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# Kara Rasmusson Iowa State University Creative Component

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# Iowa State University Creative Component

Kara Rasmusson

## Standard 1: Foundational Knowledge

1.1: Understand major theories and empirical research that describe the cognitive, linguistic, motivational, and sociocultural foundations of reading and writing development, processes, and components, including word recognition, language comprehension, strategic knowledge, and reading–writing connections.

**Artifact:** Three reflective papers from C I 533: Educational Psychology of Learning, Cognition, and Memory

- [Reflective Paper #1 Behaviorism](#)
- [Reflective Paper #2 Cognitive Constructionist](#)
- [Reflective Paper #3 Social Constructivist](#)

The selected artifacts were written for Curriculum and Instruction 533: Educational Psychology of Learning, Cognition, and Memory, with the goal of reflecting on major theories presented through readings and lecture and connecting those ideas to current practices. Each artifact answers the question: "What is learning?" by considering different philosophical perspectives. The behaviorism, social constructivist, and cognitive constructionist perspectives detail a one-track view of learning. Each influential theorist interpreted learning based on their respective perspectives. For example, behaviorism describes learning as changes in behaviors based on stimuli and a response to stimuli. A social constructivist theorist would describe learning as knowledge constructed based on individual experiences. A cognitive constructionist

view would believe learning occurs through the internal processing of information. Each of these ideas of defining 'learning' differ greatly from one another.

Historically these perspectives have competed to be the ideal philosophy of education. However, through reflecting upon the individual theories, I am able to see how each is important to the process of learning. While different, they are equally important. The artifacts detail how each perspective can be utilized in a functional classroom setting dependent upon the students, teachers, or task at hand. Learning in-depth about each perspective individually helps me remember that there is no singular method of learning. This is a valuable reminder in my chosen profession of education.

I will provide an example of a situation that recently occurred in my own early childhood classroom of students aged four and five years old. This example will describe how each philosophical perspective can be observed in one event; behaviorism, social constructivist, and cognitive constructionist ideas.

Recently, during lunch at school, students were all sitting in their chairs at the table, eating. One student began leaning back on the hind chair legs. I mentioned that he needed to put "All four on the floor." He fixed his chair and I gave him a high five for being safe! Not long after that, the student leaned back in his chair again and it tipped to the floor causing him to hit his head. Ouch! These events describe what behaviorist B.F. Skinner would call reinforcement and punishment. The high-five and positive language were aimed at reinforcing the positive behavior, while the fall and head hitting the floor would be described as a natural consequence and in a way a punishment for not following the instruction to keep "All four on the floor."

A social constructivist would describe this event as a successful learning event for the student. The knowledge of what would happen when all four of the legs did not remain on the floor could only be constructed by going through the experience of falling. It was not enough for me as the teacher to tell him, or that it is a rule in the classroom. This individual experience provided him with the knowledge of why it is important to keep “All four on the floor.”

Cognitive constructionists recognize discovery learning as an important component of their perspective on learning. Through the chair tipping event, the student made a new discovery. His knowledge of cause-effect was constructed and shaped through this experience. He internally processed this information in part because he had a high emotional reaction to this experience. Developing concepts based on experiences is an essential step in making learning meaningful in the cognitive constructionists’ viewpoint.

This single real-world event was explored by looking through the lens of various learning perspectives. The included artifacts describe my understandings of each perspective in more depth. Real classroom events are connected to each perspective in order to show how these historical perspectives are relevant in education today.

## **Standard 2: Curriculum and Instruction**

2.1: Use foundational knowledge to design or implement an integrated, comprehensive, and balanced curriculum.

Artifact: [Dialogic Reading Model](#)

The artifact is a YouTube video aimed to support parent reading behaviors while reading with their young children. The artifact was created through work on a Master thesis. The video presents the dialogic reading model describing the PEER sequence (prompting, evaluate, expand, repeat), and CROWD questioning prompts (completion, recall, open-ended, wh-prompts, distancing prompts). It was created with the intention of sharing with parents of young children to guide their dialogic reading skills.

The artifact meets Standard 2: Curriculum and Instruction because it was designed as a curriculum for parents. The video was accessible to parents via YouTube, and online video technology. It engaged parents in learning about dialogic reading and how to practice the components while reading with their young child. The video modeled questioning strategies using the children's book, *No David!* by David Shannon, 1998. Parents could self-assess their current reading practices and strengthen skills at their own pace, while engaging in reading activities with their young child at home.

Creating this artifact was something outside my comfort zone. Although I had a lot of practice giving parents ideas and tips to encourage skill development, I never used this type of technological platform to deliver my message. The creation of the video came from my desire to reach a larger audience. Additionally, I knew parents would be more ready to participate in my

study if they could access the information on their own time and in the comfort of their own place of choice. I received minimal feedback from parents on the video.

I talked to three parent participants who seemed to enjoy the content. One participant noted it was “good review” of information. Another parent appreciated the “quick and easy” access to information. Overall, parents found the video helpful. It affirmed many parents’ reading practices with their young children. I do not plan to use this specific video again; however, I would consider this platform to deliver information to parents in the future with the following adjustments: professional video setting, content targeted towards learning needs of parents, and real clips of modeling techniques.

**Standard 2 References:**

Shannon, D. (1998) No David! New York: Blue Sky Press.

### **Standard 3: Assessment and Evaluation**

3.2: Select, develop, administer, and interpret assessments, both traditional print and electronic, for specific purposes.

Artifact: MacArthur Bates Communicative Development Inventory, Home Literacy Environment Checklist, Observation Assessment Checklist

Artifact three connects to work on my Master Thesis. I was seeking to understand the impact parent education focused on dialogic reading can have on parent reading practices with young children. This study explored the importance of measuring caregivers' interactive reading to young children and the influence parent education can have in changing parental reading practices with young children. Data were collected using the Home Literacy Environment Checklist, the MacArthur-Bates Communicative Development Inventory, and analysis of video recordings of parents reading with their child. An Observation Assessment Checklist was created to analyze the video-recorded reading sessions. The Read Aloud Profile Together (RAPT) (National Center for Education Statistics, 2010); Playing and Learning Strategies (PALS) Book Reading Scales (Landry et al., 2012); and Shared Reading Coding Assessment (Luze, n.d.), established instruments to assess various reading activities, and were used to create the Observation Assessment Checklist.

The Home Literacy Environment Checklist asked parents to evaluate their home based on a true or false checklist. This checklist measured children's access to literacy materials and support while in the home. The total number of "true" checks revealed where the home environment is rated on a chart. 0-10 "true" checks describe a home literacy environment that needs improvement. 11-19 "true" checks describe a home literacy environment that has some supportive elements. 20-29 "true" checks describe a home literacy environment that has many

supportive elements. 30-37 “true” checks describe a home literacy environment with most of the necessary supportive elements for children’s literacy development.

The MacArthur-Bates Communicative Development Inventory: Words and Sentences (CDI-WS) is an instrument in which parents reported on information about their child’s developing abilities in early language skills. This instrument is designed for use with children between 16 months and 30 months of age. Foster-Cohen, Edgin, Champion, and Woodward (2007) described the various parts of the instrument. Part I of this assessment contains a vocabulary checklist, broken down into 22 groups of words. Parents checked off which words their child had produced in communication. Part II: Sentences and Grammar, assessed children’s morphological and syntactic development. It asked about the tense of language children are utilizing in their communication such as including “ing”, “ed”, “s”, and “’s” at the end of words. The next piece of this instrument addressed children’s ability to use multi-word utterances. Parents reported the three longest sentences their child had used most recently. The last section of this instrument analyzes the complexity of children’s language.

The Observation Assessment Checklist was created using other recognized assessments as described in the following paragraphs. The RAPT is an instrument which assigns codes to observed behaviors for adults and children engaged in joint reading (National Center for Education Statistics, 2010). Behaviors are observed before, during, and after the reading session. This research study used discretion in selecting age-appropriate behaviors expected to be exhibited (Reach Out & Read, 2013; Literacy Milestones: Birth to Age 3, 2017). Behaviors targeted on the Observation Assessment Checklist from the RAPT include: tracking print, using gestures or dramatic voices, directing the child’s attention to the illustrations, asking the child story-related closed-ended questions, expanding on the story or on the child’s comments,

highlighting new vocabulary, asking recall questions, relating the story to the child's experience, asking story-related open-ended questions, having the child join in the reading.

The Playing and Learning Strategies (PALS) Book Reading Scales is an assessment which accounts for adult responsiveness or providing consistently high levels of warmth and attention (Landry et al., 2012). Parent behaviors during a reading session with their child are coded for parent affective support (praise and encouragement), language or cognitive support (prompting), and global rating (overall engagement). Child behaviors during the reading session are coded for responses to maternal requests (verbal or behavioral), initiations (language or gestures), and global rating. The PALS Book Reading Scales measure the balance in authority throughout the shared reading experience for parent and child. In this research study, parent and child utterances will be tracked on the Observation Assessment Checklist as a method to measure the balance in authority over the video-recorded book reading session.

The Shared Reading Coding (Luze, n.d.) is an instrument used for observational assessment while parent and child are engaged in a shared reading experience. The instrument measured Interactional Feedback, Language, Child Acting on Book, and Utterances using a frequency count of how often they occur. Enthusiasm for the experience is measured using a Likert scale. Each category is coded for both parent and child individually. This research study utilized Interactional Feedback and Utterances as part of the Observation Assessment Checklist. Positive Nonverbal Interactional Feedback such as signs of affection, laughing, and smiling in response to communication were tracked. Additionally, Positive Verbal Feedback such as supporting, approving, or encouraging comments were tracked.

Each of these assessments were carefully selected to provide focused data for the researcher. The Home Literacy Environment Checklist and the MacArthur Bates CDI were completed twice,

once pre-video observation and once post-video observation. The Observation Assessment Checklist was also completed twice, one for each video of a reading experience submitted by families. This led to a lot of data to be analyzed.

Looking back on the research questions addressed in this study, this researcher draws conclusions based on the analyzed data and results of this study. Question one asked: What does collecting information about caregivers' interactive reading to their children reveal? Results showed that collecting information about caregivers' interactive reading to their children reveals where children are at in their literacy development as well as where families are at in their support of their child's literacy development. Without understanding where parents and children are at in their current literacy practices, changes cannot be measured. In knowing this, researchers are better able to target specific instructional methods for caregivers' continued growth. Based on the findings from this study, all parents adapted their reading routine to allow for more verbalizations from their child. They recognized they are able to facilitate more language by using dialogic reading techniques. This study confirms previous research evaluating the effectiveness of video-recorded parent education interventions teaching dialogic reading techniques (Arnold et al., 1994; Whitehurst, 2015). Research results demonstrated that participants made growth by learning skills to conduct dialogic reading while engaging in reading with their child. Parents wanted to demonstrate behaviors which will help their child build literacy skills.

The second question addressed in this research asks: To what extent will providing parent information on dialogic reading impact their reading practices with children aged 18-24 months? Parent and child reading practices were impacted by providing parents with information on dialogic reading. All participants demonstrated a positive impact in at least one area of analysis:

Rate of growth, Parent and child verbalizations, or Balance of control. The video intervention gave parents a “how-to” guide to use when reading with their child (Arnold et al., 1994).

Supportive reading behaviors were increased during the post-intervention video-recorded reading sessions. Parents were engaging their child in helping to facilitate the telling of the story by asking questions, extending their child’s language, and describing illustrations (Whitehurst, 2015; VanThiel et al., 2011). Providing dialogic reading information positively impacted the amount of language being used throughout the reading session for all participants (Whitehurst et al., 1988).

I continue to use the Home Literacy Environment Checklist with families to do a self-evaluation because I think it is clear, simple, and provides good information to parents. It gives ideas for how they can create a more literacy-rich home environment. These simple strategies can help foster a sense that literacy is important for the child and family.

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## **Standard 4: Diversity**

4.2: Use a literacy curriculum and engage in instructional practices that positively impact students' knowledge, beliefs, and engagement with the features of diversity.

Artifact: [Dialogic Reading Video](#)

When I began work on my Master thesis seeking to explore the impact of parent education on parent reading practices with their young children, I knew I wanted to provide professional development to parents. As I got deeper into the work, I was struggling with finding participants, time, and an opportunity to meet with potential participants. As an educator, we are trained to meet students where they are at. I decided the best way to connect with participants was to employ this same idea—meet parents where they are at. I created a video and posted it to YouTube because I knew it would be accessible to parents and guardians. The ability to communicate with others and access to the internet is important to a majority of people, so I knew that as long as they had a cellphone, parents would be able to access this video on their own time, in their own place of choice. I thought more parents would be willing to participate because they did not have to do anything out of their comfort zone such as meet face-to-face, attend a large meeting, or communicate with other participants. The anonymity that was established by use of this online platform provided privacy for parents and children.

This artifact meets Standard 4: Diversity because the technology provided flexibility to participants in order to engage in the study. This flexibility also allowed me to offer individual support to families who needed more guidance or had questions. They were able to comfortably seek support or ask questions because of the way the professional development was set up. They were individually viewing the video instead of in a large group setting. I think this allowed participants to be more comfortable to reach out to the researcher and ask questions.

Participants reached out with questions in multiple ways. Several participants directed questions to me in person, as we worked in the same building or had contact on a daily basis. The first question I received was about a struggle to view the YouTube video. I changed the viewing setting from private to public and had no other issues with participant access to the video. Another question I received from multiple participants was with difficulty in sending video recordings to me through email. When videos were over a certain amount of time, they were more difficult to send. I worked together with a parent to solve this problem. We figured out that if it was downloaded to an online drive, it could then be shared with me. I was able to relay this information to other participants who had struggled with this issue and all were able to complete the task. One participant reached out to me via email and sent a second video of her “first” reading session with her child. When I saw her in person, she explained that after watching the YouTube video focused on describing dialogic reading, she felt she could do a better job demonstrating the skills. I thanked her for the video, although I did not use this in my data analysis.

I believe the online professional development viewed independently by participants helped to support a feeling of connectedness between participants and the researcher. The video encouraged participants to reach out and ask for help. Several participants did reach out when an issue arose, which strengthened the connection between participants and the researcher. The video made participants feel like they were having a one-on-one meeting rather than being one in a crowd through this experience.

## **Standard 5: Literate Environment**

5.1: Design the physical environment to optimize students' use of traditional print, digital, and online resources in reading and writing instruction

Artifact: [Home Literacy Environment Checklist](#)

This artifact was used as a data collection tool while working on a Master Thesis seeking to explore parent and child reading practices. The Home Literacy Environment Checklist (Reach Out & Read, 2013) asked parents to evaluate their home based on a true or false checklist. This checklist measured children's access to literacy materials and support while in the home. The total number of "true" checks revealed where the home environment is rated on a chart. 0-10 "true" checks describe a home literacy environment that needs improvement. 11-19 "true" checks describe a home literacy environment that has some supportive elements. 20-29 "true" checks describe a home literacy environment that has many supportive elements. 30-37 "true" checks describe a home literacy environment with most of the necessary supportive elements for children's literacy development. The instrument provides clear, simple statements which can give direction for caregivers who are seeking to create a supportive home literacy environment based on a reputable resource.

Experiences in early childhood impact development across all developmental domains: cognitive, social-emotional, physical, mathematical, and literacy. (Coles, Cheyne, & Daniel, 2015). Parents play a critical role in providing experiences to their child. They are their child's first teachers. It is through these interactions that children learn to engage and experience the world around them. Research by Guralnick (2011) explores the necessity of meaningful parent-child transactions. Ramey and Ramey (1998) confirm the idea that parent behaviors and interactions with their young children create experiences that indirectly impact their intellectual

competence and academic achievement in later years. The Home Literacy Environment Checklist evaluates these important research foundations by including sections about what adults in the home environment do, and what a child might see an adult doing in the home environment. Several true or false statements include: I or another adult in the house read a picture book with my child at least four times a week, I began to read picture books with my child before he or she was a year old, my child sees me or another adult in the house reading books, magazines, or the newspaper nearly every day.

The first years of life encompass a critical learning period for language development (Garcia, Hungerford, Hill, Barroso, & Bagner, 2018). This is when language development is most readily acquired. Pancsofar (2010) notes gestures and the production of vocalizations as children's earliest form of communication and language expression. These skills are learned through children's exposure by parents and caregivers. Parents and caregivers play an important role in the exposure and development of children's early use of language (Bruner, 1981; Snow, 1999; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). The benefits of actively engaging with children through reading activities are "numerous and well documented" (e.g., Beck & McKeown, 2001; Justice, Kaderavek, Fan, Sofka, & Hunt, 2009; Mol, Bus, & de Jong, 2009; Phillips, Norris, & Anderson, 2008). The Home Literacy Environment Checklist evaluates these important research foundations by including questions about encouraging children through early literacy activities including: I or another adult in the house help my child learn to sing or say the alphabet, I or another adult in the house help my child learn to name letters of the alphabet, I or another adult in the house help my child learn how to rhyme.

Hart and Risley (1995) have built an argument for the impact of early experiences on children's later outcomes. More specifically, their study describes that amount of time parents

spend talking to their children in the early years of life directly influences their child's development and future school achievement. The more language a child takes in, the more the child's capacity for language is expanded. Their research concluded that children from low socio-economic households heard an average of 30 million words less than children from high socio-economic status households. Hart and Risley's research has been criticized for its relatively small sample size, as well as the methods by which researchers collected their data. Data were collected from 42 households by researchers going into homes and recording all the language that was used over several hours of time. With the growth in technology, less intrusive measures can be used to collect language samples from inside families' homes.

Gilkerson et al. (2017) used updated technology to collect language data from over 300 families. Their findings concurred with Hart and Risley's research findings, albeit on a smaller scale. A family's socio-economic status predicted the amount of words spoken to a child. More language was occurring in higher socio-economic households; less language was occurring in lower socio-economic households. The gap between low socio-economic status and high socio-economic status homes averaged 4 million words. When compared to the 30-million-word gap drawn from Hart and Risley's research findings, this is a big difference.

Sperry, Sperry, and Miller (2018) attempted to replicate the Hart and Risley study from 1995. Their results were not similar. They found that language environments vary from family to family and that socio-economic status had no impact on whether the home was a rich language environment. One common understanding from each of these studies recognized by researchers is that the households without a rich language environment put children at a disadvantage. The Home Literacy Environment Checklist evaluates these important research foundations by asking participants to answer true or false statements reflecting their intentional language with children

in their household. Several statements include: I or another adult in the house have a detailed and informative conversation with my child nearly every day, I or another adult in the house encourage my child to tell me what he or she wants using complete sentences, I or another adult in the house teach new words to my child nearly every day. When conducting my own data on parent behaviors while reading with their young child, I strived to be as unobtrusive as possible. I utilized technology in order to allow families the flexibility of performing the tasks in the comfort of their own home, while on their own time. They were easily able to record video sessions and send them via email. Technology allowed me to present an online video modelling dialogic reading to parents, who could access and view material at their own pace.

Reading books to young children has repeatedly been linked to positive outcomes across multiple developmental domains (Bus, van IJzendoorn & Pellegrini, 1995; Fletcher & Reese, 2005). Children who are routinely read to in their early years of life show greater language ability than children who are read to less, or beginning at later ages (DeBaryshe, 1993; Dunst, Simkus & Hamby, 2012; Whitehurst, Arnold, Epstein, Angel, Smith, & Fischel, 1994). The Home Literacy Environment Checklist evaluates these important research foundations by asking participants to answer true or false statements regarding their reading behaviors with children. Several statements include: I or another adult in the house read a picture book with my child at least four times a week, My child has at least 50 picture books, I enjoy reading picture books with my child.

These research findings support the importance of early language and literacy exposure. A rich literacy environment and rich language experiences impact early development. This information supports the statements on the Home Literacy Environment Checklist. By creating a supportive home environment, children are given the best opportunity to develop essential skills.

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## **Standard 6: Professional Learning and Leadership**

6.1: Demonstrate foundational knowledge of adult learning theories and related research about organizational change, professional development, and school culture.

Artifact: [Literacy Team Vision](#)

The artifact for Standard 6: Professional Learning and Leadership was created for an assignment in Curriculum and Instruction 555: Literacy, Leadership, and Advocacy. I used the knowledge I gained in this course to design a vision for a Literacy Team for Des Moines Public Schools Early Childhood Education program. My knowledge of the then-current practices used in the district, as well as the roles of support staff impacted who I included in my visionary team. The Early Childhood Education program is based on a supportive culture. Administration, staff, teachers and families all work together to support one another with the ultimate goal of supporting students. The goal of creating and implementing this Literacy Team Vision would be to increase student achievement in literacy. Numerous sources concede, the overarching goal for literacy leaders is to boost student achievement (Allington, 2000; Bean & Dagen, 2012; Walpole & McKenna, 2004).

When I created this vision, I considered the challenges and benefits of including diverse personnel on this Literacy Team. Often with many varying views working collaboratively, it can be difficult to make decisions. However, one benefit of having a variety of roles on the Literacy Team would be the different perspectives brought to discussions. Each team member looks at issues through their respective lens. An informed decision can be made after gathering all views from team members.

If this vision for a Literacy Team were to come to fruition, it is important to understand and plan for the impact that this will have on the early childhood program. Time is often a conflict when implementing a new system. Through this vision, communication is key. Literacy Coaches would facilitate much of the communication, responsible for meeting with and supporting all teachers. They would also provide updates and report on issues to the Literacy Team at meetings. They can help design opportunities for professional development that are needed by the staff. They can work with staff to analyze data and provide support for instructional changes driven by the data (American Educational Research Association, 2005; Bean & Dagen, 2012). Literacy leaders can design professional development with a focus on content knowledge, opportunity for active learning, and cohesively integrate learning activities in order to significantly and positively impact teacher knowledge and skills (Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, & Yoon, 2001).

Often the position of Literacy Coach is misunderstood by teachers and administration. Coaches may be perceived as being more of an evaluator and not a support system for teachers (Dole, 2004). Some teachers may see coaches as people that come to classrooms to help them with their students, there to be an “extra set of hands”. Clearly defined roles and responsibilities of the Literacy Coach will help all involved in the coaching experience. Bean and Dagen (2012) stress the importance of active listening and reflective discussions as a vital practice to the success of this coaching position.

Coaches must be aware of the trends in new materials and how they impact our students. Coaches need to understand the challenges faced by their staff and continued work with students is clearly important. Coaches need to stay up to date in trends and the culture in the school in order to best meet teacher and student needs.

There is a multitude of research detailing roles and responsibilities for Literacy Coaches, specifically (Vogt & Shearer, 2007; Walpole, & Blamey, 2008; Allington, 2006). Often tasks can be put on Literacy Coaches that are not necessarily appropriate to their assigned role of literacy leader (Bean & Dagen, 2012). Often roles of various school personnel are enmeshed and overlap responsibilities. In order to account for all tasks, I included team members in my vision whose areas of expertise would benefit the Literacy Team. Additionally, team members could help ensure that tasks were appropriately assigned. For example, distributing home-to-school literacy connection activities would be a responsibility of a Family Engagement Facilitator, rather than the Literacy Coach. It would be a responsibility for the Literacy Coach to promote family literacy (Bean, 2006).

Teachers must be included on any team created through the school. Their voices need representation (Guiney, 2001). I decided to include Teacher Leadership Team members on the literacy team because they are often experienced and respected faculty within a building. They can work together with Literacy Coaches and other teachers to implement positive changes to teaching practices.

I chose to include a Special Education Consultant in my literacy team vision. This course did not explore the role of special education students or staff in relation to literacy. However, my background was early childhood special education. I could see benefits to including a Special Education Consultant on any literacy team, even though this was not discussed in the research for this course. A Special Education Consultant would work with the Literacy Coach to provide ideas of how to support students with special education needs.

Wepner, Strickland, and Quatroche (2014) detail the process by which an educational administration oversees reading programs. Through this report I recognized the importance for

administrators to be in the know and understand what programs in their school are doing. I included administration in this Literacy Team Vision because I know open communication is a key to creating a positive school culture and building an environment focused on student success.

Creating this artifact required me to reflect upon best practices, by all staff, to support students. I was able to create roles and responsibilities for each team member through using what I knew about the targeted district, and the foundational knowledge this course provided in the areas of literacy, leadership, and advocacy. A wonderful thing about working in Early Childhood Education is the focus that is placed on literacy. It can be integrated into all parts of the school day, through all subject areas. Each literacy team member plays a part in keeping literacy a continued focus of Early Childhood Education.

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