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## Teachers' Perception and the Implementation of Peer Observation at the Language Center in a Private University

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**Abstract**

One way for teachers to learn is by peer observation to reflect the practice of teaching, which in turn will give input to improve the competence in the teaching-learning process. Conducting the process of peer observation needs the commitment from different parties and raises some problems. The institutions need human resources and budget allocation to build the system, and to maintain its running. On the other hand, the teachers are reluctant to be observed because they will feel insecure, fear to change the routine, and have more works to do. This research was to answer the following questions: (1) How did teachers perceive and engage in the practice of peer observation at the Language Training Center?; (2) How was the implementation of peer observation at the Language Center? The research design for this study was the qualitative case study and took place at the Language Center of a private university in Indonesia. Purposeful sampling was to determine the participants. The answers to those two questions were the teacher's perception in the form of how they perceive the aim of peer observation as the monitoring evaluation and the benefit of it. Then, the implementation of Peer Observation and feedback for the next implementation.

*Keywords:* Teacher Perception; Peer Observation; Language Centers

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**Introduction**

Teacher professional development (TPD) may lead to the improvement of the teachers' competence that will help the students gain success. Furthermore, science and technology rapidly change and need attention from the teachers to catch up with the things to adapt by improving the knowledge and skill. When the teachers do not learn, they will be left behind and extinct. The teacher's ability to teach is important to achieve the goals of education, and the students are easier to do the learning. Therefore teachers should have the opportunity to always learn throughout their careers.

Because of the reasons mentioned above, education institutions make efforts to make the teacher learn. There are various ways to conduct teacher learning. One of them is by teacher learning from the teacher. One form of this kind of learning is by conducting peer observation to ensure the quality of teaching practice. The peer observation aims to make sure and maintain the effectiveness of educational services at the institution (Byrne, Brown, & Challen, 2010). Bovill (2010) stated that the purpose of peer observation is to improve the teaching and learning procedures by ensuring the critical reflection toward a teachers who observe each other in order to increase the quality of teaching and learning.

The research by Tosriadi, Asib, Marmanto, and Azizah (2018) supported the earlier statement that teachers perceive peer observation as one way to pursue professional development, help them solve the problems in teaching and the opportunity to learn to improve the quality of teaching.

Peer observation is the means to reflect the practice of teaching, which in turn will give input to their partner to improve the competence in the teaching-learning process. The trust and respect among teachers who are observed and become the observer will determine the effectiveness of the process. Dos Santos (2017) highlighted this idea in his research that meaningful peer observation and how the teachers make sense of it can improve the teaching strategies, and they can do reflection to deliver their best practices. It is very crucial to provide guidelines and resource in increasing the quality of the observation (Atkinson & Bolt, 2012 in Harris et al., 2008). According to Gosling (2002), peer observation is often to train new teachers to develop both individual and institutional capacity. If this process successfully provides feedback to parties who are involved in the teaching-learning process, the increase in teacher's

competence in teaching practice can be guaranteed (Gosling, 2002).

Conducting the process of peer observation needs a commitment from parties involved in the teaching-learning process. For the institutions, the process means the human resources and budget allocation to build the system. Therefore, if there is no commitment from the institutions, this process may become a mission impossible. Besides, this is a kind of continuous process. There must be efforts to maintain its running. A study by Doyle (2012) revealed that structured peer-to-peer lessons and observation in meaningful collaboration and a transparent environment improved the perception of school as a learning organization.

On the other hand, from the teacher point of view, there are also some problems. Usually, the teachers are reluctant to be observed because they will feel insecure since nobody likes criticism. The fear of changing the routine and the stay in the comfort zone because they are afraid to change and put effort into their teaching-learning is another problem. Besides, doing the peer observation process means more works for the teachers. Those reasons are the problems that arise in conducting peer observation.

It is very interesting to research this topic concerning the importance of the

process of peer observation and challenge in the sense that the peer observation conducted in this institution is systematic and promoted by the institution for more than two years. Besides, as the language centers in a university is a supporting unit, so there is no standard for evaluation and career path for the teachers teaching there. Thus, the peer observation conducted by this institution can be seen as a genuine motive to improve teachers' quality for the students' achievement.

There are units in one of the private universities in Yogyakarta that conducted the process of peer observation. There is still a need to evaluate the program so that the program will run smoothly and meet the aims of peer observation and give valuable inputs for both the teachers and institutions. This research intends to answer the following questions: (1) What is the teacher's perception of the implementation of peer observation? (2) How is the implementation of peer observation at the Language Center?

This research has an objective to know the implementation of peer observation at the Language Center in the intended private university in Yogyakarta. TPD is only a part of the education system. However, this part resembles the whole system considering the significant role of the teacher in education as the actor who implements the education

process. The education business is specific because it relates to humans; consequently, the process should resemble the humanistic value. This project may yield an emphatic understanding of the TPD process to achieve the goals of educating people and achieve the best of students' performance. The implication of this research is to improve teacher's quality that will lead to better students' performance.

### **Definition of Peer Observation**

Peer observation of teaching is a formative process between the teacher and the observer who work together and observe each other's teaching. The observer gives feedback to the teacher who is doing the teaching ("Peer Observation," 2017). Whereas Swinglehurst, Russell, & Greenhalgh (2008) stated that peer observation is a process when an educator observes another educator, it usually occurs in college. Another expert also stated that peer observation of teaching is a formal process of a teacher whose activities are identified, disseminated, and developed (Donnelly, 2007).

Many educational institutions use peer observation for TPD. In the professional development of teachers, teachers can select co-workers to attend and observe their classroom teaching (Torku et al., 2017).

Moreover, Crandall and Miller (2014) stated that knowing the specific need for practicing teachers makes professional development is considered effective. Same as language teachers who know the need of the students who are considered effective. Glatthorn (1995) (as cited in Villegas-Reimers, 2003) mentioned that “Teacher development is the professional growth a teacher achieves as a result of gaining increased experience and examining his or her teaching systematically.” The purpose of the definition is that teachers cannot continue to hold on to their early learning techniques. So the teachers need to find ways to grow their skills. However, teacher awareness is a necessary condition for changing practice.

Professional development, according to Ganser (2000), is grouped into two, which is formal experience such as workshops and mentoring and informal experience such as reading the latest research. Through peer observation as reflective teaching, the professional development of teachers can have an improvement. Hendry and Oliver (2012) described, “peer observation is the process of colleagues observing others in their teaching, with the overall aim of improving teaching practice.” To conduct peer observation, the teacher can ask their colleagues or other teachers directly to observing his/her teaching and discuss what

happened during the teaching process. This kind of peer observation is unstructured peer observation.

On the other hand, peer observation can also be in a structured way. Such as invite colleagues to observe the teacher afterward share the result of observation, feedback, and ideas about the strategy of teaching, student enrollment, and time management in teaching. Hammerslet-Fletcher (2009) stated that “in peer observation, the observer should act to provide the observe with as an objective view of teaching session as possible, and review and reflect on that experience with the observe in a way that informs future thinking.” In peer observation, trusting one another is one of the keys to getting a better result. The selection of the right partner can also be one of the considerations in the selection of colleagues. Then as much as possible, colleagues have thoughts that inform the future.

### **Models of Peer Observation**

Gosling (2002) had categorized three models of peer observation, namely evaluation model, development model, and peer review model.

**Evaluation model** is an observation by superior toward a teacher. The aims of this model identify underperformance, confirm

probation, appraisal, promotion, quality assurance, and assessment. This model evaluates the external and internal of an institution include select the staff for judging eligibility for promotion.

**Development model**, this model is conducted by an expert teacher to others in the department. It aims to demonstrate competence or improve teaching competence and assessment. This model observed teaching performance, class, and learning material.

**Peer-review model** intends to be a formative process where teacher observes each other with giving constructive feedback without judge each other. The aim of this model is engagement in a discussion about teaching, self, and mutual reflection. It observes teaching performance, class, and learning material, and it is beneficial for both of them.

According to McMahon, Barrett, and O'Neill (2007), the categories do not have a base on who does what but who controls the data flow. It is fundamentally about the power in reporting professional competence. That is a way (McMahon et al., 2007) categorized two models of peer observation, 1) Type-A: control by observing, 2) Type-B: control by others. Each of these is in the following.

**Type-A:** control by observing, in this model, access to information is in the hands of an observed teacher. So, the area of the information based on the request of the teacher observed.

**Type-B:** control by others; in this model, access to information is not in the hands of the teacher. The information that the observer takes without their consent, control, and contribution.

McMahon et al. (2007) stated that one of the reasons to conduct peer observation is to achieve a qualification. Hence, in peer observation, we need to involve the third-party that will able to award qualification, and it implied the type-B model as described above.

### **Process of Peer Observation**

The system of peer observation is a collaborative process to facilitate and enhance the professional development of teachers or staff of teaching. The point is that the process of peer observation is a dialogue with others about the pedagogical concepts to develop someone's practice (Byrne, Brown, & Challen, 2010). According to Bovill (2010), there are three stages during the process of peer observation, namely:

**The briefing meeting before peer observation.** A briefing meeting is the first

stage of peer observation. So, before the one who observed and the observer does the observation, they should discuss how the observation will be and what part of teaching that the teacher wants to observe. Also, they should decide about where and when the observation will be, who the learners are, and what level of the learners.

**The observation of teaching.** During the observation, the observer does not take part in the classroom, but students have to know the reason for observer presence, and students understand that their performance is not under observation. The teacher should teach as usual they teach and try to behave normally to create the usual classroom situation. While the observer has to focus on the process of the way the teacher teaches unless the teacher has asked the observer to observe the content and subject.

**Post observation meeting or feedback.** Post observation meeting is the last stage of peer observation. The point is that the observer gives comments and feedback for the teacher. Usually, the observer has taken note of this session. However, it will be good if this session held immediately after the observation because both the teacher and observer can recall the details of the session. In giving the feedback, the observer should give constructive feedback about what works

well and suggest the teacher for improvement.

Furthermore, Siddiqui, Jonas-Dwyer, & Carr (2007) had the same judgment about stages of peer observation. The first is pre-observation; in this stage, both the observer and the observed discuss to gain an understanding of the session to be observed. The second is the actual observation where the observer observes during the teaching-learning process. The third stage is the post-observation and involves reflection and debriefing between observer and teacher.

#### **Peer Observation as a Reflective Teaching**

By using peer observation as a reflection of teaching, teachers can be better understood which parts should be improved. Reflection is a process of remembering and valuing an experience for a particular purpose. Motallebzadeh et al. (2017) argued that “reflective teaching has been an effective way to develop and empower teachers.” In the reflection of teaching, teachers see what they have taught in class, why the teacher taught it in the classroom, and how the teaching outcome at the time, whether it works or not. This reflection of teaching has the purpose of collecting data on the teaching process and looking for teacher weaknesses in teaching to be addressed in order to be more effective

in classroom learning. In doing a reflection of teaching, teachers can use the tools and ways. Like Fatemipour argument (2009) stated that in collecting teaching reflection data, teachers could use the teacher's diary, peer observation, student feedback, and audio recording.

With the teacher's diary, teachers can see whether the teaching or techniques used from day to day have increased or not. Not only that, but the teacher can also note the advantages he had in teaching the class. So that teachers can use these advantages as one method that can be applied by other teachers. Then feedback from students can also be a good tool because students see firsthand what is going on in the learning process. Students can give input when the learning finishes. Sometimes we often encounter teachers who do not need input from students. They feel they have a higher level than students. However, some teachers need input from students in order for teachers to get their shortcomings in the teaching process. So that teachers can anticipate these shortcomings and can slightly improve the quality of their skills in teaching in the classroom.

As written above, one way of collecting data is through peer observation. The observer attends his/her class and gathers information during the lesson. When the

observer in class, she or he should noiseless and not disturb the teaching and learning process. In peer observation, the teacher will get results from an observation performed by another teacher. It aims to improve the quality of teachers in classroom learning. Peer observation becomes one of the most effective ways of doing a reflection of teaching.

### **Research Methodology**

This study used a qualitative methodology that the purpose of this research is not to test a certain hypothesis but to describe some variables and conditions naturally (Arikunto, 2007, p. 234). In the research result, the researcher explained the phenomena being studied based on the data gathered before. The explanation was about the description of the implementation of the peer observation at the Language Center and the English Language Department. The research took place at the Language Center at a private university in Yogyakarta. The time to conduct the research was from February until July 2018. The participants of this research were two people who have a decision-maker position to reveal the implementation of peer observation. The other participants were the teachers to dig on their perception about the running of the

peer observation process. The teachers are the English language instructors at the center and comprise of two males and two females, and they had the experience of conducting the full cycle of the peer observation either as the observer or the one observed. Altogether, there were 6 participants.

The data collection methods used the document study, observation, and in-depth interview. The document study was to study the policies, SOP, and other written sources to understand the process of the implementation of peer observation. The in-depth interview, both with the teachers and decision-makers, were to reveal their perception.

Data analysis is the process of bringing the order, structure, and interpretation of the mass of collected data (Sugiyono in Adib 2012 p.38). The document study and transcribed interview were categorized using the Qualitative Data Analysis software to sort out and list different phenomena. After coding process completed, then the process of reporting began. The ethical and trustworthiness issues were along the process of the research.

### **Finding and Discussion**

This research was to answer the following questions: “what is the teacher perception on the implementation of the

peer observation?” and “How is the implementation of the peer observation at the Language Center?” This section of this paper is to explore the answer to the research questions on the implementation of peer observation and what is the teacher's perception of the implementation of peer observation. The answers to those two questions were the teacher's perception in the form of how they perceive the aim of the peer observation as monitoring evaluation and the benefit of it. Then, the implementation of Peer Observation and feedback for the next implementation.

### **The Teachers' Perception of the Aims of Peer Observation**

The aims here refer to the perceived aims that the people involved in these activities. There are two kinds of aims considered in this research; they are the source of evaluation and Feedback.

**Evaluation and Monitoring.** The first reason to conduct the evaluation is that it is a must for an institution to evaluate the performance of the teachers. After all, teaching is not a single activity. Carrie and Lily stated their opinion about this.

*“... We all believe that the faculty members should get evaluation, there should be an evaluation, evaluation in conducting the work ...”* (Carrie)

*"...In general, do the monitoring and evaluation...to make sure that the Instructors do their main job, to do the teaching as scheduled, on time, and so on."*  
(Lily)

There is an expectation that the results of the evaluation and monitoring, in general, are the increased quality of the teaching-learning itself. Sandra and Rodney stated their opinion about this.

*"To increase or make the teaching and learning quality better in this department. If there are any weaknesses, they can be improved, because they are evaluated."*  
(Sandra)

*"So, to improve the teaching quality, then it can be used as the evaluation tool."*  
(Rodney)

The aims of the peer observation activities here were said as the media to conduct the evaluation that leads to the improvement of the teaching-learning process.

**Feedback.** Another perspective about the aims of the Peer Observation is the source of feedback, and it is a kind of informed feedback because suggested by the colleague. From this feedback, they can learn

from each other because, in this part of activities, there are sharing session as well.

*"So, in observation, the teacher gave about her teaching by her colleague, the professional that they can view from the professional perspectives."* (Jodie)

*"We do it (the Peer Observation) in a friendly manner. The aim is to learn with each other. The aim is first to evaluate, and then the second is to learn from each other so that they can give feedback to other teachers."* (Carrie)

Furthermore, Lily also emphasized this matter.

*"We also want to exchange ideas with the teacher. Actually, the focus is not to evaluate to seek the weaknesses, but more on the things that can be shared. Any feedback to make betterment in the future. So, the main intention is to do the sharing to improve the teaching-learning process. The aim is more on the sharing."* (Lily)

The statement is in line with the understanding of the teachers that the peer observation at the end will improve their teaching performance and self-confidence.

*"As a teacher, if we are observed, and then we get the input, we can increase our confidence."* (Sandra)

*“To see the teacher performance directly in doing the teaching in the classroom, from what is seen, what is conveyed as the evidence to improve the teaching method like in choosing the material, methodology. So I can say that it is for professional development.” (Rodney)*

According to Gosling (2002), there are three models of peer observation, namely evaluation model, development model, and peer review model. Both evaluation and development models involved peer observation as the means of evaluation, monitoring, and assessment. The Observer and the ones to be observed have different levels, they are not collegial, and there is a judgmental part in both. Even though the participants called peer observation as the evaluation and monitoring process, but the sense of it does match with the definition offered by Gosling. The activities are more in line with the peer review model that “this model intended to be a formative process where teachers observe each other with giving constructive feedback without judge each other. The aim of this model is engagement in a discussion about teaching, self, and mutual reflection. It observed teaching performance, class, and learning material, and it is beneficial for both.”

### **Teacher Perception of the Benefits of Peer Observation**

There are at least two benefits gained from the peer observation activities viewed from the individual and institution point of view.

#### **Benefits for the individual teachers.**

There are some benefits that the individual can gain during the process of peer observation. To mention some, they are that this activity yields the motivation to learn from each other, adopting good practices and avoid the weaknesses. Sandra and Rodney mentioned her perspective on this.

*“The benefit is because I can learn from others, so it was a lesson that very valuable for me. By the time I finished the observation I can compare with another teacher, I can recognize my strengths and weaknesses, meaning I can learn about myself.” (Carrie)*

Rodney conveyed the same tone as Carrie.

*“I became to know how I teach seen from the other person's perspective because I often think that my teaching is already fine, but then there was some feedbacks that made me realized to improve here and there. When I observed another teacher, I got ideas, good*

*practices that I did not do in the classroom, which is proven more effective.” (Rodney)*

Another aspect that the teacher can gain is the process of reflection. The motivation to learn from each other raises the awareness to reflect their practices.

*“...to see, to reflect, all educators should learn from their teaching practices, whether they are successful or not, so they have to learn from what they have done.” (Jodie)*

*“So, the awareness is stronger because when we do our daily teaching as the routine activities, we often forgot that we must perform quality teaching. We often think that we already fulfill the teaching standard. When there is someone observed us, we realized that there are weaknesses, and we did not do our best. We have more awareness to reflect the things stronger than before.” (Sandra)*

*“Observation helps us to reflect, how we teach so far, is there any aspect that should be improved, which one is good and can be continued and so on. We will be able to see that our teaching is like a mirror.” (Fred)*

From the reflection practices, there is intention and awareness to improve the teaching quality as a part of TPD.

*“The influence it is for their self-development because self-reflection is the starting point for professional development. They start to think about another teaching strategy, different teaching methodology to overcome the problem in class, so more on the self-reflection then arise the motivation to improve the teaching performance.” (Lily)*

The impact of the awareness to do professional learning will influence the quality of the teaching itself and self-confidence.

*“Peer Observation improved the quality of teaching, for me also to improve my self-confidence during the teaching.” (Sandra)*

There are at least three benefits for the individual gained. The first is that peer observation can be useful as the means to learn from each other. The next is that it provides self-reflection for the teachers, and the last, those practices can lead to improving the quality of teaching.

Benefits for the institution. Other than the benefit for the individual teachers, there benefits for the institution. At least there are two advantages to the institutions. The first is the quality teaching will impact student learning that increases student satisfaction, and the second provides the institution with

the tools to do the monitoring and evaluation.

Rodney and Sandra stated the benefit of the students.

*“I think it gives the benefit to the institution like the one with the measurement on the student satisfaction index. The institution wants to increase the index every year, how the quality of teaching will impact the students’ satisfaction.”* (Rodney)

*“The students will obviously get the benefit when the teacher well prepared, then the teaching is fun, not only when the class is observed, the student will get the best experience....the most important consideration is the students....the one who gets the most impact from the teachers are the students.”* (Sandra)

The other benefits for the institution are the monitoring and evaluation through peer observation, as explained through Fred, Pat, and Lily’s opinion.

*“There are many advantages for the institution; the management will know the practical condition in the real situation to*

*make further decision. The data from the peer observation will be needed.”* (Fred)

*“From the observation, we know the teaching quality of each teacher that we used as the decision to make teachers level, from that we decide to give them additional jobs or responsibility.”* (Pat)

*“Of course, the influence for the institution is that we can assure or monitor the quality of the teachers. After the observation, we found out with the performance that needs to be improved, we will give them special sessions or additional training. It also possible that the result of the peer observation is the decision to conduct workshop that is needed by the teachers to improve their teaching quality.”* (Lily)

The benefit for the institution lies on the awareness to serve the students better and to monitoring the teachers’ quality to improve the teaching-learning process.

### **The Implementation of Peer Observation**

The implementation of the teacher observation will be presented in the table below.

**Table 1. The implementation of the teacher observation**

Frequency	Per semester for 2 years (4 times)
Role	<p>Mentoring system: The Full-time teachers observe the Part-time teacher in his or her peer sharing group, but not in reverse.</p> <p>The observation is based on the peer sharing group, where a full-time teacher becomes the PIC of around 6-7 part-time teachers. This system makes the full-time teacher does not have the opportunity to be observed by the colleague.</p>
Pre-Observation	<p>The coordinator of the Human and Resource Development prepares the documents like a checklist and rubric. There is no questionnaire for the students at the time of observation, but the student feedbacks are gathered at the end of the semester</p> <p>The observer makes an appointment with the member of the sharing group individually to learn the rubric and checklist as well as to discuss the aspects that will be observed during the peer observation.</p>
While Observation	<p>The teacher sits in the classroom for the whole time to observe the class and sat at the back so as not to disturb the teaching-learning process. The observer observes the class, takes notes, fill the rubric, and checklist provided.</p>
Post Observation	<p>The Observer or the PIC of the sharing group keep the documents and keep them as the data for the institution. These documents are reported at the center's meeting at the end of the semester as the consideration to make decisions and improvement.</p> <p>The Observer makes an appointment to discuss the result of the observation and the possibilities of improvement.</p> <p>The Coordinator of the Human Resources and Development report the result of the Peer Observation to the Manager of the Language Center at the end of the semester.</p>

### Feedback for the next implementation

It may become a crucial part of the implementation of the peer observation activity because this session captures the voice of the teachers. There are at least six aspects to consider in conducting Peer Observation.

**Sustainability.** It is hope from the teachers that the peer observation program can be continuous because the teachers gain the most benefit from it.

*"It can be conducted each year; I hope it can be conducted continuously." (Jodie)*

*"I experienced the peer observation every semester since the program runs. It is important to be conducted routinely." (Fred)*

The teachers have the willingness to take part in the activity, and they expect to have peer observation at least once a year.

**Scheduling.** Even though there is an urgency in these matters that both the authority and the teacher agree that it is not easy for all parties when conducting such activities. The commitment from both teachers and institution are needed.

*"If we have more schedule, we are getting busier, all of us are busy." (Sandra)*

*"The challenge is actually more on the system. The challenge is to arrange the schedule is difficult, with 300 classes and many teachers, the challenge is in the scheduling." (Lily)*

The teacher's motivation to participate is high, but there are technical problems in matching the schedules between the observer and the teacher.

**Reward System.** The next input is the reward system that can be in the form of financial benefit. The teacher expects to get honorarium when they do extra work for peer observation.

*"I just want money, no, seriously I want money" (Carrie)*

*"There is not any like the increase in wages or teaching honorarium, but we are trying to find the system that suitable for that." (Pat)*

**Documentation.** Documentation is an important part of the peer observation as the track record either for the institution or for the individual as the basis to make the review and evaluation.

*"This program is well documented...one day we want to look again our journey...to see the journey of our teaching or any activities that related to the observation....or if someone wants to do research on it, it has complete files." (Sandra)*

*"We have not had the system to analyze the data.....we discuss the result with the teachers, but we have not analyzed the rubrics or the checklist yet comprehensively. That is our weakness" (Pat)*

### Conclusion

The aims of peer observation are for evaluation and monitoring. Peer

observation has two benefits, and these are; for individual teachers and institutions. The teacher can learn from others, gain some reflection, and improve the teacher's quality of teaching. Institution quality teaching will impact student learning, which increases student satisfaction. Also, peer observation provides the institution with the tools to do the monitoring and evaluation. Some aspects must implement peer observation; sustainability, scheduling, reward system, documentation.

### Recommendation

Based on the result of this study there are some recommendations from the researcher for some parties that are related to this study such, teacher, institution and further researchers

For teacher. The researcher hopes that teachers get information about peer observation. The researcher also hopes that the teacher can do self-reflection on their teaching, and those practices can lead to improve and maintain the quality of their teaching.

Based on the result of this study, the researcher recommends the institution to take additional information from this research. Also, from the finding of the research, the researcher hopes that the institution will conduct some programs such

as training or seminar to monitoring and evaluating the teachers' quality.

Further researchers need to conduct that related to this topic and use the result of this study as a reference and also should investigate a similar topic but using different focus, such as teachers' perception or any aspects that relate to this topic.

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