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## **School principal's strategy in strengthening religious moderation through the independent learning curriculum at Superior High School Hafshawaty Zainul Hasan BPPT Genggong**

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*Received: 12 April 2025; Revised: 20 April 2025; Accepted: 30 April 2025*

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**Abstract:** *This article offers a strengthening strategy of religious moderation in school environments. Islamic education in Indonesia has a very strategic role in instilling religious moderation values. Religious moderation is an approach that emphasizes balance, tolerance, and compassion in religion. The study aims to examine more in relation to the strategy of principal in strengthening religious moderation through the independent curriculum at the Featured High School of Hafshawaty Zainul Hasan BPPT Genggong. Research method using a qualitative research approach. This is a research method that focuses on deep and interpretative understanding of the phenomena studied. In this approach, researchers collect data directly from relevant participants or contexts through interviews, observations, or document analysis. The result of this study is that the principal plays a vital role in developing religious moderation and student character in the school environment. Through effective leadership, the principal can create an inclusive, tolerant and diversity culture of school. Strategies such as integrating religious moderation values on the curriculum implemented in both co-curricular and extracurricular activities, floating leadership culture, training and maximizing teacher roles and religious moderation by example tolerance and applying values tolerance, and the formation of students proves effective in supporting religious moderation values.*

**Keywords:** *Strategy, Religious Moderation, Independent Learning Curriculum.*

**How to Cite:** Izzah, I., & Na'im, Z. (2025). School principal's strategy in strengthening religious moderation through the independent learning curriculum at Superior High School Hafshawaty Zainul Hasan BPPT Genggong. *Al-Fikru: Jurnal Pendidikan dan Sains*, 6(1), 21-32. <https://doi.org/10.55210/al-fikru.v6i1.2036>

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### **Introduction**

Indonesia is a vast archipelagic nation composed of various ethnic groups, customs, cultures, and religions. With the number of differences, one side of Indonesia's diversity and beauty is a gift from God but the difference can lead to divisions. As a country formed from various elements of identity, ethnicity, cultural customs, language and 6 (six) institutionally recognized religions, it allows it to create a wide range of potential conflicts and misunderstandings related to cultural and religious values so that it becomes a major challenge for the Indonesian people (Anissa & Putra, 2022).

To date, there are still areas that are prone to conflict such as the existence of armed criminal groups (KKB) in Papua and the rise of religious radicalism in Indonesia. Radicalism is like a dangerous infectious disease if it is not addressed immediately, there are some opinions that radicalism is only practiced by certain religions. Actually, it is not his radical religion, but his misguided human behavior (Sahal & Bayuseto, 2022). Therefore, as a multicultural country, Indonesia is expected to completely maintain the unity and unity of the nation (Simanjuntak, 2024).

So it is undeniable to maintain religious harmony as a challenge for the nation because diversity and differences often cause conflict and division, then the solution used is to preserve existing diversity (Lessy et al., 2022). Indonesia has the motto "Bhineka Tunggal Ika". Bhinneka

Tunggal Ika is a unifying tool of the nation and moral teachings that emphasize tolerant, fair, and rojong (Santoso et al., 2023). Therefore, one effort made in the face of conflict and division is by approaching and strengthening character on the aspect of education. Education has an important role in the unification of the nation (Utami et al., 2022).

Then to manage this diverse religious situation, it takes a solution that can create a peaceful and harmonious life in carrying out religious life by promoting moderation in religion (Qosim, 2022). According to Lukman Hakim Saifudin, religious moderation is the behavior or attitude of understanding and practicing religious teachings fairly and balancedly to avoid extreme or excessive behavior in its implementation. According to Nasaruddin Umar, religious moderation is an attitude to coexist in religious and social-political diversity (Lessy et al., 2022).

Abdul Rahman in his Blog, strengthening religious moderation can be done through education. The application of religious moderation in the field of education aims to build a sense of mutual understanding early on between learners who have different religious beliefs, so that in time students have a solid foundation and foundation of life in different societies, religion, education, culture, tribe, language, political and economic views. Because, religious moderation education itself is an approach in religious education aims to produce individuals (students) who are tolerant, able to dialogue, appreciate diversity, commitment to national values, maintain tolerance, anti-violence, and maintain wisdom and able to maintain peace and security in a diverse society (<https://iaincurup.ac.id/>).

In line with that, the government incorporates this religious moderation material into the independent learning curriculum that has been implemented since 2022. The curriculum as an educational and construction design that plays an important role in determining the quality of education (Yanzi et al., 2022). This curriculum comes as a solution to tackle the learning loss and learning gap of the impact of Covid-19 (Izzah, 2024). Seeing the conditions, Kemendikbudristek tries to make a learning recovery effort. One of the efforts made to address the problem is to proclaim the "Free Curriculum". Merdeka curriculum is a curriculum with diverse intracurricular learning, content will be more optimal so that learners have enough time to explore concepts and strengthen competencies. Teachers have the flexibility to choose a variety of teaching devices so that learning can be tailored to the learning needs and interests of learners (Khoiurrijal, Fadriati, 2022).

In the free curriculum there is also a strengthening of learners' character, strengthening of the character is implemented in the Student Profile Strengthening Project program or better known as P5. P5 is applied through the Project Based Learning approach in cross-disciplinary learning so that learners can pay attention to and provide solutions to problems in their environment. The linkage between the Free Curriculum and (P5) is that the P5 program is one of the implementations of the Free Curriculum that seeks to build the character and values of Pancasila in learners (Intan Maharani & Arinda Putri, 2023). Therefore, education is a deliberate act that results in the change of anticipated attitudes and behaviors, such as the development of intelligent, skilled, independent, disciplined, and noble moral individuals (Sihotang, 2022).

Pancasila student profile is the embodiment of Indonesian students as lifelong students who have global competencies and behave in accordance with Pancasila values. Student profile competence takes into account internal factors related to the identity, ideology, and ideals of the Indonesian nation, as well as external factors related to the context of the Indonesian nation's life and challenges in the 21st century facing the 4.0 industrial revolution, as well as religious moderation (Ristek., 2021). However, the reality in the field one of the biggest obstacles in the implementation of religious moderation contained in the independent curriculum is this curriculum is a new category that can affect the optimal application of the program in schools, so many schools that have not used it due to the lack of understanding of the school related to the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum. lack of understanding of teachers about religious moderation and P5. So that teachers need to understand

the purpose, principles, and components of implementation of the independent curriculum. Lack of student motivation, lack of support from parents and so on (Intan Maharani & Arinda Princess, 2023).

So to anticipate these obstacles, strategy is needed. The strategy was created by the Greeks, who awarded the concept with military connotations. The term derives from the Greek *strategos*, translated as generals who lead forces or art generals or plans to destroy enemies through effective use of resources (Mainardes et al., 2014). Strategy is also used in managing educational institutions, Strategic management has become a key tool in guiding educational institutions to achieve excellence, especially in achieving achievement schools that emphasize the balance between academic achievement and character development (Izzah et al., 2024). The principal as a leader, brings an important role in the implementation of this strategy. The principal as the person who takes organizational decisions strategically, in order to achieve the organization's goals effectively and efficiently (Adam, 2018).

School can be the place where the understanding of religious moderation was formed and taught to learners to later be applied to life outside of school. We know that schools become miniature when they live in society. For this reason, the understanding of the correct religious moderation can begin in the school environment by promoting the customs or culture of schools that carry out moderation attitudes in religion (Qosim, 2022). Thus, schools require models or strategies in strengthening religious moderation. Therefore the purpose of this research is to examine more in relation to the strategy of the principal in strengthening religious moderation through the independent curriculum at the Featured High School of Hafshawaty Zainul Hasan BPPT Genggong.

### **Method**

This research uses a qualitative research approach. This is a research method that focuses on deep and interpretative understanding of the phenomena studied. In this approach, researchers collect data directly from relevant participants or contexts through interviews, observations, or document analysis. Participants were selected using purposive sampling, targeting individuals with direct involvement in implementing religious moderation through the independent curriculum. The main objective of a qualitative research approach is to dig into the meaning, perspective, and experience of individuals or groups involved in the phenomenon (Moleong, 2011). This research uses a qualitative research approach. The study was conducted at SMA Unggulan Hafshawaty Zainul Hasan BPPT Genggong, located in Probolinggo, East Java. Participants included the school principal, teachers, and curriculum coordinators involved in religious moderation and curriculum implementation.

Data collection techniques with interviews, observations and documentation. (Sugiyono, 2013). To ensure the credibility of the data, triangulation was applied by comparing findings from interviews, observations, and document analysis. Member checking was also conducted by confirming data with the participants. First, Interview is a method performed by interacting directly between researchers and respondents. Data is obtained through questions asked to informants directly Interviews can be done face-to-face, communicate via phone or through online interviews. Second, observations are made by direct observation of a phenomenon studied. Researchers observed and systematically recorded behaviors, interactions, or events that occurred in the field. Observation can be done with or without the researcher's intervention. Third, Documents are data can be obtained by researchers through document analysis, such as reports, letters, policies, recordings, and the like.

The data analysis in this study was used a data analysis method that focused on descriptive approaches (Moleong, 2011). Data Analysis is the process of organizing, composing, interpreting, and presenting data that has been collected in the research. Data analysis aims to find patterns, relationships, and meanings contained in the data that has been obtained. As the primary research instrument, the researcher was actively involved in collecting, interpreting, and analyzing the data while maintaining objectivity and reflexivity throughout the research process.

### **Results and Discussion**

The Concept of Religious Moderation in School of Moderation of Religious Moderation is fostered by the Indonesian government since 2019, as delivered by Religious Minister Lukman Hakim Syaifuddin, that 2019 was used as a year of religious moderation (Hakim et al., 2022). Religious Moderation as an approach to achieve the balance between religious teachings and the demands of today's social context (Harto & Tastin, 2019), Moderation in religion is not something new in Islam. Similar values to this religious moderation have existed since the time of the Prophet (peace be upon him) One of the most basic examples is how the Prophet Muhammad did not force anyone, including his own uncle (Abu Talib), to embrace Islam even until the end of his life. Although the Prophet made a prophet attempt to gently invite people, he never imposed Islam or made enemies of religious interests. This reality is part of a moderation in Islam, where Islam is strongly upholding the values of peace (Arifin, 2024).

Moderate, derived from the Latin moderation moderatio meaning medium (not excessive and no shortage). The word moderation also means reduction of violence and the avoidance of extreme actions. In general, it means to promote a balance of beliefs, morals, and character, both when treating others as individuals, and when dealing with state institutions. In English, the word moderation is often used in the mean, core, standard, or non-aligned sense (Ahmad, 2021). Moderation in Arabic is called al-wasathiyah. Seenah al- Wasathiyah comes from the word wasath. Al-Asfahaniy defines the wasath with sawa'un, which is between two boundaries, or with justice, which is either standard or mediocre. Wasathan also means keeping from being uncompromising and even leaving the line of religious truth. While the same meaning is also found in Mu'jam al-Wasit, a simple and selected adultery and khiujan (Shauqi Dhoif, 1972). So, when the term moderation is compared to religious words, it means referring to the behavior of reducing violence, or avoiding extremism in religious practice. The combination of these two terms refers to the attitude and effort of making religion the basis and principle to always avoid extreme attitudes (radicalism) and always seek a way to unite all elements of society, nation, and state. Islam (Muaz & Ruswandi, 2022).

The concept of moderation or moderate attitude in human thinking and behavior can be viewed from a variety of points of view. In general, moderate attitude can be defined as a position or view that does not lean towards the extreme, either in the extreme right direction or in the extreme tendency to the left. The term moderate indicates a balanced attitude, not excessive, and tends to choose a middle path. From a psychological point of view, moderate attitudes can be associated with the concepts of balance and cognitive flexibility. Moderate individuals tend to have the ability to consider different perspectives and perspectives, and not get caught up in rigid and extreme thinking (Arifin, 2024). In the context of religion and belief, moderate attitudes can be viewed as an attempt to balance between fanaticism and relativism. Moderate individuals can hold their religious beliefs or ideologies, but still appreciate and accept the existence of different beliefs or ideologies.

Then religious moderation if associated with Islamic education in Indonesia, in the Sisdiknas Act no 20 Year 2003, provides a foothold for Islamic education to teach religious moderation. "It is based on article 4 paragraph 1 that ""education is held democratically and equally and non-discriminatory by upholding human rights, religious values, cultural values, and the multiplicity of the nation"" (Faozan, 2020)." One way that can be offered is to bring up the values of Wasathiyah (mid) with the main character of the basamuh or toleration also the values of al-khairiyah (goodness), al-'adl (just), al-yusr wa raf'ul Haraj (giving ease and distancing difficulties), al-hikmah (wise), al-istiqamah (heart sluts in carrying out obligations), and al-bayniyah; bayna ifrath wa tafriith (not too overwhelming and not too underestimating). Wasathiyah value is very strong in Islam, one of which is embodied in Q.S. Al-Baqarah (2): 143, aims to sow grace to all the worlds and according to Q.S. Al-

Anbiya" (21): 107, according to the human context as abdullah and Khalifatullah through the implementation of individual piety and social piety in a balanced manner (Harto & Tastin, 2019).

### **Religious Moderation Approach in Independence Curriculum**

In general, there are two major approaches in religious moderation education, namely the curriculum approach and the approach of all stakeholders (Raihani, 2016). This curriculum approach is an approach by putting an important emphasis on the loading of knowledge and value of diversity and how to shape perspectives on diversity. Bikhu Parekh (2006) in Raihani stated that in developing Bergama moderation (Multicultural Education), the main thing is to reform the contents of the curriculum that is able to support students to have an attitude of appreciation as an inevitable. Usually this approach is included in the disciplines of social sciences and humanities.

While the whole-school approach approaches view religious moderation as an educational strategy involving all elements of the school as a system. This assumption of education that moderation education as a value education cannot be done partially. (Halstead, 1996) states that it cannot underestimate non-classroom experiences that are not part of the formal curriculum in the formation of human character and behavior.

The Policy of the Merdeka Curriculum becomes a solution in the development of potential and competence of learners through an ineteractive and relevant learning process that is inherently based on the essence of learning that students have, namely the interests and talents of each student (Kemendikbudristek, 2022). The application of moderation values in learning, especially Islamic religious education. These values of religious moderation aim to foster a tolerant and balanced attitude towards belief and moral differences.

Religious Moderation Indicators according to the Pocket Book of Religious Moderation Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, namely: 1. National Commitment 2. Tolerance 3. Anti-Violence 4. Awards for local culture. These four indicators can be used to see and recognize how powerful religious moderation is practiced by a person in the school environment and in the wider community environment. So that if there is a nonconformity, it is necessary to recognize (seeking the title) in a good, correct and appropriate way through internalization and strengthening of the values of religious moderation itself (Muaz & Ruswandi, 2022)



Figure 1. Religious Moderation Indictor

The independent curriculum of one of the curriculum designed by emphasizing character education oriented towards the profile of Pancasila students (Khoiurrijal, Fadriati, 2022), According to Ernawati and Rahmawati, the profile of Pancasila students in the independent curriculum is designed to produce generations of nations capable of facing various challenges such as the 4.0 revolution and challenges in the future (Setyaningsih & Wiryanto, 2022) The profile of Pancasila students contains

six dimensions: fearing God Almighty and noble, global diversity, global diversity, throbbing, self-reliant, critical and creative reasoning (Kahfi, 2022).

Table 1. Dimensions of the Project for Strengthening the Profile of Pancasila Students

Dimensi	Elemen	Sub-Elemen
Believe, Fear God, Almighty and Exalted	religious morals	Implementation of Worship Rituals
	Personal Morals	Integrity takes care of oneself physically, mentally and spiritually
	Morals towards humans	Prioritize similarities with other people and respect differences Explore culture and cultural identity
Global Diversity	Get to know and appreciate culture	Mendalami budaya dan identitas budaya
	Reflection and responsibility for the experience of diversity	Harmonizing cultural differences
	Social justice	Participate in the shared decision-making process
Mutual cooperation	Collaboration	Cooperation, joint communication
	Concern	Responsive to the environment and social
Self	Understanding yourself and the situation you are facing	Regarding personal qualities and interests as well as the challenges faced
Critical reasoning	Analyze and evaluate reasoning and procedures penalaran dan prosedur	Elements of analyzing and evaluating reasoning and procedures
Creative	Generate original ideas	
	Have flexibility in thinking in finding alternative solutions to problems	



Figure 2. Dimension of Pancasila Student Profile Strengthening Project

The Pancasila Student Profile developed through education contains six characters/competencies that are interrelated and strengthening, namely: having faith, being devoted to God Almighty and having noble morals; global diversity; work together; independent; critical reasoning and creativity. Competencies in the form of cognitive but attitudes and behavior. The Pancasila Student Profile contains three key phrases, namely: lifelong learner, competent, and Pancasila character (Ristek., 2021). The combination of strengthening Pancasila with these competencies is an educational goal, which must be developed through guidance services and learning processes (Akhmadi, 2023).

### **Educational Strategy Management**

Management in the world of education is absolutely necessary, because the world of education in this case is an educational institution is an organization or a group of people who have the objectives to be achieved, the educational institution has a purpose or ambition or vision and mission diverse, in accordance with a deep study. To achieve the objectives of the organization, educational institutions absolutely must undertake the process, so that there are inputs, processes and outcomes and outcomes that occur in the institution of education (Rahmatullah, 2021).

To support and meet the need for quality education, good education institution strategic management is needed, in order to address global challenges. Strategic management is one of the most promising management mechanisms of education development under conditions in which educational institutions are faced with new opportunities and new risks, arising from globalization (Yureva et al., 2016).

Kotler defines strategy as how the mission of the organization is placed and the objectives are set using all internal and external forces, then how to formulate certain policies and techniques for the objectives to be achieved (Kholis, 2014). Quinn (1980) considers strategy as a model or plan that integrates the company's goals, as well as policies and activities into a coherent unity. On the other hand, Glueck (1980) saw strategy as a single, comprehensive and integrated plan designed to ensure the achievement of the company's basic goals. Mišanková & Kočíšová, 2014) Aliminsyah and Pandji mean that strategy is a plan that is directed to get maximum results (Aliminsyah & Pandji. 2004). Thompspon & Martin (2005) provides a visualization of five ways to see strategies in the strategy formulation, namely, can be seen in the following images (Fadli, 2018).



Picture 3. Strategy Visualization

Some people think that planning and strategy are the same thing. When carefully viewed, strategic planning has the strength and an important role in strategic planning, but not all planning



explains how the strategy is used. The tactics here describe how the view in staring at the future can be implemented immediately. Due to the development of the times and the vast amount of competition, all organizations are required to innovate and up todate in the use of ways and efforts to develop organizations. Therefore, tactics are the right way to compete and compete so that organisations managed institutions can be superior.

### **Strategy Strengthening Religious Moderation at High School Excellent Hafshawaty Zainul Hasan BPPT Ganggong**

Success of an activity program in school, not separated from the role of the principal. Similarly, in the program of strengthening religious moderation in the school environment. The principal is not only responsible for the administration and management of the school, but also has an important role in creating a positive school culture, supporting inclusion, tolerance, diversity and local wisdom. To ensure religious moderation values are integrated in every aspect of school life, effective leadership is needed. Starting from curriculum, quality culture, to the interaction of all school stakeholders.

The main findings suggest that the principal who succeed in developing religious moderation usually has strong leadership competencies, a deep understanding of diversity values, and the ability to cooperate with various stakeholders, including teachers, parents, and the wider community. They also demonstrate the ability to facilitate interfaith dialogue and manage conflicts that may arise due to ideological differences or beliefs.

In this case, Hafshawaty Zainul Hasan BPPT Genggong Probolinggo or better known as SMAU Hafsha also there are processes of learning and extracurricular activities that support religious moderation. The school wants to have good quality graduates in academic, skill and character Satlogi Santri and 9 strong Santri Main Main Main. The fundamental reason for the formulation of the vision in this institution is to realize the output that has competence that is "top" namely having global competitiveness level ASEAN and international, believing / fearful, achieving, capable in science and technology, healthy, and have good character. What is meant by the values of Santri Satlogi and 9 Budi Utama santri as the basis of the philosophical values of character formation in SMAU Hafsa Ganggong. As for the philosophical values of the cottage of Zainul Hasan Ganggong, the description is S (Polan Manager) A (Ajeg/Istiqamah) N (Nasehat) T (Taqwallah) R (Ridallah) and I (Ikhlās Lillāhi Ta'ala) The description of the 9 Budi Utama Santri is: a. Taqwallah, b. Manners, c. Honestly, d. Reliable, e. Discipline, f. Responsibility, g. Love of Worship and Love of Worship, h. Respecting teachers and parents, i. Visionary (Herwati, 2021).

Based on the Interview, observation and digging of supporting data documents, there are several strategies implemented by the principal in strengthening religious moderation at SMAU Hafsa Ganggong institution. Among other things:

First, integrate religious moderation values on the curriculum. SMAU Hafsa Ganggong curriculum development strategy is carried out through program program curriculum development and learning innovation, the use of variative learning methods, project-based learning (PBL), research-based learning, utilization of technology in learning and excellent programs. Then in implementing programs to realize lifelong learners, concrete programs such as character learning, development of academic and non-academic competencies and teaching integrated moral values in the school curriculum.

Second, build a leadership culture. Built leadership based on responsibility, integrity, giving trust to teams involved from formulation, decision making, implementation and development of each work program to evaluation and feedback. "This is shown by the presence of 1), a clear vision, an inspiring leader has a clear vision of the future, according to SMAU Hafsa Ganggong vision ""Make



the realization of Berahlakul Karimah, Religious, Nationalist, Superior, Performing and Global insight""." The principal who has a clear vision of the importance of religious moderation can direct the entire school community towards the application of these values. Research shows that the principal must have strong leadership competencies, which include the ability to motivate and inspire staff and students. In addition, the principal needs to have a deep understanding of the values of diversity and religious moderation, and be able to communicate the importance of these values to the entire school community.

Third, the role of teacher. SMAU Hafsa Ganggong has planned and implemented sustainable efforts to improve the knowledge and competence of educators. Through training, professional development, mentorship, collaboration, reward, award, award and use of technology. This religious moderation training aims to improve teachers' understanding of religious moderation and how they can integrate these values into classroom learning. In addition, the principal needs to develop extracurricular programs that promote tolerance and mutual respect among students. Activities such as group discussions, joint projects, and cultural arts activities can help students understand and appreciate diversity.

Fourth, character building. Character strengthening is done in a way; 1), Introducing and doctrinizing the philosophical values of Satlogi Santri begins in the socialization activities of the new student orientation period until the learners are declared graduated. 2), Value-based curriculum. 3), Positive Habits, for example by mutual respect. 4), Spiritual building. 5), Leadership. 6), Self-development. 7), Social Care. 8). Examples, Teachers and school staff should be exemplary in showing positive behavior.

The study also identified several effective strategies in promoting religious moderation in schools. First, the principal needs to provide professional training and development for teachers to improve their understanding of religious moderation and how to integrate it into learning. Second, the principal should develop programs that promote tolerance and mutual respect among students, such as extracurricular activities that focus on cultural and religious diversity. Third, it is important to build strong partnerships with parents and communities to support character education and religious moderation in the home and surrounding environment.

In addition, the study found that the challenges facing principals in developing religious moderation include resistance to change, lack of resources, and pressure from different groups of different interests. Therefore, the principal must be able to address these challenges with flexible policies, effective communication, and support from educational authorities and other stakeholders. So, this study confirms that the role of principal is crucial in creating a school environment that values diversity and promotes attitudes tolerance. With effective leadership, the principal can direct the entire school community towards an inclusive and respectful education, which ultimately contributes to the development of positive student characters and is able to address future social conflicts.

### **Conclusion**

The conclusion of this study suggests that the principal plays a vital role in developing religious moderation and student character in the school environment. Through effective leadership, the principal can create an inclusive, tolerant and diversity culture of school. Strategies such as integrating religious moderation values on the curriculum implemented on both co-curricular and extracurricular activities, floating leadership culture as the principal plays an important role in the continuity of each activity program, training teachers and maximizing the role of teachers and religious moderation by example tauladasi and implementing values of tolerance, and the formation of students' character proves effective in supporting religious moderation values. However, challenges such as resistance to change, resource limitations, and pressure from different groups must be addressed with flexible policies and effective communication. For further research, it is recommended

to conduct empirical studies with a deeper qualitative and quantitative method, examining the specific influence of various leadership strategies on the development of strengthening religious moderation in various school contexts.

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