





# Cross Currents



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## **Project SUCCESS: Glendale's Title VII Systemwide Improvement Project**

by Barbara Silcox and Kris Anstrom

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*This article was written in collaboration with the administrators of Glendale (CA) Unified School District's Project SUCCESS, particularly Kelly King and Judy Sanchez.*

In fiscal year 1995, the U.S. Department of Education funded 32 Title VII Systemwide Improvement Projects. These projects, part of the new bilingual programming established under Title VII of the *Improving America's Schools Act of 1994* (IASA), are undertaking activities to ensure that the needs of limited English proficient (LEP) students are included in districtwide efforts to improve schooling for all children (Crawford, 1997).

The Glendale Unified School District, in Los Angeles County, California is among the thirty-two school districts awarded a Title VII Systemwide Improvement grant in 1995. Now in its third year, Project SUCCESS (Schools Uniting, Collaborating, Communicating, Educating Students Successfully) is working to ensure that LEP students are provided access to the core curriculum and achieve to the same high academic standards established for all students in the district and the state.

To accomplish these goals and objectives, the project staff are assisting each school within the district to:

- identify and address the needs of its LEP students;
- to reform staff assignment policies for optimum use of certificated bilingual and language development teachers;
- to improve the capacity of each site to select and implement the most appropriate instructional practices and programs;
- to reform assessment procedures and practices for all LEP students;
- to restructure policies affecting the placement of LEP students.

### **Glendale's School Population**

The Glendale Unified School District has experienced dramatic changes in its growing student population. During the last ten years, the greatest increases in student enrollment have been for language minority and LEP students. Significant changes have also occurred in the make up of this language minority/LEP population. Less than ten years ago Spanish speakers made up the majority of the LEP students. Currently, Armenian speakers are the largest group of LEP students the District serves, followed by Spanish, Korean, Tagalog, and Arabic. The 13, 911 LEP students enrolled in the district represent over 60 different language groups. Overall the District serves 29, 907 K-12 students in 28 schools, and has the ninth largest LEP student enrollment out of the 1000+ school districts in California.

There is a wide range in the enrollment of LEP students across the district's twenty-eight schools. Some schools have extremely high percentages of LEP

**Specific student achievement objectives set by the project are:**

- To increase the percentage of LEP students

students (around 80%), while other schools have fewer than 10%. In addition, some schools have high concentrations of one or more language groups, while others have students from many different language groups.

redesignated to fluent English proficient by 8 percentage points to a district-wide average of 17 percent; and

- To narrow the achievement gap significantly in core subject areas between LEP students and their English-speaking peers.

## Project SUCCESS: A Catalyst for Reform

Alignment with district and state reform efforts is critical to the successful implementation of Project SUCCESS. All districtwide reform efforts are guided by the district's strategic plan, *Glendale Schools 2000*. Over 350 district and school site personnel, students, parents, and community members worked together to create a blueprint for the school district to follow into the next century. Among the strategies outlined in the plan, are strategies to foster bilingualism among all students in the district. Six elementary schools provide Spanish primary language programs for LEP students and three elementary schools provide Armenian primary language programs. The senior high schools in the district are developing procedures for determining bilingual competency of graduating students; bilingual competency will be noted on the student's official transcript.

In addition to being guided by *Glendale Schools 2000*, Project SUCCESS integrates the components of the California State Curriculum Frameworks and the philosophies behind *Goals 2000* and *IASA* into the implementation of its systemwide improvement project.

## Implementing Project Success

The implementation of Project SUCCESS is a multi-phased process organized around three high school clusters and their feeder schools. The project started with the high school cluster serving the largest number of LEP students; by the end of this year, the project will be in full implementation with all three high school clusters. Although the district was not organized in this fashion, the project staff felt that the cluster organization enabled the schools to collaborate and connect more closely with their neighborhoods and facilitated K-12 articulation.

Perhaps the most critical and most innovative approach to the implementation of Project SUCCESS is the site-level identification of needs based on an analysis of student achievement data. A team of stakeholders from each school site (including the principal and school guidance counselors) participates in a one-day meeting with project staff to identify areas of critical need and to develop a plan for improving the academic achievement for the LEP students within the school. These meetings are held off site and are facilitated by Dr. Laurie Olsen of California Tomorrow, a non-profit, advocacy organization. Team members are given release time and Project SUCCESS pays for Dr. Olsen's time and the substitute

### Project SUCCESS's approach to implementing reform within Glendale's school district is based upon a core set of principles:

- The focus on student achievement is what drives all reform activities;
- Successful reform requires support and participation from key stakeholders and leaders, including district administrators, school principals, department heads, and school guidance counselors;
- Teachers are key players in the reform process; they must be provided professional development and training opportunities to enable them to effect change;
- Successful reform is a continuous improvement process.

teachers required.

During these meetings, each school site team develops a professional development plan based on student needs identified from the examination of student achievement data. Each professional development plan includes data findings, program targets, and areas of focus, which can include: assessment, instructional methodology, instructional models, teaching strategies, curriculum, and enabling strategies.

## Professional Development

The professional development plans assembled by these teams are reviewed regularly in light of up-to-date indicators of student achievement to ensure that the students' needs drive the professional development activities. Project staff then summarize and analyze individual site plans to determine commonalities and unique professional development needs for all schools in the District. Based on these findings, staff and consultants are identified to provide training for individual sites and clusters of schools as appropriate.

School personnel from all twenty-eight schools in the district, as well as district-level administrators are scheduled to participate in professional development activities during the project's five-year tenure. This includes 1,402 teachers and 89 administrators.

## Identified Professional Development Needs

One outcome of this approach to professional development planning was the identification of literacy development in LEP students as an area in which most teachers across the district were in need of training. During the summer of 1996, an Elementary Summer Literacy Institute was held to train approximately 80 teachers in the components of a balanced literacy program. Emphasis was given to the unique needs LEP students have when acquiring literacy in a language other than their primary language. An Elementary Spanish Literacy Institute was held during the summer of 1997 to address the specific linguistic needs of Spanish speaking students in developing their primary language and in transferring their literacy development into English. At the secondary level, literacy development within the content areas was identified as an area for professional development. Summer institutes were held in 1996 and 1997 for secondary English/ESL, mathematics, science, and social studies content teachers. These institutes emphasized how literacy can best be facilitated through rigorous content instruction.

### Examples of needed professional development areas identified by the school site teams:

- Utilizing assessment data for curricular and instructional decision-making
- Incorporating technology to assist in the delivery of instructional programs
- Strategies for integrated teaching units, "Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English" (also known as sheltered content instruction)
- Cooperative learning
- K-6 literacy teaching
- Intercultural communication and understanding

## Teacher Focus Groups

To support implementation of new strategies introduced through the Institutes, monthly teacher focus groups are held. Teachers meet with peers to develop lesson plans, research new strategies, and share successes and frustrations throughout the year. The focus groups for elementary school personnel address topics for improving literacy instruction for LEP students. The focus groups for secondary school personnel are organized around content areas and address topics relating to accelerating academic achievement for LEP students through English/ESL, mathematics, science, and social studies. These focus group meetings have

resulted in an increased commitment to instructional innovations. At the request of participants, the focus groups have been opened to all teachers to increase the opportunities for networking and collaboration across school sites.

## Results to Date

In the two years since Project SUCCESS has been underway, project staff have learned several things.

1. School site administrators are integral in the effective implementation of each site's professional development plan and in making changes in school structure, climate, and instructional practices. Administrator training and involvement throughout the planning and implementation process is vital. Support from administrators can come in the form of encouraging teachers to take risks or to changing the master schedule to facilitate implementation of new programs.
2. The data-analysis meetings have resulted in district-level interest in the academic success of limited English proficient students. With the introduction of a new mathematics curriculum in the district, concern was raised regarding achievement of LEP students in mathematics courses, especially at the secondary level. Project SUCCESS is assisting the Instructional Support Services division with curriculum development, site-level professional development, and district-wide planning to ensure that the needs of LEP students are being met by this new curriculum and that teachers have the necessary training to ensure student achievement in all levels of math classes.
3. Avenues for communication and collaboration between project staff and district level leadership have been established. A project steering committee consisting of the Deputy Superintendent of Secondary Schools, the Assistant Superintendent of Elementary Schools, the Director of Instructional Support Services, the Director of Special Education, Coordinators for School Improvement, Title I, Gifted and Talented Education, Beginning Teacher Support Program, and principals and teachers representing the three school clusters, as well as project staff meets regularly to monitor the implementation of districtwide professional development activities. This communication and collaboration underscores the systemwide (districtwide) implementation of this project.

## Conclusion

In the first two years of operation, Project SUCCESS has learned that the focus on student achievement must drive all project efforts. In addition teachers must have input concerning their own training and be included in the design of professional development activities. Foundations of trust and commitment to student achievement must be established before changes can be recommended and received by teachers and administrators. Finally, staff must seek out experienced trainers, expert in their knowledge and in their facilitation skills, to provide new ideas and offer the technical assistance needed to sustain change.

Successful completion of this project will endow the district with a cadre of trained staff who can provide outstanding instructional programs to LEP students and who can train other staff members in the years to come.

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## Achieving Technological Literacy in America's Schools

by Carol Snyder

The use of computers and related technologies for improving teaching and learning for all students has become a recurring theme in discussions of current school reform initiatives. Starting with *Goals 2000* and *The Improving America's Schools Act* (IASA), there has been a consistent effort to promote the use of technology as a means for raising student achievement and helping students meet the anticipated challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Providing increased visibility to the issue, President Clinton and Vice President Gore announced the **Technology Literacy Challenge** in 1996, making the integration of technology into the classroom a national priority, and setting four goals that define the actions that need to be taken:

- All teachers in the nation will have the training and support they need to help students learn using computers and the information superhighway.
  - All teachers will have modern multimedia computers in their classrooms.
  - Every classroom will be connected to the Information Superhighway
  - Effective software and on-line learning resources will be an integral part of every school's curriculum.
- (U.S. Department of Education, 1996)

### The Technology Literacy Challenge

The U.S. Department of Education is implementing the Technology Literacy Challenge through a two part strategy to ensure that new technologies support high quality learning, accelerate the use of proven technology innovations in education, and provide equal technology access for all students.

The **Technology Literacy Challenge Fund** provides formula grants to State Education Agencies to help them implement statewide technology plans.

The **Technology Innovation Challenge Grants** complement the work of the Challenge Fund by developing and refining new applications of technology that make significant contributions to school improvement.

Links to the current Technology Innovation Challenge Grant Projects Home Pages are available at: <http://www.ed.gov/Technology/challenge/grants.html>

Source: U.S. Department of Education (1997), "Technology Literacy Challenge" <http://www.ed.gov/Technology/challenge/tlc.html>

### Meeting the Challenge at Schools Serving Language Minority Students

Currently more than 6,000 schools in the United States have begun to meet these national goals by creating home pages on the World Wide Web (WWW)--the fastest growing segment of the global Internet computer network. Many of these schools enroll substantial numbers of culturally and linguistically diverse students and are using the Web to share and celebrate the various cultural and linguistic assets which their students represent. In addition to serving as a forum for communicating program goals and showcasing student work, home pages help schools establish parent and community partnerships by connecting the school with homes, libraries, businesses and other organizations. For students, participating in the creation of school home pages helps build language proficiency as well as the technological skills needed to enter the workforce or pursue

higher education. They expand the audience for their work/projects and become producers as well as consumers of educational content. For teachers, the WWW facilitates the sharing of professional advice, lesson plans and information about new practices and methods.

The school web sites listed below demonstrate how, through Internet technologies, teachers and students are collaborating with schools across town, across the state or across the world to expand the knowledge base and build partnerships between schools, communities and businesses. The WWW resources which have been developed are of extraordinary value to schools that are building/ establishing home pages.

## SCHOOLS ON THE WEB

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### **San Francisco Unified School District Language Academy** <http://sf.bilingual.net>

San Francisco, California

The Language Academy represents the SFUSD Pre-Kindergarten through 12th grade language programs. The recently unveiled site includes information about bilingual education programs, professional development opportunities, current research on language acquisition, and instructional materials, as well as a way for students, teachers, administrators, and parents to interact with each other. In addition, an updated calendar of events is maintained and links to other related internet sites throughout the world are provided.

### **Saturn School Hmong Page** <http://ww2.saturn.stpaul.k12.mn.us/Hmong/sathmong.html>

St. Paul, Minnesota

Includes traditional Hmong, Vietnamese and Cambodian Stories written in Hmong and English by students, student reports on Hmong culture; more than 60 Hmong/English lesson plans and another 60 English lesson plans, which supplement the Hmong/English teaching and Hmong/English and English/Hmong Children's "Talking" Dictionaries, with over 1500 words in each dictionary.

### **Abraham Lincoln High School** <http://nisus.sfusd.k12.ca.us/programs/chinese/eslframes1.htm>

San Francisco, California

The ESL/Bilingual Department at Abraham Lincoln High School provides answers to Frequently Asked Questions about their Chinese Two-Way Immersion Program and ESL Language Development Classes. Also included on this site are, *The Information Superhighway in Chinese* project which seeks to help Chinese bilingual students use Chinese on the Internet, *The Colorful Years*, the world's first online Chinese newspaper edited by secondary students, and the *Chinese Cyber Academic Center*, an Internet study hall in Chinese .

### **Brooklyn International High School** <http://www.bihs.k12.ny.us/site/general/school.html>

Brooklyn, New York

This small, public high school in New York City for recent immigrants to the United States serves 225 students in grades nine through eleven who are from thirty-nine countries and speak thirty-four languages. The web site provides information on the school's curriculum and how it focuses on developing a student's language and academic skills through content-based instruction and career education.

### **Phoenix Elementary School** <http://www.mind.net/pes>

Phoenix, Oregon

This elementary school hosts a school-wide dual language program in English and Spanish. Phoenix Elementary School's web site acts as a gateway to the school's dual language classrooms, where the visitor can view student projects in both languages. The fourth-grade's web page provides an interesting example of one project. You can click on any of the student names to access samples of that student's work.

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You can link to additional school web sites that offer information, ideas, and resources related to the education of culturally and linguistically diverse students through NCBE's web site at: <http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/classroom/bilschool.htm> <http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/classroom>

</bilschool.htm/>

## Getting Started

### Print Resources:

**Internet for Educators** by Randall James Ryder and Tom Hughes. This is a book about the Internet and its applications to school settings. It's intended audience is pre-service and inservice teachers who would like to begin to explore the functions of the Internet and the application of the Internet to classroom learning. To order call 800/374-1200.

**"How to Create Great School Web Pages"** gives critical tips, techniques, and examples needed to build school Web sites. Available from: Classroom Connect, 1866 Colonial Village Lane, P.O. Box 10488, Lancaster, PA 17605-9981; 800/638-1639; Fax: 717/393-1507

**"World Wide Web Publishing for Schools"** is a step-by-step primer for teachers on how to quickly establish a presence on the web. Published by Intel Corporation, 1995-96. Intel Santa Clara, MP1-101, 2200 Mission College Blvd., Santa Clara, CA 95052; 800/628-8686

### Internet Resources:

The **Regional Technology in Education Consortia (R\*TEC)** program to help states, local educational agencies, teachers, school library and media personnel, administrators, and other education entities successfully integrate technologies into kindergarten through 12th grade (K-12) classrooms, library media centers, and other educational settings. <http://rtec.org>

The **Consortium for School Networking (CoSN)** The consortium provides educators with up-to-date information on how to get quick, easy, and cost-effective access to the Internet and on-line resources. <http://www.cosn.org>

**"Connecting to the Internet"** is an *Education Week on the Web* Issues Page that provides brief background on the topic and includes links to definitions of related terms and to relevant stories from the *Education Week* and *Teacher Magazine* archives. <http://www.edweek.org/context/topics/internet.htm>

The **National Center for Technology Planning (NCTP)** is a clearinghouse for the exchange of many types of information related to technology planning. This includes technology planning aids (checklists, brochures, sample planning forms, PR announcement forms); and electronic monographs such as "Guidebook for Developing an Effective Instructional Technology Plan." <http://www.nctp.com>

**Netscape Navigator Handbook** <http://home.netscape.com/eng/mozilla/3.0/handbook/>

**Netscape Gold Web Page Authoring Guide** <http://home.netscape.com/eng/mozilla/3.0/handbook/authoring/navgold.htm>

### Other resources:

**NetDay** is a grass-roots volunteer effort to wire schools so they can network their computers and connect them to the Internet. Labor and materials come from volunteers and support from companies, unions, parents, teachers, students, and school employees. NetDay is organized on the World Wide Web but if you are unable to get online, call the fax-on-demand number at 1-800-55-NET96 to obtain

faxed information and registration forms. <http://www.netday.org>

The **Universal Service Fund**. As a result of a result of the Telecommunications Act of 1996, this organization offers discounts on telecom-munications services, Internet access, and internal connections available K-12 schools and libraries. <http://www.merit.edu/k12.michigan/usf>

For more information about the Technology Literacy Challenge Fund you may contact your State Education Agency directly, or contact the U.S. Department of Education at: (202)401-0039. You may also call 1-800-USA-LEARN, or go to the U.S. Department of Education Home Page at: <http://www.ed.gov/Technology>

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U.S. Department of Education (1996) *Getting America's students ready for the 21<sup>st</sup> century--Meeting the technology literacy challenge: A report to the nation on technology and education from the United States Department of Education.* (<http://www.ed.gov/Technology/Plan/>)



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## Assessing English Language Learners: A Look at Illinois

by Kris Anstrom

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(Information on assessment procedures for English Language Learners in Illinois was obtained from: *Introduction to Illinois Assessment Initiatives for Bilingual/ESL Students*, published by The Illinois State Board of Education.)

### Appropriate Assessment for English Language Learners

The early 1990's ushered in an era of educational reform calling for high standards for all students. Federal legislation, such as *Goals 2000* and the *Improving America's Schools Act, 1994* explicitly state that all students, including English language learners (ELLs), are expected to attain high standards. Linked with these high standards are assessments that allow students, including ELLs, to demonstrate what they know and can do. For ELLs, this demonstration is complicated by the lack of assessment instruments designed for their particular needs. Furthermore standards-linked assessment is often conducted for high-stakes consequences, such as grade-level advancement or high school graduation. Such high-stakes testing intensifies the need for equitable and appropriate assessment for English language learners.

Over the past several years, states and school districts have been hard at work developing state and district standards as well as standards-based assessments. Integral to this process is the inclusion of ELL needs in the development of such standards and assessments. In the past ELLs have been either inappropriately included in state- or district-wide assessment or exempted. Both approaches fail to account for the academic progress of this population of students, hence leaving states and districts without a viable means of monitoring and reporting on ELL students' academic growth. Some states have implemented native language testing for their ELLs; others have instituted specific accommodations for these students, such as extra time for testing or allowing students to use bilingual dictionaries. One state, Illinois, has designed English literacy proficiency assessments specifically for its ELL population.

### The Illinois ELL Population

According to the *Summary Report: Survey of the States' LEP Students and Available Educational Programs and Services, 1994-1995* (Macias and Kelly, 1996), Illinois is ranked fifth in the nation for total number of LEP students. More recent Illinois state data collected in October 1996 indicate that 118,244 students were eligible for bilingual services and that these students spoke 116 languages, with Spanish, Polish, Arabic, Urdu, and Gujarati representing the top five languages spoken (data received from the Illinois State Board of Education, 1996). In response to this large ELL population, their linguistic diversity, and a desire by teachers, administrators, and the bilingual community, the Illinois Measure of Annual Growth in English (IMAGE) was developed.

### The Illinois Response to Assessing ELLs: The IMAGE

The IMAGE is a standardized, mandated state assessment of English literacy proficiency designed for students with limited English proficiency (LEP) and built on the principles of second language acquisition and second language best practices. Testing with IMAGE began in the Spring of 1997 and will be conducted

annually. A primary purpose of the IMAGE is to obtain consistent state-level information on students enrolled in Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) programs and other Transitional Programs of Instruction (TPI), such as English as a second language programs or native language tutoring programs. Results will be reported to school districts by student, school district, and state. These results are meant to assist educators in monitoring student progress in English reading and writing proficiency and serve as another source of information for school improvement.

Participation in IMAGE begins in third grade and continues through eleventh grade for those students who have been enrolled in TBE/TPI programs in Illinois schools for six months through three years. IMAGE assesses students in English reading and writing during this period of exemption from the state's academic achievement exam. The test consists of three forms corresponding to grade spans 3 to 5, 6 to 8, and 9 to 11. Both the reading and the writing tests have two 40-minute sessions. Directions are read to the students and each test is designed to give all learners, regardless of their language proficiency level, opportunities for success.

### **Assessing Reading and Writing with the IMAGE**

The IMAGE reading test is designed around a theme that develops over four subsections. The first section introduces students to the topic through a graphic, which provides the necessary contextual information for answering questions. The second section expands the topic through additional visuals along with some text. By the last sections, students are reading narrative and expository selections on the same theme with some visual support provided. The multiple choice format of the reading test allows students up to three correct responses out of five options. The correct responses challenge varying language proficiency levels.

The writing test is organized in a manner similar to the reading test, with initial writing tasks based on picture prompts, such as describing a picture or story sequence. Subsequent sections require that students respond to a text prompt, but provide graphic organizers as aids in planning. The writing test reflects the state goal requiring students to write for different purposes by designing prompts that elicit different genres, such as narration, persuasion, and exposition.

### **An Integrated Language Proficiency Assessment System**

As part of its comprehensive system, Illinois has developed a language proficiency handbook and sample assessments in social sciences for optional local use in preK-12 settings. The handbook serves as a guide oriented to teachers for planning, collecting, analyzing, and interpreting language proficiency data and promotes ongoing assessment of students learning any second language. The sample assessments consist of three theme-based units that integrate instruction in language and content with assessment and involve teacher, peer and self-assessment. Student pages are available in Spanish and Polish. Content-based themes are aligned with the 1997 Illinois' goals, Learning Standards and benchmarks.

The IMAGE, the proficiency handbook, and the sample assessments serve as an integrated model for assessing the English language development of ELLs. Information obtained from these components is intended to provide a comprehensive and longitudinal profile of ELL's language proficiency and achievement and promote accountability at the building, district, and state levels.

For further information on the Illinois assessment system for ELL learners, contact:

Anne Marie Fuhrig  
Illinois State Board of Education  
100 North First Street, E-216  
Springfield, IL 62777-0001

Margo Gottlieb  
Illinois Resource Center  
1855 Mount Prospect Road  
Des Plaines, IL 60018

Christine Ewy  
Education Consultant  
852 Fairway Drive  
Palatine, IL 60067

217-782-4823

847-803-3112

847-776-9613

## References

Illinois State Board of Education (1996). *Introduction to Illinois assessment initiatives for bilingual/ESL students*. Springfield, IL.: Author.

Macias, R.F. and Kelly, C. (1996). *Summary report of the survey of the states' limited English proficient students and available educational programs and services 1994-1995*. Washington, D.C.: National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education.



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## What's New on NCBE's Web Site ?

Look for the reports produced by the National Center for Research on Cultural Diversity and Second Language Learning (NCRCDSSL) at

<http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/pubs/ncrcdsl/>. <http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/pubs/ncrcdsl/>

This OERI-funded center produced thirty-two reports addressing education reform efforts and instructional strategies effective for educating students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Some of the reports included are:

- [\*\*Myths and Misconceptions about Second Language Learning: What Every Teacher Needs to Unlearn\*\*](#), B. McLaughlin. 1992.
- [\*\*Instructional Conversations in Special Education Settings: Issues and Accommodations\*\*](#), J. Echevarria & R. McDonough. 1993.
- [\*\*Integrating Language and Culture in Middle School American History Classes\*\*](#), D.J. Short. 1993.



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