

INFORMAL WORKPLACE MENTORING AND CORPORATE CITIZENSHIP – EMPIRICAL INSIGHTS AND CONCEPTUAL DISCUSSIONS.

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Focus of our research activities:

1. How can we develop a deeper understanding of learning in **business internships** and the meaning of **informal mentoring** processes?
2. How can we discuss the offering of internships and voluntarily informal mentoring of interns in the context of **business-society relations**?

Talking about internships..... basic annotations

- Maertz, Stoeberl & Marks (2013: 125) f.e. worked out eleven key dimensions useful for characterizing internships:
 - Payment, working hours, institutional context, evaluation modus, academic requirements, arrangement parties, transparency of duties, work format, faculty sponsor/mentor, work sponsor/mentor, future employment aspects.

- The internships in our research:
 - are framed by a school curriculum (senior secondary level)
 - have a duration of 8 weeks to 4-5 month
 - are offered voluntarily by companies (many SME) for pupils of higher vocational full-time schools
 - Branches: tourism, trade/administration, technical

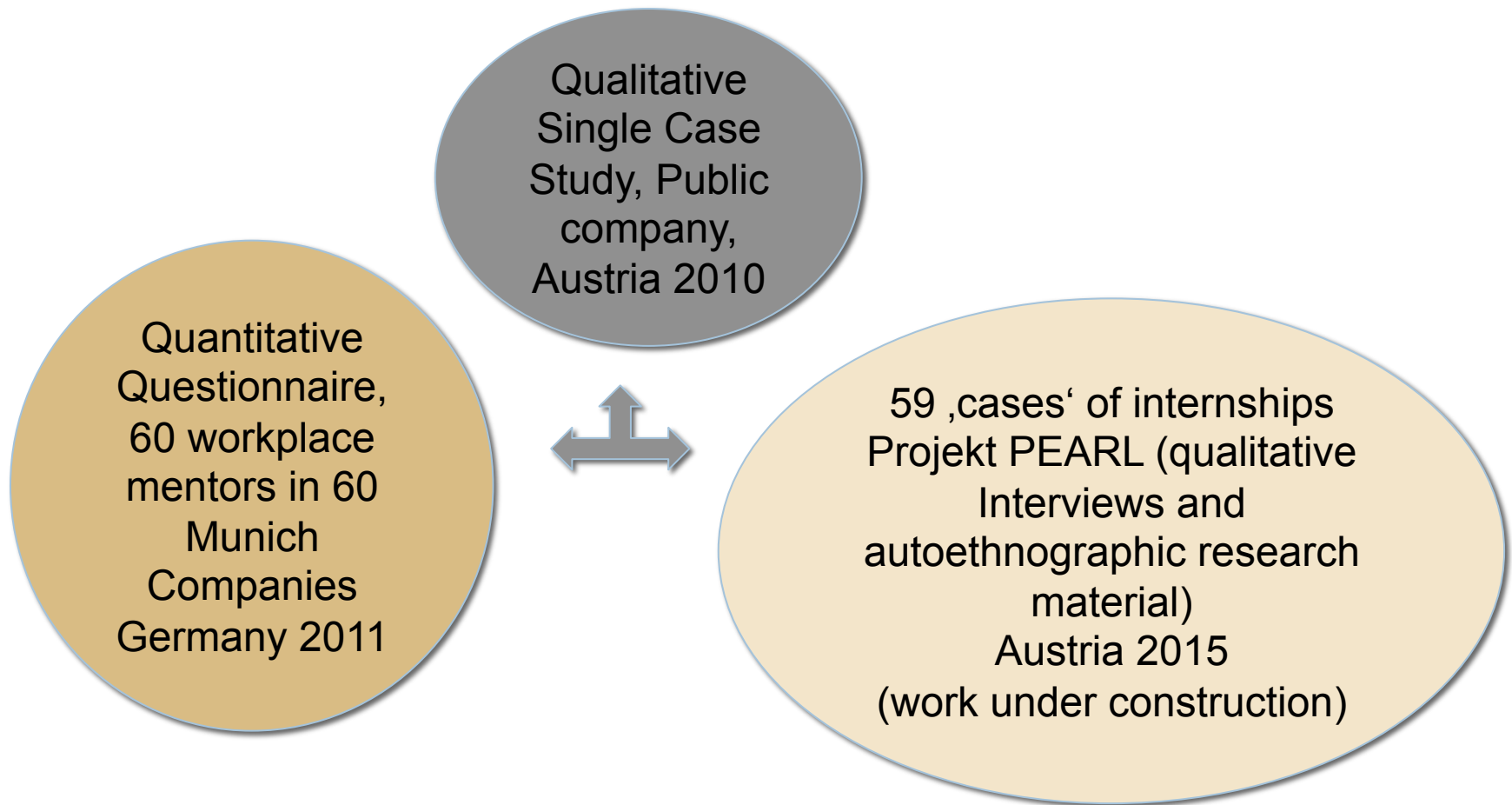
- We talk about internships from an business educational perspective, focussing on the learning and development of the interns, but also considering the business context.

The particular focus here: Informal Workplace Mentoring

Informal mentoring in organisations is defined as a process of facilitating and informally guiding, including transferring knowledge and socially integrating novices (in a broader sense and with a specific view on adolescent workers) into teams and communities of practice.

Informal workplace mentoring is offered by experienced (also peers) persons to novices or less-experienced colleagues in the same occupational field.

Empirical basis: Research studies on business internships for pupils (age 17-19) and informal internship mentoring in Austria and Germany





bmwfw

59 ,cases‘ of
internships
Projekt PEARL
(interns investigate
their working and
learning)
Austria 2015

Preparation for becoming a ‘junior researcher’



Research tool box

Research on obligatory and in curricula
of higher vocational schools (full-time)
embedded internships from the interns’
perspective

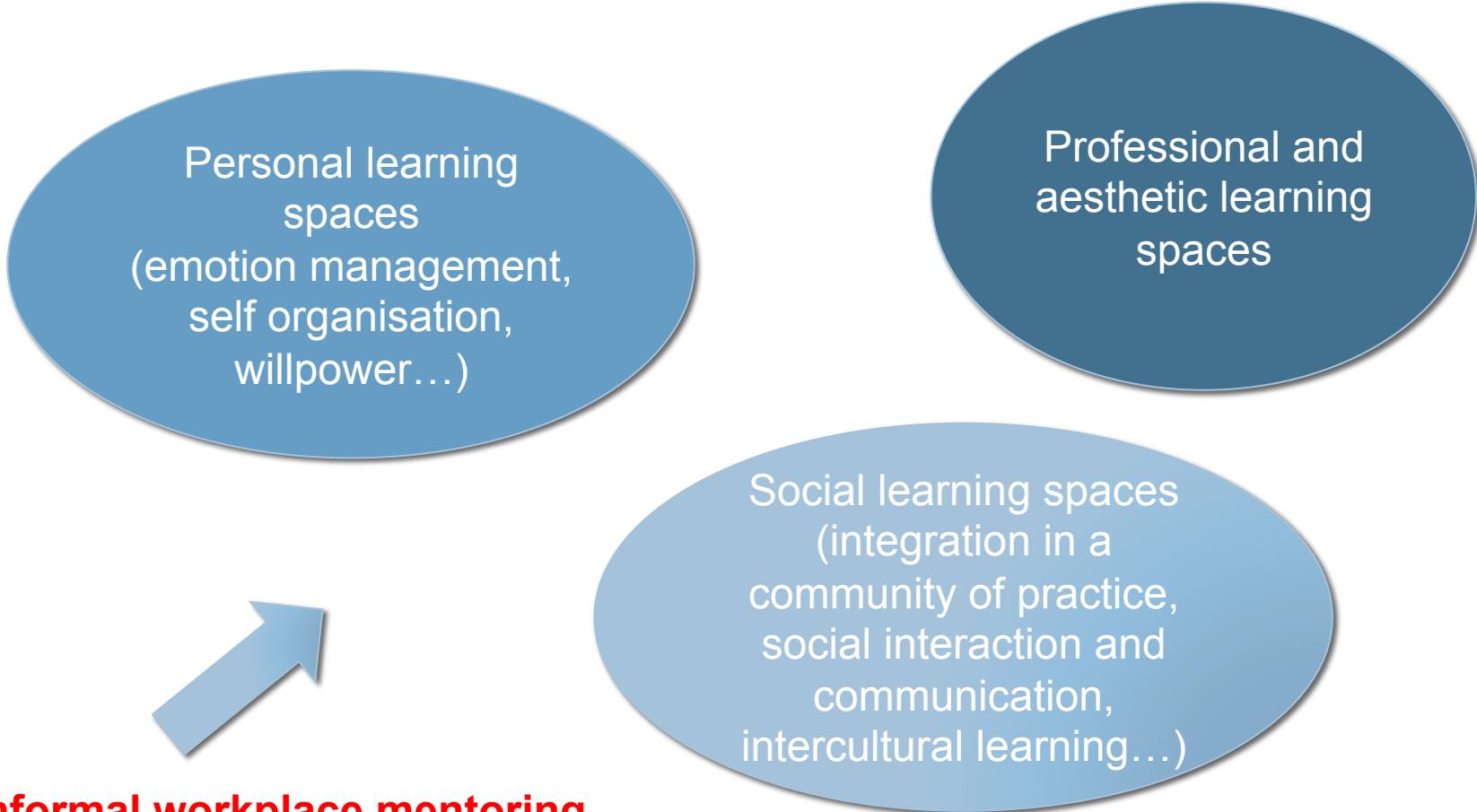
Involvement of the interns as junior researchers.
Autoethnographic ‘research’ during the internship
and stimulated qualitative interviews.
Data analysis with atlas.ti.

Business context: tourism, administration, technical



Why are we talking about ,learning spaces‘?

Interpretation of learning as a social-constructive process. Learning spaces are complex learning environments used actively by the intern for individual development purposes.



Personal learning spaces
(emotion management,
self organisation,
willpower...)

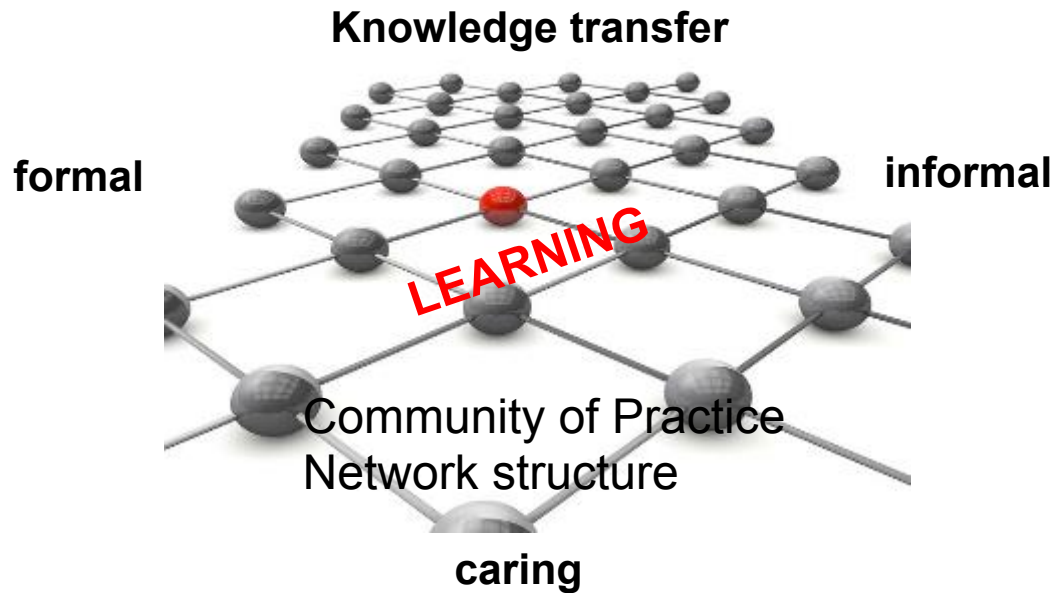
Professional and
aesthetic learning
spaces

Social learning spaces
(integration in a
community of practice,
social interaction and
communication,
intercultural learning...)

**Informal workplace mentoring
as opening spaces (scaffolding) for learning plays a prominent role.**

Informal mentoring in business internships: Selected findings in our studies (2010-2015)

	Findings on the mentoring phenomenon
Single case study, public company, Austria (Ostendorf 2012)	The phenomenon workplace mentoring can be placed in a two-dimensional grid spanned by the dimensions ‚knowledge transfer – caring‘ and ‚formal – informal‘.
Workplace mentors involved in internships, Germany Online Questionnaire (n=60=52%) (Ostendorf 2014)	Internship mentoring is a voluntary act . Mentors usually enjoy this task, even if it is partly a burden. They have fun with young people.
PEARL, learning in internships from the interns‘ perspective (work in progress (2015-2017)	Internship mentoring is a network phenomenon. Opening learning spaces and facilitating the participation in a community of practice are important tasks.



Informal mentoring
as a network issue between
knowledge transfer and
caring.

The question is:

Why and under what conditions do companies voluntarily offer internships?

Why do mentors take tasks voluntarily for supporting skill development of novices?

That leads to two phenomena described in management literature:

Corporate Citizenship (CC) and Organizational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB).

Corporate Citizenship (CC)

„CC describes the role of the corporation in administering citizenship rights for individuals. Such a definition reframes CC away from the notion that the corporation is a citizen in itself (as individuals are) and toward the acknowledgement that the corporation administers certain aspects of citizenship for other constituencies.“ Matten & Crane (2005: 173)

In Austria companies take over educational tasks in vocational education (within a curriculum given by the government).

They do it in the dual apprenticeship system but also in offering internships for pupils of medium and higher level vocational schools and colleges (as f.e. the PEARL partner school: 5-year Hotel and Tourism School, Bludenz).

They administer certain aspects of citizenship for other constituencies (like schools, ministry of education). In this case they take educational responsibility for young people starting their professional life.

Corporate Citizenship is in literature not very strongly linked to educational tasks. (in Carroll's classification (1979): economic, legal, ethical, discretionary responsibilities)

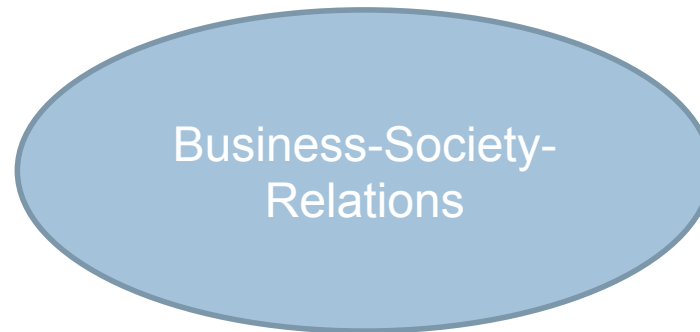
Organizational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB)

- OCB is defined by Organ (1988:4) as „individual behavior that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system, and that in the aggregate promotes the effective functioning of the organization.“ He linked OCB to extra-role behaviour.
- Informal internship mentoring and other informal facilitation processes offered to novices at the workplace (as to apprentices in the dual vocational system like in Germany, Austria and Suisse) can be interpreted as a form of OCB.

How can we interpret the offering of internship/placement and voluntarily informal mentoring for interns in the context of business-society relations?

Corporate Citizenship

Organizational citizenship behaviour

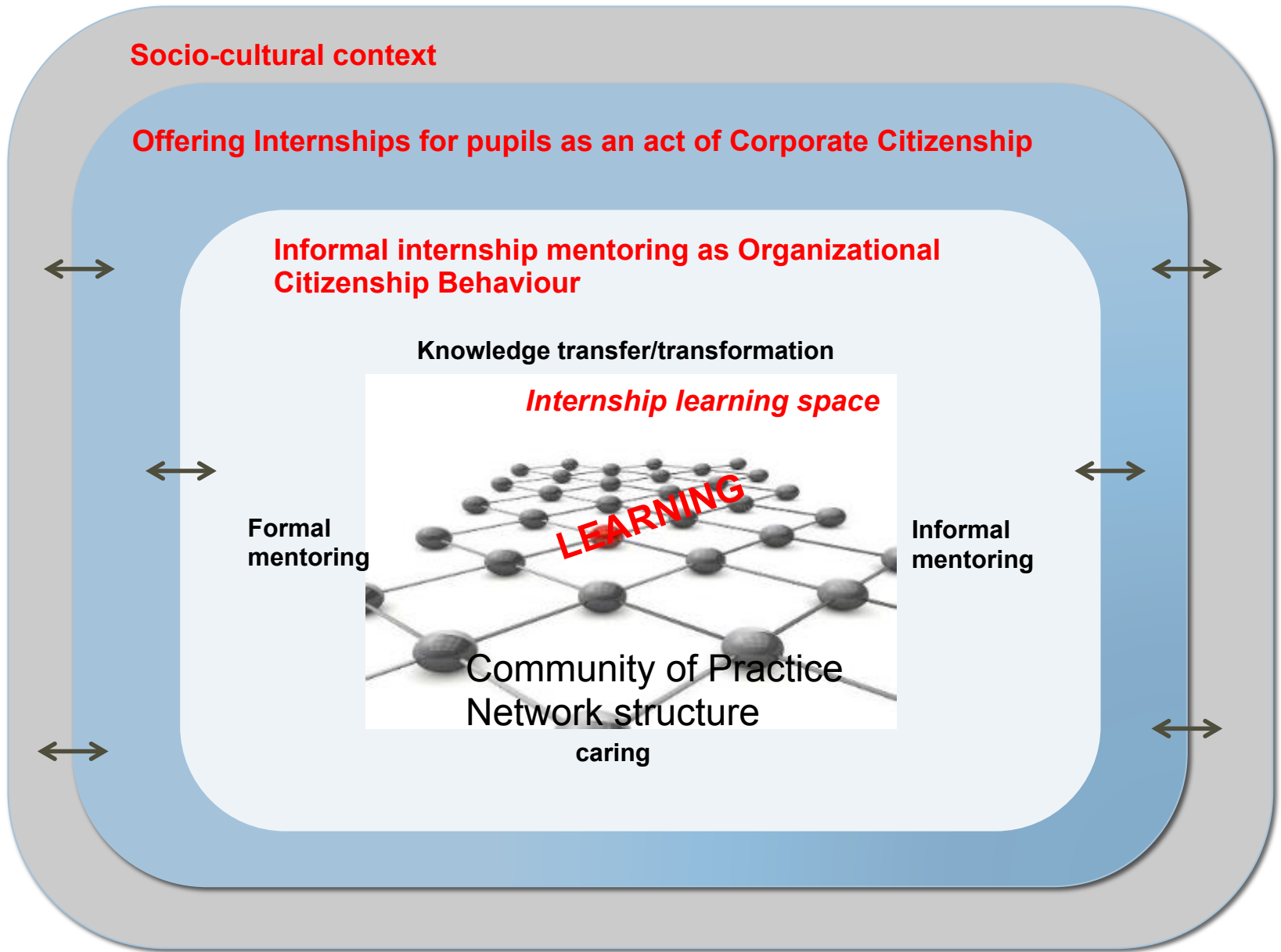


**Corporate involvement
in educational tasks**

**Informal workplace mentoring
for interns (and apprentices)**

**Example:
Business internships
in Austria or dual VET system**

The learning space ,business internship' as a phenomenon in the context of business-society relations: a model



Theses:

From an educational perspective CC and OCB can be interesting concepts to explain vocational education involvement of firms and employees (formal and informal). It gives arguments for policy makers to motivate corporate involvement in youth skill development.

A discussion of dual apprenticeships and business internships for pupils against the background of CC and OCB can be inspiring for management and educational research. Currently the academic discussion doesn't focus (vocational) education issues in CC/OCB very strongly - more under the category ,others'.

An interdisciplinary view on workplace learning is needed.

The ,citizenship'-phenomenon is expected to be diverse in intercultural contexts.

Thank you for your attention!

Literature:

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