

The Canadian Association for Prior Learning Assessment in cooperation with the Association of Canadian Community Colleges presents

Fall Focus Workshop & Annual General Meeting

November 24 - 25, 2005 Metropolitan Hotel, Toronto, Ontario

Special thanks to the following sponsors:

- ◆ Human Resources and Skills Development Canada
- Access to Profession and Trades,
 Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration
- Centre for Learning Accreditation, Athabasca University
- Ryerson University's G. Raymond Chang School of Continuing Education

Thursday, November 24

8:00 AM – 6:00 PM — MANDARIN FOYER Registration/Information Desk

8:00 AM - 9:00 AM — MANDARIN FOYER Continental Breakfast

* simultaneous interpretation will be offered in the Mandarin Ballroom on Thursday.

9:00 AM - 10:30 AM — MANDARIN BALLROOM Welcome

Sandie Birkhead-Kirk, Assistant Deputy Minister (A), Labour Market and Training Division, Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities

MANDARIN BALLROOM

Plenary Session

Introduction to Workshop Themes

1. Public Policy-PLAR and QR in Ontario

Sandie Birkhead-Kirk, Assistant Deputy Minister (A), Labour Market and Training Division, Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities



2. College and University Updates, Issues and Systems Joan McArthur-Blair, President of Nova Scotia Community College & Christine Wihak, Assistant Professor, Workplace and Adult Learning, the University of Calgary



3. PLAR/FCR Integrated Systems

L. Andrew Cardozo, Executive Director, The Alliance of Sector Councils (TASC)



4. Adult Learning Theory and Practice

Bernard Normand, Director General, Institut de coopération pour l'éducation des adultes (ICÉA)

10:30 AM - 11:00 AM — MANDARIN FOYER Nutrition Break

11:00 AM - 12:30 PM Concurrent Workshops

TOKYO ROOM

Provincial and Territorial Recognition of Prior Learning Policy Update

Making Fundamental Change to Adult Learning in Nunavut

Bruce Rigby, Senior Advisor for Adult Learning, Department of Education, Nunavut

The adult education and learning environment in Nunavut is one which was inherited from a number of different sources, including the federal government, residential schools, and the former Northwest Territories. High school education to grade 12 was only introduced to the communities beginning in 1986. As a result, adult learners fall into a broad spectrum from those who were not able to attend high school or participate in adult learning and literacy initiatives, to those who require specific courses to enter post-secondary programs in southern Canada. In addition, no mechanism is in place to allow for PLAR, even though a multitude of individuals have years of applicable experience

in many fields. The cooperative development of the Nunavut Adult Learning Strategy is the first attempt to place a Nunavut stamp on the adult learning needs of Nunavummiut, and to create a plan to deal with generations of learners who have not been able to obtain training, recognition or employment. The presentation will look at proposed policy changes which will begin this transition, and the integration of PLAR.

State of PLAR at Alberta's Post-Secondary Institutions

Lucille Walter, Chair, Alberta Council on Admissions and Transfer

Of the 35 post-secondary institutions in the province of Alberta's transfer system, the majority have "policies /guidelines" to recognize prior experiential learning. That leads to an assumption that PLAR is common. However, the truth is far from that. Alberta's research project on PLAR outlines conditions that inspire the use of PLAR and best practices in post-secondary institutions.

MANDARIN A

Recognition and Assessment in Colleges

Bryn Jones, President, ICDL Canada; **Joyce Irving**, Program Administrator, Continuing Education, Conestoga College Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning; **Darlene Cadeau**, Professor, School of Computer and Engineering Technology ICDL Administrator ICDL Tester, Cambrian College

The Colleges of Ontario Network for Education and Training (CON*NECT), an alliance of Ontario's 24 Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology, ICDL Canada, Canada's governing body for the International Computer Driving Licence (ICDL), a program offering internationally recognized certification in computing skills, along with specific college partners, will discuss how this international credential is using PLAR to evaluate knowledge and skills.

The panel will present:

- a brief overview of ICDL as the largest worldwide standard for ICT user skills, its use in Post-Secondary education and its relevance to the workplace
- a look into the current project funded by HRSDC that is being delivered through a consortium of CON*NECT and ICDL Canada within five major Ontario colleges, and
- some practical understanding of how the standard works at a college testing location and the experience with implementation at such an institution.

TORONTO BALLROOM

Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Practitioner PLAR Program

Rita Seipp, Program Head and Lead Developer, OH&S, SIAST.

The SIAST OH&S Practitioner program was developed as a result of a needs assessment convened by Saskatchewan labour and Saskatchewan industries in 2003. It determined the need for an entry-level program in this emerging career. Participants surveyed emphasized an interest in attaining academically credentialed education and training. Critical to the development of this program was the need to recognize previous non-post-secondary training and experience in this area, since the majority of current practitioners in this field had received their education through a variety of industry and government courses. This presentation will

review how the OH&S Practitioner program and PLAR were developed concurrently and collaboratively with government and industry. Discussion will also focus on the OH&S Practitioner PLAR delivery.

MANDARIN B

Institutional and International PLAR Research and **Development**

The Adult Learning Friendly Institution (ALFI) Self Evaluation Project

Paul Zakos, Project Manager and Manager, PLA, First Nations Technical Institute

In May of 2005 Human Resources and Skills Development Canada in partnership with First Nations Technical Institute and 14 institutions and organizations serving adult learners across Canada embarked upon a research project aimed at opening up education and training opportunities for greater numbers of adult learners. The framework for the project is based on eight best practice principles and their performance indicators developed by the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning in the U.S. A. The principles include: Outreach, Life and Career Planning, Financing, Assessment of Learning Outcomes, Teaching-Learning Process, Student Support Systems, Technology and Strategic Partnerships. This workshop will outline the goals of the research project, describe the institutional self-evaluation process, discuss its utility in assessing both formal and informal adult learning practices and provide an update on initial site visits with project partners over the past three months.

12:30 PM - 1:30 PM — MANDARIN BALLROOM Lunch

1:30 PM - 3:00 PM - MANDARIN A

Super Sessions

Strategic Implementation — College and University Policies and Procedures Panel

This workshop panel will be important for those participants wanting to develop or enhance PLAR systems in their institutions and organizations. Panel presenters from both the college and university sectors will provide examples of policies, procedures and personal insights into the internal and external environment which need to be taken into account, when introducing recognition and assessment activities for non-classroom learning. Panelists include:

Adopting a PLAR Policy? Consider the Impact!

Kim Orynik, PLAR Coordinator, SIAST Saskatchewan Institute of Applied Science & Technology

Following the belief that experience is often the best teacher, Kim Orynik will share the effects that adopting a PLAR model may have on units within an educational institution. For successful implementation, proponents must anticipate the impact such an initiative would have on the roles and responsibilities of: Registration, Senior Management, Counsellors, Faculty, and of course, students. Examples of some tools and best practices will help to demonstrate how PLAR has evolved at SIAST.

Considering PLAR — At the Beginning

Susan Salusbury, Registrar, Trent University

Trent University is beginning to consider the possibility of adopting PLAR. Driven by requests from students in recently established programs in Nursing and Forensic Science, the University is considering the process which will be required to not only adopt PLAR, but to implement. Susan will review the PLAR path to date and outline expectations for the future.

3 P's Of PLAR at UNB Fredericton

David Hinton, Registrar, University of New Brunswick (Fredericton); Vice-President, Association of Registrars of the Universities and Colleges of Canada.

UNB formally introduced PLAR in the late 90's, building on PLAR practices already in place for two degree programs. The 3 P's to be covered in the presentation refer to "Policy, Practice, Problems". ("Problems" would be more appropriately referred to as "challenges" but "C" doesn't work into the title as well.) An overview of the UNB's Calendar policy will be given. A more detailed review of how the policy has been put into practice will follow, including an overview of how requests are managed. Areas where PLA has been integrated into degree programs will also be noted. PLAR at UNB comes with challenges and these will be considered in the final part of the presentation.

Are Policies Enough? Moving from PLAR Policies to System Implementation

Deb Blower, PLAR Facilitator, Red River College

As part of the panel, Deb Blower will share her insights and the successes and challenges of putting PLAR policies into "action" at Red River College. She will discuss policy development and the need for a planned strategy to ensure credible system wide implementation of PLAR. Highlights of the RRC PLAR Strategic and Operational Plan (2005-2010), designed to ensure PLAR is an integral part of RRC services and programs for learners, faculty, staff and the external community will be shared.

The Policies and Procedures Database on www.recognitionforlearning.ca: Wondering which institution in a particular province has PLAR policies and procedures that work for you?

Gail Hall, RFL Coordinator.

www.RecognitionForLearning.ca (RFL) is a central resource hub for information about PLAR, including access to policies and procedures about PLAR. A new feature of the site is a searchable database of links to websites of all recognized post-secondary institutions across Canada, to their main website and to specific pages about PLAR and their related policies and procedures where this is available. The presentation will highlight how easy it is to use this searchable database, and some hints on searching. It will also show you how to participate in discussions about PLAR policies and procedures on the RFL Discussion Board.

Portfolio Development Courses and Curriculum Considerations

This panel will explore the concept of portfolio learning and will consist of experts, familiar with electronic and paperless versions, skills and learning passports and profiles, and portfolios for professional competencies. Emphasis will be on curriculum and delivery ideas. Panelists include:

Using Learning Portfolios in University Programs "A Learning Portfolio Can..."

Gaelyne MacAulay, PLA Services Coordinator Workplace Education PEI: Using Portfolios as a tool in University Programs.

"One step at a time," "walk before you run," "plan your journey" . . . all these sayings take on a more intense meaning when a post-secondary institution is exploring the option of implementing a Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) process; then again, so does, "over my dead body!" Finding that critical first step, one that benefits both the learner and the institution, may be waiting to emerge from an existing curriculum. Faculty will seek out and embrace an instrument that enhances and supports their curriculum. A Learning Portfolio can be that instrument. A Learning Portfolio can assist faculty and learners to communicate more effectively on the expectations of learning from a course or program. A Learning Portfolio can provide a vehicle to introduce the concept and terminology associated with PLAR. A Learning Portfolio can

Positioning Portfolio on the PLAR Continuum

Douglas Myers, Executive Director, Halifax PLA Centre

PLAR is increasingly on everyone's lips, but encompasses a broad range of significantly different approaches, issues and objectives. This presentation will 'position Portfolio Learning' in a context that will explore both the complementary aspects and the distinctive characteristics of these various 'types' of PLAR, with particular emphasis on what sets 'Portfolio Learning' apart. While this presenter will express his views as candidly and provocatively as possible, a more sober and detailed written commentary will also be provided.

The Portfolio College

Dave White, Director, Portfolio Learning, Nova Scotia Community College

At NSCC we are journeying toward making portfolio an integral part of the whole learning process. We see its purpose is to enable learners to answer three questions in terms of their life goals: Where am I now? Where do I want to be? How do I get there? Consider this analogy: graduates from any college or university in Canada normally receive two official records of their learning experience: a diploma or degree; and a transcript, which is a record of courses and grades. At NSCC, portfolio education offers students another record, their official record of their learning, their portfolio. The portfolio (the product) is not an end in itself, nor is it generally a separate course. It is primarily a process of reflection, critical analysis and articulation that helps make real conscious awareness of learning and personal development.

The Learning Record

Peter Donkers, Executive Director of Campus Canada

Campus Canada's Record of Learning (RoL) is part of an electronic portfolio utility available on the Campus Canada web site. The RoL allows adult learners to have a central online location for confirmation of their prior formal learning information. This enables Campus Canada and its member institutions to quickly and easily confirm and validate a learner's educational history, without having to constantly request, wait for, and verify documents via paper-based communication channels. These learning credits might include courses and/or programs taken at a college or university, credits that have been earned through assessed workplace training programs and/or credits that have been recognized through a prior learning assessment. Like a bank, these credits can be transferred to an applicable program with any Campus Canada college, institute or university. Newcomers to Canada who have attended or graduated from a foreign college or university can use the Record of Learning to have their foreign credentials assessed for Canadian post-secondary equivalency by an authorized international credential assessment agency.

ePortfolio for Skilled Immigrants

Don Presant, President, Learning Agents for the Learning Innovations Forum (LIFIA) project

The Learning Innovations Forum d'Innovation d'Apprentissage (LIfIA - www.lifia.ca), a non-profit organization dedicated to accelerating learning innovation, has launched a project to research and develop a strategy for an ePortfolio system for skilled immigrants to Canada. The project is funded through HRSDC's Foreign Credential Recognition Program. LIFIA has contracted with three consulting agencies to undertake the work: Learning Agents from Manitoba, FuturEd Inc. from British Columbia, and the Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers.

By March 31 2006, the team will be producing:

- A comprehensive environmental scan of the current state of ePortfolio use, focusing on immigrants and the workplace;
- Research-based conclusions about the feasibility of an ePortfolio system in various industries and employment environments; and
- A strategy for a pan-Canadian ePortfolio system

Skills and Knowledge Profile

Jen Liptrot, Executive Director, A Commitment to Training and Employment for Women (ACTEW)

3:00 PM - 3:30 PM — MANDARIN FOYER Nutrition Break

3:00 PM - 3:15 PM — MANDARIN B

Media Event: Results of the national study: more than half of Canadians want informal learning recognized for credit

Dr. David Livingstone, Head, Centre for the Study of Education and Work, OISE/UoT.

3:30 PM - 5:00 PM Concurrent Workshops

MANDARIN A

Learners Roundtable

Moderator: Sandra Aarts, PLAR Consultant

This workshop will provide an opportunity to hear from adult learners and new Canadians as they tell their stories and suggest how learning recognition and assessment could be enhanced.

TOKYO ROOM

Assessing Learning Against Standards

Prior Learning Assessment for Medical Laboratory Technologists

Christine Nielsen, Director of Certification, Canadian Society for Medical Laboratory Science.

This presentation will focus on the PLA process offered by the Canadian Society for Medical Laboratory Science (CSMLS), including the process, the challenges and new initiatives by CSMLS in the area of PLA.

PLAR for Internationally Educated Nurses: One Ontario University-Based Initiative

Martha Ireland, Manager, Support Services, Distance Education, The G.Raymond Chang School of Continuing Education

In 2002, a project to help internationally educated nurses access the nursing profession began at Ryerson University's G. Raymond Chang School of Continuing Education, in collaboration with the Creating Access to Regulated Employment (CARE) for Nurses project. CARE for Nurses is funded by the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. The College of Nurses of Ontario (CNO) has established baccalaureate level Nursing education as the entry to practice standard in this province. To address the needs of internationally educated nurses, The Chang School contracted with CARE for Nurses to develop a free online PLAR tool/process, based on the CNO entry to practice competencies, which would allow these nurses to self-assess and identify their degrees of competency mastery. When complete, this tool/process will be available to any candidate interested in using it.

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Examining the Human Resources Implications of PLAR

PLAR & the HR Practice

Ken Kowalski, Program Coordinator, Manitoba Civil Service Commission This interactive workshop is designed to provide the participants with the linkages between PLAR, BDI and the HR practice. HR functions such as selection, succession, competency, learning, classification and work descriptions will be examined in the context of PLAR.

MANDARIN B

Work and Lifelong Learning (WALL): Canadian Adults' Interest in Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR): A 2004 National Survey

Dr. David Livingstone, Head, Centre for the Study of Education and Work, OISE/UoT.

We have little knowledge about the extent to which Canadians are actually interested in prior learning recognition for themselves. This question is addressed in the large-scale 2004 Canadian National Survey on Work and Lifelong Learning (WALL). In addition to attitudes toward PLAR, the survey provides data on a wide array of paid and unpaid work and formal and informal learning practices. This presentation analyzes these attitudes and practices in relation to socio-demographic factors. Racial minorities, recent immigrants and younger school dropouts all express a high interest in enrolment in adult education and training with PLAR, and all are found to be devoting very substantial time to informal learning. More generally, PLAR offers part of the solution to the unmet demand and barriers to formal education and training faced by millions of Canadian adults. The key question is can we develop adequate systems to support the current demand for PLAR?

5:30 PM - 6:30 PM — MANDARIN A

CAPLA'S Annual General Meeting

Friday, November 25

7:30 AM – 1:00 PM — MANDARIN FOYER Registration/Information Desk

7:30 AM – 8:30 AM — MANDARIN FOYER Continental Breakfast

8:30 AM - 10:00 AM
Concurrent Workshops

TORONTO BALLROOM

Information Update on Research Projects for Immigrants

Colleges Integrating Immigrants to Employment (CIITE) Project

William Radford, Executive Director, CIITE will discuss the goals and stages of this multi-year, multi-million dollar project, designed to help internationally-trained immigrants enter the college system at the appropriate levels in order to expedite their participation into the labour force. Information about pilot projects and future plans will enable participants to see the implications for long-term implementation.

Pan-Canadian Sector Council & Immigrant Dialogue

Bernadette Beaupré, Executive Director, Ontario Network of Employment Skills Training Projects (ONESTEP).

The Pan-Canadian Sector Council & Immigrant Dialogue was attended by approximately 90 people from across the country. ASPECT is the lead agency in this initiative with the Dialogue project and conference taking place under the auspices of the Canadian Coalition of Community-Based Employability Training (CCCBET) with partial funding from HRSDC, Foreign Credential Recognition Program and the International Qualifications Unit, Economic Competitiveness Division, BC Ministry of Economic Development. The purpose of the Dialogue was to promote networking, share information, and create partnerships among participants. The project includes a research component, the face-to-face dialogue in Ottawa and a follow-up report in early 2006. These efforts are meant to enhance the capacity of both employer sector councils and immigrant-serving agencies to increase employment opportunities that better match immigrants' skills, knowledge and experience.

TOKYO ROOM

Brain Gain and Learning Losses: An Interim Report on the Gateways Project

Jane Arscott, Human Services Program Coordinator, University of Athabasca and **Ingrid Crowther**, Team Leader, Gateway Project, University of Athabasca

At the mid-way point in the Gateways project that will put 100 individuals at the college and university level through a program-based PLAR process in the Human Services we have found that PLA attracts adult learners primarily adult learners over age 25. Almost 95 % of our 100 or so participants are women, and a good 40% are over age 40. Many of the participants have gained up to a year's worth of post-secondary credit. Making sense of PLAR's capacity for brain gain as well

as some worrying learning losses among students who have struggled to receive transfer credit for their credentials make up the two main discussion points of our session. The session summarizes positives and negatives encountered in meeting the needs of adult learners. We would like to learn from other administrators and users of PLAR how our findings support or challenge your experiences with PLAR.

MANDARIN A

Canadian Council on Learning – Knowledge Centres Dialogue

Judith Potter, Executive Director, University of New Brunswick College of Extended Learning and lead organization for the Canadian Council on Learning Adult Learning Knowledge Centre, and Shirley Seward, Chief Executive Officer, Canadian Labour and Business Centre, will be explaining the role of their respective centres and soliciting input and ideas from participants on where the PLAR research and knowledge mobilization agenda should go in order to build capacity in Canada for adult and workplace learning, recognition and assessment.

MANDARIN B

Access to Learning for Working Adults

Janet Dassinger, Executive Director, Labour Education Centre; Workers in Transition Portfolio Project: Carol Hawkins, Manitoba Centre for Education and Work will share the current activities associated with the Workers in Transition Portfolio research project which is currently being completed in four regions in Canada. The goal of the research is to evaluate the impact and measure the long term effects of portfolio as a tool to assist workers in transition in organizations affected by economic downturn.

10:00 AM - 10:30 AM — MANDARIN FOYER Nutrition Break

10:30 AM - 12:00 PM Concurrent Workshops

MANDARIN B

Update on Recognition of Prior Learning

Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition: An Update

Susan Veilleux, Manager, Office of Learning Technologies, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada: Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) has the Government of Canada lead on the issue of Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition. The presentation will review the HRSDC perspective on the recognition of all types of learning, with the main focus the Adult Learning and Literacy Directorate's Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition Initiative. Discussion covers the objectives of the initiative and the support available to stakeholders in the adult learning community. Several PLAR projects which currently receive funding support will be described in greater detail.

Internationally Trained Workers Initiative (ITWI)

Jean Seguin, Director, Special Initiatives and Outreach, Citizenship and Immigration Canada

One of the keys to Canada's prosperity and competitiveness will be the degree to which skilled immigrants and internationally trained Canadians are able to contribute to Canada's economic and social development. To this end, the Government of Canada launched the Internationally Trained Workers Initiative (ITWI) on April 25, 2005 to improve the integration of these workers into the labour force. To accomplish this, the ITWI has five main components: Foreign Credential Recognition; Enhanced Language Training; Bridge to Work; Labour Market Information; and, Research. Citizenship and Immigration Canada is the lead department on the Enhanced Language Training initiative and the Going to Canada Internet Portal.

The FCR Program

David Moore, Director, FCR Program, HRSDC

The FCR Program, a key component of the Internationally Trained Worker Initiative, is working to accelerate the assessment and recognition of foreign credentials. There has been increased focus on assessing not only formal credentials, but developing a better sense of prior learning to provide newcomers opportunities for recognition, certification and employment in the Canadian context. This is occurring at a sectoral level, within both regulated and unregulated occupations. The Government of Canada views immigrant integration as a key priority, and as such, will continue to explore ways to integrate internationally trained workers into the economy, to promote better inclusion and effectively benefit from these skills and experiences.

MANDARIN A

Cognitive and Epistemological Development and PLAR

Christine Wihak, Assistant Professor, Workplace and Adult Learning, the University of Calgary

Universities in Canada and elsewhere (UK, Australia) have been slow to implement PLAR in any meaningful way. This workshop looks at research on disciplinary perspectives on learning within the university and research on cognitive development in undergraduate students and adult learners. Reference will be made to empirical research on university-level PLAR in South Africa, where it has been mandated as part of post-apartheid educational policy. The workshop also draws on the presenter's experience in assisting students at Athabasca University to use Bloom's taxonomy of learning to articulate experiential learning in a form that academics can recognize as valid. Interweaving these strands of research offers new directions for the development of university-level PLAR.

TORONTO BALLROOM

Sector Councils Foreign Credential Recognition(FCR) Activities

Canadian Aviation Maintenance Council's (CAMC) Prior Learning and Foreign Credential Assessment and Recognition Project

Barbara Kirby, Manager of Accreditation, Canadian Aviation Maintenance Council

The Aviation Maintenance and Aerospace Manufacturing sector presently has no formalized system to assess and recognize the skills and competencies of workers who have acquired credentials outside of Canada or, indeed, outside of the sector. The goal of CAMC's Prior Learning and Foreign Credential Assessment and Recognition (PLFCAR) project is to speed up the process for integrating highly skilled workers into the Canadian workforce without compromising the high standard for quality that is so critical in this industry. The system will clarify a worker's potential eligibility for CAMC credentials by building on the Council's well-developed system of occupational standards and certification for Canadian-trained and experienced workers. The new PLFCAR system will assess an individual's knowledge and competencies, evaluate gaps and define specific skills upgrading programs in order to ensure that new entrants into the Canadian workforce meet or exceed the standards required by industry employers and regulatory bodies.

Development of a Foreign Credential Recognition (FCR) System for Non-regulated Professions

Philip Mondor, Vice President and Director of Development, Canadian Tourism Human Resource Council

The Canadian Tourism Human Resource Council has been selected by Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) to conduct research throughout 2005 to investigate the development of a Foreign Credential Recognition (FCR) system for non-regulated professions. Philip will report

on the key findings of the Phase 1 Research, which highlights the need for PLAR systems and assessing of newcomer's competencies against job standards that employers understand.

12:00 PM - 12:45 PM — MANDARIN BALLROOM Closing Plenary

The Joy of Learning: The Poetics and Mechanics of PLA

Arpi Hamalian, Chairperson, Sectoral Commission on Education, Canadian Commission to UNESCO. Associate Professor, Department of Education, Concordia University.

- How to continue your voyage of self discovery in the wide world of possibilities, after you leave the CAPLA Fall Focus Workshop and AGM?
- How to do what is good for you while building sustainable communities that will support you in your voyage of self discovery?
- How to keep the flame of desire alive for new explorations?

Be sure to attend the Closing Plenary to qualify for the Drize draw.



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