



THE UNIVERSITY  
of ADELAIDE



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# Positive Student / Teacher Relationships

in the foreign language classroom

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*seek* LIGHT



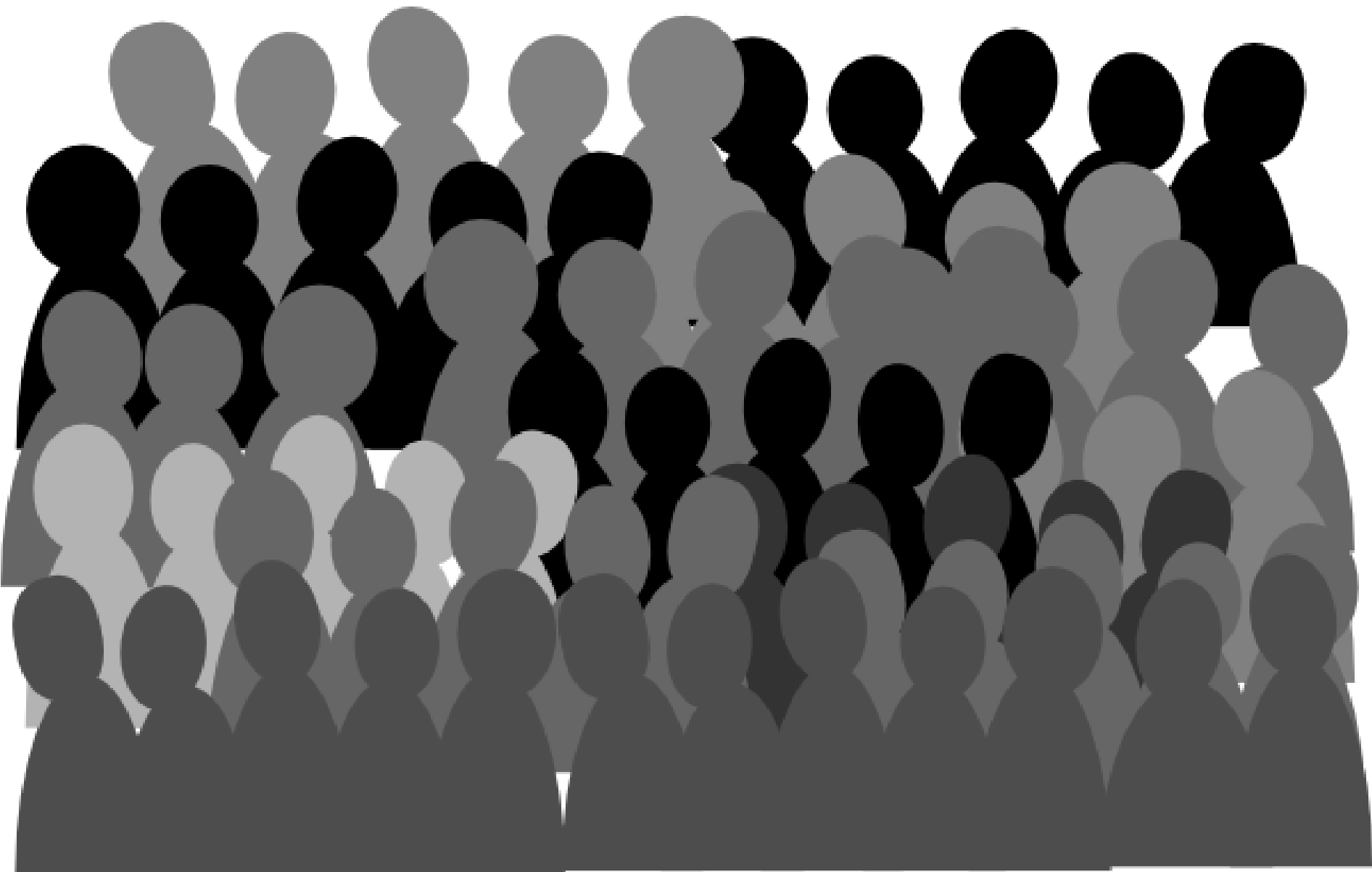
# Outline

- Personal introduction
- Purpose
- Personal experience
- Definition
- Research
- Strategies
- Outcomes
- Limitations



Class picnic with PEP 3 Students Semester 2, 2015



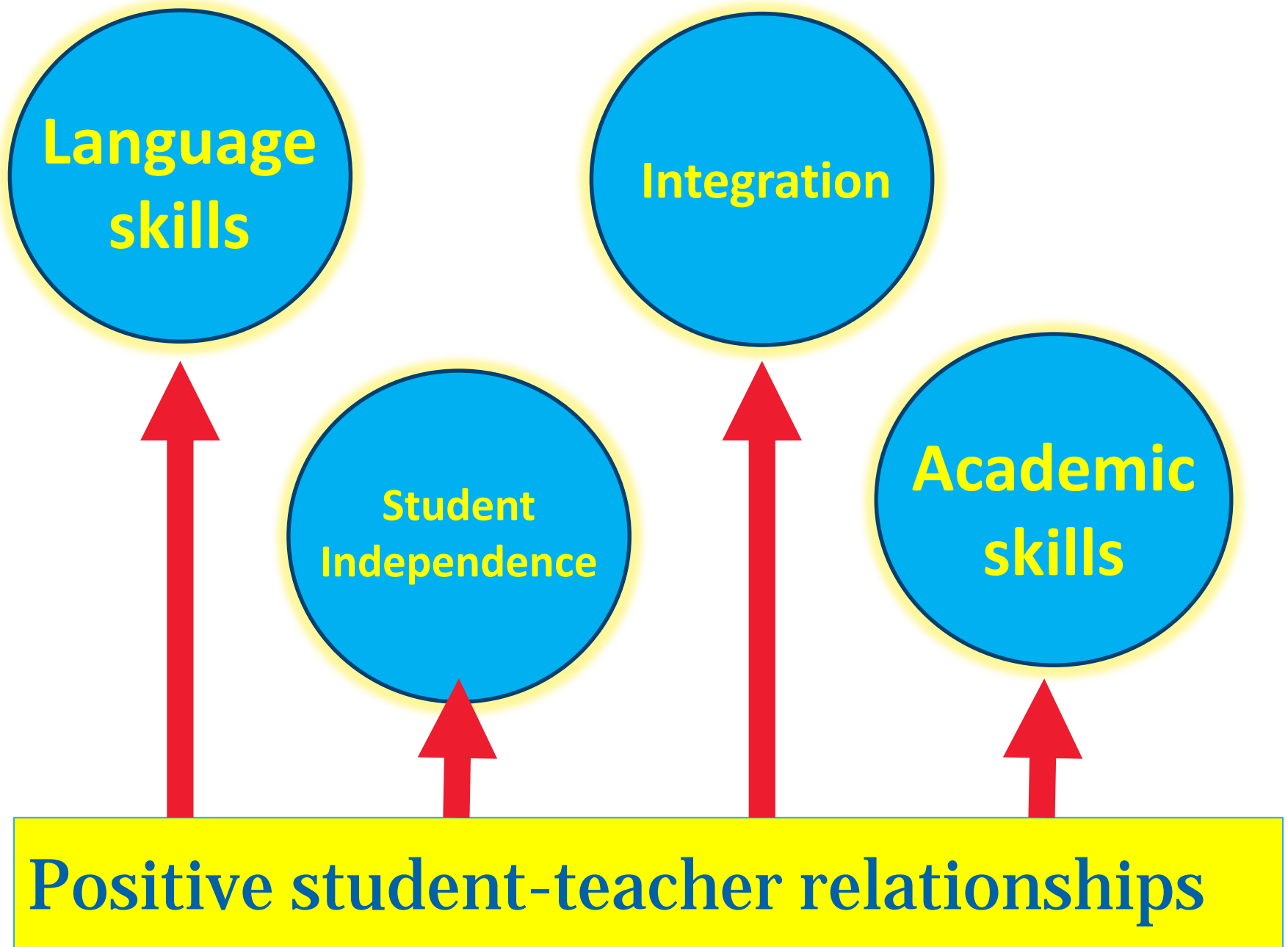


# Purpose

- Creating a positive class atmosphere and positive teacher student-relationships is:
  - valuable (academically)
  - worthwhile (professionally)
  - enjoyable (personally)
  - easy (trust me!)

# Common Classroom Priorities

1. Improve concrete language skills
2. Improve academic skills
3. Improve student independence
4. Help students integrate into life in Australia
5. Build positive and meaningful relationships with the students



# Definition (Wehlage, Rutter, Smith, Lesko & Fernandez (1989) cited in Jones & Jones 2004)

“Positive teacher culture” involves:

- Practicing an extended teacher role
- Persistence with students
- Conveying a sense of optimism that all students can learn

It is characterized by:

- Low incidences of conflict
- A high degree of closeness and support
- Student independence



## Definition (Slee 2012)

**A relationship in which both the student and the teacher strive to support, respect and uphold their duties and responsibilities within the relationship in a positive and caring manner**





# Research

- **strongly correlated with academic success, resilience and social competence** (Battistich, Schaps, & Wilson, 2004; Birch & Ladd, 1997; Curby, Rimm-Kaufman, & Ponitz, 2009; Ewing & Taylor, 2009; Jones & Jones 2004; Pianta & Hamre, 2001; Rudasill, Reio, Stipanovic, & Taylor, 2010)
- **result in more motivated and focused students** (Eggens & Kauchak 2004)
- **help vulnerable students to integrate and succeed** (Slee 2012)
- **reduce chances of classroom conflict** (Brendtro & Long cited in Jones & Jones 2004)
- **make teaching more enjoyable and rewarding for the teacher** (Pianta & Hamre 2001; Slee 2012; Jones & Jones 2004; Lyons et al 2001)

# Research : Academic Success

The instructional style which elicits a high level of performance... is to create an extremely warm personal relationship and to actively demand a level of academic work... Students thus interpret the teacher's demandingness not as bossiness or hostility, but rather as another expression of ... personal concern, and meeting the teacher's academic standards becomes their reciprocal obligation in an intensely personal relationship (Kleinfeld 1972, p. 34)



Students of PEP 2, University of Adelaide 2016 Semester 1



# Research : Motivation

- Researches have reported “lower intrinsic motivation in students who experiences their teachers as cold and uncaring” (Ryan & Deci 2000, p. 71)
- Students are more engaged in classroom activities when they perceive their teachers as liking them and being responsive to their needs (Osterman 2000)



PEP 3 student group work, Semester 2 2015

# Research: Rewarding for teachers (Pianta & Hamre 2001)

- Increase engagement with the content
- Lower stress
- Lessen chances of “teacher burn-out”

“When I taught in a public high school for three years I always ate lunch with a different group of students whether they were in my class or not, until I got to know most of them. The teachers thought I was idiotic, but they didn’t realise that **it actually made it easier for me to teach.**” –

Marva Collins (1992), Founder of Westside Preparatory School in Chicago (cited in Jones & Jones 2004)

# Can you be effective without being positive?

Yes – so long as nothing goes wrong

However, positive culture can:

- stop things from going wrong (classroom conflict – between students, or between students and teachers)
- support vulnerable students
- improve basic functioning of the classroom (punctuality, use of native languages, group work, stress levels, health)
- generally make life more enjoyable

## How is it perceived?

**Students determine a teacher's level of caring by the way a teacher “moves, stands, gestures, uses eye contact vocal inflection and self-discloses”** (Ramsey, 1979, p. 110)



# How do you do this in your classrooms?

# Strategies

- Start from a place of empathy
- Be an authentic version of yourself
- Learn their names quickly
- Give them time and space to express themselves
- Create a group atmosphere
- Be respectful and demanding



PEP 2 Class Outing Semester 1 2016

# Start from a place of empathy

- All of our students are vulnerable in one way or another
- Remember what it feels like to be bad at something, and to struggle to express yourself
- For each of our students this is a life-changing event, and a step towards a vastly different and challenging future
- They are all doing something they are bad at and being very brave about it



PEP 3 Students play football with local kids

Dear Kevin,

Now, you just join in the PEP course to study English with other international students, and it is your first time to live alone in a foreign country. You maybe **feel nervous and anxiety** now, because you do not know what will happen in the future, such as, whether you will be able to adapt the foreign living and follow the progress of learning in the PEP course. Actually, **these worries are not necessary, you just need focus on study**. In the next 20 weeks, **you will make a lot of friends, and encourage and help each other, which will make you feel less lonely and helplessness**. Moreover, the teachers will also give you great help for your study, which can improve your English skills sharply.

PEP 2 Student “Reflective Blog” entry: Write a letter to yourself at the start of the course  
Semester 1 2016



# Be an authentic version of yourself

Authenticity in teaching as an intriguing but also complex and multidimensional phenomenon. Authenticity in teaching involves features such as **being genuine**; becoming **more self-aware**; being **defined by one's self** rather than by others' expectations; **bringing parts of oneself into interactions with students**; and critically reflecting on self, others, relationships and context, and so forth....Authenticity is not just something that exclusively rests within myself...**for authenticity to be meaningful it needs to be sought in relation to issues that matter crucially** (Kreber et al 2007 pp. 40-41)

# Authenticity

- Involves self-awareness
- Can be a frustrating and ongoing process
- Identify personality traits, motivating forces, dominant qualities with tests
- Does not mean inviting students into every part of your life - authenticity is about being **comfortably yourself** in the classroom (Jones & Jones 2004)



Photo sent to students to thank them for making some food for me to celebrate their cultural festival, 2016

# Learn their names quickly

- Use name tags or a memory trick
- Take class photos and label them
- Keep a “class profile” of students’ interests and career paths
- Make sure they know each others’ names too — building relationships with each other are just as important
- Use a photo with personal notes



PEP 3 Students, Semester 2 2015

Give them time and space to express themselves

For a person “to live freely and acculturate to a new social environment, then the deeper part must surface... We must help (them) remove his or her mask through warmth, reverence, understanding and listening closely.”

- Cristina Igoa (1995) *(The Inner World of the Immigrant Child* cited in Jones & Jones 2004)

PEP 3 Introducing Ourself

https://myuni.adelaide.edu.au/webapps/Bb-wiki-bb\_bb60/wikiView?course\_id=\_337806\_1&wiki\_id=\_58444\_1&page\_guid=6718191b9c7842e6a3f254b7e8f8dbe1

PEP Groups

- Announcements
- Assignments
- Lectures
- Student Information
- ELC Contact Details
- Study Skills Links
- Extra-curricular
- PEP Teachers
- ELC Social Club
- Wiki
- Journals

My Groups

- Instructors
- PEP 03
  - File Exchange
  - Group Discussion Board
  - Send Email
  - Group Homepage
  - Customise Group Banner
  - Customise Group Colour

COURSE MANAGEMENT

Control Panel

inuit sts.JPG

inuit students.jpg

Show all

PEP 3 INTRODUCING OURSELVES


- PEP 3 Introducing Ourselves
- Anwar Alqaimi
- Helen
- Ho Ting Lee(Jason)
- Ian
- Introduce myself - Sariya
- JingHan Zhang
- JingHan Zhang(Han)
- kiki
- Martin/Dahai Hu
- Misa
- Moutain(Shan Huang)
- Ruidong Yan(Riddle)
- shiqi liu (Rachel)
- Summer(shuyi yu)
- Wang Yi Chao
- Yining(Anna)
- Zeyu Yang

**Ho Ting Lee(Jason)**

Created By Ho Ting Lee on Wednesday, 28 September 2016 13:02:20 o'clock ACST

Last Modified by Ho Ting Lee on Friday, 30 September 2016 02:26:28 o'clock ACST

Edit Wiki Content



Hello everyone! My name is Jason, I'm come from Hong Kong. I'm 20 years old, it might a little bit young in the PEP 3 class, but I will try to adapt to the class as soon as possible :) I have a normal family, my dad and my mum are live in Hong Kong and I also have a younger brother who is 17 years old. He will be a adult very soon and I'm very happy to witness his growth.

Let's talk about my hobby, I like sport, I play different kind of sport, such as basketball, soccer, swimming, badminton, gym, bicycle. I like to try new things, I feel exciting when I try something I never done before, It is good for me to recall those memories after a couple of years. Also, I like computer games, it is so much fun on the games but I won't addict on it and I usually play after I finish my study:)

I am happy to be a member in PEP 3 and actually I'm very shy, I don't talk to much, but I'm very happy that people talk to me:)

Screenshot from PEP 3 MyUni forum Wiki Folder “Introducing Ourselves”, Semester 2 2016



# Create Team Spirit

- Use inclusive language (“we” and “our” in relation to activities and assignments)
- Never forget a birthday
- Make time to do things together outside of the classroom
- Eat together









# Show them samples of previous class “team spirit”

- Sets the tone for the class
- Comforts the students
- Establishes expectations about the experience they are going to have

## --- IDEAS ---

- Blogs
- Films
- Letters to each other
- “Advice” for next class



PEP 3 students and friends, Lizandra and Johana, Semester 2 2015

# Be respectful and demanding

One of the best ways to show respect for students is to hold them up to high standards – by not accepting sloppy, thoughtless, or incomplete work, by pressing them to clarify vague comments, by encouraging them not to give up, and by not praising work that does not reflect genuine effort.

**Ironically, reactions that are often intended to protect students' self-esteem – such as accepting low quality work – convey a lack of interest, patience or caring.** (Stipek, 2002, p., 157)

# Limitations

**We must be careful, however, not to confuse the importance of establishing positive teacher-student relationships with the belief that all classroom problems can be solved by love and understanding** (Jones and Jones 2004 p. 82)



# Limitations

Positive relationships must underpin good teaching practices, such as

- Organisation
- Clear behavioural and academic boundaries
- Effective communication
- Appropriate and engaging tasks

(Jones and Jones 2004 p. 82)

# Outcomes

- Happier students = lower rates of drop-out, anxiety, conflict and health problems (McCann et al 2008)
- Better academic outcomes
- More confidence in their future success in Australia
- More enjoyable lessons for teachers and students
- Happier teachers : )



PEP 3 student picnic, Semester 2 2015

# Questions?

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