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Investigation on the Current Teaching Situation of English Picture Books for Preschool Children in Zhoushan and Its Commercial Prospects

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Abstract: This thesis investigates the teaching situation of English picture books for preschool children in Zhoushan by means of questionnaire survey and reference of relevant literature. The results show that educational institutions have very limited use of picture books during their teaching process. The teacher lacks relevant guidance of English picture book teaching. In addition, most parents cannot guide children to read English picture books due to their poor English.

Keywords: Preschool Children; English Picture Books; Commercial Prospects

1. RESEARCH BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

In recent years, Chinese parents are paying more and more attention to children's English education, which plays a crucial role in their future development. English reading, as we all know, is a vital part in English learning process. English picture books attract many children with its beautiful picture, good visual sense and creative story. American library association defines picture books as books that provide children with visual experience. Unlike other books, children's picture books are illustrated and use a series of pictures to describe a story, discuss a topic or illustrate a concept. English picture book reading is in line with children's cognitive characteristics, and has a great influence on children's language interest, observation ability, imagination and creativity. However, due to the lack of understanding of English picture books by most parents, though children have a strong interest in English learning, they cannot be well enlightened, which is not conducive to their future English learning. Investigating the teaching situation of preschool children's English picture books in Zhoushan, analyzing the current situation of Zhoushan children's English picture books learning, and putting forward some corresponding suggestions are important steps to improve children's English understanding.

More and more researchers have realized that English picture book reading plays an important role in English language teaching and have carried out many practical researches. In China, some schools in Taiwan take the lead in applying picture book reading to classroom teaching. In these schools, picture book teaching is widely used as a teaching method, especially in Chinese teaching activities. As a literary form with low language difficulty in many literary genres, English literature of children has been gradually accepted by foreign language teachers and learners in recent years, and introduced into primary school English classes. Its language difficulty and writing style are suitable for students whose mother tongue is not English. However, the popularity of English picture books isn't high in Zhoushan city. Owing to the purpose of drawing public attention to English picture books, we have conducted a series of surveys on the use of English picture books of preschool children in Zhoushan. In this survey, I used the questionnaire survey method and interview method. The questionnaires were divided into institutional and parental categories. As to institutional category, I designed 14 questions. 8 questions of them are aimed at the institutions which have already used English picture book as their teaching tool, while the others are for the institutions which haven't. For parental categories, I designed 15 questions. 7 questions of them are aimed at the parents who have bought English picture books for their children, and the others are for parents who haven't. All of the questionnaires were issued and then collected on July, 2018.

2. CURRENT SITUATION AND EXISTING PROBLEMS OF ENGLISH PICTURE BOOKS TEACHING IN ZHOUSHAN

For the institutions which have already used English picture books as their teaching tool, the data is shown in the table below. (Table1-2)

Table1.

The agency's attitude	A.	B.	С.	D.
towards using English	very	supportive	indifferent	not supportive
picture books in the	supportive			
classroom	74%	22%	4%	0%
The role of English	A.	В.	С.	D.
picture books in your	main textbook	auxiliary teaching	extra-	entertain-
classroom		book	curricular reading book	ing book
	55%	26%	11%	8%

From table1 we can see that most of the institutions' attitude is supportive, which means that English picture books, to a large extent, show their positive influences on preschool children's English learning process. The roles of English picture books are mostly chosen as main textbook, then auxiliary teaching books. It seems that most institutions have realized the importance of English picture books. With the popularity of English picture book teaching, more and more organizations will realize the versatility and practicality of picture books.

Table2.

Frequency of using English	A. once	B. once	C. once	D. less than 3
picture books as a teaching tool	a week	two weeks	a month	times a semester
	95%	5%	0%	0%
Have you received any special	Α.	В.	C.	D.
training in English picture	yes	someone	no,but we want	no, and we are
book teaching?		learn on his own	to be taught	not interested
	46%	0%	54%	0%
Are you satisfied with the	Α.	В.	C.	D.
teaching effect of using English	very satisfied	satisfied	not so bad	not satisfied
picture books in class?	85%	10%	5%	0%

Table2 gives us more detailed information on the use of English picture books in class. Most institutions insist on using English picture books as a teaching tool and many of them are satisfied with the teaching effect of using English picture books, which means that they prefer continuing using English picture books in the future. However, from the table we can also find that more than half of the agency staff claimed that they did not receive any training of English picture book teaching. The lack of training is not only ineffective for teachers to carry out English picture book teaching, but also makes students feel difficult in the process of learning, thus reducing their interest in English learning. If the institutions can intensify the training of teachers in this aspect, it is believed that both teachers and students can make better use of English picture books in the near future.

Besides, agency staff also answered the question of *What are the main difficulties in using English picture books as a teaching tool*? The staff told us that the institutions did not have the funds to purchase English picture books, so they must purchase this type of books on their own so as to carry out picture book teaching. This reflects the fact that although institutions have realized the importance of English picture book teaching, they have little enthusiasm in teaching in this way and still follow the traditional English teaching method. Most teachers believe that it is difficult to introduce picture book teaching and keep students interested in reading because of the time and classroom objectives. Although teachers recognize that children's works such as picture books can effectively improve students' interest in learning, there are few attempts. Institutions are not planning to invest money in buying English picture books in short terms. Another answer was, as we have mentioned before, teachers were not well-trained in English picture books teaching. They lacked the understanding of picture books, graded reading and standards, so they couldn't provide corresponding guidance for students' learning of picture books. Moreover, we have asked staff who worked in such institutions to give some suggestions on the development of English picture book in Zhoushan. They offered a few

opinions to us, for example, home-school integration, which means not only for children to use in the classroom, but also to read at home. It is hoped that relevant educators can publicize English picture books and enhance parents' awareness of the role of English picture books in children's English learning.

For the institutions which haven't used English picture books as their teaching tool, we asked them several questions. (Table3)

To begin with the most basic question Why doesn't your organization use English picture books as a teaching tool, they gave their answers. After sorting out these answers, we put them into the following categories. First, institutions help parents to coach their children in the summer vacation, so the children not only learn English, but also learn all the subjects, they can't spend most of their time on English. Second, children do not understand the meaning of English picture books. Even though New Concept English and Cambridge English have been used as teaching materials, children cannot fully understand and learn this kind of knowledge. Children are too young to remember, so they cannot really learn so much English words or expressions. The teaching principle of some institution is basic education, that is just to create an English learning atmosphere. Third, because they aim at personalized education and help children make steady progress in basic subjects, English picture books are not suitable for exams. These are the main reasons why institutions haven't used English picture books in class. Teaching practice shows that in areas where picture books are introduced in the classroom, the English proficiency of students is improved to varying degrees. Obviously, the neglect of the role of English picture books by institutions, teachers' ignorance of English picture books, and parents' educational attitude of only dealing with examinations result in that children cannot have access to English picture books when they at the best age of learning foreign language. At the present stage, more and more education experts and educators at home and abroad are also more and more convinced that "English picture book reading" is an essential part of the development of preschool children' English reading ability.

Some information are shown in the form of tables.

Table3.

Do you think the learning of English	A.	B.	C.	D.
picture books helps children's reading	yes, quite a lot	just assist English	not very	no
ability?		study in the school	helpful	
	75%	16%	9%	0%
In the future, how likely are you to	A.	В.	C.	D.
include English picture books in teaching	80-100%	50-80%	20-50%	0-20%
materials or supplementary materials?	17%	36%	32%	15%
Do you think that English picture books	A.yes, these	В.	C. no, the	future of
will gain good business prospects in the	books help a	we don't know	English pictur	re books is
future of Zhoushan City?	lot		still not very o	ptimistic
	64%	15%	21%	

From table3, the data shows us that more than 90% of the institutions, though they haven't used English picture books as their teaching tool, they believe that the learning of English picture books helps children's reading ability. This is a true evidence that they don't deny the effectiveness of English picture books, but they still follow the common teaching way. It will be a tough process if they plan to do some changes. Those institutions' preferences towards the possibility of using English picture books in the future are lower than 50%. This may have something to do with the lack of knowledge of English picture books among these institutions. According to the definition of English picture books by these institutions in the survey, many of them believe that picture books are children's books composed of pictures and texts, with many pictures but few words, or even only pictures without words. Other institutions consider picture books to be different from illustrated storybooks, which are the same with words plus pictures, while picture books are text illustrations. It also has a certain relationship with the reading amount and reading interest of the teachers themselves, so there are few cases that teachers introduce picture books into the classroom. Compared with the previous answers which seem not optimistic, in the last question, most institutions believe that the development of English picture books in Zhoushan has great potential in the future. This result cannot be separated from the effect that English picture books have achieved good educational effects in

some regions in China. Institutions may want to gradually change their teaching methods, or they may still follow the previous teaching methods. Their choices must have a great impact on the development of English picture books in Zhoushan city.

These institutions which haven't used English picture books gave us some advice that may be helpful to their future development in Zhoushan. Appropriate picture books should be selected for children of different ages, and a grading system should be adopted for picture books. Communicate with some foreign institutions. English courses for children should be offered to improve preschool children's literacy of basic words. To develop children's English reading habits, skills and abilities, teachers' own English literature literacy is particularly critical. Parents should help their children read English picture books at home. In Zhoushan, parents don't pay much attention to English picture books. The government and schools should vigorously promote the use of English picture books. Now we have entered the "e-book" reading era, there are many electronic picture book resources, and the corresponding audio and video can meet different reading needs. Teachers and children should make full use of network resources to teach and learn picture books. Picture books assist English classroom teaching and improve classroom teaching efficiency. Teachers should give full play to their creative thinking and design flexible and diverse teaching activities in combination with the characteristics of picture books, so as to fully mobilize students' enthusiasm in such aspects as watching, listening, guessing, speaking, reading, writing, drawing and actively participate in the study of picture books.

3. PRESENT PURCHASING CONDITION OF ENGLISH PICTURE BOOKS IN ZHOUSHAN

For parents who have bought English picture books for their children, the table is shown as follows. (Table4-5)

r	Γa	bl	64

How many English picture books are there in your family now?	A. 0	B. 0~10	C. 11~30	D. 30+
	0%	62%	25%	13%
How much time do you spend reading	A.	В.	C.	D.
English picture books with your child	0~15min	15~30min	30~60min	60min $+$
every day?	23%	45%	29%	3%
How much time does your child spend	Α.	В.	C.	D.
on reading English picture books every	0~15min	15~30min	30~60min	60min $+$
day?	35%	42%	19%	4%

From table4, we can find that parents tend to buy a few English picture books and read these books with their children at home. The time parents spend on reading English books with their children has great relationship with the time that children read on their own. The more time they invest in reading, the more time their children spent on reading. Parents can always be of great help to their children in learning. If parents accompany their children to learn English picture books, then parents should have some basic English knowledge. Parents' understanding of English knowledge will greatly increase children's interest in learning English. Therefore, the English level of parents plays a key role in whether they buy English picture books or not. When children read English picture books, the biggest resistance is no one to guide, indicating that children have strong dependence on parents or teachers, and their ability to learn independently is weak, but they have the awareness of self-learning. With the popularization of compulsory education in China and the increase of the proportion of undergraduates, more and more parents are more likely to speak fluent English in the future. It will be more common for parents to teach English to children at home, which are important in the development of English picture books all over the country.

Table5.

Does English picture book improve	A. Significantly	B. improved	C. not improved	D. not
children's interest in learning English?	improved		obviously	improved at all
	39%	43%	18%	0%
After learning English picture books,	A. reading	B. listening	C. writing ability	D. expression
which aspect do you think your child's	ability	ability		ability
English ability has been improved?	92%	63%	37%	42%
(Multiple choices)				

We can find that most parents think children's interest in learning English have been improved a lot. In the survey, there is a question called Do you support the use of English picture books as a textbook in English classes? 1 means oppose and 5 means strongly support. Parents can choose any number from 1 to 5 to express their preferences towards English picture book. As expected, most parents choose the number between 3 and 5. The second question at table5 shows us that children's reading ability and listening ability have been improved greatly. Besides, in the question In addition to these abilities, what do you think of the impact of English picture books on children? Some parents hold the view that English picture books are about foreign customs, which can let children understand Western culture and learn to accept cultural differences between China and the West. Furthermore, some children are very motivated because the English picture book is lively and interesting. The vivid paintings in English picture books can bring children unlimited imagination. The painting techniques and styles of English picture books can guide children to feel the beauty of the surroundings. English picture books provide children with excellent language learning experience. A good English picture book is not only a book that can inspire children's imagination, but also a fabulous example of language application. English picture books provide real life situations and rich vocabulary for children to learn English and help them develop their language skills. English picture books can lay the foundation for the development of children's abilities in all aspects. The content of English picture books and repeated sentences can enhance children's confidence in reading. Through picture books, children can effectively understand British and American culture and benefit their English learning.

Moreover, some parents put forward their opinions on the teaching of English picture books. They advocate diversified teaching contents and forms, and increase interaction between teachers and children. The selection of English picture books in teaching should be closely related to children's life experience and in line with children's psychological characteristics, age, intellectual factors and cognitive ability, etc. Teachers should choose those original picture books with repetitive contents and consistent with children's cognitive structure to make children fall in love with English learning. Teachers should set teaching goals. According to the overall teaching objectives of the course and the actual situation of the school, teachers should make the purpose of English picture book reading clear. Since children of different ages have different learning characteristics, the target positioning at picture book teaching should also be different. As the content of picture books is relatively simple, in order to better cultivate children's imagination, teachers should assign preview homework, hoping that children can read these books with questions. It is recommended that teachers divide the teaching of English picture books into three stages. The first stage is pre-reading, in which children are allowed to have a reading guide on the cover of picture books. The second stage is while-reading, which enables children to understand the general idea of picture books and obtain specific or detailed information through reading. The third stage is post-reading, whose main purpose is to train children to obtain the ability of grasping as much information as they can and improve their humanistic quality.

Table6.

How about parents' English reading ability?	A. we can't read English books at all	B. we can only read simple English books	C. we are capable of reading all kinds of English picture books	D. we have a really good command of English
	31%	46%	19%	4%
Do you read Chinese	Α.		В.	
or English books	yes		no	
with your child?	83%		17%	

From table6, we can see that most parents' English level is not high, which is not a good thing for children to learn English. Nearly a third of parents in Zhoushan can't read English books at all. To develop children's English reading habits, skills and abilities, parents' own English literature literacy is particularly critical. They can't teach children by themselves. That may explain why there are so many parents haven't bought any English picture book yet. As to the second question, we must get to know the importance of parent-child reading. Parent-child reading can cultivate children's interest in reading language and make them love books. It can also greatly improve children's reading ability, develop their intelligence and creative thinking. The majority of parents interviewed by us have the habit of accompanying children to read. Therefore, their lack of knowledge of English must be an obstacle for them to buy English picture books. This leaves the task of teaching children to read English picture books almost entirely to the teacher. However, the latest concept of early childhood

English education is to tell parents that children's English learning can be completely achieved by reading the original English picture books. Some parents worry that their children do not have sufficient English words, so they cannot understand. In fact, a large number of picture books have provided great help for children to understand the content of picture books. Children can understand the content of the picture book by looking at the pictures in the picture book and combining their own English knowledge and guess. Of course, it will be better if someone explains some more. Therefore, we encourage parents to buy more English picture books for their children.

4. DOMESTIC DEVELOPMENT PROSPECTS OF ENGLISH PICTURE BOOKS

In China, some schools in Taiwan take the lead in applying picture book reading to classroom teaching. In these schools, picture book teaching is widely used as a teaching method, especially in Chinese teaching activities.

4.1. Awareness of the Importance of English Picture Books

The good news is that though some parents have not purchased English picture books for the time being, they are not ignorant of the role of English picture books. In the interview, some parents admitted that they had heard of English picture books and also knew the benefits of English picture books for children. In the question *If the school uses English picture books in classes, when parents need to purchase a certain amount of picture books, are you willing to buy?*, most parents chose "yes" as their answers. If parents are willing to buy picture books, teachers should make full use of English picture books to teach children in classes. Teachers can choose picture books with moderate difficulty for children to read. Words that children know or do not know will appear in English picture books, and the repeated appearance of this word will deepen their memory of the word. This is far different from rote memorization. Children can understand and memorize in a pleasant reading way, so it is more effective. If children like these funny stories, they will keep reading them over and over again, according to Wang Peiting, a parenting expert.

4.2. Constructive Advice on Picture Books Teaching

These parents also gave us their advice on English picture book teaching. A mother mentioned that she hoped picture books can attract children's attention. Just like the detective stories which are suitable for children to read, English can be integrated into the detective plots to attract children's attention. Some parents said that their children had learned English in Wayne education institution since childhood, and had basically mastered some dialogues and words. They hoped that there could be a kind of picture book that could simply make a few key words into a dialogue or story, so as to deepen the impression of their children and constantly push them to truly master some English words through memorizing and reading. They also wanted the story to be short and profound, like a fable, which is suitable for preschool children to learn English.

5. CONCLUSION

English picture book reading, especially in the primary stage, needs the strong support of teachers and parents. Teachers' strategic guidance and parents' creativity are important means to promote children's reading. The school can regularly report to parents the ideas and specific implementation steps of reading activities, students' recent reading of English picture books, etc., to win the unanimous support of parents. In class, role play and other activities are carried out to test students' understanding and mastery of the contents of picture books, so that they can feel the practicality of the words and sentences learned in picture books and the sense of achievement after reading English picture books. Many words and sentences shown in picture books are fresh and vivid, which are rarely seen by children in the textbooks. Such subtle learning can enrich students' accumulation of words and improve their language use ability. At the same time, English picture book reading is usually combined with diversified teaching activities, which can greatly promote their English listening, speaking, reading and writing abilities. Every process of preschool English teaching is full of strongly emotional factors. Emotional teaching is an important method and approach to English teaching, and picture book teaching can make this emotional teaching more concrete. Picture books have a profound influence on children's emotional education. In the process of reading stories, children not only get the correct guidance of life values, a good learning attitude and the cultivation of living habits, but also obtain the ability to survive in the society and get along with others.

Through the above investigation and study, we find that the popularity of English picture books in Zhoushan is lower than in developed cities. In view of the fact that many parents in Zhoushan have realized the importance of English picture books in the growth of children and the institutions are gradually incorporating English picture books into the teaching category, the prospects of English picture books in Zhoushan are very promising. English picture books are no longer a new thing, and its development in Zhoushan requires us to continuously practice and explore.

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QUESTIONNAIRES FOR INSTITUTIONS AND PARENTS ARE ATTACHED

Ouestionnaires for Institutions

舟山学龄前儿童英语绘本教学现状与商业前景调查问卷

尊敬的各位教育机构负责人、老师们:

您好!我们借全国三下乡暑期社会实践的机会开展关于舟山学龄前儿童英语绘本教学现状和商业前景调查活动。在此诚挚地邀请大家来参与这次问卷调查,希望大家把最实际、最真实的情况反应给我们,以便我们能够形成准确的判断,合理的预估舟山学龄前儿童英语绘本教学发展前景。此次问卷调查均为匿名调查,我们承诺不会泄露您的个人信息。您的填写结果对于展望舟山学龄前儿童英语绘本教学具有非常重大的意义,感谢您抽出宝贵的时间支持我们的调研,谢谢!

1.您所在的教育机构是否已经开始使用英语绘本为学龄前儿童上课?

A是

B否

如"否"请直接跳至9题;如"是"请继续。

- 2.机构对于课堂上使用英语绘本的态度是?
- A.非常支持
- B.支持
- C.无所谓
- D.不支持
- 3.英语绘本在您课堂上所扮演的教学角色是?

A.主要教材

- B.辅助教材
- C.课外读物(学生自学)
- 4. 您使用英语绘本教学的主要困难为? (可多选)
- A.机构固定课表中,少有时间执行绘本教学
- B.机构无购买绘本经费, 必须自行购买才能进行绘本教学
- C.对于如何运用绘本的实作教学经验不足,需要更多知识和技术的培训
- D.对于如何设计绘本课程的经验不足,需要更多知识和技术的培训
- E.家长对于绘本融入教学的抵触反应,担心会影响正课
- 5.使用英语绘本作为教学媒介的频率是?
- A.一周一次
- B.两周一次
- C.一个月一次
- D.较少(一学期少于3次)
- E.作为课外阅读,学生自行选择学习(次数无要求)
- 6.在英语绘本教学上,您有接受过专门的培训吗?
- A.有
- B.有特意学过
- C.没有,但希望接受培训
- D.没有, 也不希望接受培训
- 7. 您对课堂上使用英语绘本的教学效果满意吗?
- A.很满意
- B.满意
- C.一般
- D.不满意
- 8.您对未来英语绘本在舟山市的发展有什么意见和建议吗?

(至此调查已结束,感谢您的配合!)

- 9.您认为英语绘本的定义如何? (单选)
- A.绘本是由图和文构成的童书,图多字少,甚至只有图没有文字
- B.绘本中的绘图和文字同样重要,文字和图画都能传递故事的意义
- C.绘本和插画故事书不同,插画故事书=文字+插图,而绘本=文字插图
- D.如有其他看法请您写在下面的方框内
- 10.您觉得英语绘本的学习是否有助于学生的认读能力?
- A.有帮助
- B.能够辅助学校里的英语学习
- C.帮助不是很大

D.孩子的英语兴趣大增

11.未来您有多大可能会将英语绘本纳入教学教材或辅助教材?

A.80%-100%

B.50%-80%

C.20%-50%

D.0%-20%

12.您是否认为英语绘本会在未来的舟山市获得良好的商业发展前景?

A.会, 英语绘本对孩子的学习帮助很大

B.不知道

C.不会, 英语绘本仍然不太能被老师和家长看好

13.对于英语绘本在机构中的广泛使用,你有什么意见和建议吗?

本次调查已结束,感谢您的配合!

Questionnaires for Parents

舟山学龄前儿童英语绘本教学现状与商业前景调查问卷

尊敬的各位家长:

您好!我们借全国三下乡暑期社会实践的机会开展关于舟山学龄前儿童英语绘本教学现状和商业前景调查活动。在此诚挚地邀请您来参与这次问卷调查,希望大家把最实际、最真实的情况反应给我们,以便我们能够形成准确的判断,合理的预估舟山学龄前儿童英语绘本教学发展前景。此次问卷调查均为匿名调查,我们承诺不会泄露您的个人信息。您的填写结果对于展望舟山学龄前儿童英语绘本教学具有非常重大的意义,感谢您抽出宝贵的时间支持我们的调研,谢谢!

1.您孩子所在的年级

2.家长的英语阅读水平

- A.完全不能阅读英语读物
- B. 只能简单读孩子的英语读物
- C.完全可以给孩子读英语绘本
- D.平时读英语类书籍刊物等

3.您是否和孩子一起亲子阅读?

A.是 B否

4.您了解英语绘本吗?

- A.了解, 经常给孩子买
- B.了解一些, 但没买过
- C.不了解

5.如果学校开展英语绘本进课堂的课题研究,届时需要家长们配合购买一定量绘本书籍,您是否愿意参与?

A.愿意

B.要考虑

C.不愿意

针对英语绘本教学,请给出您的意见和建议? (选填)

6.现在家中大概有多少本英语绘本?

- A.没有
- B.10本以下
- C.11至30本
- D.30本以上

7. 您愿意一个月为孩子购买英语绘本花费多少钱?

- A.50元以下
- B.51-100元
- C.101-300元
- D.301-500元
- E.500元以上

8. 您每天陪孩子阅读英语绘本的时间大概是多少?

- A.15分钟以下
- B.15-30分钟
- C.30分钟-1小时
- D.1小时以上
- 9.您是否支持英语课堂上使用绘本作为教材?
- (1非常反对 5大力支持)
- 10.您希望英语绘本在孩子的英语学习上充当一个怎样的角色?
- A.课前热身内容
- B.课程主体内容
- C.辅助教科书材料
- D.课外补充读物
- E.其他

11.孩子一天大概花多少时间阅读英语绘本?

- A.15分钟以下
- B.15-30分钟
- C.30分钟-1小时
- D.1小时以上

12.英语绘本是否提高了孩子对英语的学习兴趣?

- A.明显提高
- B.有所提高
- C.提高不明显

D.仍然不感兴趣

13.学习英语绘本后,您认为孩子哪方面的英语能力得到了提高?(此题多选)

A.阅读能力

B朗读能力

C.听力能力

D.写作能力

E.英语语言表达能力

F.背单词能力

G.其他(请填写)

14.除了英语能力方面,您认为英语绘本给孩子带来哪些影响?

(积极/消极皆可)

15.针对绘本教学,请提出您的意见和建议。

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