

Oregon Mentoring Program (OMP)

The Oregon Mentoring Program focuses on supporting beginning teachers and beginning administrators – educators who are in their first two years in their educational positions. Effective mentoring is foundational to a quality program and requires that mentors receive quality professional development.

In 2015, the Oregon Legislature amended the Oregon Revised Statute 329.805 to include the following funding priorities within the Oregon Mentoring Program to support this work. The conditions outlined identified that projects/districts receiving funds for mentoring must demonstrate their efforts related to: (a) **increasing the number** of culturally and linguistically diverse educators hired and (b) reflecting the demographics of the **students** of the school district with the demographics of the **educators** of the school district.

Standard #8 of the Oregon Mentoring Program Standards demonstrates a commitment to equity by supporting the development of culturally responsive practices in teachers and administrators. The Oregon Department of Education is committed to supporting and assisting school districts' work to ensure all students in Oregon receive effective educational experiences that increase their achievement outcomes.

The **purpose of this brief** is two-fold 1) to assist a quality Mentoring Program in supporting educators' knowledge of the cultural, gender, racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic characteristics of their classrooms, schools, and community and 2) to expand knowledge of cultural responsiveness and how it impacts learning, teaching and leadership for all students and educators.

Reading and discussing topics about race, ethnicity, and privilege are often difficult conversations and may create uncomfortable feelings, which is not the goal of this Brief or any of the resources suggested. We ask as you read this Brief that you follow the four agreements developed by Singleton and Curtis (2006) and used by many school districts across the nation to assist them in having courageous conversations about challenging topics. The final agreement is often the one most difficult to accept because most people are looking for answers when having thought-provoking discussions.

Mentoring Program

Standard #8

Equity, Cultural Responsiveness and Universal Access: Quality mentor programs foster and develop culturally responsive educators. (see reference page)

- Stay engaged
- Experience discomfort
- Speak your truth
- Expect and accept non-closure

The questions this Brief will address are: *How do educators reflect on their attitudes and beliefs to ensure they are being culturally responsive in their teaching practices? How can this be done appropriately utilizing authentic resources that increase knowledge that can be transferred across the different groups of students and families in our schools?*

This Brief also includes research-based resources that are currently being used by school districts funded in the ODE Mentoring Program, as well as many other districts to support this important work. Students that enter Oregon classrooms each day bring a wealth of information and expertise that educators want to aid them in using – we hope this Brief helps in that process.

The first two resources are to help ground you in understanding the importance of being an equitable educator and thinking about strategies to make that happen.

In 2013, the Oregon legislature established the Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion within the Department of Education with the following **mission**: to support our educators, students, families, community members, and colleagues to be reflective and self-critical about designing, developing, and implementing culturally responsive systems that value academic excellence for all students and promote social and emotional well-being, while maintaining high expectations and creating safe and supportive space for each student to thrive.

In an effort to support districts in these efforts, requests can be made for: professional development, technical assistance, and coaching supports related to equity and culturally responsive instructional practices, as well as systematic support structures

Resource #1

EdChange: Paul Gorski's Multicultural Hand-Out

Learning to be an equitable educator does not happen quickly and requires effort to assess yourself about the ways you learn vs. the ways other people learn. Examples of being an equitable educator can be a simple commitment to learning to pronounce the names of all students in your classroom to a deeper commitment of learning how to assist students to think critically in order to inform their learning. People see the world differently and learn in many ways. To access an article and resource suggested by one of the ODE Mentoring Project Directors please go to the [EdChange website](#).

Why is being culturally responsive important?

Nationally, less than one in five U.S. public school teachers—18 percent—are individuals of color, while approximately half—49 percent—of public elementary and secondary school students are individuals of color (The State of Racial Diversity in the Educator Workforce, 2016). In Oregon, “10.1% of the PK-12 classroom teachers and 11.3% of administrators are culturally or linguistically diverse” while over one third—37 percent (213,630) of Oregon public school students are individuals of color (Educator Equity Report, 2017).

Resource #2

Education Equity Article

The January 2016 edition of *Edutopia* stated that, “If **equality** means giving everyone the *same resources*, **equity** means giving each student access to the *resources they need* to learn and thrive.”

This statement is not new to those that have experienced it when working with students in their classrooms; however, it is also not always simple to determine the additional resources a student may need. Shane Safir, a mentor, explained how important the clarification of equity and equality was when helping her mentee be successful with ALL students in her classroom. To access her article [click here](#).

In 2011, the [Center on American Progress](#) released a paper, *Teacher*

Diversity Matters, that stated nationally, student demographics and teacher workforce numbers were very different. To assist the federal government in understanding this issue and to help states increase educator diversity two additional reports were developed and released in 2014 (May and June). The initial findings in the first report stated the “gap between teachers and students of color continues to grow; almost every state has a significant diversity gap; Hispanic teacher population had larger demographic gaps relative to students; and diversity gaps are large within districts” (Boser, 2014). All three of these reports are listed here and



1954

Supreme Court rules **segregation** in public schools is unconstitutional.



1964

President Johnson forbids **discrimination** and gives every citizen the right to vote.



1968-1988

Goal of **multicultural education** is to examine schools as social systems and to promote the idea of equity and equality (Dr. James Banks et al).

Understanding biases
White Privilege:
Unpacking the Invisible Knapsack (1988, P. McIntosh).



1990s-present

Culturally responsive teaching practices support the achievement of all students in a “culturally supported, learner-centered context” (Dr. Ladson-Billings, Dr. Gay et al).

referenced at the end of this brief.

- Teacher Diversity Revisited: A New State-by-State Analysis (2011)
- America’s Leaky Pipeline for Teachers of Color: Getting More Teachers of Color into the Classroom (2014)
- Retaining Teachers of Color in Our Public Schools (2014)

In 2016, the Oregon Legislature passed House Bill 4033 to advance the purposes of the Educators Equity Act, “to improve the cultural competence of educators and to ensure educators are trained in culturally relevant educational practices” (2016 Oregon Educator Equity Report, 2016, p. 4). Both Dr. Gloria Ladson-Billings (1994) and Dr. Geneva Gay (2000) created principles for culturally responsive teaching that support educators in their work to empower students intellectually, socially, emotionally and politically. Defining **cultural responsive teaching** or CRT requires thinking and reflecting about how students learn and recognizing the diverse cultural characteristics of learners as assets. Educators have known for a very long time “*the most important single factor influencing learning is what the learner already knows. Ascertain this and teach.....accordingly*” (Ausubel, 1968, p. vi).



When asked to define **cultural responsive teaching** the ODE Equity Team refers to:

“using the cultural knowledge, prior experiences, frames of reference, and performance styles of ethnically diverse students to make learning encounters more relevant to and effective for them”
Culturally responsive teaching - Theory, research and practice

(Geneva Gay, 2010 c, p. 31)

OMP STANDARD #8

The Oregon Mentoring Program Standard, **Equity, Cultural Responsiveness and Universal Access: Quality mentor programs foster and develop culturally responsive educators** has three indicators. Each indicator is explained here with clarifying definitions,

understandings, and resources. The clarifications and common understandings are provided to assist in identifying goals; recognizing institutional and systemic barriers and discriminatory practices; as well as providing examples of promising practices.

8.1 Support teachers and administrator mentees’ knowledge of the cultural, gender, racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic characteristics of their classrooms, schools and community.

Understanding cultural, racial, ethnic, gender, and socioeconomic characteristics is not easy and requires internal and external investigations of beliefs, values, and perceptions. People have different experiences and ways of knowing as they develop their views of the world and understandings of each other. A “Funds of Knowledge perspective” (Gonzalez, Moll & Amanti, 2005) recognizes that students arrive with an abundance of social and intellectual resources from their families’ life experiences that can be used in school. The challenge is for schools to embrace this as a resource to assist children in their learning experiences.

Understanding terms

We recognize the term **race** to mean a racial group that is generally recognized in society and refers to people because of their differences and similarities in biological traits. The term **ethnicity** refers to a group of people who have shared cultural practices, perspectives, and distinctions that set them apart from other people, a shared cultural heritage. The most common characteristics distinguishing various ethnic groups are ancestry, a sense of history, language, religion, and forms of dress (learned actions).

Educators new to interacting with students from different ethnic, racial, and socioeconomic groups are often unsure of what is appropriate. Two frequently used terms are people of color or communities of color; however, naming a specific racial and/or ethnic group, such as white can be appropriate.

Developing understanding around these concepts requires time and serious considerations for acceptance of other belief systems. When acknowledgement of different ways of thinking does not happen, stumbling blocks can delay progress in schools’ or districts’ efforts to help all students. If a district or school would like support in developing culturally responsive practices ODE’s Equity Team is available to provide technical assistance. Please contact ODE at victoria.garcia@state.or.us

8.2 Expand teachers and administrators’ self-awareness of cultural responsiveness and how that impacts their learning, teaching and leadership.

Developing knowledge about the diverse cultural backgrounds of students is one more aspect of being an effective educator. How can this be done appropriately utilizing authentic resources that increases knowledge that can be transferred across the different groups of students and families in our schools?

In *Teacher Preparation for Linguistically Diverse Classrooms*, Lucas & Villegas (2011) recommended that teachers need to “develop these six qualities: socio-cultural consciousness; affirming views of diversity; commitment and skills for promoting change in schools; understanding of how learners construct knowledge; skills for learning about their students; and ability to use appropriate instructional approaches for diverse students” (p. 56). Each of the ‘qualities’ helps educators understand the importance of uncovering the enormity of the iceberg of culture floating below the surface level of knowledge and understanding of the values and beliefs of different people.

Without this cultural self-awareness work that supports educators reviewing their own values, attitudes and beliefs the embedded racial inequalities often produced and reproduced without direct intention are reinforced. These can be and often are policies and practices that intentionally and unintentionally enable white privilege to be reinforced.

8.3 Demonstrate a commitment to equity by developing culturally responsive practices in teachers and administrators.

“Equity in education is the notion that each and every learner will receive the necessary resources they need individually to thrive in Oregon’s schools no matter what their national origin, race, gender, sexual orientation, differently abled, first language, or other distinguishing characteristic.” Equity Lens, March 2016

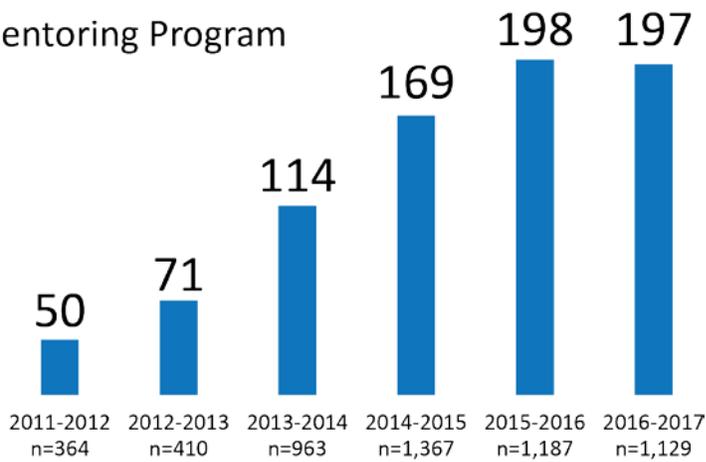
Mentors funded through the Oregon Mentoring Program (OMP) receive quality professional learning to assist them in their work to support beginning teachers and beginning administrators in this area. Since 2014-2015 OMP Mentors have been receiving specific training focused on equitable instructional practices to strengthen their skills to support beginning teachers in differentiated instruction. At the end of the Differentiated Instruction workshops, 95% of the mentors in 2014-2015 and 97% from school year 2015-2016 responded that *as a result of this professional learning session, I will be - confident, very confident, or completely confident* - in using frameworks of differentiated instruction for responsive and equitable instruction.

Understanding terms

Investigating how students’ background provides structure to how they learn can move people beyond the state of white privilege. It is important to break down barriers that can stand in the way of students reaching their full potential.

White privilege is a term used to identify the privileges, opportunities, and gratuities offered by society to those who are white (McIntosh, 1988). Dr. Geneva Gay (2010) has helped many educators see the “potential of culturally responsive teaching to improve multiple kinds of achievement that are beneficial for many different students” (p. 51) in order to move beyond white privilege.

Number of Beginning Teachers of Color Mentored in ODE Mentoring Program



the state is inflated because it includes the beginning teachers being mentored.

Oregon Mentoring Program (OMP)

Each of the OMP projects collect race/ethnicity data on each beginning teacher, beginning principal and beginning superintendent mentored. Across six years, the percentage of beginning teachers of color in the mentoring program was an **average of 5.5% higher** than the percentage of beginning teachers of color across the state. (link to Fast Facts) It is important to remember that the number of beginning teachers across

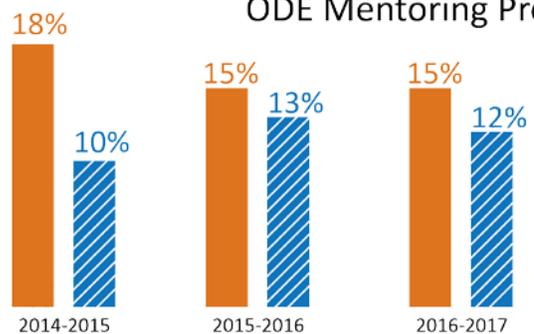
Teachers of Color in Oregon

The figures above show the number of beginning teachers of color who were mentored in the ODE Mentoring Program. Five of the six years showed an increase in the number of beginning teachers of color. The percentage of beginning teachers of color has increased to 17% in both 2015-2016 and 2016-2017. These percentages are compared to the 10% of all teachers of color in Oregon in 2016, which includes the mentored beginning teachers.

Administrators of Color in Oregon

In addition to beginning teachers, the Oregon Mentoring Program serves beginning administrators. Since 2014-15 the Oregon Mentoring Program has also reviewed the ethnicity of beginning administrators in the state compared to the beginning administrators being mentored. Consistently, beginning administrators of color being mentored has had a higher percentage rate than beginning administrators of color throughout the state. The state rate is also inflated because it includes the beginning administrators being mentored.

Beginning Administrators of Color in ODE Mentoring Program



Legend:
■ Mentored Beginning Administrators
▨ All Beginning Administrators in Oregon

** Beginning teachers and administrators are defined as first year and second year educators.

Examples of Success from the Field Themes

ODE and the Center for Education Innovation, Evaluation, and Research spoke with the ODE Equity Team and Project Directors from all seven of the 2015-2017 funded Beginning Educator Mentoring Projects to discuss how they are implementing Standard #8 **Equity, Cultural Responsiveness and Universal**

Access: *Quality mentor programs foster and develop culturally responsive educators.* All of these districts/consortiums have been implementing a research-based mentoring program for beginning teachers and/or administrators for many years: Lincoln County School District New Educators Induction Project, North Coast Mentoring Consortium, Mid-Willamette Valley Consortium, St. BeaVer Mentoring Collaborative, Southern Oregon Mentor Consortium, Mentoring for Excellence (PPS), and Hillsboro/ Forest Grove Mentor Project. Each project develops their own mentoring program based on the Oregon Mentoring Program Standards, district/consortium vision, goals and objectives and local needs. Each project has different demographics, locations and educator needs; however reoccurring themes surfaced that provided resources that can be shared.

1

Providing Trauma-Informed Care Resources

2

Encouraging Courageous Conversations

3

Supporting Restorative and Social

1

Theme 1 - Providing Trauma-Informed Care Resources

Trauma Informed Care is a framework of care to assist educators in helping all students that have experienced or are experiencing trauma in their lives. It involves understanding, recognizing, and responding to the effects of all types of **trauma**.

On-going Mentor Professional Learning (Mentor Forums) is required by all ODE Mentoring Projects. The Mid Willamette Valley Consortium selected *Fostering Resilient Learners: Strategies for Creating a Trauma-Sensitive Classroom* as the focus for a book study during their Mentor Forums. Nurturing resiliency and social/emotional learning were combined throughout the sessions. Additional resources from the [CASEL website](#) were used to focus on building resiliency and the effects that prolonged trauma has on children's brains. Mentors developed implementation plans focused on supporting beginning teachers as they support their students.

Co-Attend Professional Learning – One highly effective mentoring practice is ensuring that mentors and mentees attend professional learning together. Tillamook School District as part of the North Coast Mentoring Project sponsored year-long ongoing professional learning for

mentors and mentees focused on trauma informed practices. An October 2016 inservice included presentations by two experts regarding trauma-informed practice: Dr. Felitti, a doctor from the original ACE's study, and Jody McVittie from a Seattle-area organization. The mentors also used the article "Helping Students Who Have Experienced Trauma" which can be retrieved on the [Edutopia website](#).

Mentoring Tools – Data driven discussions between mentors and mentees help to move practice forward. Mentoring tools allow data to be collected in a variety of ways. The St. BeaVer Consortium utilized the Seating Chart tool to gather data on various classroom interactions (movement, being called on, on-/off- task). Discussions about analyzing teachers' responses to what is happening in the classroom was the main focus of this strategy as a way to equitably meet students' learning needs. A second strategy, the Selective Scripting tool allows for focused conversations of equity, cultural relevance, access, and how to convey respect to students from all walks of life.



Theme 2 - Encouraging Courageous Conversations

Courageous conversations is a protocol to assist individuals and groups having difficult conversations about critical issues confronting individuals, classrooms, and schools.

A greater majority of students in classrooms today are experiencing poverty, homelessness, and come from different ethnic, racial, and gender orientation configurations. The Four Agreements of Courageous Conversations (Singleton & Curtis, 2006) is a protocol that many districts across Oregon and other states are using to have difficult conversations about critical issues confronting schools.

1. **Stay engaged:** Staying engaged means "remaining morally, emotionally, intellectually, and socially involved in the dialogue" (p.59)
2. **Experience discomfort:** This norm acknowledges that discomfort is inevitable, especially, in dialogue about race, and that participants make a commitment to bring issues into the open. It is through dialogue, even when uncomfortable, the healing and change begin.
3. **Speak your truth:** This means being open about thoughts and feelings and not just saying what you think others want to hear.
4. **Expect and accept non-closure:** This agreement asks participants to "hang out in uncertainty" and not rush to quick solutions, especially in relation to racial understanding, which requires ongoing dialogue.

Adapted from Glenn E. Singleton & Curtis Linton, *Courageous Conversations about Race: A Field Guide for Achieving Equity in Schools*. 2006. pp. 58-65. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.

Mentor-Mentee Professional Learning Groups - Mentoring for Excellence (Portland Public Schools/PPS) has a racial equity policy that guides instructional practices and establishes equity as a priority. New employees participate in a two-day professional development focused on Beyond Diversity, conducted by PPS Equity Mentors. To support follow-up conversation Instructional Mentors are encouraged to attend the Beyond Diversity workshop with mentees.

Another resource PPS instructional mentors use is the Courageous Conversations table tent with the 4 agreements and the six conditions. This structural agenda is part of the team's work every time they meet for equity check-ins and Problem of Practices which are specifically framed to encourage equity conversations. Mentoring for Excellence uses a variety of mentoring tools that are strongly grounded in equity and focused on each individual child in front of the mentored beginning teacher. Another useful tool is the Inquiry Cycle Action Plan (ICAP). PPS mentors also ask these questions of mentees when engaging in Analysis of Student Work:

- *When we apply a lens of equity to this data, what do you notice?*
- *What do you know about the race and experience of the students who are not meeting the standard?*



Theme 3 - Supporting Restorative and Social Justice

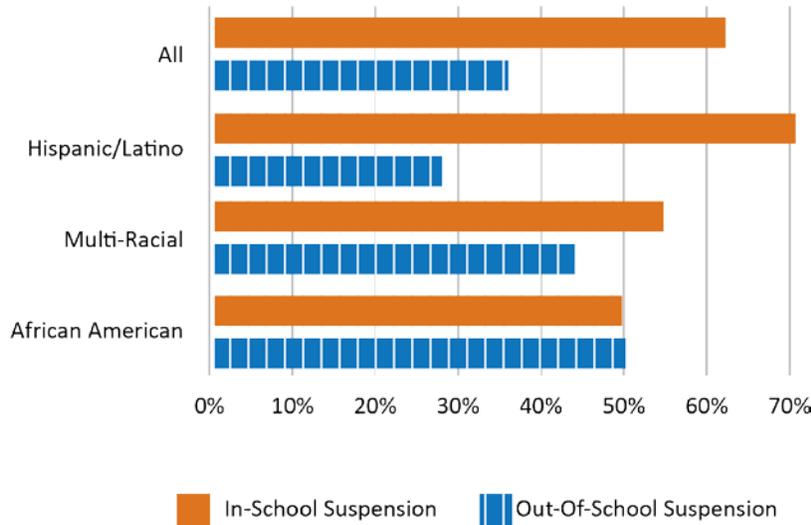
Restorative justice is an evidence-based strategy effectively used in schools to assist in reducing suspensions, expulsions, and disciplinary referrals. Restorative justice is a philosophical framework that can be applied in a variety of contexts - the justice system, schools, families, communities, and others (Davis, 2014).

Focused Professional Learning – The St BeaVer Mentoring Collaborative provided focused Professional development and opportunities to raise understanding and awareness about how to be culturally responsive. The mentors participated in different book groups – Courageous Conversations, Culturally Responsive Teaching, and The Brain. The mentors also attended workshops in Cultural Responsive Teaching practices, Advancement Via Individual Determination (AVID), Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP), and DALL (Developing Academic Language Learning) strategies. Some mentees have had opportunities to attend Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT) workshops with their mentors offered inside and outside the district. A new resource has been Restorative Practices' professional learning that mentees and mentors have been able to attend together.

Looking at Oregon Student Data - A review of the rates of suspensions, expulsions, and disciplinary referrals for students of color done by the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) in December 2015 revealed that "African American and Multi-Racial students were more likely

to receive a more severe punishment for like offenses that their white peers” (p. 1). Oregon is not unique with this outcome – historically, most school systems utilize punitive actions in hopes of changing the behavior of students.

In-School vs. Out-Of-School Suspensions



A similar study conducted by ODE, also in December 2015, discovered that two groups: students in poverty and American Indian/Alaska Native students have higher rates of chronic absenteeism than their peers. And, female students had higher rates of absenteeism than male students. Students that are chronically absent generally lag behind their peers in state assessments and graduation rates. (link to ODE Brief)

It is important to note that the comparison of like offenses in the ODE Research briefs was for offenses deemed to be more “subjective” in nature such as violation of school rules, attendance policy violation, disobedience, and disruptive behavior. More objective offenses such as alcohol and drug possession didn’t show the same disproportionate outcome. Zero-tolerance policies are the most frequently used tactic when faced with student discipline and chronic absenteeism. This method is a quick fix and does not address the deeper reasons of the behaviors.

Restorative justice is a promising approach (Fronius, Persson, Guckenburg, Hurley, & Petrosino, 2016) in working with students and families in understanding challenging behavior and unknown obstacles. Mentors receive professional learning in this area to provide them skills to assist beginning educators new to these situations. Mentees then learn to focus on the relationship with the student to better understand challenging behaviors and additional difficulties they may be working around. Utilizing Restorative Justice practices help all students

Resource #3

[National Equity Project](#) -

“Every child in America has the right to a quality education. We support people to make good on that promise”. – National Equity Project

The National Equity Project designs and provides professional learning experiences for educators and other leaders to support them in transforming their systems.

feel safe and treated with respect. ODE is currently working on a Research Brief focused on Restorative Justice to be published in Spring 2018.

Resource # 4

Chronic Absenteeism Research

Across the nation schools are concerned with how to support families and students facing high school absenteeism. In 2016 the Chief Education Office identified two “primary themes” involving the school setting: (1) attendance is a role in culturally responsive education practices and (2) attendance is a piece of the systemic barriers that block students’ progress. *“This finding challenges the common perception that when children miss school it’s a sign that their parents don’t care”* (p. 4) which was contradictory to the comprehensive investigative review discussions when talking to parents, students, and educators.

References for this research are included in Brief Reference link noted below.

Resource #5

Book Study or Professional Learning group - a new resource that might be helpful in understanding the impact that life experiences can have on groups of people is Michael Dyson (2017) *Tears we cannot stop: A sermon to white America*.

All of the resources and examples from ODE Mentoring Projects in this **Brief** are to help districts in meeting the needs of all students. Learning to be a culturally responsive educator is an ongoing process and requires being willing to try new approaches to teaching. The Oregon Mentoring Program is committed to professional learning for beginning teacher and administrator mentors who then implement the practices with beginning teachers and administrators – all of who become stronger and more effective educators.



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ODE Mentoring Research Briefs

References – please use this link to find all references for this Brief: <https://goo.gl/mFrNoH>

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