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AUTHOR   Jones, Noel K.; Cooper, Mary Gendernalik
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ABSTRACT

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curriculum choices and argues that a behaviorist logical-positivist
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(Author/MT)

TEACHER EFFECTIVENESS AND EDUCATION: A CASE OF INCOMPATIBILITY?

North Carolina's Effective Teaching Training Program:
Implications for Social Studies
Implications for Language Curricula

Noel K. Jones
University of North Carolina, Wilmington

Mary Gendernalik Cooper
San Diego State University

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The North Carolina Effective Teaching Program
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Mary Gendernalik-Cooper

ABSTRACT

The Effective Teacher Training Program in North Carolina is based upon correlational studies primarily limited to the areas of reading, math and language knowledge and to learning outcomes that consist of basic skills, factual knowledge and concept name identification. Despite warnings against over-generalization within the studies themselves, the direct instruction model, which receives support from this research, is being applied to instruction in all areas of the curriculum and to all levels of learning. This instructional model conflicts with the way learnings are conceived in social studies and with evidence indicating that the elements of direct instruction inhibit the development of critical thinking and inquiry--aims highly valued by social studies educators. Additionally, this paper challenges the assumption that effective teaching practices are neutral concerning curriculum choices. The argument is made that a behaviorist logical-positivist model of curriculum is being imposed on all teachers even though there is strong evidence that this model is inconsistent with conditions that foster the development of language competence and of literacy. It is concluded that, both in social studies and in language arts, teachers must be allowed to make professional, informed decisions about learning activities so that they can select appropriate conditions to match types and levels of learning. The Effective Teacher Training Program is an obstacle to this goal.

TEACHER EFFECTIVENESS AND EDUCATION: A CASE OF INCOMPATIBILITY?

North Carolina's Effective Teaching Training Program:
Part I. Implications for Social Studies
Part II. Implications for Language Curricula

Introduction

The Effective Teacher Training Program now being mandated across North Carolina represents an extremely problematic approach to improving instruction and learning. It is problematic primarily because it conveys the impression that its elements are integrative and generic, applicable to all learners, learnings, content areas and settings. Neither the research studies which generated the "effective teaching" label, nor analyses and reviews of these studies support such claims. Even the review contracted by the state of North Carolina (and from which references in the training manual are excerpted) does not support such an impression. The authors are quite clear:

> The conclusions derived from the integrative review are constrained by the number of research studies that have been done on the teaching practice in question. Related to this is the further limitation of the conditional nature of the conclusions. Two aspects of this limitation stand out. First, there is no teaching practice that has been researched for every subject taught in school. By

far, most of the studies available were done at the ele-

mentary school level and in the basic skills subjects of

reading and mathematics. Noticeably lacking are studies

at the high school level and studies in the teaching of

science, social studies, literature, foreign languages,

and non-academic subjects such as music, art, and physical

education. ...

With respect to attempting to derive a total picture of

teaching, it is important to recognize that the available

research is not in itself integrative. Thus, there is no

empirical evidence that addresses if and/or how various

teaching practices and teaching functions combine into a

total model of teaching. Therefore, at this time, each of

the teaching functions described in the review must be in-

terpreted as a discrete entity. (White et.al., 1983)

The selection criteria employed by these researchers for

including or excluding studies further substantiates caution in

perceiving the research results as in integrative model. Spe-

cifically the criteria excluded studies that dealt with clus-

ters of teaching practices that were highly integrated or se-

quenced and thus could not be delineated. Teaching practices

that could not be directly observed in the daily routine of the

classroom were also eliminated from the review. Only empirical

studies of the positivist process-product type were included;

the consequence of engaging in the teaching practice had to be

related either to student achievement or to increased time-on-

task by the students who were exposed to the teaching practice

(White et.al., 1983).

These cautions appear not to be heeded in either the ETTP
training manual or the actual training of teachers. The "ef-
fective teaching" research studies themselves are clear and
precise about the learners, learnings, content areas and set-
tings for which their recommended practices are effective. The
first part of this paper provides a summary review of these
studies. In the second part of the paper, the implications of
these studies for Social Studies are examined; and in the final
section, the implications for language curricula are discussed.

Summary Review of Effective Teaching Research

Effective Teaching Research includes naturalistic as well
as experimental studies. It reflects the positivist process-
product approach to ascertaining the influence of teaching
practice/behaviors on learning outcomes. Representative "ef-
fective teaching" studies of this type include the work of
Brophy (1976), Anderson, Evertson, and Brophy (1979), Stallings
and Kaskowitz (1974), and Good and Grouws (1979). In these
studies as well as others, effective teaching practices were
identified by correlating observable teacher behaviors, the
process component, with gains on achievement tests for classes
of students (not individual students), the product component.
The teaching practices identified by these students as effec-
tive are compositely represented by the direct instruction
model. According to Rosenshine (1979, 1986), the elements of
this model include an academic focus, a teacher-centered focus,

little student choice of activities and materials, use of large groups rather than small groups for instruction, limited exploration of ideas, drill and high percentages of correct answers. Common sense makes this model appealing. It is difficult not to assume the universal appropriateness of the specific teacher behaviors or sequences of behaviors encompassed by this model. Before succumbing, however, the learnings and learners for whom these practices were found to be effective, and conversely, those for which they are not effective must be reviewed.

The learning outcomes for which these practices are effective are explicit, well-structured information and skills that can be broken down into psychologically real, discrete parts: the basic skills--grammatical rules, vocabulary, decoding and mathematical computation procedures. In short, the types of learnings found on elementary level standardized achievement tests. Of the few studies done in subjects other than math and reading, positive correlations were found only in those where the learning outcomes were of a factual or concept naming nature. (Fortune 1967, Armento 1977) The direct instruction model and specific practices encompassed by it are not just less effective, but even ineffective when learnings are more complex or integrative rather than additive in nature--such things as abstract thinking (inferential, critical, evaluative), concept formulation, problem posing or finding, generative problem solving and reading comprehension beyond the literal level--or affective in nature (Brophy 1979,

Peterson 1979, Good 1979, Kozma 1982, Lockheed 1981, Pearson and Gallagher 1983). The May 1985 issue of Educational Leadership provides a comprehensive and revealing discussion of direct instruction as it relates to thinking skills as learning outcomes. Essentially, the articles in this issue describe the more and less appropriate applications of direct instruction. These articles reflect a recurrent theme in the effective teaching research itself (but one left unacknowledged in ETTP); namely, methods are to be selected and utilized by reflective informed teachers on the basis of what learnings are being addressed and what the learners are like.

The effective teaching research is similarly cautious in asserting that the practices work well in the elementary grades (Anderson, Evertson, Brophy 1979, Good and Grouws 1979, Stallings et.al., 1975 and 1978, Medley 1977). But even at that level there is variability in the findings. Low ability youngsters and those whose demonstrate external locus of control are most positively served by the "effective practices" (Peterson 1979, Medley 1978). In her review, McFall (1983) notes that student learning style and level of conceptual complexity may well mediate the effectiveness of these teaching practices. Ebmeier and Good (Good 1979) seem to concur that student SES also mediates the "effectiveness" of teaching practices. His review indicates that practices deemed effective with low SES students were the reverse of practices deemed effective with higher SES students. Brophy and Evertson (1976, 1978) also note the need to vary specific teacher behaviors,

given different SES levels of classes.

The number of effective teaching replication studies done at the middle grades and high school levels are too few to warrant generalizing the practices identified in the original elementary school studies. (See FIGURE 1)

Fisher (1978), Evertson, Anderson, and Brophy (1978), Redfield and Rousseau (1981), and Gall (1984) for example, question the direct transferability of elementary classroom effective teaching practices to upper grade settings. Older students are more likely to "tune out" to the direct instruction practices of patterned questioning and teacher-centeredness. They are also less likely to be kept interested and on-task with low level questions and corrective response--drill and practice activities. They demonstrate higher investment in instruction that encourages and incorporates their own ideas and impressions. Good and Grouws (1979), Fortune (1967) and others contend however, that the practices do transfer, provided that the intended learning outcomes are of a similar nature to the basic skills and information types emphasized in primary grades.

Other more general concerns and questions about the findings of this research further reveal the limits of their application. Good (1979, pp. 61-62) notes, for example, that even in the elementary grades the recommended practices and structure of direct instruction may not be useful in social studies, art, or problem identifying/defining. He is also concerned that misuses based on lack of understanding will result in

promoting rote, meaningless drill practices, and that teachers
may not be helpful to students in "learning how to learn" or
in developing life skill applications of learnings. Good ac-
knowledges Doyle's (1978) review of the process-product ef-
fective teaching research and the issue of whether use of the
practices recommended in this research will foster excessive
learner dependence on the teacher as "heart pacer," and produce
students unable to process information independently. Good's
suggestion is to gradually ease out or wean students from
direct instruction, but only after basic skills as measured on
achievement tests, are improved. Good concludes his own review
of effective teaching research by noting:

> The appropriate question (as suggested here and by
> Peterson, 1978) is, 'What are the circumstances under
> which an educational model best works?' Not, 'What is the
> best educational model?' Extant data suggest that direct
> instruction is a reasonable model for enhancing general
> achievement gains at least in the early elementary school
> years. Within the context that it has been studied (math,
> reading, short-term achievement goals), direct instruction
> appears to be a consistently effective teaching method.
> These results may be useful for educators if they do not
> overreact to them.

> If direct instruction is seen as a set of specific
> behaviors or as a generic form of teaching that transcends
> all settings, then it is another polemic...another educa-
> tional shibboleth. However, if it is used as an orienting

concept that has to be adjusted sensibly and sensitively to different educational settings, then the concept has some value for the practitioner." (Good, 1979, p. 63)

ETTP is being variably implemented across the state. In some places it reflects viewing direct instruction as a set of specific behaviors to be found in the practices of all teachers at all times; in other settings it is being communicated to teachers as a generic form of teaching, with similar implementation implications. Both tacks distort the research. And as will be discussed in the next two parts of this paper, both impede good Social Studies instruction and learning and good language curricula and learning.

Implications for Social Studies

ETTP is problematic to Social Studies educators for three reasons. The most compelling reasons are: first, the incongruence between the social studies educator's conceptualization of learners and learnings, and that which is reflected in the effective teaching research. The second reason relates to the instructional implications of these conceptualizations.

Social studies educators have long since abandoned as inaccurate and unproductive the positivist/behaviorist paradigm so evident in the effective teaching research. Within that paradigm the learner, as active participant, mediator of input, generator of output, independent variable, is all but ignored. For the most part social studies educators are suspicious of an explanatory schema that posits observable teacher behaviors as

the sole stimuli for gains or losses in achievement test scores. Such thinking is reductionism at its worst. Social studies educator's conceptual framework is more rooted in the cognitive constructionist's orientation represented by Wittrock, Tobias, Fenstermacher, Taba and Bruner. Within this orientation, the internal constructive processes of the learner are emphasized. The learner and the mental lives of the teacher and students are perceived as being the real keys to better understanding of classroom phenomena. Armento summarizes this orientation as well as its major research foci most succinctly:

> ...Researchers are beginning to recognize that human behavior cannot be properly studied in isolation; thoughts, intentions and affect that prompt action must be taken into account....

> Incoming stimuli are reorganized, these researchers believe, on the basis of the learners prior knowledge, value orientations, and the constructive processes employed by the student in particular learning situations. It would follow from this that students and teachers are active constructors of meaning. If this is true, then studies that have "compared the external characteristics of instructional methods (overt behaviors) have obscured the most important variable accounting for learning and instruction: macroprocesses, or the frequency and intensity with which students cognitively process instructional input" (Tobias 1982, pp. 4-5)....

The behaviorist paradigm is simply inadequate to address these

questions.

Recent research efforts based on the constructive orien-
tation are exploring student macroprocessing: how instructional
methods/strategies influence it; how social knowledge and per-
spective is constructed within the classroom; and the potential
that a variety of instructional techniques have for "helping
students generate meaning, develop images of new ideas and re-
late these ideas to those previously learned." (Armento 1986,
pp. 946-948) Initial experimental studies comparing construc-
tivist based instructional strategies (generative teaching
models) with more traditional strategies (teacher-centered) are
yielding impressive results. In one such study, (McKenzie and
White 1982) the experimental students' retention rate was 90%,
twelve weeks after the instruction. The ot'er two groups re-
tained considerably less: 58% for the traditional field trip
group, and 51% for the classroom group. In general, the re-
search efforts substantiate the viability of the constructivist
orientation and its potential explanatory power regarding in-
struction and learning. Social studies educators find the
constructivist orientation more compatible than that of the
behaviorist with how they view social studies learnings and
therefore of greater practical relevance.

And practical relevance is the second source of social
studies educator's difficulties with BTTP. All the major
learnings in social studies are by their nature complex, dy-
namic and fluid. None of them can be meaningfully learned
unless the learner is engaging in the process to which each is

intrinsically linked. Concepts are only meaningfully learned, for example, by active learner engagement in conceptualizing-- messing around with or playing with a concept's dimensions: it's attributes, possible examples and non-examples, formulating its rule/definition, relating it to other concepts, prior learnings, etc. (Taba 1966, 1971, Martorella 1972, 1985). Having students observe a teacher playing with a conceptual idea, as Good recommends, is no substitute. Nor is didactic concept teaching. The impression of efficiency conveyed by this "scripted" instruction is misleading. The learner is only likely to recall what the teacher has said and presented, not to have made the concept meaningful and useful to himself.

Similarly, generalization learning and utilization require an instructional setting/approach wherein the learner practices generalizing: formulating, defining, testing and applying. Values are learned by valuing and critical assessment of values in action. Social inquiry and problem-solving learning like-wise require an instructional setting that encourages and en-gages the learner as discoverer/generator (Fair and Shafter 1967, Martorella 1972, 1986, Fraenkel 1980, Beyer 1971). This is not to say that teacher guidance, demonstrations and varia-tions on controlled practice would not be a part of instruc-tion, but they are not likely to be evident in neatly se-quenced steps, or all in one class period, or as major focal points of the instructional effort. Arguably, various dimen-sions of these learnings may be delineated into subskills. But is the learner who must do the delineating if it is to be mean-

ingful. Furthermore, these delineations play an instrumental role and are not ends in themselves. The parts and even their sum are not to be confused with the whole.

Social studies intentionally encourages student interdependence and mental-ideational risk taking. Keeping things simple, linear and focused on correct answers in anathema to good social studies. Mistakes or errors are rich sources of important insights, intellectual and affective learning. The content of social studies (not to be confused with the content of the textbook) permeates the rest of the curriculum. Good social studies educators pursue integration. Quick, blunt transitions may interrupt a more fruitful flow and confluence of ideas, etc. with other content areas.

The third and most obvious reason has to do with the paucity of empirical studies using the direct instructional model to address social studies learnings (review FIGURE 1). Of the few studies that did address social studies and that found positive correlations between direct instruction and achievement outcomes, the learnings were of a factual or concept-naming type, hardly the raison d'etre of social studies. Even if the behaviorist paradigm were acceptable, the evidence from extant studies is insufficient.

Conclusions and Recommendations

ETTP is arguably little more than the product of expediency. The research review upon which it is based, even with its restricted selection and procedural flaws, is replete

with warnings; warnings that state clearly the limits and
constraints of the research it reviewed. The research used as
the basis for ETTP reflects a minimalist conceptual framework
for thinking about learning and the influence of instruction on
learning. Categorical teacher functions are defined solely in
terms of specific examples of behavior. Furthermore, it really
does not reflect a theoretical framework for explaining the in-
fluence of instruction on learning. Essentially it describes
nothing more than that in classrooms where certain teacher be-
haviors were observed, class-aggregated test score gains were
also observed. ETTP has turned these descriptive correlations
into causative prescriptions, clearly a case of excessive in-
ductive generalizing. An analogy comes to mind because it il-
lustrates the dire consequences of such generalizing: members
of the medical profession prescribing aspirin for ulcers,
because they had observed that it helps relieve headache pain.
The lesson: until the nature of certain types of learnings are
better understood and the nature of the influence teaching
methods/strategies/behaviors have on them is better explained,
we should be extremely cautious in our treatment prescriptions,
lest we do harm. A second lesson: if teachers are to be per-
ceived by themselves as professionals, then "training" of the
type exemplified in ETTP should be radically revised. in its
present form ETTP undermines reflective, informed decision-
making by practitioners. It distracts attention from important
complex learnings. It endangers an atmosphere of non-coopera-
tion, suspicion and subversion ("We pass a pair of scissors

from room to room, to alert each other that the evaluator is in the building. Then we all get our six point plan"). Social studies educators, their students, and our society can ill afford such misguided misuse of limited and valuable instruction time.

Implications for Language Curricula

Despite disclaimers about the generalizability of results of studies of effective teaching (White, et. al., 1983), the prevailing view of those implementing and adopting the Effective Teaching Training Program within the State of North Carolina is that this research, and the direct instruction model which it acclaims, applies to all areas and levels of the curriculum and to all classroom learning situations. This over-generalization of teacher effectiveness research results in two corollaries which are as false as they are pervasive. In the first place, not only is good teaching equated with direct instruction, but for many school-level practitioners only the direct instruction model is interpreted as good teaching. Second, while direct instruction is seen as the model of instructional methodology, it is purported to be neutral concerning curriculum choices.

A number of authors have controverted the first of these corollaries, arguing that the practices promoted by effective teaching often are not good teaching (Cooper, 1986; Glickman, 1987). This section of the paper challenges the second corollary using examples and illustrations from language learning to

show that the Effective Teaching Training Program does in fact have a strong effect upon curriculum choices and decisions, that it is far from value-free concerning both what is intended to be learned and what is actually learned in schools.

Conceptions of curriculum span a very broad spectrum. A number of writers have tried to make this kaleidoscope of views more comprehensible by suggesting four to seven broad categories of curriculum orientations (Eisner and Vallance, 1974; McNeil, 1985; Miller, 1983). These writers recognize that views about curriculum are only part of a much broader educational philosophy and epistemology. Humanists and technologists not only have different beliefs about what should be learned in schools; they also have in some cases diametrically opposing views about what knowledge is, about the ultimate source of human values, about how learning takes place, and about the roles of teachers and students in the learning process.

The teaching practices and learning conditions adopted by the Effective Teaching Training Program (including the direct instruction model) flow from a technological, process-product conception of curriculum. It is almost impossible to adopt this model of teaching and learning without adopting a constellation of assumptions about education that flow from a behaviorist, logical-positivist ideology which is incompatible with humanistic, developmental, social-reconstructionist, and academic curriculum orientations (McNeil, 1985; Miller, 1983). In spite of claims to the contrary, the Effective Teaching

Training Program represents the imposition of one style of curriculum and one philosophy of education upon the schools and teachers of an entire state.

In a very general sense, no compelling body of proof exists that one curriculum orientation is inherently superior to others, although it has been demonstrated that different educational approaches and teaching styles produce different patterns of results. The first part of this paper, for example, documents the superiority of 'cognitive constructionist' approaches for longterm retention of ideas and for the development of conceptual understandings. Choice between styles of curriculum is essentially a choice of values--if a person values the learning of higher-order thinking skills they will usually reject the focus on discrete tasks and skills and convergent questions and the heavy emphasis on teacher control and high rate of response associated with the school effectiveness research; if on the other hand, they value the rapid acquisition of simple associations and operations, these practices have great appeal.

It must be recognized that there is nothing about the direct instruction model per se that is inherently incompatible with other styles of curriculum. Its negative effects stem from the overgeneralization of this model as it is adopted in practice and extended to all teaching situations and from its effect on curriculum choices. It is interesting to note that Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987) recognize the need for a new and different model of education to produce students capable of

high levels of literacy, yet they still believe that these capabilities can be developed through 'direct instruction.'

If there is any area of development in which one conception of curriculum and learning is clearly superior to another, language acquisition must be considered a claimant. An impressive body of literature (Dale, 1976; deVilliers and deVilliers, 1982; Tough 1982; Wells, 1986; Berko-Gleason, 1986; Lindfors, 1987) has demonstrated that young children whose caretakers attempt to dominate and direct their language productions and development lag behind, on almost every measure of language quality, children whose caretakers allow them to use their own strategies and make their own discoveries about the workings of language. Evidence is currently amassing to indicate that the language of school-age children develops best in the same kind of cognitive-interactionist environment and opportunity that fosters growth for young children. Despite the currency and popularity of teacher effectiveness research, the development of communicative competence (skill in using language), the development of skill in composition, and the development of inferential and critical comprehension receive much stronger support from alternative, contrasting conceptions of learning and teaching, specifically the cognitive-interactionist view.

According to interactionist approaches to language development, language arts programs should meet conditions such as the following (the list supplied is not intended as exhaustive, but is sufficient for the purposes of this paper):

(a) Students should be involved in extensive use of communication processes (speaking, listening, reading and writing) for purposes that are real and valid to the learners (for example, writing letters to real people who will respond) rather than as academic exercises;

(b) Communication situations for language learning should represent a wide range of rhetorical relations and language purposes; that is, students should communicate with a variety of audiences (strangers to intimate friends, infants to aged, peers to subordinates, etc.) in a variety of social situations (informal to formal to ritualistic) for a variety of purposes (informational, instrumental, heuristic, etc.) about topics varying in degrees of abstractness or immediacy (Moffett and Wagner, 1982);

(c) A certain amount of study about language as language may be useful if it is used to inform the processes of using language; but the study of language structure and form, for its own sake, does little to develop skill in composing or comprehending language, and may in fact impede language development because of the lost opportunities to engage in language use (Weaver, 1979).

(d) For the acquisition of both beginning and advanced levels of literacy, teachers must support the development of learners' reading and writing strategies, including the development of cognitive self-monitoring and control strategies. Strategy development is accomplished while students are involved in meaningful reading and writing communication (point

'a' above), but it must be supported by complex, deliberate, and highly skilled teaching strategies. These include modeling, close monitoring of learner strategies, verbalization of strategies, and provision of sufficient time and latitude for learners to apply prediction, repair, and other strategies under their own control (Clay, 1982; Palinscar and Brown, 1984; Bereiter and Scardamalia, 1987).

The implications of these conditions for teaching and learning and for the roles of teacher and learner are far-reaching. Clearly language learning activities should be integrated with the content of other school subjects and with life experiences; yet in school programs language arts is too often isolated from both from subject matter content and from life. Furthermore, various dimensions of language performance (for example, spelling, handwriting, grammar, punctuation, decoding, vocabulary development, comprehension and actual reading and writing) are treated at separate times with little relationship to one another. A technological (behaviorist) approach to education, through its emphasis on discrete learnings, measurable objectives, and tests tends to encourage this kind of compartmentalization of language learnings.

A second implication is that teachers must be allowed the latitude and flexibility to make professional, informed decisions about types and varieties of activities, and to allow student choice in activities, depending upon developmental level and learning needs. What is needed is the development of teacher decision-making skills that support literacy acquisi-

tion, not a simplistic model of teaching behaviors extended to all situations.

A third implication of these conditions is that the measure of language programs should be the quality of the processes and the holistic messages or communications produced. The direct teaching model bases its claims to 'effectiveness' on measurable achievement of formal aspects of language products (e.g., spelling, sentence structure, etc.) rather than the processes or the communicative effectiveness of messages. The result is to encourage the fragmentation and isolation of language dimensions under the name of language arts.

Finally, the direct teaching model discourages just those kinds of activities that foster growth in communicative competence. Small discussion groups, group or individual projects involving student choice, role-playing situations, readers theater, creative and improvisation drama, and individualized, non-directed reading do not provide situations in which the teacher appears to be in command of the essential lesson steps of the model. Therefore, through the influence of the Effective Teaching Training Program, teachers are discouraged from using the kinds of strategies and activities that are demonstrated to be effective in reaching the broader goals of language development and the achievement of literacy. Ironically, the Standard Course of Study recently adopted by the State of North Carolina gives higher priority to the achievement of communicative competence and the ability to compose and comprehend language than it does to the acquisition of language

conventions and forms. Unfortunately, the new curriculum appears to be unrelated to the teacher training program, to the program for evaluating teachers for career ladder status, and to the state testing program. What is recognized by experts as good conditions for language learning remains the elusive ideal. Meanwhile the Effective Teacher Training Program exerts powerful leverage on the operational curriculum of the schools in a direction almost diametrically opposed.

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