



Integration of Religious Moderation Values Through Project-Based Islamic Religious Education Learning: A Study on Prospective Teacher Students

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Abstract

This study aims to identify the urgency of innovation in Project-Based Learning (PjBL) in guiding prospective teachers to have moderate characters. This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive method. Data were taken using observation techniques and documentation studies. The data were analyzed in three stages consisting of data reduction, data display and conclusion. The results of the study indicate that innovation in learning models of project-based learning in integrating the values of religious moderation is very important because it can meet the demands of learning that accommodates 21st century competencies, namely communication, collaboration, creativity and critical thinking skills in solving problems. In addition, prospective teachers today require Moral Knowing as a basis in making a decision, including in the context of religious moderation. This study has implications for the importance of innovating in learning to meet the competencies of prospective teachers with moderate characters. Therefore, teachers, lecturers or stakeholders need to continue to encourage project-based learning models through a Moral Knowing approach, especially in integrating moderation values. This research needs to continue to be developed in order to integrate moderate character values in prospective teachers.

Keywords:

Islamic Religious Education, Prospective Teachers, Learning Models, Project-Based Learning.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi urgensi inovasi model pembelajaran berbasis proyek (Project-Based Learning atau PjBL) dalam membimbing calon guru agar memiliki karakter moderat. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode deskriptif. Data diambil dengan teknik observasi dan studi dokumentasi. Data dianalisis dengan tiga tahapan yang terdiri dari reduksi data, display data dan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa inovasi model pembelajaran berbasis proyek dalam mengintegrasikan nilai-nilai moderasi beragama ini sangat penting karena dapat memenuhi tuntutan pembelajaran yang mengakomodir kompetensi abad 21 yakni kemampuan komunikasi, kolaborasi, kreatif dan kritis dalam memecahkan masalah. Selain itu, konteks calon guru saat ini membutuhkan pengetahuan moral (moral knowing) sebagai landasan perilaku dalam mengambil sebuah keputusan termasuk dalam konteks moderasi beragama. Penelitian ini berimplikasi pada pentingnya melakukan inovasi dalam pembelajaran untuk mengakomodir kompetensi calon guru berkarakter moderat. Oleh karena itu, para guru, dosen atau stakeholder perlu untuk terus mendorong model pembelajaran berbasis proyek melalui pendekatan moral knowing terutama dalam mengintegrasikan nilai moderasi. Penelitian ini perlu terus dikembangkan baik kualitas dan kualitasnya guna terintegrasinya nilai-nilai karakter moderat pada calon guru.

Kata Kunci:

Pendidikan Agama Islam, Calon Guru, Model pembelajaran, Pembelajaran Berbasis Proyek.

Introduction

Higher education institutions have an important role in shaping the character of students, especially prospective teachers, through the implementation of effective and targeted learning. The educational process in higher education should not only focus on mastering academic material but also provide coaching that can guide student behavior to have good character. According to Lickona (2019), character education at the higher education level is an important foundation for instilling moral values that will support their role as educators. With the right approach, higher education institutions can produce prospective teachers who are not only intellectually competent, but also have high morality and integrity, so that they can be role models in the educational environment and society (Ikhlās & Asyhar, 2023) .

The need for innovation in learning models in higher education is crucial to prepare prospective teachers who have holistic competencies, both in academic and character aspects. Innovative learning models, such as project-based learning, collaboration, or technology-based approaches, can increase student involvement in the learning process and encourage the development of their character, such as independence, responsibility, and critical thinking skills. According to Plomp (2013), innovation in learning must be designed systematically to ensure integration between educational goals, teaching methods, and student needs. In the context of prospective teacher education, innovative learning models not only improve professional skills (Viranny & Wardhono, 2024) , but also strengthen the moral and ethical values that they will bring into the world of education. Thus, higher education not only produces teachers who excel academically, but also become pioneers of character education.

The advantage of project-based learning (PjBL) lies in its ability to internalize important values deeply through real and relevant learning experiences (Darel, 2024) . PjBL provides opportunities for students to be directly involved (Almulla, 2020) in solving problems or projects related to everyday life, so that they not only understand the concepts theoretically but are also able to apply them in meaningful contexts. This method also encourages the development of 21st century skills, such as critical thinking, collaboration, communication, and creativity. According to Thomas (2000), PjBL is effective in facilitating active learning that allows students to associate moral values with practical activities, so that these values are more firmly embedded in their character. In the education of prospective teachers, the advantage of PjBL lies in its ability to integrate academic learning with the instillation of character values (Luma, 2011), such as responsibility, integrity, and tolerance, which are very relevant to creating competent and characterful educators.

Islam in depth through projects that are relevant to real life, such as social activities, community service, or religious tolerance campaigns. Aprilianto et al. (2023) stated that project-based learning in Islamic Religious Education can encourage students to understand Islamic teachings contextually and applicatively, so that religious values, such as compassion, justice, and tolerance, are more easily internalized. With PjBL, students not only gain a theoretical understanding (Fernandes, 2014) of Islamic values, but are also able to practice them in everyday life, forming an inclusive, tolerant, and socially beneficial character. This model is very relevant for developing prospective teachers who are not only academically competent, but also able to be role models in teaching moderate Islamic values in elementary schools and the wider community.

Various studies have examined the application of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) in the context of education and character value development. Thomas (2000) reviewed the effectiveness of PjBL in improving critical thinking skills and active learning (Issa & Khataibeh, 2021), showing that this method is able to create meaningful learning through direct student involvement. In the context of Islamic Religious Education, Aprilianto et al., (2023) discussed the application of PjBL to internalize moderate Islamic values in higher education, finding that this approach can encourage a more inclusive and tolerant understanding of religion. Maarif et al., (2023) examined the implementation of moderate Islamic values through multicultural-based education, emphasizing the importance of learning that is able to combine religious values with cultural

diversity. Meanwhile, Fuadi & Suyatno, (2020) integrated national and religious values in Islamic Religious Education learning in integrated Islamic schools, which succeeded in increasing students' awareness of the importance of social harmony. Another study by Arif et al., (2023) highlighted the strengthening of a sense of patriotism based on Islamic boarding schools, revealing that this approach is effective in building a character of love for the homeland and being religious.

The research gap that emerged was that although various studies have discussed PjBL and character values in the context of Islamic religious education, there has been no research that specifically develops a structured project-based learning model to strengthen the moderate character of prospective elementary school teachers. This study will fill this gap by designing and evaluating a learning model that combines PjBL and moderate character values based on Thomas Lickona's character education theory and Plomp's development model.

Research on Project-Based Learning (PjBL) has grown rapidly since the early 2000s. Guo et al., (2020) , through a comprehensive literature review, confirmed that PjBL is able to increase student engagement, critical thinking skills, and experiential learning. Nasution et al., (2022) found that PjBL at the university level improves collaboration skills, learning continuity, and deep understanding of the material. More recently, Scott-Barrett et al., (2023) emphasized that the project-based approach encourages creativity and innovation in the classroom, especially in motivating students to complete reality-based tasks. However, these studies tend to focus on general skills aspects and rarely touch on the internalization of moral and religious values specifically, which are very important in Islamic Religious Education (PAI).

Although PjBL has been applied in various disciplines, research examining its use in the context of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) is still limited. Sodikin & Ma`arif, (2021) highlighted the importance of education based on moderate Islamic values but have not explicitly utilized the PjBL approach. Fuadi and Suyatno (2020) tried to integrate national and religious values in PAI in integrated Islamic schools and found an increase in social awareness, but the context was more thematic than project-based learning. Arif et al. (2023) stated that pesantren-based education can strengthen students' sense of patriotism and religiosity, but the project-based approach to internalizing the values of religious moderation has not been widely discussed. Other literature, such as Aprilianto et al. (2023), emphasizes the need for innovation in PAI learning to build religious moderation, but they only touch on the concept without producing a specific model.

Moderate character, including tolerance, inclusiveness, and openness to differences, is very important in building social harmony and preventing extremism. Arifianto (2019) stated that strengthening the values of religious moderation among educators is a strategic step in overcoming radicalism in educational institutions. Research by Brooks-Lewis (2012) shows that developing character values through collaborative and experiential learning can help students understand the importance of respecting differences. In this context, PjBL designed to internalize the values of religious moderation is not only relevant but also supports the creation of educators who are able to become agents of social change.

By developing a project-based PAI learning model designed to strengthen the values of religious moderation, this study will fill the gap that has not been answered by previous studies. A structured model with a PjBL approach can have a significant impact on the quality of college graduates who produce prospective teachers. This is supported by the research of Banzon-Librojo et al. (2017), which shows that innovative approaches in education can improve students' emotional and social competencies. Thus, this study not only contributes to the development of project-based learning theory but also to relevant teaching practices in the era of global diversity.

This study aims to develop a project-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning model that can internalize the values of religious moderation in prospective teachers in higher education. Given the importance of strengthening moderate character in forming teachers who can lead classes with empathy and tolerance, this study will contribute to creating a learning model that not only focuses on teaching religious material, but also on broader character development. By utilizing the Project-Based Learning (PjBL) approach, which has been proven effective in

improving collaboration and problem-solving skills, this model is designed to accommodate the needs of the younger generation living in an increasingly complex and diverse society. In addition, this study also wants to explore how PjBL can be a means to foster a deeper and more applicable understanding of religious moderation in higher education environments.

The novelty of this study lies in the integration of PjBL with Islamic Religious Education learning that prioritizes moderate character, which until now has not been studied in depth. Although PjBL has been widely applied in various disciplines, there has not been much research that specifically examines how this model can be applied in the context of Islamic Religious Education to strengthen moderate character in prospective teachers. Through this study, it is hoped that a model can be created that not only improves students' academic skills but also equips them with a moderate attitude that they will apply as educators in the future. This is important because prospective teachers are at the forefront of transferring moral and religious values to future generations, which in turn will have an impact on the formation of a more inclusive and tolerant society.

Method

This study uses a research and development (R&D) approach with a research design referring to the Plomp development model, which includes three main phases: 1) initial investigation, 2) design phase or prototype development, and 3) evaluation phase. This study aims to develop a project-based Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning model (PjBL) that can strengthen moderate character in prospective elementary school teachers. This research was conducted at the PGRI Kanjuruhan Malang University on second semester students of the Elementary School Teacher Education (PGSD) study program totaling 27 people.

The subjects of this study were 27 second semester elementary school teacher candidates. The selection of subjects was based on the consideration that the second semester of the PAI course was distributed specifically to 5th semester students, and they already had sufficient basic knowledge to understand and apply the concepts that would be taught in project-based PAI learning. This research was conducted on the campus of Universitas PGRI Kanjuruhan Malang, with a focus on learning that integrates the values of Islamic moderation.

This research consists of several steps that have been arranged to facilitate data collection and analysis. These steps include:

1. Determining Research Samples.

The research sample was determined on odd semester students of the 2024/2025 academic year. This was chosen because in that semester students had obtained basic material on Islamic Religious Education and were ready to take part in project-based learning that focused on strengthening moderate character.

2. Determining Material Relevant to Project Activities

The selected material is "The Role of Muslims in Developing National Culture through Islamic Morals". This material is considered relevant to instill the values of religious moderation and facilitate students in developing projects that support the strengthening of moderate character.

3. Developing Learning Plans and Project Activities

The lesson plan is designed by considering learning objectives that lead to strengthening moderate character. Project activities are designed to provide students with direct experience in implementing moderate religious principles, including in the form of posters, activity reports, and games aimed at developing attitudes of tolerance and openness.

4. Creating Assessment Instruments

The assessment instruments used include formative assessments during the learning process, which include observations of student involvement in discussions, project implementation, and their ability to explain and apply moderate values in the context of national culture. Other instruments are summative assessments in the form of final tests on understanding the material and evaluating the results of projects that have been worked on by students.

The data collected in this study consists of qualitative and quantitative data, which were obtained through several data collection techniques:

1. Observation is conducted to observe the learning process that occurs during the project activities. Researchers will observe the interaction between students, teachers, and groups in completing the project and the application of moderate characters in each activity.
2. Documentation in the form of product images, project activity reports, posters produced by students, and games that reflect the values of religious moderation. All of this documentation will be used to evaluate the extent to which moderate character is reflected in the results of student work.
3. Project Activity Testing and Assessment. Tests are conducted to measure students' understanding of the material that has been taught, while project assessments will measure students' skills in completing projects and integrating moderate values into their work.

The collected data will be analyzed using descriptive analysis techniques with the following stages: 1). Data Reduction: data collected from observations, documentation, and project assessments will be reduced to obtain relevant information. This process involves sorting important data and eliminating information that is not directly related to the research objectives. 2). Data Display: data that has been reduced will be displayed in the form of tables, graphs, or images that describe the results of student project activities. This data presentation aims to provide a clear picture of the process and results achieved in the development of project-based learning models. 3). Conclusion Drawing: based on the results of the data display, researchers will draw conclusions about the effectiveness of the project-based learning model in strengthening moderate character in prospective elementary school teacher students. This conclusion will also include an analysis of the influence of this learning model on the development of religious moderation values in the context of higher education.

Through clear research stages, starting from determining the sample, materials, to the instruments used, this research is expected to provide a significant contribution to the development of an effective project-based PAI learning model to strengthen moderate character in prospective elementary school teacher students.

Results

This study aims to identify the effectiveness of the project-based learning (PjBL) model in integrating moderate values in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning for prospective elementary school teachers. This study aims to determine the effectiveness of project-based learning (PjBL) in integrating moderate values into Islamic Religious Education (PAI) for prospective elementary school teachers. The results of the study show how PjBL can internalize moderate religious values among prospective teachers. The results of this study indicate that the implementation of the project-based learning model can significantly improve students' understanding of moderate religious values in the context of Islamic Religious Education. The findings from this study can provide significant contributions to the development of better and more relevant learning models for religious education.

Stages of PjBL Implemented

The project-based learning (PjBL) model is implemented through several stages involving collaborative and reflective activities in projects related to moderate values. These stages include:

1. Determining Basic Questions: Students are invited to formulate basic questions that are relevant to the topic "The Role of Muslims in Developing National Culture through Islamic Morals" which will be used as the basis for their project.
2. Creating a Project Design: In this stage, students design a project plan that integrates moderate values, such as tolerance, anti-radicalism, and respect for diversity.
3. Developing a Schedule: Students develop a schedule for the various stages of the project, including time for research, group discussions, and creation of the final project product.

4. Monitoring Project Progress: Project progress is monitored regularly to ensure students remain on track in developing their projects and can resolve any issues that arise during implementation.
5. Outcome Assessment: Assessment is based on the final product of the project produced, as well as the extent to which the project reflects moderate values in the context of Islamic education.

Learning evaluation is done through a final assessment that covers three important aspects: attitude, knowledge, and skills. This assessment is done using various methods, including:

1. Attitude Assessment: Measuring changes in students' attitudes towards the values of moderation and tolerance through observation and self-reflection.
2. Knowledge Assessment: Measuring students' understanding of the material taught, either in the form of written tests or class discussions.
3. Skills Assessment: Measures students' ability to apply the knowledge gained in the form of real projects, such as making posters, reports, or videos that reflect the application of moderate values.
4. This assessment can be seen through a score table, where data on students' attitudes, knowledge, and skills scores are displayed, as well as photos of observations of classroom learning that illustrate student interactions, discussions, and collaboration in their projects.

Documentation of PjBL Model Integrating Moderate Values

The documents found in this study indicate that the PjBL model applied in the classroom has integrated moderate values well. Some documents that support the implementation of the PjBL model include:

1. Syllabus and RPP (Learning Implementation Plan) which include learning objectives that focus on strengthening moderate character, including tolerance, peace, and anti-radicalism.
2. A supplement book containing references and supporting materials on moderate values in Islam.
3. Learning media in the form of videos, images and posters are used to illustrate moderate values in the context of everyday life.
4. Student Activity Sheets that record the steps taken by students in completing their projects, as well as the final results that demonstrate moderate character strengthening.
5. This document provides an overview that in this learning, students not only learn theoretical concepts, but are also actively involved in applying these values through the projects they work on.

Student Interview Results

Interviews with students showed positive responses to project-based learning activities. Students felt helped in developing collaboration, communication, and understanding of moderate values. They expressed that they were able to learn more about tolerance, anti-radicalism, and diversity through the various activities they did in the project.

However, several obstacles were also faced during the learning process, including time constraints in completing the project and challenges in working together in groups with different backgrounds. These obstacles can be used as evaluation material for improving the learning model in the future.

Documentation of products produced by students, such as posters, activity reports, and learning media, shows that students have successfully applied moderate values in their projects. Some of the products produced include: Posters depicting the values of tolerance and anti-radicalism in everyday life, Activity reports that tell of their experiences in implementing projects that strengthen moderate character. A graphic or table showing the steps taken in completing the project and the end result that reflects those values. In addition, several other products

demonstrate the application of moderate values in the form of educational games that teach students how to resolve conflicts and build more tolerant relationships.

Form a Learning Approach

In this project-based learning, the approach used is a constructivist approach, which emphasizes active and collaborative learning. Students are given the task to work in groups to design and implement projects related to the topic of the role of Muslims in developing national culture through Islamic morals. The tasks given involve not only theoretical knowledge, but also practical skills in integrating moderate values in real life.

This approach allows students to learn directly through experience, as well as develop critical and reflective thinking skills that are very important in the context of higher education and character formation of prospective teachers. In this study, the application of Project-Based Learning (PjBL) in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) courses was proven effective in strengthening the moderate character of prospective elementary school teacher students (Nasution et al., 2022). Theoretically, PjBL is a learning model that prioritizes active student involvement through real projects that require collaboration, research, and critical problem solving. The results of the study showed that PjBL not only improved students' understanding of the material but also supported the internalization of moderate values such as tolerance, respect for diversity, and overcoming radicalization (Zubaidah & Suryani, 2023).

Discussion

This study is similar to that conducted by E. Suhendi, S. Aisyah, and Hendri Setyono in the context of strengthening the value of religious moderation. However, E. Suhendi et al. discussed Islamic religious education and character (PAI-BP). These researchers state that Islamic religious education and character education (PAI-BP) can strengthen the values of religious moderation, namely *Tawasut*, *Tawazun*, *Ta'adul*, *Tasamuh*, *Musawah*, and *Syura*. Meanwhile, the stages of PAI-BP learning are inserting moderate content into each learning material, optimizing learning approaches that can foster critical thinking, respecting differences, valuing others' opinions, being tolerant, democratic, courageous in expressing ideas, sportsmanlike, and responsible, conducting specific educational training and orientation programs with a special theme on religious moderation, and addressing evaluation aspects (Suhendi et al., 2023).

This study appears to enrich the findings of Amiruddin and Nurbayani (2024), who mentioned the steps taken by PAI group teachers in implementing religious moderation values in Islamic education subjects at Islamic educational institutions, namely discussion methods, case studies, problem-based learning, role-playing, and project-based learning. PjBL in this study appears to be more detailed, covering: determining the basic questions, designing the project, scheduling, monitoring project progress, and evaluating the results

To implement the values of religious moderation in Islamic religious education subjects at Islamic Education Institutions, PAI group teachers use discussion methods, case studies, problem-based learning, role-playing and project-based learning. This study focuses on teachers' efforts in implementing the values of religious moderation but does not cover students' perspectives or the long-term impacts of implementing these values. Emphasizing the importance of moderate Islamic education in an increasingly diverse and complex global context, it significantly contributes to the literature on inclusive and tolerant religious education.

Meanwhile, regarding the use of PjBL, as explained by Anderson et al. (2022) and Berhиту et al., (2020), PjBL can optimize collaborative skills and active involvement of students in learning. PjBL provides opportunities to apply knowledge in real contexts related to social and cultural issues, including issues related to religious moderation. Students not only learn theory, but also build character through the projects they work on, such as making posters, educational games, and activity reports that integrate moderate values. Therefore, this model provides space for holistic learning, which includes cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects. The implementation of

this approach not only strengthens the moderate character of students but also provides relevant and applicable learning experiences in the context of everyday life. Thus, the implementation of PjBL in Islamic Education not only enhances academic understanding but also shapes the moderate character necessary to become effective and inspiring educators.

This study also supports the findings of Alawi Hapsi, (2021) who stated that multicultural-based education and religious moderation are very relevant in the context of education in Indonesia. Indonesia, with its high ethnic and religious diversity, requires prospective teachers who not only master knowledge, but also have characters that can manage and mediate differences. PjBL in the context of PAI is able to equip students with the skills to adapt and interact in the diversity that exists in society, which in turn forms a moderate character (Laila Wardati, Darwis Margolang, 2023). Therefore, the implementation of project-based learning (PjBL) in Islamic Education is very important to develop prospective teachers who are not only competent but also have strong moderate character. Thus, this study is expected to contribute significantly to the development of effective learning models for religious education, particularly in shaping moderate character in prospective teachers.

However, although PjBL shows positive results in strengthening moderate character, there are several challenges faced by students in this learning process. Based on interviews with students, some of the obstacles faced include limited time to work on projects in depth and difficulties in group collaboration, especially in terms of equal distribution of tasks. This is in line with the findings of Sutrisno and Fitriani (2022) which state that the success of PjBL is highly dependent on clear time and task management. Therefore, it is important for lecturers to provide appropriate direction regarding the division of tasks and a realistic schedule (Endriyanto, 2023). The implementation of project-based learning (PjBL) in Islamic Education has proven effective in shaping moderate character among students, although challenges in time management and group collaboration still need to be addressed.

In addition, the evaluation of project-based learning, which combines aspects of attitude, knowledge, and skills, shows that comprehensive assessment can reflect the development of students' character as a whole. This is in accordance with the concept of Saiful, (2021) and Thomas Lickona, (1991) who stated that good character must be assessed from the aspects of moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action. In this study, the assessment of students' attitudes towards moderate values, such as tolerance and anti-radicalism, was carried out through observations and reports of project activities. This kind of evaluation makes it possible to measure the extent to which students can internalize and apply these values in their daily lives.

It is important for educational institutions to continue innovating in teaching methods in order to produce prospective teachers who are not only competent but also possess strong moderate character. Education that integrates religious moderation values through innovative and effective approaches is essential for shaping prospective teachers who can address the challenges of diversity in society (Ikhrom et al., 2023). Therefore, this study provides recommendations for the development of a more inclusive and responsive curriculum that addresses the need for moderate character traits in prospective teachers.

However, although PjBL has been proven effective, there is an opportunity to further develop this model by considering external factors that influence students' moderate attitudes, such as family and social environment factors. As mentioned by Brito et al., (2018) , social and cultural factors outside the classroom also play an important role in shaping students' character. Therefore, further research is needed to explore how these external factors can be integrated into the PjBL model to strengthen religious and character moderation among student teachers.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the research that has been conducted, it can be concluded that the Project-Based Learning (PjBL) model can be applied effectively in Islamic Religious Education (PAI) learning to strengthen moderate character in prospective elementary school teacher students. This

study found that PjBL which was applied through clear stages—starting from determining basic questions, project design, scheduling, monitoring, to evaluating results—successfully increased students' understanding of moderate values in Islam, such as tolerance, anti-radicalism, and respect for diversity. The evaluation results showed that the assessment that combined aspects of attitude, knowledge, and skills provided a comprehensive picture of the development of students' moderate character. Products produced by students, such as posters, project reports, and educational games, showed that they could apply moderate values in real form. In addition, interviews with students revealed positive experiences and improved collaboration skills as well as a deeper understanding of the importance of moderate values.

Based on these findings, there are several implications that can be drawn from this study, both for education practitioners and policies in higher education. First, the application of the PjBL model in Islamic Religious Education learning can be an effective strategy in internalizing moderate character in prospective teacher students. By using PjBL, students not only learn about religious theory, but also practice applying these values in real life through the projects they work on. Second, the results of this study can be the basis for the development of higher education curriculum, especially in integrating moderate values that are relevant to the context of culture and social diversity in Indonesia. The implementation of project-based learning that involves collaboration between students also contributes to developing social and communication skills that are much needed in the world of education. Another important implication is in the development of professional competence of prospective teachers, where they are expected not only to master the material, but also to be able to integrate moderate character values in their teaching practices. This will have an impact on the formation of a generation that is more tolerant, critical, and wise in dealing with various differences in the future. Therefore, this research makes a major contribution to improving the quality of education in higher education, as well as to the formation of prospective teachers who have good character and are able to create an inclusive and harmonious learning climate.

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