

ADDING SOME TEC-VARIETY

**100+ Activities for Motivating
and Retaining Learners Online**



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CHAPTER THIRTEEN

PRINCIPLE #10

YIELDING PRODUCTS



**(Includes Goal Driven,
Purposeful Vision, and Ownership)**

You must know for which harbor you are headed
if you are to catch the right wind to take you there.

—Seneca, Roman Stoic philosopher, statesman, dramatist, and humorist

The Final Act

It is hard to believe that we are already at the final principle of the TEC-VARIETY framework. Many courses and training programs end with the production or creation of something special by the participants. This could be a research summary report, musical performance, original poem, mobile application, or multimedia presentation. And so it is with our framework: we end on the notion of yielding products. Such products involve a sense of purpose and vision as well as ultimate ownership of what was produced. In a word, they are goal-driven. For instance, we had a goal to get to this point of the book; this goal gave us an end state toward which to work. As the nineteenth-century Scottish-born writer and historian Thomas Carlyle proclaimed, “A man without a goal is like a ship without a rudder.”

Learners, whether they are in physical or virtual classes, need the same. They glance upon a set of proposed activities in a syllabus and work toward completing what is assigned. That sense of task completion is not the only reason we sought to arrive at this chapter. We realized that goal completion and yielding products serve as the basis of many popular views in education today. When you involve learners in forms of learning based on products, projects, cases, or problems, you incentivize the system. Learners are driven to complete some type of high-quality, tangible product for others to see, share, use, comment upon, or remix. That reuse and remixing of the final product abides by John Dewey's hypothesis that "arriving at one goal is the starting point to another."

As alluded to in the previous chapter, Steve Jobs had a distinct—and often controversial and combative—way of sharing a vision and passion that excited thousands of people at Apple to work toward a common goal (Isaacson, 2011). Whether it was the Macintosh, the iPod, iTunes, the iPhone, or the iPad, there was something special about the announcement of a completed product that was thinner, more colorful, more innovative, or more powerful than anything ever available before. Steve Jobs was driven to design and produce the best products on the planet. Educators can instill the same passion and zeal within their students by having them search for and find their learning goals. When learners have a chance to produce something unique and valuable for an audience beyond the class, it can inspire them to dig deep and commit extensive amounts of time and effort. Goals give direction and purpose to such efforts, particularly when times are tough or the challenges high (Ray, 2004).

As Roy Baumeister and John Tierney (2011) note in their bestselling book, *Willpower: Rediscovering the Greatest Human Strength*, an individual's success often comes from commitment and persistent striving toward stated goals. There are many types of goals, however; for instance, learners can benefit from specific daily goals (also called "proximal" goals). When they meet such goals, they can gradually build up self-confidence and enhance their self-efficacy as learners. At the same time, establishing long-term or more distal goals such as those related to potential career interests or overall success in their college program of studies can help students overcome the drudgery of some of the daily work. As many know, it is the recording of learning-related goals as well as their completion that foster feelings of personal self-control over the learning situation. Then, when significant obstacles are faced, an inner striving or willpower arises within self-directed learners; some refer to this as tenacity or grit.

Goals alone will not determine success; to achieve success, goals must be realistic and valued. Such realism and value depends on past experiences and future intentions. When learners have some prior experience or knowledge in an area, they can be pushed to accomplish a more challenging target. And, as Stanford Professor Deborah Stipek (1998) and many other psychologists have found, charting their progress and accomplishments along the way can help learners attain even higher levels of success (Stipek, 1998). So can gentle nudging and spot-on advice from instructors and outside experts. Research indicates that when learners periodically evaluate their progress toward those goals with support from an instructor or expert, they can decide whether a change in their strategic approach is needed (Pintrich & Schunk, 1996).

This research makes an important distinction between performance-related goals that often involve outdoing other learners in the class or winning approval from someone, and learning-related goals that concern individuals' mastery of a task. The motivator be-

hind performance goals is often extrinsic in nature, whereas learning goals tend to come from inside the learner. Again, as Baumeister and Tierney (2011) explain, over the long haul, inner passion and willpower typically trump external carrots and sticks.

This differentiation between performance and learning goals is critically important to understand because individuals with performance goals who have limited self-confidence will select rather easy tasks to complete. In contrast, those with learning goals might reach for the next mountain without much hesitation. One of the intentions of the TEC-VARIETY framework is to nudge learners toward increasingly challenging but still attainable tasks. As shown by this tenth principle, when learners can design or build a product of some kind, doing so elevates the potential audience for that work. As the audience expands, typically so too do the summits that learners attempt to reach.

Technologies for Principle #10: Yielding Products

In the *Icarus Deception*, Seth Godin (2012) argues that we humans should make art. In terms of online or blended learning experiences, such art might be a short documentary video posted to YouTube, a new entry in Wikipedia, a video song parody (Korey, 2009), a unique mobile application, a chapter in a wikibook, an innovative game, or an insightful speech, perhaps in the form of a podcast. Godin laments that the recitation models that have often epitomized schooling have reduced learner opportunities to produce and ship such art.

In addition to new models of education that seek to empower learners and give them more opportunities to produce knowledge, Godin suggests that people need grit to overcome the endless critics whom they will encounter along the way toward producing their art. According to Godin, grit includes such factors as personal perseverance, hardiness, resilience, ambition, commitment, and flow. As he appropriately notes, the resistance that an individual faces is often internal as well. A learner may harbor doubts in the back of her mind that she can successfully produce something viable. As these doubts mount, the brain suffers great discomfort, leading to an inner reluctance to reach more challenging goals.

Fortunately, an emphasis on creating something unique is increasingly common in this age of the Web 2.0 and beyond. In fully online and blended learning courses, instructors can now incorporate activities that foster a type of creative renaissance. According to Sir Ken Robinson (Robinson & Aronica, 2013), it is vital to help learners find the element or situation in which they feel deeply passionate. Offering learners alternative choices in their course projects is one way to clear such a path. A modest media project today may lead to a new career interest, hobby, or budding area of expertise tomorrow. A learner might find such a passion when creating an online multimedia glossary in a wiki that future students can later augment or use. Another might discover a new interest area while creating a screencasted help system for a new software system or free learning tool used in a public library or computer lab.

Need more examples? If so, take, for instance, the simple podcast. Students could create a series of short podcast shows as a means to document and share their personal growth and development within in the course. When they are posted, peers and instructors could offer feedback or recommendations in a course discussion forum or blog. Research by Khoo and her colleagues indicates that podcasts can foster high levels of learner engagement and reflection, enhanced understanding of key course concepts, and overall personalization of learning. And in the process, learners also gain confidence with digital technologies (Forbes, 2011; Forbes, Khoo, Johnson, 2012).

In addition to podcasts, screencasts, and multimedia glossaries, some students may create infographics of emerging trends or areas of personal interest. Still others may post online books or book reviews and then engage in online discussions of them with their peers and with outsiders not enrolled in the course. As their audience expands, students will find a growing sense of purpose or meaning in their course work.

Clearly, there are numerous online activities that can yield valuable course products. Once posted or shared, they can be reused, remixed, and enhanced by present and future students (Ferlazzo, 2013). To be honest, many of the ideas presented in this chapter for yielding course products are not entirely new. In fact, most were already taking root over two decades ago when hypermedia and multimedia learning hit center stage. The opportunities for innovative course projects and products today, however, are infinitely more pervasive, accessible, and expected. With that, the resistance that Godin speaks about has started to subside.

Ten Online Activities in Principle #10: Yielding Products

The activities of this chapter push students. They force them to synthesize new learning competencies and insights into some type of unique project, scheme, venture, design, invention, or innovation. It is the doing part of this task that is infectious. Each person in a group or on a team will find a purpose from the activity's embedded goals and the potential to influence countless onlookers, lurkers, and browsers. Accordingly, these activities are not easy. They typically take much planning, deliberation, and persistence from initial design to task completion. When finished, however, students will have much to celebrate.

To be successful in this product-intensive world, learners must be able to delay gratification. They often do so by envisioning what the final product might look like and intensely working toward that imagined result. Instructors can help build those visions by providing examples of prior course success stories. They might even bring back former students to discuss their accomplishments, or they might share student testimonials that they already collected.

In the following pages, you will discover ten activities for yielding products, fostering goal setting, embedding purpose and passion, and creating ownership. They are not just the final ten activities for this book; instead, as you scan the skills and objectives associated with each one, you will come to realize that these are examples of some of the

most powerful pedagogical activities that you can place in your fully online and blended learning arsenal. Of course, they are also just a start. Build on them. Reshape them. And perhaps combine them. Then share the results with your colleagues as well as with us.

Activity 91. Cartoon and Animated Movie Productions

Description and Purpose of Activity. The Web has shifted from a resource for finding information to a platform for designing new forms of creative expression. Among the more interesting tools for expressing your creativity are sites for crafting your own animated movies or cartoons. Never heard of them? Well, an abundance of animation and cartoon creation sites have recently sprung up including, GoAnimate, Devolver, Voki, Zimmer Twins, PowToon, and Bitstrips (Kessler, 2010). With some of these tools, the user can manipulate the facial expressions, body movements, and voice of an avatar or animated character. In addition to character expressions and gestures, users can customize the scenes (i.e., background images, setting, color, etc.), add dialogue, and perhaps even record audio tracks—and then lay out all those items in a timeline that is easy to navigate.

Many of these systems remain limited in terms of customization features and the real-life sense of the characters. Nevertheless, they offer opportunities for fostering creativity in the form of humor, movement, interaction, and story development. Importantly, students can be actively involved in designing a movie or cartoon, instead of passively watching one. As movie development unfolds, students begin to grasp how humans communicate and interact in complex situations. Cartoons and animated movies are ideal for depicting political debates and civics, historical events, science fiction scenarios, product marketing techniques, and job interviewing skills (Parry, 2011). Such technology can also be used in teaching English, rhetoric, and argument structures (Jones, 2012).

Skills and Objectives. Includes spontaneity, role play, visual communication, interactivity, creativity expression, originality, risk taking, and design and artistic skills. These activities also promote a sense of participatory learning as well as content review, deeper and richer understanding of course content, and logical sequencing of content. Designing an animation or cartoon movie based on course content offers a sense of freedom of expression that most traditional course activities do not allow.

Advice and Ideas. Such a task might be novel for learners. Hence, it is important to gather sample animation movies or cartoons clarifying the requirements of such an assignment. Be specific on the length, interaction structures, and multimedia components of the task as well as your grading procedures. You may want to have students draft scripts for your approval prior to creating their movies. Post your criteria and requirements to a wiki or a course management system so that students can later refer to them. Students may also create a set of criteria to vote on the best animations. For instance, there might be competitions for Most Creative Design or Animation Sequence, Best Line, Best Screenwriting, and Most Outstanding Animated Movie of the Semester.

Variations and Extensions. Students in assigned collaborative teams might be asked to extend their cartoon or animated movies with additional effects or added length. Again, there might be competitions for best team performances. Students wanting a somewhat

challenging experience could try Machinima, a more time-intensive system as it requires creating a digital video in a 3D virtual world using avatars. The result, however, is a crisper cinematic production than they would have made using the other options already mentioned.

Key Instructional Considerations

Risk index: Medium

Time index: High

Cost index: Low

Learner-centered index: High

Duration of the learning activity: 1–3 weeks or as needed

Activity 92. Student Documentaries

Description and Purpose of Activity. Some course goals necessitate highly immersive final projects. Fortunately, as the costs of media production have plummeted, students have access to digital technologies that can significantly contribute to a course. Given that instructors often lack time and sufficient resources to produce elegant video footage that they can be proud of or want to reuse, new waves of low-cost production tools are quickly being embraced in K–12 schools and in higher education. In fact, we have had several students produce documentaries and digital stories of our courses in podcast and video formats. Some of these projects get highly creative with rich animations, in-depth interviews of prior students, and extensive filming as well as sophisticated editing. Georgetown University’s Center for New Designs for Learning and Scholarship (CNDLS) sponsors a number of innovative projects. One unique collaborative effort with Columbia University’s Center for New Media Teaching and Learning is called Project Rebirth. This initiative involves students producing a documentary related to the traumatic events of September 11, 2001. Students, faculty members, and community members collaborate to edit the footage as well as tag and annotate it for various educational uses. Students reflect on the resulting documentary footage through their blogs as well as their multimedia digital stories. Proceeds from the documentaries are intended to help professionals and volunteer agencies involved in the recovery from such traumatic experiences. Having such authentic audiences for their coursework helps students to focus the project and adds key incentives.

Columbia University’s Graduate School of Journalism trains master’s students to be independent film producers and directors. Many of their works have appeared on PBS and have won awards leading to jobs at CBS Evening News, BBC Radio, and NPR. Today, however, students can be producing documentaries on any aspect of life. Such work does not have to be as salient as the tragedies surrounding life in New York after 9/11. For instance, students at Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health have produced shows on topics ranging from food ecology to safe streets resulting from the reduction of gun violence.

Students do not have to be enrolled in acting, filmmaking, or journalism classes for the documentary task to succeed. In fact, our own students have done documentaries on the use of mobile technology during holiday travel as well as on the home schooling

of one's own children. Today, rich and engaging documentaries can spring forth from nearly anywhere.

Skills and Objectives. Course objectives may include task persistence and effort, intellectual inquiry, enhanced audience awareness and empathy, data filtering and analysis, planning and logical sequencing, and teamwork. In terms of generative skills, there are possibilities for greater insight, spontaneity, creative expression, design and artistic skills, originality, risk taking, and a need to synthesize various information sources. In addition, students learn important presentation and visual communication skills. There are many stakeholders and audiences that must be considered in conducting a documentary. As such, there is increased awareness of skills needed in the real world.

Advice and Ideas. Instructors should provide clear guidelines about length, purpose, audience, grading, and other expectations. If the learners are new to video production, they will need suggestions and examples on how to film and how to conduct interviews. Find websites with documentary guidelines for planning and storyboarding the documentaries as well as for recording, editing, and distributing them. Instructors should foster a sense of experimentation with sound effects and editing, music, voiceovers, transitions, themes, and editing. Students will need tips about equipment and software availability (e.g., Camtasia, iMovie, Movie Maker, or Adobe Premiere). Much of the project might even be completed with an inexpensive smartphone.

Of course, each production team will also need to be cognizant of negotiating rights and clearances for footage taken of people or certain situations. The team should also be aware that they need not travel to the most exotic or dangerous locations to create a high-quality product (Siegchrist, 2012). Stories and advice from previous class production teams might help students grasp what is realistically possible. At some point, they must also take into account the potential longevity and shelf life of their final product.

Students could begin by watching documentaries from prior semesters or from other schools or universities that are available online. Such best-practice examples could be placed in a course portal for later review. Students may discuss these examples as well as their own project ideas in an online forum, and, once there, they could ask for advice on narrowing or researching their chosen topic.

Consider assigning students to teams of three or four members. For instance, one person might be the camera person while others could be assigned to be the musical director or sound manager, documentary director or technician, and script writer or editor. As indicated, students should be given advice on narrowing their topic as well as researching it.

When done, there should be a showing. The class, or multiple sections of a class, could hold a film festival. The learners in the class can assist the instructor(s) with determining possible awards and categories ahead of time. For instance, there might be awards for Best Screenplay (writing of the narration), Best Photography or Cinematography (e.g., image selection), Best Musical Score (for use of appropriate or engaging music), and Best Overall Direction and Production (for best overall documentary quality).

Variations and Extensions. External clients could be solicited for watching and rating student documentaries. If successful, learners will gain a deeper appreciation and respect for the discipline or their chosen field of study. The client or set of clients might be co-evaluators or judges of each team's final work.

Key Instructional Considerations

Risk index: High

Time index: High

Cost index: Low to High (depending on the technology employed)

Learner-centered index: High

Duration of the learning activity: 2–4 weeks

Activity 93. Course Video Summaries and Movie Festivals

Description and Purpose of Activity. Instead of animated movies or documentaries as in the previous two activities, here students design summary videos of key terms or ideas that they learned in the course. Short videos of five or ten minutes force students to rethink the concepts that they have learned. When done, the instructor might hold a “movie festival” week for students to showcase their final products.

Digital video production has an impact on many skills, including communication, problem solving, critical and creative thinking, and abstract thinking (Hakkarainen, 2011). Students also gain vital digital technology skills as well as an understanding of copyright, journalism, film production, and design. If they are working in a group, they also learn collaboration, group dynamics, and decision-making skills. Research from Paivi Hakkarainen (2011) from the Centre for Media Pedagogy at the University of Lapland in Finland indicates that such tasks foster learner emotional involvement and resulting course satisfaction, feelings of challenge, interest, and sense of community in the course.

When learners are assigned to summarize or recap their learning in the course in a short video of 5–10 minutes, they have to filter an enormous amount of information into a short production. They are forced to reflect on key topics, principles, constructs, and themes in the course. Once they have grappled with the complex problem of condensing all the course texts, research papers, lectures, online resources, class activities, and so on, they must design a way to depict and digitally reflect on their learning journey. Effective storyboarding takes time and insight. In addition, people must be contacted to appear in the video and proper release forms must be signed. In addition, students must make decisions about the particular concepts or ideas that will be discussed or emphasized.

Skills and Objectives. Such activities foster task ownership and effort as well as deeper and richer understanding of the course content. When conducted in teams, there is often intense resource sharing and collaboration. Creative risk-taking muscles are strengthened with insight, spontaneity, individual expression and originality, design and artistic skills, visual communication, and synthesis across various information sources. Logical skills are also enhanced with requirements for planning and logical sequencing as well as overall content review. As a course capstone event, these activities foster a sense of course community and commitment.

Advice and Ideas. As with all tasks discussed in this book, instructors should clarify the key aspects of the video summary task. For instance, what are the expectations in terms of content coverage and topics addressed, media incorporated, video length, and technology employed? If the goal is a video reflection on students’ learning, the instruc-

tor should provide guiding questions or issues. Sample videos from previous semesters could be made available to showcase how prior students addressed similar issues.

We typically assign reflection papers with such video production projects. Naturally, students should be informed about the expected genre of the paper—persuasive, personal journal, descriptive, narrative, short story, monologue, expository, satire, and so on. Students should also have tactical information about the length of the paper and the number and type of references needed, if any. Learners might be asked to reflect on how such a task encourages a different form of teaching and learning. How does a participatory learning environment foster their critical thinking skills, motivation, and commitment to the course?

Former students as well as current ones can serve as judges or feedback givers. Alternatively, scores could be assigned by external judges or fellow students in the course. What might they look for? Student work could be rated or assessed on many dimensions, including insightfulness and grasp of course content, relevancy of that content, completeness or sufficiency of content coverage, design and visual effects, coherence and logical sequence of the content, and originality in both style and substance or content. Evaluators might be looking at how snappy, exciting, engaging, and compelling they find the final product. Other assessment variables might include the use of multimedia, quality storytelling, humor, emotional content, and a conversational tone. Do these last five sound familiar? They should. Dunlap and Lowenthal (2011) found that these were the dimensions displayed in the most popular TED talks. Finally, the product might be rated for depth, artistic effort, and task commitment.

In the end, students who perform well could be asked to contribute their videos to the course catalogue or gallery of sample student work. Such a gallery can be used within as well as outside the class to promote it and the institution or organization.

Variations and Extensions. Instructors might talk to others offering similar courses or course activities. There could be a joint event at the end of the course to share student movie productions. Awards and prizes can be handed out for different categories, such as Best Synthesis, Most Original Video, Best Production Quality, Most Innovative Content and Information, and Best Overall Video. Once established, such awards could carry forward to the following semesters.

Key Instructional Considerations

Risk index: High

Time index: High

Cost index: Low to High (depending on the technology employed)

Learner-centered index: High

Duration of the learning activity: 2–4 weeks

Activity 94. Book Trailers

Description and Purpose of Activity. One culminating project involves the creation of a book trailer. Although more common in K–12 settings, such an assignment is utilized in higher education and other educational settings. A book trailer is akin to a movie trailer. Professional book trailers are used to promote a particular book as well as to encourage

readership. In contrast, the creation of a book trailer in an educational environment fosters learner engagement and synthesis of the content. It is both a learning experience and a means to encourage learners within and outside the course to read the book.

Assigning students to teams for the book trailer will allow them to utilize their expertise and experience. They can take on different roles, including director, script writer, storyboarder, video editor, publicity specialist, and so on. Once a particular book is chosen, each team should begin to discuss and storyboard their book trailer project. At some point, they will need to find talented people to act in the video or provide other necessary resources. After the actors and resources are assembled, the video shooting commences, followed by the editing process. Next, special effects can be added. For instance, there might be special graphics, animations, or synchronized music. Of course, there should be a title at the start and the appropriate credits displayed at the end.

Skills and Objectives. This task fosters creative thinking including insight, spontaneity, creative expression, design and artistic skills, originality, risk taking, and visual communication. It also entails aspects of participatory learning, logical sequencing of the content, and deeper and richer understanding of course content. Given the hands-on nature of the task, information embedded in the book trailers will reside in the memories of the producers well after the course ends.

Advice and Ideas. You might start this project by showing example book trailers from such websites as The Book Life, Book Trailers for Readers, and Book Riot. It is also vital to provide learners with clear task requirements in terms of length, format, and due dates. They will also need to know what technology resources and media elements (e.g., pictures, music, and so forth) are available to help. For instance, instructors should create a list of video editing resources in addition to freely available media such as images, sound, and videos. We recommend that as part of their task learners should write reflection papers on the activity, or, alternatively, design a set of promotional material for the trailer.

Once the trailers are completed, consider different presentation formats for sharing them as well as alternative assessment and reward options. Those of higher quality might be posted to a gallery or website of course examples. Once established, that gallery of video trailers could be used in later years as promotional materials for the course. Finally, instructors could also send a link of each trailer to the author(s) of the book for their observations and comments.

Variations and Extensions. Consider holding competitions or a special book trailer night. Experts from the local community or prior students in the course might rate each trailer using a set of assessment criteria. Awards might be handed out for different categories such as Most Creative Trailer, Best Director, Best Actor, and the like. Learners might also enter into competitions to build upon or remix trailers from previous semesters. Again, students from previous semesters might be brought back to rate their work.

Key Instructional Considerations

Risk index: High

Time index: High

Cost index: Low to High (depending on the technology employed)

Learner-centered index: High

Duration of the learning activity: 2–4 weeks

Activity 95. Online Book Reviews

Description and Purpose of Activity. Perhaps someone in your class will one day write book reviews for the *New York Times*, *NPR*, the *LA Times*, or *Barnes and Noble*. Younger and less experienced writers, however, can now perform book review activities as part of a class or other learning experience. Book reviews force students to summarize or condense what they have read. In the process, they obtain valuable practice in writing for a more varied and extended audience than what is available from a single class. And such reviews are not just read by others around the world, but often are reused, extended, or commented on. Stated another way, a good review could enhance a student's reputation and sense of identity.

There are numerous websites for student book reviews. K–12 learners might use Scholastic's Share What You're Reading website to pen reviews and read those submitted by their global peers. They might also review books in a wiki or podcast show. Such young learners' book reviews can also be in the form of a video such as in Club Recap from 60 Second Recap. Adult learners might critique a book and post it to LibraryThing, Goodreads, Scribd, or Amazon.com. Graduate students and professionals might post their book assessments to Academia.edu or LinkedIn. They might also attempt to publish professional reviews at Kidreads, Teenreads, 20SomethingReads, or Book Reporter. If successful, such reviews could be added to their résumés. Seeing their reviews appear on one of these sites is a strong incentive to work diligently on the task.

Some might wish to push the book review envelope while keeping the reviews private within a class. Take, for instance, Professor Julie Gahimer, who teaches a course on Professionalism in Physical Therapy (PT) at the University of Indianapolis. Julie has experimented with using a tool called Animoto for multimedia book reviews. With Animoto, students can combine photos, videos, and music in their reviews. In one of her classes, each student read a different book and reviewed it with Animoto. As students added images and sound to their book reviews, the books came to life and were much more memorable. Naturally, during the process, they were asked to relate the content of their book to the PT field.

Skills and Objectives. Such a task forces learners to justify their reasoning, back up their claims, engage in comparison and contrast, and evaluate arguments and ideas. In addition, learners engage in summarization, content synthesis, content sharing, deeper and richer understanding of course content, and content review or extension. Others skills might include rebutting challenges or comments to one's book review. A learning network, and thus a community, forms and expands around the book reviews and social sharing. Within that community, students bond and often form a personal identity within the field.

Advice and Ideas. Even though students have likely done book reviews since they entered school, some guidance is nonetheless essential. Consider asking them to write about the key book themes, purpose, or impetus for the book as well as the intended audience, key points or contributions, implications, conclusions, and sources used. A book review could also discuss the author background as well as related books on the topic. Naturally, the publisher, publication date, and title of book should typically be included. Before starting, students should be told how they will be assessed on the book review project.

Depending on their age or familiarity with the field, students may be hesitant or reluctant to post a book review on display to the world. One means to reduce that tension is to store the reviews in a password-protected site. Instructors could also partner students in a class or across different classes or institutions for joint book reviews.

Variations and Extensions. Learners could be asked to comment on the online book reviews of one or more of their peers; consider offering a guide sheet or learning scaffold with examples of the types of comments expected. The person writing the review could reflect on the comments received in a short paper, blog post, or a response to a discussion forum thread.

The book reviews or comments could be posted to a social networking group forum. For instance, at Goodreads and Scribd, posted book reviews and recommendations are shared with a social network of friends. Rethink Books extends such ideas, using a mobile application that allows learners in a class to share ideas and notes taken on a book with others reading the same book. Users can highlight and then leave public notes on different books. Such notes can also be offered on specific chapters or sections within a book. Favorite parts of a book might be highlighted as students read it and then are sent out to others via their Facebook or Twitter account (Wortham, 2010). Users of Rethink Books can also comment on the notes of others. As this occurs, books spring forth to life as learners realize how active the process is.

Key Instructional Considerations

Risk index: Medium

Time index: Medium

Cost index: Low

Learner-centered index: High

Duration of the learning activity: 1–2 weeks

Activity 96. Content Databases and Learning Portals

Description and Purpose of Activity. Sometimes learners are not excited by the assembly of course tasks and activities. They may not find them meaningful or authentic enough. One solution is to give them options to design their own final tasks or projects. Unique final task ideas often arise when students conduct in-depth research literature searches on one or more topics relevant to the course or when they are involved in an internship experience. When done, they may wish to share their work with present and future students of the course in the form of an interactive article database or content portal.

For example, in a course on e-learning administration or leadership, students could focus on topics such as educational data mining, learning analytics, information visualization, and social network analysis. Students can find a wealth of new articles and resources on those topics that can enhance the course. They may also review, categorize, and rate or comment on what they have found. When done, they could develop a database or learning portal for the articles, videos, podcasts, and so on that they discovered, or they could develop supplemental content for every week of the course. In later years, such resources can be pruned or expanded as needed. When done effectively, learners

can feel a sense of pride that their work will find use by hundreds or even thousands of peers who take different iterations of the course, as well as countless others who stumble upon the course website or learning portal.

Skills and Objectives. Skills enhanced include design and creative expression, communication skills, knowledge filtering and synthesis, content review and analysis, and logical sequencing. Students also engage in deeper and richer understanding of course content, synthesize various information sources, sequence content, and reflect on their final product. Along the way, they become more self-directed in their learning. Such activities require students to think about multiple uses of the articles or resources, not just for their peers in the course today, but for potential learners in the coming years. Hence, this resource compilation work heightens their audience awareness skills.

Advice and Ideas. Make the final course assignment options fairly open with only the basic requirements outlined. Such an open-ended approach grants learners more freedom to explore and express themselves, allowing them to frame the key variables such as the audience, currency and richness of the content, design and delivery format, underlying technology platform or database, and opportunities for others to add to or comment on the content.

Prior course participants could be recruited as mentors, guides, or evaluators. If your students are working on a particularly ambitious project, you may consider breaking it into stages of completion. In addition, as each stage is completed, you might require a meeting with the course instructor, designated project mentors, or teaching assistants. Student databases or website portals or prototypes should be approved before extensive labor is committed. If more than one person is designing the product, part of the design team should be involved in usability testing and formative evaluation. In addition, a link to the project or website could be placed in MERLOT, Connexions, or some other knowledge repository. Finally, such work should be presented to the entire class to acknowledge and celebrate it.

Variations and Extensions. A request for articles to include in the database could be made to content experts, departmental colleagues, friends, and prior students from the course. Such an announcement may also be posted in relevant social media groups in Ning, Facebook, Twitter, and Wikispaces. Once suggestions are received, students in the course need to make decisions about what to include in the final database.

Key Instructional Considerations

Risk index: Medium

Time index: Medium

Cost index: Low to Medium

Learner-centered index: High

Duration of the learning activity: 2–4 weeks or as needed

Activity 97. Oral History Interviews

Description and Purpose of Activity. As noted by the Oral History Society in the United Kingdom, history is all around us in the living memories of people we interact with every day—from our personal family to people in our local community. We just need

to ask some of the interesting individuals we meet to tell us their respective stories and record them. Everyone has a story, although obviously some people are involved in more momentous historical events than others. What we read in books cannot begin to inform learners of all the emotionally compelling and noteworthy experiences connected to any single event that they are learning about.

Often the voices and accounts of those who have been marginalized—women, the disabled, certain ethnic communities, the unemployed, those in poverty, and so forth—are missing, overlooked, or hidden. Oral histories can fill in those gaps. As noted at the UC Berkeley Regional Oral History Office (ROHO) website, oral histories are a method of collecting historical information with the goal of adding to present historical records or markers. As such, they are not the final or verified account of the event(s).

Requiring your students to conduct one or more oral histories is a unique means to help them better connect with course content. Such activities are especially relevant in sociology, history, education, music, and qualitative research methodology courses.

Designing a unique oral history project can inspire both the learners involved in the production and those affected by the final result. As Dr. Joan Kang Shin from the University of Maryland Baltimore County told us, students—whether they be teenagers or older adults—want to work on meaningful projects that can make a difference in the world. In her teacher training programs for English as a Foreign Language (EFL), Dr. Shin works with teachers from all parts of the globe including Russia, Libya, Egypt, Morocco, Cuba, Saudi Arabia, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Peru. Given that English is increasingly an international language, Dr. Shin has her teachers utilize various global resources such as Idealist.org and TakingITGlobal to design curricula to help teenage learners foster social change in different communities.

For example, as an extension of a community leadership challenge program from the US State Department, Dr. Shin's students sometimes interview elders in the community. Their resulting work becomes a database of oral histories or an online documentary of that community. As the project unfolds, students feel empowered to make a difference in their global communities while using their emerging English skills as a vehicle for doing so. When done, students draft a series of "This I Believe" statements based on the results of the project. Dr. Shin finds these projects exceedingly motivational and engaging.

Skills and Objectives. Includes the ability to sift through masses of data, authentic data analysis, decision making, leadership and communication skills, interpreting results, and grasping possible audiences. Skills also include information filtering, synthesizing various information sources, appreciating multiple points of view and diversity, extending course connections, listening skills, deeper and richer understanding of course content, and various inquiry skills. Conducting an oral history can excite and engage learners about the content in general or a special element or aspect of it from which they might expand and build their expertise.

Advice and Ideas. Although there are rich veins of interview content to sort through related to the opinions, perspectives, controversies, and decisions of the past, there may be reasons to require students to conduct their own oral interviews and perhaps even create an oral interview website. Students might interview particular people from an ever-expanding class list of possible interviewees. Alternatively, they might find one or more people whom they are interested in interviewing and send their ideas to the instructor

for approval. The Oral History Society's practical advice includes asking for recommendations from friends, relatives, neighbors, and work colleagues as well as local history groups, professional and voluntary organizations, and schools and college centers.

The instructor should lay out the assessment and evaluation criteria for the oral history assignment, and solicit from students suggestions that support the purpose, audience, and tenor of the project. For instance, students should know how many media elements that they are expected to include, the expected length of the interviews, the types of questions that might be asked, the ways of conducting the interviews, and the minimum number of references or citations for their work, if any. Connections to websites and other resources on how to conduct an oral history should be provided. In addition, an assessment template or guide should be posted online and explained. Prior examples of student oral histories could be posted to a project gallery or class oral history website. Have students write reflection papers, reports, interview summaries, or other papers based on the oral histories that they have conducted. A set number of course connections could be required for each oral history created.

Variations and Extensions. As a class, students may decide to combine their respective interviews to create an oral history website for a topic. If none exists, they could be assigned to collect a set of interviews from living legends on a particular topic. Initially, they might seek out relevant online resources on the topic. Students will need guidance on how to solicit interviews, the typical length of such interviews, the types of questions to ask, the protocol for the interview procedures, and how to submit their completed projects. As a class, they will need support related to establishing the online oral history website. A set of scaffolds or guide sheets should be created to nurture their success.

Key Instructional Considerations

Risk index: High

Time index: High

Cost index: Low to High (depending on the actual technologies and resources available and used)

Learner-centered index: High

Duration of the learning activity: 2–5 weeks at the end of the term

Activity 98. Grammar Check, Peer Check

Description and Purpose of Activity. As indicated in several earlier activities in this book, writing is a form of thinking. It involves heavy doses of effortful cognition and involvement in the task. Writing is hard for many students. When done, students want their final products to be as accurate and professional as possible. Fortunately, there are online support tools for learner writing that are freely available. Tools like Ginger, Grammarly, GrammarCheck, Language Tool Style and Grammar Check, PaperRater, WritersDiet Test, and SpellCheckPlus have free versions or trial options that can be used to help students sort through various writing issues such as run-on sentences, sentence fragments, shifting tense, missing prepositions, the use of conjunctions, wordiness, passive versus active writing, comma splices, vague words, and so on. In addition to grammar, some of these devices have options to check spelling, style, and plagiarism. Most important, many of them are fairly straightforward to employ; to use these tools or systems, the user

often just has to copy and paste in his paper or section of the paper, and allow the system to check for potential errors and problematic expressions (YourDictionary, 2012). Quick, consistent, and often free!

That is the micro level aspect to revising papers which can now be effectively provided by a machine or set of software code. To complement such mechanized feedback there ought to be peer reactions to what students have written. Professors Hui-Chin Yeh and Yu-Fen Yang at the National Yunlin University of Science and Technology in Taiwan have developed an online writing system called WRITeam to support peer review for structural or macro-level changes as well as grammatical or micro-level changes (Yang, 2010). The system records student writing activities in action logs to help understand student revision processes. According to their research, with peer-flagged potential changes, students are more engaged in the writing task and the quality of their papers is raised (Yang, Yeh, & Wong, 2010; Yeh & Yang, 2011).

Naturally, human feedback is highly valuable even when a system like WRITeam is not available. Papers can be shared and peer reviewed using a dropbox in a course management system like Blackboard or Moodle. This powerful combination of machine and human feedback can significantly enhance the quality of student writing. In addition, there is a focus on the micro or specific grammatical or spelling changes as well as changes that are more global or related to the macro side of the writers' revisionary practices.

Anyone who has been on a work team realizes that there are many moments in the real world when individuals must edit or revise a report. Coworkers must become savvy at incorporating others' ideas while maintaining a personal voice. At the same time, they need to know how to make suggestions for changes and corrections on reports written by others. Forcing students to use online grammar and support tools as well as to label their revisions as surface or deep will foster greater awareness of the writing process. They will better understand issues related to word usage, grammar, sentence structure, and text organization. Juxtaposing multiple drafts of papers and analyzing the potential local and global revisions can highlight these changes. It will also engage them more fully in the activity.

Skills and Objectives. Includes extensive peer feedback, gaining diverse perspectives, peer-to-peer interaction, critical analysis and reflection, attention to detail, audience awareness, and knowledge construction and negotiation. Of course, other objectives might include elevating student writing skills, resolving cognitive conflict, and internalizing new skills such as students' ability to self-monitor their own writing.

Advice and Ideas. Students may not understand the difference between surface level and global or more structural forms of revision. In addition, awareness of revisionary practices might not transfer into practice and may vary across age groups. To deal with this issue, instructors could show examples of different versions of texts that detail changes in writing development, style, and organization. Alternatively, they may consider including a series of guide sheets or writing templates on the various types of changes expected. Instructors can also experiment with using multiple rounds of review and revision. As part of these efforts, students would compare papers and label the types of revisions made. Discussion forums and chats can also be utilized to reflect on different revisionary practices and evaluate changes over time.

Variations and Extensions. Have students create a wiki of revisionary tactics and strategies at the micro and macro levels along with labels for each of them. Ensuing classes could add to the list. In addition, students from previous semesters or versions of the course might return to train current students in both macro and micro forms of revision.

Key Instructional Considerations

Risk index: Medium

Time index: Medium

Cost index: Low to high (depending on tool availability)

Learner-centered index: High

Duration of the learning activity: 2–4 weeks or as needed

Activity 99. Recording Accomplishments (e.g., I Done It)

Description and Purpose of Activity. As discussed in Activity #4 back in Chapter Four, posting course commitments can help in course retention because students' goals are on display for others to read. Tracking your progress on different goals is fast becoming accepted in business settings. Such tracking can promote persistence or willpower (Baumeister & Tierney, 2011). People today track everything from calories consumed to miles flown to training courses completed to baseball games attended each year. Some refer to technologies that enable us to track activities and various performances as “auto-analytics” (Wilson, 2012). Often workers experience significant gains in productivity as well as improvements in self-awareness and life and job satisfaction from using these technologies.

There are many auto-analytic tools available for helping individuals with their goals. For instance, IDoneThis provides a daily e-mail reminder to post what you have accomplished during the day. Using technology, your goals and accomplishments are on display privately or more publicly for colleagues or other team members to discover. Launched in 2011, IDoneThis quickly became recognized as one of the most effective productivity tools available. Timelines, word clouds, quips, and project names can focus the individual on tasks that need to be accomplished (Purdy, 2012). The daily e-mail summaries of users' goals and accomplishments can also be exported to an Excel spreadsheet for searching and for reflecting on personal goals. In effect, these are performance results that can keep a person engaged and motivated in the activity.

IDoneThis is just one such tool for goal setting. While IDoneThis costs a few dollars each month, 43 Things is a free service used by millions of people to list their goals, share their progress toward each one, and provide feedback to others with similar goals. A somewhat more robust tool is Lfetick. This innovative system includes options for tracking multiple goals and the capability to build plans for each one. With special graphs and reports, a learner can review progress over time and in each individual area. Other websites like Milestone Planner allow users to visualize how close they have come to meeting task goals or milestones, while Goalscape utilizes concentric wheels with varying sizes indicating the relative importance of different goals (Henry, 2012).

For those wanting a more simple and cost-effective way to keep track of their goals, there is Joe's Goals. This free online system is straightforward and fun. It permits the user to check off if she did or did not meet a particular goal each day of the week. Mindbloom Life Game is another free tool. In a nutshell, it is a self-improvement game in the form of a life tree that tracks things that you want to do now (e.g., eat better, perform random acts of kindness, exercise, and so on) (Henry, 2011). It includes features to collaborate with others on goals and share your progress with others. These tools and systems allow users to establish personal goals and to-do lists, monitor progress, set up step-by-step plans, and review priorities.

Skills and Objectives. Includes setting personal goals, working backward as well as planning ahead, analyzing progress, visualizing success, and forming commitments and convictions. The physical act of record keeping provides both a series of benchmarks and reflection points on the journey to success, and as such, it should enhance metacognitive monitoring skills.

Advice and Ideas. Imagine a day when such auto-analytic tools are ubiquitous in every fully online and blended course. With such embedded goal-related information and feedback, learners could become more self-directed in their learning quests. As part of this self-directedness, they could better visualize their course tasks and assignments. And they will be doing so when in line at a grocery store or while boarding a plane. In fact, mobile applications will soon be common for tracking course-related goals and accomplishments.

In the meantime, instructors can do several things to foster such goal setting. First, they could create a course accomplishments thread in a discussion forum for learners to list what they have done to date. Alternatively, they may post goals in different sections of a wiki to indicate major as well as more minor accomplishments. These could range from short-term goals related to the course to more impactful ones that cut across one's different learning experiences. Learners could also blog their course goals and accomplishments each week or as each unit passes. All three of these ideas would foster learner reflection while building a semipermanent goal accomplishment history; the blog, in particular, would be a place for personal reflection long after the course has ended.

Another idea would be to send out weekly or biweekly e-mails asking students to list their upcoming goals for the week as well as those that they have fulfilled for the preceding one. However, providing constant and genuine feedback to all learners on their accomplishments each week may prove too time-intensive for instructors. As an alternative, they could recruit mentors from the ranks of those who have completed the course in the past. Such mentors could send out individualized weekly reminders pertaining to their specific learning goals. Incorporating personalized reminders and feedback helps to humanize the process, instead of relying on system e-mails and feedback in the form of data visualizations. Both approaches—system as well as human feedback—are better than having no goal setting within a course.

Experiment with one or two of these ideas and see what works best for your course or situation. You might pilot-test free services like 43 Things, Mindbloom, or Joe's Goals and see how such goal setting affects learner performance in your classes. Be sure to review each one and see which is applicable to your age group or class topic. In addition,

gather formative feedback from your learners on each idea that you have tested and ask for their suggestions on improving the activity.

Variations and Extensions. If the course-related accomplishments posted are public, the instructor could create a matching game at the end of the semester for students to figure out the person who achieved a particular accomplishment. The game could be played as a final activity to signal who was actively participating in the course. Students might have options within the game to add bonus or trick questions; possibly they could even design a learner accomplishment game or test as a team.

Another option to recording accomplishments is to detail what you have yet to do and to plan for the future. In this method, the learner would map out a plan of action for upcoming weeks, months, or years so as to continue learning once the course has ended.

Key Instructional Considerations

Risk index: Medium

Time index: Medium

Cost index: Low to Medium

Learner-centered index: High

Duration of the learning activity: Semester long

Activity 100. Poster Sessions and Gallery Tours

Description and Purpose of Activity. One technique that we have found effective online for nearly two decades is to inform students that a key goal of the course is to post their midterm or final projects to the Web as a public resource. Our students have contributed to free wikibooks (Bonk, Lee, Kim, & Lin, 2009, 2010) as well as designed multimedia glossaries in a wiki. They have also designed summary videos, produced podcast shows, compiled interactive literature reviews, created research journals, designed interactive Webquests (Ehman, Bonk, & Yamagata-Lynch, 2005), and written and performed songs. Posting work online offers online and blended learners an audience beyond the instructor. They quickly realize that not only could their peers view their work, but so could family members, friends, future students, future employers, and countless people they will never formally meet. The stakes are elevated.

When working with professionals such as practicing teachers, it is quickly apparent that working adults want to perform at an extremely high level. The standards of working adults are often a few levels above those who recently left secondary school. Not too surprisingly, their elevated level of personal expectations often raises their course-related tensions and anxieties. However, when they can review prior student work in the form of an online gallery or poster session of prior student work, much of these tensions abate. Why? Well, they now have examples and a target to work toward.

Skills and Objectives. Includes audience awareness, goal setting, communication and presentation skills, and synthesizing across various information sources. It also fosters feedback from a range of sources, creative expression, knowledge construction, task engagement and involvement, and student autonomy and choice. There is perpetual content review and deeper understanding of key concepts. Of course, student projects,

documents, and media posted to an online gallery by the course instructor can be added to the student's résumé or digital portfolio.

Advice and Ideas. Think carefully about the goals of an online gallery or poster session. Perhaps start with just a few examples of student work. Solicit feedback from a few students on the initial design. It is important not to embarrass anyone while attempting to motivate them by publicly displaying student work that they are not happy with. Be sure to ask for their permission before posting and then ask them how it looks when done. As the gallery expands over semesters or years, instructors should prune prior examples that are no longer relevant to the course or that simply are not of suitable quality.

An online gallery or archive of prior student work creates a legacy for the course. It could even be a key component of a community of learners. Previous students would feel a connection to current students through that gallery; instructors should ponder ways to take advantage of such course sentiments. At the same time, inquiries may be received from students and instructors at other institutions about the content that is being displayed. We recommend that you respond whenever possible to such inquiries as international course connections might lead to interesting tasks and activities in future versions of the course. Research might also emanate from such initial correspondences.

Variations and Extensions. Learners could engage in competitions across sections of a course or between multiple institutions for the best representation of particular concepts, theories, principles, people, or new trends. The top-rated work would be highlighted in a special website or open educational resource.

Another variation would be to invite several experts within the field to critique the student posters or galleries in private one-to-one discussions with each learner. Students could be asked to write reflection papers based on that feedback.

Key Instructional Considerations

Risk index: Medium

Time index: High

Cost index: Low to Medium

Learner-centered index: High

Duration of the learning activity: 1–2 weeks

Final Reflections on Yielding Products

Production. It seems that life in the twenty-first century revolves around that word. Secondary and higher education students produce reports that are shared with real-world clients. Even very young learners today design their own online radio and television shows. Learners have the opportunity to document aspects of life in their local community or try to document something much more global in nature. The audience for such products may be current students of the course or future ones. Alternatively, onlookers could also be learners at other institutions or parts of the planet. And with article databases, creative song summaries, and gallery tours, there may be informal learners who get inspired from their casual browsing of the online course content.

That is what this chapter was all about—the yielding of products; or, as Seth Godin (2011) might say, the production and shipment of art. When tasks are effectively designed, learners have a sense of purpose or passion to complete them. There is an underlying vision or end state. With such visions, learners can create goals and accomplish them one by one. In the process, they take ownership over the task. And that is what this tenth and final principle of the TEC-VARIETY framework is all about.

Throughout this book, we have inserted numerous examples of the types of learner outputs that instructors could use to foster learner success and ownership. Given that we are in the age of the Web 2.0, we could have detailed countless more. Such course products often yield unimaginable benefits. Each offers learners a goal or milestone from which to gauge their course competencies. And each offers something tangible not only to submit to their instructor or their peers, but to take from the class and personally share with others in the months and years to come. There are also personal takeaways such as pride and identity. Of course, there is no real way of knowing just how many people might purposefully or serendipitously drop in to be inspired or find a small clue or minor insight that they can use or perhaps build upon. And so it is that knowledge, when shared with a global audience of peers, continues to evolve and find new uses.

Take one or more of the ten activities outlined here and build upon them. Share them with others. Talk to your students about how goal setting in a fully online or blended course can lead to long-term goals and perhaps even a future job or career someday. Take, for instance, the gallery tours, oral histories, posters, podcast shows, YouTube videos, book trailers, and wikibooks that students might design and share. Each one of these can become a course legacy and the start of a more permanent and evolving course community. Invite former students back, perhaps as mentors, judges, consultants, feedback partners, and tour guides for the course. Anything is now possible in this digital age. Experiment and reflect on the results.

Recapping the Ten

These are definitely exciting times to be a learner as well as someone who can assist with that learning. In these past 10 chapters, we have detailed 100 ways in which you can foster such excitement and passion for learning in this digital age. We also inserted one or more variations and extensions for each of those 100 activities. With each set of 10 activities and assorted variations, online instructors have much to choose from and chew on.

It is almost time to briefly recap the ideas we have detailed in this book. Chapter Fifteen will offer such a recap as will the ending list of resources and references in the appendices of this book. First, however, in Chapter Fourteen, we offer a bit of advice on how instructors who are less experienced or more reluctant or resistant might be supported in the use of the TEC-VARIETY framework and others like it (e.g., R2D2).

Thanks for joining us on this journey into TEC-VARIETY. We hope that you can now incorporate some of the ideas of this chapter as well as the preceding ones in your online and blended courses as well as FTF ones. Adding some TEC-VARIETY may be just what this generation of learners is looking for. If you need some support, well, then, it is time to read Chapter Fourteen.

Praise for *Adding Some TEC-VARIETY*

“There are books on theory and books on practice, however this is the best volume ever written for using learning theory to inform effective practice. This book is a tour de force for creating an environment where students not only succeed in online learning, but they achieve excellence as well.”

—**Charles (Chuck) Dziuban**, Director, Research Initiative for Teaching Effectiveness (RITE), Professor Emeritus and Inaugural Pegasus Professor, University of Central Florida, and Sloan-C Fellow

“An excellent book from world leaders in the field that will be of great value for educators and designers. Presents concrete examples grounded in solid ‘practical’ theory.”

—**Charalambos Vrasidas**, Executive Director of the Center for the Advancement of Research & Development in Educational Technology (CARDET), Associate Dean for eLearning, University of Nicosia, Cyprus, and author of several information technology and distance learning books

Based on 10 theoretically driven and proven motivational principles, *Adding Some TEC-VARIETY* offers 100 practical yet innovative ideas to motivate online learners and increase learner retention.

What motivates?

1. **Tone/Climate:** Psychological Safety, Comfort, Sense of Belonging
2. **Encouragement:** Feedback, Responsiveness, Praise, Supports
3. **Curiosity:** Surprise, Intrigue, Unknowns
4. **Variety:** Novelty, Fun, Fantasy
5. **Autonomy:** Choice, Control, Flexibility, Opportunities
6. **Relevance:** Meaningful, Authentic, Interesting
7. **Interactivity:** Collaborative, Team-Based, Community
8. **Engagement:** Effort, Involvement, Investment
9. **Tension:** Challenge, Dissonance, Controversy
10. **Yielding Products:** Goal Driven, Purposeful Vision, Ownership

This is the book you need to grow your online teaching repertoire in innovative ways that will grab your students' attention and imagination. **Additional book resources as well as a free e-book are available for download at <http://tec-variety.com>.**

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