

Applying Deweyan Principles to Global Citizenship Education in a Rural Context

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Abstract: Global citizenship education (GCE) helps students conceptualize citizenship beyond national boundaries so they are capable of action in dealing with global issues like human rights and environmental sustainability. However, very little literature exists to assist rural teachers in implementing GCE as they face specific challenges due to the context of their schools. This paper identifies challenges rural educators encounter, such as conservative communities and geographic isolation, and details a Deweyan approach to GCE as a means to overcome these challenges. Specifically, we apply Dewey's democratic and learning theories to reconceptualize GCE around *student, home, and community life* to foster a more relevant curriculum that utilizes students' experiences. It emphasizes the utmost respect for local customs and culture by using them as sources of content for the curriculum while simultaneously extending citizenship thoughts and actions to the global arena.

Keywords: global citizenship education, rural education, social studies curriculum, John Dewey, community-based learning, democracy education

Introduction

Social studies teachers are charged with the challenging and often contentious task of citizenship education (Abowitz & Harnish, 2006; Evans, 2004). Globalization increases the complexity of this task, leading some people to reevaluate the traditional notion of nation-based citizenship as the dominant paradigm. Some scholars support global citizenship; however, others view this newer conceptualization as anti-American (Grygiel, 2013; Rapoport, 2009). In light of this controversy, today's social studies educators are making decisions, consciously or unconsciously, about global citizenship as they enact their curricula. Their work is of great moral importance as it influences how (or if) students will act regarding global concerns such as human rights and environmental sustainability.

Rural teachers face specific challenges when teaching for global citizenship. They often confront geographically isolated students and conservative communities that may oppose this non-traditional concept (Gimpel & Karnes, 2006; Knoke & Constance, 1977). We believe these challenges must be overcome to prepare rural citizens for participation in a wide range of political and social arenas, from the local to the global. To maintain a thriving democracy and a sustainable world, rural students must have access to a social studies curriculum that empowers them to become both local and global citizens. To accomplish this task, we offer a reconceptualized global citizenship education (GCE) framework specific to rural needs.

The GCE framework we propose applies Deweyan principles of democratic life and local experiences to overcome resistance, personal or cultural, to global citizenship. We desire teachers to be knowledgeable and respectful towards students' experiences and the needs of the community while reverent toward

rural values. Our framework integrates Deweyan principles into three categories: *Student Life*, *Home Life*, and *Community Life*. Each category links specific rural experiences with the aims of global citizenship. This Deweyan framework helps rural educators use students' lives, homes, and communities as starting points for a more relevant GCE, respecting the local while embracing the global. To apply this framework, the characteristics of global citizenship education must first be understood.

Understanding Global Citizenship Education

Adding global dimensions to citizenship education discourses increases the intensity of an already controversial field (Abowitz & Harnish, 2006). Some scholars do not support GCE, viewing it as a threat to national interests (Grygiel, 2013); and even amongst its proponents, unsettled conceptual issues and opposing aims make GCE contentious (Gaudelli, 2009; Oxley & Morris, 2013). While leading curriculum theorists note that conflicts can be healthy for curriculum development because they allow deeper understanding and growth in the field (Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery & Taubman, 1995, p. 867), this point becomes moot if practicing teachers do not adopt the new curriculum understandings. This is currently the case with GCE as few teachers implement global citizenship instruction (Rapoport, 2009). One way of addressing this concern is for scholars to provide practical guidance to social studies teachers so they can overcome their unique challenges (Shaver, 2001) and become more competent "gatekeepers" of the social studies curriculum (Thornton, 2005, p. 1).

Since multiple types of GCE exist, Gaudelli and Heilman (2009) reduced them into two groups – those congruent with democratic citizenship (cosmopolitan, environmental, and critical justice) and those less congruent (disciplinary, neoliberal, and human relations). Democratically-congruent forms of GCE share an emphasis on respecting human rights and revering places. Gaudelli and Heilman suggest that democratic types of GCE embody Deweyan ideals of pragmatism. Less democratically-congruent types of GCE fail to evoke egalitarian ideals. They lack civic aims, instead promoting a narrow focus on academic knowledge, vocations, or private interests. We believe the social relationships and place consciousness emphasized in democratically-congruent GCE approaches are necessary to link rural populations with global concerns.

Support for Deweyan GCE

Like Dewey, Gaudelli and Heilman (2009) acknowledge the reciprocal relationship of the individual and the society (p. 2674). In their article on geography education, they criticize didactic instruction that makes no attempts to connect the curriculum with students' lives. They recognize GCE is both local and global, saying "It is democratic and inclusive in its use of theory toward pragmatic democratic ends... GCE allows both connections across lines of cultural and social difference, and collective action dependent on local and global similarities" (p. 2666). Gaudelli and Heilman (2009) offer a Deweyan-supported GCE that links local and global through the study of geography. Building from their work, we undertake a further analysis of Dewey's ideas to construct a new conceptualization of GCE for one specific local context, rural areas.

In this paper, we propose that the challenges of rural education demand a place-conscious, democratic approach to GCE. Rural education adversities and rural political resistance to GCE can be overcome by making the global citizenship curriculum relevant through a refocus on students' individual experiences, home life, and community associations. In his *Pedagogical Creed*, Dewey (1897) recommended these

elements to make subject matter more meaningful. Our reconceptualization of GCE empowers and improves democratic relations in rural communities, brings to fruition rural-global connections, and establishes broader conceptualizations of citizenship for rural areas.

Understanding Rural Contexts

Prior to explaining how Deweyan principles can be applied to GCE in rural contexts, the term “rural” must be understood and the challenges of rural education must be delineated. This enables readers to understand our proposed framework in context. Rural is defined in many different ways by researchers (Cromartie & Bucholtz, 2008). Cromartie and Bucholtz (2008) suggest “the use of multiple definitions [by researchers] reflects the reality that rural and urban are multidimensional concepts, making clear-cut distinctions between the two difficult” (p. 29). Rural areas are often described as having small populations, as well as being geographically isolated and agrarian, but the reality of rural areas is much more complex (Cromartie & Bulchotz, 2008). In the United States, rural areas vary greatly by population density, community size, and proximity to metropolitan areas (National Center for Education Statistics, 2013). They are more likely to be homogeneous, but not always white (Johnson, 2006); and their ethnic and socioeconomic demographics change due to in- and out-migration that is often driven by job markets (Johnson, 2006). Internationally, rural places can differ greatly from one another. For example, rural in China may refer to isolated, self-sustaining mountain villages (Gao, 1999), while rural in sub-Saharan Africa may conjure images of de-agrarianization and the unraveling of peasant communities (Bryceson, 2000). The inter- and intra-diversity of rural areas makes research difficult, but nonetheless important because policy-makers and curriculum specialists across the globe cannot afford to misunderstand the complexity of rural situations. In this paper, we avoid one firm definition of rural. Our Deweyan GCE framework is general enough to be adapted across many unique rural contexts throughout the world.

The United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (2014) reports that 46% of the world’s population is rural, though this population is spread unequally among countries. Just two nations, India and China, account for 45% of the world’s total rural population. While detailing rural traits for each international area is impractical, rural education research across multiple countries shows some common characteristics. Rural areas often face poverty, remoteness, lack of economic diversity, and trouble recruiting high-quality teachers (Herzog & Pittman, 1995; Lock, 2008; Qian & Smyth, 2008). We theorize these challenges work against rural students’ understandings of social life beyond their communities and that this contributes to lower political efficacy as adults. For example, it is well documented in the United States that people in poverty and people with low levels of education, both common traits in rural areas, tend to vote less than others groups (McElwee, 2014). Additionally, small and remote communities may lack contact with diverse people therefore hindering rural people’s citizenship development (Pearse, 1989).

Many of the above stated rural challenges stem from large scale societal circumstances. Historic rural trends, like out-migration to urban areas, waning industry, and negative perceptions adversely impact education in those areas (Herzog & Pittman, 1995). While no research currently exists to assess the effects of these specific rural challenges on teaching social studies, we believe broader rural education research points to the likelihood that rural students receive a lower quality citizenship education. Research shows that rural schools have fewer course offerings, less technology, and poorer quality teachers (Bouck, 2004). Additionally, declining populations and low funding have led to school

consolidations in the United States (Purcel & Shackelford, 2005) and small school closures in Finland (Autti & Hyry-Beihammer, 2014) adversely impacting rural communities in those nations. Consolidations and closures remove community schools that would otherwise act as common gathering places and contributors to a shared public heritage – something beneficial to democratic life (Dewey, 1916/2008).

In addition to economic and demographic challenges, we suspect people's rural identities bear on teachers' willingness to implement GCE. This suspicion arises as rural people tend to possess strong place-based identities (Corbett, 2007) and hold conservative ideologies (Gimpel & Karnes, 2006). Rapoport (2010) noted that "small town mindsets" may be at odds with GCE (p. 186). In one part of rural Canada, students possessed a strong place-based identity that caused many to place less emphasis on academic success (Corbett, 2007). Since GCE asks students to take perspectives that differ from their ethnic, national, religious, and geographic understandings of life, it may be perceived as threatening to a student's self-identity and produce student resistance to the content or low motivation to learn. A strong sense-of-place may lead students and community members to decide global issues are a less important part of the curriculum as they first appear to have very little connection with daily activities in the community. Strong place-based identities can present challenges to citizenship educators, but they also offer the possibility to increase student interest by connecting local issues with the academic curriculum.

Research in rural social studies education is limited (Burton, Brown, & Johnson, 2013), but some studies point to specific challenges for citizenship educators. Feinberg and Doppin (2010) found that both urban and rural students tend to lack sophisticated understandings of citizenship. Students in their study viewed citizenship as *personally responsible* acts opposed to *participatory* or *justice-oriented* acts. *Personally responsible* acts fail to represent the full range of democratic values (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004). Journell's (2011) research on the political socialization further illuminates this deficiency. While not explicitly comparing urban and rural schools, the researcher observed social studies teachers in both types of schools instructing students for their presumed citizenship roles. Teachers in the study emphasized the political identities and attitudes most prevalent in the communities where their schools were embedded. We believe that while students need to know how to act as citizens within their lived settings, too narrowly-focused citizenship curricula devalue students' potential to understand and influence political events beyond the local; and it often fails to recognize connections between the local and global. A more relevant GCE would nurture dispositions in rural students for *multidimensional citizenship*, or citizenship that "requires citizens to address a series of interconnected dimensions of thought, belief and action." (Grossman, 2002, p. 38).

Other literature points to additional challenges for classroom teachers. For one, Walsh (2004) suggests that group homogeneity may foster distrust of people outside the group. While it is noteworthy that not all rural areas are homogeneous and research on the effects of homogeneous classrooms is inconclusive, some studies suggest insular attitudes in rural classrooms may be problematic for citizenship educators. Washington and Humphries (2011) identify the existence of overt racism in one rural classroom during student discussions of slavery. Lee (2006) found rural students displayed othering, or measuring global cultures based on United States culture, when participating in an international educational program. These cases call attention to the disconnection some rural students have with cultures and people that differ from their own. Teachers must be prepared to handle rural students' negative perceptions or stereotypes of others when teaching GCE.

Lastly, working at schools located in less populated communities represents life challenges for teachers. An increase in the visibility of teachers outside of school can result in increased interaction with parents and community members (Seifert & Simone, 1980). If GCE is seen as controversial by people outside of school, a dichotomy arises for social studies teachers where they seek acceptance within a tightknit community while simultaneously asking the youth to contemplate other cultures. Inquiry into the nature of other cultures could lead to students' rejection or reconstruction of previously-held family or community values. If not handled with care, this forces confrontations with rural traditionalism and family-first values. No research could be found that explores the tensions between forming rural and global citizenship identities, but a synthesis of the existing literature on rural schooling leads to our assumption that educating rural citizens for global citizenship is a difficult task in need of scholarly attention.

Establishing the Importance of Rural-Global Connections

Existing GCE scholarship does not focus on rural-specific contexts; however, the need is urgent. The National Council for the Social Studies situates global education as a vital component of the social studies curriculum (NCSS, 1982). The call for personal and political action beyond a nation's borders, coupled with the more recent College, Career, and Civic Framework for Social Studies State Standards (NCSS, 2013b), demands teachers be knowledgeable about global curricula and the aims of teaching for global civic life. We concede this is not an easy mission, especially for educators in rural areas. Guenther and Weible (1983) declared, "Rural isolation limits or eliminates various kinds of educational experiences which might foster a more global, multicultural perspective" (p. 60). They recommend including global and multicultural components into the social studies curriculum; however, they stop short of providing practical advice on how to teach for global citizenship in rural contexts. Also in the more than thirty years since they referenced the effects of rural isolation, new communication technologies, like social media and online video conferencing, gained common usage. These tools have the power to bring knowledge of global issues directly to rural people. New local-global connections heighten the need for rural social studies teachers to foster global citizenship dispositions in their students that show respect for human rights across cultures and responsibility in addressing global problems.

Also relevant to frame our reconceptualization of GCE is the shortcomings of current GCE practice pieces. The social studies literature abounds with exemplar instructional strategies and lesson plans for various types of GCE (Fry, Griffin, & Kirshner, 2012; Kirkwood-Tucker, 1999; Kirkwood-Tucker, 2004; Kirkwood-Tucker, 2012; Merryfield, 1998; Nganga, 2009); however, not all lessons are easily applicable to rural locales due to limited resources and small student populations. Of key interest to this study is the notion that little utilization is made of students' community experiences or personal interests as a doorway to relevancy and increased motivation in exemplary GCE lessons. Their cultural capital is not being used.

A Deweyan-infused Global Citizenship Education for Rural Areas

This section details specific Deweyan principles that enhance GCE for rural contexts. We organize Deweyan GCE around three categories: *Student Life*, *Home Life*, and *Community Life*. These categories enable the GCE curriculum to blossom through an enlarging horizon, starting with pupils' personal interests and experiences, then recognizing and respecting home life as a primary agent of a student's

socialization, and finally utilizing life in the local community. This framework considers that human interactions across these three areas provide complex social and moral codes and a distinct knowledge base that cultivates a person’s disposition and behavior. Schools that serve rural communities can increase democratic relationships to create shared-understandings of local-global issues and how the local populace can participate beyond their geographic limitations. When applied to GCE in rural areas this generates a curriculum that rethinks community investments, from *local to global*. Also, this better fulfills the Civic Mission of the Schools where community participation, thoughtfulness, political action, and virtuous citizenship are prized (NCSS, 2013a). See Table 1 below for an overview of the key principles of Deweyan GCE for rural contexts.

Table 1 Deweyan GCE in Rural Contexts

Category	Key Deweyan Principles for Rural Contexts	Questions to Consider for Curriculum Development
<i>Student Life</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The child is an essential part of curriculum. • Teachers should utilize subject matter familiar to the students. • Look to students’ daily lives to incorporate their interests and life experiences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the GCE curriculum consider rural students’ interests, aspirations, and desires within the community context? • Does it challenge students with perspective-taking to overcome prejudices, racism, and xenophobia? • Does it ask students to share their life experiences with others, within and across cultures? • Does it recognize that despite appearances rural students are not always academically, culturally, and ideologically homogeneous?
<i>Home Life</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not impose a pre-decided moral code. • Deepen and extend values bound up in home life. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the GCE curriculum honor local community culture and family values? • Does it seek active participation from parents and other relatives? • Does it foster shared experiences that lead toward positive growth for all?
<i>Community Life</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilize physical, historical, economic, and occupational conditions of the local community. • Focus on human mutuality within and across cultures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the GCE curriculum make global concerns relevant to the local community or place the local community as a crucial element of the global? • Does it make use of community groups as a resource to connect to the greater world? • Does it foster group associations that will improve the community while simultaneously seeking to improve the world?

Student Life

Dewey was explicit that the child is an essential part of the curriculum (Dewey, 1902). Subject matter should stem from the passions and impulses of students (Dewey, 1916/2008). Motivation to learn increases when new experiences are crafted that utilize familiar subject matter. Dewey (1938) wrote, "It thus becomes the office of the educator to select those things within the range of existing experience that have the promise and potentiality of presenting new problems which by stimulating new ways of observation and judgment will expand the area of further experiences" (p. 75). Students make sense of new experiences based on their prior knowledge. This act of reflection, or what Dewey calls judgment, helps students form a broader knowledge base for future experiences. This is the essence of student growth.

When applied to GCE in rural contexts, students' life experiences become the building blocks for a relevant curriculum. Teachers choose pertinent GCE content and guide students through new experiences that foster progress towards global citizenship objectives. The Deweyan principle of growth through experiences is valuable to rural GCE because it recognizes the child's unique knowledge, values, and interests; and it provides a more approachable educative experience. Also, Dewey realized that positive growth could come through "play" as it indirectly formulates the dispositions of the young (Dewey, 1916/2008). Rural teachers should look to their students' daily lives for opportunities to take advantage of play, interests, and relevant life experiences.

Democracy is about how conclusions are made by individual people concerning public issues. Dewey (1930/2010c) thought that the cardinal objective of schooling was to develop the desire and ability for "democratic social cooperation" (p. 247); therefore, democratic GCE requires the ability to learn from and with one another. Ethnically and ideologically homogeneous rural classrooms, when encountered, must be treated to a variety of perspectives on issues of global concerns. Discussion enables classroom opportunities to evaluate students' thoughts on these issues. Ideally, these conversations would move from the classroom to the dining room, and then to the community, intermixing multiple perspectives and value systems. As ethical stances on issues are refined, so are students' "sympathetic imagination(s)" (Dewey, 1893/2010b, p. 48). Sympathetic imagination denotes a perspective-consciousness that makes citizens ethically competent in decision-making and action on political and social issues, both local and global. Dewey desired students to utilize sympathetic imaginations in their future relationships and decisions.

Home Life

Students' home lives act as key agents of their socialization. In rural areas, the family relationships and teaching present in students' homes tend to be highly regarded. Teachers should respect students' homes as powerful identity builders and recognize that families instill values and knowledge that stem from intergenerational heritages and complex, unique histories. Dewey (1897) wrote that schools should deepen and extend the values of students' home lives. While social studies curricula, like GCE, can cause cognitive dissonance in students, it is not wise for teachers to aggressively or pretentiously challenge family values. Instead, teachers should strive for harmony between the values of global citizenship and the values of rural families. This can be done through the incorporation of the home life into the GCE curriculum and freer and fuller communication between schools and families. However, as noted in the literature (Washington & Humphries, 2011), when students display racist or anti-

democratic values, whether they stem from a child's home life or not, teachers must be prepared to intervene and challenge students' perspectives.

It is unrealistic to think that families and teachers will always agree on educational aims and the underlying morality of a curriculum. This is particularly true in GCE. Teaching global citizenship in rural areas may contradict family values or conservative expectations for the social studies curriculum. This issue can be reconciled through dialogue. As professional educators, the responsibility to convey rationales for the curriculum falls on teachers. Teachers must explain to families that GCE does not impose external values on students. Instead, the curriculum encourages both local and global perspective-taking and public evaluation of multiple perspectives. Rural social studies classrooms should be havens of respect that purposely seek to incorporate local attitudes and the construction of shared interests.

Dewey recognized that all education was moral in nature. He did not believe in the imposition of a pre-decided moral code. He advocated for a morality fostered through social interaction that looked to the consequences of human action for moral meaning (Simpson & Stack, 2010). His ultimate faith was in the human capacity for people to be democratic in their thoughts and actions. This conviction must be brought into the teaching of GCE in rural contexts to achieve a reconciliation of competing aims. Home life and family relationships should be incorporated into democratic educational processes. Dewey (1916/2008) said democracy is "a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience" (p. 80). Teachers of democratically-congruent GCE should increase opportunities for community interactions between many individuals, including parents, grandparents, and other relatives and their contact with students, school personal, and community groups at large. Fostering shared knowledge about global concerns is a critical goal. Families' heritages are important in establishing student identities and should be used as stepping stones into exploring the heritages of other cultures.

Incorporation of local home life into the GCE curriculum strengthens democratic education and stymies indoctrinatory pedagogies. Reconstructionist goals of GCE, to purposely make students more globally-minded and cosmopolitan, must be addressed through a Deweyan vision of democratic reflection and decision making. Communication, freedom of intelligence, and contemplative inquiry are a must. Adversarial relationships between students, families, and teachers are poisonous to education and likely to thwart any positive outcomes of the curriculum. Rural teachers should assist families in joining the educational process by opening lines of communication and with them the power of developing social dispositions and communal knowledge. Lastly, teachers should assist families in seeing their role as a vital institution in the local community and in the greater world.

Community Life

A community acts as a microcosm of democracy. It is through communities that citizens construct common interests and group associations that are crucial to the democratic way of life. Rural GCE must strive to connect the culture, customs, careers, and history of the local community to the global community. Dewey (1938) said, "the teacher should become intimately acquainted with the conditions of the local community, physical, historical, economic, occupational, etc., in order to utilize them as educational resources" (p. 40). Connecting students to community life stimulates political and social efficacy. If the rural school acts as a living model of democracy, then its outreach and connection with the local community will be recognized as a necessity to education itself.

Dewey's emphasis on democratic associations is synonymous with equality and mutuality within community – large and small, local and global. Dewey (1916/2008) believed democracy was best accomplished through an “equal opportunity of all members of society to receive and to take from others” (p. 78). A wide range of collective activities and experiences encourage people to learn from one another and foster societal improvements. Teachers play a crucial role in this task. They can instill students with dispositions for “fuller, freer, and more fruitful associations of all human beings with one another” (p. 89). GCE in rural areas must establish this interchange, so rural experiences and values become interlaced with desires for local and global action. GCE must be cognizant and reverent of the local culture in which schools are embedded especially when teaching for critical conceptions of GCE. One example of a critical conception is Merryfield and Subedi's (2006) desire for students to contest ethnocentrism and national superiority. Since conservatism tends to dominate rural areas, successful global citizenship educators must be prepared to handle backlash if the curricula is perceived as anti-American or anti-patriotic. Rural classrooms provide a public space to evaluate the worthiness of critical approaches to GCE, but to do so teachers should pursue effective group and community relationships. Dewey's notion of human mutuality can be used for guidance through this delicate dilemma.

Writing about human mutuality and overcoming international animosity, Dewey (1916/2008) said, “The emphasis must be put upon whatever binds people together in cooperative human pursuits and results, apart from geographical limitations” (p. 89). Global citizenship educators should emphasize common human experiences across national boundaries to make a less threatening curriculum that can still lead to critical epiphanies such as a loss of ethnocentrism or increased perspective-taking of other nationalities.

World events influence community life in rural America. The immigrant past of many families in the U.S. is proof alone. Dewey (1916/2010a) was well aware of this as he said, “the peculiarity of our nationalism is its internationalism” (p. 237). Personal connections with other global cultures can be used as a springboard into GCE as it positions the unique makeup of the community as a globally-infused locale. Ultimately, GCE should assist the community in thinking and acting beyond its geographic limitations. Historical perspectives on community formation through internal migration and immigration foster a better sense-of-place, something that is valued in rural America (Corbett, 2007).

GCE should make relevant local occupations and labor conditions. Rural jobs and the local labor economy influence students' prior knowledge, views, and dispositions. Dewey (1916/2008) believed education should acknowledge the “full intellectual and social meaning of a vocation” to ensure workers do not become “blindly subject to a fate imposed upon them” (p. 275). In today's world, local occupations often relate to the global marketplace. Some traditional rural jobs (in mining, lumber, and agriculture) can be researched for their roles in fulfilling the world's needs. Teachers can also help students see how their local jobs compare to similar positions in others areas across the globe and how globalization affects rural jobs and markets. Also, if a rural community experiences high levels of poverty, waning industries, and out-migration due to work shortages then teachers should strive to make connection to the global causes and effects of such plights. These practices align with the Deweyan commitment to a well-rounded, reflective individual regardless of his or her future vocation. In the end, democracy and global political efficacy are fulfilled by human relationships as they are put into action at the community level.

Conclusion

GCE in rural contexts presents unique challenges to teachers, including conservative ideologies and geographically isolated communities; but rural contexts also provide enhanced educational possibilities, like intimate family relationships and community associations. Applying Deweyan democratic principles to GCE makes the most of these possibilities by providing a literature-backed framework to bridge local-global divisions and empowering rural citizens to think globally while acting locally. Teaching global citizenship in a rural-sensitive manner creates a more approachable and meaningful curriculum. Rural teachers can employ this framework to construct powerful classroom experiences in global citizenship.

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