**A STUDY OF EFFECTIVE ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS AT SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL IN MAKASSAR**

**Asriati**

*Graduate Program*

*State University of Makassar, Indonesia*

**ABSTRACT**

An effective English language teacher has different characteristics from an ordinary one. This research was conducted to reveal the characteristics of effective English language teachers in Makassar and the backgrounds of effective English language teachers that contribute to develop their abilities in teaching. This research applied a qualitative research method using case study approach. The findings of this research show that the characteristics of effective English language teachers in Makassar are divided into several categories; professional competence, pedagogical competence, social competence, personal qualities, and intra and intercultural awareness. Effective English language teachers emphasized their characteristics mostly on professional and pedagogical competence while the students categorized their teachers based on their personal qualities. In terms of personal background, there are several characteristics that could be concluded, they were inspired by their teachers that make them interested in English and become English teachers, they have positive attitudes toward English since they were students, and the second and the third research subject come from teachers’ family while the first research subject does not come from teachers’ family, but they all admitted that their families have important roles to their career as teachers.

**Keywords:** *Effective Teachers, Teacher Characteristics, Teachers’ Personal Background*

**INTRODUCTION**

There are several reasons that probably become the problems of the students’ failure to use English in the classroom setting. The first is the English teachers or instructors still lack of capability in teaching the subject itself. The second is the method which used by the teacher does not cover the needs of the students’ characteristics and abilities. The third is the classroom management system which applied by the teachers is still not effective to cover the students’ condition in the classroom in order to create effective classroom circumstances. Those reasons actually focus on the ability of the teacher whether the teacher has a good capability in transferring their knowledge to the students, has an effective method in teaching, and has an effective classroom management system in the classroom. The result of Teacher Competence Assessment that has been done by the National Education Ministry that has been reported by Sundari on Sunday, August 5th 2012 shows that the quality and competence of the junior high school English teachers are still poor. Furthermore Arief on his article on Kompasiana, June 22nd, 2011 entitled “Jangan Asal Jadi Guru” discusses about teachers ability in teaching and learning process. The article also mentioned surprising information about the teachers in Indonesia based on the reports on Kompas on January 5th 2006, close to half numbers of teachers in Indonesia do not have proper competences in teaching and the standard of teachers in Indonesia was still far from what is expected.

In reality the level of the students’ ability is different in every school. There are some schools which have been successful in delivering English as the mandatory subject, but there are also some schools which have not been successful yet to teach English for their students. Probably the teacher capability is one of the affecting factors which formed this situation. The level of teacher capability and characteristics in teaching may affect students’ ability in mastering the subject. Darling-Hammond isdeveloped) reports her findings on teacher quality and student achievement. Her findings shows that the teacher quality variables appear to be more strongly related to student achievement than class sizes, overall spending levels and also the effects of well-prepared teachers on student achievement can be stronger than the influences of student background factors, such as poverty, language background, and minority status.

Harmer (1991:3-6) points out a number of factors which may have strong effect on the successful and the failure of the students in learning a language. Overall that factor, the intrinsic motivation is one of vital importance that relies on the students themselves. Intrinsic motivation of the students is consisted of four major factors. They are physical conditions of the students, the method that they used in learning, the teacher as one of the most important factors that affecting the intrinsic motivation of the students, and the success factor itself.

In addition, Harmer (1991:5) states that whether the student likes the teacher or not may not be very significant what can be said, though, is that two teachers using the same method can have vastly different results. There are many researchers which have been conducted research on effective teachers or good teachers. A term likes effective English language teacher or good English language teacher is a kind of popular topics that has become one of the major attention by many researchers.

Explaining the terms of effective teacher vary among people. Every person may have her or his own opinion about effective teacher. Effective term is a word which has many implications. Eventually, effective teacher cannot be apart from effective teaching. According to Stronge (2007:99) effective teaching is the result of a combination of many factors, including aspects of the teacher’s background and ways of interacting with others, as well as specific teaching practices. Therefore, the teacher that may include as effective teacher is the one who shares a different background, way of interaction and specific teaching practices comparing to others.

Previous researchers evaluate the effectiveness of the English language teacher relying on the students and teachers perception but there is no one doing a further research to prove those characteristics. In order to investigate deeply about the real characteristics which are possessed by the effective English language teachers in Makassar, it is important to conduct a research which observed the characteristics of effective English language teachers, the background of the effective English language teachers, the way of interaction that they have and the daily teaching activities of the effective English language teachers in a real classroom circumstances. In regard to these research problems, the researchers formulate some research questions as follows:

1. What are the characteristics of effective English language teachers at Senior High School level that they possess based on their competence in Makassar?
2. How are the backgrounds of effective English language teachers at Senior High School level that contribute to their teaching?

**The Concept of Effective Teaching**

The qualities of effective teaching cannot be separated from the qualities of effective teacher and effective teaching in an appropriate learning environment. Gurney (2007:91-96) suggests five key factors that provide a foundation for a good teaching, they are (1) teacher knowledge, enthusiasm and responsibility for learning, (2) classroom activities that encourage learning, (3) assessment activities that encourage learning through experience, (4) effective feedback that establishes the learning processes in the classroom, and (5) effective interaction between the teacher and the students, creating an environment that respects, encourages and stimulates learning through experience.

Ceranic (2012:31-33) proposes several principle of effective teaching, they are relationship between teaching and learning, development of learning climate, effective classroom management, and improving the students skills. The explanation above shows that one of the essential factors of effective teaching is the teacher management dealing with the classroom, student, material, and assignment. Muijs & Reynolds (2008:117) state that classroom management is strongly related to students’ attitude in the classroom. In addition they emphasize that the better the classroom management, the better the students attitude in the classroom will be controlled.

**The Concept of Effective Language Teaching**

In order to create an effective language classroom the teacher should know some stages in conducting the teaching and learning process. Richards & Bohlke (2011:9) emphasize the three essential stages of a lesson: openings, sequencing, and closings. The explanation of those stages is briefly described by Richards & Bohlke (2011:9-11):

1. Stage 1: *Openings.*

This phase of the lesson serves primarily to focus the students’ attention on the aims of the lesson, to make links to previous learning, to arouse interest in the lesson, to activate background knowledge, or to preview language or strategies students may need to understand in order to complete activities in the lesson.

1. Stage 2: *Sequencing.*

A common lesson sequence found in many tradi­tional language classes consists of a sequence of activities referred to as P–P–P: *Presentation*, (new language items are introduced), *Practice* (students complete guided practice activities using the new language), and *Production* (students take part in freer, more open-ended activities using the new language). In addition to the lesson sequence suggested by the teaching approach you are using or by the particular language skill you are teaching, other more general considerations will also influence the stages into which you think a lesson should be divided. At the same time, when planning a lesson, you will need to consider how you will handle the transitions between the different sequences of the lesson.

Experienced teachers are very skilled at handling the transitions between the different parts of a lesson. Less experienced teachers, on the other hand, tend to blend activi­ties together, not paying sufficient attention to the links between events and taking too long to complete the movement between segments of a lesson.

1. Stage 3: *Closings.*

The closing phase of a lesson is also an important part of a lesson sequence. Ideally, it should leave the students feeling that they have successfully achieved a goal they set for themselves or that had been established for the lesson, and that the lesson was worthwhile and meaningful. At the end of a lesson, it is usually valuable to summarize what the lesson has tried to achieve, to reinforce the points of the lesson, to suggest follow-up work as appropriate, and to prepare students for what will follow. It is always important to praise the students for their effort and performance.

**The Concept of Effective Teachers Characteristics**

The characteristics of effective teacher may vary according to several experts. Stronge, et.al (2004:9-16) explain prerequisites of effective teaching that linked to effective teachers, they are verbal ability, content knowledge, educational coursework, teacher certificate, and teaching experience. Furthermore, Stronge (2007:100) states that the qualities of effective teachers might be summarized under four overarching statements describing the effective teacher for students of all ability levels and backgrounds, (1) the effective teacher cares deeply, (2) the effective teacher recognizes complexity, (3) the effective teacher communicates clearly, and (4) the effective teacher serves conscientiously*.*

Park & Lee (2006: 236) mention three categories as the main point of effective English teachers characteristics, they are English proficiency, pedagogical knowledge, and socio-affective skills. Furthermore, Khojastehmehr & Takrimi (2007:61) emphasize their research findings on four basic factors which can be identified as the effective teachers characteristics. They are instructional strategies, communication (social) skills, personal characteristics, and knowledge.

The four basic factors which introduced by Khojastehmehr & Takrimi actually have similarities with the Indonesian Laws No. 14 2005 about Teachers and Lecturers. The laws state that professional educator should masters four main competence such as pedagogical competence, professional competence, personal competence and social competence. In line with it, Brown (2007:491) also formulates some characteristics of a good language teacher by dividing them into several categories such as technical knowledge, pedagogical skills, interpersonal skills, and personal qualities.

In this research the researchers emphasizes the characteristics of effective English language teachers as the teacher that could have and master the following competence and quality.

1. Professional competence deals with the technical knowledge of the effective English language teachers. Technical knowledge closely related to the teacher ability in mastering the English itself. How far they master English in order to teach the students the proper way of using English.
2. Pedagogical competence deals with the ability of the effective English language teacher in teaching. How far they can manage and teach the students in the classroom where they use variety teaching techniques and approaches to get the students focus on English subject that they teach.
3. Social competence deals with the effective English language teachers’ ability to interact and communicate with their surroundings including the ability to communicate with the students’ parents, colleagues, and all school staffs.
4. Personal qualities deal with the effective English language teachers’ characteristics or features that they used during the teaching and learning process. The types of personal qualities which explored here are personal qualities that the effective English language teachers imply during the classroom climate.
5. Intra and intercultural awareness competence deal with the ability of the effective English language teachers to understand cross-cultural differences and information. This competence should be mastered by the English teacher considering that English is a language where a language may be followed by cultural values and beliefs.

**RESEARCH METHOD**

This research is regarded as qualitative descriptive research by applying case study approach. The main purpose of the study is to examine the effective English language teachers’ characteristics in teaching English as a foreign language in Makassar context. The sites of this research are SMA Negeri 1 Makassar and SMA Negeri 17 Makassar. Both schools were chosen purposively. There are 324 students as respondents in this research. They are 213 respondents from SMA Negeri 1 Makassar and 111 respondents from SMA 17 Makassar. After accumulating the votes’ results and the students’ reasons, the researchers then conclude that there will be three research subjects from this research, two English teachers from SMA Negeri 1 Makassar who got 141 and 70 votes from their students and one teacher from SMA Negeri 17 Makassar who got 72 votes from their students. There are several procedures that the researcher does in order to collect the data, they are nonparticipant observation, interview, and document examination. There were three activities or stages in analyzing the data, they are data reduction, data display, and conclusions or verification.

**FINDINGS**

In this part the three research subjects will be given pseudonym. Mrs. Arina will be the pseudonym of the first research subject, Mrs. Lisa will be the pseudonym of the second research subject, and Mrs. Indah will be the pseudonym of the third research subject. Each category of effective English language teachers’ characteristics will be revealed in a form of table, where they are derived from the interview results from the teachers and students.

1. **Effective English Language Teachers Characteristics**
2. Professional Competence
3. English Proficiency

Table 1 English Proficiency

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **English Proficiency** | | |
| 1st Research Subject | 2nd Research Subject | 3rd Research Subject |
| * Got 568 TOEFL score * Got 810 TOEIC score | * Got 510 TOEFL score | * Got lower than 500 TOEFL score |

Table 1 shows that the English proficiency of the research subjects. Mrs. Arina has the highest English proficiency compared to Mrs. Lisa and Mrs. Indah because she gained the highest score on English proficiency test like TOEFL. Furthermore she also ever took another English proficiency test like TOEIC, and she also got a high score on it. It signifies that she has a high ability in English.

1. Teacher Development

Table 2 Teacher Development

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Teacher Development** | | |
| 1st Research Subject | 2nd Research Subject | 3rd Research Subject |
| * Reads many books * Joined several teacher trainings | * Reads many books about teaching and English * Joined several teacher trainings * Continues her study to the graduate program | * Joined several teacher training * Continues her study to the graduate program * Joined an English meeting club at the first years she taught. |

Table 2 shows about the teacher development shows that the teachers share similarity in terms of developing their teaching skills, such as read many books and join several teachers training. Two of the research subjects, Mrs. Lisa and Mrs. Indah, continue their study to graduate program.

1. Pedagogical Competence
2. Teacher Preparation before Teaching

Table 3 Teacher Preparation before Teaching

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Teacher Preparation before Teaching** | | |
| 1st Research Subject | 2nd Research Subject | 3rd Research Subject |
| * Prepares Lesson Plan * Reads a book or material * Prepares herself * Recycles the old material | * Prepares Lesson Plan * Prepares material and worksheet * Reads a book or material * Prepares evaluation sheet | * Prepares Lesson Plan * Prepares material for brainstorming * Prepares the main material * Prepares herself (mentally) |

Table 3 shows that effective English language teachers have several kinds of preparation before teaching they are preparing the administrative requirements, reading the materials that will be taught in the classroom, and preparing their selves as a teacher before come into the classroom. From the three research subjects, it can be concluded that each of the research subjects shares similar characteristics.

1. Teacher Qualities in Teaching

Table 4 Teacher Qualities in Teaching

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Teacher Qualities in Teaching** | | |
| 1st Research Subject | 2nd Research Subject | 3rd Research Subject |
| * Emphasizes her teaching on integrated skill approach. * Still believes that Grammar knowledge is important for the students | * Teaches with integrated skill approach but emphasizes her teaching on speaking. * Use communicative teaching | * Try to improve the students discipline * Encourage the students to become an independent learner. * Teach the students using integrated skill. |

Table 4 shows that the research subjects share similarities on their way to teach the students by using integrated skill approach though they also have specific attention to each skill and sub skills such as grammar and speaking.

1. Classroom Circumstances

Table 5 Classroom Circumstances

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Classroom Circumstances** | | |
| 1st Research Subject | 2nd Research Subject | 3rd Research Subject |
| * Fun * Comfortable * Enjoyable * Monitoring the students in high frequency whilst teaching * Grouping the students | * Fun * Funny * Enjoyable * Interesting * Passionate * Pairing and grouping the students * Give an individual task | * Fun * Enjoyable * Gives Games * Grouping the students |

The classroom situation of the three research subjects also share similarities. Based on the findings, their classrooms are fun and enjoyable. Each of the research subjects has their own specific characteristics on each classroom. The students of Mrs. Arina feel that her classroom is comfortable while Mrs. Lisa’s students feel that her classroom is interesting and passionate, and Mrs. Indah’s class is characterized by its games.

1. Language Used by the Teachers

Table 6 Language Used by the Teachers

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Language Used by the Teachers** | | |
| 1st Research Subject | 2nd Research Subject | 3rd Research Subject |
| * English and Indonesian * Using English while giving example and telling a story * Using Indonesian while explaining detailed information * Using Indonesian when the students look confused and does not understand about the explanation | * English and Indonesian * Using English mostly in the classroom * Using English and Indonesian when she wants to give an extra stressing to some specific point * Using Indonesian to clear and clarify the students understanding | * English and Indonesian * Using Indonesian when the students look confused * Using English in teaching the students about vocabulary, listening, speaking, and reading. * Using Indonesian when teaching about grammar/rules in English |

Deals with the language used by the teacher, Mrs. Lisa, compared to Mrs. Arina and Mrs. Indah, used English more on her teaching based on the students’ interview results and the researchers’ observation on her classroom. This situation appeared probably because she emphasized her teaching on speaking skill therefore she should give a lot of example for her students in terms of pronouncing the words.

1. Types of Task and Assignment Given by the Teachers

Table 7 Type of Task and Assignment Given by the Teachers

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Type of Task and Assignment Given by The Teachers** | | |
| 1st Research Subject | 2nd Research Subject | 3rd Research Subject |
| * Emphasizes grammar on her teaching * Type of task and assignment are drama, writing, and grammar | * Focus her teaching on speaking activities * Type of task and assignment are retelling activities or unforgettable moments, and presenting about idol biography | * Type of task and assignment are writing a paper, observing pictures and making questions * Likes to give games such as connecting words, Dick Tell, the Wind Blows. |

Based on table 7 about the type of task and assignment which given by the teachers, each teacher showed kind of task and assignment based on their beliefs on the important language aspects that have to be taught to the students. Mrs. Arina showed that she believes that grammar is one of the important points in learning a language, Mrs. Lisa believes that speaking is one of the most important skills, and Mrs. Indah believes that giving games is also important.

1. Teachers and Students Evaluation

Table 8 Teachers and Students Evaluation

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Teachers and Students Evaluation** | | |
| 1st Research Subject | 2nd Research Subject | 3rd Research Subject |
| * Evaluating herself after teaching * Regularly evaluating the students’ progress | * Evaluating and doing reflection after teaching * Regularly evaluating the students’ progress | * Evaluating herself after teaching * Regularly evaluating the students’ progress |

In case of the evaluation held by the teacher, table 8 shows that all the research subjects showed similarities in evaluating the students’ progress. Besides having the formal evaluation like regular test after the materials were finished, mid-test, and semester test, all the research subjects also evaluated the students’ progress when they taught the students in the classroom.

1. Social Competence

Table 9 Teacher-Students Relationship

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Teachers and Students Relationship** | | |
| 1st Research Subject | 2nd Research Subject | 3rd Research Subject |
| * Close to the students * The students like to share their problem to her * Observes the students work closely | * Close to the students * Like to great the students outside the classroom * Observes the students work closely | * Close to the students * The students like to ask about the lesson and their score * Observes the students work closely |

Based on the table 9, Mrs. Arina, Mrs. Lisa, and Mrs. Indah shared the same characteristics in terms of social competence because all of them are close to the students. Mrs. Arina has the closest relationship among all the teachers in terms of her interaction with the students outside the classroom. Mrs. Indah also shows a close relationship with the students’ though it is not as frequent as Mrs. Arina does outside the classroom, but in her classroom she shows close relationship with the students. While Mrs. Lisa is the friendliest teacher compared to all the research subjects.

1. Personal Qualities

Table 10 Teacher Personal Attributes

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Teacher Personal Qualities** | | |
| 1st Research Subject | 2nd Research Subject | 3rd Research Subject |
| * Strict teacher * Discipline teacher * Smart teacher * Cares to everything that the students do in the classroom * Appreciate positive attitude of the students * Prefer advise to punishment * Good teacher * Effective teacher * Treats the students equally | * Discipline teacher * Friendly teacher * Cares to the students * Praises the students who has positive attitude * Encounters students who has negative attitude * Good teacher * Teach effectively * Accommodates the students ability differences | * Strict teachers * Discipline teacher * Diligent teacher * Care to the students * Gives advice about real life to encounter the positive and negative attitude of the students * Teach communicatively * Accommodate the students ability differences |

The three research subjects show a high similarity on their personal qualities whether it is based on her students’ comments or the result of the researchers’ observation in their classroom. Interestingly each research subject shows differences in terms of the students’ perception, Mrs. Arina is believes as a smart teacher while Mrs. Lisa is believes as a friendly teacher, and Mrs. Indah is believes as a diligent teacher.

1. Intra and Intercultural Awareness

Table 11 Teacher Understanding on Intra and Intercultural Awareness

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Teacher Understanding on Intra and Intercultural Awareness** | | |
| 1st Research Subject | 2nd Research Subject | 3rd Research Subject |
| * Interested in the type of multicultural class * Multicultural class will help the teacher and the students to gain more knowledge about culture * The teacher ever went to Australia | * Interested in the diversity of the students * The level of the students economical background creates effects to their English proficiency levels because some of them attend an English course outside the school * The teacher ever went to Australia | * The students cultural background does not become a problem in the classroom * The students that attend her classroom mostly the students that want to study and come from the city * The teacher ever went to United States of America. |

Table 11 shows that the effective English language teachers in Makassar have several characteristics. Their characteristics appear from their activity, attitude and beliefs. They showed interesting and unique characteristics. Each of the research subjects possesses special characteristics between others.

1. **Teachers Personal Background**
2. Teacher Perception about English Teaching

Table 12 Teacher Perception about English Teaching

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Teacher Perception about English Teaching** | | |
| 1st Research Subject | 2nd Research Subject | 3rd Research Subject |
| * English should become second language in Indonesia * The class arrangement for the students should meet their prior ability | * The teacher of English should improve their professional competence | * The teacher of English should improve their pedagogical competence |

An English teacher should be well-trained in order to help the students improve their English. If the teacher does not have a good quality in teaching, the students will become the victims. Therefore there should be teacher training which is programmed continuously by the government. Mrs. Lisa and Ms Indah agreed that the teacher of English should improve their competence pedagogically and professionally. While Mrs. Arina thought the class arrangement should be arranged well.

1. Personal Reasons to Become an English Teacher

Table 13 Personal Reasons to Become a Teacher

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Personal Reasons to Become a Teacher** | | |
| 1st Research Subject | 2nd Research Subject | 3rd Research Subject |
| * Decide to become an English teacher when she was admitted in English Education program. | * Decide to become an English teacher when she was admitted in English Education program. | * Decide to become an English teacher when she was admitted in English Education program. |

Table 13 shows that the three research subjects decided to become a teacher when they were admitted in English education program. Although the second research subject has been thought about become a teacher since she was in elementary school, on the contrary the first and the third research subject never expected to become a teacher.

1. Experience in Learning English

Table 14 Experience in Learning English

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Experience in Learning English** | | |
| 1st Research Subject | 2nd Research Subject | 3rd Research Subject |
| * Inspired by her teacher in Junior High School. * Has positive attitude toward English subject since started learning English. | * Inspired by her teacher in Elementary School. * Has positive attitude toward English subject since started learning English. | * Inspired by her teacher in Senior High School. * Has positive attitude toward English subject since Senior High School. |

Table 14 shows that all the research subjects have their own experience with their teachers which encourage their spirit to learn English and the three research subjects have positive attitudes toward English since they were students. The first and the second research subject have already impressed by English since they started to learn it. Though she started late to show positive attitude on English subject, the third research subject realized it when she studied in senior high school.

1. Family Background

Table 15 Family Background

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Family Background** | | |
| 1st Research Subject | 2nd Research Subject | 3rd Research Subject |
| * Does not come from teachers’ family * Her parents have important roles that made her chose English as her profession | * Comes from teachers’ family * Her families have important roles that made her chose English as her profession | * Comes from teachers’ family * Her families have important roles that made her chose English as her profession |

Table 15 shows that the families of all the research subjects have important roles that make them chose English teacher as their career. The second and the third research subject come from teachers’ family. They admitted that their families give a lot of encouragement to their life. Even though the first research subject does not come from teachers’ family, but she admitted that her parents especially her mother is the one who encourage her motivation to chose English education study program as her major in university.

**CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS**

Based on the findings and discussions in the preceding chapter, the researchers would like to draw the following conclusions:

First, the characteristics of effective English language teachers in Makassar are divided into several categories they are professional competence, pedagogical competence, social competence, personal qualities, and intra and intercultural awareness. In this research, the effective English language teachers emphasized their characteristics mostly on professional and pedagogical competence while the students perceived the teachers’ characteristics based on their personal qualities.

Second,the three research subjects have been teaching English for more than 15 years. They already certified as professional teachers from the government. The personal background of the three research subjects are they were inspired by their teachers that make them interested in English and become English teachers, they have positive attitudes toward English since they were students, and the second and the third research subject come from teachers’ family while the first research subject does not come from teachers’ family, but they all admitted that their families have important roles in their career as teachers.

Referring to the research findings in describing the effective English language teachers’ characteristics and backgrounds, the researchers would like to state some suggestions:

Teachers need to consider their professional, pedagogical, social and personality competence. Especially for the English teacher, they need to consider their intra and intercultural awareness in their teaching.

It is also suggested to the further researchers to explore more about the effect of the cultural competence of the teacher to their teaching performance in the classroom, and investigate the effective English language teachers’ method and approach that they use to teach the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading and writing) and the language elements. Since this study deals with the effective English language teachers that cover their characteristics in the classroom mostly, it is necessary to explore more characteristics outside the classroom.

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