Original Article

Concepts of art education curriculum, tendencies and challenges

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Abstract

Discussing the different concepts of teaching Art, one should start from the competences we want to transfer to students. Through different ideas about competences, we can see the wishes of individual countries about what is expected of visual arts education. In this review, we have focused on the thinking of the European countries.

All European countries have some variants of learning art in curricula and outcomes that determine what is meant to be achieved by these subjects. Depending on whether these curricula are structured as an integrated whole or as a set of specific subjects, objectives/outcomes are defined more concretely for visual arts, music, theater, dance, media arts or crafts. Learning objectives differ from country to country: in some cases, they are more globally expressed, and in others, it is more specific. The goals to be achieved or the skills to be mastered are defined for each year of learning or schooling periods.

There are increasing pressures on the art education to fulfill a number of goals, in addition to learning about art. Educational systems increasingly recognize the importance of developing children's creativity and contributing to cultural education. Almost all European countries have similar goals for the curriculum of teaching Art, among them: the development of artistic skills, knowledge, and understanding, engagement with various art forms; increasing cultural understanding; exchange of experiences. But in addition to these artistic results, the curriculum includes personal and social/cultural outcomes (such as self-confidence and self-esteem, the individuality of expression, teamwork, intercultural understanding and cultural participation). The focus on creativity (often in relation to its importance in innovation) and cultural education (in relation to individual identity and the promotion of intercultural understanding) is present in these goals.

Various studies have recognized the pressure to include in the art curriculum of the 21st century the study of new media (including film, photography and digital arts) and to enable students to use ICT as a part of the creative process. In many, it is also requested for art contents to be connected to other non-artistic subjects and thus deal with creative and cultural themes.

Keywords: *teaching art, competences, art education curricula*

Introduction

The 21st century world is based on knowledge and learning and requires members of the society who are creative, flexible, adaptable and innovative, and education systems need to develop in terms of these changing conditions. Post-industrial societies require creative citizens with verbal and nonverbal communication skills, imaginative, with the

ability to critically reflect on intercultural understanding. In visual arts, new tools for artistic production offer students the opportunity to explore their multicultural, multi-technological visual worlds.

The importance of teaching Art (visual arts education) is increasingly recognized in the world and in Europe, it offers students a useful guide to developing their creativity, imagination, sensitivity towards themselves and the world around them in mutual relation. Additionally, teaching Art enables students to develop the ability to express themselves in a wide range of visual techniques. Teaching Art gives students opportunity to understand art, also enhances the critical skills needed to think and move freely and consciously in our society with full stimulation and information. In addition, teaching Art has the responsibility to bring students closer to different cultural heritage and cultural diversity, and can play an important role in creating a culture of peace, international understanding, social cohesion and sustainable development.

Three concepts

Georg Peez states that discussions on various didactic concepts of art pedagogy are being held today, and that we are witnesses of the period during which art pedagogy is re-conceived. The days of the 1980s have passed, in which the subject is significantly associated to a formula of "aesthetic education" of Otto Gunter.In the 1990s Oto Gunter and Gert Selle were the forerunners of one polarization in this field: it was that the teaching of Art should be oriented towards avant-garde, modern art, whose advocate was Gert Zele or,on the other hand, it should be seen in a much broader context in the opinion of Otto Gunter.

Today, there are three dominant concepts of teaching Art.

Picture Orientation (Visual Literacy)

In this concept the development of the "picture orientation" from Otto Gunter's position is observed, in such a way that the teaching focuses on everything visually. Visually becoming more and more important in our culture and everyday life, today we are exposed to the strong influence of various visual messages (television, film and video, photographs, signs and symbols, emoticon ...). Such conditions have led to a growing need for understanding and creating different visual messages.

Teaching Art, according to this concept, aims at visual literacy, it is oriented towards the support of the competences of understanding art in (inter-) cultural contexts, which implies the need for Art teaching to be set as one of the main subjects in schools. The goal of teaching Art in this concept is to provide aesthetic experiences to children, young people and adults and to teach students to interpret, understand and create visual messages through their art classes thus supporting media literacy.

The art of living (the aesthetics of existence)

In recent years, opposed to the first concept, a tendency has been established which propagates the end of "Otto's times" and the proclamation of artistic education. This concept directs the Art teaching towards art, the creation of art not to "visual" or to school pedagogy. The decisive influence on this concept is the extended concept of art of Joseph Beuys, which aims at the "art of living" and the promotion of the "aesthetics of existence". The main representative of this concept is Gert Zele.

Teaching Art implies the establishing of artistic ways of thinking and acting in the educational process. The teaching aim is to initiate mediation and action processes. Ac-

cording to this concept, teaching takes place through open workshops, on personal projects with an open time structure; stimulating experimentation in creating that results in broad views of life and the world, the student has complete control (organises and controls the process) over his creativity. The concept initiates artistic processes and thus enables new art and everyday experiences with a high goal of the "art of life".

Aesthetic research

This concept has the student in focus, the student and his aesthetic research interests are the starting point and it is based on the traditional art teaching and pedagogical orientation towards the student. The concept is based on individual art practice and, on the other hand, to subjective aesthetic research. It starts from the individual and his individuality and in this concept we can notice the influence of Joseph Beuys.

The three concepts presented here are basic examples, but as Georg Peez himself concludes, they further combine, more or less overlap, or sometimes they have different attitudes, forming some others with new names (Peez, 2007).

The place of art and cultural education in schools in Europe

The research conducted by Education, Audiovisual & Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) *Arts and Cultural Education at School in Europe* gives us insight in the position and aims of arts teaching in Europe.

The place of teaching art in national curricula

The existing research shows that the curriculum hierarchy exists even today, where the priorities are reading, writing and computing. In the art itself, emphasis is put on visual and musical art while theater and dance are completely in the background.

The study dealing with cultural policies towards young people in Europe (*Culture, Creativity and the Young: Developing Public Policy*, Robinson, 1999) showed that all national policies concerning education routinely emphasize the importance of the cultural dimension and the need to promote the artistic and creative abilities of children and young people, while in practice, the status and availability of arts in education are less pronounced. The main disciplines available in schools are visual arts and music. In a number of national education systems, visual arts and music were compulsory in elementary education and in the first two or three years of secondary education. In all the observed cases, art had a lower status than mathematics and similar sciences. Attempts have been made in some countries to reduce the role of art in the curriculum in favour of subjects that are more important for economic and school success. Similar results were also found in some subsequent international studies (Sharp and Le Métais, 2000; Taggart et al. 2004, according to EACEA, 2009).

Objectives of art education

There are increasing pressures on art (visual, musical ...) to fulfill different goals, in addition to learning about art. Educational systems increasingly recognise the importance of the development of children's creativity and their contribution to cultural education, but it is not fully defined how art is expected to contribute either as an individual subject or in cooperation with other areas of the curriculum.

In Europe, almost all countries have similar goals for the art curriculum. Among them are: Development of artistic skills, knowledge and understanding, engagement on various art forms; Increasing cultural understanding; the exchange of artistic experiences and

creations, which recognise the differences between the consumer and the creator. But in addition to these artistic outcomes in most countries, personal and social/cultural outcomes are expected (trust and self-esteem, individual expression, team work, intercultural understanding and cultural participation). Creativity-related goals (often in relation to its significance in innovation and use of ICT in creation) and cultural education (in relation to individual identity and the promotion of intercultural understanding) are visible in the goals of art learning. All this raises questions about the possibility of an artistic teaching curriculum to fulfill such diverse and broad goals.

All European countries have curricula in the field of art and culture that determine the learning objectives/outcomes to be achieved, depending on whether these curricula are structured as an integrated whole or as a set of separate teaching subjects, some learning objectives/outcomes can refer to specific arts (visual arts, music, theatre, dance, media arts and crafts). The formulation of learning objectives/outcomes is also different from country to country, in some cases, they are more related to the global level, and in some cases, they refer to a specific area. The goals to be achieved or the skills to be mastered are defined for each year of learning or for each education cycle, and they are, in some countries, similar and related to the previous and next cycle or year of learning.

Goals and tasks of cultural teaching curricula:

- Artistic skills, knowledge and understanding;
- Criticism (aesthetic analysis)
- Cultural heritage (and national identity)
- Individual expression/identity/development
- Cultural diversity (multiculturalism and identity/consciousness)
- Creativity (imagination, problem solving, willingness to experiment, taking risks and responsibilities)

The first six goals/outcomes of learning mentioned are in almost all art and cultural education curricula. These are quite general goals and are directly related to the art education. All the curricula refer to artistic skills, knowledge and understanding. Of these six goals, five countries do not include "creativity" in the curriculum. Artistic skills, knowledge and understanding are, generally speaking, the skills that form the basis of an "artistic language" (such as the understanding of colours, lines and shapes in visual arts or in music, listening, and instrumental performances). The development of artistic skills tends to include the learning of various artistic styles and genres. Artistic understanding tends to focus on artistic concepts, such as understanding the characteristics of various means of artistic expression or the relationship between the artist, his or her cultural and physical environment and his or her works. Critical thinking (aesthetic assessment) is one of six goals that are most frequently mentioned. It is especially concerned with raising awareness of students about basic characteristics of work and developing their capacity for critical assessment in assessing their own work or work of others.

The third goal common to almost all countries is to understand cultural heritage. In some cases, this goal is connected to the creation of cultural identity: the learning of cultural shapes and tends to evolve into student self-esteem as a citizen of a particular state or a member of the group. Understanding of cultural heritage is promoted through contact with works of art, as well as through learning the characteristics of works of art from different historical periods and works of specific artists.

Understanding cultural diversity is another goal that is common to most artistic and

cultural curricula. Promoting cultural diversity through art also requires raising awareness of cultural heritage and modern genres specific for different countries and cultural groups (sometimes with a special emphasis on European cultures).

The development of individual expression and the development of creativity are two other very widespread goals, although they appear in fewer countries. The development of individual expression of children and young people through art is closely connected to their emotional well-being. This type of goal is related to all art forms, especially visual arts. The development of creativity can be defined as the development of an individual's ability to participate in imaginative activity, whose product will be characterised by originality and value. Although its relationship with the development of the individual expression is obvious, the development of creativity is different enough to be considered a special type of artistic goal.

The remaining learning goals/outcomes can be grouped into two major categories: general goals (not closely related to the arts) of art and cultural curriculum, on the one hand, and specific goals explicitly related to the art education, on the other. The goal that most often refers to "social skills development" is identified in 26 curricula, generally speaking, this goal is more related to performing arts, especially to the theater. The least occurring goal is the development of "self-confidence and self-esteem" through participation in artistic activities, only in 15 curricula.

General objectives (which are not closely related to arts):
- Social skills/group work/socialisation/cooperative work
- Communication skills
- Enjoyment/satisfaction/pleasure/joy
- Variety and diversity in art; Engagement in different art forms media
- Performances and presentations (promoting students' own artistic work)
- Ecological awareness/conservation of nature

Learning goals/outcomes that are closely related to the arts:
- Confidence/respect
- Art and lifelong learning/interest
- Identifying the potential for art (ability/talent)

Learning goals/outcomes that are closely related to the arts and which are specific, exposure to various experiences and different means of artistic expression and skills in the performance or presentation of the work, are most often mentioned in the curriculum and are common to all forms of art. In the same category, the two goals commonly referred to as "Developing a lifelong interest in arts", in other words, encouraging students to participate in extra-curricular art activities and retaining this interest throughout their lives are mentioned in 15 countries.

Identifying artistic potential/talent occurs in only 6 teaching curricula. In addition to learning objectives identified as parts of the artistic and cultural curriculum, there are also learning objectives in a total teaching curriculum that can be connected to art and cultural education.

Several teaching curricula relate to the specific goal of encouraging inter-curricular connections between art and other subjects, and on the other hand, in a number of countries there are elements of the overall curriculum that relate to creativity and art.

Curriculum organization, integrated and separate curricula

We can notice that curricula include many separate subjects (mathematics, language, history, music ...) or wider learning areas (such as sciences, humanities and arts). In this regard, the field of art forms (such as visual arts, music, theater and dance) can be considered as belonging to the same "family" of artistic disciplines. This is reflected in the way the school curriculum is conceived at the national level (for example, the way in which official documents describe the curriculum).

There are two basic patterns that are evident in art grouping in the curriculum:

- Two or more essential artistic areas are conceived together as a separate area within the curriculum (eg, called "art") and separated from other areas of the curriculum. This type of conceptualisation, which observes the areas of the art form in relations with one another, can be described as "integrated" (integrative teaching, Vilotijević & Vilotijević, 2008a).

- Each subject of art is separately acknowledged in the curriculum (for example, Visual art or music in addition to other subjects, such as chemistry, history or mathematics), without any conceptual connections between them. Certain art forms may also be included in other (non-artistic) subject areas, regardless of whether the curriculum is designed to include integrated areas or consisting of separate subjects. For example, drama is often involved in language teaching, and dance is often integrated into physical education.

Little less than a half of the countries consider that art subjects should be integrated as "integrative" components of the entire curriculum, while the rest adopt the approach of a separate subject.

Compulsory and elective art subjects

In all countries, "art" as a curriculum area (which includes some but not necessarily all subjects: visual arts, music, crafts, theater, dance, media arts and architecture) are required at level ISCED[1]. In addition, in almost all countries "art" is also compulsory at level ISCED 2, with some exceptions at this level, meaning that the subjects are elective.

All the major art subjects defined in this study are compulsory in most countries in some form, and visual arts and music are compulsory in all.

In some countries, curriculum reform is under way, but this analysis does not include that and it is not discussed in detail, although changes that may occur may have an impact on teaching.

In curricula

The research has shown that art education has a relatively low status in the curriculum. The study has observed two main concepts, that art subjects are integrated or that every art subject is separate. A little less than half of the countries think that the art subjects should be integrated in the components of the entire curriculum, while the rest adopt the approach of a separate subject. In addition, in some cases art subjects are part of other compulsory subjects or areas of curriculum. The main art subjects are compulsory in most countries in some form, whereas visual arts and music are compulsory in all

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[1] ISCED - International Standard Classification of Education. ISCED 1: the duration of the program usually varies from four to seven years. The usual duration is six years; ISCED 2: the duration of the program usually varies from two to five years. The usual duration is three years.

countries. In addition, two thirds of the countries include crafts in the compulsory curriculum. In the great majority of countries, including theatre and dance, they are taught as part of other compulsory non-artistic subjects, usually teaching languages and physical education.

Objectives

This research has shown that there is a significant level of agreement between European countries on the basic goals of education in the field of art. Not surprisingly, all countries focus their art education curricula on developing artistic skills, knowledge and understanding of children and young people. Most of them also aim at developing critical thinking in their curricula in the field of art; Understanding cultural heritage and cultural diversity, individual expression; Development of creativity (imagination, problem solving, willingness to experiment, taking risk and responsibility). Other common goals are social skills, communication skills, enjoyment, engagement with various art forms and media, performance/presentation and ecological awareness.

However, the study also revealed several differences between countries, while some had more variations of goals than others. Three goals have been identified in less than half of the countries: self-confidence/self-esteem; promoting lifelong learning through art; and identifying artistic talent. Apart from learning objectives identified as a part of the curriculum, there are also goals that can be related to art and cultural education. Where countries set goals for the entire curriculum, they usually include cultural and creative goals, especially creativity, learning about cultural heritage and cultural diversity, and the development of individual expression.

Integrated/integrative teaching[2]

Contemporary education aims at interdisciplinary knowledge based on integrative and synthetic processes. Knowledge is integrated on the basis of interdisciplinary connections both horizontal and vertical, which should contribute to a comprehensive vision and a multi-aspect view of problems and phenomena in the environment.

There are several types of these connections, and didacticians consider the following four types to be the most important: Interdisciplinary direct connections in the teaching process; Research interdisciplinary direct connections; Mentally mediated connections and Indirectly applied connections. Interdisciplinary direct connections in the teaching process are established when the adoption of a material of one subject is based on the knowledge of the material from the second (Vilotijević & Vilotijević, 2008, 2008a).

The basis for integrative teaching consists of thematic units. Knowledge, which students acquire, should be connected in function and meaning, not that the content of a single subject is completely separate and unrelated to the contents of other subjects. Of course, it is not necessary at all costs to connect all the thematic units, but to do the connection wherever possible and where it will have a positive effect.

Integrative approach to learning emphasizes intellectual, social, emotional and aesthetic development, supports the overall development of students, and does not focus on isolated, mostly cognitive aspects. In the center of integrative learning is an individualised curriculum directed towards the student, not a curriculum directed towards the subject and guided by teachers. Integrative learning (learning based on cooperation in which concepts such as partnership, experiential and social learning are taken seriously) is initially directed towards co-organisation and co-responsibility, and then, gradually, towards

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[2] In the world the term *Integrated* is used. Vilotijević & Vilotijević (2008) use the term *Integrative Teaching.*

self-organisation and self-responsibility. They learn together, one from the other, and interactions are not solely directed by teachers.

In integrated teaching, curriculum instead of teaching subjects introduces teaching areas: the field of language, literature and communication; the field of social science and philosophy; the field of mathematics, natural science and technology; Physical and health education field and the field of Art.

Educational field of Art usually consists of: Visual arts, music, theater and play and thus process thematic units through these four parts of the field. From students, integration requires creativity, problem solving, perseverance, cooperation, and the ability to work with a greater number of ideas and concepts fused for the final product.

DBAE (Discipline Based Art Education)

Art education based on disciplines is a comprehensive approach to the art education of the Getty organization (The Getty, which includes an education institute for art) and advocates DBAE as an effective means by which students can experience visual art in various ways.

The DBAE approach integrates content from four disciplines that contribute to creating, understanding and evaluating art. These disciplines of art provide knowledge, skills and understanding that enable students to have a wide and rich experience with works of art and are adapted to specific levels of groups, grades and degrees:

- Artistic creativity - Students will learn skills and techniques to create a personal, original work of art.
- History of art - Students will study the artistic achievements of the past and present through styles, motives, techniques and themes, especially in relation to cultural, political, social, religious and economic circumstances.
- Art criticism - Students will describe, evaluate, consider the properties of works with the understanding and respect of the works of art and the understanding of the role of society in society.
- Aesthetics - Students will consider the nature, significance, influence and value of art, be encouraged to form criteria for the assessment of the works of art.

Teachers include paintings, drawings, sculptures and architecture in their lessons, furthermore they include applied, craft and folk art, ceramics, weaving and other textile arts, fashion design and photography. Students work and study various visual images and objects that carry a unique meaning for human beings from all cultures and times.

DBAE is an approach to learning and learning in art, not of a specific curriculum and program. It exists in many ways in order to meet the needs of the community in which it is taught. Examples of variation include the choice of one or more disciplines as a central or basic discipline to help students understand works of art; Including settings such as museums, galleries and genuine and original works that they collect or display; Integrating art with other subject areas; And with the help of modern technologies.

Teaching is conceptualized and focuses on students and their interests, judgments, ideas, and critical thinking. Teachers provide a wider picture, help them work, motivate, instruct, demonstrate processes and techniques.

CBAE (Choice Based Art Education)

CBAE-Choice Based Art Education is not a concept of a curriculum, it is a concept of

teaching realization and here it is referred to as a way of learning Art. This concept shares some ideas with the concept of teaching the *Art of Living (aesthetics of existence)* that we mentioned in the first part.

The student is an artist. This is the basis on which the concept of CBAE teaching is set. In an authentic environment, students have a control over topics, materials and approaches. The CBAE focuses on two elements: the development of students as artists and ensuring the right choice. The aim is for the student to research, experiment with his ideas and materials, create and make progress in accordance with his abilities and desires with the help of teachers and classmates. In the CBAE, the teacher provides the structure of the time, and the students themselves make their own plan and improvise, create.

CBAE transforms art classrooms into multifaceted learning centres where students work independently on art projects of their choice, with the guidance of teachers and classmates (independently or in a group) in an atmosphere of communion. The classroom is divided into centres and they contain all materials for different techniques and information on how to use materials, so that students can access materials without the help of teachers.

Students do not get lectures, they are never punished for something they didn't manage to learn or do, taking risks and failure, as long as they make progress, only when they come to a stop on their way, whatever they choose, does the teacher get involved, help and suggest. What the teacher seeks and evaluates at students is perseverance, commitment, dedication, advancement, thinking that can go in different directions.

Teacher's role- Teaching occurs in several forms indirectly and directly, demonstrations in front of the whole group, discussions, small groups of students who choose a certain way of producing and individual work (teacher-student). Each of these roles encourages students' independence. The role of teachers involves demonstrating, motivating, assisting, giving instructions, securing, organising content and changing content as a result of observation in the class.

Students' role - Students create homogeneous, cooperative, spontaneous groups within which information is exchanged, and students themselves provide numerous instructions.

There are numerous resources in the classroom, which are accessible to everyone, different techniques and materials, various sources of information relating to techniques, work practices, art history ... and they are available to students so that they can find a connection to what they do through reproductions, books, Internet and multimedia materials. There are numerous art concepts in front of students and they can choose to try something new every week, or to continue to work on a piece for a long time. The constant availability of different materials allows students to plan artistic activities in advance (Douglas, Jaquith, 2006).

P21 - 21st century Arts skills

Organisation *P21* has produced for NAEA (National Art Education Association) a document *21st century Arts skills,* and we present them here as an example of competences.

Communications in world nowadays are increasingly emphasizing the connection between multimedia and art. For both personal and professional success, it is important that students learn to critically interpret media messages, to transfer their ideas through art forms. All art media, both traditional and contemporary, offer powerful opportunities to nurture skills and articulate human expression. The ability of students to create and

express through art is one of the main traits of success in the 21st century.

Key student competencies listed in the document *21st century Arts skills* are**:**

Critical thinking and problem solving, students will use different types of reasoning to solve problems in the usual or innovative way.

Communication, students will communicate in different contexts through various artistic media, including technologies, know how to communicate their ideas and interpret the ideas of others.

Cooperation, students will work efficiently in a cooperative environment, will be able to share and accept responsibility, respectfully accept others' ideas to achieve a common goal.

Creativity, students will find inspiration through various sources, know how to evaluate them, come to a creative idea that will turn into personally meaningful products.

Innovation, students will explore processes, implement creative ideas, use traditional ideas to create new and existing works of visual and performing arts.

Media literacy, students will analyse and use the media, understand the functioning of the media and information, interpret them and evaluate them.

ICT literacy, students will use the technology to use technology effectively for research, access, creation and communication.

Flexibility and adaptability, students will be flexible and adapt to changes in different artistic contexts.

Initiative, students will be motivated to manage their goals to know how to use time effectively and continually progress as artists. Commitment to learning as a lifelong process.

Social and intercultural skills, students work productively to respect cultural and social differences in different teams.

Productivity and responsibility, students will set goals, accept responsibility and improve their work to meet high standards.

Leadership and responsibility, students will use art to inspire others, to know how to lead and optimize team members' skills in solving problems that benefit the wider community (NAEA / P21, 2010).

Conclusion

Different experts in the world are trying to predict what kind of competences will be required from future members of society in order to achieve success at workplace and at society in general. Education has to prepare students for this future world. Nenad Suzić points out that: "Today's educational system prepares children for life in the 21st century, for professional and working life that will take place in just 20 to 30 years. If now children at school acquire the knowledge they will need in 20 to 30 years, the school must realise what knowledge, skills and abilities are needed for free life at that time." (Suzić, 2005) Similarly, Ken Robinson says: "Nobody has an idea, despite all the expert opinions, what the world will look like in the future, and nevertheless, we need to educate children for this world. I think that creativity in education is as important as literacy and we should give it the same status" (Robinson, 2006).

Constanze Kirchner considers that school - and therefore the teaching of art - should be adapted to the current social and educational needs. With constant changes in our environment, today's childhood changes, not just habits. Types of media, various social conditions, have led to new ways of life and changed childhood experiences. Today's students live in a time that has powerful impact on them: with little free time, they are

often emotionally neglected, at a fast pace of life, parents torn apart in insecure living conditions, a collision of different cultures and various media influences, all of which characterize the heterogeneous conditions of life of today's students. Teaching is under the strong influence of competences and standards, on the one hand, and works of contemporary visual arts, works of different cultures, epochs and everyday visual information for which technical and visual requirements are to be met, on the other (Kirschner, 2013).

Children and young people should, first and foremost, through their personal creativity learn the meaning of arts and visual arts in different contexts of information and their mutual relations. Understanding and respecting the creative and visual art of various artifacts, processes and situations, indicating works, paintings, drawings, graphics, sculptures, photographs and film, thus also applying to all forms of design, architecture, digital art, expanded media, and popular culture.

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