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STUDENTS' ENGAGEMENT IN GOOGLE MEET SESSIONS AND ITS' IMPACT ON THEIR ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE: THE CASE OF MASTER'S ONE STUDENTS IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AT MOULOUD MAMMERI UNIVERISTY

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Abstract: The present research is a case study that looks at first-year Master's students' behavioural, cognitive, emotional, and agentic engagement in their online Google Meet classrooms The target population is Master's students in the Department of English, at Mouloud Mammeri University. The context of the study is mainly online e-learning classrooms in remote learning environments. To meet the goals of the present study, an engagement survey, attendance data, and test scores, are used to collect data on students' engagement. The primary tool used for data collection is a survey administered to 82 Masters' students. It is designed to gather quantitative data about students' engagement. Triangulation with observable behavioral data further supports the quantitative nature of the study. The four-dimentional model of students' engagement, as proposed by Reeve & Tseng (2011), is used to design the research instruments of the present study. The results indicate that 53.1% of the students have positive emotional engagement towards the use Google Meet as a learning and teaching platform. However, 53.2% of the students find it challenging to concentrate during online lessons and to retain what they have learned. Additionally, the data reveal that the students who regularly attended the online classrooms had better examination scores than the students who did not.

Keywords: Engagement; Google Meet; EFL, e-learning, the four-dimentional model

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1. Introduction

With the ever-increasing development of technology and its widespread presence in many universities, online teaching is more readily accepted as a viable solution for education. Likewise, remote learning and teaching have become commonplace in many higher education institutions. As noted by Boulkroun (2020), the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the adoption of digital platforms like Google Meet in Algerian universities, making remote learning a necessity rather than a choice. Nowadays, many university teachers resort to online platforms to deliver their lessons and enhance their students' online communication skills. In the case of Algerian universities, some courses must be delivered online despite the end of the Covid 19 pandemic, mainly the transversal units (les unités transversales). One of the key goals in promoting online learning and teaching becomes creating opportunities for students to be actively engaged in the online classroom. With the new changes in the modes of teaching and learning come the need to create a more effective learning environment.

Students' active engagement and participation, be it online or in face-to-face classrooms, are the goals that most teachers seek when imagining an ideal classroom. It is even more critical in online environments where students face numerous obstacles that can hinder their learning process. Though students' engagement in on-site classrooms is heavily researched, the impact of the online environment on students' involvement and participation remains an under-researched field of study (Huong, 2020). Numerous studies have shown that students' level of engagement changes based on numerous factors, such as the task difficulty (Davidson, 1999; Turner, Thorpe, & Mayer, 1998), and teachers' instructional methods and relationship with their students (Murray & Greenberg, 2000; Reeve, Jang, Carrell, Jeon, & Barch, 2004; Skinner, Furrer, Marchand, & Kindermann, 2008). Moreover, research comparing face-to-face and online courses has demonstrated that online courses can be as successful as traditional face-to-face courses in delivering instruction and engaging students (Maki & Maki, 2007; Robertson, Grant, & Jackson, 2005; Zhao, Lei, Lai, & Tan, 2005). In fact, engagement has been found to be a strong indicator of student learning, grades, and achievement (Connell et al., 1994; Skinner, Wellborn, & Connell, 1990 as cited in Skinner, 2008). Such studies support the idea that high-quality learning and academic success are the result of students' involvement with the learning material. Equally of great interest to researchers and practitioners is the impact that the instructional format can have on students' emotional, cognitive, behavioral, and agentic efforts to learn new material and skills.

The present research focuses on the synchronous meeting platform Google Meet as the main software used to mediate interactions between students and teachers. Research on its impact on students' engagement has been rather scarce, and the previous studies in this field of study were carried out during the Covid-19 pandemic period. Moreover, most studies on the effectiveness for synchronous platforms have focused on applications other than Google Meet, such as Zoom and Whatsapp (Budianto & Arifani, 2021; Nakhriyah & Muzakky, 2021). Besides, most studies concentrate on students' motivation, attitude and perception, rather than their active engagement in the online classroom (Alturki & Aldraiweesh, 2022; Marsini & Dwikoranto, 2022; Serhan, 2020; Daroedono et al., 2020).

The aim of the present study is twofold. First, the research aims at evaluating the effectiveness of Google Meet in promoting students' online classroom engagement, namely behavioral, cognitive, emotional, and agentic engagement. The second objective is to identify the impact that their engagement has on their academic performance, namely their examination scores. We hypothesis that online learning has a considerable influence on students' behavioural, cognitive, emotional, and agentic engagement.

To guide our study, the following research questions are raised:

1. How are first-year Master's students' behaviourally, cognitively, emotionally, and agentically engaged in their online Google Meet classrooms?
2. What is the impact that first-year Master's students' engagement in online lessons has on their academic performance, namely their examination scores?

2. Theoretical Background

2.1.Students' Engagement

Researchers from various disciplines have approached the conceptualization of students' engagement in many ways. Overall, Engagement can be described as "a multifaceted concept encompassing what and how students think, act, and feel in a classroom setting" (Oga-Baldwin & Nakata, 2017: 152). As for engagement in the field of language education, many experts have identified the concept as one of the most crucial steps in predicting how students succeed at languages in formal education settings. Lam, Wong, Yang, and Liu (2012) describe engagement as 'the central mediator between the external world that students experience, their internal processes, and their degree of achievement.' (as cited in Oga-Baldwin, 2019). Other researchers have used the term motivated behavior to describe what students do in the classroom, or actional phase, where learners are working actively on a task (Dörnyei, 2002). Overall, student engagement can be understood as their ability to put time, energy, thought, effort, and, to some extent, feelings into their learning.

2.2.Engagement vs Motivation

Though some researchers have used the two concepts of motivation and engagement interchangeably (Dörnyei, Ibraham, & Muir, 2015), many argue that a distinction needs to be made between the two concepts. When motivation can be associated with students' intent effort, engagement refers to what students actually do to further their learning (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004). It is also related to how they act, think, feel, and interact. In school settings, from preschool through higher education, what students actively do and what they think about, they eventually learn (Willingham, 2009, as cited in Oga-Baldwin, 2019). Kuh (2003) sees engagement as "the time and energy students devote to educationally sound activities" (p. 25). As a case in point, students may be motivated and excited to learn and work on a specific task, but that does not directly lead to active execution of the intended goals. They may start their academic year with positive affirmations and hope to achieve good results, only to end up procrastinating and diverting their attention to other forms of distractions. In this case their motivation says one thing, their engagement, and by extension their low grades show otherwise. As asserted by Oga-Baldwin "If motivation is will and intention, wanting and wishing, engagement is the moment when word turns to deed" (2019, p. 3).

Engagement is often related to the notion of flow (Hektner & Czikszentmihalyi, 1996). That said, a distinction can be made between the two. Flow can be viewed as a special case of high-quality engagement. It describes a state of optimal focus, enjoyment, and action, that is rarely experienced by an individual. Additionally, it may not be the ideal state for formal educational settings. The reason is that flow necessitates from learners to be working on tasks that are at the perfect level of difficulty with the perfect level of enjoyment. In fact, many factors must align to reach this state. When flow can be considered as a state of optimal engagement, it is not a prerequisite for learners to engaged in learning tasks. (as cited in Oga-Baldwin, 2019).

2.3.Types of Engagement

Following the above definitions, the concept of engagement in the sphere of language education consists of four dimensions. Initially, students' engagement has gone through a single dimension to multi-dimensional process in the literature. Early research tended to focus solely on the behavioral dimension, later appeared the emotional dimensions, and finally joined the cognitive and the agentic dimensions (Reeve & Tseng, 2011; Hu, 2017).

Behavioral engagement is the basic form of engagement. It is explicit and observable, and mainly includes student's specific behaviors in the learning process. The behavioral dimension of engagement comprises students' effort, attention, and persistence during the initiation and execution of learning activities (Hu & Li, 2017). Cognitive engagement primarily refers to the use of learning strategies, that is, students' grasp and control of their mental effort in learning. The use of different learning strategies leads to different levels of thinking. Emotional engagement mainly refers to students' emotional reaction, including interest, boredom, happiness, sadness and anxiety. Some scholars relate emotional engagement to a sense of belonging and values. The emotional dimension of engagement focuses on states that are relevant to students' emotional involvement during learning activities, such as enthusiasm, interest, and enjoyment (Meyer & Turner, 2002). A two-dimensional approach to engagement combines behavioral and emotional dimensions and refer to the active, goal- directed, flexible, constructive, persistent, focused, and emotionally positive interactions with the social and physical environments (in this case, academic activities) (Skinner et al., 2008). Moreover, Harter (1978) suggests that it is engaged emotions, such as interest and enthusiasm, that fuel engaged behaviors, such as effort and persistence (as cited in Skinner et al., 2008). Emotional engagement mainly refers to students' emotional reaction, including interest, boredom, happiness, sadness and anxiety, and some scholars understand emotional engagement into sense of belonging and values (Hu and Li, 2017). Last but not least, agentic engagement is when students actively request change in their learning environment. It helps students better contribute constructively into the flow of instruction they receive, as by personalizing and by enhancing the lessons and the conditions under which they learn (Reeve & Tseng, 2011).

3. Research Methodology

As previously stated, the present study attempts to measure what students do actively and in their thought processes, together with testing how they feel about their learning and the connections they are making with the lesson, the teacher, and other students in terms of, participation, contribution, and emotional engagement.

3.1.Context

In December 2022, the decision to teach transversal units online was made by the establishment of the Sectoral Commission for the Implementation and Monitoring of Distance Learning in Higher Education Institutions (CNEAD). The transition to remote learning was motivated by the need to cope with the new pedagogical and technological practices that the post Covid-19 world is witnessing (La Commission National de L'enseignement Supérieure à Distance, 2022).

Since the study focuses primarily on online e-learning classrooms, it is set within the context of remote learning. The students connect from their homes rather than attend in-person classes on campus. This remote setup is crucial for understanding the students' engagement levels, as it encompasses diverse home environments, technological access, and personal responsibilities that may impact their participation and learning experiences in the Google Meet classroom.

The e-learning subject aims to introduce students to the main concepts of online learning, language learning, and digital information literacy. The aim of the course is to help them understand the necessary information and digital skills required both as students and researchers, and familiarize them with the fields of Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) and Mobile-Assisted Language Learning (MALL). The second aim is to help students develop various computer software and digital literacy skills for their future academic projects.

Students have one online tutorial of an hour and thirty minutes per week. Prior to the online session, they receive a link to the Google Meet session, which they can access on the day of the lesson. The lesson begins with a brainstorming session, followed by the main content. The third part of the lesson is dedicated to a question-and-answer session, where students are assessed on their understanding of specific aspects of the lesson and can ask questions as needed. The lessons are recorded and shared on the university's Moodle platform for students to review at their convenience. A total of six lessons took place from May 8, 2023, to June 12, 2023, with sessions scheduled at 10 a.m. for the Language and Communication master's group and at 2 p.m. for the Didactics of Foreign Languages master's group.

3.2.Participants

The sample for this quantitative study included 82 master 1 students taking online e-learning courses over one semester at Mouloud Mammeri university in Tizi-Ouzou, Algeria. Only 32 students out of a total of 82 from the two masters of 'Didactics of Foreign Languages' and 'Language and communication' completed the survey. It is important to mention that M1 students had no previous experience using Google meet as an online platform in the previous years of their university studies.

3.3.Data Collection Tools and Procedures

To test our hypotheses a survey was designed to gather data about students' engagement. The survey consisted of 15 items, with 9 items measuring students' emotional engagement and 6 items measuring students' cognitive engagement. To do so, they reported on a 5-point Likert scale how well each behavior, thought, or feeling was characteristic of them or their behavior. Statements included descriptions of emotions such as "I enjoy using the Google meet platform"; cognitive engagement like "I find it hard to concentrate in Google meet lessons" and "I find it easier to remember what I have learned in Google meet lessons.

Since simple intent cannot and should not be used as the only means to indicate what learners do, students' self-reports were triangulated with their online behavior. A checklist was use to gather information about their observable behavioral and agentic engagement, such as their frequency of classroom attendance, their online oral and written participation, the feedback they shared with their teacher, and their final year test scores.

The students were invited to complete the survey online near the end of the second semester. They received an email with a link to the survey. Two reminder emails were sent during each of the following two weeks to non-respondents. The surveys were anonymous to ensure that students feel comfortable and confident that their responses would remain confidential.

4. Results and Discussion

The results of the students' engagement survey are displayed in the form of tables and graphs. The participants were asked to indicate on a five-point scale, which ranges from 1 "Strongly disagree'" to 5 "Strongly agree", the extent to which they agree or disagree with the items of the survey.

4.1.Students' Emotional Engagement

Table 1: *Students' Emotional Engagement with the Google Meet Lessons*

Survey's Items	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
I feel good when I study using Google Meet	9.4%	9.4%	21.9%	40.6%	18.8%
I find it more beneficial when I study using Google Meet	9.4%	28.1%	15.6%	34.4%	12.5%
I find the Google Meet online sessions more interesting	15.6%	9.4%	31.3%	40.6%	3.1%
I enjoy using the Google Meet platform	9.4%	15.6%	18.8%	50%	6.3%
I enjoy interacting with my class using Google Meet	9.4%	18.8%	12.5%	53.1%	6.3%
I get bored when I attend the Google Meet platform	6.3%	37.5%	15.6%	28.1%	12.5%
I find participating to online Google Meet classes to be stressful	18.8%	43.8%	12.5%	18.8%	6.3%
I find participating to online Google Meet classes to be anxiety-inducing	12.5%	43.8%	28.1%	15.6%	00%
I always look forward to Google Meet classes	9.4%	28.1%	28.1%	31.3%	3.1%

Table 1 presents data about the level of students' emotional engagement. Overall, the data reveal that students show positive emotions towards the use of Google meet as a learning and teaching platform. For instance, a large percentage of students agree with the following items: 'I enjoy interacting with my class using Google meet' (53.1%), 'I enjoy using the Google meet platform' (50%), 'I feel good when I study Google meet' (40.6%), and 'I find online Google meet sessions more interesting' (40.6%). Only a small percentage find the online lessons to be anxiety-inducing (15.6%).

4.2.Students' Cognitive Engagement

Table 2:*Students' Cognitive Engagement with the Google Meet Lessons*

Survey's Items	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
I find it hard to concentrate in Google Meet sessions	6.3%	31.3%	9.4%	21.9%	31.3%
I find it easier to understand the Google Meet lessons	18.8%	28.1%	25%	25%	3.1%
I find it easier to remember what I have learned in Google Meet lessons	12.5%	37.5%	21.9%	15.6%	12.5%
I find the Google Meet sessions interesting	9.4%	12.5%	25%	50%	3.1%
I find it easier to pay attention to what the teacher is saying in Google Meet sessions	18.8%	37.5%	6.3%	34.4%	3.1%
I find a way to make the Google Meet lessons relevant to my life	6.3%	15.6%	31.3%	37.5%	9.4%

Interestingly, data in table 2 reveal that most students struggle to concentrate in the online lessons and remember what they have learned in the Google meet lessons. An important number of students disagree with the following statements 'I find it easier to remember what I have learned in Google meet lessons' (37.5%) and 'I find it easier to understand the Google meet lessons' (28.1%). Besides, 31.3 % of students strongly agree with the statement 'I find it hard to concentrate in Google meet session'.

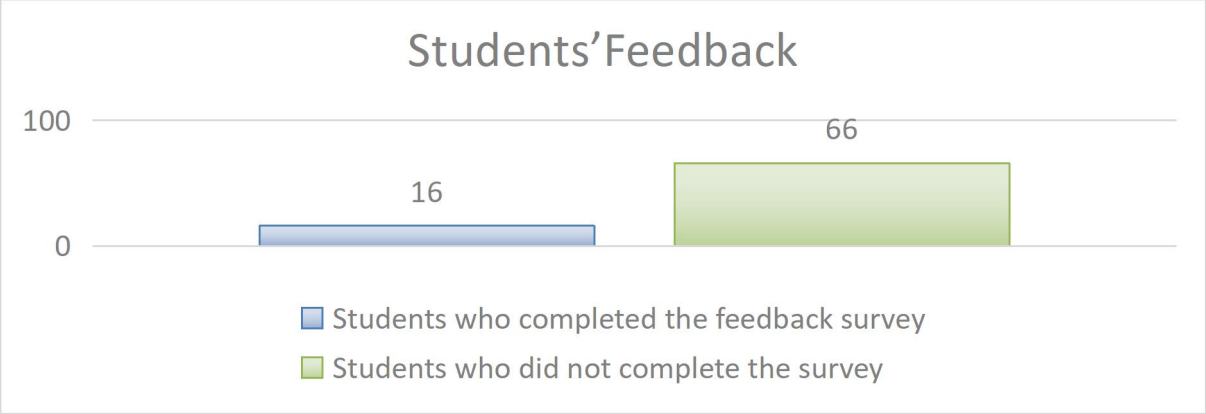
4.3.Students' Behavioral Engagement

Table 3: *Students' Behavioral Engagement with the Google Meet Lessons*

Online Lessons	Attendances	Participation (Chat box)	Participation (Oral)
Lesson 1	21/41	8	3
Lesson 2	19/41	6	3
Lesson 3	19/41	3	1
Lesson 4	15/41	10	2
Lesson 5	10/41	3	0
Lesson 6	26/41	8	3

Table 3 provides information about master students' behavioral engagement. A class of 41 students was regularly tracked, and their active involvement was quantified. It is clear from the data that a very limited number of students regularly attend the online classrooms. The number of students who actively participate in the chat box and orally is even smaller. The number of students who use the chat box to write their questions and comments ranges between 3 and 10. As for the number of students who use the microphone, it does not exceed 3. For instance, table 3 shows that out of 21 students who were present, only 8 actively participated in the chat box, and three used the Google Meet microphone to interact with their teacher and classmates. The smallest number of participations is to be found in lesson 5, where only 3 students use the chat box, and no student makes the effort to participate orally.

4.4.Students' Agentic Engagement



Graph 1: *Students' Agentic Engagement with the Google Meet Lessons*

The aim of the feedback survey is to test students' ability to contribute constructively into the design of the lessons they receive, as by actively personalizing them and by improving the conditions under which they learn. A very small number of students 16 out of 82 students have taken the time to complete the feedback survey, indicating that many are not interested in contributing in the design of the online lessons.

4.5.Students' Agentic Engagement: their Feedback

The students who took the time to complete the feedback survey shared some recommendations to improve the quality of the online lessons as cited below:

- Everything is good
- Personally, I would suggest giving a chance to everyone to speak and in turn not in an anarchically ... that way everyone feels included and sort of contributed to the online session...
- I'd suggest students raising their hands by clicking on the "hand" bottom whenever they would like to say/ask something, for a well-organized meeting
- I think everything is good at home everyone has his own computer without sharing the same as we do in the computer room.
- More Time to take notes about the given lesson
- I enjoyed the online session. I hope we can continue to study this way.
- Fun activities would be great for our online sessions.
- In my opinion It is better to give the student the chance to elaborate by asking questions repeatedly.

Out of the eight responses, five students have shared critical recommendations and suggestions that can help improve the quality of the lessons. Three students did not provide

actual insights that aim at changing or contributing to a smooth, easy and more effective progress of the lessons.

4.6.The Relation between Students' Engagement and their' Academic Achievement

Table 4: *The Relation between Students' Engagement and their' Academic Achievement*

Students (present)	**Score**	**Students (absent)**	**Score**
Student 1	12	Student 6	7
Student 2	13	Student 7	6
Student 3	13.5	Student 8	10
Student 4	15	Student 9	9
Student 5	9	Student 10	9

Table 4 reveals data about the scores of students based on their attendance. As can be noticed, the five students who were regularly present during the Google meet session have scores ranging from 9 to 15, with Student 4 scoring the highest at 15 and Student 5 the lowest at 9. Conversely, the five students who were absent have scores ranging from 6 to 10, with Student 8 achieving the highest score of 10 and Student 7 the lowest at 6.

5. Discussion

Overall, the results of the study bring valuable insights into EFL students' active behaviour, emotion, and cognition when using Google meet as a synchronous learning platform and how their engagement influences their learning outcomes. The findings reveal that most students exhibit positive emotions towards the use of Google meet for their online classes, and only a small minority find it anxiety-inducing (See table 1). The findings corroborate the results of Irzawati's study (2021). After interviewing and administering questionnaires to 79 EFL university students from three faculties of three universities, the research concludes that the students perceived the use of the digital platforms, namely Learning Management System, Whatsapp, and Google Meet, in EFL learning environment positively. It also goes in line with Daoudi's conclusion that students consider Google Meet to be suitable platform (Douadi, 2024).

It may be pertinent to take into account that students' emotional engagement could have been influenced by the novelty of the online lesson. Peterson (2013) refers to the tendency of individuals to idealize every new technological invention as the false down phenomenon. It shows the pervasive influence of the belief that technological advances are in themselves beneficial (Stockwell 2007 as cited in Peterson, 2013). On the other hand, the overwhelming majority of students affirm that they lack cognitive engagement and struggle to concentrate online. Such outcomes may be due to their lack of familiarity with the online platform layout, which may in turn lead to cognitive overload. Pratolo et al. (2024) and Marzulina et al. (2023) reached similar conclusions in their studies. Pratolo et al. (2024) found that 53.2% Indonesian EFL learners affirm struggle to concentrate and maintain focus during Google Meet sessions, echoing Marzulina et al.' (2023) findings where students perceive the platform as ineffective due to decreased engagement.

Table 3 reveals that an important number of students do not attend the online lessons regularly. The reason why many students choose not to attend the online classrooms are manifold. Technical barriers, such as unreliable internet connectivity—a issue underscored by Boulkroun (2020) in the Algerian context—may explain low student attendance and engagement in online sessions. In countries such as Algeria, where consistently reliable

internet connections are not a given, technical challenges can be an issue for students and may prove disruptive to timely online study. The final results reveal that students who attended online lessons outperformed those who were absent in their examination scores. Hrastinski (2009) defines online learner participation as “a process of learning by taking part and maintaining relations with others. It is a complex process comprising doing, communicating, thinking, feeling and belonging, which occurs both online and offline” (p. 81). The findings reinforce the idea that online learning environments foster social presence and community, as well as facilitate meaningful interactions. These conditions enhance the likelihood of significant learning outcomes. To be sure, researchers emphasize the importance of social presence as key factors in student’s participation and engagement. They have shown that social presence is positively associated with students' learning and their feeling of connection within the online class (Shea et al., 2006). As demonstrated by Oussou (2020), students who actively use ICT tools like Google Meet and YouTube exhibit higher levels of autonomy, which aligns with our findings on students' behavioral and cognitive engagement in online sessions.

6. Conclusion

The findings of the research highlight the importance of students’ effective use of Google Meet as a learning platform, and their high engagement as a contributing factor in enhancing their academic performances. The results demonstrate that, while EFL students exhibit positive emotions towards the use of the online platform, they face difficulties engaging cognitively with it. The study also reveals that the students who were present to online classes performed considerably better than the students who did not use the platform.

The significance of the study is to aid research on online course design and to provide feedback to instructors regarding their students’ level of engagement. Moreover, the research instrument used to evaluate students’ engagement in online classrooms can be especially useful in providing feedback before and after course design, to increase student involvement, which can in turn lead to high-quality learning.

The current study is not free from limitations that must be addressed. To be sure, not all types of engagements have been considered. For instance, silence, social, and long-term engagements are worth investigating. Additionally, a larger and more diverse sample would lead to stronger and more generalizable conclusions. Third and equally important, when the present research aimed at identifying students’ level and type of engagement online, the question of why students are or are not engaged remain uunexplored. To overcome this limitation, we suggest teachers design a survey that can allow them to understand their students source of engagement. Indeed, students can share valuable feedback and recommendations that can bridge the gap between their preferences and teachers’ practices.

To conclude, in countries whereby demands for online components in courses are new, adequate training in use of online platforms and how to integrate online tools and methodologies in learning must be made available to language professionals by their institutions, and adequate internet quality must be provided. Furthermore, instructors and students must take responsibility to engage fully in online teaching and learning opportunities. Online lessons should be implemented with the aim of delivering an engaging and interesting lesson that enables students to learn effectively and succeed academically. We also recommend breaking lessons into shorter segments, using various features and extension to make the lessons more interesting and engaging, such as the implementation of polls and quizzes.

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