



Challenges in Teaching Good Manners and Right Conduct at The Intermediate Level: Educators' Perspective

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Received : May 12, 2025

Revised : September 02, 2025

Accepted : September 29, 2025

Online : September 30, 2025

Abstract

This study explored the challenges faced by Grade 4 public school educators in teaching Good Manners and Right Conduct (GMRC) and the strategies they use to address them. Using a qualitative phenomenological approach, eight (8) teachers from the Bongabong North District with at least two years of teaching experience were interviewed. Findings revealed several challenges, including cultural diversity, lack of student discipline, social media influence, behavioral issues, limited teaching materials, and insufficient training. Despite these difficulties, teachers applied strategies such as storytelling, role modeling, and experiential learning to promote moral values and discipline among students. The study also emphasized the importance of a well-managed classroom, where student cooperation and engagement play a key role in the success of GMRC instruction. Furthermore, teachers stressed that parental and community involvement is vital in reinforcing values education beyond the school setting. In addition, this research contributes to the application of qualitative methodology in education by demonstrating how phenomenological inquiry can capture the lived experiences of teachers and provide insights into value-laden instruction.

Keywords: *Cultural Diversity, Classroom Management, Student Behavior, Teacher Challenges, Moral Instruction, Parental Involvement*

INTRODUCTION

In today's rapidly evolving and interconnected society, the moral development of young learners is shaped by external influences such as digital media, shifting family structures, peer interactions, and global cultural exposure (OECD, 2021; UNESCO, 2022). While these factors can enrich perspectives and promote social awareness, they also introduce conflicting messages that challenge the teaching of traditional values (Valbuena & Ocampo, 2021; Pascual & Reyes, 2022). Reports of declining empathy, respect, and civic responsibility among students have raised concerns about the weakening of character education, prompting a renewed push to reintegrate values-based learning as a core element of holistic development (OECD, 2021; UNESCO, 2022; DepEd, 2021).

In the Philippines, this movement is reflected in Republic Act No. 11476, which reintroduced Good Manners and Right Conduct (GMRC) as a dedicated subject beginning in 2020 (Official Gazette, 2020). This law aligns with the MATATAG curriculum's goal of nurturing competent, compassionate, and ethically aware Filipino learners (DepEd, 2021). GMRC is envisioned not only as an academic subject but as a foundation for instilling respect, responsibility, honesty, and empathy, virtues crucial for peace, unity, and social cohesion in diverse and digital learning environments (Caballero et al., 2022).

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Despite this strong policy framework, challenges persist. Teachers in resource-limited and Indigenous contexts often lack access to culturally relevant materials and professional training, forcing reliance on improvised or outdated strategies (Calo, 2024; Dela Cruz & Manansala, 2023). The influence of social media and contemporary culture further complicates GMRC instruction, introducing competing value systems that reduce student engagement (Valbuena & Ocampo, 2021; Pascual & Reyes, 2022).

This study is guided by Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1977) and Character Education Theory (Caballero et al., 2022). Bandura highlights the role of modeling and imitation in behavior formation, positioning teachers as moral exemplars (Bandura, 1977). Complementarily, Character Education Theory emphasizes structured approaches, such as storytelling, experiential learning, and discussion, in explicitly teaching ethical reasoning (Caballero et al., 2022; Dela Cruz & Manansala, 2023).

Recent studies affirm the importance of these frameworks but highlight persistent barriers such as insufficient training, limited instructional time, and digital distractions. They also recommend context-based and community-integrated approaches to sustain relevance and student engagement (Calo, 2024; Valbuena & Ocampo, 2021; Pascual & Reyes, 2022). These gaps underscore the need to examine how teachers adapt and deliver GMRC in diverse classroom realities.

Accordingly, this study explores the lived experiences of elementary educators in implementing the GMRC curriculum under the MATATAG framework. It investigates the specific challenges they face, such as a lack of resources, inadequate training, and the impact of cultural and digital shifts, and documents the adaptive strategies they employ, including local storytelling, dramatization, parental collaboration, and community-based initiatives (Caballero et al., 2022; Dela Cruz & Manansala, 2023).

By examining both constraints and innovative practices in GMRC implementation, this research contributes insights to curriculum development, teacher professional growth, and policy refinement (UNESCO, 2022; DepEd, 2021). Beyond its practical contributions, the study advances qualitative methodology by demonstrating how phenomenological inquiry captures the lived experiences of teachers, offering nuanced perspectives on value-laden instruction in real classroom settings. Ultimately, it aligns with Sustainable Development Goal 4 by promoting inclusive, equitable, and culturally responsive education for Filipino learners (UNESCO, 2022; OECD, 2021).

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Global Significance of Values Education

Moral and character education has reemerged as a global priority due to concerns about declining empathy, respect, and civic responsibility among young learners (OECD, 2021; UNESCO, 2022). Increasingly, researchers highlight the influence of external factors such as digital media, peer interactions, and cultural pluralism in shaping children's moral development (Valbuena & Ocampo, 2021; Pascual & Reyes, 2022). While these influences can broaden perspectives, they also create conflicting messages that complicate the teaching of traditional virtues. In response, organizations like UNESCO (2022) and the OECD (2021) advocate for schools to systematically integrate values-based learning as a central component of holistic education, ensuring that learners are prepared to navigate ethical complexities in a rapidly changing society.

Challenges of Moral Development in the Digital Age

The digital environment introduces unique challenges to value formation. Valbuena and Ocampo (2021) note that students increasingly model their behavior on media figures and online

personalities rather than teachers or parents. Pascual and Reyes (2022) further argue that the pervasiveness of social media and pop culture leads to value dissonance, where students receive mixed signals about respect, responsibility, and empathy. Reports of diminished moral discipline, such as disrespectful classroom behavior and weakened civic engagement, reflect these tensions (OECD, 2021). The literature thus suggests that teachers must navigate not only traditional classroom dynamics but also the broader, and often competing, influences of digital culture.

GMRC in the Philippine Educational Landscape

In the Philippines, the institutionalization of Republic Act No. 11476 (2020) marked a major step toward revitalizing character education by reintroducing Good Manners and Right Conduct (GMRC) as a stand-alone subject from Kindergarten to Grade 6 (Official Gazette, 2020). This initiative aligns with the Department of Education's vision under the MATATAG curriculum to foster competent, compassionate, and morally grounded Filipino learners (DepEd, 2021). GMRC emphasizes virtues such as honesty, empathy, respect, and responsibility, which are seen as essential for building national unity and peace in diverse cultural contexts (Caballero et al., 2022; UNESCO, 2022; De Guzman et al., 2020; Escobal et al., 2023)

Barriers to Effective Implementation of GMRC

Despite the strong policy framework, implementation at the classroom level faces persistent obstacles. Teachers in resource-limited, Indigenous, or remote settings frequently lack access to context-appropriate materials and professional training specifically tailored for values education (Calo, 2024; Dela Cruz & Manansala, 2023). While Calo (2024) emphasizes the shortage of training opportunities and insufficient instructional time, Dela Cruz and Manansala (2023) highlight how the absence of localized resources limits teachers' ability to contextualize values instruction. These findings converge on the idea that teachers are left to rely on outdated or improvised approaches, which often fail to reflect the lived realities of students.

At the same time, Valbuena and Ocampo (2021) and Pascual and Reyes (2022) draw attention to the influence of digital culture as a compounding factor. Although both agree that social media introduces competing value systems, Valbuena and Ocampo stress the shift of students' role models from teachers to online personalities, whereas Pascual and Reyes (2022) focus on the resulting value dissonance and inconsistency in students' moral behavior. Together, these perspectives illustrate how digital distractions not only weaken classroom discipline but also intensify the challenges posed by limited training and resources.

Overall, the literature suggests that barriers to GMRC are not isolated issues but interconnected dynamics: structural limitations (training, resources, time) intersect with cultural and technological pressures (social media, pop culture), creating a multi-layered challenge for educators. Addressing these requires flexible, context-based strategies that integrate both policy support and teacher-driven innovation.

Theoretical Foundations for GMRC

Two major theoretical perspectives guide research on values education: Social Learning Theory and Character Education Theory. Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1977) posits that individuals acquire behaviors through observation, modeling, and imitation, making teachers critical role models in moral formation (Pascual & Reyes, 2022). In the context of GMRC, this suggests that consistent modeling of virtues by educators is as important as direct instruction (Valbuena & Ocampo, 2021).

Complementing this, Character Education Theory stresses the explicit teaching of values through structured and deliberate strategies such as storytelling, role play, and experiential

activities (Caballero et al., 2022; Dela Cruz & Manansala, 2023). It highlights that values must not only be caught through modeling but also taught through guided reflection and dialogue. Together, these frameworks reinforce the dual role of teachers as both moral exemplars and facilitators of structured moral reasoning.

Synthesis and Research Gap

The literature affirms the global and local urgency of reintegrating values education in schools, particularly amid the competing influences of digital culture. It also identifies key challenges in the Philippine setting, including a lack of culturally relevant resources, limited teacher training, and digital distractions that undermine GMRC instruction. While policies such as RA 11476 and the MATATAG curriculum provide a strong foundation, there is limited empirical research on how elementary teachers experience, adapt, and innovate in implementing GMRC in diverse classroom contexts.

This study addresses this gap by exploring the lived experiences of Filipino elementary educators, focusing on both the challenges they face and the contextually grounded strategies they employ, such as community-based learning, local storytelling, dramatization, and parental collaboration. By examining these dynamics, the research aims to inform curriculum refinement, teacher training, and policy development, ensuring that GMRC not only exists in theory but is practically relevant and culturally responsive to the realities of Filipino learners.

RESEARCH METHOD

The study employed a qualitative research design using a phenomenological approach, aiming to explore the challenges educators face in teaching Good Manners and Right Conduct (GMRC) in public elementary schools within the Bongabong North District, Oriental Mindoro. This design was particularly suitable for capturing the lived experiences, personal insights, and coping mechanisms of teachers tasked with delivering values education. By using a phenomenological approach, the researchers were able to delve into the subjective realities of teachers, exploring how they perceive, respond to, and navigate the complexities of teaching GMRC in today's educational setting. Following Moustakas (1994), phenomenology was used to bracket the researchers' assumptions and focus on the essence of participants' experiences. This method prioritized the voices of the educators and provided a platform for them to express their understanding of character education, the difficulties they encounter, and the strategies they adopt to address these issues. Through this approach, the study sought to generate in-depth narratives that reflect authentic classroom experiences and contribute meaningful insights toward enhancing GMRC instruction.

The research was conducted in four purposively selected public elementary schools in the Bongabong North District, namely: Aplaya Elementary School located along Lapu-Lapu Street, Bagong Bayan Central School situated in Bagumbayan, Felimon M. Salcedo Memorial School in Malitbog, and Moises Abante Memorial Elementary School in Labasan. These schools were chosen for their accessibility, diverse learning environments, and the presence of qualified Grade 4 teachers directly involved in teaching GMRC. A total of eight Grade 4 teachers participated in the study, each with at least two years of teaching experience in values education. The selection of participants was carried out through purposive sampling to ensure that those involved had firsthand experience relevant to the research focus. The sample size of eight teachers was deemed sufficient, as data saturation was reached, no new themes emerged after repeated interviews, which is consistent with phenomenological research norms that typically involve small but information-rich samples (Creswell, 2013; Guest et al., 2006). Their varied teaching backgrounds and school contexts enriched the data and provided a comprehensive view of the realities of GMRC instruction.

across different settings.

Data were gathered through semi-structured, face-to-face interviews using an interview guide developed by the researchers. The guide consisted of two primary questions and five follow-up prompts designed to encourage reflective and comprehensive responses. These questions addressed topics such as the challenges encountered in teaching GMRC, the strategies used to overcome these challenges, and their suggestions for improving the subject's implementation. Interviews were conducted in private, quiet areas within the school premises to ensure participant comfort and openness. Each session lasted approximately 10 to 15 minutes and was audio-recorded with the participants' consent. Interviews were transcribed verbatim and translated when necessary to maintain clarity and preserve the authenticity of responses for accurate analysis.

The data were analyzed using thematic analysis. Following [Braun and Clarke \(2006\)](#), an inductive thematic analysis was employed to allow themes to emerge directly from participants' narratives rather than being imposed by prior frameworks. This involved reading and re-reading the transcripts to extract significant statements, formulate meanings, and cluster them into emerging themes. Initial codes were generated, refined into broader categories, and then synthesized into overarching themes through iterative comparison across data sets. These themes provided a structured understanding of the participants' shared and individual experiences in teaching GMRC. To ensure the credibility and accuracy of the findings, member checking was conducted by sharing the thematic summaries with the participants for validation. This process helped verify that the results truly reflected their perspectives. Additionally, the researchers practiced triangulation by comparing responses across different schools and teacher backgrounds to identify consistent patterns and variations.

Ethical standards were strictly observed throughout the research process. Participants were fully informed about the nature and purpose of the study, and written consent was obtained before the interviews. Anonymity and confidentiality were maintained by using assigned codes instead of actual names, and no identifying personal information was collected. All data were securely stored and used exclusively for academic purposes. The researchers also committed to upholding academic integrity by ensuring that all information was reported honestly and without distortion. The ethical rigor and methodological consistency of this study aimed to uphold the trustworthiness and validity of the research findings, ultimately contributing to the improvement of GMRC teaching practices in elementary education.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings of the study, organized into clusters of themes that emerged from the participants' narratives. To ensure clarity, demographic information of respondents and summary tables of key themes and sub-themes are included.

Table 1. Demographic Profile of Participants

Participant Code	Gender	Teaching Experience (Years)	School Context
T1	Female	5	Urban-central school
T2	Male	7	Rural school
T3	Female	10	Urban-central school
T4	Male	3	Rural school
T5	Female	6	Barangay school
T6	Female	8	Central school

Participant Code	Gender	Teaching Experience (Years)	School Context
T7	Male	4	Remote area school
T8	Female	12	Central school

What challenges do educators encounter in teaching Good Manners and Right Conduct to elementary learners?

The study found that Grade 4 educators in the Bongabong North District, Oriental Mindoro, encountered various challenges when teaching Good Manners and Right Conduct (GMRC) at the intermediate level. These included cultural and social differences, teaching and learning difficulties, lack of educational resources, behavioral concerns, environmental influences, and issues related to teacher well-being. Despite these obstacles, educators shared valuable insights that highlighted the complexity of values education in diverse classroom settings. Their experiences emphasized the need for holistic support to ensure meaningful and effective GMRC instruction.

Table 2. Challenges and Sub-themes

Themes	Sub-themes / Illustrative Narratives
Cultural Diversity	Different backgrounds, conflicting practices, and difficulty aligning values.
Social Issues	Peer influence, exposure to social media, and changing attitudes.
Learning Difficulties	Short attention spans, varied comprehension levels.
Limited Resources	Lack of GMRC-specific materials, reliance on teacher creativity.

Cultural and Social Beliefs

The first theme highlights that cultural and social challenges in education arise from differences in beliefs, values, and social backgrounds, which can hinder communication, collaboration, and value formation in classrooms (Lamont, 2024). These issues are especially evident in diverse settings where students bring varied norms and preconceived ideas from home (Gay, 2016 & Gay, 2018). Such predispositions can make it difficult for students to internalize values like discipline, cleanliness, and cooperation (Karacsony et al., 2022). To address this, culturally responsive teaching (CRT) is recommended, as it integrates students' cultural backgrounds into instruction to create more inclusive and equitable learning environments (Janakiraman et al., 2019; Gay, 2016).

Participant 1 highlighted these challenges,

“Yung behavior nila ngayon diba iba’t iba yung bata, iba’t iba yung kinalakihan nila...” (Their behavior now is different, right? Each child is raised differently).

This underscores how cultural upbringing influences conduct, making behavior expectations difficult to standardize. The participant added,

“Kapag meron na silang naka preconceive idea... minsan mahirap ng baguhin.” (Once they have a preconceived idea... sometimes it’s hard to change).

These cultural scripts resist change despite structured value-based education like GMRC. For instance, in cleanliness, students may know the right actions but fail to apply them.

“Halimbawa sa paglilinis ng kapaligiran... nasasabi nila ang tamang sagot pero pag sa actual na hindi nila magawa.” (For example, in cleaning the environment... they can say the correct answer but in reality they can’t do it).

Discipline and respect are foundational for moral and behavioral development. These values support ethical understanding and application (Hattie, 2015; Duckworth et al., 2019). Participant 4 observed,

“Alam ng bata ang tama at mali pero hindi ginagawa, walang application... Disiplina at respect...” (The child knows right from wrong but doesn’t do it, there is no application... Discipline and respect...).

This reflects the challenge of helping students embody knowledge meaningfully, reinforcing the need to cultivate these values.

A growing issue is the influence of social media on student behavior. While it offers engagement potential, it also introduces inappropriate content, distorted values, and distractions (Owusu-Acheaw & Larson, 2015; Abuhassna et al., 2020). Participant 8 remarked,

“The behavior of the pupils talaga yan ang number one ahahaha.” (The behavior of the pupils is really number one, hahaha).

Participant 2 elaborated, *“How to discipline the pupils... yan ay karanasan namin ngayon sa social media...”* (How to discipline the pupils... that is our experience now on social media...).

Specific concerns were raised about TikTok,

“Though may mga TikTok na hindi para sa kanyang edad... nakakachallenge.” (Although there are TikToks that aren’t appropriate for their age... it’s challenging).

Research confirms that excessive social media use impairs focus, behavioral development, and emotional regulation (Prothero, 2024), creating what educators describe as a “mental health minefield” (Domingo, 2023).

To meet the demands of modern classrooms, professional development must also prepare teachers to manage digital-era behaviors and support value formation amidst the influence of technology and media (Prothero, 2024). Researchers contend that understanding how media shapes student behavior is essential in designing interventions that cultivate digital responsibility and social-emotional regulation (Abuhassna et al., 2020).

These strategies are grounded in the sociocultural theory of Vygotsky, which posits that learning is a socially mediated process shaped by cultural tools and interactions with more knowledgeable others (Lai, 2023). By embedding sociocultural principles into practice, educators can scaffold student development and foster essential values such as discipline, respect, and empathy, core components of effective teaching and learning in the modern Philippine classroom (Hattie, 2015; Duckworth et al., 2019).

Teaching and Learning Challenges

The second theme, Teaching and learning challenges in education, has become more pronounced, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, which exposed teacher unpreparedness and technological gaps (Huck & Zhang, 2021). Systemic issues such as teacher shortages, heavy workloads, and lack of resources (UNESCO, 2022), along with behavioral problems like distraction and low motivation (Glass et al., 2023), further hinder effective instruction. A significant concern is the gap between students' theoretical understanding and real-world application, often influenced by cultural and personal factors (Gay, 2016; Duckworth et al., 2019). Addressing these challenges requires professional development and innovative teaching strategies.

Participant 1 described,

"Yung challenges, yung behavior nila ngayon... Iba't iba yung bata, iba't iba yung kinalakihan nila... Halimbawa sa paglilinis ng kapaligiran... oo, nasasabi nila ang tamang sagot pero pag sa actual na hindi nila magawa." (The challenges, their behavior now... Every child is different; they grew up differently... For example, cleaning the environment... yes, they can say the right answer, but when it comes to the actual thing, they can't do it).

This shows the difficulty in translating moral knowledge into action, especially when influenced by inconsistent home and community environments. Participant 4 echoed this challenge,

"Alam ng bata ang tama at mali pero hindi ginagawa, walang application..." (The child knows right from wrong but doesn't do it, there is no application)

Reinforcing that knowledge without discipline and respect does not lead to behavioral change. Childers-McKee and Guido (2024) affirm that cultural and preconceived influences hinder students' ability to act on what they learn. Carmichael (2024) and Hanifan (2023) suggest that clear expectations, consistent routines, and tools like noise meters promote effective management. Participant 5 shared,

"Unang una kaingayan..." (First of all, noise...)

Stressing the need for a calm, values-driven environment to guide student behavior. Supporting this need for effective strategies, Vygotsky's sociocultural theory underscores that learning occurs through social interaction and guided participation, making it essential for teachers to model desired behaviors and scaffold learning based on student backgrounds (Lai, 2023). By applying this approach, educators can create environments where moral education, such as GMRC, becomes part of students' lived experiences rather than abstract concepts (Duckworth et al., 2019). This alignment between theory and practice helps bridge the gap between knowledge and application, encouraging consistent behavioral growth among learners (Hattie, 2015).

Educational Resource Challenges

The third theme, Educational Resource Challenges, highlights a persistent and systemic issue in the Philippine education system: the lack of adequate resources and infrastructure (UNESCO, 2020). These limitations are particularly prevalent in rural and underfunded schools, where learning conditions often fall below acceptable standards (UNESCO, 2020).

Compounding these infrastructural challenges is the shortage of instructional materials, including textbooks, learning modules, and technology tools essential for modern education

(Maffea, 2020). When schools operate without the necessary educational tools, it becomes difficult for teachers to implement learner-centered approaches and for students to achieve meaningful academic progress (Maffea, 2020). Participant 4 shared,

“...Resources din wala” (Resources also nothing),

While Participant 3 added,

“Lack of resources kasi...” (Because of lack of resources...).

Participant 6 pointed out the lack of GMRC textbooks,

“Wala kaming aklat sa GMRC... ang meron lang ay Filipino lang, Science, at AP.” (We don't have any books at GMRC... all we have is Filipino, Science, and AP).

Participant 7 also shared,

“Walang LM's... May curriculum guide naman pero napakabroad.” (There are no LM's... There is a curriculum guide, but it is very broad).

These responses show how crucial accessible materials are for engagement and performance. Fasinro et al. (2024) argue that clearly defined curriculum content is essential for effective instruction. Participant 6 expressed difficulty using unfamiliar teaching tools,

“Yung ituturo mong mga PowerPoint na andoon hindi mo pa alam hahaha.” (The PowerPoints you're going to teach are there, you don't even know yet hahaha).

Participant 7 described the strain of adjusting to broad curriculum guides,

“Napakabroad... kapag ang bata mo ay mahina, kailangan ay chop-chopin ang objectives.” (Very broad... when your pupils are struggling, you need to chop up the objectives).

These concerns reflect how broad curricula lead to inconsistent instruction and increased planning time. Research confirms that a lack of structure undermines teaching quality (Fasinro et al., 2024). Better-designed curricula and sufficient training would help ensure consistent implementation. The new MATATAG Curriculum aims to enhance foundational learning and promote inclusivity, but its early implementation has faced several obstacles (DepEd, 2021). Teachers report limited training, unfamiliar materials, and a lack of resources (Kilag et al., 2024 & UNESCO, 2022). Participant 6 said,

“Wala kaming aklat sa GMRC... Bagong bago ang MATATAG, mangangapa-ngapa ka pa,” (We don't have a book at GMRC... MATATAG is new, you'll be left wondering), and also,

“Yung ituturo mong mga PowerPoint na andoon hindi mo pa alam hahaha.” (The PowerPoints you're going to teach are there, you don't even know yet).

Participant 7 added,

“Isang beses lang naman kami trinaining... nangangapa pa din kami hanggang ngayon.” “Biglang bigla namang ibinaba yang MATATAG... marupok na sabi nga namin.” (We only trained once... we’re still groping until now.) Suddenly, the MATATAG one was dropped... we said it was fragile.

These reflections mirror findings by [Lagbao \(2024\)](#) and [DepEd \(2021\)](#), who identify limited training, rushed implementation, and inadequate materials as major barriers. [Kilag et al. \(2024\)](#) emphasize that teacher preparedness and sustained support are critical for effective curriculum reform.

To support reforms like MATATAG, the Department of Education must ensure thorough teacher training, timely provision of instructional materials, and continuous support systems ([DepEd, 2021](#) & [Kilag et al., 2024](#)). These efforts are essential to improve instruction and create an environment where students can succeed ([UNESCO, 2022](#)).

Behavioral Challenges

The fourth theme, Behavioral Challenges, significantly affects the implementation of the MATATAG Curriculum by disrupting classroom dynamics and hindering learning outcomes ([Kilag et al., 2024](#)). These issues often stem from socio-emotional difficulties, lack of discipline, and low engagement ([Glass et al., 2023](#)), compounded by limited resources and inadequate teacher training ([DepEd, 2021](#)). These behavioral concerns interfere not only with academic instruction but also with values formation, which is central to the MATATAG framework ([Kilag et al., 2024](#)).

Several participants shared first-hand insights into these challenges. Participant 1 mentioned,

“Yung mga bata na medyo sensitive... kunting sagi lang nakasuntok na agad” (Those kids who are a bit sensitive... just a little bit of teasing then punched right away),

Describing how emotional sensitivity leads to impulsive reactions. Participant 7 added,

“Merong kaharap kana doon magsusuntukan pa” (There’s someone in front of you who will fight), highlighting frequent physical conflicts that disrupt learning.

These observations show that behavioral issues are not isolated but occur regularly in many classrooms. Teachers also face difficulties managing classroom behavior, which directly affects values education. Participant 2 shared,

“Ayaw ko kasing magstart ng klase na ang aking istudyante ay hindi nakatingin sa akin... kaya siguro yung behavior nila ay minsan ay maingay... pero pwede ko imanage” (I hate starting class without my students looking at me... that’s why their behavior can be noisy sometimes... but I can manage it),

Stressing the importance of setting control before instruction. Participant 7 explained, *“Meron talagang bata na yan pasaway... may tatayo, may sisigaw”* (There’s a really naughty child... someone will stand up, someone will shout),

Describing the disruptive behaviors they routinely encounter. Participant 3 simply stated,

“Kalimitan naman ay misbehavior ng bata” (Usually it’s the child’s misbehavior),

While Participant 8 emphasized,

“Ang attitude ng bata is a big problem talaga yan... napakalaking factor kung bakit ang mga bata ay di natututo.” (A child’s attitude is a really big problem... a huge factor in why children don’t learn).

These statements reflect how deeply student behavior and attitude influence classroom learning and values development. Research supports these experiences, as [Marzano \(2017\)](#) advocates proactive classroom management to promote engagement. [Hattie \(2015\)](#) highlights the importance of teacher clarity and behavioral expectations in reducing disruptions and improving student outcomes. These strategies help minimize classroom interruptions and foster better academic performance ([Hattie, 2015](#); [Marzano, 2017](#)).

Self-discipline is another key factor, with [Duckworth et al. \(2019\)](#) finding that it contributes significantly to academic performance and behavior regulation. Participant 8’s comment on student attitudes echoes this, emphasizing that when learners lack internal motivation, they are more likely to be disruptive, negatively affecting the whole class ([Duckworth et al., 2019](#)). To address these challenges, educators must foster responsibility, respect, and positive engagement ([Glass et al., 2023](#)). [Glass et al. \(2023\)](#) suggest that developing self-discipline in students reduces behavioral problems and enhances learning outcomes. This expands the teacher’s role from instructor to character-builder, helping learners grow socially and emotionally ([Glass et al., 2023](#); [Duckworth et al., 2019](#)).

Thereby, behavioral challenges ranging from aggression and noise to chronic misbehavior pose major obstacles to implementing the MATATAG Curriculum ([Kilag et al., 2024](#)). These issues interfere with teaching routines, distract from learning goals, and hinder values formation ([DepEd, 2023](#)). Addressing them requires systemic support such as regular teacher training, mental health services, guidance counseling, and a school culture that emphasizes positive behavior and inclusivity ([Kilag et al., 2024](#); [DepEd, 2021](#); [Domingo, 2023](#)). With these structures in place, MATATAG can better achieve its goal of providing inclusive, learner-centered, and values-driven education ([DepEd, 2023](#)).

Environmental Influences on Behavior

The fifth theme, Environmental Influences on Behavior, highlights how environmental factors like peer influence, home life, social media, and school policies significantly shape student behavior in the classroom ([Reuben et al., 2022](#); [Nagaraj, 2020](#)). These elements can either support or hinder learning and proper conduct, depending on the values they promote. Research shows that such influences deeply affect both behavior and academic performance ([Reuben et al., 2022](#); [Nagaraj, 2020](#)).

Peer influence emerged as a common source of disruption. Participant 2 shared,

“Ang factors naman lagi ay inside the classroom ay yung mga kaklase... sinaway mo sira ang klase” (The factors are always inside the classroom, the classmates... you criticized, the class is ruined),

Noting how peer misbehavior interrupts lessons. Another example involved sharing food inappropriately, indicating how peer actions normalize improper behavior. Participant 7 added,

“Meron talagang bata na pasaway... hindi na namin inaano yun” (There are really naughty

children... we don't give attention to that anymore),

Describing how noncompliant students affect overall discipline. These findings support [Gordon and Ohannessian's \(2024\)](#) view that peer dynamics shape classroom behavior and teacher morale, underscoring the need for teachers to foster positive peer relationships.

The home environment also plays a vital role. Participant 3 explained,

"Environmental nila ang nakakaapekto... malaking factor yon behavior ng bata" (Their environment affects... that's a big factor in a child's behavior)

Highlighting how upbringing influences behavior. They also mentioned,

"Meron kasing magulang na busy sa trabaho" (Some parents are busy with work),

Indicating limited parental involvement. Participant 4 added,

"Social media... behavioral issue kasi kung ano ang nakikita nila sa TV ginagawa nila yan sa personal" (Social media... a behavioral issue because what they see on TV they do in person),

Linking media exposure and lax parental control to behavioral problems. Participant 6 echoed,

"Hindi na sila nagaguide ng parents," (They are no longer guided by their parents),

It is mentioned that teacher authority is constrained by child protection laws. These responses align with [Bosmion and Chua \(2020\)](#) and [UNESCO \(2022\)](#), who emphasize strong parent-teacher collaboration to support student behavior.

Social media emerged as another influential factor. Participant 4 stressed,

"Sobra talaga ang social media," (Social media is really too much),

Participant 5 observed,

"Sa halip na mag-aral, cellphone agad ang gamit" (Instead of studying, they immediately use their cellphones).

These statements reflect how early digital exposure leads to distraction and behavioral issues, consistent with [Iwamoto and Chun's \(2020\)](#) findings on the negative emotional impact of media and [Abuhassna et al.'s \(2020\)](#) work on digital multitasking. Participant 8 added,

"Open na sila sa media... nakasupply na sa utak nila yan" (They are open to the media... it has already been supplied to their brains), referring to how students' legal awareness from the media affects discipline.

Institutional policies, especially child protection laws, were seen as both necessary and limiting. Participant 6 expressed,

“Bawal kang manakit... hindi mo na sila madisiplina ng maayos” (You are not allowed to hurt them... you will not be able to discipline them properly),

While Participant 8 remarked,

“Kung iaapply natin lahat yan, bagsak ang behavior” (If we apply all of that, the behavior will fail),

Reflecting concern that legal constraints hinder discipline. These issues support [Mag-atas et al. \(2023\)](#), who advocate for positive reinforcement and restorative discipline over punitive methods.

Hence, the impact of behavior on learning was clear, as classroom conduct directly affects a student’s capacity to absorb and engage with academic content ([Perera et al., 2024](#)). Participant 8 shared,

“Paano nga kung di nakikinig ang bata, paano sila matututo,” (What if the child doesn’t listen, how will they learn?),

Highlighting how poor behavior impairs academic success, a view supported by research indicating that inattentive or disruptive students are less likely to achieve desired learning outcomes ([Perera et al., 2024](#); [Marzano, 2017](#); [Corpuz & Lucido, 2021](#)). This underscores the need for balanced, respectful classroom management, which scholars argue is essential for maintaining a productive learning environment ([Hattie, 2015](#); [Simonsen et al., 2022](#)). Addressing these challenges requires collaboration among educators, parents, and policymakers to foster supportive, well-managed learning environments tailored to students’ diverse needs ([DepEd, 2021](#); [Darling-Hammond et al., 2020](#)).

Lastly, Teacher well-being and support are critical factors in fostering a positive educational environment, directly influencing teaching quality, classroom climate, and student outcomes ([Viac & Fraser, 2020](#)). However, educators often face high levels of stress, burnout, and workload challenges that threaten their job satisfaction and retention ([Nyoko et al., 2023](#)). Supportive school climates, ongoing professional development, and work-life balance are essential elements that promote teacher resilience and well-being ([Hakanen et al., 2018](#)). Prioritizing teachers’ mental and emotional health not only benefits educators themselves but also enhances their relationships with students, ultimately creating a thriving learning environment ([OECD, 2021](#); [Jennings & Greenberg, 2009](#)). The emotional toll of managing challenging student behaviors was clearly expressed by Participant 1, who humorously remarked,

“Ipapsychology test din nila ang mga bata charot lang pero on the other side naman kung puro ganun yung nakikita mo araw araw diba parang gusto mo rin magpakunsulta sa ano sa psychologist or psychiatrist.” (They should also give children psychology tests, just for fun, but on the other hand, if that’s what you see every day, it’s like you want to consult a psychologist or psychiatrist).

This candid comment underscores how daily exposure to difficult behaviors can overwhelm teachers and highlight their need for psychological support. Research corroborates this experience, emphasizing that occupational stress contributes to teacher burnout and diminished job satisfaction ([Guo et al., 2022](#); [Salinas-Falquez et al., 2022](#)).

Participant 5 further highlighted the necessity for continuous professional development to manage evolving challenges in education, said,

“So ano ang gagawin siguro ang support na kailangan namin ay mag-training kasama ng workshops para mastrengthen kung paano maii-cocope up yung challenges na maaari naming madaanan all throughout the school year.” (So, what we can do is maybe the support we need is training along with workshops to strengthen how to cope with the challenges we may face throughout the school year).

This response emphasizes the need for targeted training and workshops to equip teachers with strategies to navigate difficulties, especially when adapting to new curricula such as MATATAG. Moreover, Participant 5 reflected on the importance of staying current with changing student behaviors, shared,

“Kailangan makasabay ka sa kanila kasi ang mga bata tumatagal nag-iiba ang ugali because of the generation na naa-adapt nila.” (You have to keep up with them because children’s habits change over time because of the generation they are adapting to).

This insight highlights the necessity for teachers to remain flexible and updated in their pedagogical approaches to effectively engage students across generations. Even with extensive experience, Participant 5 acknowledged,

“Para ma-cope mo iyon kailangan makasabay ka sa kanila... though it’s very effective yung efficiency and effectiveness niya talagang 100% sure na sure ka,” (To cope with that, you need to keep up with them... although it’s very effective, its efficiency and effectiveness are really 100% sure)

Emphasizing that ongoing learning and adaptation are crucial for maintaining teaching effectiveness. These participant perspectives are consistent with the findings of [Darling-Hammond \(2017\)](#), who stresses that sustained professional development and teacher training are vital in improving educational outcomes and teacher effectiveness. Providing teachers with continuous learning opportunities equips them to better handle classroom dynamics and meet the diverse needs of their students.

What teaching techniques do educators employ in teaching Good manners and Right conduct?

Grade 4 educators in the Bongabong North District, Oriental Mindoro, employed various strategies to teach Good Manners and Right Conduct (GMRC). These included Personalized Learning Approaches, Experiential and Active Learning, the Teacher’s Role in Learning, and Classroom Management and Discipline. Each strategy addressed learners’ diverse needs, promoted real-life application, emphasized the teacher as a moral role model, and maintained classroom order. These practices highlight the importance of intentional, context-driven pedagogy in fostering values education.

Table 2. Strategies and Sub-themes

Strategies	Sub-themes / Illustrative Narratives
Storytelling	Moral tales, real-life scenarios, parables.

Strategies	Sub-themes / Illustrative Narratives
Differentiated Instruction	Adjusting lessons for varied learners, simplifying tasks.
Experiential Learning	Role-playing, community-based activities, and hands-on values practice.

Personalized Learning Approaches

The first theme, which is personalized learning approaches, reveals that Grade 4 educators in the Bongabong North District increasingly adopt personalized learning strategies to address the varied needs, interests, and backgrounds of their learners (Delos Santos, 2024). This approach aligns with contemporary pedagogical research advocating for student-centered teaching that adapts to individual differences to improve learning outcomes (Smith, 2025). Personalized learning involves differentiated instruction tailored to individual student readiness and learning styles (Tomlinson & Murphy, 2021). It also includes attention to students' unique learning profiles, ensuring lessons meet their cognitive and emotional development needs (Chen & Gardner, 2019). Additionally, the use of culturally responsive methods supports engagement by connecting learning to students' social and cultural experiences (Gay, 2018).

Participant 1 emphasized the situational nature of instructional strategies, stated,

"Kung ano yung epektibo na gawin sa batang yun para mapatino siya, edi yun ang gawin mo. Diba, may sinasabi nga na maraming best strategy, pero hindi applicable sa lahat?" (If there's something effective you can do to help that child to come to their senses, then that's what you should do. After all, there's a saying that there are many best strategies, but they do not apply to everyone, right?)

This view underscores the importance of pedagogical flexibility, affirming that no single strategy works universally. Teachers must exercise professional judgment in selecting the most appropriate interventions, a principle central to differentiated instruction. Participant 3 further illustrated this idea by articulating the role of learner diversity and the importance of Multiple Intelligences (MI).

"Depende, case-to-case basis kasi ang strategies... gagamit ka ng differentiated instruction o MI. Multiple intelligence kasi iba-iba ang talent ng mga bata." (It depends, because the strategies are on a case-to-case basis... you will use differentiated instruction or MI. Because it's multiple intelligence, children have different talents).

This perspective resonates with the work of Tomlinson and Murphy (2021), who assert that differentiated instruction allows teachers to modify content, process, and learning environments to accommodate student readiness, interest, and learning profiles. Additionally, Gardner's theory of Multiple Intelligences (Chen & Gardner, 2019) suggests that recognizing learners' unique capabilities fosters better motivation and performance. A culturally responsive lens was offered by Participant 5, who reflected on the value of integrating learners' lived experiences into instruction.

"Daanin mo sila sa kwento, kukwentuhan mo sila... doon mo mauunawaan kung ano yung depth learning ng pagkatao nila." (Take them through the story, tell them stories... that's when you'll understand the depth of learning in their personality).

This aligns with [Gay's \(2018\)](#) advocacy for culturally responsive pedagogy, which emphasizes connecting instruction to learners' cultural and social contexts to improve comprehension and participation. Teachers' awareness of students' personal narratives enriches lesson planning and promotes relevance in values education. Despite the positive impact of these approaches, challenges remain. Participant 4 pointed out a disconnect between knowledge acquisition and its application.

"Alam nila pag oral recitation, 100 sa exam, eh sa pag-apply lang talaga... Hindi mahirap magturo, mahirap magdisiplina." (They know that oral recitation is 100 on the exam, but it's really just about applying... It's not difficult to teach, it's difficult to discipline).

This suggests that students may demonstrate surface-level mastery through assessments but struggle to embody values in daily behavior. According to Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory (2015), application and reflection are essential for meaningful learning, particularly in GMRC, where behavioral manifestation is a key indicator of success. Participant 7 echoed this sentiment, emphasizing the need for learner articulation.

"Kailangan ay yung... yung para masabi muna nila 'Know what you learn.'" (What is needed... they can say it first, 'Know what you learn').

This reflects the value of metacognitive strategies in helping students internalize and reflect upon their learning ([Zohar & Barzilai, 2021](#)). Encouraging learners to verbalize their understanding enhances comprehension and promotes long-term retention of values. Thus, the educators' responses demonstrate an evolving shift toward more individualized and reflective teaching approaches in GMRC ([Delos Santos, 2024](#); [Bernabe & Dizon, 2022](#)). These practices not only foster inclusivity but also equip learners with the tools to apply moral principles in real-life contexts ([Gay, 2018](#)). Personalized learning, therefore, stands as a critical element in building both academic and ethical competence among elementary learners ([Chen & Gardner, 2019](#)).

Experiential and Active Learning Approaches

The second theme, Experiential and active learning approaches, has become an essential pedagogical strategy among Grade 4 educators in Bongabong North District. These strategies emphasize real-life applications, hands-on experiences, and student engagement, which are critical components for developing problem-solving, critical thinking, and value internalization ([Kolb, 2015](#)). Unlike passive learning, experiential learning fosters deeper understanding through exploration, reflection, and application.

Supporting this, [Smith \(2023\)](#) found that connecting theory to practice increases motivation and academic success. Participant 1 shared,

"Experiential kasi mas nararanasan nila kaysa yung nakikita lang nila" (Experiential because they experience more than what they just see), emphasizing the value of authentic experiences.

Multimedia tools also play a critical role. Participant 5 said,

"Nagpapanuod ako ng mga motivational videos, pero more on experiential-based ako eh" (I made them watch motivational videos, but I'm more experiential-based),

which reflects [Mayer's \(2017\)](#) multimedia learning theory that visual and auditory content enhance attention and memory. Similarly, Participant 8 shared,

"Madalas akong gumamit ng mga larawan at tunay na sitwasyon upang ipakita sa mga bata ang mabuting asal" (I often use pictures and real situations to show children good manners),

Applying [Bandura's \(2017\)](#) Social Learning Theory through modeling. Observation and imitation help learners understand and internalize proper behavior. External systems also influence discipline and moral development. Participant 4 observed,

"Kung nakikiayon ang gobyerno at pamilya sa tamang pagdedisiplina" (If the government and the family agree on proper discipline),

Highlighting the importance of aligned systems. This supports [Bronfenbrenner's \(2018\)](#) Ecological Systems Theory, which emphasizes the interconnected roles of family, school, and policy in child development. Storytelling and situational teaching further enrich values education. Participant 2 explained,

"You can use stories, situational... para madevelop ang kanilang discipline." (You can use stories, situational... to develop their discipline).

This aligns with [Bruner's \(2017\)](#) Constructivist Theory, which emphasizes learning through meaningful and real-life connections. Participant 6 confirmed,

"Merong kwento, storytelling. Oo, meron ding mga situational," (There are stories, storytelling. Yes, there are also situational ones),

Participant 7 added,

"Sa GMRC... minsan naman ay storytelling talaga kasi ang bata na ang nagbabasa" (At GMRC... sometimes it's really storytelling because the child is the one reading), highlighting learner participation.

Multimedia tools such as PowerPoint and video clips are frequently used to enhance experiential learning. Participant 6 shared,

"Nagpa-PowerPoint din kami... i-connect mo sa internet" (We also used PowerPoint... connect it to the internet)

While Participant 8 said, *"Madalas akong gumamit ng mga larawan,"* (I often use pictures),

Reinforcing the effectiveness of visual aids. According to [Mayer \(2020\)](#), multimedia enhances learning when delivered through both visual and auditory channels. [Clark and Lyons \(2019\)](#) and [Sweller \(2018\)](#) further emphasized that visual elements help simplify complex content, aiding internalization, especially for diverse learners.

As [Jonassen \(2017\)](#) concluded, integrating interactive and visual tools makes learning more inclusive and engaging. Therefore, experiential and active learning strategies through real-life

tasks, storytelling, visual aids, and multimedia offer an effective, holistic framework for teaching Good Manners and Right Conduct (Kolb, 2015; Gay, 2018). These approaches not only improve academic achievement but also nurture responsible, reflective individuals (Zohar & Barzilai, 2021; Chen & Gardner, 2019).

Teacher's Role in Learning

The third theme, Teacher's Role in Learning, emphasizes that teachers significantly influence students' values, attitudes, and behaviors (Lumpkin, 2017). As role models, educators are expected to embody the virtues they teach to create a respectful and empathetic classroom environment (Bandura, 2017; Djuwita, 2017). According to Social Learning Theory, students learn by observing the consistent actions of their teachers (Bandura, 2017). Therefore, leading by example remains one of the most effective strategies in teaching Good Manners and Right Conduct (Lumpkin, 2017). Participant 3 stated,

"Naniniwala ako na ang pinakamabisang paraan ng pagtuturo ng Good Manners and Right Conduct ay ang pagpapakita nito sa araw-araw... kailangang makita ng mga mag-aaral ang tamang asal sa kilos at pananalita ng kanilang guro." (I believe that the most effective way to teach Good Manners and Right Conduct is to demonstrate it every day... students need to see proper manners in their teacher's actions and words).

This supports Lumpkin's (2017) argument that educators' daily conduct significantly impacts students' character development. Participant 4 added,

"Madaming strategies, lalo na yung role model kuhang-kuha naman nga nila. Sa tunay na buhay pati ang halimbawa" (There are many strategies, especially the role model they take. In real life, even the example),

Highlighting that students naturally emulate the behaviors of teachers they admire (Wentzel, 2019). Through consistent modeling of respect, patience, and discipline, teachers reinforce positive classroom norms and behaviors. Participant 6 pointed to the use of DepEd-provided lesson exemplars,

"Meron naman kaming lesson exemplars... yun ang aming sinusunod." (We have lesson exemplars... that's what we follow).

This reflects Gagne's (2018) instructional design model, which emphasizes the importance of structured, objective-based lesson planning. Moreover, motivation plays a crucial role in sustaining student engagement. Participant 7 mentioned,

"Kailangan mong magmotivate lagi... tuloy-tuloy lang ang lesson" (You need to always motivate yourself... the lesson just keeps going),

This aligns with Ryan and Deci's (2020) Self-Determination Theory. When students are given meaningful, well-paced, and interactive lessons, their intrinsic motivation and participation improve (Ryan & Deci, 2020). By serving as role models, delivering structured content, and sustaining motivation, teachers create a dynamic and supportive environment for character development (Lumpkin, 2017). These practices not only facilitate academic success but also contribute to the holistic growth of students as respectful and responsible individuals (Elias et al.,

2015).

Lastly, Classroom management and discipline are essential in creating a positive and productive learning environment (Gregory & Ripski, 2021). Effective discipline strategies help regulate student behavior, but managing young learners remains challenging due to their ongoing development of self-regulation skills (Marzano & Simms, 2019). Teachers must balance enforcing rules with understanding students' developmental needs to maintain both discipline and their own well-being (Jones & Jones, 2020).

Participant 1 emphasized the impact of behavioral reinforcement,

"Effective naman, alam nyo yung domino effect, kapag nangyari na sa isang bata titigil na sya kasi nakita nya na yung nangyari dun sa isang bata." (It's effective, you know the domino effect, when it happens to one child, he'll stop because he's seen what happened to that child).

This supports Bandura's (2017) theory of observational learning, where students adjust their behavior by observing consequences experienced by their peers. However, Participant 6 acknowledged that complete control over classroom behavior is unrealistic.

"Nababawasan bawasan naman siguro pero yung totally na wala, siguro hindi... unawain mo nalang na sila ay mga bata din." (It might be reduced, but if it's completely gone, maybe not... just understand that they're children too).

This reflects the importance of empathy in discipline. Teachers must respond with patience and emotional regulation to create a positive and respectful classroom environment (Jones & Jones, 2020). Participants also raised concerns about external influences such as social media and policy restrictions, which affect students' attitudes toward discipline (Alonzo & Capulong, 2022). Participant 8 expressed frustration over the impact of media and child protection laws,

"Ang may malaking problema dyan sa GMRC... Hindi nagiging tama ang social media open lagi... kinasuhan ang guro... Ah ganun pala. Kaya yang behavior na yan binabago ng DepEd order... nakakaapekto yan sa lahat." (The big problem with GMRC is that social media is always open... the teacher was charged... Ah, that's how it is. That's why the DepEd order is changing that behavior... it affects everyone).

Social media significantly shapes students' perceptions of authority and discipline in the classroom (Livingstone et al., 2019). As students become more aware of their rights through the media, traditional disciplinary methods face increased resistance. Tan (2021) argues that these shifts necessitate restorative and positive approaches to discipline. Radesky et al. (2022) add that media overexposure can impair emotional regulation and behavior, reinforcing the need for proactive and compassionate classroom strategies.

CONCLUSIONS

The teaching of Good Manners and Right Conduct (GMRC) among Grade 4 teachers in Bongabong North District revealed challenges such as cultural diversity, social issues, learning difficulties, and limited resources. Despite these, teachers used strategies like storytelling, differentiated instruction, and experiential learning to engage students. Parental and community involvement played a vital role in reinforcing values beyond the classroom. While the teaching of GMRC proved meaningful, its success depended on the shared efforts of educators, families, and the

wider community.

These findings directly address the research questions by showing the challenges educators encounter and the strategies they employ. They also align with *Social Learning Theory*, as teachers model positive behavior, and with *Character Education Theory*, through explicit moral instruction. The study offers a novel contribution by extending these theoretical perspectives to the Philippine context of GMRC instruction at the Grade 4 level. In practical terms, the results suggest the need for structured GMRC teacher training, the development of localized teaching materials, parent workshops to reinforce values at home, and digital literacy programs to counteract negative media influences. Together, these insights strengthen both the theoretical foundations of values education and its application in classroom and community settings.

LIMITATION & FURTHER RESEARCH

The study is limited by its focus on Grade 4 teachers in a single district, which restricts the generalizability of the findings to other grade levels and contexts. Since it relied on teachers' perspectives, the research may not fully capture students' experiences or the broader impact of GMRC instruction on behavior and values formation. Further research should include the voices of learners and parents, explore comparative studies across different grade levels and districts, and assess the long-term effectiveness of strategies like storytelling and experiential learning in shaping values, particularly in culturally diverse and resource-limited settings. Future studies are also encouraged to adopt methodological innovations such as longitudinal qualitative designs to trace value formation over time, mixed-method triangulation to integrate student outcomes with teacher narratives, and the use of qualitative data analysis software like NVivo or Atlas.ti for more rigorous coding and theme refinement. Beyond classroom implications, future research should also investigate policy dimensions of GMRC implementation, including teacher training models and curriculum support mechanisms, to provide broader contributions to educational practice and values formation at the national level.

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