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ABSTRACT

Economic pressures along with health, nutrition, housing, sanitation, and child labor problems contribute in large measure to the plight of the migrant population. The incomplete and fragmented education migrant children receive is further compounded by low expectations from teachers and inappropriate curriculums. Legislative action has attempted to address the special needs of migrants through numerous health assistance, housing, nutrition, job opportunity, and educational acts. The Migrant Student Record Transfer System was instituted to gather, store, and transmit student academic and health information. Although the national migrant program is working to provide solutions to migrant problems, findings from a review of the literature, research and state evaluations indicate areas for improvement. Some recommendations are that (1) the Migrant Students Record Transfer System Data Bank should be more timely and should also be used for gathering; (2) long range plans for the national migrant program should be developed; and (3) duplication should be eliminated in agency services to maximize the use of resources. This report reviews relevant literature and research pertaining to the migrant population, reports on legislative actions, and makes recommendations for consideration in decision making and policy development. (DS)

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EQUITY FOR MIGRANT CHILDREN IN RURAL AREAS

by

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A Paper presented

at

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EQUITY FOR MIGRANT CHILDREN IN RURAL AREAS

The purposes of this paper are: (1) to present a review of the relevant literature and research pertaining to the migrant population of the United States; (2) to report the legislative action that has been taken to address the special needs of the migrant population in the United States; (3) to present conclusions that may be drawn after analysis and synthesis of the reported quantitative and qualitative data; (4) to present recommendations for consideration in decision-making and policy development for governing the conduct of programs for migrant children in rural areas; and (5) to provide a basis for discussion and consensus of this assembled group which will result in positive actions to benefit migrant children in rural areas.

If the complexity of the problems characteristic of the migrant population are to be comprehended and dealt with in a positive, productive, and efficient manner, it is essential to examine the historical and social circumstances which the estimated three million migrants who traverse the United States annually encounter.

Each of the ethnic groups that make up the population of the United States has brought to the situation its unique culture, values, perceptions, aspirations, fears, and anxieties. The early settlers brought with them their Anglo-Saxon values, religions, traditions, and educational system. The European immigrants who followed later had unique characteristics, but also had many attributes in common with the Anglo-Americans. Because of the similarities in skin color, values, traditions, and expectations

for success between these immigrants and the established population, opportunities and eventual acceptance were available to them.

Blacks and Hispanics encounter more rigid barriers due to the pronounced differences between their ethnic characteristics and those of the established population. The most obvious difference is skin color. The fact that Blacks were brought into the country as slaves established a certain general expectation for the role they were to fulfill in the society. Hispanics encounter barriers because of differences in language, aggressiveness, values, mores, and family traditions.

The educational system is often cited as the vehicle for minimizing the impact of ethnic differences. However, in order for the goals of education - to perpetuate and support the culture and to develop skills and competencies that permit self enhancement - to be relevant to an individual, that individual must have access to the system and have meaningful interactions within the system. Unfortunately, this is frequently impossible for those who compose the migrant population of the United States.

There are many ways in which the migrant child has been made to feel that he was different and that he did not belong within the educational system. The mobility and transience which is an inherent part of the migrant lifestyle meant that the child was constantly moving from one school system to another. When he did enroll in a school program, he was exposed to a curriculum and to materials that were built around the white, middle class value system. The pictures in the primers featured well-dressed Anglo-Saxon characters. If minorities were shown at all, they

were portrayed as menials. All of these factors combined with the anxiety of being new and different, speaking a different language, and knowing that the stay was short-term contributed to a self-perpetuating cycle of frustration and failure.

The literature suggests that migrant workers follow three major routes. One route originates in southern Florida and continues along the Atlantic Coast into New England. This stream of workers is predominately Black but is heavily laced with Hispanics, primarily from Puerto Rico. The second route originates in south Texas and fans out into the Mid-Central States. The workers following this route are predominantly Mexican Americans. A third route originates in Southern California and extends into the Pacific Northwest. This stream of workers is composed of Mexican Americans and American Indians.

Of the several ethnic and cultural groups composing the migrant population, the Hispanic is the most predominant. It should be noted that some of these Hispanics are Mexican Nationals. It is significant that each ethnic group brings to the migrant picture its unique culture, values, perceptions, aspirations, fears, and anxieties. However, there are not only differences among these ethnic groups, but similarities as well. Some of these similarities grow out of the interrelated factors of educational, socio-economic, health, and nutritional deprivation.

There have been attempts to address the unique problems of the migrant population through legislation and social action programs. Following is an overview which focuses on the educational, socio-economic, health and nutritional factors which have an impact on the migrant population.

The original Migrant Health Act, P.L. 87-692, was enacted in 1962. It provided for the establishment and upgrading of family health clinics and the initiating of projects to improve health services and health conditions for the migrant.

A 1965 amendment, P.L. 87-109, extended the Act to 1968, authorized hospital care, and established limits to the appropriations. Unfortunately, in fiscal 1966, Congress authorized only three of the seven million dollars for hospital care. This inadequate appropriation made it impossible to implement the hospital care provisions.

In 1965, there were a reported 69 health projects in 33 states. When these figures are compared with the numbers and locations of the migrant pockets in each of the various states, it becomes apparent that health care for migratory workers was less than adequate.

A 1966 report of the Committee on Labor and Public Welfare states in part that the need for migratory labor to supplement local labor forces created problems in the areas of education, health, housing, sanitation and social services which communities were not equipped to meet. The report goes on to state that the estimated three million migrant workers and their families carry their health problems into as many as 48 of the 50 states. The report further states that the available health care for these citizens falls far below the national norm.

Again, in 1967, the Committee on Labor and Public Welfare reported on the status of migrant health problems. The facts and figures are almost identical to those of 1966, but the

1967 report is a little more descriptive. The report states:
". . . Traditionally rejected by the same communities which demand their services, migrants are further handicapped by financial impoverishment which makes them unable to pay for necessary medical attention. Legal restrictions against providing services to non-residents bar the migrant and his dependents from most of the health and welfare services offered to other citizens. . . ."¹
The report goes on to say that health care is available intermittently and even when available it is accessible only to the individual who happens to live or work in the county where such a project is being operated.

Other problems cited in the 1967 report were rural isolation caused by crew leader and camp owner restrictions on visits outside the camp and visits to the camp. Inadequate transportation and health facilities which are not open in the evenings and on weekends were also cited. Language and cultural barriers also affect the delivery of health services.

Additional problems are those emerging from the voluminous paper work required to confirm eligibility, verify income, and establish residency. The discontinuity and suspension of health care is an unremitting concern. Many migrants do not carry their health records with them. This means that each time an individual sees a different doctor a medical record and history must be established. Frequently this causes delays in the delivery of services.

In 1977, ten years later, Inter American Research Associates published a report titled, Migrant Child Welfare: A Review of the Literature and Legislation. The report states in part:

"The unmet health care and nutritional needs of the migrant family are severe and deplorable in a country in which many federal programs exist to meet the needs of low income families

... "2 In addition, the report states, that there is a need to assess the impact or lack of impact of such programs in order to determine their appropriateness and needed changes. Evidence indicates that two of the most critical problems are malnutrition and dental problems. A related problem seems to be that of getting qualified physicians and dentists. It seems that there are limited numbers of practitioners in rural areas and some practitioners are reluctant to work with migrants.

The Housing Act of 1965, P.L. 89-117, provided federal assistance for the construction of low-rent housing for migratory agricultural workers. The 1966 report of the Committee on Labor and Public Welfare states in part that the authorization was to provide ". . . decent, safe and sanitary low-rent housing."3 This same report indicates that one of the most urgent needs of the migrant worker and his family is the need for decent and sanitary housing. The report goes on to state that "the migrant still lives in poor and substandard conditions without adequate plumbing or cooking facilities."4 It was reported that in one state eighty percent (80%) of farmworker housing did not meet minimum standards of health, safety, and sanitation. Sixty-five percent (65%) of the housing was deteriorated and delapidated. Thirty-three percent (33%) had no bathing facilities and twenty-five percent (25%) were without running water.

Unfortunately the 1967 report of the Committee on Labor and Public Welfare is an echo of the 1966 report regarding health, housing, and sanitation, as well as other areas.

The InterAmerican Research Associates report of 1977 confirms the persistence of deplorable, substandard, and inadequate housing and sanitary facilities. Although it is difficult to establish a relationship between poor housing and health because of other variables such as nutrition, poor housing and sanitation are known to contribute to sickness, disease, and the spread of infection.

It was not until the passage of the Child Nutrition Act of 1972 that the relationship between health and malnutrition was acknowledged. Regrettably the program was not implemented until 1973 when the courts ordered the U.S. Department of Agriculture to spend \$40 million dollars on the program. As pointed out in the InterAmerican report, "It is clear that the Dept. of Agriculture has been negligent in serving a needy population, and that many have gone unfed without due cause."⁵

The importance of proper, nutritional diets cannot be over-emphasized in the development of young children. Proper nutrition is paramount in the growth and development of the brain and in bone formation. Such illnesses as retardation, stunted growth, and respiratory diseases can be attributed to malnutrition at an early age. Evidence indicates that such illnesses can be ameliorated but never completely corrected.

The concept and pervasiveness of child labor has had its indelible effect on the migrant individual. The 1966 and 1967

reports of the Committee on Labor and Public Welfare confirm the widespread use of school age migrant children in the labor force during times when non-migrant children were attending school. Economic pressures dictate that these children work and contribute to the subsistence and welfare of the total family. By 1977 all occupations had eliminated child labor except agriculture.

In 1967 Dr. Charles H. Smith of Columbia University reported that long hours of tiring labor were detrimental to children. He pointed out that such tiring labor robs the individual of energy vital to growth and development, and that chronic fatigue lowers the individual's resistance to disease.

Arnold B. Taylor, in his book Sweatshops in the Sun, describes the myth that farm work is the essence of American virtue. Many people believe that hard work on a farm develops a sense of values and responsibility. If that myth is held to be true, then why is farm work not part of the required curriculum for all students in the public schools?

It is apparent that economic pressures, compounded by health, nutritional, housing, sanitation, and child labor problems contribute in large measure to the plight and to the self-perpetuating cycle of frustration and failure of the migrant population. It is for these reasons that the migrant child is the recipient of an incomplete and fragmented education.

In 1966, it was reported that migratory workers and their children were the most educationally deprived group in the nation. Of migrants 25 years and older, one third (1/3) were functionally illiterate and forty-three percent (43%) had no more than an

eighth grade education. In 1967, the same figures were reported, with the additional fact that twenty-five percent (25%) of the farmworker force had either less than a fourth grade education or had never attended school. The literature indicates that as a result of almost continuous mobility, social isolation, health and nutritional deficiencies, and discrimination, the migrant child is characterized as:

- o A person who has an inadequate command of the English language
- o A person with a low self image and self concept
- o A person who has experienced failure and frustration repeatedly
- o A person subjected to an unrealistic and inappropriate curriculum
- o A person with little or no decision-making or saleable skills.

A response to earlier recommendations, the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964, P.L. 88-452, authorized programs in education, child daycare, sanitation, and housing. In 1966, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 was amended to provide specifically for the establishment and improvement of educational programs designed to meet the learning needs of the migrant child. The spirit and intent of the legislation implies that a wide variety of educational processes and supportive services were to be provided across school district and state lines. Such an effort and concept calls for coordination and cooperation of agencies on an inter- and intrastate basis.

Subsequent amendments included provisions for the use of carryover funds, establishing the eligibility of the settled out

migrant and migratory fisherman, preschool education, and the use of the statistics from the Migrant Student Record Transfer System as a basis for funding.

The research findings relative to the needs of the migrant individual strongly influenced the curriculum and program designs for early migrant education programs. Curriculum and program design focused on oral language development, cultural development, and self concept and self image improvement. Also emphasized in the designs were reading, math, and concept formation. Medical, dental, and nutritional needs were addressed through provision of much needed support services. These and other services were offered to alleviate the failure, frustration, discrimination, and social services deprivation described earlier. Conference, workshop, and local inservice materials, as well as state program plans and evaluations, document the directions taken at the onset of the national program.

It is suspected that an overemphasis on the improvishment and deprivation of the migrant child elicited emotional over-reactions and guilt feelings which prompted patronizing and paternalistic attitudes on the part of those designing and delivering services. These attitudes were revealed by the low expectations for migrant student performance held by teachers who responded to questionnaire and interview items employed in a state program monitoring process. For example, primary elementary students are usually expected to recognize and name such things as colors, numbers, and letters. Interviews with migrant students, for whom these expectations were expressed by their

teachers, indicated that these concepts were far below the students' instructional level. Seat work assigned to these students also illustrated the low level of expectations their teachers held. When confronted with this data, teachers reacted by saying that it was unreasonable to expect higher performance from these students because they had it so bad.

This notion is further substantiated by findings cited in the report, Wednesday's Children. The report states:

"In the projects visited, consultants found wide variations in the amount and quality of in-service staff training. There is little evidence that in-service training is having an important impact on day to day classroom performance."⁶

"In none of the projects visited was there evidence of adequate individualized instruction."⁷

"Projects depended heavily on programmed material to the exclusion of curriculum balance and human interaction."⁸

"In many of the projects visited, there was no evidence of an educational plan."⁹

A somewhat different view of the same situation would lead one to say that an adequate assessment of instructional needs remained to be conducted. State program evaluation reports substantiate this assertion by stating that one of the deficiencies of the Migrant Student Record Transfer System was that of inadequate needs assessment information. Such a statement is an excuse, as the responsibility for conducting a needs assessment is incumbent upon each state. State program plans and evaluations indicate a wide range and variety in identified needs and program goals and objectives. This implies that an established process

and systematic procedures for program needs assessment, monitoring, and evaluation are not used by all states. This lack of uniformity is also reflected in the variety of "programs" for which there seems to be little or no continuity. It should be pointed out that such discontinuity among the programs a student encounters contributes to cognitive dissonance. Placing the burden of integrating half mastered skills upon the learner is a gross misdirection of responsibility.

This raises the question of what constitutes an appropriate curriculum for the migrant learner. It is rhetorical to say that teachers teach in much the same way that they were taught. Therefore, much of what is taught is content rather than process. Seemingly the instruction in today's educational system provides little, if any, opportunity for analysis, synthesis, and application of knowledge. Students, therefore, do not develop the ability to question and examine issues and situations.

In his book, Migrants, Sharecroppers, Mountaineers, Robert Cole says, "It is a particular kind of social and economic system that permits, even encourages, migrant farmers to wander the land." He goes on to say, ". . . workers look at 'minds,' 'cultures,' or 'social systems' without asking the plain facts about who is running whom, who owns what, who hires which people for what purpose, who prevents what families from living here, settling down there, working at this kind of a job, or indeed working at all."¹⁰ There does not seem to be a conscious effort to develop in the migrant student the necessary skills and competencies for decision making and goal achievement ~~to~~ permit him to succeed.

Stereotyping and labeling of people help to shape and mold the attitudes of the general public. The systems goes so far as to reinforce the notion that minorities do not succeed. A classic example is the young, Black, divorced mother on welfare who, in an effort to improve herself, applies for and receives a college scholarship. The Welfare Department, upon learning of her initiative and good fortune, stops all welfare assistance because her income level is too high for eligibility. The reward for initiative and determination is punishment.

Dr. James H. McElhinney, Professor, Department for Lifelong Education, Ball State University, Muncie, Indiana, states in his rationale for a leadership development program that success at leadership can be learned by systematically working to develop the personal characteristics possessed by successful leaders and by acquiring the competencies that successful leaders possess. A program designed to teach success at leadership would include instilling in the learner high expectations for self, providing opportunities for the learner to be successful, encouraging daily goal-oriented activities, and building on the relationship between the learner and some adult significant other.

Dr. McElhinney's rationale lends credibility to the "total family development" concept. The concept is an approach that incorporates working with and involving the total family in a positive and productive manner. This concept would seem to have a high probability of success within the Mexican-American culture. The reason for this is the emphasis and importance placed upon "the family" in this culture.

One of the needs identified early in the program that was common to all states was that of transmitting pertinent academic and health information for each student. In 1968, a committee called the Record Transfer Committee was organized to develop a system for gathering, storing and transmitting academic and health information. Conceived in 1968, the system became an operational instrument in 1969 and a national reality in 1971. The system is known as the Migrant Student Record Transfer System (MSRTS).

An analysis of the system and its operations indicate that there are two issues critical to its success in terms of use. The two issues are:

- o The timeliness of the information
- o The usefulness of the data.

State program evaluations indicate that the system was weak due to the lack of timely and useful academic and health information. Consequently the system has not been valued significantly by teachers, the prime users. It should be pointed out, however, that the nature of migrant education is such that pupils must be recruited into the educational program. Because their arrivals and departures occur without notice, there may be a time lag which contributes to the delay in transmitting updated information to the Central Records Depository.

Results of a national MSRTS survey conducted in 1977 indicate the need for a differentiated system. In an effort to respond to the need for useful and timely data, the national migrant program has done two things. First, the National Association of Title I

Migrant Directors, in cooperation with the MSRTS Data Bank and the United States Office of Education, have developed skills lists for reading, math, oral language, and preschool. This has been done in an effort to establish a commonality of acceptable evidence related to programs. It also enables the use of codes that tell another teacher the performance and program status of an individual student. Secondly, the MSRTS Data Bank is piloting a differentiated MSRTS. A differentiated system will accommodate the unique needs of individual states.

Unfortunately this innovation in American public education has not been exploited to its fullest potential. With its massive amount of stored data, the Data Bank should serve as a center for the compiling, analysis and synthesis of information for decision-making, forecasting, planning, organization and management, budgeting and fiscal accounting, and assessment and evaluation. The national migrant program does not have, but vitally needs, a long-range plan. The system's facilities provide almost infinite capabilities for developing such a plan.

Let's consider for a moment how a business in the private sector plots its future course by fully exploiting data input on a daily basis. Colonel Sanders Kentucky Fried Chicken recently introduced mini-computers in local franchise stores which link the cash drawer function to a computer controlled management information system. During the night the day's data is transmitted to the main computer in the company's central office. Use of this data network allows for monitoring the effectiveness of advertising on a daily and weekly basis; automatic store-level inventory of

chicken and other raw materials; automatic production of daily operating control reports detailed enough to show what was sold each hour and the sizes and types of items; and projecting how much chicken and other supplies to order daily, how much to cook each hour, and how to schedule employees.

There can be no disagreement that the national migrant program has as equally compelling a motive to succeed as does Colonel Sanders Kentucky Fried Chicken! The national migrant program could utilize a management information system to assure the attainment of a significant goal of the migrant education program - to develop skills and competencies that permit self-enhancement of each student. The necessary hardware, technology, and data are readily available. To the MSRTS could be added other components, such as industrial and economic trends and projected employment needs. By interfacing all this data, future skills and training requirements could be forecast. Curricula could then be designed to provide migrant students with the saleable skills required to insure their employability.

Although data is available to substantiate the impact of the migrant programs operated in the various states, it is impossible to compile the data to reflect the overall impact of the migrant program nationally because there is not a standardized procedure for assessment and evaluation to measure the impact of Title I migrant services on a national basis. It seems reasonable to examine alternative methods of assessment and evaluation at this point.

Currently an established set of commonly accepted definitions and descriptors of terms and concepts to insure some measure of common understanding among those people involved in the conduct of migrant programs does not exist. An example of what is suggested would be to define in terms and descriptors such terminology as "educational continuity" and "inter-" and "intrastate coordination." There is a need to develop a model set of systematic procedures for annually assessing needs that is useful and meaningful to all states. Such a process would insure the uniformity of information necessary for the planning, implementation, and conduct of programs. Such a model would also provide the basis for appropriate and effective inservice training. By identifying the ultimate and desired outcomes and identifying available resources, focus would be brought to bear on the skills and competencies needed to bring about the desired behavior change. Such a practice is in fact a leadership development program benefiting staff, and ultimately, benefiting the migrant learner.

Pre- and post-testing on a short term (6-8 weeks) basis is unreliable and undesirable. The evaluation report from one of the states illustrates the high degree of success experienced due to the employment of a "process evaluation" design. Success is measured in terms of commitment, program change, and pupil performance. The model incorporates as part of the design a monitoring component. Interview questionnaires and observation instruments are employed. Analysis and feedback with specific recommendations are provided to the project staff on the same day as the on-site review. The findings provide the basis for change

and decision making which involves the total staff: The process is internal rather than external. Such a model insures the appropriateness of curriculum and instructional process relative to student opportunities and experiences in the analysis, synthesis and application of knowledge to real life situations.

The Education Amendments of 1972, P.L. 92-318, called for such an assessment and evaluation of the Title I Migrant operations and its impact on migrant learners. Exotech Systems, Inc., was contracted to conduct the study, and in January of 1974 the report was issued. The report points out many of the program's weaknesses and deficiencies which, when viewed as constructive criticism, provide a basis for decision and policy making.

Among many other things, the report indicates that real and perceived academic failure and frustration are powerful factors contributing to the dropout pattern. Also contributing to the pattern of a high dropout rate for migrant pupils was the inappropriateness of curriculum materials.

The report emphasizes the inadequacy of assessing instructional needs and interests, manpower needs, and long range job trends and opportunities. The lack of educational continuity, coordination and cooperation on an inter- and intra-state basis is overwhelming. This lack of coordination and cooperation among agencies and states results in duplications and gaps in services.

The report also states that, of the teachers interviewed, approximately one half did not use MSRTS because the information was untimely and in most cases unreliable. Records were for the most part incomplete. In spite of the deficiencies of MSRTS,

states cited their participation in the MSRTS as their response to the legislative mandate to demonstrate interstate cooperation. The absence of uniformity and continuity in program design and instructional practices contributes to the lack of success in meeting the needs of the migrant learner.

Nevertheless, the national migrant program, with all its innovations and resources, shows the most promise of any program for providing solutions to the problems of the migrant learner. However, the answers are not to be found totally in the improvement of presently employed practices, but rather in the ability of people to accept new ideas and concepts and to change their behavior. It is the commitment of people that sustains the faith in their ability to change.

Taking into account findings from the literature, research, and state evaluation reports, the following conclusions and recommendations are offered for consideration and reaction:

1. Conclusion: There is no uniformly established procedure for assessing learning needs and interests of pupils, economic and industrial trends, or job market needs.
 - 1.1 Recommendation: It is recommended that a model, or models, be developed that incorporate the gathering, analysis, and synthesis of information from business and industry, to be interfaced with educational needs, to serve as a basis for decision making relative to program planning and design.

2. Conclusion: There is no systematic procedure for evaluating pupil progress or for measuring the impact of Title I services on a national basis.
- 2.1 Recommendation: Research Triangle Institute is currently under contract to develop a model.
- 2.2 Recommendation: It is recommended that a monitoring process that incorporates the constant and systematic review of instructional process and curriculum, experiences, and opportunities be piloted on an interstate basis to insure continuity and appropriateness of curriculum.
3. Conclusion: The MSRTS Data Bank does not provide useful and meaningful data on a timely basis.
- 3.1 Recommendation: The MSRTS record form is being revised and a differentiated system is being piloted.
- 3.2 Recommendation: It is recommended that the capabilities of the MSRTS Data Bank be exploited for the purpose of gathering, analyzing, and synthesizing information for decision making and planning, budgeting and fiscal accounting, and assessment and evaluation.
- 3.3 Recommendation: It is recommended that a differentiated recruitment system that meets the unique needs of individual states be developed to help insure timeliness and accuracy of information.
4. Conclusion: There is a lack of educational continuity and program uniformity among the states.

- 4.1 Recommendation: It is recommended that terms and concepts be clearly defined and described to insure uniform understanding.
- 4.2 Recommendation: It is recommended that a long range plan for the national migrant program be developed cooperatively with the MSRTS Data Bank, the U.S. Office of Education, and the states.
5. Conclusion: There is a proliferation of agencies that provide services for the migrant, which frequently results in duplication and/or gaps in services.
- 5.1 Recommendation: It is recommended that an examination of agency services be conducted to determine appropriate action for reducing duplication and maximizing the use of resources.
- 5.2 Recommendation: It is recommended that a model be developed to facilitate coordination and cooperation on an interstate basis.

FOOTNOTES

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5. Porteous, p. 22.
6. National Committee on the Education of Migrant Children. Wednesday's Children. (New York, 1971), p. 111.
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