

# Indexed Literature Review: Intercultural Approach to the Online Teaching and Learning

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**Abstract:** Attention to cultural diversity is a necessity at online higher education in management (2004) postulated a framework for conceptualizing dimensions of intercultural competence in its development model of intercultural sensitivity. Complementary, Intercultural Learning Model (Beamer, 2016) emphasizes the importance that students are able to encode and decode the differences in messages emitted by people of different cultures. In addition, higher education institutions should attend perceived cultural distance emerges as an outstanding concept related to the management of interculturality by the management of institutions. The aim of this research is develop a systematic indexed literature review at the field of intercultural approach to the online teaching and learning at management. Systematic literature review described by Fink (2005) is the methodology used. It consist on identifying, evaluating, synthesizing, interpreting and analyzing research literature. This review is based on Business Source Complete (EBSCO) that offers papers from 1936 to 2016 with 1,232 documents; Web of Science, from 1995 to 2016 with 207 documents and Scielo, from 1999 to 2016 with 358 documents. The content analysis applied shows that 74% of the papers' fragments can be categorizes as integration. Therefore, the papers articles avoid the importance of achieving integration at the online teaching-learning processes in management.

**Keywords:** Teaching and Learning Processes, Online, Education, Management, Intercultural

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## 1. Introduction

As Li et al. (2016) and Watt et al. (2012) highlight higher education institutions face an increasingly list of challenges. These challenges included ranging from cost pressures, increased levels of demographic and cultural diversity. In this way, it becomes relevant to analyze student's satisfaction and perceived value in online higher education.

Attention to cultural diversity benefit from being able to establish long-term relationship with students. The analysis of cultural diversity requires online higher education to carefully understand how value perceptions arise. Positive and negative dimensions that lead to customer satisfaction, which in turns result in higher levels of loyalty and positive word of mouth (Boksberger & Melsen, 2011; Gallarza et al., 2011).

## 2. Intercultural Approach to the Online Teaching and Learning

Attention to cultural diversity is a necessity at online higher education in management. The teaching-learning processes are governed by the principles of integration and normalization. In this sense, higher education institutions must pay attention to identify specific needs.

It is also consider that future managers will meet difficulties related to work on environments whose culture is unknown for them. The literature distinguishes two educational perspectives to address this issue: multicultural education and intercultural education (Bernal, 2003; Prats, 2007).

### 2.1. Intercultural Competences at Higher Education in Management

Intercultural education is based on coexistence between

people of different cultures is resolved if interpersonal relationships are established. Living together involves exchanging and sharing between people. Intercultural education faces the risk posed by the dominant culture in terms of handling, the reinterpretation of the past and denial of identity references. Intercultural is the adjective that designates the actions of interaction between individuals of different cultures. Research from multiculturalism are interested in modes of interaction. The use of voice intercultural established in Europe to devise the companies that host large numbers of immigrants. In the white paper on intercultural dialogue Council of Europe (2009), the role of intercultural dialogue is set to play the respect for human dignity, the common heritage and cultural diversity. The need to avoid ethnic, religious, linguistic and cultural divisions is set, and at the same time move forward together and recognize the different identities constructively and democratically in accordance with common universal values.

Otherwise, multicultural education, deeply rooted in culturalism, is to consider and describe the society as a mosaic of cultures. Multiculturalism is a value and not a difficulty. Multicultural perspective emphasized the right to cultural difference arises. This perspective is found from the existence of different cultures in the same geographical and social space. All cultures coexist although the influence between them is limited. Multiculturalism is seems as the axiom of a desirable model of society by nature.

At this model, the hegemonic culture exerts strong pressure on education so that the educational models that emerge tend to be assimilationist, compensatory and sometimes segregationist. Revisions to the concept of multiculturalism have led to locate it from the perspective of socio-critical theory adopting as responsible for directing the

social praxis against injustice towards minority groups. Another response that provides education for reconciling different values of culture is contributing to the development of skills seeking intercultural coexistence: institutions and teachers help develop competition based on democratic values to support social cohesion.

## 2.2. Conceptualizing Intercultural Competences at Higher Education in Management

Today, the importance of intercultural competence in global and national contexts is well recognized. Bennett (2004) postulated a framework for conceptualizing dimensions of intercultural competence in its development model of intercultural sensitivity (DMIS). The DMIS constitutes a progression of worldview with orientations toward cultural difference that understand the potential of increasingly more complete experiences cross-culturally. Three ethnocentric orientations, where culture is a central experience in reality (denial, defense, minimization) and three ethnorelatives orientations, where culture is considered an experience (acceptance, adaptation and integration). The aim is to analyze teachers discourse and student's discourse attending the dimensions of intercultural sensibility in relation with collaborative learning.

Bennett (1986; 1993; 2016) and Bennett & Bennett (2003; 2004) highlight the relevant of being more intercultural competent. Intercultural competence seemed that there was a major change in the quality of their experience, which move from ethnocentrism to ethnorelativism. As figure 1 shows ethnorelativism became when acceptance, adaptation and integration emerge.

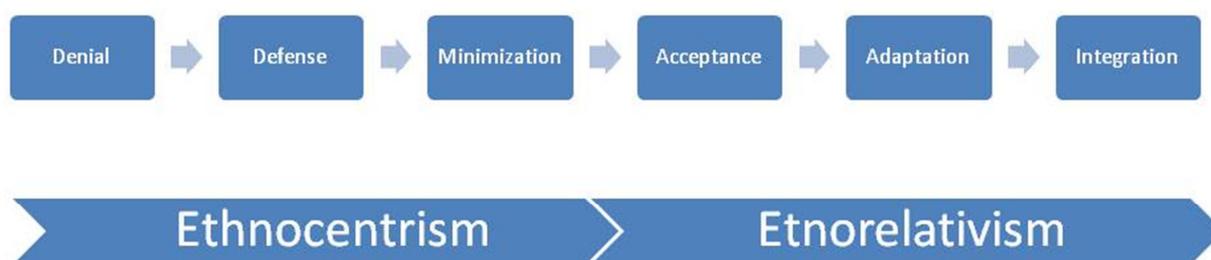


Figure 1. The stages of development at DMIS model. Adapted from Bennett (2004).

The first step, denial, is “the tendency to avoid noticing or confronting cultural difference (Bennett, 2004, p. 13)”. Denial implies the inability to make the perceptual distinctions of cultural facts. Otherwise, denial not implies to refuse or confront the facts. In order to overcoming denial, teachers must present cultural information in too-complex ways. The resolution of denial issues allows the development of simple categories for each culture.

Second step, defense, “against cultural difference is the state in which one’s own culture (or an adopted culture) is experienced as the only viable one—the most “evolved” form of civilization, or at least the only good way to live (Bennett, 2004, p. 13)”. This stage assumes that the person has a

simplified mental representation of intercultural reality. Cultural reality is too complex to allow the construction of a mental scheme or a mental screen that responds to the key dimensions of intercultural differences.

The third step is minimization of cultural difference. Minimization “seemed to be a transition from the more virulent forms of ethnocentrism to a more benign form (Bennett, 2004, p. 1)”. Minimization is the state in which elements of one’s own cultural are experienced as universal. For example, learning style or the religious assumptions that everyone in the world is a child of God or that everyone has karma are examples of minimization. While they may be relatively tolerant, people at minimization are unable to

appreciate other cultures because they cannot see their own culture clearly.

In fourth place, “acceptance of cultural difference is the state in which one’s own culture is experienced as just one of a number of equally complex worldviews. By discriminating differences among cultures (including one’s own), and by constructing a kind of self-reflexive perspective, people with this worldview are able to experience others as different from themselves, but equally human (Bennett, 2004, p. 6)”. Acceptance assumes that the person is able to construct a mental representation, a script or a scheme, with which to identify the cultural differences.

In fifth place, “adaptation to cultural difference is the state in which the experience of another culture yields perception and behavior appropriate to that culture (Bennett, 2004, p. 8). Adaptation assumes that the person is able to construct a mental representation, a script or a scheme, with which to identify the cultural differences with behavioral, cognitive, affective and social dimensions that allow it to develop properly within a cultural context.

Finally, the integration of cultural difference is the state in which one’s experience of self is expanded to include the

movement in and out of different cultural worldviews (Bennett, 2004, p. 9). The mental representation constructed by a person whose behavior shows evidences of integration is characterized by an identify at the margins of two or more cultures and central to none.

Intercultural Learning Model (Beamer, 2016) emphasizes the importance that students are able to encode and decode the differences in messages emitted by people of different cultures. The model proposes a spiral learning. This type of learning is characterized by the ability of students to go deeper into cultural differences.

Building knowledge from this model involves going over and over again on the same issues to structure increasingly complex and complex mental representations. The assimilation and accommodation of new concepts is part of this learning process. The construction of new meanings around the diverse cultures appears like fundamental. This construction implies that students are competent to generate other culture messages, analyze communication, challenge stereotypes, pose questions and understand the diversity. See figure 2.

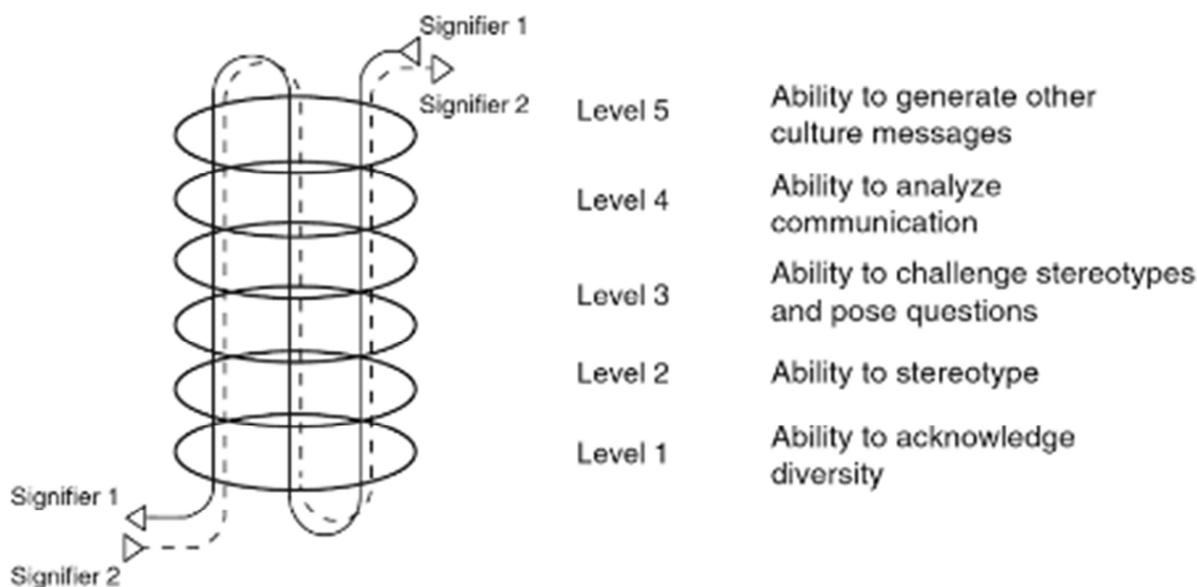


Figure 2. Intercultural Learning Model. Adapted from Beamer, 2016.

Complementary, perceived cultural distance emerges as an outstanding concept related to the management of interculturality by the management of institutions. Cultural distance is the extent to which two cultures are different from each other in terms of various cultural elements, such as ethnicity, language, social structure, religion and values (Triandis, 1994).

Suaneti and Van De Vijver (2009) define the concept by differentiating between antecedent variables (contextual conditions in which acculturation takes place, notably the perceived distance between the ethnic and the culture), mediating variables (e.g. preference for adopting the mainstream culture and/or maintaining the culture of the country of origin) and outcome variables (the adjustment of

the immigrant).

The perceived cultural distance is address by (Sharma and Namwoon, 2015) as gap with their intercultural service encounters framework. To explore the direct and indirect influence of perceived cultural distance and intercultural competence on inter-role congruence, interaction comfort, adequate and perceived service levels, and satisfaction, from the perspective of both participants and employees.

Mental representations of perceived cultural distance include terms of language, emotions, values and norms that may or may not facilitate their communication with each participant and improve the quality of their interaction and their satisfaction with the outcome.

Wang and Mattila (2010) explored the stress and negative

emotions experienced by the service employees in ICSEs and the different coping strategies used by them to deal with these negative outcomes. However, both these papers are conceptual in nature and only use some qualitative data to support their respective conceptual frameworks.

Mental representations of perceived cultural distance must be addressed by the managers of institutions of higher education in management since their presence is relevant in the fluidity of communication.

Therefore, institutions of higher education in line should approach interculturality in two different and complementary ways. On the one hand, an approach to the interaction of students and teacher around activities include interculturality. On the other hand, the management actions of the reduction in the perception of cultural distance since this distance affects the satisfaction of students and workers of institutions.

### ***2.3. Intercultural Competences at Online Higher Education in Management***

The most basic theoretical concept in the model of intercultural sensitivity and the perceived cultural distance is that both are constructed. This is the central tenant of constructivism (Kanuka; 2011, Koshman, 2002). The adaptation involves a modification of the mental representation to the demands of the environment. It is necessary not only because the person adapts to the environment but also to provide consistency between mental representations.

Constructivism focused the teaching and learning processes at restructuring. The learning is a process, not a moment in learning, and required a practice that has accumulated encouraged reflecting on their own knowledge. Possibly the first anomalies or deficiencies identified through this reflection solved by processes of growth and adjustment. Only when these fail is needed restructuring. It is rare and requires previous processes of growth and adjustment, but produces substantial and lasting changes in people, although restricted to the domain of knowledge in which it occurs. This process of gradual building of knowledge from simple growth (which is clearly compatible with the processes of associative learning, given its cumulative nature and organizational barely) to the deep restructuring, has been studied in various fields of knowledge and with different approaches.

There are two main features that deserve to be highlighted in this theory. It is, if we evoke Piaget, a balancing process: as we access more complex levels of construction, the balance between new knowledge and information is growing. Genetic psychology of Jean Piaget (2013) proposed an intelligence built to solve practical problems on the mechanisms of assimilation and accommodation are key.

Assimilation is based on the fact that the growth of knowledge becomes from the integration of information in a schema or structure above. This means you need to consider organizing activity of the person as important as the relationships inherent to external stimuli. The person

becomes sensitive to external stimuli insofar as they are similar to structures already built. Structures that enrich and change according to the new assimilation.

The dialogue in the online classroom is essential for learning. The educational experience can be achieved if sustained dialogue remains in the teaching learning emerging between cognitive presence, social presence and teaching presence (Ayuste et al., 2016; Briones & Lara, 2016). In this sense, the community that interacts building sets meanings often emphasizes the importance of student reflections on their experiences (Arbaugh, 2013). Unlike traditional thinking, which tends to focus on the analysis of responses and connections to the subject matter immediately course, the community of inquiry takes into account the context of students' knowledge in a particular setting.

This questioning of assumptions about reality, their place in it, and the construction of the resulting identities and consideration of various possibilities has been called self-reflexivity, when carried out individually and reflexivity criticism while implying the other participants (Thu, 2016). The teaching-learning processes offer many options: offer greater similarities between the organization and the educational context, power relations manifest themselves when the physical structures are removed and allow take into account the context of a particular organization.

Given the importance of attending to cultural diversity in institutions of higher education in line, the objective of this research is to carry out a systematic bibliographical review of the main articles indexed in this field of research.

The restructuring is a process, not a moment in learning, and required a practice that has accumulated encouraged to reflect on their own knowledge. Possibly the first anomalies or deficiencies identified through this reflection solved by processes of growth and adjustment. Only when these fail is needed restructuring. It is rare and requires previous processes of growth and adjustment, but produces substantial and lasting changes in people, although restricted to the domain of knowledge in which it occurs. This process of gradual building of knowledge from simple growth (which is clearly compatible with the processes of associative learning, given its cumulative nature and organizational barely) to the deep restructuring, has been studied in various fields of knowledge and with different approaches. We speak of constructivism.

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The adaptation involves a modification of the mental representation to the demands of the environment. It is necessary not only because the person adapts to the environment but also to provide consistency between mental representations. The decline in cognitive dissonance is responsible.

Popov, Biemans, Kuznetsov and Mulder (2014) introduced an interculturally enriched collaboration script for working in culturally diverse groups within a computer supported collaborative learning environment and then assessed student online collaborative behavior, learning performance and experiences.

The aim of this research is develop a systematic indexed literature review at the field of intercultural approach to the online teaching and learning at management.

### 3. Methodology

Systematic literature review described by Fink (2005) is the methodology used. It consist on identifying, evaluating, synthesizing, interpreting and analyzing research literature. Fink establishes that it is relevant for an efficient search to decide the criteria for including and excluding papers and to sort relevant and strong studies from others. These papers were published in impact journals of the field of interest and cover the topic of research.

This indexed literature review have performed a systematic review of the literature published from 1936 to 2016 onwards, to ascertain the relevance of online teaching and learning processes at management and intercultural aspects.

The first documents selection criterion was focused on three databases. Those databases are Business Source Complete (EBSCO), Web of Science and Scielo. The first one offer papers from 1936 to 2016 with 1,232 documents, the second, Web of Science, from 1995 to 2016 with 207 documents and the third, Scielo, from 1999 to 2016 with 358 documents. The second criterion for the identification and inclusion of these papers was that it addressed the intercultural aspect at higher education context in an explicit way.

### 4. Results

Quantitative data have been extracted from the documents included in the review. After analyzing the files stored in the Web of Science, Scielo and Business Source Complete (EBSCO) databases, researchers found 1797 articles on interculturality and higher business education. 458 articles are related to higher education online and interculturality. The Business Source Complete (EBSCO) database provides 1232 documents (see table 1).

**Table 1.** Documents at Business Source Complete (EBSCO). Keywords: education and intercultural.

|                                  | Type                  | Number |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------|--------|
| Business Source Complete (EBSCO) | Academic publishing   | 991    |
|                                  | Journals              | 146    |
|                                  | Professional journals | 35     |
|                                  | Newspapers            | 4      |
|                                  | Books                 | 4      |
|                                  | Total                 | 1232   |

The Web of Science database provides 207 documents, 62% of which are papers (see table 2).

**Table 2.** Documents at Web of Science. Keywords: education and intercultural.

|                | Type     | Number |
|----------------|----------|--------|
| Web of Science | Articles | 129    |
|                | Meeting  | 78     |
|                | Review   | 7      |
|                | Other    | 7      |
|                | Books    | 5      |
|                | Total    | 207    |

The Scielo database provides 358 documents, 92% of which are papers (see table 3).

**Table 3.** Documents at Scielo. Keywords: education and intercultural.

|        | Type                     | Number |
|--------|--------------------------|--------|
| Scielo | Paper                    | 332    |
|        | Review                   | 8      |
|        | Book review              | 5      |
|        | Editorial                | 3      |
|        | Fast communication       | 3      |
|        | Other research documents | 3      |
|        | Short story              | 2      |
|        | Case                     | 1      |
|        | News                     | 1      |
|        | Total                    | 358    |

**Table 4.** Documents which published more papers about education and intercultural. Keywords: education and intercultural.

| Keywords: Education and Intercultural |                          |  |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|--|
|                                       | Period                   | Journal  |
| Business Source Complete (EBSCO)      | 1936-2016 (1,232 papers) | Business Communication Quarterly                   |
|                                       |                          | International Journal of Human Resource Management |
|                                       | 2010-2016 (521 papers)   | Management Intercultural                           |
|                                       |                          | Insight into Diversity                             |
| Web of Science                        | 1995-2016 (53 papers)    | Academy of Management Learning & Education         |
|                                       |                          | Quality Management in Higher Education             |
|                                       | 2011-2016 (154 papers)   | International Journal of Intercultural Relations   |
|                                       |                          | NTED proceedings                                   |
| Scielo                                | 1999-2016 (358 papers)   | ICERI proceedings                                  |
|                                       |                          | Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences            |
|                                       | 2011-2016 (289 papers)   | Estudios pedagógicos (Valdivia)                    |
|                                       |                          | Revista mexicana de investigación educativa        |
|                                       |                          | Polis (Santiago)                                   |
|                                       |                          | Revista Integra Educativa                          |
|                                       |                          | Revista Mal Estar e Subjetividade                  |
|                                       |                          | Cuicuilco  |

Key words in the search for education and interculturality have provided research evidence since 1936, with research being productive in the last 5 years (see table 4). The papers found with the term interculturality denote a different use of the term in Spanish. The integration actions of members of different ethnic groups within the same country are the subject of research in these articles. Therefore, interculturality in these articles is not related to cultural sensitivity to people from other countries but to cultural sensitivity to different ethnicities that have historically shared geography.

The keywords in the Online Higher Education and Intercultural search have contributed papers especially in the Business Source Complete (EBSCO) database, accounting for 51% of the total (see table 5).

**Table 5.** Search with the keywords Online Higher Education & Intercultural.

| Keywords: Online Higher Education & Intercultural |              |  |
|---|--------------|--|
| Database  | Total Papers | Journals which published more papers   |
| Web of Science                                    | 53           | International Journal of Intercultural Relations<br>Language and Intercultural Communication                           |
| Business Source Complete (EBSCO)                  | 236          | Business Communication Quarterly<br>Insight into Diversity<br>Journal of Higher Education Policy & Management<br>Koers |
| Scielo  | 169          | Online Brazilian Journal of Nursing<br>Propuesta educativa   |

The keywords in the research Intercultural & Education & Management have contributed papers especially in the Scielo database where the documents found represent 92% of the

total (see table 6).

**Table 6.** Search with the keywords Intercultural & Education & Management.

| Keywords: Intercultural & Education & Management |              |   |
|--|--------------|---|
| Database   | Total Papers | Journals which published more papers  |
| Web of Science                                   | 3            | Korean Journal of General Education<br>Business Communication Quarterly   |
| Business Source Complete (EBSCO)                 | 76           | Academy of Management Learning & Education<br>Educational Management Administration & Leadership<br>Estudios pedagógicos (Valdivia) |
| Scielo   | 967          | Polis (Santiago)<br>Revista mexicana de investigación   |

In addition, a heavy emphasis was placed on material, which provided evidence concerning the ethnocentrism. 93% of the total fragments found in the analysis of the content belong to the category of ethnocentrism. Therefore, the presence of ethnocentrism in the reviewed documents is very rare. The results and conclusions of these articles do not show that the participants show ethnocentrism behaviors.

Acceptance, adaptation and integration appear as the most frequent. Therefore, interculturality is qualified as positive and adequate. It includes verbalizations in which the participant clearly expresses an opinion in favor of cultural diversity. The verbalizations show accommodation or adjustment to the companions of other nationalities. The adjustment is adequate and works for the benefit of the teaching-learning process. Elements that show the approach of the participants and their configuration as a cohesive working group appear (see table 7).

**Table 7.** Number of fragments and percentage following the model of cultural sensitivity.

|                     | Denial | Defense | Minimization | Acceptance | Adaptation | Integration |
|---------------------|--------|---------|--------------|------------|------------|-------------|
| Number of fragments | 32     | 36      | 64           | 205        | 241        | 1.146       |
| %                   | 1,85%  | 2,08%   | 3,71%        | 11,89%     | 13,97%     | 66,47%      |

## 5. Conclusions

Placing ourselves in the field of management, the development of a systematic indexed literature review at the field of intercultural approach to the online teaching and learning at management has shown the increased presence of ethnocentrism. The cultural sensibility concreted at acceptance, adaptation and integration is relevant since higher education institutions face interculturalism as a challenge. It must be consider that documents analyzed has reflect a high percentage of fragments of ethnocentrism,

On the other hand, institutions have an important role in the dissemination of cultural sensitivity. It is relevant to posit this sensitivity on the model of interculturalism to ensure that there is not culture superiority. Online higher education institutions which offer management programs should incorporate interculturalism as a value being sensitive to this as a process. That is, it must be considered that

interculturalism will go installed in the institution following the model of cultural sensitivity proposed by Bennett (2004).

In this sense, reviewed paper reveal the high interest in interculturality with a clear ethnocentric approach. The greater number of articles that deal with the question since adaptation show the need for institutions to continue working in interculturality. The documents indicate an effort to approach interculturality although most of them are in a proposal of methods that increase the cultural sensitivity but do not reach the optimal levels of adaptation.

The approach of the students of the participants to the other cultures with a level of depth that allows the work as a cohesive group is not a very habitual finding. That is to say, the level of integration is according to the models of interculturality the optimal, however, this integration requires more research since the practices in the classroom and outside the classroom that allow to reach it can still be more widely approached.

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