

Consider managing the learning environment, differentiation and exploiting subject disciplines in areas of learning. Discuss these central strands in relation to practices in education, showing secure understanding, identifying personal strengths and areas of development for each.

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# Introduction

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- Good afternoon, my name is Liv Minshall, and in this presentation, I will be discussing the concepts associated with the three central strands of differentiation, managing the learning environment and exploiting subject disciplines in areas of learning and experience.
- In addition to this I aim to reflect on my practice by discussing specific strategies I have implemented whilst on placement to meet the various aspects of the three central strands. After discussing these strategies, I will highlight my strengths and areas for improvement within each strand.

# Reflecting on practice

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- According to Thompson (2022), reflection on professional practice is a positive way of managing change as it provides an opportunity to open our practice up to analysis. Through critical reflection, practitioners can begin to challenge previously held beliefs and really start to unpick how and why we see things the way we do.

# Literature Review – Differentiation

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## Adapting and organising the environment to meet individual needs

- Sharma (2024) argues that it is crucial to address individual learning styles, abilities and backgrounds of pupils to ensure equitable access to education. Some methods of adapting the learning environment can include curriculum adaptation, differentiated instruction and flexible assessment.
- However, it is important to acknowledge that with the number of pupils in the classroom the likelihood of each child having learning individually tailored to them is very low due to the demanding job of teaching, (Jordan, 1965).

# Literature Review – Differentiation

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## Using resources to support learners

- Learning resources have the ability to empower all students in the classroom to engage and enjoy lessons. Visual aids, interactive tools, and hands-on materials are just a few examples of strategies that could be used to make learning enjoyable, (Supply Desk).
- Conversely, Angileri (2010) cautions against an overuse of concrete materials as children may become over-reliant in their use of resources which can lead to them struggling with abstract questions.

# Literature Review – Managing the learning environment

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## Creating a positive learning environment

- Having a positive learning environment means truly understanding and supporting the needs of students and colleagues in multiple ways. A positive learning environment may look like:
- Children feeling safe to come to school without feeling like they have to act like someone else for acceptance, pupils being more willing to take risks in their learning without fear of failing and students and staff members being more engaged and excited to interact with one another under positive circumstances.
- Whereas a negative learning environment may look like:
- High levels of student frustration, likely leading to increased disciplinary rates. Lack of parental or guardian involvement in school and high levels of stress for teachers, (Prieur, 2022).

# Literature Review – Managing the learning environment

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## Behaviour management

- According to Hart (2010) the behaviour of children and young people in schools appears to be a concern to both practitioners and members of the public. The most extreme forms of behaviour, such as violence and aggression, may be those that capture the attention of the public through the media. However, this does not mean that these behaviours are the greatest concern to education professionals. Twenty years ago, the Elton Report into Discipline in Schools (Department for Education and Science, 1989) found that teachers were most concerned about the impact of disruption caused by reoccurring incidents of misbehaviour.

# Literature Review – Exploiting subject disciplines in areas of learning and experience

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## Making cross-curricular links

- Welsh Government (2022) says that the mandatory cross-curricular skills of literacy, numeracy and digital competence are essential for learners to be able to access knowledge. These are skills that can be transferred to the world of work, enabling learners to adapt and thrive in the modern world. Schools and settings must develop a curriculum which enables learners to develop competence and capability in these skills and, where there are opportunities, to extend and apply them across all Areas. Developing these skills is therefore a consideration for all practitioners.

# Literature Review – Exploiting subject disciplines in areas of learning and experience

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## Developing purposeful and meaningful lessons

- Fisher and Frey (2011), argue that establishing a purpose focusses learners' attention to more important information and guides their attention. In stating a purpose expectations for learning are also made clear, which can support children to be more independent with completing tasks as there are specific expectations set.
- This also links to the Curriculum for Wales as the Welsh Government, (2022) emphasises the importance of authentic real-life contexts within lessons to deepen the purpose of lessons.

## Adapting and organising the environment to meet individual needs.

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- Whilst on placement a strategy I utilised to adapt the learning environment was the use of focus groups. As groups were based on ability, I was able to alter my lessons based on the abilities of children within those focus groups.
- The issue of whether or not children should be grouped together based on ability has been debated for many years. There is evidence, that concern in the issue of ability grouping developed around the 1900's. At that time people paid little attention to adjustment of classes, standards, or subject-matter to individual pupils, (Jordan, 1965).

Blue

Pirate Quest Questions

1. To begin your adventure, what is  $5 \times 4$ ?
2. To climb the tree, solve 2 lots of 3.
3. To wave to the mermaids, what is 3 lots of 10?
4. To walk through the woods, solve 2 groups of 6.
5. To cross the bridge, what is 4 groups of 3?
5. To cross the bridge, solve 10 lots of 8.
6. To take the sword, solve  $5 \times 5$ .
6. To take the sword, what is  $5 \times 10$ ?
7. To explore the castle, what is 8 lots of two?
7. To explore the castle, solve 2 lots of 7.
8. To climb the volcano, solve  $5 \times 10$ .
8. To climb the volcano, what is  $5 \times 11$ ?
9. To sneak past the crocodile, what is 3 lots of 5?
9. To sneak past the crocodile, solve 10 groups of 3.
10. To steal the treasure, solve 3 groups of 2.
10. To steal the treasure, what is 5 lots of 9?

Higher group

Yellow and Green

Pirate Quest Questions

1. To begin your adventure, what is  $2 \times 5$ ?
2. To climb the tree, solve  $6 \times 2$ .
3. To wave to the mermaids, what is 3 lots of 10?
4. To walk through the woods, solve 7 x 5.
5. To cross the bridge, what is 4 groups of 5?
6. To take the sword, solve  $5 \times 5$ .
7. To explore the castle, what is 8 lots of two?
8. To climb the volcano, solve  $6 \times 10$ .
9. To sneak past the crocodile, what is 9 lots of 5?
10. To steal the treasure, solve 3 groups of 2.

Middle groups

Red

Pirate Quest Questions

1. To start your adventure what is  $3 \times 2$ ?
2. To climb the tree, solve 2 lots of 2.
3. To wave to the mermaids solve 6 lots of 2.
4. To walk through the woods, what is  $4 \times 2$ ?
5. To cross the bridge, what is  $7 \times 2$ ?
6. To take the sword, solve 5 lots of 2.
7. To enter the castle, what is  $9 \times 2$ ?
8. To climb the volcano, solve 10 groups of 2.
9. To sneak past the crocodile, solve  $1 \times 2$ .
10. To steal the treasure, what is 8 lots of 2?

Lower group

differently with my first group. I could have encouraged more independence from higher groups.

NWN - You set clear boundaries and expectations when you went into first group with each group.  
• Activity was clearly explained to all 3 groups, with adjustments made to suit the needs of the learners.

EBI - You pushed the higher children further in their learning - could you have had the higher group to compare a half to 2 quarters.  
- Remember to take photos to upload to Seesaw.

see where children are with multiplications especially with plenary at the end.

EBI: Lower ability and higher ability groups completed activities very quickly therefore lower and higher groups should be differentiated differently.

- Purple pen question could have been used ask how do you know  $4 \text{ lots of } 2 \text{ is } 8$ ?

- Improved line marking was able to look at more children's work.

NWN - was lovely to see you introduce AFL strategies into your lesson.

- lovely idea for a lesson with a map to hook the lower children.

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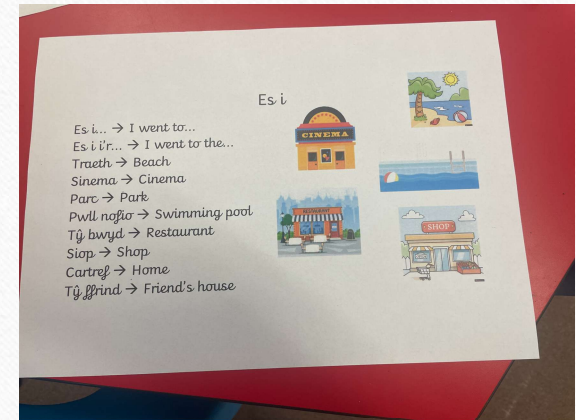
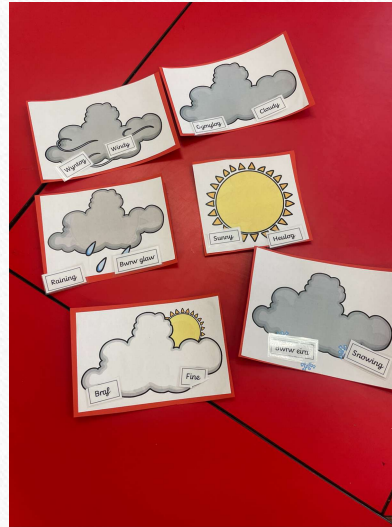
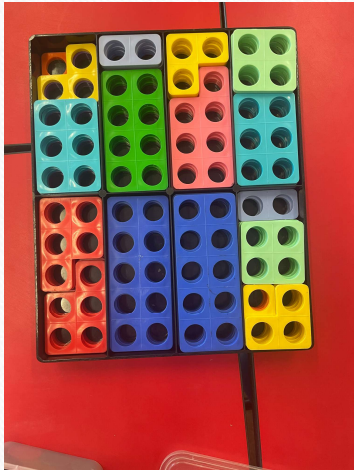
EBI - Extension for each group to push the learning further through a purple pen question.

Reflections related to focus groups in learning journal.

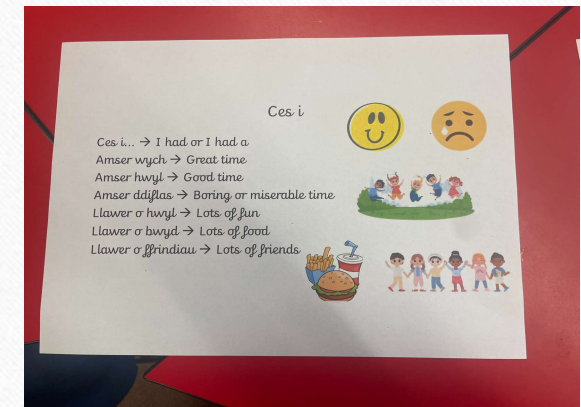
## Resources to support pupils

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- In addition to differing the content based on the capability of each focus group, I also ensured that I provided a wide variety of resources to ensure that pupils felt supported to complete tasks. Utilising resources in the classroom is also an effective way of appealing to different learning styles.
- Every student is unique, with their strengths, weaknesses, and learning pace. Effective teaching requires the ability to adapt to these differences, learning resources are beneficial as they enable teachers and teaching assistants to provide tailored support to individual students, (Supply Desk).



Examples of resources provided by me  
to help the children.



Monday 24<sup>th</sup> March

www: Delivered and explained lesson clearly.

- Provided support for children that needed help.
- All children independently met the WALT.

EBI: I can think of a question to help children extend their learning.

- I can gain confidence in correcting children's work.

www: Clear reading of story.  
Set clear expectations of what you want.

EBI: Sentence starters for the less able children.

Learning journal entry  
reflecting on the utilisation  
of resources

## Creating a positive classroom environment

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- During my placement I utilised the school's star behaviour point system to maintain a positive classroom environment. It is a collaborative whole class approach which encourages good peer relationships.
- Research has shown that students who have good relationships with their peers are able to establish a sense of togetherness, belongingness, self-worth and self-acceptance (Baloche, 1998 and Kauffman et al, 2002), and these feelings promote purposeful and responsible behaviour and lead to effective learning. In contrast, those who relate poorly to their peers tend to experience more tension, stress and upset, and may have difficulty in learning, even when teaching is effective and student-centred.

Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> March

WWW: Lesson clearly explained and understood by children.

- Children independently achieved well.
- I encouraged children to correct more spelling mistakes today.

EBT: I can keep encouraging children to keep on best.

- I can think of a way to question or extend the children's learning.

WWW: Confident live marking shown.

- Beginning to address behaviour that you do not want in your class which is lovely to see.
- Clapping to get children's behaviour ready and their attention worked well. Stick with this.

Learning journal entry highlighting me addressing different behaviours in the classroom

# Behaviour management

- During my placement I implemented a variety of strategies to assist with managing the behaviour of the children in my class. One of the main strategies I implemented was positive reinforcement of children who were showing good behaviour such as sitting quietly on the carpet and ignoring the negative behaviour of children such as children who would talk whilst on the carpet.
- Psychologist B. F. Skinner (1904– 1990) discovered the principles of operant conditioning in a series of animal studies. He believed that these principles strongly influence human development. Reinforcement occurs when a consequence increases the likelihood of a particular behaviour. With positive reinforcement, an added stimulus or consequence increases a behaviour. Certain kinds of pleasant stimuli, such as praise, a smile or attention serve as positive reinforcers for children most of the time, (Boyd and Bee, 2014).
- However, Hart (2010) disagrees with ignoring negative behaviour and argues that teachers should respond to negative behaviour by using a long stare or verbal reprimand so that the behaviour displayed will stop sooner than it would if teachers were to wait for the behaviour to change as a result of the child picking up on the praise of their peers.

# Behaviour management

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- Another strategy I utilised to manage behaviour in the classroom was the clapping attention grabber. While many teachers resort to raising their voices when the classroom gets too loud, clapping provides an equally noticeable but far more positive way to get students' attention. As more students join in, the clapping pattern gets spread across the room until all students are participating and ending their conversations, (Fuhrman, 2022).

Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> March

WWW: Lesson clearly explained and understood by children.

- Children independently achieved well.

- I encouraged children to correct more spelling mistakes today.

EBI: I can keep encouraging children to keep on task.

- I can think of a way to question or extend the children's learning.

WWW: Confident live marking shown.

- Beginning to address behaviour that you do not want in your class which is lovely to see.

- Clapping to get children's behaviour ready and their attention worked well. Stick with this.

## Learning journal entry and fortnightly reflection looking at the effectiveness of my clapping strategy

### Mentor comments

A great first week getting to know the children and settling in to year 2. You have been very honest in your reflections and discussions we have had this week and you have learnt a lot already. We have discussed aspects of assessment as this is something we have talked about being such a huge aspect to cover. You have selected a few strategies to use for AFL next week to trial within your maths lesson Monday. Continue with your clapping behaviour management strategy to develop this further and progress your positive relationship.

## Making cross-curricular links

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- When planning lessons on placement I tried to make cross-curricular links to deepen the purpose of lessons students would be completing. To assist me in planning these lessons and ensuring that I was utilising multiple areas of learning and experience I used guidance from the Curriculum for Wales.
- The Framework helps educators develop a more holistic approach to learning. The six Areas bring together familiar disciplines and encourage strong and meaningful links across them. Those individual disciplines still play an important role, especially as learners progress and begin to specialise, (Welsh Government 2024).
- Kerry, (2015) says that learning beyond subject boundaries provides children with the opportunity to experience deep, challenging and relevant learning. Because children are focussing on multiple disciplines within one lesson, the tasks set tend to be far more engaging and purposeful.

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|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Student-teacher:</b>                                                                                                | for Education<br>Liv Minshall                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | <b>Class / Group:</b>                                                   | Year 2                                                                 |
| <b>AoLE or Subject:</b>                                                                                                | Language, Literacy and Communication.                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | <b>Date</b> <i>(please note that this may be a continuous session):</i> | Monday 24 <sup>th</sup> March and Tuesday 25 <sup>th</sup> March 2025. |
| <b>Meaningful links to Curriculum</b><br>(What Matters Statements, Descriptions of learning, 'previous' curriculum...) | Expressing ourselves through language is key to communication.<br><br>Progression step 2 - I can explain information and share ideas, opinions and feelings using relevant vocabulary.                                                                              |                                                                         |                                                                        |
| <b>Meaningful links across the curriculum</b><br><i>Links to other AoLEs or the Cross-curricular skills frameworks</i> | Expressive arts – through drawing their home and families.<br>Health and well-being – celebrating different families and expressing their opinions.<br>Literacy Framework – Writing - I can write for different purposes and authentic audiences, real or imagined. |                                                                         |                                                                        |

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|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <b>Student-teacher:</b>                                                                                                | for Education<br>Liv Minshall                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | <b>Class / Group:</b>                                                   | Year 2                              |
| <b>AoLE or Subject:</b>                                                                                                | Mathematics and Numeracy                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | <b>Date</b> <i>(please note that this may be a continuous session):</i> | Monday 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2025. |
| <b>Meaningful links to Curriculum</b><br>(What Matters Statements, Descriptions of learning, 'previous' curriculum...) | The number system is used to represent and compare relationships between numbers and quantities.<br><br>Progression step 2 – I can use my understanding of multiplication to recall some multiplication facts and tables starting with tables 2, 3, 4, 5 and 10 and I can use the term 'multiples'.<br><br>Four purposes – ambitious and capable learners who can use number effectively in different contexts.<br><br>Integral skills – Critical thinking and problem-solving – identify potential solutions and justify decisions. |                                                                         |                                     |
| <b>Meaningful links across the curriculum</b><br><i>Links to other AoLEs or the Cross-curricular skills frameworks</i> | Humanities – using a treasure map and following footsteps.<br>Numeracy Framework – Calculation – I can recall 2-, 5- and 10-times tables and solve multiplication problems.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                         |                                     |

Screenshots of cross-curricular lesson plans

**Targets (maximum of three, linked to appropriate strands)**

Although cross-curricular planning has been planned for and skills have been developed, there have been some missed opportunities for developing other cross-curricular themes. Olivia is only now showing an understanding of the use of real life, authentic contexts for learning being provided as a natural part of the learning experience. Looking again at Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig requirements and the local area where learners live will assist with planning and delivering lessons that are relevant to and extend the learners' cultural, linguistic, religious and socio-economic experience.

Comment in end of  
placement report

# Developing purposeful and meaningful lessons

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- One method I used to support me in developing purposeful lessons on placement was setting a learning intention for pupils. In my placement school all members of staff used the acronym WALT which stands for 'we are learning to'. By setting a WALT for each lesson the children understood what the purpose of the lesson was and practitioners also knew what pupils should be achieving from each lesson.
- Gronlund and Linn, (1990) acknowledge that the terms goals and objectives have been used for decades to refer to broad categories of written or verbal statements that describe what students should learn in a given unit or lesson.
- However, according to Marzano, Pickering and Pollock (2001), a narrowly defined objective can limit pupil performance because it focusses children's attention to only achieving their WALT. Therefore, children can ignore information that is not set specifically to the goal.



Hooks used in my lessons



|                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                                                           |                           |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Student-teacher:                                                                                                | Liv Minshall                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Class / Group:                                            | Year 2                    |
| AoLE or Subject:                                                                                                | Mathematics and Numeracy                                                                                                                                                                                          | Date (please note that this may be a continuous session): | 14 <sup>th</sup> May 2025 |
| Meaningful links to Curriculum (What Matters Statements, Descriptions of learning, 'previous' curriculum...)    | The number system is used to represent and compare relationships between numbers and qualities.<br>Progression step 2 – I have experienced fractions in practical situations, using a variety of representations. |                                                           |                           |
| Meaningful links across the curriculum<br><i>Links to other AoLEs or the Cross-curricular skills frameworks</i> | Numeracy framework progression step 2 – I can use halves and quarters.                                                                                                                                            |                                                           |                           |

|                                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                           |                              |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Student-teacher:                                                                                                | Liv Minshall                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | Class / Group:                                            | Year 2                       |
| AoLE or Subject:                                                                                                | Language, Literacy and Communication.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | Date (please note that this may be a continuous session): | 30 <sup>th</sup> April 2025. |
| Meaningful links to Curriculum (What Matters Statements, Descriptions of learning, 'previous' curriculum...)    | Understanding languages is key to understanding the world around us<br>Progression steps 2 - I can use grapheme-phoneme correspondences when reading, including combining these to decode words.<br><br>I can use a range of strategies to read with increasing fluency.<br><br>I can read different texts using a range of strategies to make meaning.<br><br>I can recognise the features of different types of texts and use appropriate language to talk about them.<br><br>I can find and use information from different materials that I read. |                                                           |                              |
| Meaningful links across the curriculum<br><i>Links to other AoLEs or the Cross-curricular skills frameworks</i> | Literacy Framework: I can use grapheme-phoneme correspondences when reading, I can read different texts using a range of strategies to make meaning, I can infer meaning from text and images, which is not explicitly stated, I can identify the topic/theme and show my understanding of the main ideas of the text and I can respond to what I view and read, asking questions and expressing viewpoints and preferences.<br>Expressive arts – music through the story of Tiger's drum kit.                                                       |                                                           |                              |

Screenshots of lesson plans

Think about utilising and developing your hook further next time. You spent a long time preparing resources that were effective, it was a shame they didn't get utilised more to fully immerse the learners.

Olivia has shown some understanding of how high-quality learning experiences result in improved learning. She should continue with this and ensure to plan appropriate and meaningful learning experiences for the learners that will result in improved well-being of the students as well as motivating students to achieve.

Comments from end of placement report and observation.

## Conclusion

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- To conclude my presentation, I would like to focus my attention to the specific aspects I feel I need to improve upon. These are the differentiation of questioning within focus groups, researching more strategies for behavioural management with smaller groups and utilising my hook further into my lessons.
- I would also like to emphasise the importance of reflecting on practice. Through completing this assignment, I have been able to look back on my placement and identify my strengths and weaknesses within different aspects of the central stands.

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