

## Glocalization as an Alternative to Internationalization in Higher Education: Embedding Positive Glocal Learning Perspectives

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The notion of internationalization in higher education is understood as the recruitment of international students, marketing of academic programs and courses, and teaching English as a Second Language to student cohorts from Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Various models of internationalization (Knight, 2004, 2006; Leask, 2009; Pimpa, 2009; Welikala, 2011) have been explored and promoted in Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia, and New Zealand. Often, as noted in the literature, these models emphasize the acculturation of international students into the host country culture rather than a respectful exchange of academic and cultural knowledge and ideas. The central thesis of this critical reflective discussion paper is that *glocalization* in higher education is an appropriate alternative to internationalization. Glocalization advocates a positive learning experience and encourages the enhancement of learners' *glocal* experience through a critical academic and cultural exchange of global and local socio-economic and political issues. Instructional strategies supporting glocalised learning curricula are recommended. The glocalization pedagogical framework for higher education, introduced in this paper, embraces the principles of social responsibility and justice with a firm commitment to sustainable futures for local and global societies.

Preparing future graduates for their place in a fast evolving 21st century society and global economy raises a number of challenges and possibilities. Higher education is struggling to keep up with the demands of changing world demographics (Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, 2009, 2011) along with the rapid rate of new communication technology diffusion and a volatile political economy. The co-authors of this paper collaborated in a workshop during International Education Week at Dalhousie University in November 2011 on the integration of *glocal* perspectives in teaching and learning. As an outcome of that collaboration, this paper presents the critical reflective perspectives of an educational development consultant and a student assistant in the international office on the merits of *glocalization* in higher education as opposed to existing models of internationalization. The authors submit this paper as a contribution to the ongoing dialogue of inclusive teaching and learning in diverse higher education contexts. Further, they want to introduce glocalization as an alternative paradigm to the deficit model of internationalization in higher education, thus promoting glocalization as a respectful and appropriate response to the needs of a changing higher education demographic. Welikala (2011) asserts that the internationalization paradigm frames the international student as "deficit, obedient, passive, lacking autonomy and unable to engage in critical argumentative processes" (p. 15-16). Most importantly, the authors of this paper reject the deficit model of internationalization. They assert that glocalization can arrest the impact of local and global socio-economic and political concerns through dialogue and action, thereby creating an exceptional and powerful learning experience for local and global learning communities.

Glocalization empowers and encourages all stakeholders to work harmoniously toward a sustainable future. This critical reflective discussion paper subscribes to scholarship as an inquiry-based, reflective perspective on the delivery of higher education teaching and learning practice. It offers instructional strategies that are practical and adaptable to varying contexts.

The authors endorse the positive, enriching features of glocalization and recommend the use of appropriate instructional strategies and resources to embed glocalization in higher education.

### Clarification of Terminology

#### Glocal, Glocalization, and Glocalized

The paper introduces a range of terms that may be unfamiliar to readers in the higher education pedagogical context so in this section the terms are explained as they shall be used in the paper. *Glocal* and *glocalization* refer to the merger of global and local perspectives on the socio-economic and political impact of all phenomenon that affects local and global communities. *Glocalized* learning and teaching refers to the curricula consideration and pedagogical framing of local and global community connectedness in relation to social responsibility, justice and sustainability. The authors support Boyd's (2006) and Khondker's (2004) assertion that glocalization is a good description of blending and connecting local and global contexts while maintaining the significant contributions of the different cultural communities and contexts. The terms glocal and glocalization are not new and have mainly been associated with the business, technology, and sociology disciplines. There are multiple descriptions

and definitions of the terms as they apply to non-higher education frameworks; however, they have not been applied to the pedagogical framework within higher education. Boyd's and Khondker's description of glocalization is our point of reference in this paper, framing it within the curriculum core of the higher education context as a suitable alternative to internationalization. Boyd (2006) explains the term glocalization as connecting "the global and local together" (para. 4) and a blend of local and global. Khondker (2004) describes glocalization as similar to globalization and suggests that its strong attraction is that it erases the fear of difference but not the differences. The latter is one of the desired goals of glocalization in higher education.

### Third Culture and Global Community Building

Glocalization is underpinned by the notion of *third culture* building in which culturally different communities draw on their strength to form a respectful, engaging, and inspiring *third culture space*. The third culture space is where diverse cultural communities meet and make connections through dialogue, negotiation, and meaningful engagement. According to Lee (2003, as cited in Patel, Li, & Sooknanan, 2011), the third culture building model is "expansive, responsive, future-oriented and open ended with growth potential" (p. 9). Furthermore, third culture building supports *global community building* which endorses the integration of "acceptable cultural norms and values in a meaningful and respectful way" (Patel et al., 2011, p. 6).

### Cultural Wealth, Cultural Authenticity, Cultural Relativism, and Ethnocentrism

Glocalization embraces *third culture building* thereby promoting global community building. In third culture building there is an exchange of *cultural wealth* (i.e., "cultural ideas, knowledge, stories, approaches to the cultivation of food, and so on" [Patel et al., 2011, p. 12]) and *cultural authenticity*. According to Mo and Shen (2003), cultural authenticity is "not just accuracy or the avoidance of stereotypes, but involves cultural values, facts, and attitudes that members of the culture as a whole consider worthy of acceptance and belief" (p. 10). Furthermore, glocalization challenges the cultural relativist framework of accommodation and tolerance that underpins internationalization. Cultural relativism, defined as a cognitive tool that "rejects the notion that any culture, including our own, possesses a set of absolute standards by which all other cultures can be judged" (Ferraro & Andreatta, 2010, p. 16), responds critically to the ethnocentric and Western-centric approaches of internationalization. The authors

acknowledge that cultural relativism is a contested paradigm (Herskovits, 1972; Li, 2007; Park, 2011; Zechenter, 1997) and claim that glocalization progresses the pedagogical impact of learning beyond cultural relativism and moves the dialogue toward a deeper level of respectful engagement among cultures. Glocalization also rejects *ethnocentrism* that has long promoted the dominant worldview of judging other cultural communities through the parochial, tinted lens of one's own cultural standpoint. Within the context of this paper, ethnocentrism is defined as "the strong tendency to use one's own group's standards as the standard when viewing other groups, to place one's group at the top of a hierarchy and to rank all others as lower" (Berry, Poortinga, Segall, & Dasen, 2002, p. 8). Sumner (197) notes, "one's own group becomes the center of everything, and all others are scaled and rated with reference to it" (p. 13). In contrast to ethnocentric norms that favor the dominant worldview, glocalization embraces a multiperspective worldview that focuses on the positive contributions and the beneficial attributes of participating cultures, without imposition on and threat to cultural values and beliefs. Glocalization favors Welikala's (2011) notion of the "*multiperspective curriculum* to represent the curriculum in the 21st century Universities" (p. 24). In challenging and rejecting cultural relativist and ethnocentric perspectives, glocalization forces learners and teachers to level the playing field on the basis of mutual respect and shared responsibility and accountability for actions and non-actions that will impact on local and global societies as a whole. This means that we confront our local and global realities or encounter the world in relation to our individual and collective sustainable futures. Welikala (2011) suggests that the manner in which we "encounter the world in the classroom" (p. 25) can be labeled the *pedagogy of encounter*.

### Glocalization: Holistic Framework for Higher Education

The glocalization of higher education, as opposed to dated, negative, and deficit models of internationalization (Absalom & Vadura, 2006; Pimpa, 2009; Welikala, 2011) is a holistic perspective that advocates for the removal of ethno-centric and culturally relativist political agendas in higher education. It promotes and encourages third culture building thus respecting the cultural contributions of diverse cultures. The notion of third culture building subscribes to the respectful exchange of the cultural wealth of all cultures leveraged as common ground for building community, thus supporting the holistic framework of glocalization (Boyd, 2006; Khondker, 2004). Glocalization introduces a socially just and responsible ethics framework that situates learning and

teaching within a respectful, equitable and inclusive learning space. It distances itself from the internationalization curriculum that is “innately hegemonic” (Bates, as cited in Welikala, 2011, p. 13). Embedding a glocal perspective across the higher education curriculum encourages teachers and learners to explore local and global perspectives that will enrich learning experience in a positive way.

Higher education must take responsibility for providing potential graduates with opportunities to become active citizens in a turbulent global economy and must be held accountable for their actions. A commitment to social responsibility to the rapidly growing diverse populations of McLuhan’s (1962) “global village” in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is an imperative. In Canada and Australia, graduate attributes discourse has begun to identify effective strategies for preparing graduates for their future roles as professionals in local and global environments. Higher education discourse focuses on life skills, employability, and civil responsibility as desirable graduate attributes (Kreber, 2008). These attributes overlap with desired goals for educating global citizens who will be intellectually and professionally qualified; individuals who possess good interpersonal skills and are prepared to meet the diverse range of “wants” of the ever evolving global economy and changing global demographics. The emphasis is on developing professionals who are flexible and responsive to local and global concerns along with the changing demands of socio-economic trends with commitment to the principles of social responsibility and justice.

The next section gives an overview of glocal perspectives and of glocalization which frames the authors’ contention of a socially responsible, just and inclusive framework for higher education in comparison to the framework of internationalization. The past and current internationalization models (Knight, 2004, 2006; Pimpa, 2009; Welikala, 2011) that were endorsed as a favorable strategic goal of higher education institutions in Canada, Australia and the United Kingdom, advocate for the acculturation and assimilation of international students into the host country cultures. Welikala’s (2011) study found that internationalization favored “pedagogic approaches which emphasize ethnocentric-Western-didacticism encouraging assimilation and socialization of international learners to the learning approaches and theoretical perspectives advocated by the host university” (p. 15). Such models continue to reflect a colonial mindset that imposes the host country’s culture (e.g., Western-centric perspective). The internationalization model removes responsibility from the local or domestic community to engage in a mutually respectful exchange of the cultural wealth of the host country with that of the international cohorts.

*Local or domestic* in the context of this paper refers to the citizenship population of the host country. Internationalization goals have been interpreted differently and may sometimes remain disguised under various banners such as multiculturalism and cultural diversity, leaning strongly toward cultural relativism. Cultural relativism remains a contentious issue in various contexts.

### **Overview of the Glocalization Pedagogical Framework**

Together, glocal and glocalization perspectives reinforce the notion that alternative viewpoints, on local and global socio-economic and political concerns are important, if respectfully exchanged. Within the higher education context, glocalization refers to the respectful exchange of cultural wealth among learners and teachers to inform and enhance higher education pedagogical practice. The importance of embedding a critical reflective examination of socio-economic and political concerns within a glocalization framework to assess its collective and individual impact on local and global learning communities, cannot be ignored.

Learning is effective when contextualized within the local context because that context frames the learner’s experience and lived reality. The focus in glocalized teaching and learning is a critical reflection and understanding of important and relevant connections between the local and global perspectives of learners. Learners bring to the third culture space their diverse cultural worldviews but it is through the respectful exchange of their cultural wealth that they will map their shared futures. Important to this perspective is the supposition that the two communities “may be defined by their histories but that they are bound by their destinies” (Patel, Sooknanan, Rampersad, & Mundkur, 2012, p. 23). Glocalization recognizes the need to continue to identify and expand the building blocks of a glocal community network. This network embraces global community building within a third culture development model. Third culture building does not reduce and subjugate one culture or make it “dominant over another” (Lee, 2003, p. 10). Within glocalized discourse, individuals and groups critically reflect upon socio-economic and political concerns from their local perspectives while taking into consideration the global ramifications. Hence, responses to the socio-economic and political strife must be beneficial to the glocal community, without a selfish obsession to benefit one more than the other. Engaging glocal perspectives and glocalized responses among learners will safeguard against hegemonic tendencies. One effective strategy in glocalized learning spaces is storytelling. In glocalization dialogue, an increased number of opportunities for storytelling are

embedded within the curriculum acting as a powerful medium for engaging learners in community building. Critical self-reflection and sharing of cultural values and beliefs aligned to religion, history and family that are held sacred by local and global communities binding them at the deep structure level of intercultural communication (Samovar & Porter, 2004) create open learning spaces in a glocalized classroom. Critical sharing in a respectful learning space compels all stakeholders to remain vigilant in holding each other accountable and responsible.

### **Glocalization: Removing Ethnocentrism in the Classroom**

The adoption of a glocal approach to education has the potential to eliminate negative and undesirable aspects bred by the internationalization of curriculum discourse. To a great extent, internationalization discourse has overshadowed perceptions of international student contributions to glocal learning. Internationalization is premised on the practice of one set of assumptions about international students. The internationalization of the curriculum literature (Welikala, 2011) is exhaustive in its explicit focus on issues related to English language proficiency, accents, international student enrollments, and deficit models of internationalization. Higher education standards of assessment and evaluations are set in line with dominant culture norms with assessment and evaluations designed within the Western-centric paradigm and knowledge base. Dichotomized between the international student group and the domestic student group, the deficit model of internationalization regards international students as less able to contribute to the learning environment because of their English language proficiency levels. A review of the literature of models of internationalization in Canada, Australia, and the United Kingdom, for example, strongly suggest that these models subscribe to the ethnocentric worldview. As noted in Welikala (2011), internationalization upholds the dominant cultures' ideology and utilizes the stereotypical behaviors of less dominant (i.e., minority) cultures to frame its strategic hegemonic agendas through negative shaping of minority cultures.

In this way, the social mores of the dominant cultures become the norm against which the values and attributes of other cultures are judged. The stereotypical behaviors of less dominant cultures are used to judge them as inadequate, inefficient, and incompetent allowing these stereotypes to become the basis of assumptions made about their cultural practices. Perpetuating stereotypes in various ways contributes to prejudicial attitudes and discriminatory practices. From an international student assistant perspective, examples of the perpetuation of stereotypes and stereotypical

behaviors are frequently noted in the classroom and remain uncontested, often because of the power differentials between learner and teacher. For example, a professor who wants to recall the name of Chinese cuisine calls upon a student who is identified as being of Chinese descent and asks the student to name the dish. Another professor, when referring to Thailand, insinuates that a large proportion of the Thai population is prostitute. These stereotypical behaviors not only gravely harm communication on an intercultural level, but they devalue the contributions of diverse cultures and desecrate their deeply held beliefs and values.

The aforementioned deficit model of internationalization established a negative pedagogical framework that was immersed in ethnocentrism thereby establishing the visible and invisible barriers to equitable and inclusive reciprocal engagement among learners and teachers. Glocalization acknowledges, appreciates, and embraces cultural authenticity based on what is acceptable and valued in a culture, creating a conducive, safe learning space. Discussion on glocalization as a new way of thinking about culture is discussed next with reference to its move beyond cultural relativism.

### **Moving Beyond Cultural Relativism**

From the authors' perspective, glocalization of teaching and learning is useful in fostering a learning environment that moves beyond cultural relativism. Glocalization demands that host country and international community cohorts refrain from the multicultural and cultural diversity rhetoric of awareness, reflection, accommodation, tolerance, and support as desirable goals for the co-existence of diverse cultures on university campuses. It encourages the expressed commitment to engagement and action for change among glocal communities. Various models of internationalization lean strongly toward cultural relativism in their application, through their focus on an assimilation of foreign cultures within the host culture. Contrary to the belief that cultural relativism is a desirable alternative to ethnocentrism, cultural relativism also threatens the development of a safe learning classroom because it promotes an accommodation and tolerance stance. Accommodation and tolerance is firmly entrenched in colonial, oppressive regimes as strategies to manage difference.

Cultural relativist arguments may purport that they hold positive, inclusive and open-minded attitudes toward other cultures; however their willingness to recognize other cultures as unique and different may disguise negative, exclusive, and close-minded attitudes. Herskovits (1972) explains that there is nothing wrong with feeling like one's own way is preferred to all others for "it characterizes the way most

individuals feel about their own cultures, whether or not they verbalize their feeling” (p. 21), but this attitude becomes dangerous when “a more powerful group not only imposes its rule on another, but actively depreciates the things they hold to be of value” (p. 103). It is when the cultural wealth of other cultures becomes depreciated that their cultural legacy is threatened. The discussion that follows explores effective and creative strategies that may be useful in facilitating respectful engagement between host (i.e., dominant) cultures and international (i.e., minority) cultures.

### **The Heuristic Dimension of Glocalization**

As our global and local experiences fuse together in the open spaces of glocalized learning, it is important for teachers to work within a framework that endorses acceptable norms of engagement: respect and dignity for all, meta-cultural sensitivity, critical self-reflection, justice, inclusivity, diversity, and commitment to action for change. Within this framework, teachers must also be cognizant of the effect of the teaching methods they use, overt and covert messages that are delivered, and their powerful influence on learners. Glocalization of education takes into account local and global contexts of intercultural processes and “is heuristic to push beyond the global/local binary” (Pullen, Gitsaki, & Baguley, 2010, p. 42). It allows learners to inquire, discover, and to learn from their individual and collective experience and context in public learning spaces, where possible. In these ways, glocalization subscribes to Boyer’s (1990) scholarship model. The heuristic dimension is one of the underlying strengths of glocalization. Learners and teachers are challenged to seek creative solutions through exploration and discovery that are context driven instead of blindly subscribing to the dogma of best practice and good teaching and learning (Patel, 2012). Unlike the rhetoric and exhausted notion of exemplifying and reiterating best practices, glocal learning inspires creative and innovative ways of practice and engagement in shared glocal spaces. The following section outlines various curricula considerations and challenges in the implementation of glocalization in higher education.

### **Curricula Considerations in Glocalization**

#### **Why Glocalize the Curriculum?**

At the outset, teachers will have to establish a rationale for glocalization. Next, the teacher must focus on curricula considerations that include decision-making about supportive activities, enabling assessment tasks, and useful resources. The design of the glocalized learning experience will be diverse: some teachers are passionate about infusing glocalization across the

curriculum and others are happy to intersperse the glocalized approach within their mainstream teaching, as needed. Curricula considerations require decisions to be made about appropriate glocalization interventions during the semester, and their alignment to activities and assessment. An important prerequisite for glocalization is to establish acceptable norms of engagement as discussed under the recommendations section.

### **Designing Glocalized Learning Activities, Assessments, and Resources**

In an effort to design glocalized learning effectively, it is the activity selection, assessment design, and resources component that will prove challenging. The challenge is to maintain inclusivity, diversity and equity in the activities selected, the design of assessment, and in access to resources. Selected activities must provide local and global learners an opportunity to contribute and share their respective and collective glocalized perspectives. Assessment must incorporate a broad range of inclusive criteria that recognizes and rewards diverse perspectives. The challenge with accessing resources (e.g., people, media, and events) to stimulate glocal discussions is in utilizing the information communication technologies in the classroom without infringing laws that govern and regulate their use.

### **Integration of Glocal Perspectives**

Glocal perspectives can be integrated through discussions that focus on local socio-economic and political concerns. Within the context of this paper, events in Canada during 2011-2012 are cited under recommendations to illustrate how such examples may be used, keeping in mind the limitations of media laws as noted below.

Media provide endless possibilities for enhancing teaching and learning effectiveness in a glocal perspective approach but they are also fraught with challenges. Using the media (television, Internet, YouTube, newspaper, university Web news) has exciting possibilities in bringing history, current affairs and future concerns into perspective. Media can serve as a catalyst for creating a learning environment that vividly captures “reality” (from a media perspective). The challenges and limitations that are inherent in using the media include the laws that govern the use of media (i.e., copyright laws) to the laws that govern the ownership of media (i.e., intellectual property rights). One has to weave through a web of complex laws to ensure that none are infringed in bringing “media-reality” to learners. However, learners have to critically reflect upon media images, to assess these against their

own realities, to make meaning about truth and fiction. Over and above the regulations that govern media use are matters related to ownership of media and intellectual property, the intended messages and the hegemony of cultural bias and ethnocentrism. Against the background of the foregoing discussion of the glocalization framework, the paper concludes with recommendations to embed glocalization across the curriculum.

### **Recommendations to Embed Glocalized Learning Across the Curriculum**

Pedagogical frameworks in higher education provide multiple opportunities (Absalom & Vadura, 2006; Pimpa, 2009; Welikala, 2011) to increase glocalized learning. Students from all geographical regions welcome opportunities to engage in activities that invite them to share their glocal experiences. Glocalization promotes glocalized learning design that brings all students into the third culture learning space to explore and negotiate their diverse viewpoints and knowledge. Below, the authors outline their recommended instructional strategies from their combined educational development and international student assistant perspectives. The recommendations may not be innovative in themselves however it is the glocalization pedagogical framework that will make the difference. Diverse communities will respond to their contexts, as relevant and necessary, with particular regard to humanness, equity and sustainability.

### **Norms of Engagement**

Respectful engagement is a pre-requisite when negotiating values and beliefs that are firmly embedded within the deep cultural structures (e.g., history, religion, and family) of all communities, as noted earlier in the discussion. Clearly articulated norms of engagement or “ground rules” to support glocalized learning are an imperative (e.g., respect, fairness, confidentiality, trust, and “voice” are important). The opportunity to explore glocalized dialogue in an environment that is respectful and welcoming of difference, of critical views, and fair practice is vital within the glocalization pedagogical framework.

### **Identify Interdisciplinary Concepts in the Current Media**

When discipline-specific and interdisciplinary concepts have been identified, various activities can be organized around the concepts. The glocalized curricula will require flexibility in design and content so that current socio-economic and political events can be gradually embedded, reviewed, and refreshed on an

ongoing basis. Flexibility also means that learners and teachers will share learning spaces to propose ideas that are different and confronting at deep cultural levels. Videoconferences can be organized with pre-and-post videoconference assignments strategically integrated in the curriculum. Another recommended pedagogical resource that can be integrated into the glocalized curriculum is the *Facing History and Ourselves* website (<http://www.facing.org/aboutus>). Other examples of topics based on media events that were identified during the International Education discussion forum in November 2011 are: The First Nations Residential Schools Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearings in Halifax, Nova Scotia; the Occupy Protest Movement that began in Wall Street to protest the imbalance in the national and global economy; and the “Arab Spring” uprisings in the name of democracy that affected local and global communities in unimagined ways.

### **Study Abroad and Student Exchange Programs**

Study abroad and student exchange programs have been part of the internationalization models over the decades however within glocalization is embedded a commitment to resources (human and financial), social responsibility budgets, and capacity building. Teachers and learners must explore creative ways in which to participate and promote study abroad and student exchange programs. One example from the business discipline is a class assignment that focused on the countries to which classmates were going on a study abroad program. All students were assigned a research, report and presentation task that investigated various aspects of the socio-economic and political landscape of the regions to which their peers were going. Another approach to support student exchange is to encourage all students to participate in short volunteer programs (five to 10 days) within their local cities where they live among diverse communities. Students can provide a service to the community and report on the benefits and challenges of that experience. In all instances, these assignments must be effectively embedded within the glocalization curricula.

### **Conclusion**

Glocalization of higher education engages a positive learning experience through cultural respect and an appreciation of cultural values. Dialogue on glocalization attempts to move learners beyond the intercultural communication phases of awareness, tolerance, and accommodation. Glocalization dialogue obligates learners and teachers to consider action that will demonstrate a deep understanding and recognition of the benefits, differences, and similarities among diverse cultures. Glocalization is an empowering

paradigm. It enables learning communities to take action through dialogue in situations that are perceived to be socially irresponsible and unjust. Unlike internationalization, glocalization is empowering, inspiring, and socially responsible. Pedagogical considerations in embedding glocalization across the curriculum should be framed within a learning space that encourages action for change.

This critical, reflective discussion paper on glocalization as an appropriate alternative to internationalization offers an educational development consultant and student perspective that is absent as a collective voice. The authors highlight the strengths and benefits of bringing together local and global learning communities in a just and inclusive glocalization framework. Higher education must embrace the tide of change to adequately and appropriately reflect a proactive stance that will encourage the development and growth of global understanding through an exploration of the impact of glocal socio-economic and political agendas and perspectives. Glocalization enables learners to take action by proposing change through critical review, dialogue and meaningful engagement. Higher education institutions must commit to glocalization through proactive policy development and implementation endorsing commitment to social responsibility budgets, sustainable futures for global communities, and socially just pedagogical frameworks that celebrate glocalized learning.

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- and South Africa. Current research focuses on educational development approaches to online learning, the scholarship of teaching, curriculum development, international development, and the diffusion of information technologies in diverse learning environments. Among a broad range of journal papers and book chapters, Fay's publications include co-edited and co-authored books, such as *Information Technology, Development, and Social Change* (2012), *Intercultural Communication: Building a Global Community* (2011), and *Working Women: Stories of Strife, Struggle and Survival* (2009).

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