

A Foundation of Communication: Reinforcing content learning with language development--and vice versa--across disciplines



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You will be able to:

1. **Argue for more authentic communication in every classroom**
2. **Apply 3 key features of communicativeness to all activities**
3. **Use 2 speaking-listening activities tomorrow**
4. **Begin to develop 4 constructive conversation skills in upcoming lessons**

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Neil Mercer
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WARM-UP

“Our students need to be builders and owners of ideas—not just renters and consumers.”



1. Tell your partner what you think this quotation means.
2. With your partner, decide which is the most effective way to make this happen in our schools.
3. What needs to be more authentic in most lesson activities in order to help students be builders and owners?



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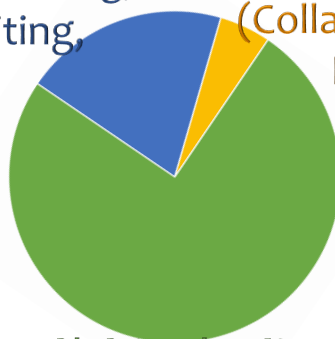
Understanding Language

Types of Classroom Communication

One-way (Productive
Speaking, Listening,
Reading, Writing,
Multimedia)

Conversational
(Collaborative
Building,
Exploring,
Arguing)

Minimal/Shiny/Indirect/Fake
(Display, IRE)



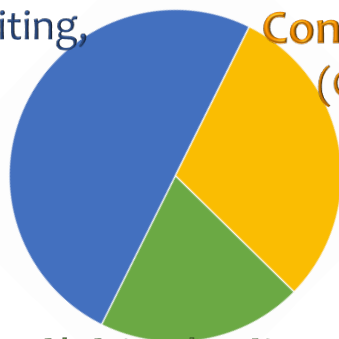
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Understanding Language

More Authentic Communication

One-way (Productive
Speaking, Listening,
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Conversational
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Understanding Language

Communicativeness "Test" (Essential Features for Language Development)

___ **Is there a useful & engaging purpose?** In the activity, do students *use* (and *need to use*) language to do something meaningful and engaging beyond just to answer questions or get points? (e.g., language, content, thinking...)



___ **Is there an information gap?** In the activity, do students get or give information that they want, need, or don't have?



___ **Is there attention to language in service of communication?** In the activity, is there extra teaching and assessment focused on improving how language is used?



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Discuss how authors decide how Columbus

Co-design an experiment that measures the speed of sound.

STUDENT A STUDENT B

STORY 1 STORY 2 STORY 1 STORY 2

- Sentence Frames
- Language modeling & scaffolding
- Practice
- Formative feedback

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A Ration of Rationale

Modifying (and choosing) lesson activities to have more authentic communication is a hassle. And many activities are loud and “messy.” So...

Why is authentic communication in all reading, writing, oral, and content activities so important—especially for English learners?

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Improving Quantity & Quality of Oral Language

	 SPEAKING & LISTENING	 CONVERSING
Increase Quantity	# of students # of minutes	# of students conversing # of turns Length of turns
Increase Quality	Strength Clarity	Co-Construction Collaborative Arguing Conversation Skills




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Fostering speaking and listening
with semi-structured discourse:

TRANSITION IMPROV

Activities



Transition Improv Activity: **Pro-Con**

Topics: Camping, Shopping, TV, Uniforms, Computers, Superheroes, Cars, Conferences, Testing, Internet, Cell phones, Video games, ...

Transitions: **However,**
On the other hand,
Then again,

~~but~~

Frames: One advantage is ... For example, ...
 Another positive of ... is... because...
 A negative aspect of ___ is ...
 In spite of the positives of _____,

A & B, Lean?

Transition Improv: **For-Against**

Topics: Fracking, adding lime to soil to lower pH, genetic engineering, nuclear energy, stem cell research, human-caused climate change, wolf reintroduction, de-extinction, zoos, preserving wetlands, corn as fuel, extraterrestrial life, desalination, ...

Transitions: **However,**
On the other hand,
Then again,

~~but~~

Frames: One reason for ... is ... For example, ...
 Evidence that supports ... is... because...
 A reason against ... is ... For example, ...
 Evidence that does not support ... is ... because ...

OUTPUT: Transition Improv (Similar-Different)

Animal cells

Lysosomes
(digest food and break down waste)

Centrioles
(pull chromosomes from nucleus during mitosis)

No cell wall

Plant Cells

Cell wall
(gives plant its shape)

Large vacuole (store nutrients and waste)

Chloroplasts
(produce carbohydrates using photosynthesis)
One turn with, next turn without

Ribosomes
(make protein)

Mitochondria
(turns nutrients into energy)

Cytoplasm


However,
On the other hand,
Then again,

Plant & animal cells both have ____, which serve to...
 Unlike animal cells, plant cells have ____, which ...
 ... are similar to ____ in that they both ____
 Animal cells differ from plant cells in that ____

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Transition Improv: Two Views

Views: Patriots
Loyalists



Transitions: **However,**
On the other hand,
Then again, ~~but~~

Frames: The ____ thought that ...
 Many ____ believed that...
 A different perspective held by ____ was that...
 In the eyes of ____...

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Developing Listening, Speaking,
Clarifying, & Supporting with
**“STRONGER Y CLEARER
EACH TIME”**

Activities:

Stronger-Clearer Grid



Designing “Stronger & Clearer Each Time” Activities



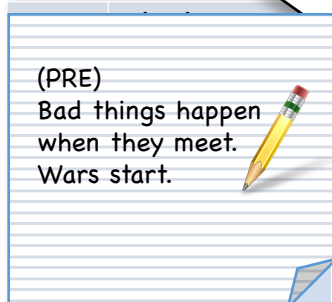
1. Prompt for an **original response**
2. Successive partners: **borrow and use the language, ideas, and evidence** each time-->
 - **Stronger** (often longer) with better supporting evidence and examples, and
 - **Clearer** with more precise terms and linked, organized, complete sentences.
3. Scaffolds **are reduced during** the activity.

“Stronger & Clearer Each Time” Grid

I think bad things happen when cultures meet, like wars.

Switch partners!
Don't forget to use examples.

I think it's both good and bad. Like you learn from each other, but also you can fight.



What happens when cultures meet and why?

“Stronger & Clearer Each Time” Grid

I think bad things happen when cultures meet, like wars.

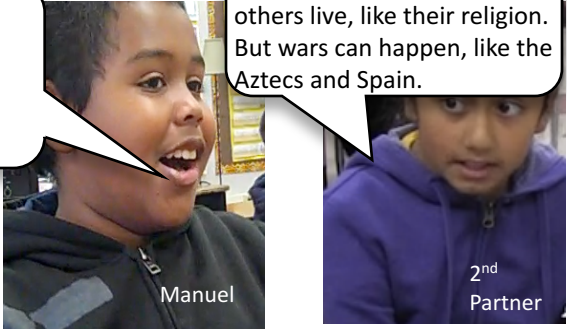
Switch partners!
Don't forget to use examples.

I think it's both good and bad. Like you learn from each other, but also you can fight.

Cultures meet and bad things happen like war. But good things, too, like you can learn other language.

When cultures meet each other, it helps us to learn how others live, like their religion. But wars can happen, like the Aztecs and Spain.

1.	Mario	both, learn
2.	Juan	religion, Aztecs,
3.	Spain	
Me		



Manuel

2nd Partner

What happens when cultures meet and why?

“Stronger & Clearer Each Time” Grid

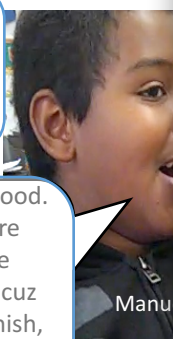
I think bad things happen when cultures meet, like wars.

(PRE)
Bad things happen when they meet.
Wars start.

Cultures meet and bad things happen like war. But good things, too, like you can learn other language.

(POST)
When cultures meet, is both bad and good. Bad cuz they fight, like the Aztecs and Spain. Spain thought they were better so they took over. Good cuz of new food and languages and religion.

When cultures meet, is bad and good. Bad cuz they fight wars, like they're different. Spain thought they were better than the Aztecs. And good cuz you can learn languages, like Spanish, and new religion.



Manu

What happens when cultures meet and why?

Looking at Student Work (Before & After Grid Partners)

PRE
INTERVIEW TIME!
(Listen in, Share out, Create together)
QUESTION: Why should I care about biodiversity?
MY ANSWER: Because the food chain

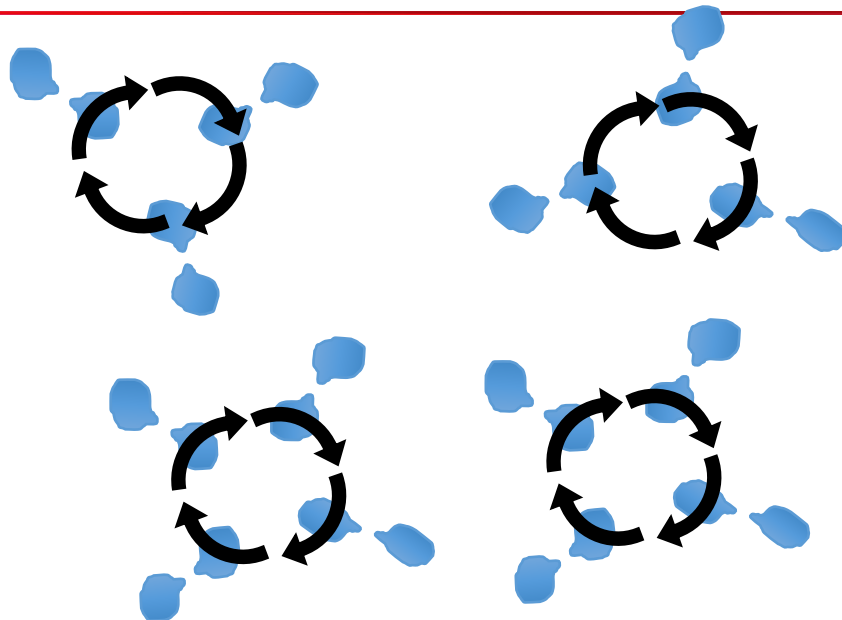
POST
I should care about biodiversity because without the variety of living things there wouldn't be anything to provide for us for example(s) the rosy periwinkle provides a medicine that treats certain cancers including leukemia.



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Practically Speaking: Interaction Mini-Circles



“Stronger & Clearer Each Time” Grid

Name	What can we do to increase the quantity and quality of communication in our instruction and assessments?
Me	(just two or three key words, if any)
1.	
2.	
3.	
Me	

- One powerful way in which we can...
- A big challenge we need to overcome is...
- Teachers can...
- ~~I disagree with you....~~

(Listeners can help and prompt for clarification and support)

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(Essential Features for Language Development)**

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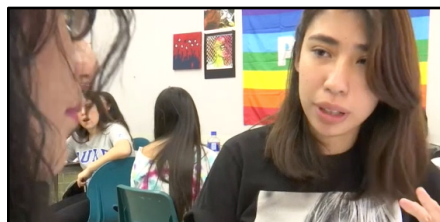
Constructive Conversations

Building a Conversation Culture

CC Skills Poster



Constructive Conversations



A conversation has a spirit of its own, and the language in which it is conducted bears its own truth within it.

That is, it allows something to 'emerge' which hence forth exists.

--Hans Georg Gadamer

Build Conversation-Rich Classroom Culture: Reduce these Obstacles

- Our desire for “control” over learning (e.g., “I don’t know what they’re saying back there.”)
- Lack of seeing the long-term & learning value of classroom conversation
- Lack of consequences for unclear language
- Lack of academic conversation assessments, models, supports
- Lack of conversation practice time (scrimmages)
- Over-structured “discourse” activities and over-use of sentence frames



*How can we
reduce these?*

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Conversation Analysis

- Laura: I think air has weight. Remember the balloon?
- Eli: I disagree.
- Laura: Can you give a reason?
- Eli: Cuz I can't feel it. Can you?



- Lisa: I think the dog was his best friend in the story.
- Edgar: I would like to add to your idea. My dog ran away last year and we found him in the park.
- Lisa: Which park?
- Edgar: The one by the train station.
- Lisa: I took a train to San Jose last week.



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Conversation Analysis

Alex: What caused the fall?
 Carlos: The book said disease and war.
 Alex: It also said crops and politics.
 Carlos: All of them, I guess.

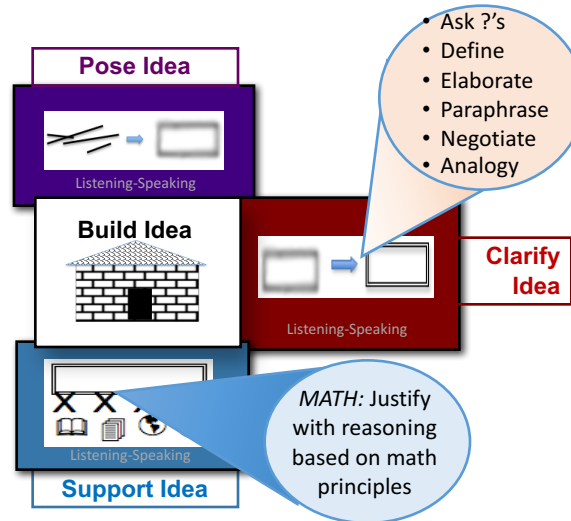


Mansur: I think there are different ways to solve it.
 Lynn: So? Just do what the teacher did.
 Mansur: But why did she turn the fraction over?
 Lynn: Who cares? Just turn it over.
 Mansur: OK.

$$\frac{3a}{3c-6} \div \frac{9ab}{c^2-4} =$$

Constructive Conversation Skills for "Build Up 1 Idea" Mode

Goal: Students collaboratively (but w/o teacher) build an idea (e.g., claim, answer, solution, interpretation), **using the following skills:**



Conversations at Beginning Levels of Proficiency

Learning objective: Use reasons to argue the importance of a historical figure.

Prompt: Talk about what makes Abraham Lincoln a hero.

A: How Lincoln a hero?

B: He stop slavery, the slaves.

A: How?

B: The war.

A: Yeah, Civil. He fighted it stop slavery.

B: Muchos die in the war.

A: Real bad.

B: But cuál es more bad? Slavery or die?

A: Slavery.

B: Why?

A: Cuz you not free, like, como en la cárcel, y te golpean. And Lincoln stop it. He's a hero.



Constructive Conversations

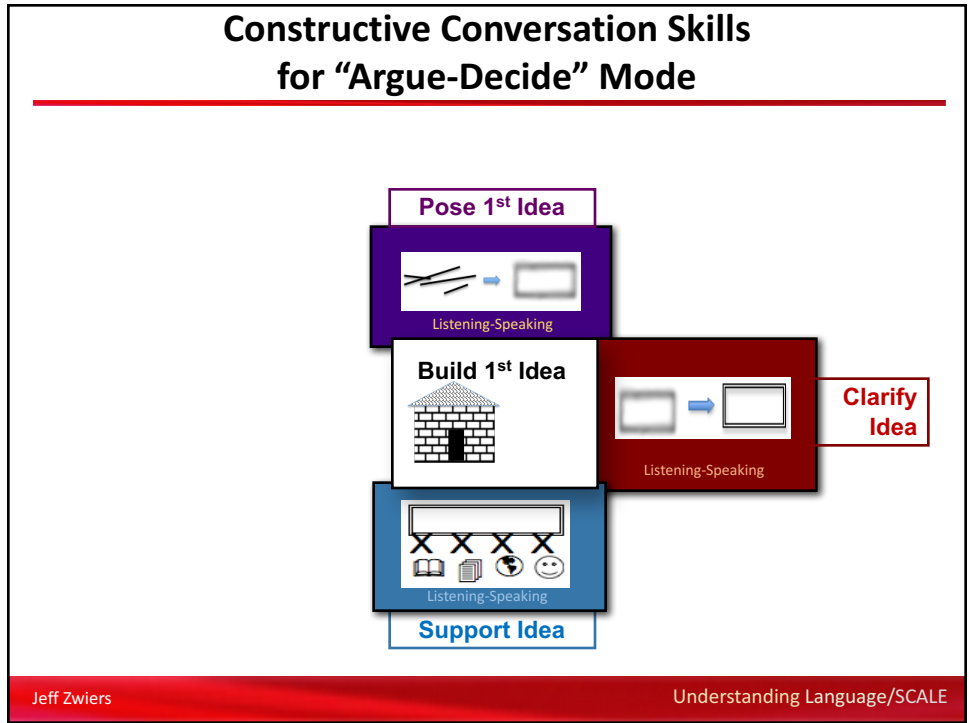
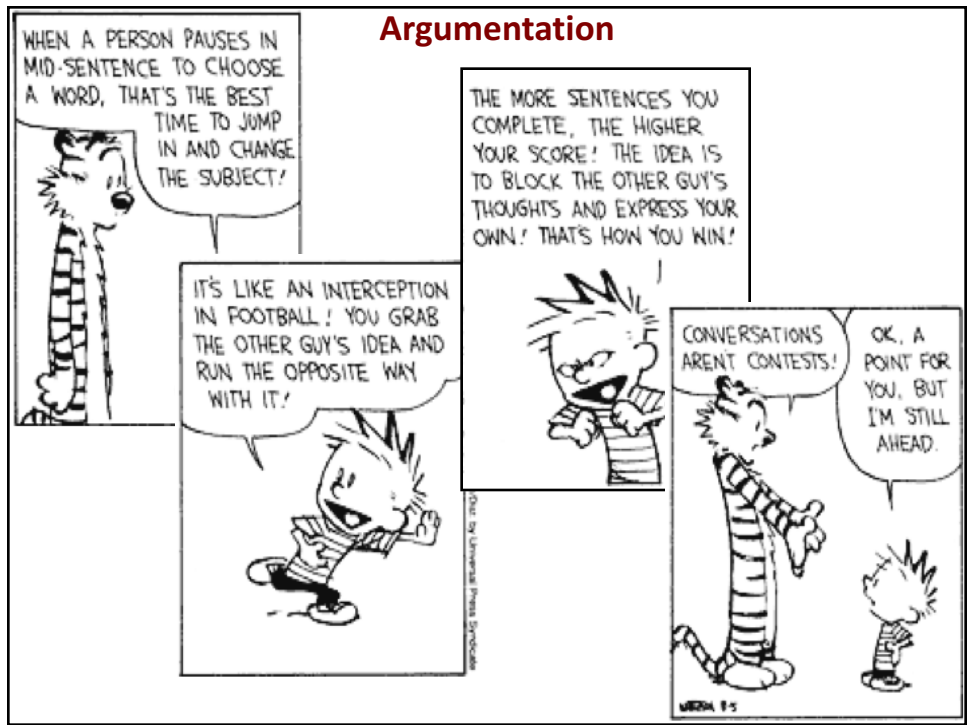
Context

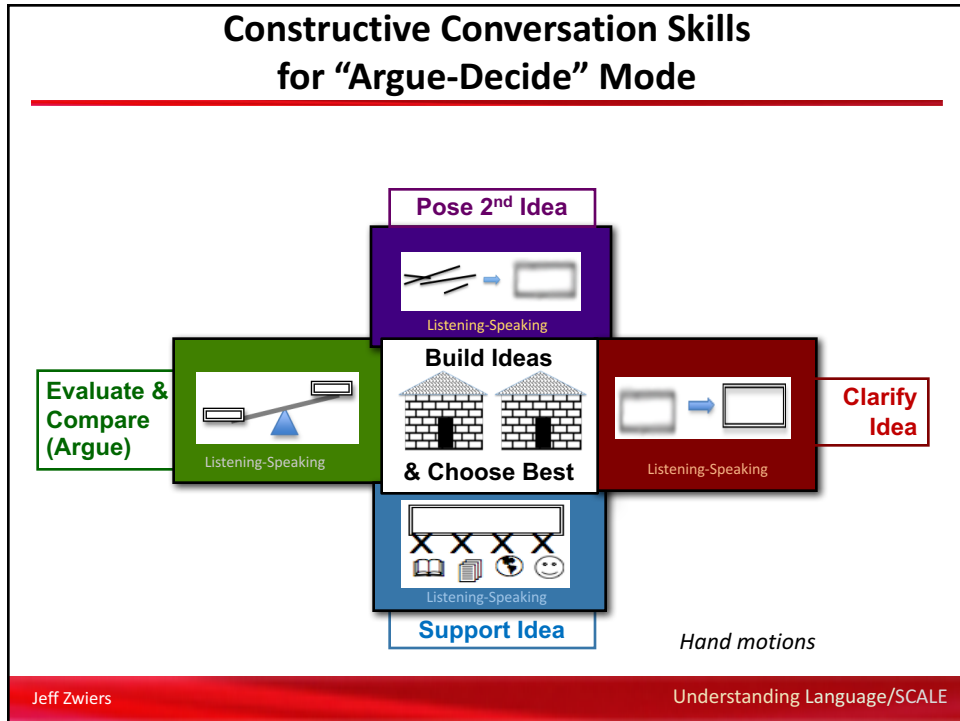
- Sheltered 9th grade English class (taught by Patrick Hurley)
- Intermediate and early advanced speakers.
- Have read *To Kill a Mockingbird* and *Of Mice and Men*
- Focal conversation skill: supporting your ideas with examples from a text.
- Prompts on the board



This Clip

- Discuss the main theme: "what do you think an important theme in this book is?" *"An important theme of this book is real courage"*
- They prompt each other: "What does courage mean?" "Can you elaborate on that?" "Can you give an example from another book?" "How does this apply to our life?"





Conversation Observation & Analysis Tool (COAT)

Prompt

Relevant & Engaging Purpose Need to talk (Info gaps)
 Clear Expectations (language to use, thinking, content)

Quantity

of turns
 Length of turns
 Equity of voice

Quality

Use conversation skills to co-construct & argue ideas

- Turns build on previous turns
- Students pose or choose a relevant initial idea(s) that is focused on learning objective(s)
- Students clarify idea(s) (by paraphrasing, defining, elaborating, asking questions, negotiating, etc.)
- Students support ideas (using evidence, examples, explanations)
- *If there are two or more competing ideas (argue/decide):*
 - students build up both ideas and
 - (a) evaluate the strength/weight of the evidence of each idea
 - (b) compare the strengths/weights and choose the "strongest/heaviest" idea
 - (c) explain and/or negotiate final decisions & conclusions

Effective listening

Clear speaking (+ use of language asked for in prompt)

Academic thinking (+ use of thinking asked for in prompt)

Academic content (+ talk about content asked for in prompt)

Nonverbal communication

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5th Gr. Language Arts/ELD



Context

- 5th grade Language Arts/ELD class in San Francisco
- Advanced and early intermediate partners.

This Clip

- After reading an allegory of the Holocaust, students discuss what could have happened if the animals had stood together.
- They practice stating opinions, paraphrasing, and clarifying

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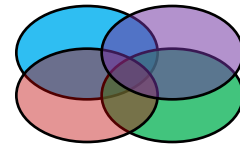
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References

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