

Occupation and Learning Process

WEEK 8 - Developing an Action Plan II

University: Rwanda Polytechnic - Tumba College

Lecturer: NSHIMIYIMANA Arcade

Objectives

At the end of this session, students will be able to:

1. Understand the steps involved in action planning
 2. Study the templates and apply them to develop action plan
 3. Apply PDCA for monitoring and evaluation
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Warm up (3 minutes)

- Individually think of how you plan for your activities and assess why you do so and what do you expect.
 - What do you think are the steps to follow while developing an action plan.
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1. Action plan and steps involved

- Action planning is a structured process that helps individuals or groups move from setting goals to achieving them effectively.
 - It provides a clear roadmap, outlining what needs to be done, who will do it and when it should be completed.
 - Understanding the steps involved in action planning ensures that efforts are organized, progress is measurable and outcomes are achievable.
 - Mostly, action plans generally include "what," "who," and "when." They outline the action steps (the "what") your program will take to achieve your goals and objectives, the person(s) responsible (the "who") and the projected completion dates (the "when").
 - Most importantly, action plans highlight the "why" of a program goal.
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1. Action plan and steps involved cont'd

- **Identify the goal:** The first step is to clearly define what you aim to achieve. The goal should be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound (SMART). For example, a Rwanda Polytechnic student might set a goal to develop a prototype for an IoT-based smart irrigation system before the end of the semester.
 - **Analyze the situation:** Before acting, it is important to assess the current context, available resources and possible challenges.
 - This helps in identifying gaps and determining what needs to change. For instance, the student may evaluate the availability of lab equipment, internet connectivity and technical guidance needed to complete the project.
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1. Action plan and steps involved cont'd

- **Set clear objectives and tasks:** Once the goal is established, break it down into smaller, manageable tasks. Each task should have a clear objective that contributes to the main goal.
 - For example; objectives may include conducting research, designing the circuit, programming sensors and testing the prototype.
 - **Assign roles and responsibilities:** Clearly outline who will be responsible for each task. In a group project, one student might handle coding, another might manage data collection and another might focus on report writing.
 - Assigning roles ensures accountability and efficient collaboration.
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1. Action plan and steps involved cont'd

- **Establish a timeline:** Setting a realistic timeline helps track progress and maintain focus. Define start and end dates for each task and identify milestones to measure achievements along the way. For example, completing the design phase by week three and testing by week six.
 - **Determine resources needed:** List all materials, equipment, budget, and support required to complete the plan. This could include access to a laboratory, computers, internet connection, software tools and technical supervision.
 - **Implement the plan:** Put the plan into action by executing tasks as scheduled. This stage requires commitment, coordination and consistent monitoring to ensure that activities progress as planned.
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1. Action plan and steps involved cont'd

- **Monitor and evaluate progress:** Regularly review progress to identify what is working well and what needs improvement. Evaluation can be done through meetings, progress reports or performance checklists. Feedback from mentors or supervisors helps in making necessary adjustments.
 - **Review and reflect:** After completing the plan, review the overall process to learn from the experience. Reflecting on successes and challenges helps improve future action plans and strengthens problem-solving skills.
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1. Action plan and steps involved cont'd



(Create an Effective Action Plan in 6 Steps, Alicia Raeburn, Asana, 2025.)

2. Action plan examples with terms

- When individuals, groups, business entities are developing actions plans they used different strategies and various methods depending on their expectations.
- Some terms are often used while developing action plans. Such may be the milestones, the KPIs, Timelines, Resources, among others.

Milestone	Description	Timeline
Semester planning	Create study schedule	Week 1
Midterm review	Evaluate progress	Week 6
Final exam preparation	Intensive revision	Week 10
Industrial attachment search	Apply for opportunities	Month 3
Graduation	Ensure all credits met	Month 6

- Timeline can be daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, semester, yearly, etc.
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2. Action plan examples with terms cont'd

- The Key Performance Indicators helps to track the progress.

KPI	Target	Frequency
GPA	≥ 3.5	Semester
Attendance	≥ 90%	Weekly
Assignment submission	100% on time	Weekly
Participation	Active in 2+ groups	Monthly
Industrial attachment applications	≥ 5	Semester

- Time management is important especially using Priority Matrix and then avoiding multitasking and tasks collapsing.
 - Mentorship guides in a proper implementation and self assessment as well as reflection
 - Use of digital tools is important is activity track and revision
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2. 1. Academic improvement

- Some templates use table as ideal for instance in educational settings by clearly defining goals, assigning responsibilities and setting measurable outcomes that supports easy tracking and accountability. (Guiding School Improvement with Action Research, Sagor. R, ASCD, 2000.)

Goal	Action steps	Responsible person	Timeline	Resources needed	Evaluation criteria
Improve student math scores by 15%	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implement weekly tutoring• Prepare a consultation standard form• Prepare the check list for students' self-assessment for approval• Monitor the progress	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students• Lecturers• Head of Department	Sept - Dec 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tutorials• Revised materials• Past papers• Books• Exercises related to applications• Previous years' results	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Scores in FA• Scores in CAT• Score in SA

2. 2. Project launch - Checklist format

- This checklist format suits fast-paced environments like Startups or Tech projects. It emphasizes task completion and flexibility, making it easy to adapt and communicate across teams. (Action Plan Examples and Templates You Can Use for Any Project, Marija, Breeze, 2025.)
 - The check list has the following elements
 - ✓ Define project scope and objectives
 - ✓ Assign team roles and responsibilities
 - ✓ Develop timeline and milestones
 - ✓ Secure budget and resources
 - ✓ Conduct kick-off meeting
 - ✓ Monitor progress and adjust as needed
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2. 3. Research - Narrative format

- This narrative format is common in academic or research contexts. It allows for detailed descriptions of methodology, rationale, and expected outcomes, supporting deeper reflection and planning. (Guiding School Improvement with Action Research, Sagor. R, ASCD, 2000.)
 - For example;
 - To improve classroom engagement, the research team will conduct a mixed-methods study over 12 weeks. Weekly surveys and bi-weekly focus groups will be used to gather data. The team will analyze results using thematic coding and statistical analysis. Findings will inform a revised engagement strategy.”
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2. 4. Strategies and Methods

1. Set Clear and SMART goals

- Strategy: Begin by defining goals that are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound.
 - Method:
 - ✓ Write down exactly what you want to achieve and by when.
 - ✓ Break large goals into smaller sub-goals. For example: Instead of “Improve sales,” say “Increase online sales by 20% within six months through targeted social media advertising.”
 - Why it works: SMART goals provide focus, direction and measurable outcomes for the action plan. (There’s a S.M.A.R.T. Way to Write Management’s Goals and Objectives, George T. Doran, AMACOM (American Management Association), 1981.)
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2. 4. Strategies and Methods cont'd

2. Conduct a Situation and Needs analysis

- Strategy: Understand the current situation, identify gaps and determine what must change before creating an action plan.
 - Method: Use tools such as SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) or PESTEL analysis (Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental, Legal). For example: A Rwanda Polytechnic student planning a solar energy start-up may find a strength in technical skills but a weakness in funding guiding their next steps in seeking partnerships or grants.
 - Why it works: Analysis ensures that plans are based on evidence, not assumptions. (SWOT Analysis for Management Consulting, Albert Humphrey, SRI International (SRI Alumni Newsletter), 2005.)
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2. 4. Strategies and Methods cont'd

3. Prioritize actions using Priority Matrix

- Strategy: Focus on tasks that are most important and urgent.
- Method: Classify tasks into four categories: Urgent and Important, Important but Not Urgent, Urgent but Not Important, Neither Urgent nor Important. For example: Completing a final report (urgent & important) should come before redesigning the project logo (not urgent).
- Why it works: Helps avoid wasted effort and ensures time is spent where it has the greatest impact. (The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People, Stephen R. Covey, Free Press (Simon & Schuster imprint), 2004.)

4. Develop a step-by-step Work Breakdown Structure (WBS)

- Strategy: Divide the project into smaller, manageable tasks or milestones.
 - Method: Create a hierarchical chart or table that breaks the main goal into phases, activities and deliverables.
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2. 4. Strategies and Methods cont'd

For example: For a network installation project: Site Survey, Equipment Procurement, Installation, Testing and Documentation

- Why it works: Provides structure, clarifies dependencies, and simplifies monitoring. (A Guide to the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK® Guide), Seventh Edition, Project Management Institute (PMI), Project Management Institute, 2021.)

5. Assign Roles and Responsibilities (RACI Model)

- Strategy: Clearly define who will perform, approve, support, or be informed about each activity.
 - Method: Use a RACI chart (Responsible, Accountable, Consulted, Informed). For example: Task (Network design), Responsible (Students), Accountable (Supervisor), Consulted (Lab Technician), (Informed (Head of Department).
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2. 4. Strategies and Methods cont'd

- Why it works: Avoids confusion and promotes accountability in team projects. (Project Management and Teamwork, Karl A. Smith, McGraw-Hill Higher Education, 2005.)

6. Use Gantt charts for scheduling

- Strategy: Visualize timelines and dependencies between tasks.
 - Method: Create a Gantt chart showing tasks along a timeline (can use Excel, MS Project or online tools like Trello or Asana). For example: A project spanning four months can show overlapping phases like research, design and implementation.
 - Why it works: Makes it easy to track progress and adjust deadlines if delays occur. (Organizing for Work, Henry Laurence Gantt, Harcourt, Brace and Howe, 1919.)
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2. 4. Strategies and Methods cont'd

7. Allocate Resources Wisely

- Strategy: Match available resources (budget, people, tools, and time) to the planned activities.
 - Method: Prepare a simple Resource Allocation Table that identifies what is needed and where gaps exist. For example: Resources (Arduino boards), Required (10), Available (6), Gap (4), Action needed (make request).
 - Why it works: Ensures that resource shortages do not disrupt the implementation process. (Project Management: A Managerial Approach, Jack R. Meredith, Scott M. Shafer, Samuel J. Mantel Jr., John Wiley & Sons, 2021.)
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2. 4. Strategies and Methods cont'd

8. Implement Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Mechanisms

- Strategy: Track progress and measure effectiveness against objectives.
Method: Use performance indicators (KPIs), regular progress reports or feedback meetings and Include evaluation tools like checklists, reflection logs or surveys example: A student may track project milestones weekly and adjust based on supervisor feedback.
- Why it works: Encourages continuous improvement and helps identify bottlenecks early. (Ten Steps to a Results-Based Monitoring and Evaluation System: A Handbook for Development Practitioners, Jody Zall Kusek, Ray C. Rist, World Bank Publications, 2004.)

9. Apply the PDCA cycle (Plan–Do–Check–Act)

- Strategy: Adopt an iterative process for ongoing improvement.
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2. 4. Strategies and Methods cont'd

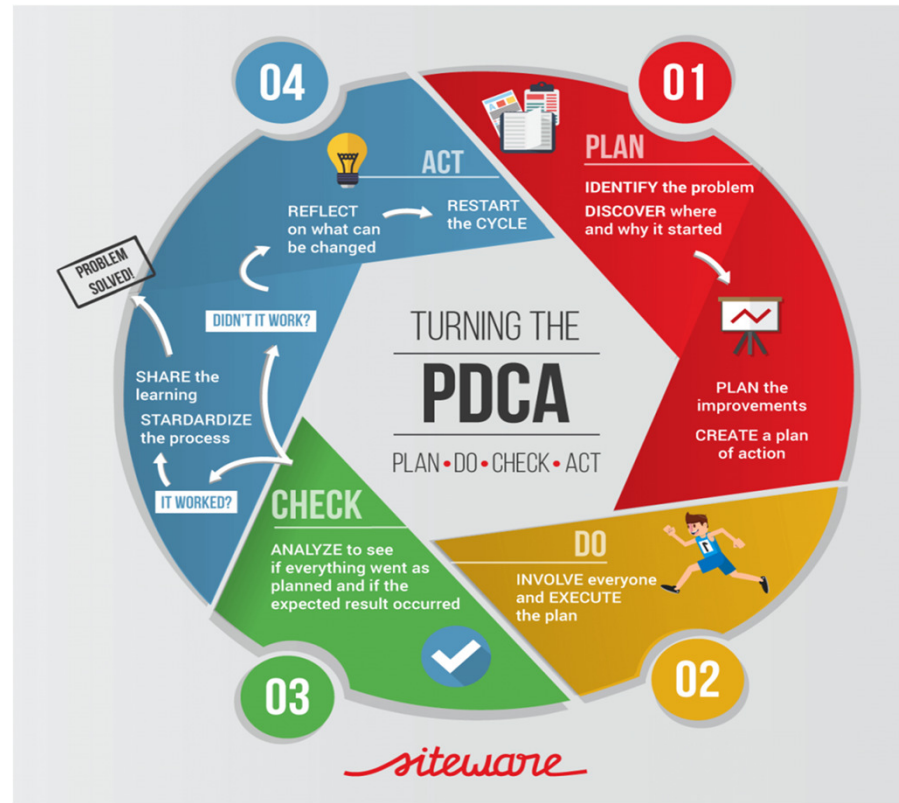
- Method: Plan (Define goals and methods), Do (Implement actions), Check (Evaluate results), Act (Adjust based on findings). For example: After testing a prototype, a student improves the design and re-tests it for efficiency.
- Why it works: Promotes learning and continuous refinement of action plans. (Out of the Crisis, W. Edwards Deming, MIT Press, 1986.).

10. Communicate and Document Everything

- Strategy: Maintain transparency and communication throughout the project.
 - Method: Regular review meetings, share reports, and store documentation systematically like Weekly progress emails between team members and supervisors.
 - Why it works: Improves collaboration, reduces errors, and ensures everyone stays informed. (Skilled Interpersonal Communication: Research, Theory and Practice, Owen Hargie, Routledge, 2011.)
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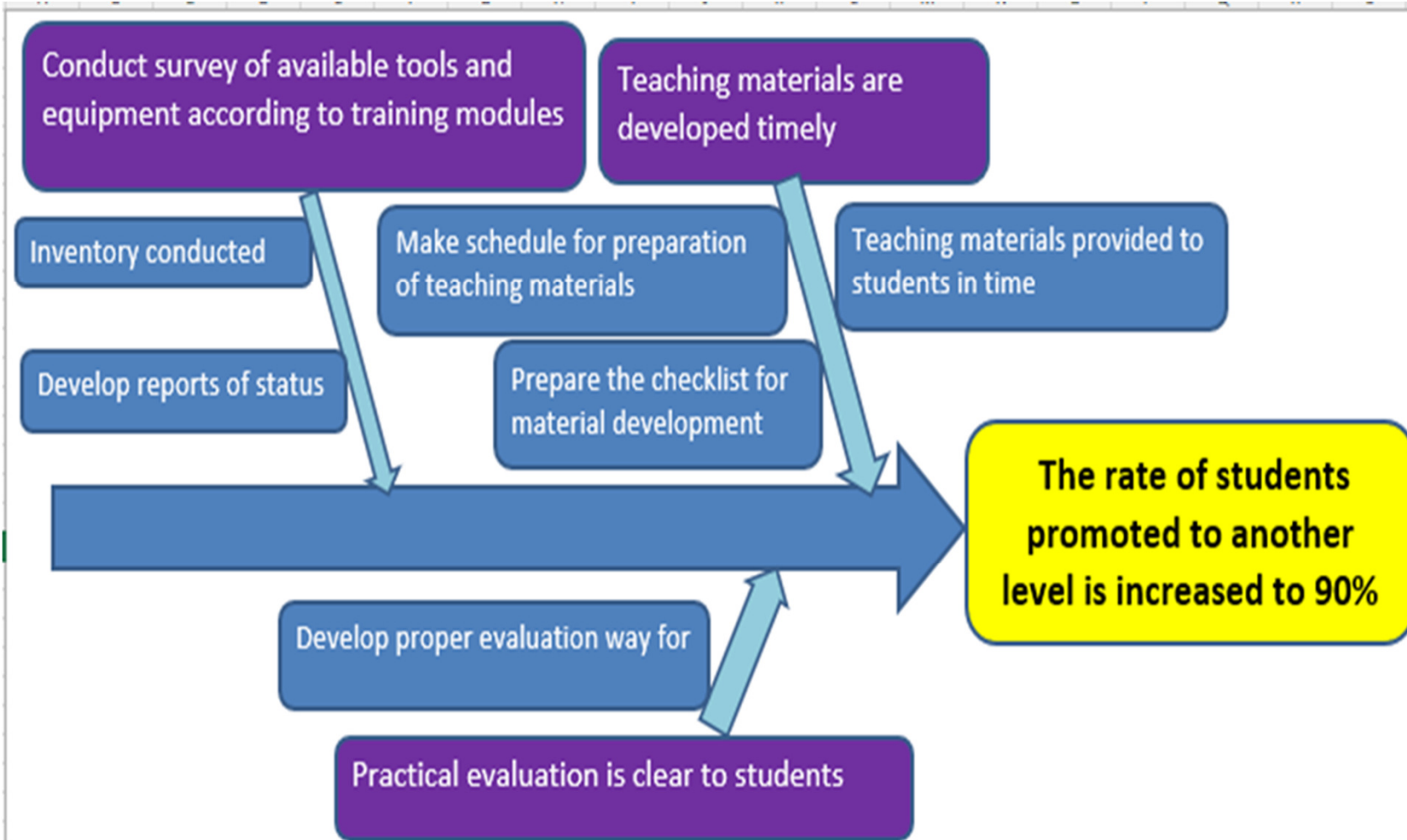
3. PDCA Cycle

- The PDCA method specifically deals with how to create an action plan for a company to improve its processes.
- Plan: discover the problem, its root cause, plan the improvements and develop AP.
- Do: engage the employees and execute the plan.
- Check: check the results and analyze if everything went completely as expected.
- Act: are things going well? Great, process improvement is being implemented. It didn't work? Restart your PDCA cycle!



(How to Create an Action Plan for a Company in 7 Steps, Siteware Editorial Team, Siteware Blog, 2023.)

Additional information



Additional information

Goal	Increase students performance in ETT department	Students promotion rate is at least 90%
Outcome-1	Teaching delivery is conducted in proper way	A proper documentation is available for all activities involved in teaching delivery
Activity 1-1	Revision of module description form	1. Report on the revised module description form available in the department
Activity 1-2	Preparation of teaching materials	2. A copy of teaching material for all modules available in the department
Activity 1-3	Preparation of scheme of work indicating detailed weekly activities	3. A copy of scheme of work submitted in the department
Activity 1-4	Department meeting is organized to approved teaching materials	4. A report on the approval of teaching material for a whole semester is prepared and filed
Activity 1-5	Evaluation of teaching delivery progress	5. Class dialy forms collected and analyzed
Activity 1-6	Plan of daily lesson and topics to cover are presented to students	6. Detailed topics discussed per lecture reported in class daily
Activity 1-7	students attendance assured	7. Students attendance is taken
Activity 1-8	In course assessment (Quiz, assignments, homeworks) given to students	8. A copy of in course assessments submitted in the department every two weeks
Activity 1-9	Staff self-evaluation conducted	9. Staff portfolio developed with monthly updated availed to department
Activity 1-10	The examination is prepared by catering the students intellectual levels	10. Moderation of exams conducted and report compiled and submitted in the department
Outcome-2	Practical teaching and evaluation is clear to students	Teaching strategy is improved and a standardized paper for evaluation is developed
Activity 2-1	Practical teaching materials are prepared in advance	11. A copy of practical teaching materials for all modules are available in the department
Activity 2-2	Daily lesson plan prepared before class	12. A copy of the lesson plan for every practical class is available at least a day before class
Activity 2-3	Group activities don't exceed 3 students per group	13. A copy of groups of students with maximum of 3 students per group is available in the department
Activity 2-4	Equal participation of students in practical classes assured	14. All group are visited during practical class to provide support
Activity 2-5	A standard copy of practical evaluation is developed	15. Standardized evaluation sheet for practical classes for all modules is utilized during evaluation
Outcome-3	Supportive strategies for students performance put in place	Meetings, tools and equipment, documents are accessible in the department
Activity 3-1	Department meeting for evaluation of students performance conducted	16. A copy of evaluation results available each month and shared with students
Activity 3-2	Meeting with students to discuss their performance is arranged	17. Students performance is shared every 3 months and a copy of taken measures is provided to students
Activity 3-3	Evaluation of staff conducted	18. A compiled monthly report of staff performance is developed from class dailies and discussed in meeting
Activity 3-4	Students are provided with coaching sessions (mentorship)	19. Students coaching session (mentorship) conducted monthly
Activity 3-5	Classes are assigned with class mentors	20. Each class is provided with two class mentors
Activity 3-6	Inventory of available tools and equipment is conducted	21. Inventory of equipment is done monthly
Activity 3-7	Tools and equipment's status is regularly reported	22. A copy of status of tools and equipment is available
Activity 3-8	Maintenance of tools and equipment is done	23. Maintenance of equipment is done monthly
Activity 3-9	Tools required are requested	24. A list of required tools is prepared, regularly updated and shared in procurement unit

References

- Create an Effective Action Plan in 6 Steps, Alicia Raeburn, Asana, 2025.
 - Guiding School Improvement with Action Research, Sagor. R, ASCD, 2000.
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