
TOWARDS A FILIPINO CONCEPTUALIZATION OF CREATIVITY¹

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One objective of a dissertation research entitled, "Creativity in Different Fields Among Young Adults" (Bartolome, in progress) is to look into the Filipino conceptualization of creativity from the nominators' viewpoint. There were 47 nominators from different fields consisting of deans/directors, department chairmen, professors, guidance counselors and advisers of student organizations who recommended 482 students with creative potentials to participate in the aforementioned study.

Their conceptualizations were explained in a questionnaire that asked them to indicate their reasons for their nominations and their own conceptualizations of the term "creativity." In cases where their responses were vague, clarification was sought through follow-up interviews.

The results of the questionnaire and interviews are summarized in three parts: (1) Conceptual Definitions of Creativity (Table I), (2) Characteristics of Creative Individuals (Table II) and (3) Climate of Creative Development (Table III). Commonalities and differences in conceptualizations across fields of specializations are then discussed and summarized.

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Conceptual Definitions of Creativity

The statements summarized in Table I express some definitions of creativity forwarded by the 47 nominators from different fields of specialization.

From these statements one can see that the Filipino concept of creativity are as varied as what authorities in the field (Torrance, 1951; Guilford, 1959; Osborn, 1963; Gordon, 1961; Young, 1985; Charles, 1980; and Brownlee, 1985) say about creativity. Indeed various definitions of creativity provide researchers quite an array of somewhat confusing and sometimes contradictory situations. As of now, no single definition of creativity has universal acceptance (Welsch, 1980). Rhodes (1981) set out to examine the literature to find a single definition of creativity. Instead, he found four categories of definitions: the creative personality, the creative process, creative products and the environment for creativity. This is also true of this investigation. One of the biggest challenges to the field has indeed been the definition and measurement of the elusive concept of creativity.

Although it was rather difficult to find a single definition of creativity from the nominators, the following elements of creativity have emerged from the definitions they have given:

1. Originality/Inventiveness

Originality was found most central to the concept of creativity, being the most pervading dimension mentioned across all specialization groups. Most of the nominators see creativity as the capability to come up with new ideas, new approaches, new techniques, or new products.

The expression of originality is seen as possible in almost any field or situation, e.g., a new technique for analyzing tissues in agriculture, a new way of solving a problem in science, a new way of reasoning, a new

contribution to economic theory, a new computer program, a new recipe, a new approach to teaching, and many more.

2. Flexibility

In many cases, the definition of creativity in terms of the originality dimension overlaps with that of flexibility in the sense that new ideas, approaches or products are seen as answers to problems where existing or stereotyped approaches no longer work or have become less efficient.

Thus creativity is defined, for instance, as an impulse to rise above the ordinary approach towards solving problems, the use of alternative strategies and resources in times of emergency and crisis, the ability to shift the functions of objects, the ability to improvise on existing resources, and the openness of mind for new possibilities of doing things.

3. Fluency

Some nominators see creativity as the ease with which one can generate ideas and translate such ideas into forms easily understood and appreciated by others whether visual, numeric, or written.

Creativity as fluency Sw also implied in the following definitions: ability to communicate the musical language of composers through one's medium of choice; ability to express one's ideas clearly and independently; and having a good grasp of medium and language of visual, numeric, written, and verbal communication.

4. Elaboration

Of the four dimensions of creativity identified by Torrance, elaboration is the least mentioned by the nominators in this study. However, even if it is not explicitly stated, elaboration is often implied or

intertwined with the dimensions of originality and flexibility.

The statements summarized in Table I express some definitions of For instance, the creative ability of elaboration can be implied from the following definitions: ability to come out with forms quite distinct from the original; making new formulations out of existing ones through improvisation; and the ability to modify a prototype model.

5. Creativity as function

For many of the nominators, creativity must not stop at being just a concept or idea; it must be manifested in forms tangible to the senses which can be observed and tested.

Furthermore, some nominators see such tangible manifestations of creativity as having a functional purpose aside from aesthetic satisfaction, e.g., they are made to alleviate a problem, for human comfort, or to contribute something to society without regard for personal gain.

6. Creativity as individual expression

Some of the nominators put emphasis on the individual nature of creativity as an extension/projection of the self. A musician, for instance, sees creativity as the ability of the artist to inject his own personal feelings and individual perceptions in his interpretation of another's creation. An educator adds that one very important thing about the creative process is that the creator is happy about and values what he has done. A physicist furthermore says that the creative project may have no functional value but is important to the individual undergoing such a process.

7. Creativity as synthesis/integration

Some of the definitions given seem to equate or at least combine creativity with intelligence and other cognitive functions. A psychologist sees it as a learned skill resulting from knowledge, intelligence, and evaluation, while an architect views it as the sum total of a person's life experiences in reaction to a stimulus at a particular time. This view is best expressed by a physicist who sees creativity as the ability to synthesize inputs from various sources and that its expression relates to the individual's emotional, physical, intellectual, social, and spiritual state.

Sarnoff & Cole (1983) make these remarks:

At its most basic level, creativity is concerned with the process of personality growth and development what May (1975) calls "spiritual creativity". In this realm persons create new aspects of themselves, new thought patterns, new emotional reactions, new physical actions, new forms of relating to people. All of these contribute to new states of being and personal growth. At another level, creativity is concerned with the invention and improvement of "things" including tools, concepts, artistic forms, symbolic systems and other products useful across the theoretical, artistic and practical disciplines. May has referred to this as the technological realm of creativity.

The aforementioned elements of creativity culled from the nominators given definitions were found to be present across disciplines. Two other elements mentioned by nominators in the arts are:

8. Creativity as aesthetics

In addition to functional value, nominators from the arts stress the aesthetic value of the creative product;

thus, the following definitions: ability to create and manipulate space for visual satisfaction; and ability to see and reproduce form, order, and beauty in anything one perceives.

9. Creativity as spontaneity

In line with Moreno's theory on creativity, some nominators from the arts put much value on the role of spontaneity on the creative process. This is implied in the following definitions: a spontaneous action of organizing elements in the environment to create a new thing; a spontaneous impulse to rise above the ordinary approach in solving problems.

In summary, it can be seen that even if situations and examples given by the nominators relate, as expected, to their respective fields, some common dimensions/elements of creativity are identified. The most central and pervading dimension is originality, followed by flexibility, fluency, and elaboration, in that order. Other elements that cut across disciplines are the following: the functional nature of creativity as a form of individual expression, and creativity as a synthetic integrative skill or function.

In addition, nominators from the arts included the elements of aesthetics and spontaneity in their conceptualizations of creativity.

Table I
Conceptual Definitions of Creativity by Nominators
from Different Fields of Specialization

Field of Specialization	Definitions of creativity
<i>The Arts</i>	
Architecture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Ability to come up with new patterns, given limited time and resources * Making new things out of the ordinary * Creation and manipulation of space for visual satisfaction and human comfort * Expression of the sum total of one's life experiences in reaction to a stimulus at a particular time
Fine Arts	<p>Ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * create, devise, invent something out of nothing (first of its kind) * innovate, come out with new ideas, explore possibilities * put forms, lines, planes to visual or other use
Language and Literature	<p>Ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * innovate, be resourceful to higher degree * see and reproduce form, order, beauty in anything one perceives

- Music** the following Ability to: Functions: ability to create and manipulate space for visual satisfaction; and ability to see
- * create appropriate substitutes or solutions to situations demanding authentic or pursuit approaches
-
- 9— Creativity as spontaneity**
- * communicate the musical language of composers through a medium, be it voice, keyboard, etc.
 - * inject one's own personal feelings and individual perceptions in one's interpretation or recreation of musical works, and to temper these with the norms and conventions of the musical eras. even if situations nominators relate, as expected,
- Theatre Arts**
- * Ability to come out with forms quite distinct from the original. The most
 - * Expression of one's vivid mind in a manner understood and appreciated by others. of creativity as a form of individual expression, and creativity as a synthetic
- Mass Commu- nications**
- * A spontaneous action of organizing elements; in the environment to create a new thing in their
 - * Uncanny ability to represent an aspect of life in an original and refreshing manner
 - * Capacity to integrate the two brain hemispheres in response to a question or problem posed
 - * A learned skill which is a function of knowledge, intelligence and evaluation.

The Natural / Physical Sciences

- Computer Science**
- * Ability to apply newly-learned abstract concepts into tangible projects in real life situations
 - * Ability to make the most out of available resources
 - * Originality or capability for novel ideas, new approaches, etc.
- Engineering**
- * Ability to generate good and unique ideas and to express these well
- Biology**
- * Ability to make an original presentation, be it drawing, clothes, music, food, etc.
 - * Ability to express a message to others
 - * Ability to conceive, imagine, formulate new ideas based on previous experiences and to bring these ideas into reality
 - * Improvisation of available resources
 - * A spontaneous impulse to rise above the ordinary approach in solving problems
- Physics**
- Ability to:
- * look at an ordinary situation and see in it an opportunity for growth

- * synthesize inputs from a variety of sources

- * process or produce something tangible and perceptible to the sense with or without value and relative to the experience as well as the emotional, physical, intellectual, social, spiritual state of the individual undergoing such process.

Agriculture

Ability to:

- * make or use substitutes or improvised equipment out of available materials

- * make new formulations, e.g., a new recipe, which is better than existing ones

- * using new techniques in doing things and in solving problems

The Social Sciences

Commerce/ Economics

- * Ability to produce an "original" or innovative contribution to economic theory, policy, methodology, etc.

Education

- * A new way of thinking, of doing something original, as in solving a problem or in making a product

Home Economics

- * Ability to see or make something new out of ordinary or usual things, situations or events

- Psychology * Ability to break out of the usual, accepted or established ways of doing things or thinking about things in order to develop a more fully functioning persons
- * Ability to anticipate future problems, refine methods of problem-solving, demonstrate behavior which are both unique and valuable either to self and especially to society
- History * Ability to express one's ideas clearly and independently
- Philosophy * Doing more than the usual, being more productive, having new or novel ideas
- Counseling * Ability to handle problems in one's own way, avoiding stereotyped ways of approaching conflicts and difficulties
- * Being original and authentic; modifying something out of a prototype model
- * An innate talent to make new things in a manner unique and apart from the rest.

Characteristics of creative individual.

As can be seen from the perceptions of nominators of qualities that characterize creative individuals summarized in Table I, some are more often mentioned than others and cut across the different fields of specialization.

These are:

<u>Characteristics</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent</u>
1. Original (innovative, divergent thinker)	41	87.23
2. Independent-minded (different, unconventional, non-conformist, unique, out of the ordinary)	30	68.83
3. Fluent (fast thinker, good grasp of medium, vibrant thought and speech patterns, can compose/convey message easily)	37	78.72
4. Committed and Dedicated (hardworking conscientious, productive, studious, intense)	24	51.06
5. Courageous (bold, adventurous, risk taker, confident, fearless)	17	36.17
6. Flexible (broadminded, openminded, searches for several alternatives)	24	51.06

The characteristics/traits most often mentioned clearly are in keeping with the definitions of creativity given by the nominators, most central to which is the dimension of originality. Independence of mind, some degree of non-conformity and unconventionality are called for if one has to come up with novel ideas of products. Likewise, such manifestations can take place if the individual has enough courage and confidence to pursue a course of action that is different from what have already been tried and tested.

The other characteristics mentioned relate to the dimensions of fluency and flexibility which, as discussed earlier,

also were components of the definitions of creativity given by the nominators.

One interesting trait that appeared across the different disciplines is that of commitment. Many nominators perceived the creative individual as dedicated to his field, is conscientious, hardworking, and productive.

The following set of characteristics are not as often mentioned as the first set but nevertheless appeared in several fields of specialization:

<u>Characteristics</u>	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent</u>
7. Intelligent and has a good academic performance	15	31.91
8. Active in student organizations	10	21.28
9. Leadership qualities/initiative	14	29.79
10. Inquisitive and explorative	8	17.02
11. Resourceful	11	23.40
12. Involved in the arts	15	31.91
13. Patient and persistent	5	10.64
14. Sensitive to elements in the environment	11	23.40

Many nominators perceive creative individuals as also intelligent and, more often than not, are doing well academically. Creative persons are also perceived as involved in both curricular and extra-curricular activities, often serving as leaders or active members in student organizations.

The characteristic of resourcefulness is obviously akin to originality and flexibility and that of patience to commitment and dedication.

One interesting finding is that nominators from the social sciences and the natural/physical sciences mentioned that the creative individual in their fields is also involved in the arts such as dancing, painting, music, and writing.

Creative individuals are also perceived by some nominators as inquisitive, explorative, and sensitive to elements in the environment.

Other characteristics mentioned by one or two nominators are the following: has a sense of humor, physically attractive, idealistic, disorderly, emotionally sensitive, "weird" and impractical.

To some nominators, creativity is manifested by winning awards and competitions that require creativity, e.g., Urian Awards, Palanca Awards, fashion competitions, writing competitions, etc.

Table II

Characteristics of a Creative Person As Adjusted
by Nominators in Different Fields

Field of Specialization	Characteristics of a Creative Person
The Arts	
Architecture	* Messy, Disorderly ("Kalat")
	* Thoughts wander endlessly; there's a free flow of ideas

* Fine Arts	* Thinks independently
* *	* Flexible; possesses an open mind
* *	* Has courage to confront complexities
* *	* Hard-working, patient, and productive
* *	* A perfectionist
Mass Communication	* Sensitive to his environment
* *	* Has a world view of the ordinary
* *	* Can make something different out of the element or several elements
* *	* Always has fresh ideas
* *	* Can translate his ideas into tangible things
Music	* Is active and restless
* *	* Speech and thought patterns are vibrant, faster than the ordinary
* *	* Constantly seeks innovative ways of doing mundane things
* *	* Bodily movements are large and loose, active and vary expressive

* Original and innovative
 * Can compose easily; has
 * visual fluency

Original, innovative, non-
 conformist; a divergent
 thinker

* Can compose easily; has
 * visual fluency

Can compose easily; has
 visual fluency

* Is idealistic

Is idealistic

* Investigative, adventurous,
 * explorative; broadminded

Investigative, adventurous,
 explorative; broadminded

* Comes out with new things
 * often

Comes out with new things
 often

* Emotionally sensitive; warm
 * but easily gets upset when
 * distracted

Emotionally sensitive; warm
 but easily gets upset when
 distracted

* Home Economics

Belongs to top 40% of the
 class; intelligent

* Inventive, imaginative,
 * inquisitive; resourceful,
 * innovative

Inventive, imaginative,
 inquisitive; resourceful,
 innovative

* Non-conforming; a dreamer

Non-conforming; a dreamer

* Has leadership qualities;
 * actively participates in
 * activities and competitions

Has leadership qualities;
 actively participates in
 activities and competitions

* Is sensitive to elements in the
 * environment

Is sensitive to elements in the
 environment

* Counseling

Is productive; never idle

Original and authentic

- * Has leadership qualities; actively participates in activities and competitions
- * Is sensitive to elements in the environment
- * **Counseling** Is productive; never idle
- * Original and authentic
- * Has intellectual superiority and high scholastic performance
- * Intuitive and intelligent
- * An iconoclast; a visionary
- * Oftentimes sexually attractive
- * Non-conformist, especially in mode of dressing
- * Apparently impractical and "insane" (weird)
- * **History** Active in his chosen field of specialization
- * **Philosophy** Productive
- * Has new or novel ideas
- * **Psychology** Fluid and flexible

	*	Risk-taker, bold, brave, adventurous
	*	Intelligent
	*	Resourceful
	*	Innovative and original
Biology	*	Resourceful, innovative
Physics	*	Original, seeks new ways of doing things

Climates/Situations that develop creativity.

The perceptions of the nominators regarding this aspect of creativity are summarized in Table III.

As perceived by the nominators, creativity can be developed in almost any situation - whether in real life, simulated or in the realm of the abstract.

More specifically, the following situations are mentioned:

1. Classes or course work that focus on creative work, e.g., fine arts, landscape, architecture, music etc. obviously aim to develop creativity. Nevertheless, creativity is enhanced further by these courses as well as other courses through these activities: project-oriented assignments, theses presentations and reports, exercises that call for creative thinking/brainstorming, opportunities for observation and visualization, apprenticeship/practice work, holistic evaluation: from concept/idea to execution to product.

2. Extra-curricular activities, particularly leadership positions in student organizations where the individual is required to make decisions.
3. Real-life situations such as emergencies, problems, crisis, where decision-making is involved.
4. Competitions such as song-writing contests, fashion design contests, etc.
5. Leisure activities

Environments perceived by the nominators as conducive to the development of creativity are those:

1. free from work/other responsibilities
2. open, such as outdoors
3. equipped with the necessary materials such as paper, crayons, pens, etc. (e.g., ad agency room, a painter's studio, etc.)
4. where divergent views and unusual answers are accepted and encouraged
5. with some amount of pressure, such as deadlines to be met.

Despite the disparity of approaches, the proliferation of related terms and the tendency of the nominators to concentrate on various narrow aspects of creativity, the preceding section attempted to identify the commonalities as well as differences in the conceptualizations across different fields. It is hoped that this will prove helpful to test constructors in designing instruments that will assess creative potentials among Filipino college students and professionals across different fields.

Table III

**Climate/Situations that Develop Creativity as Adjusted
by Nominators from Different Field of Specialization
Climate/Situations that Develop
Creativity**

Field of Specialization	Climate/Situations that Develop creativity
The Arts	
Architecture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Classes in interior design, fine arts, landscape architecture, musical arrangements and composition o Design and songwriting competitions o Theses presentation and oral reporting

- o Occasions such as decorating a stage
 - o Tight situations where one has to find a way out of
 - o Observation/listening activities as watching games, listening to lectures, watching a film, a dance, etc.
 - o Doing apprentice or practice work as musical scorer, film maker, etc.
 - o Competitions that encourage creative expression, e.g., Urian Awards, Palanca Awards, etc.
- Mass Communications** **M a k i n g d e c i s i o n s ,**
interpreting situations
-
- o Choosing preoccupations
 - o Environment that is free preferably outdoors
 - o Situation where one is free from work and other responsibilities
 - o Work areas equipped with the necessary materials as pens, paper coloring materials, etc.
 - o Exercises that call for creative, elaborative

- o Environment that is free preferably outdoors
- o Situation where one is free from work and other responsibilities
- o Work areas equipped with the necessary materials as pens, paper coloring materials, etc.
- o Exercises that call for creative, elaborative thinking (e.g., 45 uses for a paper clip in 1 minute)
- o Brainstorming, encouraging the flow of ideas during meetings
- o The right environment: an ad-agency room, a painter's studio; a script-writers room
- o Activities during idle hours
- o Crises or difficulties like deadlines to be met
- o Solving problems, both situational and technical
- o Designing, writing, composing

The Social Sciences

o Encouraging unusual, different, non-conventional manners of doing things	o Encouraging unusual, different, non-conventional manners of doing things
o Home Economics	o In arts and crafts; literary undertaking
o Teaching, e.g., seeking new methods for making learning more effective	o Teaching, e.g., seeking new methods for making learning more effective
o Competitions such as fashion design contests	o Competitions such as fashion design contests
o Apprenticeship work	o Apprenticeship work
o Holding leadership positions in organizations, committees, etc.	o Holding leadership positions in organizations, committees, etc.
The Natural/Physical Sciences	
o Physics	o Giving students project-oriented assignments
o Any situation such as a child tinkering with toys; a housewife modifying an old recipe; a woodcarver making designs radically different from his contemporaries; a child making a poem, a song, or drawing a human figure.	o Any situation such as a child tinkering with toys; a housewife modifying an old recipe; a woodcarver making designs radically different from his contemporaries; a child making a poem, a song, or drawing a human figure.
Summary and Conclusion	

From the foregoing discussions of creativity, one can see that the Filipino conceptualizations do not go very far from what authorities in the field, e.g., Torrance (1971), Burgett (1982),

Guilford (1959) Osborn (1961). Young (1985) Wolfe (1981), Baer (1985) Goge & David (1984), Charles (1980). Wheeler-Brownless (1985) Lowenfeld and Brittain (1982) say about creativity. Creativity, according to the nominators, indeed consists of several important elements that run across different fields, the core of which is inventiveness or originality. What is considered creative varies greatly: a new way of solving a problem in science or mathematics, a new musical composition, a new computer program, a new recipe, new painting/poster, a video film production, a thesis/dissertation, a new contribution to economic theory, policy, methodology, a new way of fixing one's room, a new way of designing/choreographing fashion shows, unique artifacts, landscape architecture, a new dissecting set. Young (1985) found from his review of literature that creativity involves skills, newness, and values. "Newness" according to him implies (1) being unique, the first of its kind; something that has never been done before; (2) being statistically infrequent/rare/unusual. Newness is novelty out of the ordinary; (3) a change from the regular way of doing things; (4) renovation, rejuvenation or regeneration.

Indeed the expression of originality/newness/uniqueness is seen as possible in almost any field or situation-- be it in the Arts/Humanities, Social Sciences or Natural/Physical Sciences.

Flexibility, a second important dimension that runs across fields, has something to do with alternative strategies and approaches to problem-solving, especially in times of emergency or crisis. It is seen in "the ability to shift functions of objects," "ability to improvise on existing resources" or "in the openness of the mind for new possibilities of doing things". Creative people tend to be flexible in the way they look at things. They see many different possibilities that usually do not come to mind at first.

A third dimension is that of fluency. Creative people seem to produce quantities of ideas and make numerous associations among them. These ideas are usually translated into forms which are understood and easily appreciated by others in visual, numeric or written language. Creativity here is defined as the "ability to communicate the musical language of composers through one's medium of choice" or "having a good grasp of

medium and language of visual, numeric, written and verbal communication."

A fourth dimension, elaboration, seems to be intrinsically woven with the dimensions of originality and flexibility as applied in the following definitions: "ability to come at with forms quite distinct from the original" or "making new formulations out of existing ones through improvisation." Creative people tend to be very good at elaborating ideas. If you give them a bare outline of an idea, they can fill in all the details.

Creativity is also seen as function, e.g., the abstract idea must be manifested in solid, concrete forms which can be observed and tested. Aside from aesthetic satisfaction it must have a functional purpose, such as alleviating a problem or contributing something to society, regardless of material reward. MacMullan and Stocking (1978) and Cogle (1985) share a similar view in that creativity must be "externalized in the form and pattern in some transmittable media" and must contribute to human life at large."

Some nominators believe that creativity an individual expression-- an extension/projection of the self. It is reflected in the "ability of the artist to inject his own reaction for individual satisfaction." The important thing is, the creator is happy about and values what he has done. It may not have much functional value but it is important to the individual undergoing such process. This concept of creativity may be seen as related to the physical, mental and emotional well-being of the creator. Kuppuswany (1972) says that creative behavior is an act of self-expression, a realization of something from within. It arises in a situation calling forth imagination, initiative and originality. Burget (1982) alleges that creativity is a function of growth and growing is a function of all human beings. Since all human beings grow, all are creative. Baer (1985) affirms that creative expression represents a valuable coping mechanism for human beings. Creative experiences often lead to new perceptual and attitudinal windows on the world and more fulfilling ways of confronting overwhelming circumstances. Adler (in Bischof 1970) says that an individual searches for new experiences to fulfill his desires for

superiority and puts these altogether to create a self that is different from any other self and that describes his own peculiar style of life. Maslow observes that every self-actualizing personality has a hierarchy of need priorities--actualization--which lead to psychological health. Torrance acknowledges the fact that mental health is closely affiliated with creativity.

Creativity is sometimes also considered as a synthetic/integrative skill. It is a "learned skill resulting from knowledge, intelligence and evaluation." It is seen as "the sum total of a person's life experiences in reaction to a stimulus." It is the "ability to synthesize/combine inputs from various sources, such that its expression likewise relates to the person's total well-being.

Furthermore, from the artists' vantage point, creativity means aesthetics and spontaneity. In addition to the aesthetic value of the product, the reactive act must come about spontaneously, e.g., creativity is defined as "a spontaneous action of organizing elements in the environment to create something unique." "It is an impulse to rise above the ordinary approaches to problem solving." "It is the spontaneous ability to create and manipulate space for visual satisfaction." This point of view is shared by Moreno's spontaneity principles of creativity.

On the whole, the most central and pervading dimension of creativity across fields is originality followed by flexibility, fluency and elaboration. Other elements include the functional nature of creativity, creativity as a form of individual self-expression, creativity as a synthetic/integrative skill/function, creativity as aesthetics and spontaneity.

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