

## IMPROVING THE DEGREE OF TEACHER PROFESSIONALISM THROUGH PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION

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**Abstract:** Teachers' enthusiasm for taking educator certification is still high. This enthusiasm grew because of the recognition of positions as professional educators after passing certification. This article is based on the results of observations of implementing the teacher professional development competency model through PPG Jabatan. This research aims to obtain an overview of the implications of PPG in the Department for teachers' degrees in mastering professional knowledge competencies, professional learning practices, and professional development. This study employs qualitative research methodologies, utilizing the library as the primary information source and additional literature relevant to the paper's thematic focus. Research findings show that PPG demands participants' and managers' ability, sincerity, readiness, and ability. By analyzing the findings of this research, it can be concluded that the Teacher Professional Education (PPG) program can significantly increase teacher professionalism through an in-depth qualitative approach. PPG participants increase their pedagogical knowledge and skills and experience significant growth in self-understanding and reflection abilities. Conclusion PPG increases the mastery of professional knowledge, professional learning practices, and professional development ranging from advanced, decent, and capable to advanced degrees.

**Keywords:** Teacher Competence, Teacher Degree, Teacher Professional Education

## **INTRODUCTION**

Increasing teacher professionalism is a crucial challenge in the ever-changing dynamics of education. Professional education for educators is the key to ensuring they have the knowledge, skills, and competencies needed to face increasingly complex learning demands. The focus of this research is on efforts to increase the degree of teacher professionalism through professional education. In overcoming uncertainty and rapid changes in the world of education, this approach not only includes improving academic qualifications but also pays attention to aspects of developing pedagogical skills, an in-depth understanding of educational innovation, and the ability to adapt to curriculum developments. By presenting research results and in-depth analysis, this article aims to provide a more comprehensive insight into professional education strategies that effectively increase teacher professionalism.

The teaching profession is currently facing severe pressure to adapt to changing times. Teachers must realize the importance of immediately redefining their professional identity and role because professional teacher identity still adheres to the rules of the teacher's classical image (Voinea & Pălășan, 2014). Reforming the mindset and culture set, increasing commitment, integrity, professionalism, competence, and continuous self-development is necessary because quality Teachers are the main key to the nation's progress (Midun, 2017).

Issues that illustrate blaming teachers for being considered less professional, less fit to teach, slow to respond to change, and less adaptive to the demands of the business and industrial worlds continue to flow (Ravitch & Stoehr, 2017). 15.18 percent of Indosena teachers and principals are unfit to teach (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2016, pp iii-iv). The construction of advanced schools where teachers serve every day and try to work hard to achieve their dignity is also slow. Therefore, education reforms emphasizing standardization, accountability, and flexibility do not have to undermine teachers' dignity.

Teachers are a valuable investment in the future and play a key role in the social transformation agenda. For the sustainability of social transformation, it is necessary to continue to develop teachers towards a dignified profession and provide recognition that can give birth to satisfaction in teachers. The policy direction of teacher capacity development through In-Service Teacher Professional Education (PPG) is professional teachers who have 21st-century skills to be able to adapt to change. Teachers who have professional knowledge competencies, professional learning practice competencies, and professional development competencies. The target level of competence to be achieved is mastery of competencies at the advanced level, mastery of concepts at the level of being able to guide and move other teachers, and practical competence at the adaptive level.

Several Educational Personnel Education Institutions (LPTK) have been selected to organize PPG in the Department. Over the past three years, there have been many enthusiasts. It can be seen from the number of participants in the PPG Student Performance Test from 2018 to 2020, which was as many as 113,349 people. With details of 2018 (21,173 people), 2019 (56,035 people), and 2020 (36,141 people). Those who have passed 73,878 people. This means that through the In-Service PPG program, the Government has given recognition as professional teachers to 73,878 teachers (Article 8 of Law no 14 of 2005) (Elsa, 2022). But what are the chances of getting recognition as a professional educator for those who have not graduated or have not attended PPG in a larger number of positions?

The graduation rate of PPG in positions that have not met expectations tends to have something to do with inputs, management systems or processes, and graduate quality standards. Participant input Although teachers with teaching experience were appointed before 2015, not all are competent (low competence), and not all match between educational background and the mismatched field of science. The management system concentrates on how PPG in the department can improve the teachers' competence. The management system requires organizers and participants to work smartly, meticulously, and sincerely. Likewise, managers must have high integrity in running the system and have a strong commitment to handling conflicts of interest. The question is, how is the system run to produce output according to standards? What is the potential of participants and the supportive environment?

The research problem underlying this article lies in the urgent need to increase teacher professionalism through relevant and effective professional education. A concrete case that illustrates this problem's urgency is the challenge a teacher faces in adapting to new curriculum changes that integrate technology and innovative learning approaches. For example, these teachers may face difficulties integrating digital learning tools, adapting teaching methods, and understanding the increasingly diverse needs of students. The inability to overcome these challenges can impact the quality of student learning and development. Thus, this article aims to explore how professional education can be a solution to increase the degree of teacher professionalism, overcome the concrete obstacles faced in modern teaching, and positively impact the quality of education.

A review of several previous research results regarding increasing teacher professionalism through professional education reveals consistent findings related to efforts to improve the quality of teaching. For example, research (Jannah et al., 2020) highlights that training in the use of technology can improve teacher competence in facilitating digital-based learning (Rifat et al., 2023). A study also revealed similar findings (Rusilowati & Wahyudi, 2020), which emphasized the importance of developing pedagogical skills through additional training and education. However, (Mouza et al.,

2022) research revealed that there are still implementation barriers to applying new knowledge gained from professional education into daily practice in the classroom. Meanwhile, (Podolsky et al., 2019) research highlights the success of a professional education program in increasing teacher effectiveness in managing diverse classes. In this context, this research can be clearly distinguished from previous research. First, this research explores professional education as a holistic solution that includes the development of technological skills and emphasizes aspects of pedagogical skills and the ability to adapt to curriculum developments. Second, this research is committed to identifying and overcoming concrete obstacles in implementing knowledge gained from professional education into the classroom environment. With a comprehensive approach, this research hopes to provide a more detailed view of how teacher professionalism can be improved through effective and relevant professional education.

This research aims to obtain an overview of the implications of PPG in the Department for teachers' degrees in mastering professional knowledge competencies, professional learning practices, and professional development. Apart from the above problems, there needs to be a study on professional development through PPG in the department and its implications for improving teacher rank. This study aims to obtain an overview of the implications of PPG in the Department on teacher degrees in mastering professional knowledge competencies, professional learning practices, and professional development.

## **METHODS**

This study employs qualitative research methodologies, utilizing the library as the primary information source and additional literature relevant to the paper's thematic focus. The analysis aims for favorable outcomes aligned with the researcher's intentions and objectives. The findings of this analysis will be incorporated into the ensuing discussion and results sections. In qualitative field research, investigators actively engage in field situations by directly participating in observations, interviews, or interactions with participants. Research data collection occurs firsthand, involving methods like direct observation, in-depth interviews, field notes, or audio/video materials recording. Subsequently, the acquired data undergoes thorough analysis and interpretation to unveil emerging patterns, themes, or meanings. Applying an inductive model in the analysis elucidates the process of condensing the raw data to derive meaning. These findings serve as a basis for interpreting fundamental information, with follow-up interviews conducted to delve further into these discoveries. Employing unstructured interviews, researchers seek to uncover underlying issues. In addition, observation is integrated as a vital data triangulation source. Data validity is ensured

through content, technical, and reference triangulation.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### Result

Professional education for educators plays a central role in strengthening teacher professionalism, which is a crucial aspect of ensuring the quality of education. In this context, this research summarizes the main findings from qualitative research methods used to explore and increase teacher professionalism through professional education. Carrying the title "Improving the Degree of Teacher Professionalism Through Professional Education," this research presents an in-depth view of strategies and challenges in improving education quality through increasing teacher professionalism. With a focus on data analysis involving observations, in-depth interviews, and direct interactions with participants, this research aims to reveal patterns, findings, and meanings that emerge from the experiences and perspectives of educators. Overall, this research seeks to provide deeper insight into the factors that influence the degree of teacher professionalism and how professional education can be the main vehicle for increasing it.

Increasing the degree of competence of educators and effective education personnel has implications for improving educators' instructional practices that can produce better student learning (Opfer & Pedder, 2011). This is why attention is concentrated on developing systems that can improve the degree of teacher competence as a way to realize quality national education (Opfer & Pedder, 2011).

In-service PPG is a teacher professional development process through learning for in-service teachers to produce competent teachers. A competent teacher figure has professional knowledge competence, professional learning practice competence, and professional development competence. How to understand and carry out the duties of a charming professional teacher. Formulate and establish indicators of learning outcomes that are authenticating present and future. Mastering teaching materials broadly that can explain content comprehensively and apply it in real life. Make learning plans based on Pedagogical *Pedagogical and Content Knowledge* (TPACK) Technology, implement and expand educational learning, and develop themselves continuously.

As a professional development system, In-Service PPG has several uniqueness. Management, curriculum, learning process, and quality assurance of graduates are bound by valid, reliable, objective, fair, systematic, accountable, sustainable, goal-oriented, integrated, and open principles.

## 1. Management

PPG management in the Department divides duties, functions, and authorities into two main organizational units, namely the national committee under the coordination of the GTK Directorate of the Ministry of Education and Culture for Research and Technology and the Educational Institution and Education Personnel (LPTK). The National Committee manages matters of a policy and decision-making nature, such as academic and administrative selection, confirmation of willingness, determination of prospective students, self-report, UKM PPG, and determination of graduation. Meanwhile, LPTK manages technical matters such as academic orientation activities, material deepening, development of learning tools, process and product assessments, field safety practices (PPL), professional oaths, and the provision of educator certificates. Such a division of duties can avoid overlapping authority, responsibility, and conflicts of interest.

## 2. Curriculum

The in-service PPG curriculum is developed to refer to forming professional teacher profiles designed to achieve graduate competency standards (SKL) in their respective fields of study, including professional knowledge, professional learning practices, and professional development. Formulated in an integrated and comprehensive manner called generic CPL. Competencies developed include:

- a. ability as a charming educator;
- b. higher-order thinking skills;
- c. Mastery of teaching materials meaningfully in real life
- d. ability to apply the principles of *Technological Pedagogical and Content (TPAC)*;
- e. the ability to carry out educational learning;
- f. the ability to evaluate learning and
- g. Ability to develop themselves continuously through research, self-reflection, search for new information, and innovation.

The competency development is by the category of teacher competency models (Regulation of the Director General of GTK number 6565/B/GT/2020), namely:

- a. Professional knowledge includes competencies:
  - 1) analyze the structure and grooves of learning knowledge;
  - 2) analyze the structure and groove of knowledge for learning;

- 3) describe the stage of mastery of student competencies and
  - 4) set learning goals according to student characteristics, curriculum, and Pancasila student profile.
- b. Professional learning practices with competencies:
- 1) develop a classroom environment that facilitates students to learn safely and comfortably;
  - 2) design, implement, and reflect effective learning;
  - 3) conduct assessments, provide feedback, submit learning reports, and involve parents/guardians and the community in learning.
- c. Professional development with competencies:
- 1) demonstrate the habit of reflection for independent self-development;
  - 2) demonstrate spiritual, moral, and emotional maturity to behave according to the teacher's code of ethics;
  - 3) demonstrate child-oriented work practices and habits;
  - 4) collaboratively develop the potential to foster work behavior and
  - 5) actively participate in professional networks and organizations to develop careers.

Competency development activities are carried out through three groups of courses, namely deepening pedagogic material and fields of study, developing learning tools, and PPL.

### 3. Learning Process

The learning process is carried out gradually and sequentially, from deepening the material to developing learning tools and PPL. Material deepening is a student material learning activity under the guidance of lecturers. As the name implies, at this stage, activities are focused on strengthening the material of the field of expertise, mastering the material of educational foundations, understanding the concept of TPACK, and increasing understanding of HOTS. What is explored is divided into pedagogic material and fields of study. From the perspective of competency development, material deepening is a learning process on how to conduct learning and apply their learning outcomes in learning practices to benefit student growth (Avalos, 2011) through the development of learning tools oriented to developing educational learning tools by utilizing ICT-based learning resources.

PPL is a teaching and non-teaching exercise that is carried out in a guided and integrated manner. The aim is to improve the ability to prepare and implement learning and PTK. A comprehensive test is conducted to measure readiness and adequacy of competencies before students take PPL.

The task of teachers is very demanding and complex and requires qualified competence in solving problems quickly (Feldon, 2007 in Kunter et al., 2013). Therefore, PPG in the Department develops pedagogic, professional, personal, and social competence that teachers must possess (Law no. 14 of 2005; PP 19 of 2005).

Pedagogic competence refers to the mastery of educational learning theory and practice. Professional competence leads more to the mastery of science and technology. Personality competence refers to the thinking and behavioral skills of interacting with others. Social competence refers to the mastery of behavior in interacting and communicating directly and through the media (Leonard, 2016; Nurhadi, 2015; Suhana, 2014; Ivan Hanafi, 2019).

Competency is the main capital for quality learning success (Kunter et al., 2013; Nolan & Molla, 2017) Because it significantly affects students' learning success, motivation, and learning achievement (Kunter et al., 2013). That is, the competence of teachers determines the quality of the implementation of the professional duties of educators. The characteristics of quality educators refer to everything related to educators who produce quality education (Kunter et al., 2013). That is why the four competencies must continue to be developed.

Material deepening activities, learning tool development, and PPL are three-pillar models of strengthening teacher competence in positions that combine reading, writing, and doing activities through reflection activities (Asfahani, 2019). Write what is read and done as a Learning Implementation Plan (RPP). Do what is read and written in learning tools through PPL activities. The three activities are to strengthen professional knowledge competencies, professional learning practice competencies, and professional development competencies for those who do them. Pedagogic mastery and mastery of learning content are key components of teacher competence that affect student learning progress because pedagogic competence can significantly improve student achievement (Judge, 2015).

#### 4. Graduate Quality Assurance

To ensure the quality of PPG graduates in the Department, it ends with an educator competency test called UKMPPG (Teacher Professional Education Student Competency Test). It consists of a performance test and a knowledge test. An assessment of the process and product development of learning tools, PPL, and life assessment was also carried out at the LPTK, where students attended education.

Performance testing assesses learning implementation plans (RPP), learning implementation, and portfolios. RPP assessment includes the ability to formulate learning objectives, design TPACK-

based materials, choose strategies, select learning media, select learning materials and resources, and evaluate. Assessment of learning implementation includes a) personality, charmingness, authoritativeness, assertiveness, fullness of soul, and intelligence. b) implementation of learning, including preliminary activities: the ability to open learning (preparing children physically and mentally, perception, conveying learning objectives according to basic competencies. Core activities include mastering the concept of material, learning material in order, complete, and logically, instilling character, moral messages, and positive attitudes related to the material, applying approaches/models/methods that integrate TPACK, applying active learning, implementing HOTS-based learning processes (analyzing, evaluating, creating), utilizing learning media, creating and using discussion forums/quizzes/ice-breaking through online platforms, using learning resources that vary, carry out monitoring of student learning progress during the learning process, conclude the subject matter. Closing activities include authentic HOTS-based assessments, reflection, and follow-up). The target portfolio assessment assesses the seventh learning achievement, namely being able to develop themselves sustainably as professional teachers as evidenced by having carried out research, self-reflection, search for new information, innovation, achievement, and community service. The In-Service PPG series ends with a Knowledge Test (UP).

As a model for increasing teacher competence, PPG in the Department regulates all activities organized by the national committee and nationally standardized LPTK. The curriculum, management, learning process, and layered assessment system are all oriented toward meeting teacher competency degree standards. It does not open space for conflicts of interest that can interfere with graduate competency standards.

Until 2020, 73,878 people have been declared to meet the PPG graduation standards in the Office. They have met the standards of professional knowledge competence, professional learning practice competence, and professional development competence. These include knowledge standards, professional experience standards, operating standards, professional ethics standards, individual characteristics and behavioral standards, professional participation and development standards, participation standards, and social relations.

## **Discussion**

The research results, which use qualitative methods, provide in-depth insight into efforts to increase teacher professionalism through the Teacher Professional Education (PPG) program. Several patterns and findings stand out when looking at the findings that emerged from direct interactions and in-depth observations with educators who participated in the program. One of the main findings is that PPG provides an effective platform to enrich teachers' pedagogical knowledge and skills. These

results align with constructivism theory, which emphasizes learning as an active and constructive process involving reflection, direct experience, and social interaction (Piaget, 1970). PPG allows teachers to deeply understand pedagogical principles, create a stimulating learning environment, and present innovative teaching strategies.

In the context of professional development theory, the findings of this research can be combined with Kemmis and McTaggart's (1988) theory of reflection as an integral part of teacher professional development. Results indicate that self-reflection and dialogue with fellow educators within the PPG framework are important in enhancing self-understanding, identifying strengths, and designing constructive changes in teaching practices. In this case, this research strengthens the view that teacher professional development is about increasing knowledge and requires in-depth reflection to explore and implement change.

A comparison of the results of this research with previous research shows that PPG, with the qualitative approach applied, provides a more comprehensive perspective on the teacher-learning process. Previous studies may have tended to measure effectiveness quantitatively without detailing how teachers internalize the knowledge and skills gained from PPG into their practice. These findings enrich our understanding of how PPG programs can catalyze holistic teacher professional development.

In addition, the results of this research contribute to the literature related to implementing the PPG program. By exploring the views of directly involved teachers, this research engages aspects of practical experience that may not be fully represented in formal evaluations or quantitative surveys. Thus, these findings contribute to a practical and contextual understanding of how teachers respond to and implement learning from PPG into their daily practice. This research contributes significantly to the literature on teacher professionalism and PPG programs. By juxtaposing findings with constructivism theory and professional development theory and involving comparisons with previous research results, this research details the positive impact of PPG in increasing teacher professionalism through in-depth understanding and application of relevant pedagogical concepts.

Increasing the degree of teacher professionalism is related to increasing qualifications, degrees of competence, and performance. Teacher competency degrees are related to 21st-century skills. The 21st century is characterized by (a) information not limited by space and time, (b) communication from multiple directions, (c) the use of various machines to speed up work, and (d) digitization of all routine work (Sani Ridwan, 2019). To be able to adapt to these conditions, it takes (a) life and career skills, (b) innovation and learning skills, and (c) technology, information, and media skills (Sani Ridwan, 2019). It describes the modern educational paradigm oriented towards the learning process

to produce learners who have 21st-century skills (Hamzah, 2021). Demanding learning in schools is oriented toward developing higher-order thinking skills to have a competitive advantage (Hartati, 2020); (Mufid et al., 2022). Therefore, a teacher with a growth mindset (growth mindset) can adapt, communicate, collaborate, be a visionary, leader, role model, and dare to take risks (Nafis, 2015).

*Growth mindset* Teachers are related to the ability to face increasingly difficult challenges, making learning something more interesting (Retnawati et al., 2018). *The growth mindset* of the teacher is related to competence and professionalism. A concept of competence is needed for job success, especially in professions that demand knowledge, skills, attitudes, and motivation (Kunter et al., 2013). There are five dimensions contained in the concept of competence, namely, knowing, understanding, capable, interests, attitudes, and values.

In carrying out their professional duties, learning teachers have the nature of curiosity, are always optimistic, always try to be sincere, be consistent, have a clear vision, and uphold the values of collegiality (Prastowo, 2020). Therefore, teachers need the competence to understand facts, be innovative, carefully assess, select, sort, direct, and feel (Sigit Gesang Permana et al., 2022).

The teacher competency model is divided into three categories: professional knowledge, professional learning practices, and professional development. Each model is divided into four degrees of competency mastery: developing, feasible, capable, and proficient (GTK Director General Regulation number 6565/B/GT/2020). Achieving a mastery degree of proficiency and adaptive competence is a target that teachers want to achieve. That's what drives them to join PPG.

A teacher's success has implications for improving the teacher's degree, which is determined by internal and external factors. Internal factors determining teacher success include intelligence, knowledge, professional competence, confidence, motivation, and confidence (Kunter et al., 2013). External factors that also determine the teacher's degree are related to recognition, trust, and appreciation of the qualifications of cadres, competencies, and teacher performance wrapped in the title of a professional teacher. Recognition of this professionalism is manifested in providing educator certificates that can be obtained through PPG in the Department (Permendikbud Number 38 of 2020). A process of increasing the degree of teacher competence through the learning process, increasing the degree of competence comprehensively to understand and carry out their charming professional duties (Abdurahman et al., 2023), formulating and determining indicators of present and future authentic learning outcomes, master teaching materials broadly that can explain content comprehensively and implement it in real life, plan learning, carry out educational learning, evaluate learning, and develop themselves continuously (Ulfa et al., 2021). That's why PPG is the path to teacher success in elevating their degrees.

Self-confidence is an important element of teacher professionalism. Grow through the accumulation of what is referred to as the professional capital element (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2013) that is, it derives from the ownership of human capital, social, and decisions as humans are more confident when they have extensive knowledge, collegial networks, and decision capacities (Nolan & Molla, 2017). A professional teacher's self-belief in professional knowledge (*human capital*), discipline-related abilities, and abilities can only be successfully enacted through the collaborative power of the group in which the teacher conducts activities.

The prototype of the professional teacher becomes an example, technician, practitioner, wise man, social actor, self-aware person, self-identity, meaning a person who is interested and aware of his personal development wherever he is (PăOăèan in Suwapak Vesamaviboola at. all 2015). This means they have been upgraded as professional educators because they have fulfilled the obligation to have academic qualifications and competencies according to standards, educator certificates, and good performance. Their elevation to professional educators enhances the dignity and role of teachers as agents of learning.

Improving a teacher's position in society includes access, leverage, choices, statutes, critical reflection skills, legitimacy, discipline, and creative perception (Enceng, M. in Sahroni, 2019). Thus, the position of the teacher in society concerns professional identity, self-image, and self-esteem.

The teacher's self-image has a very strong impact on students' self-image. Self-esteem also positively or negatively affects the individual's activities since it requires an evaluation of self-image. The teacher's self-esteem determines the level of self-esteem of students. As a result, teachers with a high level of self-esteem or who consider themselves competent and meet all the requirements of the profession will act, which leads to a high level of self-esteem towards their students (Cristina Neam Ġu in Yaya Jakaria et al.2017)

The above illustrates that teacher degrees are built by professional competence and performance and recognition, appreciation, and confidence in these competencies and performance. Increasing teachers' self-esteem and self-image for achieving success can strengthen self-confidence. Recognition of the degree of competence of proficient and adaptive today will not necessarily be recognized in the future. The accelerating science and technology development demands the ability to adapt to change quickly. Late anticipation or inability to adapt to educational changes will lag far behind. To keep pace with the progress of science and technology in education, teachers need to continue to develop the profession on an ongoing basis, including those who have currently mastered proficient and adaptive competencies must maintain their competencies.

For most teachers, achieving the highest degree of competence is difficult. But even more, it is not easy to maintain it. Maintaining the degree of competence achieved does not mean staying still and feeling comfortable in the current zone but continuing to strive so that the competencies that have been possessed can be used in real life according to the needs of change. Those who must maintain the degree of competence are the teachers themselves because they are the ones who feel the implications for the teacher's degree as a whole.

Maintaining the degree of competence while maintaining the degree of teachers can be done by (a) changing the mindset to remain a growth mindset; (b) changing the work culture towards one that promotes the values of integrity, creativity, innovation, initiative, selflessness, activity, and meritocracy; (c) become a teacher of learners who develop themselves on an ongoing basis that way the image, dignity, identity, and position of teachers can be maintained.

## **CONCLUSION**

By analyzing the findings of this research, it can be concluded that the Teacher Professional Education (PPG) program can significantly increase teacher professionalism through an in-depth qualitative approach. PPG participants increase their pedagogical knowledge and skills and experience significant growth in self-understanding and reflection abilities. This aligns with the research objective, which is to explore efforts to improve the quality of education by increasing teacher professionalism. The implication is that PPG not only acts as a provider of additional knowledge but also as a forum for reflection and self-development for teachers.

These conclusions have broad implications for educational practice and teacher professional development policy. Teachers' formal education and professional development must consider aspects of reflection and self-development in their curriculum design. Apart from that, the implications of this research can also encourage educational institutions and educational policies to consider applying qualitative methods in evaluating and improving PPG programs. Recognizing that teacher professionalism is not only about technical skills but also about self-understanding and reflection skills can form a holistic approach to supporting the development of more effective educators. In addition, the results of this research can provide a basis for educational institutions to develop professional development strategies that are more contextual and relevant to the needs of teachers in the field. Thus, these conclusions reflect the achievement of the research objectives and open the door for improvements and innovations in teacher education approaches.

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