

Communication Assessments for Individuals with Complex Communication Needs

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Thank You!


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Today's Topic Location in the 5 STEPS

<i>Targets</i>	
<i>Teaching/Tasks</i>	
<i>Tools</i>	
<i>Testing</i>	
<i>Team</i>	


Webinar Outcomes

- ✓ Know features of a good assessment
- ✓ Names of specific, recommended assessment tools
- ✓ Practice with structured observation to inform assessment

Communication Assessments

<i>Targets</i>	Purposes, intended outcomes of communication assessments
<i>Teaching/Tasks</i>	Features of a good communication assessment
<i>Tools</i>	Communication assessment materials, resources
<i>Testing</i>	Content and format of results of communication assessments
<i>Team</i>	Next steps towards success with communication assessments

Targets

<i>Targets</i>	
<i>Teaching/Tasks</i>	
<i>Tools</i>	
<i>Testing</i>	
<i>Team</i>	

Purposes, intended
outcomes of
communication
assessments



Targets	★
Teaching/Tasks	
Tools	
Testing	
Team	

IDEA Part C

"the ongoing procedures used by qualified personnel to identify the child's unique strengths and needs and the early intervention services appropriate to meet those needs throughout the period of the child's eligibility..."

(IDEA, Part C, Section 303.321)

Targets	★
Teaching/Tasks	
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Assessment

“ongoing procedures ... to identify
... unique strengths and needs and ...
services to meet those needs ...”

(IDEA, Part C, Section 303.321)



<i>Targets</i>	★
<i>Teaching/Tasks</i>	
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Purpose and Outcomes

- ★ identify strengths and needs
 - ★ Communication skills and abilities
 - ★ Communication challenges
 - ★ Successful strategies, methods, approaches
 - ★ Enhancing contexts, environments
- ★ Identify services
 - ★ Goals
 - ★ Instructional plans

Teaching / Tasks

<i>Targets</i>	
<i>Teaching/Tasks</i>	★
<i>Tools</i>	
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<i>Team</i>	

Features of a
good
communication
assessment

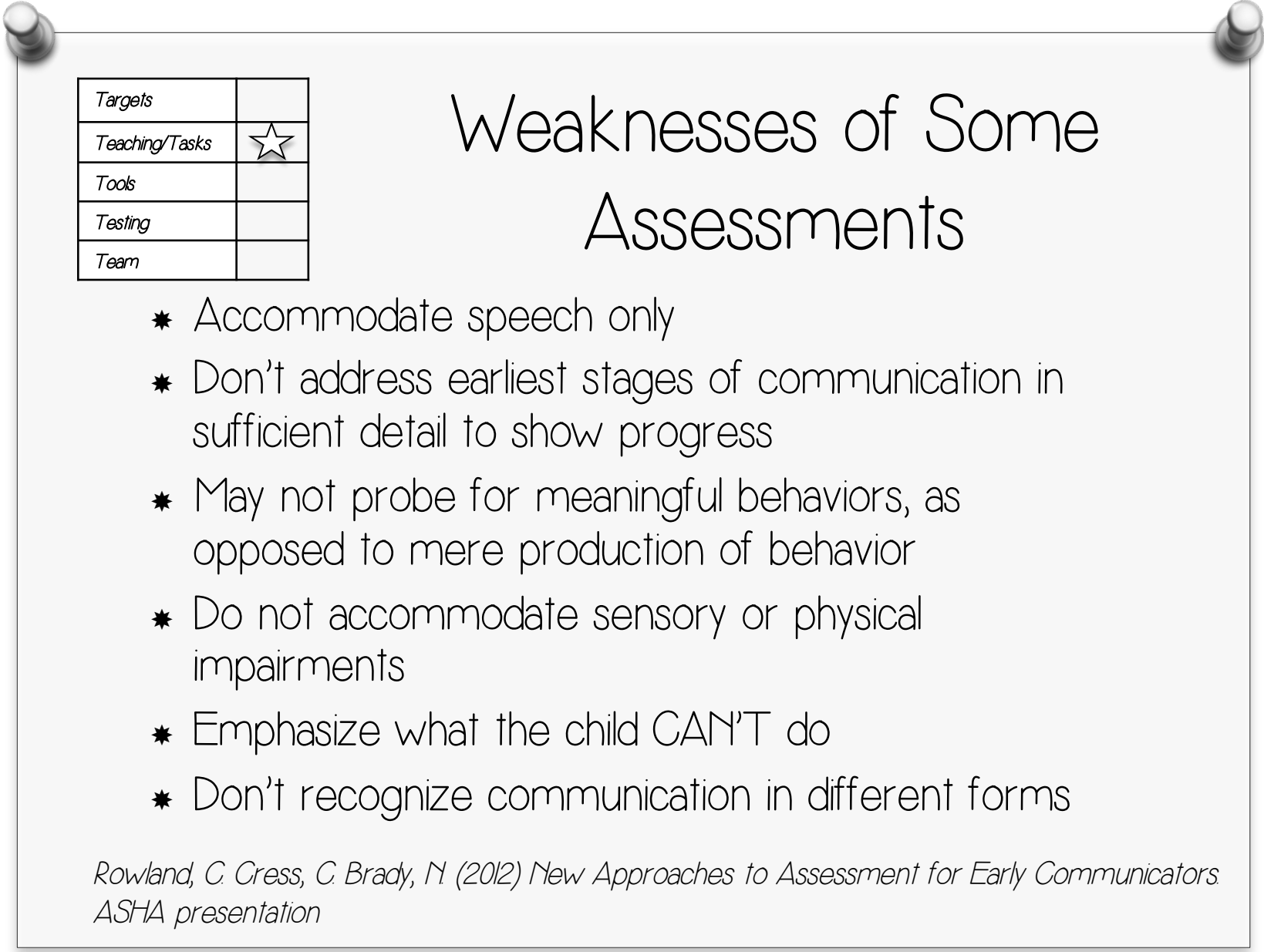


Targets	
Teaching/Tasks	☆
Tools	
Testing	
Team	

Weaknesses of Some Assessments

- * Accommodate speech only
- * Don't address earliest stages of communication in sufficient detail to show progress
- * May not probe for meaningful behaviors, as opposed to mere production of behavior
- * Do not accommodate sensory or physical impairments
- * Emphasize what the child CAN'T do

*Rowland, C. Cress, C. Brady, N. (2012) New Approaches to Assessment for Early Communicators
ASHA presentation*



Targets	
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Weaknesses of Some Assessments

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- ★ May not probe for meaningful behaviors, as opposed to mere production of behavior
- ★ Do not accommodate sensory or physical impairments
- ★ Emphasize what the child CAN'T do
- ★ Don't recognize communication in different forms

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Strong Assessment Content: Tool Selection

- ★ Use multiple tools to look at communicative functions and forms
- ★ Focus on “can do” - allow for range of forms of expression
- ★ Appropriately “sensitive” – to see details and show information along continuum

Targets	
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Strong Assessment Content: Range of Sources

- ★ Solicit input from many partners
- ★ Have them explain how the student communicates
- ★ Look for their interpretations and then ask “How do you know that?” or “How does s/he show that?”
 - ★ Example:
 - ★ Mom: “She loves the book “Harry Potter”
 - ★ You: “How does she show you that?”
 - ★ Mom: “Well, she smiles, looks at me, taps the pages, and reaches for it when it is time to put it away”.



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Strong Assessment Contexts: Natural Contexts


- ★ consult with checklist or tool to see what to look for
- ★ observe in typical routines without intervening
- ★ Be aware of partner's role (if present)
- ★ Be open to wide range of forms each function can take ★
- ★ "translate", explicate what you see

Targets	
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Strong Assessment Contexts: Engineered Opportunities

- ★ Recognize lack of opportunity ★
 - ★ Not naturally occurring
 - ★ Partner intervenes
- ★ Engineer opportunities to demonstrate targeted skills

Tools

<i>Targets</i>	
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Communication
assessment
materials,
resources



<i>Targets</i>	
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Assessments

- ★ Handout of Assessment Tool resources
- ★ Focuses primarily on the early communication assessment materials
- ★ Standard assessments are more readily available and can be adapted for students with more advanced communication abilities

Targets	
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Caution About Standardized Tests

"It should be noted that test scores would be invalid for testing a client who is not reflected in the normative group for the test's standardization sample, even if the test were administered as instructed. However, these tests can provide valuable descriptive information about a client's abilities and limitations in the language of the test."

Downloaded from ASHA: <http://www.asha.org/practice/multicultural/issues/assess/>

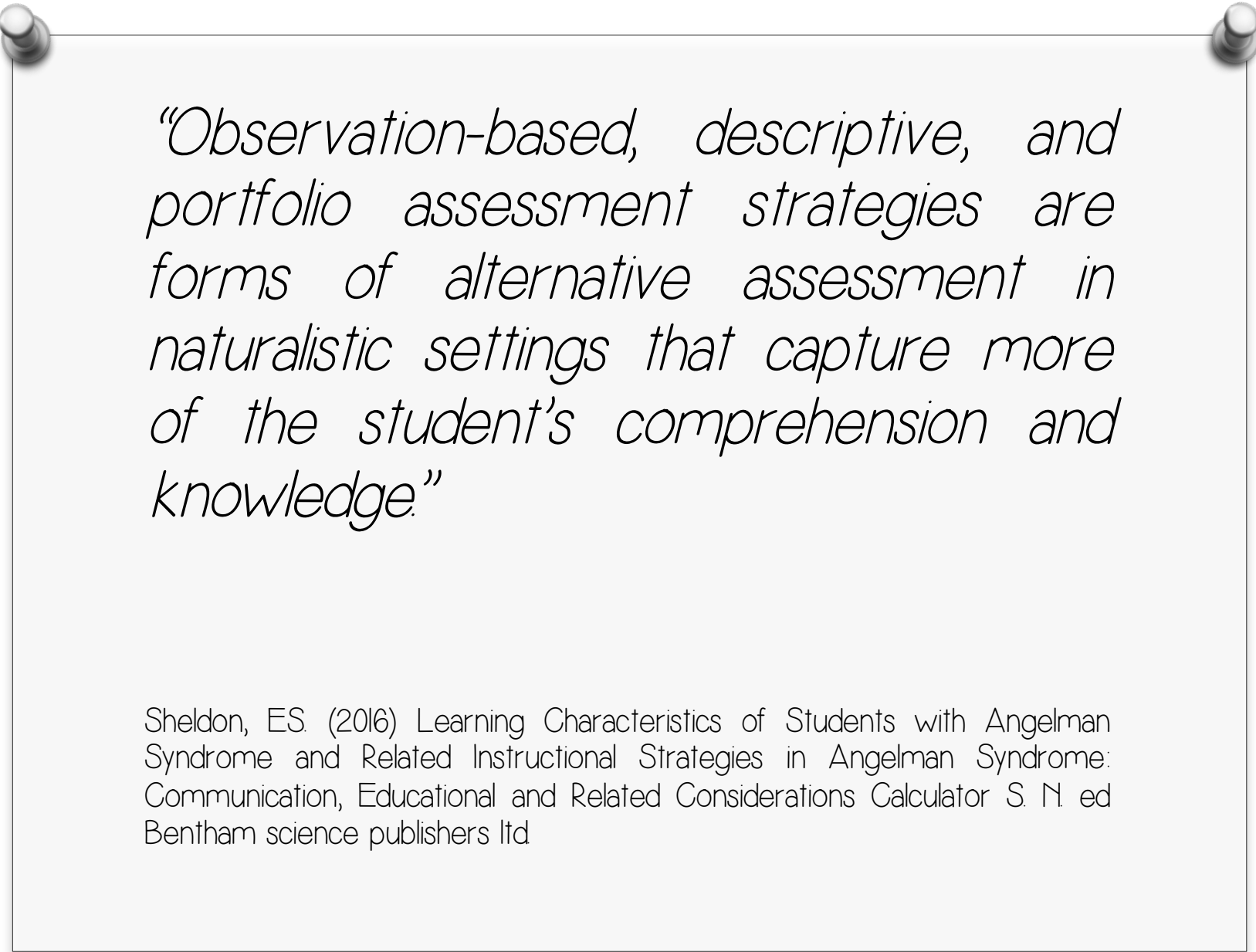
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Caution About Standardized Tests

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Most standardized tests were not created for individuals with complex communication needs, so those scores are not valid.

You can use these tests, if appropriate, as part of your assessment if you report the results accordingly.




“Observation-based, descriptive, and portfolio assessment strategies are forms of alternative assessment in naturalistic settings that capture more of the student’s comprehension and knowledge.”

Sheldon, ES. (2016) Learning Characteristics of Students with Angelman Syndrome and Related Instructional Strategies in Angelman Syndrome: Communication, Educational and Related Considerations Calculator S. N. ed Bentham science publishers ltd

Testing

<i>Targets</i>	
<i>Teaching/Tasks</i>	
<i>Tools</i>	
<i>Testing</i>	★
<i>Team</i>	


Content and
format of results
of communication
assessments



<i>Targets</i>	
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Format and Content of Results

- ★ Results should be interpreted - what is meaningful about this information?
- ★ Focus on positive – what the child can do and then what is next
- ★ Include changes to the context (environment) as well as student goals (service focus)




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Potential Uses of Results

- ★ Provide more supportive contexts for student to communicate
- ★ Increase opportunity to demonstrate existing skill, generalize it to new environment
- ★ Expand current form of expression (e.g. more abstract symbols)
- ★ Teach new skills by providing opportunity and modeling

Team


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Team's next steps
towards success
with
communication
assessments

<i>Targets</i>	
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Next Steps

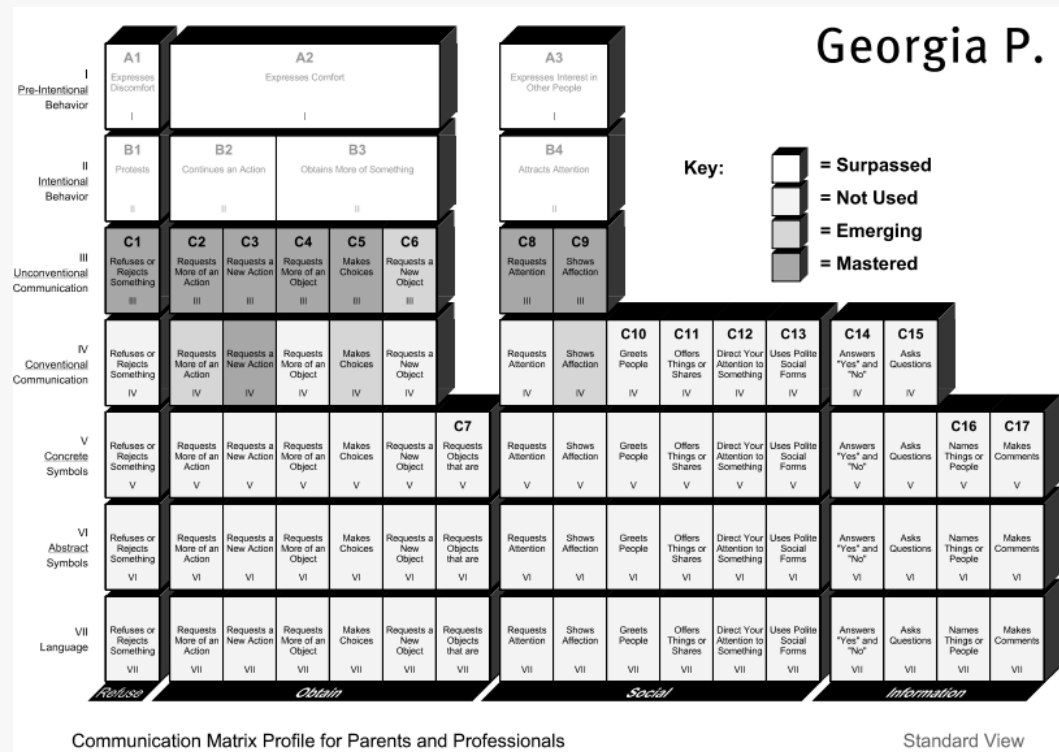
- ★ Check out new tests or options from resource handout
- ★ Do observation practice with videos
- ★ Conduct student observation using practice structure
- ★ Request/supply family info
- ★ Rephrase “can’t do” to “can do”
- ★ Focus on interpretation of information in next assessment



“Observation-based assessment describes a more complete picture of the child’s abilities and areas that should be targeted for instruction.”

Sheldon, ES. (2016) Learning Characteristics of Students with Angelman Syndrome and Related Instructional Strategies in Angelman Syndrome: Communication, Educational and Related Considerations Calculator S. N ed Bentham science publishers ltd

Communicative Functions



Rowland, C. (2016). Online Communication Matrix [Web site]. Portland, OR: Oregon Health & Science University, Design to Learn Projects Website: <http://communicationMatrix.org>

Communicative Functions

Reject

Reject/refuse something

Request

New action

More action

More object

New object

Choices

Object not present

Social

Request attention

Show affection

Greet people

Offers things, shares

Direct your attention to something

Use polite social forms

Information Exchange

Answers yes/no

Asks questions

Names things/people

Makes comments

Rowland, C. (2016). Online Communication Matrix [Web site]. Portland, OR: Oregon Health & Science University, Design to Learn Projects Website: <http://communicationMatrix.org>

Observation Chart

What the child did	What I think it meant	What function it served
<i>Describe exactly what the child did</i>	<i>If you were to put these actions into words, what do you think they are saying?</i> <i>You may have more than one interpretation.</i>	<i>Which function best matches the message you identified?</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Reject</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Request</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Social</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Information Share</i>



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