Proceedings of the TESOL Kuwait 2023 Hybrid Conference

Language Education in a Hybrid World: Obstacles and Opportunities

February 17 and 18, 2023

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MISSION STATEMENT

TESOL Kuwait's Mission, Goals, and Practices

TESOL Kuwait is a growing community of English Language Teaching (ELT) teachers with over 400 members in Kuwait and the Arabian Gulf region. Our activities are based in Kuwait, where we are registered as a non-profit volunteers' team. We have an Executive Board and a Board which takes care of the activity run by the team. We also have a number of Special Interest Groups and volunteers who handle mailings and the conference. Our mission is to 'Connect, support, and assist the progress of English Language Teaching professionals in Kuwait and the Arabian Gulf region' through providing our members with:

- An annual international conference and an exhibition with an extensive programme of talks and workshops, which attracts over 300 delegates
- Special Interest Groups (SIGs) to help teachers develop their own professional areas of interest
- Links with other Teachers' Associations throughout the world for members to share knowledge and experience and join a wider community
- A blog on our website and a forum open for discussion with members
- Webinars and an annual conference

Our Wider Mission

- In addition to meeting the professional development needs of its members, TESOL Kuwait helps to serve the needs of the wider ELT community through:
- To work cooperatively toward the improvement of instruction in all programs which seek to provide learners with an opportunity to acquire English language skills and proficiency;
- To provide opportunities for study and research;
- To encourage professional development, participation, and leadership at the local, national, and international levels;
- To promote intercultural understanding and effective cross-cultural communication;
- To cooperate in appropriate ways with other groups having similar concerns;
- To promote TESOL vision and values in Kuwait.

Our Goals and Our Practices

Our goal is to provide general support in helping teachers and ELT professionals in their professional development, and to provide a platform where they can offer their views, exchange research and, learn from each other in the field of professional development. We feel strongly that all ELT professionals should be respected and that everyone has the right to be treated fairly and as such we aim to be an inclusive association which welcomes diversity and respectful debate. However, we do not get involved in specific campaigns, issues, or politics, at a local, national or international level, and do not favour or prioritise the needs of one group of teachers over another. Our goal is to provide a forum where educators from anywhere in the area can come together to learn from each other and to offer mutual professional support. As such, we are willing to work with any associations or organizations who share similar philosophies.

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2022-2023 EXECUTIVE BOARD

MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT

On behalf of TESOL Kuwait, I am delighted to welcome you to our 2023 Hybrid Conference, which is sponsored by Kuwait Technical College and Cambridge University Press & Assessment. We're especially honored to be joined today by Dr. Anwaar Alkdandari, representing Ktech, and Ms. Karen Ryan from Cambridge University Press & Assessment. I also want to acknowledge our guests from schools and universities here in Kuwait. It is a further pleasure to welcome you teachers who are joining us today, particularly those who have prepared papers and workshops.

Our goal is to provide an enriching and enjoyable experience for all participants and to promote professional development for English language teachers. The theme for this year's conference is Language and Education in a Hybrid World: Opportunities & Obstacles. We are confident that you will find the sessions and activities at this conference to be both informative and inspiring as you navigate your way through this hybrid world. We look forward to an engaging and educational event.

In closing, I want to thank TESOL Kuwait's executive board and Ktech faculty, administrators, and staff for their hard work to make this conference a success. I especially thank you for being part of this TESOL Kuwait Conference!

Ann Newman

Ann Newman, President
TESOL Kuwait

MESSAGE FROM CONFERENCE CO-CHAIR

On behalf of the organising committee, it is my great pleasure to welcome you to the TESOL Kuwait 2023 conference. This year's conference promises to be an exciting and engaging event, bringing together experts, educators, researchers, and professionals from around the world to share ideas, discuss new trends, and collaborate on innovative approaches to language teaching and learning.

Our theme this year, "Language Education in a Hybrid World: Obstacles & Opportunities" is both timely and relevant, given the ongoing global changes after the pandemic and the rapidly evolving technological advancements. We believe that this conference provides a unique opportunity to explore new ideas, approaches, and technologies that can help us overcome the challenges of language teaching and learning in today's complex and globalising world.

We are thrilled to have an impressive lineup of keynote speakers, plenary sessions, and workshops that will address a wide range of topics related to language teaching and learning. Additionally, we have organized several events and webinars to help you network, share experiences, and build new connections with colleagues from around the world.

I look forward to seeing you all in Kuwait and to the exciting discussions, presentations, and collaborations that will undoubtedly emerge from this year's conference.

Best regards,

Abdullatif Alshatti, Conference Co-Chair
TESOL Kuwait

MESSAGE FROM CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS & ASSESSMENT

Cambridge University Press & Assessment would like to thank the TESOL Kuwait President, Ann Newman, and the Conference Co-Chair, Abdullatif Al-Shatti, for inviting Cambridge to be the headline sponsor of the 9th annual TESOL Kuwait conference. It has been an honour to partner with such an illustrious teachers association that is so active in advancing PLD in Kuwait and the wider region.

This year we were delighted to sponsor five keynote speakers at the conference: Cambridge ELT author, Scott Thornbury, who presented on the topic of grammar and lexis, Cambridge colleague Kasia Brzoska, Digital Transformation Expert on engaging students in digital interactions; Dr Hisham AlSaghbini, Assessment & Recognition Manager on Learning Oriented Assessment; Darren Perrett, Senior Performance and Sales Support Manager on aligning tests to the CEFR; and Peter Lucantoni, Professional Learning and Development Manager, on Teacher Learning.

We recently celebrated its first anniversary as a single organisation. By bringing together our publishing and assessment, Cambridge University Press & Assessment is now creating better support for teaching, more confidence to learning, more assurance to assessment and greater innovation from research.

We continue to be part of the University of Cambridge and exist to further its mission, which is to contribute to society through the pursuit of education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

For Cambridge University Press & Assessment - English, language is at the heart of being human and we believe that English can unlock a lifetime of experiences. Together with teachers and our partners, we're here to engage and inspire millions of people throughout their learning journey, to help them prove their skills to the world.

With this in mind, we hope that our contribution to this year's conference added to the rich professional development content on offer and provided a flavour of the many benefits which Cambridge University Press & Assessment brings to English language learning and teaching.
Thank you TESOL Kuwait for this opportunity and we look forward to developing our partnership in future conferences!

With best wishes,

Karen Ryan
Learning & Assessment Consultant – Gulf
Cambridge University Press & Assessment

CAMBRIDGE

MESSAGE FROM KUWAIT TECHNICAL COLLEGE

Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen!

It gives me great pleasure to extend to you all a very warm welcome on behalf of Kuwait Technical College. Before we kick start the conference,

I would like to express my gratitude towards TESOL, we feel extremely ecstatic to have been given the opportunity to host this conference in *collaboration and sponsorship with Cambridge University Press & Assessment with providing such knowledgeable expertise. * This gratitude is also to you all who sincerely contributed to this event in order to make it a success. This wouldn't have been possible without the support of each and everyone attending here, and for those who are in Kuwait we are looking forward to welcoming you in person tomorrow at ktech campus.

The main aim of the conference is to enhance and develop a new understanding of different types of communication and other cultures by teaching English as a foreign language. In fact, teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages is important to ktech as our educational programs are in English and it is the international language of communication. Actually, in both the private and public sectors, there is demand for professionals with strong language skills who can work in culturally diverse environments. Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) is a practical branch of applied linguistics and our focus at ktech is on helping you put the skills you learn to practical use in the world of work. Today TESOL experts will help you understand language learning and teaching approaches, as well as the English language itself.

This is all from my side and thank you for being such patient listeners!

Hope you all have a great and fruitful day.

Best wishes,

Dr. Anwaar Alkandari
Head of Research
Kuwait Technical College

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

Scott Thornbury
Cambridge University Press & Assessment
The Twilight Zone: Between Grammar and Lexis
Traditionally, language syllabuses make a distinction between grammar, on the one hand, and vocabulary, on the other. But this compartmentalization ignores the fact that there is a huge body of multi-word items – variously known as formulaic expressions, lexical chunks, constructions, and so on – that don't lend themselves easily to either category. In this talk I'll review the evidence for these phenomena, and show how they contribute both to fluency and to language acquisition, and speculate as to how they might be integrated into the second language curriculum and classroom practice.

Darren Perrett
Cambridge University Press & Assessment
Aligning Tests to the CEFR
The Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) (COE, 2001) was developed in order to align language testing across Europe, providing a mental framework that enables people to say where they are on a common scale: common reference levels (A2-C2).

In 2003 and later in 2009 the Council of Europe produced a supporting manual which would allow language examination boards to align language examinations to the CEFR (COE, 2009). This manual adopted five inter-related approaches: Familiarisation; Specification; Standardisation; Standard Setting; Validation.

In this presentation we will discuss the above approaches that users are advised to follow in order to design a linking scheme in terms of self-contained, manageable activities. CEFR alignment is part of a wider validation study which language tests providers should provide evidence for when building a validation argument. It is one of the last validation research projects that should be carried out under what is known as criterion-related validity (Weir, 2005). However, in order for test scores to be interpreted by external stakeholders it is a vital piece of work, albeit equal in importance as all other validity.

Prof. Hashim AlSaghbini
Cambridge University Press & Assessment
Learning Oriented Assessment: Applications in the Classroom
Teacher learning, or education, or training, is a critical element in any teacher's professional development. This session discusses the aims of teacher learning, what we are striving for, and the benefits in terms of classroom impact. We will consider a four-step process to support teachers' professional development and the organisations that they work for, and define three elements for successful teacher training input: personal, professional, practical (Ellman & Lucantoni, 2022).

Chris Graham
ELT Footprint
The Great Reset: How Covid-19 Has Changed the Way We Teach and Learn English
Covid-19 has changed the way we work. This session will explore how the experiences of learners and teachers have changed, focus on those changes that are beneficial to us and and may become part of our practices, and engage with the changes that have had negative impacts on our community.

Kasia Brzoska
Cambridge University Press & Assessment
Engaging students in meaningful digital interactions
New advancements in technology mean that we're constantly bombarded with attractive digital tools that promise to keep students engaged and motivated. But how do you cut through this digital noise and focus on what's meaningful and truly adds value to the learning process? Are there any specific digital interactions that can help improve learning outcomes? Join Kasia to explore these and other questions related to digital learning. We'll examine how insights from digital pedagogy can make teaching with technology more meaningful and we'll look at some practical examples from Cambridge One to see how this this can be applied in practice.

Peter Lucantoni
Cambridge University Press & Assessment
A Recipe for Teacher Learning
Teacher learning, or education, or training, is a critical element in any teacher's professional development. This session discusses the aims of teacher learning, what we are striving for, and the benefits in terms of classroom impact. We will consider a four-step process to support teachers' professional development and the organisations that they work for, and define three elements for successful teacher training input: personal, professional, practical (Ellman & Lucantoni, 2022).

Hussain Al Sharoufi
Gulf University for Science and Technology, Kuwait
The Downfall of Dogmas in English Language Teaching: Pragmatic Grammar as a New Approach to Teaching Contextualised Language
There is a strong affinity between theory and practice and teaching English as a foreign language, TEFL, is the best area where TEFL practice is heavily impacted by theory. Over the last fifty years, the linguistic theory has undergone several upheavals that have paved the way for the emergence of certain dogmas that have severely affected ELT practice afterwards. Formal language theories are principally based on two important pillars, the first of which is decontextualisation, and the second of which is reductionism. These two pillars have negatively affected the linguistic theory and have hindered any development of a genuine sociocultural understanding of language, creating thus grave dogmas in linguistics and in TEFL. With the emergence of pragmatics in the sixties and cultural linguistics in the 90s, a new approach to linguistics was born, and as such

a new ray of hope for breaking linguistic dogmas appeared. In this talk, I will focus on the new outcomes of cultural linguistics and pragmatics in envisaging a new era of effective English language teaching, away from the shackles of linguistic dogmas that hinder foreign students from learning and producing English naturally. Non-native students of English need to construe the sociocultural context in second language learning and should develop an awareness of using language effectively in appropriate situations. Grammar, as such, should be taught as a spring of water serving the communicative purposes of non-native speakers. English teachers thus should not be teaching sporadic sentences, simply to show their students how phrase structure rules operate. Rather, the mechanics of language should be presented to students as helpful tools to achieve communicative goals. This is achieved through observing the following:

1. Identifying causes of non-native speakers' mistakes when communicating their messages in English,
2. Developing pragmatic repertoires as instructional components,
3. Developing tests based on gauging pragmatic skills,
4. Helping non-native speakers to be strategically aware of using pragmatic acts in real-time situations,
5. Incorporating technology into teaching pragmatic skills.

In a nutshell, if English teachers really want their non-native students to excel at performing English naturally, they should pay heed to the crucial importance of pragmatics and its role in creating a communicative confluence in English language teaching and learning.

Developing Professional Communicative Competence with Wordwall

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Abstract

Presenters will concentrate on expanding English vocabulary through the use of software programs such as Wordwall. Software like Wordwall helps EFL learners build memory techniques, enhance creativity, and reduce anxiety. The educators will share their expertise by developing a number of interactive vocabulary-based exercises on Wordwall and other such kind of educational software.

Keywords: English as a foreign language (EFL), Wordwall, vocabulary

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Cultural Representation: Arab Women Writing the Self and the Other

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Abstract

How do Arab women image and imagine the Arab self and the Western other in their writings? The politically sensitive relationship between Arabs and the West, with a long history of imperialism and colonialism, makes any contact between the two a lot more complicated than a simple encounter between two topographies. These encounters are mostly affected by ideological preconceptions that have been constructed of both, thus generating what came to be known as the "Orient" and the "Occident."

Keywords: Arab women, cultural struggle, Arab identity

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Writing Practices Post COVID-19: Exploring Third Grade Teachers' Perceptions

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Abstract
This qualitative study explores third-grade English language teachers' perceptions of writing practices and challenges prior to, during, and post COVID-19 in the UAE. The findings show that post-Covid writing challenges have significantly increased. Pedagogical and remedial implications have been taken to bridge the gap between virtual and face-to-face writing instructions.

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Using Etymology as a Deliberate Vocabulary Learning Approach: A Psycholinguistic Analysis

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Abstract
Whilst formal classrooms are inadequate to teach the needed amount of vocabulary due to time constraints, language learners are encouraged to take the vocabulary learning process outside the classroom domain. Additionally, vocabulary learning has always been accompanied by the problem of retention. The prominence of the etymological approach as a deliberate vocabulary learning technique is ascribed to two theoretical accounts in which language learners' vocabulary size and lexical retention are advanced, namely, the schema theory and the dual coding theory. Therefore, the etymological approach not only helps learners' retention, but also equips English language learners with a decoding tool in which unknown words can be deciphered and interpreted from their building blocks.

Keywords: Vocabulary, etymology, psycholinguistic, dual coding theory, schema theory, retention

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Strategies for Teaching Writing to Arab Learners in an ESL/EFL Context

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Abstract
Investigating the various aspects of teaching academic writing to Arab students in the ESL/ EFL classroom is crucial, as the key differences outnumber the similarities in terms of the linguistic features between both languages. The study examines how students can transfer and improve their academic writing skills by using the various writing techniques that should be employed and embedded within other basic skill areas, such as reading, speaking, listening and grammar. Questionnaire 1 includes closed questions distributed to 20 foundation students, studying in a university level in Kuwait. The findings show the importance of explicit rule teaching of grammar in writing tasks for EFL foundation students at an elementary, low- intermediate, and intermediate level. The findings also suggest that giving direct corrective feedback assists students immensely in improving their academic writing skills.

Keywords: Explicit, implicit teaching, patch writing, plagiarism, direct and indirect corrective feedback

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Enhancing Language Teaching to Millennials

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Abstract

To successfully teach post-millennials teachers must take into consideration their characteristics such as the absence of the need to remember anything by heart as the information may be found online, clip thinking and switching back and forward between topics easily. Such characteristics lead to changes in teaching, which now has to be based on a spiral (sticky) curriculum, visualization and scaffolding of learning material and categorization of topics. It can be done with the help of meta-cognitive schemes. In this presentation, the material will be organized in a metacognitive scheme, and participants will go through the stages of learning to understand the effective ways of teaching post- millennials.

Keywords: Post-millennial, meta-cognitive schemes, scaffolding

Leading a School Transformation by Creating an Environment of Trust and Collaboration: An Autoethnography

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Abstract

School leadership is critical in ensuring the education system's effectiveness, both in quality and quantity. A leader in a school may play a significant role in creating a conducive environment for students, teachers, staff, parents, and other stakeholders. This paper reports a case of a school principal who, in her own words, recounts her experiences of leading the school's transformation from an ordinary public school to a nationally recognized one within three years of her tenure. We used autoethnography as a genre of writing personal, evocative narratives to portray the transformative leadership experience. The first author wrote the autobiographical vignettes, placing her personal experiences into the social, cultural, and historical context of the United Arab Emirates. Then, the second author interpreted these narrative experiential anecdotes, connecting the critical nodal moments with the theory of critical transformative leadership to make sense of personal experiences within the social, cultural, and historical context. The thematic interpretive portrayals reveal four key moments of transformative school leadership practices— Accepting Challenges amid Uncertainty: Experience as a Novice School Leader; Building Relationships, Gaining Trust, and Dealing with Challenges; Dreaming of a Model School and Exposure to the Environment; and Successful Keys to Leading Change and Vision for the Future. We have discussed some practical implications of these themes.

Keywords: School leadership, leading change, transformative leadership, public school, UAE

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Investigation into Instructors' Perceptions of L1 Use in EFL Classrooms

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Abstract

Due to alterations in foreign language educational strategies, the utilization of the L1 has invariably been one of the most contentious topics in the field. The purpose of this research was to investigate instructors' perceptions about employing students' L1 in language classrooms and which specific methods they favor using L1.

This study included a sample of 262 instructors from various universities in Istanbul. An online questionnaire was administered to the participants in order to explore instructors' perceptions. The survey that was implemented in the research was qualitative in terms of open-ended questions and quantitative in terms of closed items. The gathered qualitative data were analyzed using grounded theory, while the gathered quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS 22. In this regard, this research employs a mixed method design that includes both quantitative and qualitative data.

The results indicated that instructors had unfavorable perceptions despite their positive responses to the open-ended question about their views toward the use of L1. Furthermore, using learner's L1 served distinct purposes in the teaching and learning procedure, such as "assisting low proficiency students", "bonding with students", and so on. As a result, the current study found that using students' L1 might play an important role in language classrooms.

Keywords: Teachers' perceptions, L1 use, Target language

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Five Ways to Take Language Off the Page

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Abstract

This session aims to share a set of low-preparation activities that will allow teachers to bring language work off the coursebook page. It involves all four macro skills, and it encourages students to use their creativity and work collaboratively on tasks that can easily be adapted to different levels and topics, although there are some suggestions regarding the vocabulary items and grammatical structures that can be revised or recycled with them.

Keywords: Macro skills, creativity, vocabulary, grammatical structure

What Is Beyond the Degree Matters

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Abstract
After the huge achievement of getting our degree in English language and being ELTs, we sometimes find ourselves not ready yet to handle the teaching process in its best ways inside the classroom, and sometimes we struggle to find the best lead-in and activities to cover the curriculum points perfectly.

Keywords: ELT

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Game-Based Learning vs. Game-Assisted Learning Workshop

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Abstract
Irrespective of the learner's age, fun, playfulness, and games enhance attention, recognition, and retention of acquired knowledge and skills. However, it requires a lot of practice to apply and adapt games to the classroom. Participants will play and assess (educational) games and playful activities in this workshop.

Keywords: Games, adapting games, game-based learning, game-assisted learning

Promoting the Oral Reading Fluency of EFL Students through Reading Progress

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Abstract
In acknowledging oral reading fluency as an integral part of reading ability in EFL learning, the presentation introduces Reading Progress in Microsoft Teams to foster immediate corrective feedback through assessing oral reading accuracy and tracking individual progress overtime. The presentation also discusses pedagogical implications in the existing curriculum.

Keywords: Reading fluency, reading progress

Motivating Language Learning via Popular Culture in Arab Classrooms

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Abstract
Students often struggle to motivate themselves when it comes to foreign language acquisition. This presentation aims to highlight how students in the Arab world can feel motivated when practical teaching materials and exercises link popular culture to language; it additionally identifies areas of weakness in current widespread teaching materials. This presentation will offer pedagogical suggestions in line with recent research on the effects of popular culture in the language classroom.

Keywords: Foreign language acquisition, Arab classrooms, motivation

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CPD That INSPIREs

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Abstract
INSPIRE helps institutions approach CPD (continuing professional development) in a systematic way, ensure that it meets their long-term objectives, teachers' aspirations, and addresses the reality on the ground (students' needs). This session will present INSPIRE as a model and go through the steps of building an efficient CPD program.

Keywords: INSPIRE, CPD program

An Analysis of Arab Undergraduate Students' Writing Performance: Applying the SWOT Framework

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Abstract

This study was conducted to explore and analyse the writing skill proficiency of undergraduate Arab Business students using the SWOT framework "strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats." An analysis of a written corpus of 80 students' written analytical essays was thoroughly conducted. The participants were business major students enrolled in a writing course at the Open Arab University in Kuwait. The research is still undergoing.

Keywords: Writing skill proficiency, SWOT

Utilizing Innovative Technologies in Education

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Abstract

Today's learners are very different from older generations. Not only are they tech savvy, but also they have short spans of attention if something isn't interesting to them. Using innovative technologies in education can effectively increase learners' motivation and engagement in the classroom.

Keywords: Motivation, technology in education

Activating and Motivating Students Through Gamification

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Abstract
Gamification has been significantly used in classes. Companies have already been applying it to break employees' boredom and motivate them. However, we find that it is often not fully understood and that many teachers are confused between gamification and game-based learning. Therefore, it's important to identify them and their uses to be applied effectively in classrooms with students.

Keywords: Gamification, game-based learning

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