

Designed for Improvement

--A Program Level Assessment Process--

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Learning Outcomes

- Understand the importance of an assessment process that leads toward improvement
- Plan an outline for an assessment design (as presented)
- Explain the process for using the results for improvement

60/60 - Pair and Share

- Pair up, and share with your partner the following:
 - Name, Institution, Position
 - How does your institution conduct program learning outcomes assessment?
 - Processes?
 - Policies?
 - Procedures?



Assessment and Evaluation

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Liberty University

- Liberty University is the largest private, nonprofit four-year college in the country, the nation's seventh largest university, and the largest college in Virginia.
- Enrollment: Exceeds 100,000 students with nearly 13,000 resident students and more than 90,000 online students

Liberty (continued)

- INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITATION: Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC)
- TOP UNDERGRADUATE MAJORS: Business, Psychology, Religion, and Education
- 315 unique programs (some both resident and online)
 - 206 RESIDENTIAL PROGRAMS OF STUDY:
 - 151 undergraduate, 54 graduate, 1 post master's
 - 166 ONLINE PROGRAMS OF STUDY:
 - 57 undergraduate, 100 graduate, 3 post master's, 6 doctorate

Assessment Scope and Process

- Program learning outcomes and syllabi are assessed on a three-year cycle
- Program curriculum is reviewed on a five-year cycle.
- In addition to the course-embedded assessments, used primarily for student learning outcomes, the departments participate in an *Annual Assessment Day* each spring



Measuring Student Learning

ASSESSMENT CYCLE

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Process -- Design

Department

- Completes PLO Design in Planning and Submits to IE.

IE Facilitator

- Reviews the design with integrated feedback tool and submits to Dean
- Other facilitators review comments as well.

Dean

- Reviews PLO design with IE Facilitator's comments and adds additional instructive comments or questions

Process -- Conduct

**-Conduct the
Assessment-**

Process - Report

Chair/Assessment Coordinator

- Updates assessment design and includes findings and action plan (if necessary) and submits to IE Facilitator

IE Facilitator

- Reviews the design with integrated feedback tool and submits to Dean
- Other facilitators review comments as well.

Dean

- Receives final copy of the entire PLO assessment.

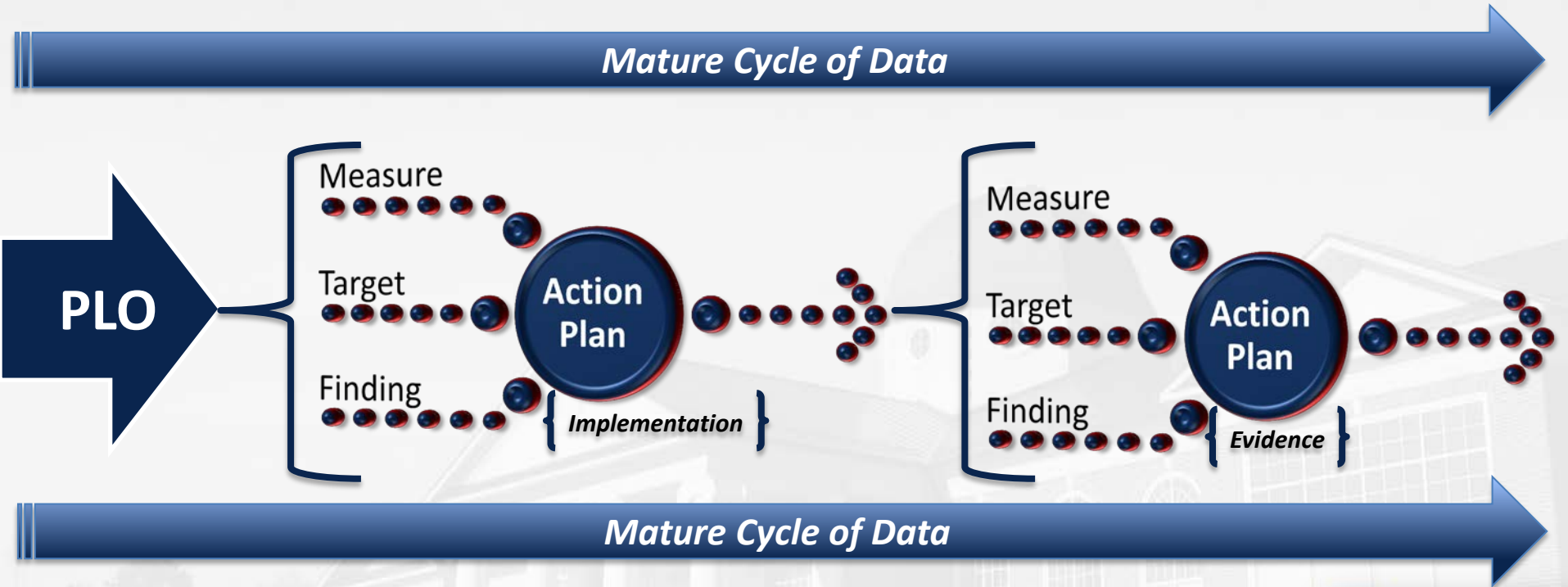


Measuring Student Learning

IMPROVEMENT CYCLE

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The Logic of Assessment



Program Learning Outcome

- The knowledge, skills, attitudes, and habits of mind that students gain from a learning experience
- Assessment focuses on the specific skill(s) mentioned in the PLO wording.

Measure

- At Liberty, the measure consists of several parts: a research question, sample, instrument, method, and rubric/scoring key.
- Faculty are encouraged to design assessments which look at a specific sub-skill of the larger skill in the PLO.

Target

An achievement target...

- is the assessment's criterion for success
- will identify how the data will be analyzed in the instrument
- should focus on the individual student as opposed to an average of the sample
- should reflect the research question

Finding

- Once the assessment is conducted, findings are reported in our assessment management system.
- When findings are reported, there are checkboxes indicating “met,” “partially met,” or “not met.”

Where Does Improvement Fit in?

- For targets that are “not met” or “partially met,” an action plan is created to remedy the identified deficiency.
- If the rubric/scoring key was designed well, it should be relatively easy to identify which sub-skill the students are deficient in.

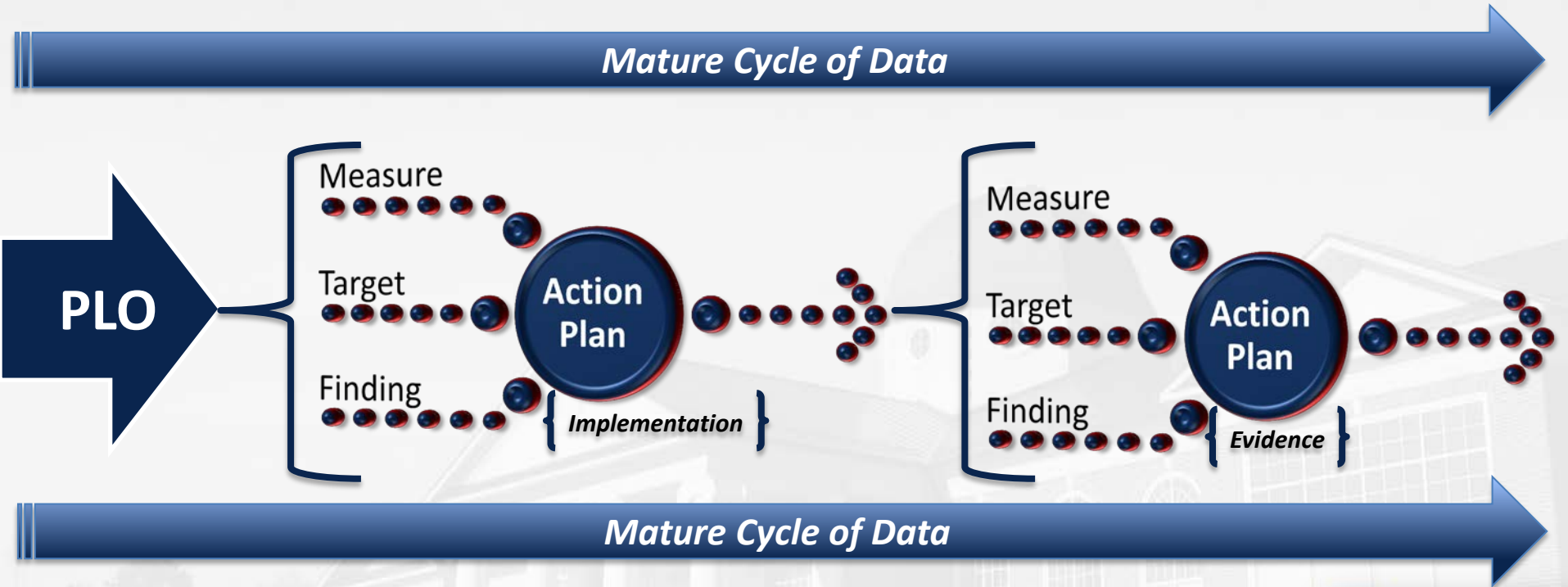
What are you doing with it...?

“Assessment and decision making should go hand in hand...In essence, assessment and improvement are often separated by a single important point: assessment focuses on the *what*, improvement on the *what-you-do-with-it*. Linking the two may very well be the most crucial aspect of successful assessment practice.”

Action Plan (Closing the Loop)

- Each action plan is given a due date as to the time expectation for the improvement to be carried out.
- We try to encourage curriculum improvement decisions instead of an action plan which adjusts the assessment when a target is not met.

The Logic of Assessment



Improvement Template

- At Liberty, a standard Program Learning Outcome improvement template is utilized for all assessment designs.
- By using a template, it is easier for faculty to ensure they have thought through all aspects of the design.

Improvement Template



Program Learning Outcome Improvement Design

School: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Program: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Please have a plan filled out and returned for each outcome to be assessed by _____.
(One per program as defined in Planning)

PROGRAM LEARNING OUTCOME TO BE ASSESSED (print full outcome as it would show in Planning)

[Click here to enter text.](#)

ASSESSMENT MEASURE TO BE USED

Title of Measure

Use title that is in Planning

[Click here to enter text.](#)

Timeline of Original Assessment

Please indicate the semester and year of the original assessment (within the last 3 years) from which the PLO Improvement plan will be carried out. Use semester/year format (i.e. Spring 2013).

[Click here to enter text.](#)

TARGET

A target is the department's criterion for success. What finding would statistically indicate an adequate level of usage, satisfaction, or process? Will benchmarking be involved? Please indicate the original target set (if this was a past assessment), or the target that has been set for a future assessment (i.e. if it will be conducted later this Spring). Please keep in mind that even if this is a future assessment and your target is met, you will still need to identify a deficiency and improvement plan from the findings.

[Click here to enter text.](#)

FINDING

What were the findings of the assessment (leave this blank if the findings have not been reported yet)?

Target Met? Yes No

[Click here to enter text.](#)

ACTION PLAN

Once findings have been reported, an action plan for improvement should be implemented. Please describe the initial action plan for improvement here (should be a curriculum improvement versus an assessment revision).

[Click here to enter text.](#)

NEW TARGET

A target is the criterion for success. What finding would statistically indicate an improved level of student learning or skill acquisition? This could be expressed as a percentage of increase from the first target (e.g. usage level 10% higher than the first finding) Please note that the same measure should be repeated for the assessment.

[Click here to enter text.](#)

NEW FINDING

Once the repeated measure has been conducted, findings should be reported showing the results.

Evidence of Improvement

- Once the action plan is completed, the same assessment is carried out with a similar sample of students.
- If improvement is demonstrated in an area which was previously deficient, this would be considered evidence of improvement.
- Our assessment management system has a text box in which the evidence of improvement can be thoroughly explained.

Evidence of Improvement

Evidence of Improvement

Research Essays from SPAN 421 were evaluated using the Spanish Written Communication Rubric, which contains the following categories: Content, Structure, Grammar, and Vocabulary. Students were given a score from 1 to 4 on each of these categories (1 – Inadequate competence, 2- Developing competence, 3-Adequate Competence, and 4- Clear and Consistent Competence). The target set was 3-Adequate Competence. The average scores for each of the categories were as follows: Content 2.81, Structure 3.12, Grammar 2.73, and Vocabulary 3.04.

The modern language committee reviewed the amount of written practice students have in all Spanish courses and recommend changes and created a strategy to address the students' ability to organize their thoughts appropriate to the context of the assignment. The committee also reviewed grammar instruction and implemented a strategy which encourages greater grammar retention. To some extent these steps were already taken during recent NCATE and SACS reviews.

For reassessment purposes written assignments from SPAN 301 (Fall 2010) and SPAN 321 (Spring 2011) were scored using the Spanish Written Communication Rubric developed by the Modern Language faculty. The achievement target was not met in the fall (average of 2.64) but was met in the spring (average of 3.15). Additionally the Spring 2011 scores demonstrated improvement over the scores from the academic year 2010-2011.



PLO Assessment - Classroom Implementation

CASE STUDY – SCHOOL OF RELIGION

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PLO Design

- Background:
 - The program learning outcome being assessed is used for both a residential and online degree program.
 - We used two different research questions since one of the courses being used was not offered online.
 - Both assessments used course-embedded assignments.

PLO Design

- Program Learning Outcome: “The student will be able to demonstrate competence in the use of sound principles of biblical interpretation.”
 - Research Question - online course: “Is the student able to *explain* what an Old Testament text meant to the original audience, *discover* its theological principle, and *apply* its application to today’s audience?”
 - Research Question – residential course: “Is the student able to integrate the literary genre(s) of an Old Testament passage into its interpretation?”

Level / Category	Beginner (1)	Developing (2)	Competent (3)	Advanced (4)
Identify and describe the primary genre and associated sub-genre of Isaiah 6:1-13	Only identifies the primary genre of Isaiah 6:1-13.	Identifies and describes the primary genre of Isaiah 6:1-13.	Identifies and describes the primary genre of Isaiah 6:1-13 but only identifies associated sub-genre within the passage.	Identifies and describes the primary genre of Isaiah 6:1-13 and also identifies and describes associated sub-genre within the passage.
Apply the genre specific principles to the interpretation of Isaiah 6:1-13.	Student does not apply any identifiable genre specific principles to the interpretation of Isaiah 6:1-13.	Student attempts to apply genre specific principles related only to the primary genre of the passage to the interpretation of Isaiah 6:1-13.	Student correctly applies genre specific principles related to the primary genre and attempts to apply additional principles related to the associated sub-genre to the interpretation of Isaiah 6:1-13.	Student correctly applies genre specific principles related to the primary genre and correctly applies additional principles related to the associated sub-genre to the interpretation of Isaiah 6:1-13.



Rubric 1 – Residential Course

Rubric 2: Online Course

Level / Category	Beginner (1)	Developing (2)	Competent (3)	Advanced (4)
Explain text	The student explains what the text means to today's audience but not what it meant to the original biblical audience	The student explains what the text means to the biblical audience but does not explain any differences between the biblical audience and today's audience	The student explains what the text means to the biblical audience and highlights differences between the biblical audience and today's audience.	The student explains what the text means to the biblical audience and highlights both differences and similarities between the biblical audience and today's audience.
Discover principle.	The student does not find the principle	The student explains a principle that cannot be gleaned from this text.	The student accurately explains an expected theological principle in the text.	The student accurately explains an expected theological principle as well as an additional correlative principle.
Apply principle.	The student does not offer any application of the principle	The student offers application of the principle without connecting it in a concrete way.	The student offers an application that connects to the theological principle in a concrete way.	The student offers several applications that connect to the theological principle in a concrete way.




Results

- Residential Course: Target partially met

BIBL 480 PLO Design - Biblical Interpretation			
PLO	The student will be able to demonstrate competence in the use of sound principles of biblical interpretation.		
RQ	Is the student able to integrate the literary genre(s) of an Old Testament passage into its interpretation?		
		<i>Identify and describe the primary genre and associated sub-genre of Isaiah 6:1-13</i>	<i>Apply the genre specific principles to the interpretation of Isaiah 6:1-13.</i>
	Average Score	3.4	3.0
	% 3.0 or greater	87% 	67% 

Results

- Online Course: Target partially met

Bible 350 – Lesson Questions Assignment					
PLO	The student will be able to demonstrate competence in the use of sound principles of biblical interpretation.				
RQ	Is the student able to explain what an Old Testament text meant to the original audience, discover its theological principle, and apply its application to today's audience?				
		<i>Explain text</i>	<i>Discover principle</i>	<i>Apply Principle</i>	
	Average Score	3.1	3.0	2.6	
	% 3.0 or greater	 87%	 83%	 43%	

Bible 350 – Lesson Questions Assignment

PLO The student will be able to demonstrate competence in the use of sound principles of biblical interpretation.

RQ Is the student able to explain what an Old Testament text meant to the original audience, discover its theological principle, and apply its application to today's audience?

	<i>Explain text</i>	<i>Discover principle</i>	<i>Apply Principle</i>
Average Score	3.1	3.0	2.6
% 3.0 or greater	87%	83%	43%

Results Analysis

Both residential and online assessment data revealed a similar area of needed improvement. (application)

BIBL 480 PLO Design - Biblical Interpretation

PLO The student will be able to demonstrate competence in the use of sound principles of biblical interpretation.



RQ Is the student able to integrate the literary genre(s) of an Old Testament passage into its interpretation?

	<i>Identify and describe the primary genre and associated sub-genre of Isaiah 6:1-13</i>	<i>Apply the genre specific principles to the interpretation of Isaiah 6:1-13.</i>
Average Score	3.4	3.0
% 3.0 or greater	87%	67%

Improvement

- Application was the target area for improvement since both courses demonstrated similar need.
 1. Discuss the results with the professors.
 2. Provide greater emphasis with class material.
 3. Provide more instruction with the assignment.
 4. Re-assess with the same design.

Round 2 Results

BIBL 480 PLO Design - Biblical Interpretation			
PLO	The student will be able to demonstrate competence in the use of sound principles of biblical interpretation.		
RQ	Is the student able to integrate the literary genre(s) of an Old Testament passage into its interpretation?		
	<i>Identify and describe the primary genre and associated sub-genre of Isaiah 6:1-</i>	<i>Apply the genre specific principles to the interpretation of Isaiah 6:1-13.</i>	
Average Score	3.3	3.0	
% 3.0 or greater	 83%	 80%	

- Residential Course: Met

Results




Bible 350 – Lesson Questions Assignment

PLO

The student will be able to demonstrate competence in the use of sound principles of biblical interpretation.

RQ

Is the student able to explain what an Old Testament text meant to the original audience, discover its theological principle, and apply its application to today's audience?

	<i>Explain text</i>	<i>Discover principle</i>	<i>Apply Principle</i>
Average Score	2.8	2.6	2.6
% 3.0 or greater	 53%	 47%	 47%

- Online Course: unmet

Results Analysis

- Residential Course: target was met
- Online Course: Not only was the target not met, students in Round 2 actually did worse.
 1. Assessment can be unpredictable, so never let the results of one round put you into panic mode.
 2. This online course was just completely redeveloped as part of these assessment findings.
 3. A third round will be employed after the redevelopment is complete.



Classroom Assessment/Improvement v. Program Assessment/Improvement

SIDEBAR - CLASS OR PROGRAM

Classroom Assessment and Improvement

- The teacher of the senior capstone course evaluates her student's final projects, assigns grades, and uses the information for her own improvement next semester.

Program Assessment and Improvement

- The faculty teaching the senior capstone report annually to the department, outlining the strengths and weaknesses of the students' work in relation to the departmental learning goals.
- The department uses these and other data, such as student and alumni data, to inform decisions about curriculum, pedagogy, and other factors that affect student learning.



PLO Assessment - Classroom Implementation

CASE STUDY – ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

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Example – English Bachelor's

Example: PLO – The student will be able to research and write in the style appropriate to the field of English.

AY 12/13 – Measure – Writing Style – MLA (ENGL 433 – Literary Criticism in Fall 2012).

AY 12/13 - Target – 70% of ENGL BA students taking this course will achieve an average of 3.0 out of 4.0 or higher in the MLA column of the rubric (four columns total). There were two aspects of MLA looked for, proper citation and proper documentation.

AY 12/13 - Findings – Partially met – 26% scored a 3.0 or better after the two scorers' scores were averaged.

AY 12/13 - Action Plan – Implementation Details

- Ask faculty to emphasize MLA formatting in their upper-level courses.
- Action Plan rationale - Students should have had competent MLA skills as a result of the program emphasis before entering ENGL 433.

Example – English B.A. - continued

Same PLO – The student will be able to research and write in the style appropriate to the field of English.

AY 13/14 – Exact same Measure – Writing Style MLA.

AY 13/14 – Exact same Target – 70% of students will achieve an average of 3.0 out of 4.0 or higher in the MLA column of the rubric. The two aspects (citation and documentation) were also analyzed separately but the target was the same, i.e., the two aspects together.

AY 13/14 - Findings – 86% of student achieved the target.

AY 13/14 - Action Plan – Evidence of Improvement – The same rubric was used to score the papers. Only 1 paper fell below a 3 in either category.





THANK YOU!

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References

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