



A Publication of the Council for Learning Disabilities

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President's Message



Dear CLD Members,

The first sentence in the CLD Mission Statement reads: The Council for Learning Disabilities (CLD) is an international organization composed of *professionals* [emphasis mine] who represent diverse disciplines. . . . As

I embark on my year as President of our organization, I want us all to reflect on what it means to be a professional in our field. By etymology, or word origin, a professional is someone who has professed his or her skill and vowed to perform that skill to the highest standard. The desire to do quality work is supposed to surpass the desire for profiting from doing it (Friedson, 2001). Rather, being a professional suggests we are not only experts, but also the standard bearers who have a responsibility for upholding the integrity of the field.

We talk a lot about the importance of maintaining the membership of CLD, and the unfortunate message often is that we care about the financial support that members provide the organization. Although that is a necessary element, what I want to convey to you is that maintaining your membership in CLD is about carrying the torch of professionalism. We care about those who will lead the work of “enhancing the education and quality of life for individuals with learning disabilities across the life span,” as the end of that first sentence in our mission statement reads. It is why we invest in the Leadership Academy and strive to keep our members abreast of the latest information through our various publications including *LD Forum*, *the Research-to-Practice guides*, *Intervention in School and Clinic*, and *Learning Disability Quarterly*.

Being a professional does not mean that we have nothing left to learn. Malcolm Forbes once said, “. . . the

more a man knows, the more he knows, he doesn't know.” Being a professional involves acknowledging when we do not have the answers, or what it is we do and do not know about LD issues. One of the things I enjoy the most about the annual CLD conference is the opportunity to reset my thinking by learning how others are approaching problems and exploring new directions for our shared work.

I have asked our Board of Trustees to join me this year in focusing on professionalism in the field of LD, and I invite you to do the same. Post your ideas about being a professional on our [Facebook](#) page and consider making other contributions to advance the mission of CLD.

Looking forward to working with you!

Deborah Reed
CLD President

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Research to Practice

Culturally Responsive Practices in a Response to Intervention Model when Working with English Language Learners

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As described for the past four decades, students from diverse backgrounds are often disproportionately included in special education. As Gay (2002) has discussed, the lack of culturally responsive practices or a confusion between diversity and disability often lead to this issue. Currently, more than 4.6 million students in the United States are considered to be English language learners (ELL), and of those, about 500,000 currently receive services in special education (U.S. Department of Education, 2014). Extremely high failure rates in schools are evidenced by some diverse groups, including ELL students (National Center for Education Statistics, 2013). According to the U.S. Department of Education (2014), a disparity between non-ELL and ELL students' standardized assessment scores continues to exist. Though an uncomfortable one, the connections between school failure, special education, and diverse student needs must be deliberated in order to decrease the inappropriate placement of ELL students in special education. Over the past 15 years, models such as Response to Intervention (RTI) and Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) have been employed to address inappropriate placement into special education in categories such as learning disabilities. Although this is the case, practices of these models often lack responsiveness for ELL students (Artiles, 2015). With this in mind, the following paper focuses on key issues for ELL students in special education such as understanding barriers ELL students encounter and the importance of cultural responsiveness from teachers, administrators, and staff. It also provides research-based recommendations of culturally responsive practices (Gay, 2002) for educators working with ELLs, and students from diverse backgrounds, through an RTI model/framework and those served in special education.

A section of recommendations and suggestions of culturally responsive practices for special educators is included. This section includes evidence-based practices and recommendations from experts that will help teachers and administrators improve their practices when providing services for ELL students in special education.

Addressing Disproportionality through a Culturally Responsive RTI Model

The disproportionate representation of culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students (e.g., ELL students) in special education has been a recurring topic of concern in the field of special education within the United States (Barrio,

2015; Klinger, et al., 2005, Rueda & Windmueller, 2006; de Valenzuela, Copeland, Qi, & Park, 2006). Disproportionate representation refers to the unequal representation of students within special education compared to White/Caucasian students (Artiles, Kozleski, Trent, Osher, & Ortiz, 2010; Klinger, et al., 2005; Rueda & Windmueller, 2006; de Valenzuela, et al., 2006). ELL students in special education are often over-represented in the category learning disabilities (Harry & Klinger; 2006). The attributing factors for this disproportionality include the subjectivity of the referral process for categories such as learning disabilities (Linan-Thompson, 2010; Macswan & Rolstand, 2006); similarities between behaviors and characteristics of students with learning disabilities (Flores, S., & Chu, S.-Y., 2011); deficiency of valid and reliable individualized assessments with representative norm samples of ELL populations (Geva, E., & Herbert, K. (2012); lack of culturally responsive practices (Gay, 2002); and minimal resources to support ELL students at the teacher, school, and school district levels (Hoover & Erikson, 2015). In addition, bilingual or non-verbal assessments are available, although personnel may not be professionally trained to administer the assessment or the school district may not have the resources to provide the assessment in students' native language (Artiles, et al., 2010; Harry & Klinger, 2006; Vaughn, Mathes, Linan-Thompson, & Francis, 2005).

More recently, researchers have suggested this issue can be addressed through the appropriate use of multi-tiered intervention systems and models such as Response to Intervention (RTI) and evidence-based practices (Barrio & Combes, 2014; Hosp, 2014; Linan-Thompson, 2010; Macswan & Rolstand, 2006) that incorporate culturally responsive pedagogies (CRTI; 2015; NCCRESt, 2005).

Defining Culturally Responsive Practices

Recommendations for educators and professionals working with CLD parents and families of children with disabilities are to delve into the literature regarding culturally responsive pedagogies and practices (Ravindran & Myers, 2012; Travers, Tincani, & Krezmien, 2011) by starting a dialogue about the impact of culture on families and the need for cultural competence among practitioners and educators (Tincani, Travers, & Boutot, 2010). Cultural responsiveness is a term often used to describe the awareness, understanding,

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acceptance, respect, and appreciation of cultural differences and diversity in order to provide equity and decrease prejudice, discrimination, and racism in the classroom (NCCRESt, 2005). Cultural responsiveness is also defined as the ability to relate, respect, and learn from your own and other cultures. For educators and professionals working with CLD families and children with disabilities, understanding that inequity exists is important and that teachers should develop cultural self-awareness, appreciation of diverse views and values, and ultimately make intentional decisions to avoid imposing own values and views on others in order to demonstrate cultural sensitivity (Gay, 2010; Kea, Campbell-Whately, & Richards, 2006; NCCRESt, 2005: See Figure 1). In multi-tiered systems of support, such as RTI, culturally responsive practices are a key component to the function of such models (NCCRESt, 2005).

Culturally Responsive Response to Intervention

According to the National Center for Response to Intervention (2013), the multi-tiered systems of support, as preventative or early intervention models, must include culturally responsive practices as a main component of this model. This model follows NCCRESt's (2016) statement that "culturally responsive RTI frameworks have the potential to help solve the problem of disproportionate representation for diverse students in classes" (p.1). More specifically, a culturally responsive RTI framework helps practitioners screen, assess, make decisions based on data, and provide interventions taking into consideration the role of language, culture, and educational background in the teaching and learning processes (NCCRESt, 2016) for each student. As an example, when an ELL student is struggling in learning fractions, a teacher should take into consideration the student's native language (e.g., Spanish) and assess them with physical representations

Why Talk about English Language Learners in Special Education? Culturally Responsive Practices for Special Educators

Culturally Responsive Practices

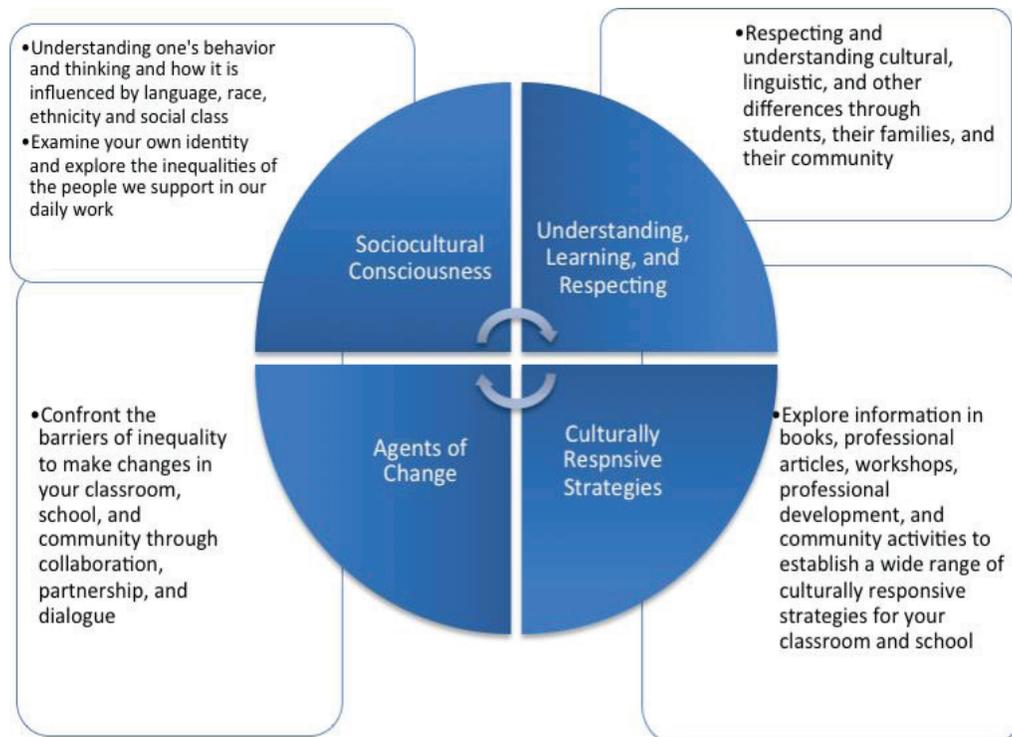


Figure 1. Culturally responsive practices: A continuous process

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rather than with a word problem. In this case, a teacher who knows his/her student well can also use something familiar to the student's culture such as a favorite dish or recipe.

Culturally Responsive Practices and Recommendations in an RTI model

Of chief importance is building a bridge between home and school culture. Understanding students' cultural beliefs and practices ensures all students can be successful. School communities engaging in culturally responsive practices demonstrate an understanding about the values, beliefs, and behaviors of people from cultures different from their own. Specifically, below are some practices and recommendations on building caring classroom communities and family partnerships in a three-tiered RTI model.

Commitment to Building Caring Classroom Communities and Family Partnerships: Considerations at Different Tier Levels

Within Tier 1, students are not responding to high-quality, scientifically based instruction provided to all students. Through universal screenings and/or state- or district wide tests, these struggling students require supplemental instruction for no longer than 8 weeks. Oftentimes, this additional instruction is delivered in small groups. Tier 2 is more intensive and appropriate for students who did not show adequate progress with Tier 1. These students are provided increasingly intensive instruction match precisely to their individual needs. Intensity varies across group size, frequency and duration of intervention. Reading and math are typically the focus during the early grades, and these targeted interventions are no longer than one semester. Students who continue to show little progress at this level of intervention are then considered for additional intensive interventions as part of Tier 3. Within Tier 3, students receive intensive interventions targeting the student's skill weaknesses. Ongoing data is accumulated and used to guide instruction. Students, who do not show adequate progress with these concentrated efforts may benefit from a comprehensive evaluation required of special education services (Mellard, McKnight, & Jordan, 2010). Recommendations for each tier and placement level are below.

Tier 1

- Examine your own sociocultural consciousness (i.e., one's way of behaving and thinking that is influenced by language, race, ethnicity, and social class) by exploring inequalities of the people you support as a professional. Administer an assessment to faculty and use results for discussion (Tincani et al., 2010; Hoover, 2012).
- Learn about children and their families, especially the culture of their homes and communities by engaging in conversations with your students, their

families, and attend events in their community (Ravindran & Myers, 2012; Travers et al., 2011).

- Acquire depth of knowledge about students including the parallels between family and culture. Involve parents and ask parents what works with their child. With parent permission, make connections among families (CRTI, 2015; NCCRESt, 2005).

Tiers 2 and 3

- Build strong rapport with families from diverse backgrounds (i.e. culturally and linguistically diverse; single parent or same sex parents). Positive rapport is built on strong communication channels, frequent contacts, and treating the families as experts of their child and thus critical components of their child's educational success (Dettmer, Knackendoffel, & Thurston, 2012; Cook & Friend, 2010).

All Tiers

- Respect families' perspectives. Recognize that children with disabilities and their families can be strongly influenced by their culture. Families want what is best for children with disabilities in order to provide the best life possible. Their beliefs, attitudes, and goals vary widely across cultures, but these continue to affect their everyday lives. For children with disabilities, culture may greatly influence the decision-making process of families regarding diagnosis and treatment pathways. Respect can be shown by building true partnerships with the family and asking their input before making any decisions (Gay, 2010; Kea, Campbell-Whatley, & Richards, 2006; NCCRESt, 2005).
- By opening up dialog, building partnerships and collaborations, parents, families, community members and educators can become agents of change. For example, making the school accessible and welcoming to all families through celebrations, events, and inviting community organizations, it will boost student confidence and will help everyone feel included (NCRESt, 2015).

Special Education

- Incorporate strengths-based planning into the IEP process that focuses on students' strengths and abilities rather than weaknesses and disabilities. The strengths-based planning can help parents have more positive attitudes toward the IEP meetings, feel they are equal partners of the team, and thus lead to the success in developing their child's IEP (Kea, Campbell-Whatley, & Richards, 2006).
- Be keenly aware that some interventions used to promote student IEP participation may be counter to the

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collectivist values of some CLD students and their families (e.g., collectivism vs. individualism) (Griffin & Steen, 2011).

Conclusion

With the increase in diverse populations in today's schools, as well as the continued use of multi-tiered systems of support such as RTI, culturally responsive considerations must be at the forefront of teachers' and educators' minds. This paper presented some research-based recommendations of culturally responsive practices for educators working with English language learners through a Response to Intervention model/framework and those served in special education. Through these recommendations, we encourage educators to critically examine their current practices, instruction, assessment, and policies regarding the support of CLD students. As a key model to reduce inappropriate referrals to special education, RTI in conjunction with CRP serves as a model to support all students, taking into consideration their cultures, backgrounds, native languages, and beliefs. We encourage educators to begin this culturally responsive cycle by reading the suggested articles found in the Members Only section of the Council for Learning Disabilities website.

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Call for Nominations for CLD Officers

Vice President

The Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees is seeking nominations for the position of CLD Vice President. The Vice President serves a one-year term in this position and automatically succeeds to the position of President Elect, President, and Past President. The Vice President serves as the Program Chair for the Annual Conference on Learning Disabilities and serves in the President's place and with his or her authority in case of absence or disability of the President and President Elect. The Vice President assists in the plan of operation for the organization, charges to committee, and the annual CLD budget.

Nominations will be accepted until the Annual Business Meeting, to be held at 4:30 PM on Thursday, October 19, 2017 in Baltimore, MD at the Council for Learning Disabilities conference. Nominees must consent to the nomination to stand for election and must submit at least five signatures from current members of CLD on the official nominations form, which can be found at <http://www.council-for-learning-disabilities.org/governance>. A biographical sketch, which includes evidence of the candidate's qualifications, must accompany the nominations form. Nominations must be submitted to **Dr. Mary Beth Calhoon**, Nominations Chair, via e-mail at bethcalhoon@miami.edu or given to Dr. Calhoon at the conference on **Thursday, October 19, 2017** no later than 12:00 PM, at which time nominations will close.

Secretary

The Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees is seeking nominations for the position of CLD Secretary. The Secretary serves a three-year term and is responsible for recording the minutes for Board of Trustees, Executive Committee, Business, Transition, and any Special meetings. The Secretary maintains these documents during his/her tenure with CLD. Prior to the Annual International Conference on Learning Disabilities; the Secretary acquires letters of recognition for Award recipients.

Nominations must be submitted to **Dr. Mary Beth Calhoon**, Nominations Chair, via e-mail at bethcalhoon@miami.edu or given to Dr. Calhoon at the conference on **Thursday, October 19, 2017** no later than 12:00 PM, at which time nominations will close. Nominations will be accepted until the Annual Business Meeting, to be held at 4:30 PM on Thursday, October 19, 2017 in Baltimore, MD at the Council for Learning Disabilities conference. Nominees must consent to the nomination to stand for election and must submit at least five signatures from current members of CLD on the official nominations form, which can be found at <http://www.council-for-learning-disabilities.org/governance>. A biographical sketch, which includes evidence of the candidate's qualifications, must accompany the nominations form.

Committee & Chapter News

Updates from Colorado CLD

New this fall: The Colorado Council for Learning Disabilities (CCLD) board will host mini webinars to discuss short articles or videos about current topics in education. Also new are the CCLD socials. This is a unique opportunity designed to bring educators new to the field together in an informal setting to network, discuss current topics that impact teachers, and share resources.

Additionally, **Dr. Barbara Dougherty** will be the guest speaker for **Math on the "Planes" 2018**. Participants in this two-day workshop will consider instructional strategies, content interventions, and assessments for learning algebraic and geometric concepts and skills. Check out the brochure for this professional development opportunity presented by CCLD here: <https://goo.gl/U68bfV>.

Maryland CLD

MCLD Joins Maryland Council for Exceptional Children to Co-Sponsor 2017 Winter Conference

The Maryland CLD Chapter and Maryland CEC joined forces to plan and sponsor a professional development conference on Saturday, February 25, 2017, held at Loyola University Graduate Center in Columbia, MD. The conference title was "Unlocking the Dimensions of Special Education."

Mr. Matt Barinholtz, Educator, Artist, and Founder of Future Makers, delivered the keynote entitled, "Everyone's a Maker: Project Based Learning for Exceptional Learners." Following the keynote address, participants had the opportunity to choose from four presentations in each of three

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rounds of breakout sessions. Additionally, current and future special and general educators of students with disabilities at the Pre-K, Elementary, and Secondary levels presented poster sessions and interactive papers throughout the day. Conference participants reported a highly worthwhile day of professional learning and networking. The co-sponsorship was made possible because of a generous CLD Chapter Grant.

Debi Gartland, MCLD President

MCLD Holds New Teacher Workshop and Recruitment Event

On May 16, 2017, MCLD held a professional learning workshop and recruitment event for new teachers. The workshop was entitled, “Executive Function Skill Training for ALL Students.” **Roberta Strosnider** and **Valerie Sharpe** presented to 37 educators, and each attendee left with a wealth of information and materials to use with students with learning disabilities. **MCLD President Debi Gartland** discussed the benefits of CLD and MCLD membership and distributed brochures as well as information on the October 2017 CLD Conference in Baltimore and how to assist with the local arrangements for the Conference. The workshop and recruitment event was made possible because of a generous CLD Chapter Grant.

Debi Gartland, MCLD President

Updates from Texas CLD

New for the 2017–2018 academic year, Texas CLD is represented by **Kristi L. Santi, Ph.D.** – President; **Mariya Davis, Ph.D.** – Vice President; **Jennifer Farmer** – Secretary; and **Lesli Raymond** – Treasurer; **Beth Jones, Ph.D.** – Past-President

Last year Texas CLD worked on various ways to incorporate social media into the chapter to enhance communication between members. We redesigned the website to incorporate links to research and practice as well as highlight the Research to Practice documents on the parent CLD website. This year, we will continue to develop our social media outlets, highlight our member’s accomplishments, and promote the Council for Learning Disabilities.

Website: <http://texasclدstrikingly.com/>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/texasclدchapter/>

Twitter: https://twitter.com/texas_clد

Updates from Virginia CCLD

The Virginia chapter of the Council for Learning Disabilities (VCLD) had a successful symposium on April 1, 2017

at James Madison University’s Festival Conference and Student Center. **Chad Triolet** of Chesapeake Public Schools provided the keynote address titled “Super-Classrooms, Don’t Forget your C.A.P.E.S. (Creative Activities that Promote Engaged Students).” He is currently the Assistant Principal at Sparrow Road Intermediate, a Title 1 school in Chesapeake, VA. Prior to becoming an Assistant Principal, Chad was an elementary physical education teacher for 18 years. In 2009, he was recognized as the Elementary Teacher of the Year for Virginia and he is the author of *K-5 Health & Nutrition Games & Activities* (2013). In addition to the keynote presentation, there were 15 breakout sessions and 8 poster presentations on various topics during the afternoon. VCLD recognized **Mrs. Jeaneen Dofflemyer** as VCLD’s Outstanding Teacher of the Year award and **Ms. Melody Moody** for the VCLD’s new Early Career Award Outstanding Teacher of the Year award.

VCLD also welcomes a new Executive Board for the 2017–2018 academic year. **Brenda Tyler** will serve as president, **Clara Hauth** as president-elect, **Mindy Gumpert** as vice-president, **Dani Allen-Bronaugh** as past-president, **Carol Cox** as treasurer, and **Judith Fontana** and **Nancy Schwab** will serve as secretary. Anyone interested in serving on VCLD committees or in leadership roles are welcome to contact Brenda (bjtyler@radford.edu).

VCLD is accepting nominations for CLD Outstanding Teacher of the Year Award – Virginia Chapter and Early Career Special Educator Award. Nominations are due by **February 1, 2018**. For further information, please email **Dani Allen-Bronaugh**, past-president (bronauda@jmu.edu).

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39th Annual International CLD 2017 Conference

**Baltimore, Maryland
October 19–20, 2017**

<http://www.council-for-learning-disabilities.org/2017-annual-conference>

Have you registered yet? Join the CLD leadership team, and members for a fantastic learning experience at the 2017 International CLD Conference in Baltimore, Maryland, **October 19–20, 2017**. The conference will be held at the Lord Baltimore Hotel, centrally located in downtown Baltimore near the Inner Harbor, and the National Aquarium.

2017 Floyd G. Hudson Service Award Recipient

We are excited to announce that **Philippe Ernewein**, is the 2017 Floyd G. Hudson Service Award recipient. Philippe's career opened him to thinking beyond a singular definition of intelligence and prepared him for a life-long work of advocacy, teaching, and learning. His advocacy work in creating inclusive learning environments extends from public schools to the community.

Local Arrangements Committee

The LAC is diligently working on identifying sponsorships, coordinating volunteers, and finding activities in Baltimore for conference attendees. Please contact Trisha Strickland (Strickland@hood.edu) if you are interested in helping the 2017 LAC Committee.

Connect to CLD with Social Media

For updates about the conference and fantastic places to visit while in Baltimore visit CLD.

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Council-for-Learning-Disabilities-International-196204000418174>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/CLDIntl>

Sponsor the 2017 Conference

The conference committee is now accepting sponsorships for the 2017 CLD Conference in Baltimore, Maryland. Sponsorship is very important to the CLD Conference success. For more information please contact Donna Sacco (donnamsacco@gmail.com) or Rajiv Satsangi (rsatsang@gmu.edu).

CLD NEWS & NOTES ...

- The 39th Annual Conference on Learning Disabilities will be here in October! Visit <https://goo.gl/DbGKPw> for information and updates on the conference! We look forward to seeing you there!
- Share your thoughts on what it means to be a professional on our Facebook page! Visit <https://goo.gl/cxv83r> to engage in the conversation!
- *LD Forum* is currently seeking manuscript submissions, including submissions for two new columns – “Point/Counterpoint” and “Issues and Trends in Learning Disabilities”. For manuscript submission guidelines, visit

<http://goo.gl/PcgWUI>. We are also seeking individuals to serve on our review board. Contact Joseph Morgan, Editor of *LD Forum*, at ldforum@unlv.nevada.edu for more information.

- Check out the latest issues of *Learning Disability Quarterly* and *Intervention in School and Clinic*! Also, consider submitting your work for publication in our flagship journals!
- Not currently a member of CLD? Join us at cldinternational.org!

2017-2018 CLD Board of Trustees

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