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Assessment And Productive Pedagogy: The Need For Redesigning Evaluation Methods To Foster Critical Thinking And Creativity

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Abstract

The role of assessment in shaping education is crucial, as it influences teaching strategies and student learning outcomes. Traditional evaluation methods, often focused on rote memorization and standardized testing, fail to address the evolving needs of modern learners. These methods tend to prioritize surface-level understanding and limit the development of critical thinking and creativity, skills essential for success in the 21st century. This paper explores the urgent need to redesign assessment practices to align with productive pedagogy, a teaching approach that emphasizes deep learning, engagement, and the application of knowledge in meaningful contexts.

Productive pedagogy highlights the importance of fostering higher-order thinking skills, encouraging collaboration, and promoting real-world problem-solving abilities among students. Redesigning evaluation methods to support these goals requires a shift from traditional tests to more dynamic and flexible approaches. Methods such as project-based assessments, portfolios, peer reviews, and reflective practices offer opportunities for students to demonstrate their understanding in diverse ways. These approaches encourage learners to think critically, analyze complex issues, and express their ideas creatively. The integration of formative assessment, which provides ongoing feedback, can further support this transformation. By focusing on the learning process rather than just outcomes, formative assessments help students identify

their strengths and areas for improvement. Teachers also benefit from these insights, enabling them to tailor their instructional methods to meet the unique needs of their students.

This paper argues that a balanced and innovative evaluation framework, incorporating both traditional and alternative assessment techniques, is essential to promote meaningful learning experiences. It emphasizes the need for teacher training and curriculum design that support the implementation of productive pedagogy. In conclusion, redesigning evaluation methods to prioritize critical thinking and creativity is not only a response to the changing demands of the global economy but also a step toward empowering students to become independent and innovative thinkers. By adopting these practices, educators can create a more equitable and engaging learning environment, preparing students for the challenges of the future.

Key Words – Assessment, Productive Pedagogy, Critical Thinking

Introduction

"Learning is the development of the mind to think, not the knowledge of facts." Albert Einstein

Learning is a journey, not a destination, by participating actively the students develop a deeper understanding of the facts and prepare themselves to succeed in the long run Teachers can design learning settings that encourage students to take chances, investigate ideas, and form a developing point of view by using effective pedagogies and trustworthy assessment (Dweck, 2006). A teaching strategy known as "productive pedagogy" center's students and uses assessments as a means of directing their development. Traditional evaluation techniques are being re-examined to put process above product and depth above breadth as educators work to foster critical thinking and creativity in their pupils (Lingard & Hayes, 2003). By using cutting-edge teaching strategies, teachers may help students gain the abilities and self-assurance they need for a constantly evolving future. In a vital classroom teacher uses different pedagogies for an effective learning environment. Every student learns differently in their own unique way by using various teaching methods. For example, blended learning in case of traditional lectures, interactive conversation, using digital tools to make a class more interactive and effective, performing group activities among students to think critically, positive reinforcement to acknowledge and reward students' effort and achievement and many more. Various teaching methods help to create a sense of community in the classroom, it builds a strong bond among both teacher and students. "It's like a teacher saying, I'm here to help you learn the way that works best for you likewise, Productive Pedagogy which is one of the teaching methods. Imagine learning as a journey, is not an easy task. Productive pedagogy helps students to improve their learning, using assessments as a guide. This method emphasizes students' abilities rather than merely their knowledge. It involves critical thinking, creation, and exploration. Teachers employ a number of techniques to make their lessons more expressive, including: Use real-world examples to

illustrate abstract concepts so that students can evaluate their own learning and provide feedback to teachers. The most effective learning moderator is feedback (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). Regular assessments assist students stay on their learning ability which emphasize progress, and perfection.

Productive Pedagogy

"Productive Pedagogy is about connecting students' lives and experiences to the curriculum, and creating opportunities for them to make a positive difference in the world", According to Professor Christine Edwards – Groves. Productive pedagogy is an educational structure that focuses on the quality of teaching and learning outcomes of students. Earlier traditional teaching methods used rote memorization now in present scenario productive pedagogy focus on standardized testing, critical thinking and creativity which connect classroom learning with real world. Students learn best when they are actively engaged in constructing their own knowledge (Bransford et al., 1999). **The term productive pedagogy is coined by Ofelia Miramontes**, a professor at the university of Colorado boulder in 1990s. Through productive pedagogy, teachers can create classrooms that are not only places of learning but also spaces for growth, creativity and collaboration. One of the key influences on the development of productive pedagogy was the work of educational theorists such as John Dewey, Lev Vygotsky and Paulo Freire.

John Dewey's says that experiential learning connects the students' ideas to the meaningful and relevant learning which connect the Education to the real-life experiences. Vygotsky's concept of social constructivism lays emphasis on the role of social interaction and collaboration in learning, Paulo Freire emphasis on critical pedagogy which shows the importance of empowering students to questions and challenges society norms. Learning is not a spectator sport; students must be actively engaged in their own learning (Chickering & Gamson, 1987). Productive pedagogy builds upon these theoretical foundations which includes elements of intellectual quality, inclusivity and connectedness into teaching practices. It shows a change from traditional teacher- centre methods to more student - centre methods that values diversity, promotes critical thinking and encourages active engagement. Productive pedagogy has four key dimensions that guide teaching practices and create a healthy learning environment in the classroom.

1.Intellectual quality - It is the HEART of productive pedagogy, which focuses more upon the deep and critical thinking of students. It helps students to memorize the facts, encourages students to engage themselves with complex ideas to understand their subject matter. Intellectual quality involves faster higher - order thinking skills for example analysis, synthesis, evaluation and encourages students to explore multiple perspectives.

2.Supportive classroom environment - This dimension focuses on creating a positive, inclusive and safe area where all students feel themselves valuable and respected, here students actively participate, share their ideas because of it the strong bond between teachers and students are created which set clear expectations and provide constructive feedback.

3.Connectedness - Through this dimension teachers link classrooms with the real world by connecting academic content with the real-world issues, connectedness also involves integrating cross disciplinary perspectives and encouraging students to make learning more meaningful by finding common threads between subjects.

4.Recognition of difference - In this globalized world recognition of difference plays a critical role in productive pedagogy. This dimension focuses upon the importance of valuing and addressing the diverse background, identities and experience that students bring into the classroom. This dimension also includes strategies to meet the needs of all students, including those with different learning style, abilities and cultural background.

Assessment and Evaluation

Assessment and evaluation have different meanings and goals, they are frequently used interchangeably in the workplace, in education, and in other contexts. The process of gathering data about knowledge, abilities, attitudes, and behaviours in order to determine what individuals are aware of and able to perform is called assessment. Its goal is to track advancement and offer suggestions for enhancement. There are different types of assessment like, **Formative assessments**: It is used to enhance understanding throughout a learning process for example- quizzes, in-class discussions, feedback sessions. **Summative assessments**: such as final exams and projects, are carried out at the conclusion of a learning session to evaluate student progress. **Diagnostic assessments**— It is used to determine present knowledge and abilities. **Self-assessment**: People analyze their own development or output. Evaluation is the process of developing ideas based on assessment data to determine the effectiveness, valuable, or quality of something. Its purpose is to assess the quality or results, usually following the completion of a project or learning phase. Types of evaluation are: Process evaluation assesses how well a program or activity was delivered and implemented. The results or effects of a program or activity are the main focus of outcome evaluation (what was achieved).

Summative Evaluation: At the end of a project or learning session, this method is used to evaluate overall effectiveness. Decision-making is the main focus. It is employed to assess quality, gauge success, and guide future plans or regulations. While evaluation is concerned with forming conclusions about the success or worth of something based on the information gathered, assessment is concerned with obtaining information to direct and enhance current operations

Whereas evaluation frequently takes place at the conclusion of a process or program, assessment is normally ongoing. Evaluation, on the other hand, is more judgment-focused, often used to determine the overall effectiveness or impact of a

program or process. (Scriven ,1991) defines evaluation as the process of determining the quality, value, or usefulness of something. In education, evaluation helps stakeholders make informed decisions based on outcomes and impacts (Patton, 2008). Although they play different roles in development and decision-making processes, both are essential for understanding performance and directing future activities. Assessment is a way to find out what students know and what he can do. It's like taking a picture of their learning at a particular moment. But assessment is more than just a test or grade**.** Assessment should be a learning experience in itself, not just a way to measure learning (Boud, 2000). It's a tool to help students learn and grow. A good assessment can help students understand what they need to work on so that teachers can help students to guide their learning and give them instruction which encourages students to take ownership of their learning, think of assessment like a difference plays a critical role in productive pedagogy. This dimension focuses upon the importance of valuing and addressing the diverse background, identities and experience that students bring into the classroom. This dimension also includes strategies to meet the needs of all students, including those with different learning style, abilities and cultural background.

It helps students and teachers both in their learning journey, identify their progress, and make adjustments among them. It is the process of gathering, evaluate and analysing data in order to compare the performance of a system, program, individual with predefined standards, in education Assessment play a vital role in shaping curriculum and teaching strategies, it understands students' strengths and weaknesses. Assessment should be used to support student learning, not just measure it. (Linn & Miller, 2005)**.** Productive pedagogy and Assessment both work equally in learning and improvement. By assessing students' learning, teachers can refine their instructional strategies and students can refine their understanding of the material. Assessment is not just about accountability; it's about helping students learn and grow. (Stiggins, 2005)

Here are some points through which **Assessment completes productive pedagogy**.

1. Measuring progress - Through this the progress of students can be tracked how much students have achieved their learning goals.

2. Identify gaps - it describes those areas where students need more support and practices

3. Informing instructions - it helps teachers to improve their teaching strategies to meet the needs of students.

4. Encouraging reflection - here students reflect their own goals for their future perspective.

5. Evaluating effectiveness - it helps teachers and schools to evaluate their program and make improvements.

Assessment, also known as topic-centre assessment, focuses on evaluating student learning outcomes in relation to specific topics or concepts (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005).

Literature Review

A literature review is a crucial stage in the research process that requires collecting, analyzing, and evaluating previous research and publications on a certain subject. It's similar to taking a picture of the current state of knowledge, emphasizing important discoveries, and pointing out areas that require further research. By studying the literature, researchers may discover new perspectives to guide their own research, avoid duplication of work, and build on existing knowledge. It provides a way to learn from others, identify knowledge gaps, and establish the framework for further study.

Sr. No.	Year	Author	Tittle of the study	Research Findings
1	2024	Claire Timperley	Assessment as pedagogy: inviting authenticity through relationality, vulnerability and wonder	Creative Assessment plays an important role for creating instrumental trends in higher education
2	2024	Elisabetta Nicha	Formative assessment in higher education: an exploratory study within programs for professionals in education	Formative assessment proves effective for both evaluation and development, supporting higher education students in honing assessment competencies for future professional roles in educational and social sectors.
3	2024	Fernandes S	Pedagogic innovation and student learning in higher education: perceptions, practices and challenges	provides a comprehensive overview of the core aspects on Innovative Pedagogical

				Approaches, Student Learning and Development, and Teaching and Faculty Perspectives
4	2024	Jennier M. Gore	Towards better teaching: productive pedagogy as a framework for teacher education	deep understanding of important concepts through meaningful learning experiences that occur in an environment that supports learning and values diversity.
5	2024	T.J.O. Ceallaigh	Navigating transformative assessment and feedback in teacher education: unveiling challenges and innovative practices	showcasing diverse approaches and contexts from around the globe.
6	2023	Ahmed & Patil	*Redefining Evaluation: Fostering Creativity in Higher Education*	Found that mixed-assessment methods combining self-assessment and peer review fostered both creativity and critical thinking, resulting in a deeper understanding of course material.
7	2023	Martinez & Liu	Project-Based Assessments for Enhancing Analytical Skills in Students	Demonstrated that project-based assessments led to

				improved critical thinking and real-world problem-solving skills among students in higher education settings.

Emergence of the study

One of the most essential elements of good teaching has always been assessment, yet the conventional techniques of assessment that are now in use in schools have long been criticized for their inability to accurately assess students' capacity for creativity and critical thought. These traditional methods focus more on rote memorization and unchanging testing while current evaluation focuses more on fostering these important skills, which are essential for success in the present day. Therefore, it is necessary that we reevaluate the way through which the children's increase understanding and learning abilities The main role of productive pedagogy is to focuses the progress of critical thinking, creativity, modernization, and problem-solving skills which has been reflected in the current self-study. The current assessment techniques frequently effect these instructional approaches, which affects teachers' capacity to measure student learning progress. This study emerges from the need to make an effort to deal with this mismatch between assessment methods and productive pedagogy. By exploring innovative evaluation approaches that give preference to critical thinking and creativity, this self-study intends to come up with insights into effective assessment strategies that can promote deeper and profound learning and better prepare students for a steadily complex and abruptly changing world. Assessment, also known as topic-centre assessment, focuses on evaluating student learning outcomes in relation to specific topics or concepts (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005).

Justification of the study

Research on assessment and productive pedagogy is important as it includes different methods of evaluation to promote critical thinking and creativity. First, Traditional evaluation methods prioritize standardized testing and rote learning. It may not accurately reflect students' critical or creative thinking skills. These abilities are necessary in this present quickly changing era. It is necessary in order to solve difficult problems and adjust to new conditions. Students get the creative and critical thinking skills necessary for success in today's workforce and society through developing the assessment process. Second, educational systems must adapt in order to deal with students of different backgrounds. Standard analyses cannot reflect the talents accurately of many learners since they learn in diverse ways. By exploring innovative evaluation techniques, educators can develop tests that promote and recognize a greater range of abilities and talents. This would

create a more diverse and equal learning environment. Lastly, educators play a major role in fostering critical thinking and innovation. But their way of teaching are frequently affected by the tests that they have to prepare for students. Modified assessments give greater importance to those skills that encourage teachers to employ innovative and engaging teaching strategies, which might ultimately enhance student learning outcomes.

Creative Thinking Assessment from OECD — The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has extended its PISA international student valuations and included original thinking. OECD (2023) says, "this change represents a global acknowledgement of the fact that creativity is every bit as important as other academic skill when it comes to formulating students for an increasingly complex labour market"

Modern Skills in Education: The "4Cs"—creativity, critical thinking, communication, and collaboration, focus on growing attention from researchers. It is an effort to motivate schools to look at these qualities as equally important as academic success. A recent study that was published in the Journal of Intelligence offered a framework for formally evaluating and certifying these abilities. By encouraging abilities like problem-solving and teamwork, this improvement aims to help students in implementing what they have learnt to real-life situations (Feybesse & Sundquist, 2023).

Encouraging Critical Thinking in Classrooms: The OECD also released report in 2023. In the report, it emphasizes that creativity and critical thinking should be prioritized in schools. The report outlines the strategies for teachers to help students develop these skills through varied assessments, like project-based and open-ended tasks. These findings reflect a growing understanding that students need more than traditional knowledge to be succeeded. For this, they need to be adaptable and have innovative thinking. It can be nurtured through assessments that encourage exploration and originality.

The Need for Redesigning Evaluation Methods

In today's changing world, the education system needs to provide the skills to the students. These skills will help them to succeed in difficult and challenging situations. The rote and repetition of the facts usually focuses on traditional assessment system do not prepare students to overcome the challenges of the future. As number of evaluation systems are increasing, it needs to be redesigned in order to enhance the ideas of productive pedagogy, especially to **foster students' critical thinking and creativity**. Current evaluation methods focus too much on memorization and regurgitation of information**.** This method has a number of drawbacks also.

- It gives excessive emphasis on grades, which becomes the main focus and causes pupils to put obtaining high grades ahead of learning and applying what they have learnt.
- Students find it challenging to pinpoint areas for growth because typical assessments offer little feedback.

- A limited definition of intelligence is presented by standardized tests and multiple-choice exams. It only assesses a limited set of abilities while neglecting crucial components like creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving.
- Due to the pressure of securing high score in standardized examinations, teachers prioritize test preparation over in-depth knowledge and comprehension.
- Last but not least, a lack of real-world application occurs when traditional assessments frequently fall short of evaluating students' capacity to use their knowledge in practical settings.

Rethinking Assessment Techniques: To address these challenges, a redesigned evaluation methods is needed to focus on Deep Learning which assess students' ability to apply knowledge, think critically, and solve problems.

To remove these obstacles, many techniques are being re-evaluated. It helps in identifying the techniques which focuses on deep learning and helps to evaluate pupils' ability to apply knowledge, solve problems, and reason logically. Second, it offers feedback that helps in pupils' development. Thirdly, it places a strong focus on creativity and modernization which inspire pupils to come up with original ideas and explanations. By this, students can be better prepared for success in real-life scenarios by restructuring the methods of evaluation which provide a more efficient and interesting learning environment. This strategy aims to promote fair learning opportunities and enhanced academic results (Lingard et al., 2003).

Alternative Evaluation Methods

Traditional evaluation method fails to represent students critical learning, because of which different alternative methods were come across to fulfill this gap which was seen through the literature review they highlight learning process over product, providing more comprehensive and detailed insights into student's abilities. The positive impact develops on group work for the both student to student and teacher to student connections. By permitting students to work through helping each other, teachers can assess both specific and group progress, which helps in improving classroom dynamics and learning involvements (Blatchford et al., 2006). These alternate strategies support problem-solving, active engagement, and practical application of information, which are more similar with the objectives of effective teaching.

Project based evaluations

It helps to presents a student's capability to apply one's knowledge in everyday situations rather than to rote memorize facts or performance for exam results. It motivates students to work on projects that solve real life issues, which helps students to learn thoughts more deeply and develop skills like teamwork, critical thinking, and originality. Some of the initiatives like the Atal Revolution Mission which have introduced "Atal Tinkering Labs" in schools, helps students to do

experiment and build projects related to science, skill, production, and math. Moreover, the Central Board of Secondary Education *(CBSE)* has started including projects in its curriculum to encourage active learning across more institutes.

Fostering collaboration, creativity, and problem-solving

In this the projects were assigned to students in a group or individual which help them to think critically, and relate themselves to the real-world situations, in NEP 2020 it was focused to develop more creative assignment which help students to develop there thinking more deeply. NEP 2020 focuses the importance of experiential learning, which includes sports and arts into the curriculum, enhancing collaborative skills while encouraging self-initiative, teamwork, and responsibility. Such general approaches aim to make learning more attractive and meaningful for students, which bring into line education with the needs of a quickly changing job market in fields such as technology and sustainable development.

Promoting Critical Analysis and Self-Expression

Through project-based learning, students can express their understanding through written reports, multimedia presentations, or artistic projects. Students can creatively communicate in various ways. Furthermore, critical analysis is a common component of these examinations, as students consider the procedure, pinpoint the difficulties, and appraise their own and their peers' contributions. Critical thinking abilities and deeper learning can be encouraged by this reflection.

Portfolio Assessments

A different kind of assessment is the portfolio assessment. In this type assessment, students gather their best work throughout the time to demonstrate how much they have learnt. Portfolio assessments offer a complete evaluation of students' learning. It provides a detailed understanding of academic growth and development (Klenowski, 2002). Portfolios, as opposed to a single test or exam, provides a longitudinal perspective of students' growth, enables a more sophisticated assessment of abilities, creativity, and critical thinking.

- **Highlighting Development and Originality Over Time**- students can showcase their growth by contributing their drafts, revisions, and final projects through portfolios. This method recognizes that learning is a continuous process. errors and improvements both are the important parts of this process. Students can also display their creativity because projects, essays, artwork, and reflections personalize their interests and strengths. It also frequently included in their portfolios.
- **Permitting reflection and self-evaluation**- portfolio evaluations provide a strong emphasis on reflection as a fundamental element and motivate students to evaluate themselves. By encouraging students to reflect on their strengths and opportunities for development, it helps them develop metacognitive abilities, which are essential for

critical thinking. In a literature lesson, for example, a student can consider how their interpretation of a specific work changed over time and how each revision helped them grasp it better.

Peer Review and self- Evaluation

Self-evaluation and peer review are effective methods for fostering critical thinking and communication abilities. Students examine each other's work using specific criteria in peer assessment. It helps them in learning from others and develops critical thinking skills regarding the caliber and depth of their peers' work. On the other hand, self-evaluation gives students the ability to evaluate their own work, that encourages ownership of learning and individual accountability. Peer review and self-evaluation are essential components of effective assessment, fosters critical thinking, reflection and continuous improvement (Falchikov, 2005). This help to encourage Metacognitive and Critical Thinking in students. They get encouraged to think critically about both their own and other people's work through both peer and self-assessment. Students are required to think critically about what constitutes a strong argument or an original solution while evaluating a peer's project or essay. Students who connect with the topic deeply and gain evaluative abilities beyond performance evaluation benefit from this process.

Challenges in Implementing New Evaluation Methods into Practice

Redesigning methods of assessment is necessary to promote critical thinking and creativity. By applying the theoretical concepts into reality presents a number of challenges. Students' learning outcomes and informing instructional decisions can be measured by assessment and evaluation (Boud, D., & Falchikov, N. 1989). These are crucial for assessment. Implementation of alternative evaluation procedures is facing a number of challenges. This may be because educational systems have long been rooted in traditional assessment methods like standardized testing. These challenges include Systematic response to change, the need for teacher training, maintaining a balance between traditional and innovative methods of assessment, and ensuring inclusiveness and equity in evaluation procedures etc. Some of these difficulties are discussed as follows:

1. Resistance to Educational System Change

Due to deeply rooted policies, regulations, and the comfort of established routines, educational institutions commonly show unwillingness to change. For many years, standardized testing has dominated student assessments, since it offers a clear objective and simple means of comparing student performance across large populations. Administrators and policymakers might consider the implementation of assessment more complicated like project-based learning, portfolios, and peer reviews which can be seen as disruptive or unreliable. Here are some of the resistances.

- **Inertia within Culture and Institutions** here not only schools but societal expectations also frequently oppose the change, Parents, employers, and even students are habituated to a system in which the primary indicators of success are to test scores, grades, and rankings. It can take a lot of time and effort to change our cultural perspective on learning and success in order to change this mindset. Governments and accrediting agencies also hold schools accountable; they frequently link financing or performance assessments of schools to the outcomes of standardized tests.
- **Lack of willingness among stakeholders** where, implementing new evaluation procedures effectively takes more time, effort, and skill, teachers also opposed to their acceptance. Teachers must be adaptable and creative in order to generate a variety of assessments and evaluate the advancement of students in less clear-cut ways as a result of redesigning evaluation systems. This indicates a significant divergence from the more common, simpler ways which considered more objective traditional grading procedures.

2. Training Teachers on New Approaches for Assessment

The requirement for teacher training to enable the successful use of alternative evaluations is one of the most significant barriers. Presenting curriculum content and evaluating students via standardized tests or assignments with specific assessments are common emphasis of traditional teacher preparation. However changing towards evaluations that encourage creativity and critical thinking demands a unique combination of abilities, such as the capacity to design complicated open-ended activities, direct students' self-evaluation, and offer valuable feedback during the learning process. Innovative assessment practices can empower teachers to be more effective in promoting student learning. They argue that assessments should be integrated into the teaching process to not only measure learning outcomes but also inform instructional strategies. The formative assessments that guide students' learning journeys, making education more responsive to individual student needs (Gardner et al., 2011, p. 109). Here are some new approaches for assessment:

- **Creating Innovative Literacy for Assessment** here, educators need to acquire new assessment literacy, which includes knowing how to assess higher-order thinking, creativity, and problem-solving abilities which represents a project, portfolio, or presentation needs for more judgement than evaluating a multiple-choice exam. When assessing these skills, teachers must learn how to strike a balance between subjectivity and objectivity, leading to the need for specialized training and continuous professional growth.
- **Providing Continuous Feedback**, it is essential that teachers give students constant, productive feedback which is essential for guiding their learning which represents a further major challenge. In relation to summative assessments, the feedback can be limited to the final grade, which shows a significant change in it. Teachers must

regularly monitor student progress and modify curriculum in response to formative assessments, which can take time and need a greater involvement with each student's work.

Conclusion

In order to match teaching and assessment practices with the needs of the population of the twenty-first century, it is imperative that educational evaluation methodologies be redesigned. This is not just a reformative process. As we've seen, in many of the previous literature by reviewing them that encouraging **critical thinking and creativity** is crucial to equipping children to live in a world that is getting more complicated all the time due to quick changes in technology and shifting social issues. feedback is most effective when it provides specific information that helps students understand *how* to improve their performance. Feedback should be timely, relevant, and focused on helping students to achieve specific learning objectives, the importance of creating a classroom environment where students feel comfortable receiving and acting on feedback (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). Furthermore, the digital collaboration increased many changes in this globalized world.

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