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Learning by Doing: A Comparative Study of the New Education Policy, 2020

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Abstract

American philosopher John Dewey worked on the educational theory of “Learning by Doing” in which he formulated the idea that a child should be taught with practical experiences. Every school should focus on teaching a child through activity-based curriculum so that a child can experience an over-all development by dint of his experiential education.

The Indian National Educational Policy, 2020 can be associated with this educational principle of “Learning by Doing”, especially in case of Foundational, Preparatory and Middle school education. The Foundational education (3-8 years) or Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) is designed to be focused more on play-based, activity-based curriculum. ECCE will be based mostly on story-telling method and several indoor and outdoor activities.

In the Preparatory stage (from 8 to 10 years and Classes 3 to 5) also, children will be taught primarily on play-based method which will ensure the cognitive, behavioral, moral, emotional and psychomotor development of them.

In the Middle School (from 11 to 13 years and Classes 6 to 8), children will be encouraged to continue their education in a newly-developed multidisciplinary curriculum with at least a mandatory vocational skill training. The aim of “Learning by Doing” will also be accomplished in the middle school level by special attention to Vocational Education. This policy, in fact, aims to prepare at least 50% students who are proficient in any kind of vocational skill by 2025. New Education Policy 2020 even focuses to reduce the academic or performance pressure among students and lead them to take up education not as a burden but as a boon.

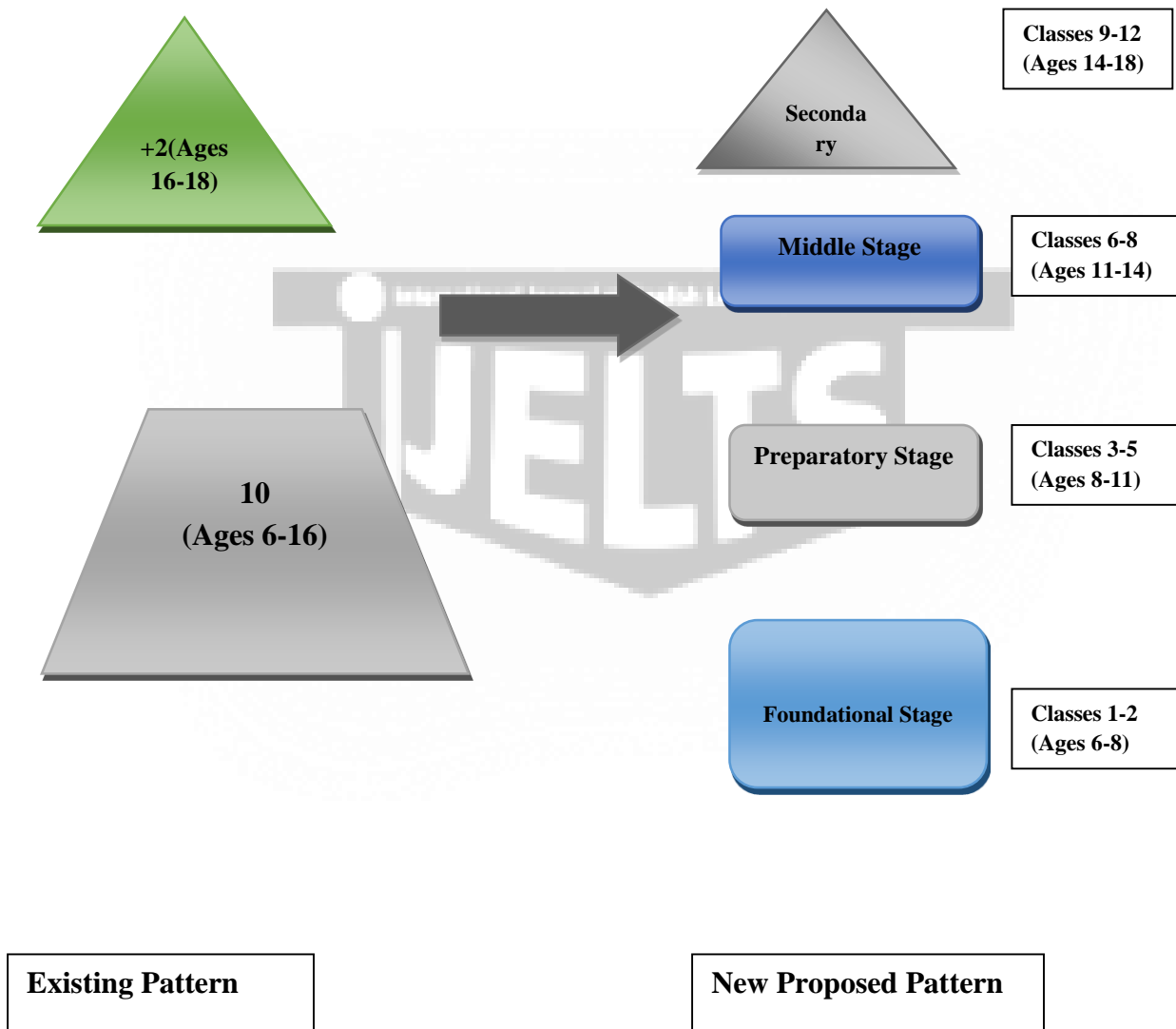
Keywords: experiential education, Learning by Doing, vocational education, play-based.

Learning by Doing: A Comparative Study of the New Education Policy, 2020

The National Education Policy 2020 is the first educational policy which aims to achieve the global standards by making a drastic change in the educational framework. To fulfill the Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4) by 2030 for ensuring the inclusion and equitable quality education and also encouraging the life-long learning opportunities for all, the Government of India formed a committee under the Cabinet Secretary T.S.R. Subramaniam in 2015 January. In June 2017, this committee presented a report. Based on this report in 2019, the draft of National Education Policy was submitted by a panel led by Krishnaswamy Kasturirangan, the former chief of Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO). Later the Ministry of Human Resource Development submitted the draft National Education Policy 2019 and the Union Cabinet of India approved it on 29th July 2020 as the National Education Policy 2020 by replacing the previous National Policy on Education 1986.

This policy modifies the earlier 10+2 structure of curriculum to 5+3+3+4 framework. This model will be implemented in four stages, i.e. –

- a. Foundational Stage: This stage includes the pre-school years (children from 3 to 6 years of age) and Classes 1 and 2 in the primary section (children from 6 to 8 years of age).
- b. Preparatory Stage: This stage consists of Classes 3 to 5 which will cover the age group of 8 to 11 years.
- c. Middle Stage: This stage covers the age group of 11 to 14 years including Classes 6 to 8.
- d. Secondary Stage: This stage includes Classes 9 to 12 covering children from 14 to 18 years of age.



This policy has focused on adopting the vocational activity based learning processes from the middle school and also introduced coding and experiential learning processes. In this policy the curriculum load of the students has been reduced and it also provides the right to study whatever subjects they are interested in, by

introducing multilingual discipline. Students of Classes 3, 5 and 8 will only give exams. Other classes up to Standard 8 will not give exams in every academic year. Moreover, a holistic report card will be offered to the students which will provide information about their skills learned. This policy concentrates on the importance of mother language or the regional language as a medium of instruction up to Class 5 and also states that no language will be forced to any student as their medium of learning.

National Education Policy has also made a huge change in the teachers' education structure by introducing 4 years Bachelor of Education course compulsory as the minimum criteria for recruitment required by 2030.

Evolution of New Education Policy in India.

After independence in 1947, India's first Education Minister Maulana Abul Kalam Azad established a control of the central Government over the educational system of India. The Union Government set up the University Education Commission in 1948-49, the Secondary Education Commission in 1952-53, the University Grants Commission and the Kothari commission in 1964-66 to enhance and develop the education system of India.

Considering the recommendation of the Kothari Commission which was set up on 1964-66, the then Prime Minister of India, Indira Gandhi officially declared the first National Education Policy on Education in 1968. In this policy, children up to the age of 14 were ensured compulsory education. This policy focused on the matter of learning of the regional languages and "the three language formula" was outlined in the Secondary education. The "the three language formula" consisted of English, preferred Regional language of the state and Hindi.

Later in 1986, then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi established a New Education Policy on Education. This policy emphasized on the equal rights of education for Indian women, Scheduled Tribes (ST) and Scheduled

Caste (SC) communities. This policy also introduced “Operation Blackboard” to develop primary school education system and Open University system by establishing Indira Gandhi National Open University in 1985.

The 9th Prime Minister of India, P.V. Narasimha Rao, in 1992 modified the National Policy on Education, 1986 and established the Programme of Action. In this amendment an all India basis common entrance examination for professional and technical programmes, was introduced.

In 2019, Draft New Education Policy 2019 was declared by the Ministry of Human Resource Development. The draft New Education Policy talks about reducing the content of the theoretical curriculum and focuses on the learning by doing or analysis-based learning. It also discusses on a revised curriculum and introduced a pedagogical structure changing from the existing 10+2 education system to 5+3+3+4 system design to enforce the cognitive development among the children.

The Union Cabinet of India approved the New National Education Policy on 29th July 2020, which replaces the previous National Policy on Education, 1986. This policy is a comprehensive framework for preparatory education to higher education as well as for the vocational education in the rural and urban India.

Objectives of the National Education Policy, 2020.

- To develop and improve the whole education system.
- To enforce the Inclusive and Equitable Education System in the society so that every child can get equal right to education.
- To increase focus on skill based learning over the traditional learning system.
- To prepare adept teachers for implementing this policy by 2023.
- To encourage flexibility in choosing subjects according to the interest of the learner by introducing the multidisciplinary education system and integrating all the subjects.

- To give emphasis on the conceptual understanding rather than the rote learning and traditional learning processes and it leads to innovative and critical thinking enhancement.

Learning by Doing

Learning by Doing is an educational theory developed by John Dewey, in which Dewey highlighted the necessity of introducing a student-centric education system. Learning by Doing is all about behavioral change in a learner initiated by experiential stimulus resulting from several first hand real life learning experiences. In fact, both positive and negative experiences play a vital role in shaping a child's cognitive and behavioral characteristics. In this context Dewey himself quoted:

I believe that this educational process has two sides – one psychological and one sociological; and that neither can be subordinated to the other or neglected without evil results following. (Dewey, *My Pedagogic Creed*)

According to this theory, education should be based more on practical skills and it should be applicable to real life situation. It focuses on student's participation on experimental and application based curriculum rather than filling their minds with only ideas.

This principle of John Dewey is further expanded over time by several nations such as Europe, China, and Japan where he himself travelled in his lifetime to lecture on his theory. Most recent and notable influence among the followers of this principle is the U.S based organization named 4-H that takes up "Learning by Doing" as the main agenda of their foundation.

Characteristics of Learning by Doing Principle

1. ***Involvement*** – Learning by Doing emphasizes on a two-way teaching learning experience in which students need to equally participate in the learning activities.

2. ***High moral*** – Students are highly motivated to take part in several activities. Hence, it develops the students' emotional aspects that encourage them to build a positive outlook to accept both positive and negative reinforcement. Students grow in themselves a high moral while performing such experiential activities as it is way distinct from their conventional learning patterns.

3. ***Critical Thinking*** – Learning by participating in role-plays and problem-solving activities enhances the cognitive development of students and nurtures their critical thinking activities.

4. ***Innovation*** – This principle of learning by doing generates the innovative side of students while they engage in different creative activities.

5. ***Practical Exposure*** – It gives students exposure to different practical or real life circumstances and train them to cope up with certain life experience.

6. ***Effective Use of Vacations*** – As this principle inspires children to take up several creative and problem-solving activities, it initiates an urge in children to further continue such activities as the hobbies in their leisure or vacation time.

National Education Policy 2020 Promoting Learning by Doing

National Education Policy, 2020 differs from the earlier National Education Policy, 1986 in its aim to induce experiential learning from the very foundational level. It even proposes to change the entire education system by introducing a new 5+3+3+4 structure where an undeclared motto of “Learning by Doing” have been

taken up in almost every stage. If we consider the theory of “Learning by Doing”, focus was laid on role and application of education in real life situation. It said that education should be parallel and intermixed with real life situations. Schooling should enhance the quality of one’s living and approach towards life. It should not create a bar between acquired knowledge and one’s scope to implement it in one’s life.

The same principle is highlighted in this National Education Policy 2020. It plans to take up the playground language as the medium of instruction. Also this policy plans to make a curriculum that will concentrate more on experience as a mode of learning rather than theoretical learning.

Stage Wise Analysis of National Education Policy, 2020 Supporting the Concept of Learning by Doing

Foundational Stage: National Education Policy categorizes children from 3 to 8 years of age as the foundational age group. In this stage children will be provided with a ‘play-based learning’ (National Education Policy, 2020. Page 07) focusing on their cognitive, psychological and emotional development.

Dewey’s theory of Learning by Doing is also reflected in this stage of schooling since India aims to focus more in indulging students in various playground activities that will enrich them morally and intellectually. To quote Dewey:

I believe that school must represent present life – life as real and vital to the child as that which he carries on in the home, in the neighborhood, or on the playground. (Dewey, *My Pedagogic Creed*)

Games like role-play, puppetry and even hopscotch will be used to initiate both physical and mental involvement, problem solving attitude, team work, and moral development. Developed countries like Japan focus on the social and moral education of the students in their foundational stage. Similarly the National Education Policy follows the concept of Learning by Doing rather than rote learning for academic achievements in this stage.

Preparatory Stage: The second stage of National Education Policy 2020 is the Preparatory stage which includes classes from 3 to 5 for the children of 8 to 11 years. This stage focuses on the development of a child

Development in the numeracy skills increases the ability to utilize, interpret and convey the mathematical and logical information in decision making process. These make the child understand the basic mathematical concepts like addition, subtraction, multiplication and division.

In this stage the students will be taught in their mother tongue or any local language of the state which is mutually accepted as a mode of communication. This initiative of the policy gives the students an independent opportunity to express their feelings and makes their study more lucid.

Preparatory stage of National Education Policy 2020 inspires the learning by shifting to activity-based proceeding. This is all about transforming the classroom into a more interactive and activity-based study technique. Different games are applied in the sessions to make the students motivated and involved in it. Thus learning becomes more comprehensible in this stage.

Middle School: In the National Education Policy, 2020, classes from 6 to 8 are grouped as the Middle school. This policy offers a special focus on ‘application-based’ education in this stage. In the Middle school, this policy plans to introduce students with various vocational subjects along with their conventional subject-learning. Each student is aimed to learn at least one vocational subject. Several vocational subjects will be introduced to the students and they can continue to pursue training of one or more vocational subjects.

In fact National Education Policy 2020 proposes Online Vocational training in which students from any part of the country can learn a ‘skill’ as per their convenience remaining in their own regions or areas.

Vocational training will not be concentrated in or around school campus and it will provide a nationwide accessibility.

This policy proposes to train 50% of total school students with vocational education by 2025. Subjects like coding and computer programming, computer science and application, arts and handicrafts, home science, agriculture, carpentry and handlooms will be included in the middle school curriculum.

Role of Vocational Training in encouraging Learning by Doing.

1. **Coding and Computer Programming:** Countries like Israel, Australia, U.S.A have already incorporated coding in the school curriculum. India, too, will introduce coding as a part of curriculum in the middle school as it will encourage children to adept IT skills. Hence, it promotes learning through performance rather than only theoretical knowledge. P. M. Modi himself mentioned in his speech to nation regarding the National Education Policy 2020 about introducing Coding in the school curriculum.
2. **Arts and Handicrafts:** In the middle school, students will be taught arts and handicrafts in their vocational training. It will allow the students to get first-hand exposure to such subjects and students can learn those specified skills and pursue holiday internship from local artisans as well.
3. **Agriculture, Carpentry and Handlooms:** Students will also get first-hand knowledge about the process and usage of such topics. Also National Education Policy 2020 introduces 10 days bag-less period per year in the middle school in which students will participate in various vocational workshops. Vocational trainings in agriculture, carpentry and handloom will also provide students with ample opportunity to learn such subjects practically and develop a better understanding of these subjects to pursue them in their higher education.

Objectives of incorporating Vocational Education :

- To develop and improve the entire educational system.
- To enforce the Inclusive and Equitable Education system in the society so that every children should get the equal right to education.
- To increase focus on skill based learning over the traditional learning system.
- To prepare adept teachers for implementing this policy by 2023.
- To encourage flexibility in choosing subjects according to the interest of the learner by introducing the multidisciplinary educational system and integrating all branches of studies together.
- To give emphasis on the conceptual understanding rather than the rote learning and traditional learning processes and leads to innovative and critical thinking enhancement.
- To incorporate use of teaching in enhancing the teaching-learning experience.

Pros and Cons of the inclusion of Vocational Education in the Mainstream curriculum:

Pros:

- a. Inclusion of Vocational Education will increase the number of skilled intellectuals in any field of work.
- b. Children are often forced by their parents to pursue only the conventional main stream subjects. According to P. M. Modi, this inclusion of Vocational Education in the middle school curriculum will motivate the students to take up their preferred vocational subjects along with the conventional subjects.

c. Any skill is learnt best when it is learnt during the early years of one's life. Thus, vocational education in the middle school will prove to be more effective than it was earlier taught in the High school curriculum, according to National Education Policy 1986.

d. Vocational Education in the middle school (students from 11 to 14 years age) will enhance one's emotional and social development as such diversified, practical learning experience will give students exposure and it will benefit them to recognize their societal role and identity.

Cons:

a. Though this policy talks about introducing Vocational Education in the middle school, it does not provide with any clear framework regarding implementation of this plan.

b. There are no proper instructions about how teachers will be prepared for conducting the vocational training in the middle school curriculum.

Comparison between National Education Policy, 1986 and National Education Policy, 2020:

In the National Education Policy 1986, vocational education was introduced in the high school, whereas, in the National Education Policy 2020, vocational education will be given in the middle school standard.

National Education Policy 1986 promoted life-long education in the universal literacy and provide opportunities to the housewives, agricultural and professional workers to continue their education by establishing open and distance learning universities. On the other hand, National Education Policy 2020 presents a plan to get back more than 20 million children who are school drop-outs into the main stream by introducing open schooling system in India.

In National Education Policy 1986, vocational education was a distant stream for preparing the children for different occupational areas. On the other hand, in National Education Policy 2020, vocational education learning has made compulsory from 6th standard and it has now been not considered as a distant stream. It has been included in the main curriculum.

Interpretation of the Acceptance of the New Education Policy, 2020

Approches:

Descriptive Approach is one of the most popular approaches these days in which a problem is described by using a well-structured Questionnaire to explore new areas of investigation.

Research Design:

A well-structured Questionnaire is framed in Google Forms.

Data Sources:

Here both Primary and Secondary Data are used.

Primary Data – Questionnaires and Online Google Forms.

Secondary Data – Annual Report, Websites, Records.

Data Collection Method:

Survey Method through Google Forms

Research Tools:

Multiple Choice Questions

Statistical Methods Used:

Bar Graph

Statistical Tools Used:

Percentage Analysis

Sample Size:

The Sample size that has been chosen for the study is 50 individuals (including Teachers and Students)

Participants	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Teachers	20	40%
Students(Classes 3-5)	5	10%
Students(Classes 6-8)	15	30%
Students(Classes 9-12)	10	20%

Questionnaire:

Dear respondents,

Kindly go through this questionnaire and you are requested to answer the questions with appropriate and spontaneous response.

Personal Profile:

1. Name:

2. Age: 8-11years 12-14years 15-18years above 18years

3. Designation: Teachers Students (Classes 3-5)
 Students (Classes 6-8) Students (Classes 9-12)

Feedback:

4. Do you think that the New Educational Policy will be learner-centric?

Yes No

5. Do you think that this new policy will reduce the pressure of theoretical learning and performance pressure?

Yes No

6. This policy claims to promote play-based learning up to Middle school. Do you think this is applicable?

Yes No

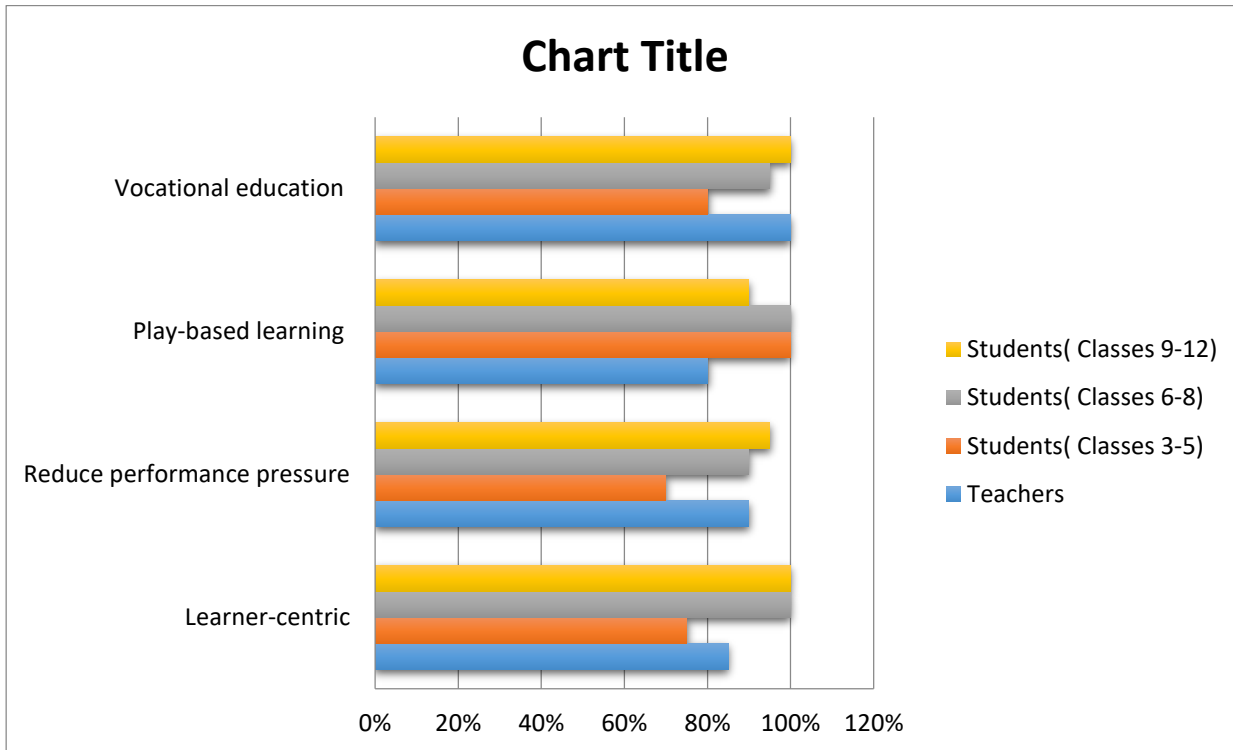
7. What, according to you, will be more effective?

Vocational education along with conventional subjects

Conventional subjects learning without much focus on Vocational education

8. Suggestions (if any):

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Conclusion:

The experiential aspect of National Education Policy 2020 will enrich the brain storming capabilities of the students and encourage creative minds. Also the equal importance on vocational education will create scopes for young entrepreneurs. Young minds will be motivated to take up several entrepreneurship ideas to further continue their careers and it will in fact boost the national economy as well since it will increase work scopes. The National Education Policy 2020 also focuses on raising enthusiasm and resilience among children which will lead them to be more practical and focused while opting their career in future.

The “Learning by Doing” characteristic of this policy will also build up more self-consciousness, congruence and commitment in the students. Students, by learning through several real-life experiences, will be able more to set clear aims and goals for their future and won’t be frightened to take up challenges in life. It will

also enhance the determination, perseverance and participative mentality of the students. While learning by performing, children will learn to manage time and all these skills will build self-motivated youths in future.

Hence, if implemented properly, National Education Policy 2020 will bring an answer to a serious problem that students face since the last few decades, that is, the extreme mental pressure for acquiring good academic scores no matter what skills or knowledge a student gathers. Moreover, it will also bring an assertive result against the tendency of students to succumb to evil effects of clinical depression.



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