good, good, moderate, and poor with a minimum standard of 70% mastery, individually and classically. The questionnaire was analyzed by using percentage. The data obtained from the result of observation was analyzed qualitatively.

4. Findings and Discussion

4.1 Research Results

a. Preliminary Observation

As an initial step in identifying the students' problem, preliminary observation was conducted. The researchers observed the way of teacher in teaching. He gave a brief brainstorming and instructed them to open certain page in the workbook. There he showed a monolog text of descriptive. He tried to give the students chance to do self learning by asking them to check some difficult vocabulary in the dictionary. He offered 10 minutes for this activity. After 10 minutes only some vocabularies could be defined. The students found it was difficult to check all the words they do not understand and match with the context.

The teacher gave extended time to finish it. And then they were forced to translate it. It is not really an effective learning process since it wasted too much time. They absolutely failed in translating it. It was such a dull way to gain knowledge. To experience writing exercise he explained the generic structure asked them to combine with the reading text, and they were instructed to do writing. When the bell rang everything became homework.

b. Pre Test Result

Pre-Test was conducted to identify the students' problem in writing short simple descriptive. The test result showed that the students mean score was poor. Here are the students mean score on the five aspects of writing:

Table 4.1 Students' mean score on the Pre-test

No.	Sub skills	Mean Score	Level of Mastery	Criteria
1.	Content	40.50	40.50%	Poor
2.	Organization	37.50	37.50%	poor
3.	Grammar	25.00	25.00%	Poor
4.	Vocabulary	37.00	37.00%	Poor
5.	Mechanism	28.55	28.55%	Poor
Mean Score		33.71	33.71%	poor
Category		poor	poor	

Table 4.1 shows five aspects of learning mastered poorly. Their mean score was 33.71. Grammar was the lowest one. The mean score was 25.00. The mean score for mechanism was 28.55, vocabulary 37.00, organization 37.50, and the highest was content 40.50. all were categorized as poor.

c. Cycle I

Here is the result of analysis on Post Test 1. Table 4.2 shows that the mean score 52.00. It categorized as poor. The lowest score was 50.00 for mechanism, 52.00 for organization and grammar, 52.50

for content, and 53.50 for vocabulary. From the above data students' achievement was improved, but still poor.

Table 4.2 Result of Post Test 1

No.	Sub skills	Mean Score	Level of Mastery	Criteria
1.	Content	52.50	52.50%	Poor
2.	Organization	52.00	52.00%	Poor
3.	Grammar	52.00	52.00%	Poor
4.	Vocabulary	53.50	53.50%	Poor
5.	Mechanism	50.00	50.00%	Poor
Mean Score		52.00	52.00%	Poor
Category		poor	poor	

d. Cycle II

Table 4.3 shows that the students mean score was 71.05. they master 71.05% of a how to produce a good writing. It was categorized as good. The highest mean score is 74.75 for vocabulary mastery, down to organization n mastery 70.00, content mastery for 69.50, and the lowest was 67.00 the mechanism.

Table 4.3 Result of Post Test 2

No.	Sub skills	Mean Score	Level of Mastery	Criteria
1.	Content	69.50	69.50%	Moderate
2.	Organization	70.00	70.00%	Good
3.	Grammar	74.00	74.00%	Good
4.	Vocabulary	74.75	74.75%	Good
5.	Mechanism	67.00	67.00%	Moderate
Mean Score		71.05	71.05%	Good
Category		good	good	

4.2 Discussion

Problem in using the five aspects of writing occurred because there was no specific guide on the use vocabulary in the topic shared. The teacher asked the students to read certain text, asked them to find out the meaning from the dictionary and then they were asked to translate it. Later he explained about the generic structure. Finally, they were assigned to write a paragraph.

As a foreign language, English is supposed to teach in a step by step learning. There should be more guides since they were new to English writing. The teacher needs to give some models and example. He needs to introduce some vocabularies related to the topic, structure and mechanism in writing integratedly so they did not realized them as separated aspects. After they succeed in making simple phrases or sentences, then they were taught to combine the sentences in coherence.

Although the skill was focused on writing, the teachers can include other skills such as listening, speaking and then reading along the process of learning. Then in measuring the improvement itself, we give writing test at the end of the learning phases. So there is collaboration among the aspects and they can use English in more contextual way.

The learning process was also lack of media. Although it was writing they need something to help them with the theme/topic. Moreover, they need to work together in a group at

first to raise their confidence, and promote interaction to raise fun. The teachers can also work with their motoric skills since the seventh graders were 12 to 13 years old students who like being moved.

The application of technique implemented by the teacher has importance role in helping the students to gain their writing skill. If it is not fit to the problem then it failed to solve it. Based on the analysis done during the observation, it was found the previous teaching technique failed to raise the students' achievement and motivation in writing simple descriptive paragraph. It was a traditional technique with structural approach which tends to require passive interaction and thinking. They just listen, read, make notes, and memorize words/phrases or idioms). Then, the improvement just measured by test achievement.

a. Pre-Test

Based on the result of the pre-test, it was found the classical mean-score only achieved for 33.71 which mean only 33.71% of the materials were mastered by the students. It was categorized as poor achievement. It occurred since each of the aspect mastery was low; they were 40.5% for content mastery, 37.5% for organization, 25% for grammar, 37% for vocabulary, and 28.55% for mechanics. Individual achievements were also bad.

During the test the researcher found it was hard for them to start their writing test. They were so worry about writing. They felt

so scared. Their face is full of worry expression. After the test a questionnaire was shared.

Based on the result of the questionnaire it was found that only 12 from 40 students (it was about 30%) who liked learning English, and 10 students (it was 25%) who were able to understand the materials taught by the teacher. There were only 12.5% of them who love to do writing, feeling motivated and enthusiastic in writing a paragraph.

From this overall analysis, to overcome the students' problem in writing a communicative, integrated, and effective technique should be applied. It is Palm Mosaics Creative Game.

b. Cycle I

Table 4.2 (on the research result) showed the classical mean score in each aspect of writing. There was an improvement in score but the category was still poor. The mean score for the aspects are 52.50 for the content (which means the students mastery of this aspect was 52.5%), 52.00 for the organization and grammar (which means the students mastery of these two aspects were 52%), 53.50 for the vocabulary (which means the students mastery of this aspect was 53.5%), and 50.00 for the mechanics (which means the students mastery of this aspect was 50%). The overall class' mean score was 52.00 and categorized as poor.

In line with the improvement on the score achievement, questionnaire result was also improved. From only 4% students who liked learn English it raised to 87%. For about 87.5% of them also said it was easier to compose a paragraph. It is because they can master the five aspects better than before. 87.5% said that they know how to make good content, use the vocabulary, work with the structure, and mechanics. 80% of them said they can organize the sentences better. They were much motivated than before. No worry faces were in the classroom. 79% said they were motivated and enthusiastic in doing writing.

Based on the test analysis, there were 10 students (it is 25%) categorized as having moderate mastery level. Their mean score were 60.00 to 68.00. It means their level of mastery is 60% to 68%. Based on the standard minimum mastery level both individually and classically, there should be further reflection on the use of the technique.

There are some weaknesses in the use of the technique in cycle I, such as: some of them lost were failed in identifying phrase and sentence structure. They put the structure upside down as what they had in Indonesian language. Some of them also forget the English word for shapes on their hands. They mentioned it wrongly. There were some students who couldn't focus on the learning process, and some others were having good mood and interest.

Based on the reflection above there should be a modification on the use of this technique on the next cycle. They are:

1. They should be more controlled on the use of grammar (55 to 65% of them still put the phrase upside down, as the Indonesian Structure), vocabulary, mechanism, organization and content. Repetition drill would be applied on the next cycle.
2. To promote creativity, it would be a good idea of giving them chance to make their own product so they can make better description. They can explore their idea, work with art and further they can be more responsible on self learning.

c. Cycle II

Based on the result showed in table 4.3 (on the research result) the students mean score improved to 71.05. It means the materials were mastered 71.05% in this class. The improvement also could be found in each of the aspect of writing. Mean score for content was 69.50. It means the mastery level reach for 69.50% which categorized as moderate. Mean score for organization was 70.00. It means the mastery level reach for 70% which categorized as good. Mean score for grammar was 74.00. It means the mastery level reach for 74% which categorized as good. Mean score for

vocabulary was 74.75. it means the mastery level reach for 74.75% which categorized as good. The last, mean score for mechanics was 67.00. it means the mastery level reach for 67% which categorized as moderate.

In a line with the improvement on the score achievement, questionnaire result was also improved. From only 87% students who liked to learn English it raised to 100%. All of them said it was much easier to compose a paragraph. It is because they can master the five aspects better than before. All of them said that they know how to make good content, use the vocabulary, work with the structure, mechanics and organize the sentences better. They were much motivated than before. The classroom was full of confidence and pride. They were motivated and enthusiastic in doing writing.

From the data analysis, there were 28 students (70%) categorized as having good mastery level. Their mean score were 72.00 to 80.00. It means their level of mastery is 72% to 80%. It can pass the minimum standard of mastery.

d. Reflection

From Figure 4.1, it could be stated that there were improvements in students' mean score in writing short simple descriptive of the seventh grader students of SMP N 2 Kubu in the academic year 2010/2011. The improvement score was 33.71 on Pre-Test to 52.00 to Post-Test 1 to 71.05 on Post-Test 2. Their motivation and

enthusiastic were also raised to 100% and they found it was easy to write short simple paragraph. Based on the result above it is recommended that the Palm Mosaics Creative Game succeed in improving students' ability in writing short simple paragraph.

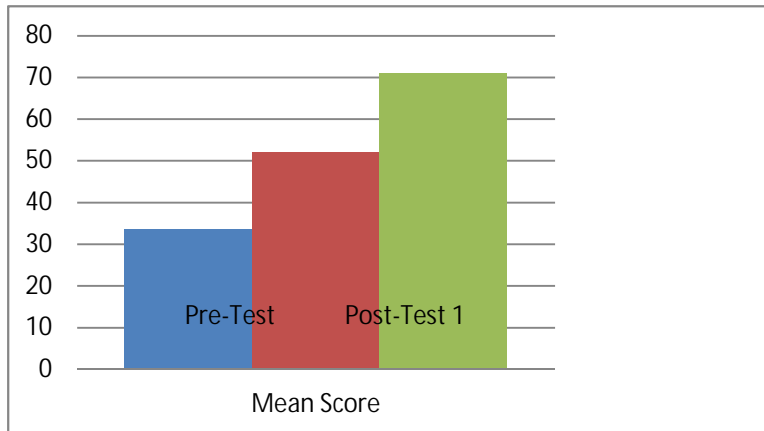


Figure 4.1 Students' Pre- and Post-tests Means of score Improvement

5. Conclusion and Suggestion

a. Conclusion

From the research result and discussion in a line with the purpose of the research it could be concluded that:

1. The ability of the seventh grade students SMP N 2 Kubu in the academic year of 2010/2011 in writing short simple descriptive was improved by the use of

The Palm Mosaics Creative Games. Before the application of this research they learned in a passive way. The improvement was proved by the raising on the mean score. It raised from 33.71 to 52.00 in cycle I and 71.05 in cycle 2, which followed by the rising in motivation.

2. Individual competency was also improved in the pre-test all individual score were categorized as poor, on the post-test 2 there were 25% of the students mastered moderate level and on the post-test 3 there were 70% of the students acquired good level of mastery.
3. The improvement also could be found on the aspects of writing, such as content, organization, grammar, vocabulary and mechanics. The mean score improved in content area from pre-test to post-test 2. They are 40.50; 52.50; 69.50. In organizing the paragraph the mean score are 37.50; 52.00; 70.00. In mastering grammar the mean score are 25.00; 52.00; 74.00. in vocabulary use the mean score are 37.00; 53.50; 74.75. in mastering mechanics of writing the mean score are 28.55; 50.00; 67.00.

b. Suggestion

In relation to the conclusion, there are some suggestions that can be drawn as follows:

1. The English teachers of SMP are expected to apply the Palm Mosaics Creative game in learning, especially in writing. This technique is not only for writing but could be use in wide range of competency.
2. The teachers are suggested to pay attention to the aspects of writing, such as vocabulary, grammar, mechanics, organization and content.
3. The students are expected to experience more in writing. Do not worry about mistakes. But more practice because practice makes perfect.
4. For other researchers are expected to continue this kind of research, it could be in different subject, theme and scope.

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