Gamifying report text reading: Implementing Wayground to improve vocational students' comprehension

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Article Info

Abstract

This article explores the integration of Wayground, a game-based digital learning platform, as a tool to enhance vocational high school students' comprehension of report texts in English language classrooms. The primary objective of this study is to analyze the pedagogical potential of Wayground in improving students' reading comprehension, motivation, and active engagement through interactive and student-centered instruction. This research employs a qualitative theoretical approach grounded in literature review, synthesizing findings from recent scholarly sources related to gamification, reading instruction, and the Emancipated Curriculum in Indonesia. Reading report texts presents challenges for vocational students due to their factual, formal, and structured nature, often resulting in disengagement and low comprehension. Wayground offers a practical solution through gamified features—such as instant feedback, time limits, and competitive elements—that stimulate learners' motivation and cognitive engagement. Furthermore, Wayground facilitates formative assessment and differentiation, supporting individualized learning pathways in line with constructivist principles and curriculum flexibility. The practical implications of this study suggest that integrating Wayground into English reading instruction can revitalize classroom dynamics and improve literacy outcomes in vocational settings. However, considerations such as digital infrastructure and teacher readiness must be addressed to ensure effective implementation. The findings of this study serve as a pedagogical guide for teachers seeking to leverage technology to promote deeper learning and engagement, particularly in reading-intensive lessons.

INTRODUCTION

In the rapidly evolving landscape of education in the 21st century, integrating technology into learning has become more than a trend—it is a necessity. Digital transformation, especially within the framework of the Industrial Revolution 4.0, urges teachers to rethink and redesign instructional methods to better align with students' needs and preferences (Ulla et al., 2020). In Indonesia, this transformation is further emphasized by implementing the *Emancipated Curriculum*, which promotes flexible, student-centered learning that integrates digital tools into everyday classroom instruction (Nguyen, 2020). However, despite this momentum, many classrooms still rely on traditional methods that may limit student engagement and performance (Pratiwi, 2024).

An educational tool that draws users with its interactive aspects is Wayground, previously known by the name Quizizz. Wayground is a game-based learning platform that facilitates formative assessments while keeping students actively engaged. Developed initially as a quiz tool, Wayground has evolved into a versatile educational technology that allows for real-time feedback, gamified learning experiences, and independent practice. According to Huong (2022), Wayground has proven to be particularly effective in boosting student motivation and participation in online and hybrid settings, making it a strategic choice for enhancing comprehension, especially in reading-intensive subjects.

The foundation of English language study includes reading comprehension. One must be able to gather, interpret, and evaluate written content, core skills for both educational and real-world communication. Among the various genres taught in secondary schools, report texts pose a unique challenge due to their factual structure, formal language, and the cognitive effort required to interpret technical content (Amalia, 2020). This challenge is even more pronounced in vocational high schools (Sekolah Menengah Kejuruan or SMK), where students often prioritize hands-on, practical learning over theoretical knowledge (Nguyen, 2020). Wayground's interactive elements, task timers, and scoring functions work together to support vocational students' practical learning, resembling real job performance. These gamification mechanics provide an engaging platform for students to practice and refine their comprehension skills in a supportive, non-threatening environment (Yunus & Hua, 2021).

Beyond its role in engagement, Wayground supports the Emancipated Curriculum's philosophy with independent learning and individualized task assignment. Through real-time performance analysis, teachers can track student progress and provide personalized support (Manzano-León et al., 2021). The integration of gamified elements helps reduce cognitive overload, a common issue when students encounter complex texts, allowing them to process information in smaller, manageable units (Razali et al., 2020). Previous research suggests that students who use interactive platforms like Wayground show greater levels of engagement and comprehension compared to those exposed to traditional instructional methods (Bottentuit Junior, 2020; Pratama, 2023). This sense of agency is critical, as passive learning often leads to cognitive overload, boredom, and poor retention (Safitri et al., 2023).

The use of interactive platforms like Wayground is especially relevant in vocational schools, where traditional approaches to teaching reading comprehension can lead to disengagement and passive learning (Mas' odi & Arma, 2024). Preliminary observations at SMK Negeri Semarang, which has adopted the Emancipated Curriculum and integrated various digital tools into its instruction, indicate that students respond more positively to visual and game-based materials than to conventional textbook-based methods. Introducing Wayground is expected to counteract these tendencies by promoting an interactive, game-like environment that fosters both motivation and cognitive engagement (Yusuf, 2023). Using this strategy, students should not only better understand what they read but also participate more actively with materials and thus remember content longer.

While numerous studies have investigated the general use of gamified platforms like Wayground (formerly Quizizz) in language learning (Amalia, 2020), fewer have explored its specific application in teaching report texts to vocational school students. This section aspires to resolve that issue through a conceptual review of the ways Wayground can be practically applied to teach reading comprehension to vocational students.

Centering on the use of Wayground in vocational high schools, this chapter's intent is to add to the ongoing discussion about integrating gamification into education and how it influences learning achievements. The sections that follow will analyze the theories behind gamification, instructional methods for utilizing Wayground in vocational areas, and the alignment of these tools with the Emancipated Curriculum's educational objectives. The chapter will also outline strategies

for teachers to incorporate Wayground into their teaching, both in class and in other learning environments.

Both those teaching reading skills in inventive ways and decision-makers wishing to see more widespread digital platform adoption are likely to value this research. By exploring this topic, the expectation is that Wayground will be recognized as a powerful facilitator of reading comprehension and motivation, especially in vocational education, where traditional methods are often ineffective (Manzano-León et al., 2021). While many studies have investigated the general impact of gamified tools like Wayground in language learning (Bottentuit Junior, 2020), there is still a gap in research specifically exploring its application in vocational settings, especially for teaching complex reading tasks such as report texts. Report texts are inherently challenging due to their structure, formal language, and specialized content. Engagement with theoretical content is an even bigger challenge in vocational schools, where students' interest may wane. Vocational students tend to prioritize practical, hands-on learning, which makes abstract or theory-based subjects like reading comprehension seem less relevant or engaging (Nguyen, 2020). Thus, instructional methods must be updated to be more practical for students and still support wider curriculum targets.

The novelty is the attention given to Wayground as a dedicated gamified tool for elevating report text comprehension in vocational education. The direct influence of Wayground on how vocational students interact with and comprehend report texts is relatively unexplored. It seeks to fill the gap by analyzing conceptually how Wayground can uplift engagement, comprehension, and the curricular agenda in vocational settings.

This study also reveals that using Wayground within reading classes can demonstrate how gamification lessens learners' cognitive overload with academic texts. Traditional instruction usually falls short in aiding students to process material full of facts. Razali et al. (2020) found that Wayground's gamified setup stimulates a more dynamic, enjoyable classroom, easing comprehension tasks and making them more achievable, while fueling student engagement and skill growth. Employing gamification pedagogically further enriches the wider discussion around innovative digital strategies designed to elevate learning in Indonesian vocational institutions.

METHODS

This article employs a qualitative theoretical approach to understand the potential of Wayground in promoting vocational high school students' report text literacy, solely referencing secondary sources, for instance, peer-reviewed works, policy frameworks, academic books, and talks from conferences. The aim is to construct a theoretically sound and pedagogically relevant foundation for integrating gamified digital tools into reading instruction, particularly in alignment with the Emancipated Curriculum.

The method used is based on an integrative literature review, which involves identifying, analyzing, and synthesizing scholarly sources related to four major themes: (1) gamification in education, (2) reading comprehension instruction, (3) vocational students' learning characteristics, and (4) the implementation of the Emancipated Curriculum in Indonesian secondary schools. Through this method, it is possible to comprehensively investigate how Wayground, exemplifying interactive learning technology, matches with educational theories and classroom application.

Sources were selected using purposive sampling based on three criteria: recency (published within the last ten years), credibility (peer-reviewed or academically reputable), and thematic relevance. A total of over fifteen sources were reviewed, covering literature at national and international levels about English language teaching, digital learning platforms, and curriculum reform. Most of the selected literature was published between 2018 and 2024, ensuring that the data reflect current trends and practices in educational technology and literacy development.

In analyzing the literature, a thematic coding technique was used to identify recurring concepts and recommendations related to Wayground implementation. Important considerations identified were student motivation, engagement, assessment, instructional scaffolding, digital accessibility, and teacher preparedness. These themes were then organized into sub-sections for discussion in the following chapter to ensure clarity and logical coherence.

The theoretical framework guiding this study combines several educational theories:
1. Constructivist Learning Theory: This theory emphasizes student-centered learning, where knowledge is actively constructed through engagement and reflection. Wayground's interactive format fosters active participation and real-time feedback,

    enabling learners to build understanding based on their experiences and encouraging the development of higher-order thinking skills.

2. Reading Comprehension Frameworks: Particularly those that focus on cognitive strategies such as identifying main ideas, recognizing text structures, and using contextual clues to understand vocabulary. These strategies are aligned with Wayground features that allow repeated practice and varied question types.

3. Gamification Principles in Education: The use of game gamified elements like competition, rewards, progress tracking, and time constraints enhances motivation, focus, and persistence, especially among students with lower academic confidence, such as those in vocational schools.

This research does not include any human participants; therefore, no ethical clearance or informed consent was required. Nonetheless, academic integrity is maintained through accurate citation and synthesis of scholarly ideas without plagiarism.

By employing this theoretical method, the study provides a non-empirical yet evidence-informed perspective on how teachers and curriculum designers can integrate Wayground into English language instruction. The findings are not meant to generalize outcomes but rather to serve as a strategic pedagogical reference for practitioners who aim to improve reading instruction for vocational students through interactive, technology-enhanced methods.

In conclusion, the qualitative theoretical approach used in this study allows for an in-depth, theory-driven analysis of the challenges and opportunities presented by using Wayground in reading classes. It enables the development of a pedagogical model that is both flexible and adaptable, considering the realities of vocational education and the aspirations of the Emancipated Curriculum. Future studies may build upon this foundation through classroom-based action research, experimental designs, or case studies that provide empirical evidence of effectiveness.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION
Overview of Literature

The use of digital technologies in educational environments has significantly redefined teaching and learning, particularly strengthening student involvement, enthusiasm, and results. Such tools allow teachers to make lessons more engaging. Wayground, formerly known as Quizizz, is an example of a gamified learning platform enhancing these aspects. By introducing game-like features such as real-time quizzes, leaderboards, instant feedback, and competition, Wayground has proven to be particularly effective in improving reading comprehension, especially in subjects that require students to actively engage with written content (Bottentuit Junior, 2020; Lim & Yunus, 2021; Rahayu & Purnawarman, 2019). Vocational education settings show these benefits most clearly, given students' common difficulty with theoretical resources, like report texts. In vocational schools, these benefits are evident because students often encounter obstacles when trying to engage with theoretical content, like report texts (Ju & Adam, 2018; Zhao, 2019).

In vocational education, report texts are challenging due to their formal organization, information-heavy content, and abstract ideas. Many students struggle to interpret and engage with such materials due to the perceived lack of relevance to their practical, career-focused goals. Through gamification via tools like Wayground, these learning challenges are overcome by making educational activities more engaging and interactive. Components that are gamified within Wayground, such as instant feedback, live quizzes, and competitive features, work to improve student motivation, enable better engagement, and facilitate more effective academic learning (Bal, 2018).

Academic reports that are divided into small parts will be more approachable. The use of Wayground is proven effective in reducing students' cognitive tension, thus making students understand and remember the subject matter better (Ju & Adam, 2018). For vocational students, who might otherwise view theory-heavy tasks like report writing as unrelated to their practical training, Wayground's dynamic, real-world-focused teaching strategies make the content more relevant and engaging. As their ability to interpret academic reports grows, students' overall performance and the advancement of the field are further supported (Lim & Yunus, 2021).

The use of gamified tools like Wayground within the classroom setting contributes to improved understanding and increased student involvement in reading-heavy educational tasks. This platform engages learners by encouraging active learning, alleviating cognitive load, and providing differentiated materials through game mechanics (Zhao, 2019). In this section, previous research

findings are assessed and interpreted, aligned with applicable theoretical frameworks, and associated with wider academic discussions on the impact of gamified learning in vocational education.

Thematic Discussion

Integrating Wayground into English reading instruction, particularly in teaching report texts to vocational high school (SMK) students, illustrates a confluence of gamification, technological adaptation, and the pedagogical shift toward student-centered learning in the digital era. This section synthesizes key themes emerging from the reviewed literature, framed around core pedagogical and contextual considerations: motivation, comprehension, technological infrastructure, teacher readiness, curriculum alignment, and risks of overreliance.

Engagement and Motivation through Gamification

Empirical findings consistently point out that engaging platforms like Wayground help increase student involvement with classroom activities and elevate their motivational drive. Because success in learning highly depends on motivation, gamification has gained wide recognition from educators aiming to tap into students' full capabilities. This trend is particularly prominent in vocational studies, where theory is frequently viewed as disconnected from practical needs. Through gamification, passive reading and writing tasks become interesting and stimulating experiences. With its interactive structure, Wayground helps make learning enjoyable and engaging. This engagement is primarily driven by the incorporation of features such as leaderboards, points, time-bound challenges, and real-time feedback, which enhance students' intrinsic motivation (Amalia, 2020; Razali et al., 2020).

The relevance of Wayground to Emancipated Curriculum is affirmed by Pratiwi (2024) and Handayani et al. (2020), who argue for a curriculum that integrates digital media to foster independent, student-centered learning. Through self-paced learning and progress tracking, Wayground champions these values, while also furnishing teachers with the capacity to differentiate instruction.

The gamified features within Wayground support intrinsic motivation through a healthy mix of competition and encouragement. Progress tracking through points and leaderboards gives students control and pride, and time-pressured tasks add energy and motivation to participate actively. Learning becomes less monotonous when fun elements are included, especially when contrasted with conventional textbook assignments. In vocational education, where theory often feels unrelated, this is particularly helpful. A fun and competitive approach in Wayground results in students being more motivated and achieving better grades (Zhao, 2019).

The findings align with previous research showing that gamification increases motivation, engagement, and participation in learning tasks (Yusuf, 2023). For example, Nguyen (2020) found that students using gamified learning platforms like Wayground were more motivated to complete tasks than those who used traditional learning methods (Bal, 2018). As for environments where students are less involved, the use of gamification methods is considered from this research to be suitable in increasing student participation and also has an influence on student performance (Ju & Adam, 2018).

Wayground's competitive structure, like scoring systems and countdown-based tests inspires students to keep improving. As they earn recognition via points, their motivation to study increases, resulting in better outcomes. Feedback delivered in real time informs students of their performance, keeping them engaged and minimizing interruptions (Rahayu & Purnawarman, 2019).

Breaking Down Cognitive Overload in Reading Tasks

Another important finding is that Wayground reduces cognitive overload, especially when students need to understand dense, technical report texts. Report texts often require significant cognitive effort, and traditional classroom methods (such as passive reading) may fail to provide the necessary support for students to manage this load effectively.

In this context, Constructivist Learning Theory, as proposed by theorists like Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky, emphasizes that learners actively construct knowledge through engagement, reflection, and interaction with the material. In line with constructivism, Wayground's design allows students to interact with complex materials by breaking them down into smaller, more digestible segments. By engaging with the material and reflecting on their learning, students actively develop deeper understanding.

Focusing on a single section in each interactive quiz, Wayground prevents students from feeling overwhelmed and improves their concentration. This approach encourages deeper engagement with the material, helping students manage their cognitive load in a constructive manner (Muhtarom et al., 2023).

The immediate feedback delivered by Wayground secures that students get quick affirmation of correct answers and correction of errors, facilitating improved comprehension and material retention. Due to this, students interact more purposefully with academic content, improving their proficiency in decoding complex vocational texts.

Development of Higher-Order Thinking Skills

Wayground promotes the development of higher-order thinking skills, such as analysis, evaluation, and synthesis, which are crucial in vocational education. Through its interactive quizzes, Wayground encourages students to engage with the text in a more meaningful way. For example, quizzes may require students to analyze the structure of a report, evaluate the implications of its findings, or apply the information to hypothetical scenarios. These activities push students to go beyond surface-level comprehension and develop critical thinking skills.

In accordance with constructivist learning theory, these tasks encourage students to grow existing knowledge and draw on experience by actively and reflectively engaging with the subject matter. Constructivism asserts that critical thinking is cultivated when learners actively participate and reflect on their experiences. Constructivism asserts that critical thinking is built through active interaction with content and subsequent reflection. This process supports the development of higher-order thinking skills necessary for real-world problem-solving.

Using Wayground's interactive quizzes and tasks, students are prompted to engage more deeply with the material, which supports the development of these important skills. The quiz features push learners to think critically, such as by analyzing the format of a report, evaluating its consequences, or applying knowledge to imagined scenarios. These learning activities exemplify the goals of active learning, where students must transform and apply what they know (Bottentuit Junior, 2020).

Research has shown that interactive learning platforms like Wayground can improve recall, critical thinking, and text comprehension when used in a structured and scaffolded way (Safitri et al., 2023). By using repetition, variation in question formats, and spaced practice, these platforms align with well-established reading comprehension strategies, such as identifying main ideas, supporting details, vocabulary in context, and inferencing (Huong, 2022).

Through interactive practice with quizzes and tasks demanding analysis, synthesis, and evaluation, students develop the problem-solving critical thinking skills used in real-world scenarios. Students who actively engage with the material in this way are better prepared to tackle complex challenges and apply their knowledge in real-world settings. As students improve advanced cognitive skills, their educational performance rises and they deal with work challenges more adeptly.

Contextualized Learning and Vocational Relevance

Wayground actively promotes the development of critical higher-order cognitive skills analysis, evaluation, and synthesis which are integral to vocational learning. Quiz prompts might require examining report structures, assessing results' implications, or hypothetical application of information, helping move beyond surface comprehension.

When teachers design quizzes based on students' career paths, learners are better able to appreciate the practical value of their studies. Students are more enthusiastic about participating when they understand the skills' future value. For instance, a report on a technical component or a recipe becomes much more interesting and engaging when it is framed within the context of the student's vocational field. Making assessments industry-specific, such as for healthcare or engineering, not only makes learning more meaningful but also more successful.

Contextualized learning goes further than engagement by cultivating the skills students need for professional success. Through customized assignments, students not only grow academically but also gain experience with tasks they'll face in their careers. The closer the link between their studies and career objectives, the more invested and successful students are likely to be.

In the context of vocational education, learners often prioritize measurable outcomes such as earning professional certifications, securing promotions, or mastering specific industry-related competencies. Wayground supports these ambitions by providing customized instructional materials

that directly correspond to students' career objectives. This alignment between educational content and professional goals enhances workplace readiness and fosters the development of critical thinking, technical skills, and problem-solving abilities—qualities that are in high demand across vocational disciplines.

Teacher Readiness and Assessment Innovation

Student success and engagement through Wayground and other gamified tools greatly depend on how effectively teachers incorporate these tools into their educational strategies. Teachers must be equipped to craft quizzes based on objectives, read platform analytics, and refine teaching as feedback comes in. The data analytics provided by Wayground offer teachers valuable insights into student performance, allowing them to offer personalized feedback and adjust instruction to meet the diverse needs of students (Yusuf, 2023). Teachers must also be able to design quizzes that align with the curriculum's goals and learning objectives.

For gamified tools like Wayground to be used successfully, teachers must be adequately prepared. Proficiency in deploying these tools is necessary to achieve their intended impact in class. Teachers need to master quiz construction geared toward goals, evaluate learner data, and shift their teaching methods as needed in real-time. Teachers who are trained to use these tools effectively can provide more personalized learning experiences and improve student outcomes (Pratama, 2023).

The use of digital tools like Wayground also requires teacher readiness in mastering digital teaching practices. According to Pratama (2023), teachers can utilize Wayground not merely as an evaluation tool but as a formative assessment platform that provides immediate feedback and data analytics. This aligns with the Emancipated Curriculum's commitment to diagnostic, adaptive, and individualized instruction.

Wayground's real-time data collection empowers teachers to regularly assess student progress and swiftly alter their teaching strategies as needed. However, this potential can only be realized when teachers are trained to design quizzes aligned with learning objectives, interpret quiz results meaningfully, and respond to data-driven insights (Gangaiamaran & Premraj, 2020).

However, the effective adoption of technology in education can be impacted by digital inequality, as implied by Yumnah (2021) and Yusuf (2023), which can lead to learning disparities. Schools and decision-makers must work together to provide every student with the necessary technology and consistent internet connectivity to realize the full potential of Wayground for every learner.

By integrating Wayground and similar tools into their teaching practices, educators can foster a more dynamic and engaging learning environment, leading to better academic performance and greater student satisfaction. The use of real-time data enables educators to track student progress closely and find areas of struggle quickly, promoting tailored intervention strategies and individualized feedback essential for addressing diverse learning need (Muhtarom et al., 2023).

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this theoretical study has examined the potential of Wayground as a gamified learning tool to support the teaching of report texts in vocational high school English classes. By synthesizing recent literature on gamification, reading comprehension, and vocational pedagogy, the study reveals that Wayground offers significant benefits in enhancing students' engagement, motivation, and understanding of factual texts. The interactive features of Wayground—such as real-time feedback, time limits, and point systems—align well with student-centered and constructivist learning approaches. These features allow learners to participate actively, reflect on their performance, and develop comprehension strategies in an enjoyable, less intimidating environment.

Furthermore, Wayground is compatible with the Emancipated Curriculum's emphasis on digital integration and flexible instruction. Its ability to differentiate tasks, provide formative assessment, and foster autonomous learning makes it a valuable tool in the vocational education setting, where students often require contextualized and practical learning experiences. However, the successful implementation of Wayground also depends on external factors such as adequate digital infrastructure, teacher readiness, and careful instructional planning. Without these supports, there is a risk that the platform may be underutilized or misapplied, potentially leading to superficial learning or digital exclusion.

Based on the findings, it is recommended that teachers integrate Wayground not as a standalone solution but as part of a blended instructional model that includes explicit reading strategy instruction, reflection activities, and collaborative tasks. Teachers should receive professional development on how to design pedagogically sound Wayground content that aligns with learning objectives and student needs. Policymakers and school administrators are also encouraged to invest in equitable access to technology and to support initiatives that promote digital literacy among both teachers and students. Future research is suggested to empirically test the impact of Wayground on learning outcomes across different vocational fields, as well as to explore how it can support the development of higher-order thinking and long-term literacy skills.

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