

“Everyday Inclusive Practices for Students with Dyslexia: Differentiation and Collaboration in Saudi Primary Classrooms”

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ملخص البحث

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى استكشاف الممارسات اليومية الدامجة التي تستخدمها الممارسات التربويات في المدارس الابتدائية السعودية لدعم الطالبات ذوات عسر القراءة داخل الفصول العادية. اعتمدت الدراسة على منهج نوعي بتصميم دراسة حالة متعددة شملت ثلاث مدارس ابتدائية للبنات في المملكة العربية السعودية، اختلفت في طبيعة الدعم المتاح للطالبات ذوات عسر القراءة؛ إذ تضمنت إحدى المدارس غرفة مصادر/وحدة دعم، بينما قادت مدرسة أخرى قائدة مؤهلة في مجال عسر القراءة، في حين لم تتوفر في المدرسة الثالثة وحدة متخصصة أو قيادة ذات تأهيل إضافي في عسر القراءة. جُمعت البيانات من خلال مقابلات شبه منظمة مع 16 مشاركة من المعلمات والقائدات والمرشدات الطالبات، إضافة إلى تحليل بعض الوثائق المدرسية. أظهرت النتائج أن الممارسات اليومية الدامجة تمثلت بصورة أساسية في محورين مترابطين: التمايز والتعاون. شمل التمايز تعديل الوقت، والمهام، والدعم، والمخرجات، والموارد التعليمية. أما التعاون فظهر من خلال التعاون بين المعلمات، وبين المعلمات والقائدات والمرشدات، وبين المعلمات والطالبات من خلال دعم الأقران، وكذلك التعاون مع أولياء الأمور. وتخلص الدراسة إلى أن الدمج في هذه المدارس لا يتحقق فقط من خلال السياسات الرسمية أو الخدمات المتخصصة، بل يتشكل أيضاً من خلال ممارسات صفية ومدرسية يومية، لكنها غالباً ما تبقى غير منظمة وتعتمد على اجتهاد المعلمات والسباق المدرسي. وتوصي الدراسة بالحاجة إلى تدريب مهني أكثر

Abstract:

This article explores the everyday inclusive practices through which female practitioners in Saudi primary schools respond to the needs of students with dyslexia in mainstream classrooms. Drawing on a qualitative multiple case study of three girls' primary schools in Saudi Arabia, the article examines how inclusion is enacted through ordinary classroom and school-based practices rather than only through formal policy or specialist provision. Data were generated through semi-structured interviews with 16 participants, including teachers, headteachers and student advisors, and were supported by documentary analysis. The findings show that everyday inclusive practice was mainly enacted through two interrelated forms: differentiation and collaboration. Differentiation included adaptations related to pace, task, support, outcome and resources. Collaboration occurred between teachers, between teachers and school leaders or student advisors, between teachers and students through peer tutoring, and between teachers and parents. The article argues that while inclusive practices were visible across the three schools, they were often informal, uneven and dependent on teachers' individual judgement, leadership support and access to specialist knowledge. The findings highlight the need to move from individualised efforts towards more systematic, embedded and sustainable inclusive practices for students with dyslexia in Saudi mainstream classrooms.

Keywords: Dyslexia; Inclusive education; Everyday inclusive practices; Differentiation; Collaboration; Saudi primary classrooms.

تنظيماً، وتطوير آليات واضحة للتعاون المدرسي، وتعزيز القيادة
الدامجة لدم الطالبات ذوات عسر القراءة في الفصول العادية.
الكلمات المفتاحية: عسر القراءة، الدمج، الممارسات اليومية الدامجة،
التمايز، التعاون، المدارس الابتدائية السعودية.

How to Cite This Article

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AJSP | Vol. 9 | Issue 92 | DOI: <https://doi.org/10.36571/ajsp.92>AJSP ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0005-8048-2082>**Introduction:**

Inclusive education has become an increasingly significant priority internationally and in Saudi Arabia, particularly through global commitments such as the Salamanca Statement and the Incheon Declaration, which emphasise equity, access and quality education for all learners (UNESCO, 1994, 2016). In Saudi Arabia, educational reforms have increasingly reflected a commitment to improving access and participation for learners with special educational needs, including students with dyslexia (Alquraini, 2010; Alquraini & Rao, 2020).

Although inclusive education is often discussed through policy, legislation and specialist provision, inclusion is also enacted through ordinary daily practices within classrooms and schools. These practices may include adapting tasks, offering additional time, repeating explanations, using peer support, preparing accessible materials, consulting colleagues and communicating with parents (Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Tomlinson, 2014; Topping, 2005). Such actions may appear small, but collectively they shape the educational experiences of students with dyslexia.

In Saudi Arabia, students with dyslexia may receive support through learning disabilities programmes and resource rooms in mainstream schools. However, specialist provision is not available in all schools, and students with dyslexia continue to spend much of their school day in mainstream classrooms (Alnaim, 2016; Alquraini, 2010). This makes everyday classroom practice central to the inclusion of dyslexic learners. The role of the mainstream teacher is therefore not peripheral but fundamental.

Previous Saudi-based research has often focused on teachers' attitudes, readiness or self-efficacy regarding inclusive education, frequently through quantitative methods (Alnahdi, 2020; Alnahdi & Saloviita, 2019; Alquraini & Rao, 2020). Less attention has been given to the everyday practices through which teachers and school staff enact inclusion for students with dyslexia in mainstream classrooms. This article addresses this gap by focusing on how inclusion is practised in daily school life.

Problem Statement

Although inclusive education has become an important educational priority in Saudi Arabia, the translation of inclusive policy into everyday classroom practice remains complex. Students with dyslexia may receive support through specialist provision such as resource rooms; however, such support is not available in all schools, and students with dyslexia continue to spend much of their school day in mainstream classrooms. This places considerable responsibility on mainstream teachers to adapt teaching, provide support and collaborate with others.

Previous Saudi-based research has often focused on teachers' attitudes, readiness or general perceptions of inclusion (Alnahdi, 2020; Alnahdi & Saloviita, 2019; Alquraini & Rao, 2020). However, less attention has been given to the everyday practices through which inclusion is enacted for students with dyslexia in primary classrooms. Therefore, there is a need to examine how teachers and other school practitioners respond to the needs of students with dyslexia through daily classroom and school-based practices.

Research Question

This article is guided by the following research question:

How are everyday inclusive practices enacted for students with dyslexia in Saudi primary classrooms?

Research Objectives

This study aims to:

1. Explore the everyday inclusive practices used by practitioners to support students with dyslexia in Saudi primary classrooms.
2. Identify the forms of differentiation used by teachers to respond to the needs of students with dyslexia.
3. Examine how collaboration among teachers, school leaders, student advisors, peers and parents contributes to inclusive practice.
4. Understand how school context influences the enactment of inclusive practices for students with dyslexia.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it shifts attention from inclusive education as a policy aspiration to inclusion as an everyday classroom and school-based practice. By focusing on students with dyslexia in Saudi primary classrooms, the study contributes to the limited qualitative literature on how inclusive practices are enacted in real school contexts.

The study also offers practical insights for teachers, school leaders and policymakers. It highlights the importance of differentiation, collaboration, leadership support and specialist knowledge in supporting students with dyslexia. Furthermore, it provides evidence that inclusive practice should not depend only on formal programmes or individual teacher effort, but should be embedded within school culture and professional practice.

Delimitations of the Study

The scope of this study is defined by several delimitations. First, the study was spatially delimited to three public girls' primary schools in Saudi Arabia. These schools were selected because they represented different support contexts for students with dyslexia: one school had a resource room or specialist support unit, one school was led by a headteacher with dyslexia-related qualifications, and one school had neither a specialist unit nor a headteacher with additional dyslexia-related qualifications.

Second, the study was delimited to female primary school practitioners, including teachers, headteachers and student advisors. Therefore, the study focused on the perspectives and practices of practitioners working in girls' primary school settings.

Third, the study was delimited to students with dyslexia within mainstream primary classrooms. It did not examine other categories of special educational needs or other educational stages such as intermediate or secondary schools.

Fourth, the study was thematically delimited to everyday inclusive practices, particularly differentiation and collaboration. Therefore, the article focuses on how practitioners enacted inclusion through daily classroom and school-based practices rather than on policy analysis, diagnosis procedures or students' academic outcomes.

Definition of Terms

Dyslexia

In this study, dyslexia refers to a specific learning difficulty that primarily affects reading, spelling and written language processing. It is understood as a learning difficulty shaped not only by individual cognitive characteristics but also by classroom, pedagogical and environmental factors (Armstrong & Squires, 2015; British Dyslexia Association, n.d.; Reid, 2016).

Inclusive Education

Inclusive education refers to the process of enabling all students, including those with special educational needs, to access, participate in and benefit from learning within mainstream educational settings. It involves identifying and reducing barriers to learning and participation rather than merely placing students in regular classrooms (Ainscow, 2007; Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011).

Everyday Inclusive Practices

Everyday inclusive practices refer to the ordinary classroom and school-based actions through which practitioners respond to learner diversity. These may include adapting tasks, allowing additional time, providing individual support, using resources, arranging peer support and collaborating with colleagues or parents.

Differentiation

Differentiation refers to the adaptation of teaching and learning according to students' needs, abilities and learning profiles. In this study, differentiation includes adaptations by pace, task, support, outcome and resources (Tomlinson, 2014; Tomlinson et al., 2003).

Collaboration

Collaboration refers to the shared work among teachers, school leaders, student advisors, peers and parents to support students with dyslexia. It includes both formal and informal forms of communication, planning and support.

Theoretical Framework and Previous Studies

Dyslexia and Inclusive Education

Dyslexia is commonly associated with persistent difficulties in accurate and fluent reading, spelling and written language processing (British Dyslexia Association, n.d.; Reid, 2016). However, students' experiences of dyslexia are not shaped only by individual cognitive characteristics. They are also influenced by teaching methods, classroom expectations, assessment systems, school culture and access to support (Armstrong & Squires, 2015; Frith, 1999).

An interactive understanding of dyslexia is useful for inclusive education because it recognises the relationship between individual learning needs and environmental conditions. Frith's (1999) causal modelling framework highlights the interaction

between biological, cognitive, behavioural and environmental levels in understanding dyslexia. From this perspective, inclusive practice requires attention not only to the learner's difficulties but also to the classroom and school environments in which learning takes place.

Everyday Inclusive Practice

Inclusive education is often associated with formal structures such as policies, specialist services and intervention programmes. However, inclusion is also produced through everyday practices within classrooms and schools. Inclusive education involves identifying and reducing barriers to learning and participation rather than merely placing students in mainstream settings (Ainscow, 2007; Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011).

For students with dyslexia, everyday inclusive practice may include adapting written tasks, providing additional explanation, offering flexible time, reducing unnecessary literacy barriers, using visual or practical resources and creating opportunities for peer support (Armstrong & Squires, 2015; Reid, 2016; Tomlinson, 2014; Topping, 2005). Focusing on everyday practice is important because it shifts attention from whether inclusion exists as a policy ideal to how it is actually enacted through daily classroom interactions, teacher decisions and school-based routines (Ainscow, 2007; Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011).

Differentiation as Everyday Inclusive Pedagogy

Differentiation is widely recognised as a key pedagogical approach for responding to learner diversity in inclusive classrooms. It refers to teachers' planned adaptation of instruction according to students' readiness, interests, learning profiles and individual needs (Tomlinson, 2014). Rather than expecting all students to access learning in the same way, differentiation allows teachers to adjust teaching so that students can participate meaningfully in classroom activities (Tomlinson et al., 2003).

In inclusive classrooms, differentiation may involve adapting the pace of learning, the complexity of tasks, the level of teacher support, the expected learning outcomes and the resources used during instruction (Tomlinson, 2014; Tomlinson et al., 2003). These forms of adaptation are particularly relevant for students with dyslexia because dyslexia may affect reading fluency, spelling, written expression, working memory and processing speed (British Dyslexia Association, n.d.; Reid, 2016). For example, students with dyslexia may benefit from additional time, reduced written load, task breakdown, visual resources, repeated explanation and alternative ways of demonstrating understanding (Armstrong & Squires, 2015; Reid, 2016).

However, differentiation requires more than teachers' willingness to help. It depends on pedagogical knowledge, planning, classroom flexibility and an understanding of students' learning profiles (Tomlinson, 2014). When differentiation is improvised rather than planned, it may provide short-term support but remain inconsistent across classrooms and schools (Westwood, 2001). Therefore, everyday differentiation for students with dyslexia needs to be supported by teacher training, school-level guidance and collaborative planning.

Collaboration as Everyday Inclusive Practice

Collaboration is another central feature of inclusive education because the support of students with dyslexia often requires shared responsibility among classroom teachers, specialist teachers, school leaders, student advisors, peers and parents (Armstrong & Squires, 2015; Reid, 2016). In inclusive schools, collaboration can help practitioners exchange strategies, develop resources, solve problems and provide more consistent support for students with diverse learning needs (Ainscow, 2007; Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011).

Peer collaboration can also support inclusion through peer tutoring or cooperative learning. Peer learning has been shown to support participation, engagement and academic development when it is carefully structured (Topping, 2005). For students with dyslexia, peer support may help reduce barriers during classroom tasks, but it needs to be organised sensitively so that it does not expose students to stigma or embarrassment (Reid, 2016; Topping, 2005).

Collaboration with parents is also important because it can strengthen continuity between home and school. Family-school partnerships can contribute positively to student achievement when communication is constructive and responsibilities are clearly shared (Henderson & Mapp, 2002). However, parent involvement should not mean shifting responsibility from schools to families; rather, it should support coordinated planning between home and school.

Methodology

This article draws on a qualitative multiple case study conducted in three public girls' primary schools in Saudi Arabia. A multiple case study design was appropriate because the study sought to understand everyday inclusive practices across different school contexts rather than examine a single school in isolation (Yin, 2018).

The schools were selected because they represented different support contexts for students with dyslexia. One school had a dyslexia support unit/resource room, one had a headteacher with a qualification related to dyslexia, and one had neither a specialist unit nor a headteacher with additional dyslexia-related qualifications. This design allowed the study to examine how everyday inclusive practices were shaped by different school contexts.

Data were generated through semi-structured interviews with 16 participants, including teachers, headteachers and student advisors, and were supported by documentary analysis. The wider study used thematic analysis to identify patterns across the data, with MAXQDA used to support the organisation and classification of codes. Thematic analysis was suitable because it enabled the identification of repeated patterns of meaning across participants' accounts while allowing attention to contextual differences between schools (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

The findings presented in this article focus on the practices used by practitioners to respond to the needs of students with dyslexia in mainstream classrooms. Two main themes were identified: differentiation and collaboration.

Study Instrument

Data were generated primarily through semi-structured interviews. The interview questions were designed to explore practitioners' understandings of dyslexia, their views of inclusion and the practices they used to support students with dyslexia in their schools. Semi-structured interviews were appropriate because they allowed participants to describe their experiences in detail while also enabling the researcher to ask follow-up questions.

Documentary analysis was also used to support and contextualise the interview data. Relevant school documents helped provide additional insight into the practices and forms of support available for students with dyslexia across the three schools.

Findings

Differentiation as Everyday Classroom Practice

The first major form of everyday inclusive practice identified across the schools was differentiation. Teachers described adapting their practice in several ways to support students with dyslexia. These adaptations included differentiation by pace, task, support, outcome and resources. Although such practices were evident across the schools, they were often informal and based on teachers' immediate responses to students' needs rather than on a clearly structured whole-school framework. This

reflects the original thesis finding that all three schools used some forms of differentiation in daily practice, including pace, task, support, outcome and resources.

Differentiation by Pace

Differentiation by pace was evident in two of the three schools. Some teachers allowed students with dyslexia additional time to complete class activities or assessments. This practice was important because students with dyslexia may require more time to process written information, organise their responses or complete written tasks.

In everyday classroom life, additional time functioned as a practical inclusive adjustment. It reduced pressure and allowed students to participate more fairly. However, it was not consistently described as a formalised school-wide practice, suggesting that flexibility in pace depended largely on individual teacher judgement.

Differentiation by Task

Differentiation by task appeared across all three schools. Teachers adapted class activities by breaking tasks into smaller parts, reducing task difficulty, changing question types or allowing students to complete tasks gradually. These practices reduced the literacy demands placed on students with dyslexia and helped them engage with learning activities.

Task adaptation was particularly significant because it showed how inclusion was enacted through small daily decisions. Teachers did not necessarily redesign the entire curriculum, but they modified specific tasks to make them more accessible. In the school with a specialist resource room, task adaptation was sometimes strengthened by specialist guidance, indicating the value of professional knowledge in supporting everyday differentiation.

Differentiation by Support

Teachers also differentiated by providing additional support. This included giving individual attention, repeating explanations, highlighting errors, guiding students through corrections, supporting students during revision or evaluation classes and changing seating arrangements to allow closer teacher-student interaction.

These practices show that inclusion was enacted through interaction as much as through materials or tasks. Teacher proximity, repeated explanation and individual feedback became everyday mechanisms for supporting students with dyslexia. However, the support described was not always clearly connected to specific evidence-informed dyslexia strategies, indicating the need for more targeted professional development.

Differentiation by Outcome

Differentiation by outcome was reported in two schools. In some cases, students with dyslexia were assessed according to minimum expected outcomes, particularly in formal evaluation contexts. This approach may help students demonstrate partial understanding without being unfairly penalised for literacy-related difficulties.

However, differentiation by outcome needs careful implementation. If applied thoughtfully, it can make assessment fairer. If applied without clear guidance, it may reduce expectations rather than increase access. This highlights the need for clearer assessment guidance for students with dyslexia in mainstream classrooms.

Differentiation by Resources

Teachers in all three schools used resources to support students with dyslexia, although these resources were not always designed specifically for dyslexic learners. Some were general classroom materials, while others were teacher-created. In some cases, teachers developed handmade resources or handwriting materials that benefited both dyslexic and non-dyslexic students.

This finding is important because it shows that everyday inclusion does not always depend on expensive or highly specialised resources. Teacher-created materials, when informed by student needs, can become practical tools for access. In the thesis, one example showed a teacher-created handwriting resource that was later used across the school, supporting all students rather than only students with dyslexia.

Collaboration as Everyday School-Based Practice

The second major form of everyday inclusive practice was collaboration. Participants described collaboration between teachers, between teachers and school leaders or student advisors, between teachers and students, and between teachers and parents. Collaboration helped practitioners respond to students' needs in ways that extended beyond the individual classroom.

Collaboration Between Teachers

Teacher collaboration was common across the schools. Participants described sharing ideas, discussing teaching methods and seeking advice from colleagues. Much of this collaboration was informal and occurred through everyday conversations rather than formal professional learning meetings.

This informal collaboration was valuable because it showed that teachers were not working in complete isolation. They used colleagues as sources of practical advice and emotional support. However, because collaboration was not always structured, effective strategies could remain inconsistent, undocumented and dependent on individual relationships.

Collaboration Between Teachers, Headteachers and Student Advisors

School leadership played an important role in shaping everyday inclusive practice. In some schools, headteachers supported teachers by encouraging adaptations, approving additional support arrangements and guiding staff. The school with a headteacher who had dyslexia-related qualifications demonstrated how leadership knowledge could influence classroom practice and resource development.

Student advisors also contributed to support by communicating with teachers and families, monitoring student progress and helping coordinate responses to students' needs. These practices suggest that inclusion is not only a classroom responsibility. It is also a school-level process requiring coordination among different practitioners.

Peer Tutoring and Student Collaboration

Peer tutoring was another everyday practice used to support students with dyslexia. Teachers sometimes paired students with dyslexia with higher-achieving classmates who could help them complete tasks or understand classroom activities.

Peer support can promote participation and create a more cooperative classroom culture. However, it must be used carefully. Students with dyslexia may feel embarrassed if support from peers makes their difficulties visible. Therefore, peer tutoring should be structured as a normal part of classroom learning rather than as support directed only at one student.

Collaboration with Parents

Teachers and student advisors also described collaboration with parents. Parent collaboration was particularly important when students experienced persistent difficulties or when schools needed to agree on additional support. Such collaboration helped connect classroom practice with home support.

In the thesis, one example described a meeting between a student advisor, the student's mother and teachers from different year levels to develop an alternative support plan for a student who had repeated a level. This example illustrates how parent-school collaboration can support decision-making and planning for students with dyslexia.

However, parent collaboration should not mean transferring responsibility to families. Instead, schools need clear communication channels and practical guidance so that parents can support learning without increasing pressure on students.

Limitations of the Study

This study has several limitations. First, it is based on three girls' primary schools in Saudi Arabia, which means that the findings cannot be generalised to all Saudi schools. Second, the study focuses on female practitioners and girls' schools; therefore, the experiences of male schools or different educational contexts are not represented. Third, the findings are based mainly on practitioners' accounts through interviews, supported by documentary analysis, rather than direct classroom observation. Finally, the study focuses specifically on students with dyslexia and may not represent the experiences of students with other special educational needs.

Despite these limitations, the study provides in-depth qualitative insights into how inclusive practices are enacted in everyday classroom and school contexts.

Discussion

The findings show that everyday inclusive practice for students with dyslexia was enacted through differentiation and collaboration. These practices align with inclusive education literature that emphasises reducing barriers to participation and learning through flexible pedagogy, classroom adaptation and shared responsibility (Ainscow, 2007; Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011; Tomlinson, 2014).

A key contribution of this article is its focus on the everyday nature of inclusion. The findings suggest that inclusion was not enacted only through formal policies, specialist programmes or official procedures. It was also enacted through ordinary classroom decisions: giving extra time, simplifying a task, repeating instructions, preparing materials, asking a colleague for advice or arranging peer support. This supports the view that inclusive education must be understood as a process embedded in daily pedagogical decisions rather than a fixed placement or one-time intervention (Ainscow, 2007; Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011).

However, the findings also show that these everyday practices were often informal and inconsistent. Teachers demonstrated willingness to support students with dyslexia, but their practices were frequently based on individual judgement rather than shared school systems. This is significant because differentiation, when not supported by planning and professional knowledge, may become uneven and dependent on individual teacher confidence (Tomlinson, 2014; Tomlinson et al., 2003; Westwood, 2001).

The findings also highlight the role of school context. The school with a resource room benefited from specialist input, while the school led by a headteacher with dyslexia-related expertise benefited from informed leadership. This reflects previous

work suggesting that students with dyslexia require both classroom-level adaptation and wider school-level understanding (Armstrong & Squires, 2015; Reid, 2016).

Finally, collaboration emerged as a practical bridge between policy and practice. When teachers, leaders, advisors, students and parents worked together, support became more possible. This finding is consistent with literature highlighting the role of collaboration, peer support and family-school partnerships in strengthening inclusive education (Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Topping, 2005).

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study recommends the following:

1. Mainstream teachers should receive practical professional development on dyslexia and everyday inclusive strategies, including task adaptation, multisensory teaching, feedback, additional time and flexible assessment.
2. Schools should develop clear school-level procedures for differentiating tasks, support, resources and assessment for students with dyslexia.
3. Collaboration between classroom teachers, specialist teachers, headteachers, student advisors and parents should be strengthened through structured meetings and shared planning.
4. School leaders should be supported in developing inclusive leadership practices that promote shared responsibility for students with dyslexia.
5. Schools should establish shared resource banks and structured professional discussions to help teachers exchange successful inclusive practices.
6. Peer tutoring should be implemented carefully to support participation while protecting students from stigma or embarrassment.
7. Inclusive practice should be embedded in daily classroom routines rather than treated only as an additional programme or specialist responsibility.

Conclusion

This article examined how everyday inclusive practices were enacted for students with dyslexia in three Saudi girls' primary schools. The findings show that inclusion was mainly practised through differentiation and collaboration. Teachers adapted pace, tasks, support, outcomes and resources, while also collaborating with colleagues, leaders, student advisors, peers and parents.

The article argues that everyday inclusive practices are important because they show how inclusion is lived and enacted in ordinary classroom routines. However, these practices were often informal and uneven. Saudi schools therefore need to move from individual, effort-based support towards more systematic and embedded inclusive practice.

Supporting students with dyslexia should not depend only on the presence of an exceptional teacher, a specialist unit or a knowledgeable headteacher. Rather, inclusive practice should become part of the everyday culture of mainstream classrooms, supported by professional knowledge, collaborative structures and clear school-level guidance.

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