

Teacher Education: South African Context

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ABSTRACT Teacher education in South Africa is a matter of concern to us. It is a concern to us because students who choose teaching career are few. The profession is surviving because of students who pass Grade 12 and find out that they are not qualifying to do their first prioritized, desired or chosen career in university and then turn to teaching as an alternative career. It becomes important to keep these teachers to be in the profession. It should be always remembered that teaching is a noble profession. It needs a professional individual who is dedicated to his work and who will practice roles of teacher as per Norms and Standards for educators. Teaching needs a professional individual who will be a role model to his learners. Students who choose teaching as a second choice and even those who choose teaching as their first priority career path need to undergo through three components of teacher education in order for them to remain in teaching profession for their entire long-life career. In this conceptual paper we would like to emphasise the importance of incorporating three components of teacher education for long-life career span of teachers. The three components which will lead discussion are initial teacher training, induction as well as teacher development or continuing professional development.

INTRODUCTION

In South Africa, teacher education concentrates more on initial teacher training and continuous professional development. The component of induction is neglected, which is a concern to us. Teachers enter education system without induction programme that will be of assistance for their survival in their new role as teachers.

In this paper we are to discuss the practice of teacher education in England and European Union, pre-democratic and post-democratic South Africa and strategies for South Africa in the transformation of teacher education.

TEACHER EDUCATION

Teacher education refers to the policies and procedures designed to equip prospective teachers with the knowledge, attitudes, behaviors and skills they require to perform their tasks effectively in the classroom, school and wider community (en.wikipedia.org 2013).

Although ideally it should be conceived of, and organised as, a seamless continuum, teacher education is often divided into these stages:

- *Initial teacher training / education* (a pre-service course before entering the classroom as a fully responsible teacher);
- *Induction* (the process of providing training and support during the first few years of teaching or the first year in a particular school); and
- *Teacher development or continuing professional development (CPD)* (an in-service process for practicing teachers) (en.wikipedia.org 2013).

TEACHER EDUCATION IN ENGLAND

For us to understand on what should be done in teacher education in South Africa, we find it necessary to discuss how teacher education is perceived in England and European Union. In the Importance of Teaching: The School White Paper 2010, the following has been discussed DoE (2010:19) states that: the evidence from around the world shows that the most important factor in determining the effectiveness of a school system is the quality of its teachers. The best education systems draw their teachers from the most academically able, and select them carefully to ensure

that they are taking only those people who combine the right personal and intellectual qualities. These systems train their teachers rigorously at the outset, focusing particularly on the practical teaching skills they will need. At each stage of their career, and especially as they move into leadership positions, teachers in the highest performing systems receive further focused training and development.

In the highest performing countries, teachers and teaching are held in the highest esteem. Rightly so, because all the evidence shows that good teachers make a profound difference. Studies in the United States have shown that an individual pupil taught for three consecutive years by a teacher in the top ten per cent of performance can make as much as two years more progress than a pupil taught for the same period by a teacher in the bottom ten per cent of performance (DoE 2010).

In England, the evidence about who is being attracted into teaching now is encouraging: where once the average degree class of those joining postgraduate initial teacher training was below average for the graduate population, it is now above average. But England has some way to go before the status of teaching matches its status in the highest performing countries: some 43% of teachers' rate the status of teaching as low, and 66% of final-year students at 30 top universities believe that teaching offers slow career progression and limited chances for promotion. The country continues to struggle to attract enough graduates in some shortage subjects like physics, chemistry and mathematics. And while some countries draw their teachers exclusively from the top tier of graduates, only two per cent of graduates obtaining first class honours degrees from Russell Group universities go on to train to become teachers within six months of graduating from university (DoE 2010).

The initial training of teachers is the most important part of their professional development. Over a twenty-year period, initial teacher training has tended to focus more sharply on classroom practice. Even so, new teachers report that they are not always confident about some key skills that they need as teachers, for example the teaching of systematic synthetic phonics as the proven Teaching and Leadership (DoE 2010).

Teachers training and development

DoE (2010) states that the state provides more opportunities for a larger proportion of trainees to learn on the job by improving and expanding the best of the current school-based routes into teaching – school-centred initial teaching training and the graduate teacher programme. A central

application system makes it easier for potential trainees to find a suitable place. Their strongest schools take the lead and trainees are able to develop their skills, learning from best teachers. Increased opportunities for school-based training suits career changers, new graduates and existing members of the school workforce wanting to learn on the job and receive a salary as they train.

As part of its work, the Department of Education expects Teaching Schools to draw together outstanding teachers in an area, who are committed to supporting other schools. There are currently many designations for these teachers, including Advanced Skills Teachers, Excellent Teachers and Leading Teachers. The Department of Education has re-examined this range of designations to create a single simple designation which identifies more clearly leading practitioners who work to support others. Alongside this, education department has created the national network of Teaching Schools, education department also designates ‘Specialist Leaders of Education’ – excellent professionals in leadership positions below the head teacher (such as deputies, bursars, heads of department) support others in similar positions in other schools (DoE 2010).

The DoE (2010) further states that at the same time, the department works to support the professional development of all teachers. As opportunities to observe and be observed are central to effective professional development, government makes it clear that there is no ‘three hour limit’ on the amount of time a teacher can be observed. The Chartered London Teacher model provides a reward for teachers reaching the ‘threshold’, which have undertaken a programme of collaborative professional development and meet challenging standards. The department looks at the scope for learning lessons from this nationally.

It is also vital that teachers are given the opportunity to deepen their subject knowledge and renew the passion which brought them into the classroom. An independent panel makes awards to support those who wish to pursue further study in their subject or broaden their expertise (DoE 2010).

QUALITY TEACHING: EUROPEAN UNION TEACHER EDUCATION

According to Emya (2013) teachers, school leaders and teacher educators are key actors in maintaining and improving the quality of education and training systems in Europe. Ministers of

Education have on three separate occasions recently identified priorities for improving the quality of teacher education systems. Taken together, these statements describe a vision of teacher education in Europe based upon high quality standards, professionalism and effective support. Teacher quality is the most important within-school factor affecting student performance. As such, it is vital to the achievement of Lisbon goals. The key role played by teachers and trainers in creating quality education and training systems was recognised from the very beginning of the Open Method of Coordination in Education and Training (OMCET).

Emya (2013) states that early work led to the drafting and validation by representatives of all Member States and stakeholders of a key document: 'Common European Principles for Teacher Competences and Qualifications'. Council Conclusions of November 2007, 2008 and 2009 describe a vision of Teacher Education in Europe in as follows:

- Key professional values and attitudes such as reflective practice, autonomous learning and collaboration are promoted;
- Practical teaching competencies are improved;
- Recruitment and selection are more effective so that Member States attract and retain the best candidates for the teaching profession and promote teaching as an attractive career;
- The quality of Initial Teacher Education is improved, with all teachers having a HE qualification that is evidence-based, and balances theory and practice;
- All beginning teachers, during their first years in the profession receive professional and personal support ('induction');
- All teachers are engaged in relevant and effective Continuing Professional Development, based upon regular reviews of their training needs;
- The recruitment and development of school leaders as leaders for learning is improved;
- The quality of Teacher Educators (Teacher Trainers) is promoted; and
- Each Teacher Education System is organised as a seamless continuum: and is adequately resourced and quality assured.

PRE-DEMOCRATIC TEACHER EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

Sayed (2002) states that the emergence of the system of teacher education has its roots in the apartheid system. As a consequence of the 1910 constitution, white teacher training was located under the control of the then four provinces. The introduction of the Bantu Education Act in 1953 necessitated a system for training black teachers. Thus a racially stratified teacher education system emerged, with separate teacher education colleges for Coloured, Indian, and Africans (Blacks). As the 'homelands' policy took root in the early 1960s, each 'self-governing' and later 'independent' African homeland took control of teacher education in its own area. Thus, by the 1960s, teacher education colleges were segregated along the lines of race and ethnicity, creating partial, multiple, and separate pathways to teacher education. The segregation of teacher education colleges was paralleled by the provision of separate university education for different racial groups. The Bantu Education Extension Act in 1959 created racially segregated universities with their 'own affairs' Faculties of Education.

For Africans in then 'white areas', teacher education colleges fell under the jurisdiction of the Department of Bantu Education, which came to be known in 1979 as the Department of Education and Training. The name change was an attempt to project a more 'friendly' image onto a racially and ethnically fragmented system (Sayed, 2002).

Sayed further states that by the early 1970s, teachers were trained in racially and ethnically separate colleges and universities. This was coupled with a system of posting which allocated trained teachers to different racially and ethnically segregated schools. In other words, each type of college and university trained teachers for specific schools.

Sayed (20023) further indicates that there were six key features of the apartheid system of teacher education:

- The mushrooming of teacher education providers since the 1950s was driven by the political logic of the apartheid system, which sought to provide separate forms of education for different racial and ethnic groups. The physical location of teacher education training institutions was thus based on the fragmented racial geography which socially engineered 'life spaces' of South Africans. Training provision was driven by the needs of the system as a whole and, as such, it was motivated by the specific political and ideological rationale of the apartheid system. Thus, it would be fair to characterise the teacher education system under apartheid as a 'system of systems', with different teacher education systems for different racial and ethnic groups.

- Fragmentation of the teacher education system determined whether individuals were trained and where they were posted. The supply and demand for teachers was consequently conditioned by the need to maintain racial and ethnic segregation and not related to an overall national plan (Carrim in Sayed 2002), notes that the apartheid system resulted in teachers acquiring their professional competencies through socialisation in a racialised environment. In governance terms, the system resulted in duplication of teacher training institutions, lack of overall coherence and articulation in the system, and limited quality assurance procedures and mechanisms. Economies of scale were not possible as the ‘own affairs’ approach to policy determined provision and supply.
- By 1994 there were 19 education departments responsible for teacher education, with 32 autonomous universities and technikons, and about 105 colleges of education scattered throughout the apartheid homelands system. This resulted in a very expensive system of teacher training with marked differences in costs between and within colleges and universities. Teacher education training was more expensive at colleges compared to universities. For example, lecturer: student ratios in colleges were about 1:10 compared to 1:20 in the university sector; this was partly a consequence of the fact that teacher education colleges were single purpose dedicated institutions with a high lecturer: student ratio.
- As a result of the ‘system of systems’ there was a multiplicity of curricula and qualifications. One important effect of the fragmented system was the fact that the bulk of training in black colleges and universities was limited to the humanities and arts subjects. This was a consequence of the underdevelopment of mathematics, science and technology in the secondary school system for the black population. Most of the graduates from black teacher training colleges were trained in subjects such as religious studies and history. There was thus a ‘vicious education cycle’, with too few teachers in maths, science, and technology, resulting in poor quality education in these subjects in the school system. A further curriculum difference, but one that has shifted in the early 1990s, was that colleges were primarily responsible for training primary school teachers, while universities focused on secondary school teachers. This distinction was replicated for each of the racial groups under the system of apartheid. This rigid binary distinction between colleges and universities prevented the rational sharing of resources, and prevented collaborative interaction between colleges and universities.

- The 'homelands' under apartheid were economically not viable, and the civil service and education were the principal means of employment. Teacher education under apartheid education was, therefore, the main source of jobs, creating a pool of professionals whose prospects were intimately connected to its existence.
- For the black population, educational opportunities were extremely limited, with very few students successfully completing even basic education, and even fewer successfully completing secondary schooling. Not only were there limited higher education opportunities, but even within the secondary school system, as indicated earlier, the curriculum was usually limited to humanities subjects such as history and religious studies. In this context, the logic of the system resulted in many enrolling in teacher education training programmes in order to acquire higher educational opportunities. Under apartheid, the black population's higher education options were effectively limited to 'teaching or preaching'. Teacher education was thus a strategic response to the lack of higher educational opportunities for the black population. As a result, the historically disadvantaged universities themselves were principally teacher training institutions, and focused on academic provision in the arts and social sciences.

POST-DEMOCRATIC TEACHER EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

The independent democratic South Africa amalgamated all education departments into one Department of Education. Acts such as National education Policy Act of 1996 and South African Schools Act of 1996 were promulgated; for higher education, the Department of Education introduced White Paper 3 on Higher Education. White Paper 3 on Higher Education states challenges of transformation, reconstruction and development and also future plans for the department. The economic and technological changes create an agenda for the role of higher education in reconstruction and development. This includes:

- Human resource development: the mobilisation of human talent and potential through lifelong learning to contribute to the social, economic, cultural and intellectual life of a rapidly changing society.
- High-level skills training: the training and provision of person power to strengthen this country's enterprises, services and infrastructure. This requires the development of professionals and knowledge workers with globally equivalent skills, but who are socially responsible and

conscious of their role in contributing to the national development effort and social transformation.

- Production, acquisition and application of new knowledge: national growth and competitiveness is dependent on continuous technological improvement and innovation, driven by a well-organised, vibrant research and development system which integrates the research and training capacity of higher education with the needs of industry and of social reconstruction.

TEACHER EDUCATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

There are lessons to be learnt from England and European Union strategies on teacher education development in South Africa. South Africa should emphasise the growth of teacher development like what European Union is practicing. This is to emphasise reflective practice, autonomous learning and collaboration; practical teaching competencies; quality of teachers; recruitment and development of school leaders as leaders for teaching and learning; and quality of initial teacher education.

It is of importance for us to point out that in South Africa when we engage ourselves in teacher education we should incorporate initial teacher training/education, induction and teacher development or continuing professional development. According to DoE (2005) a professional teacher is a person with the educated competences and abiding commitments needed to engage successfully in the professional practice of teaching. A professional teacher is characterised more by a commitment to the ideals of the profession, and flexible competences to pursue those ideals in a variety of circumstances, than by mere obedience to the legitimate requirements of an employer.

The practice of teaching is a situated and interpretative contextual practice. Although this practice does involve skills and routines, it cannot be reduced to skills and routines. Variations in what the exercise of this practice involves are dependent on variable contextual realities that include the level of the learners and the socio-historical, political contexts of practice. Expert teaching involves making situated, interpretive judgments, and this is one reason for saying that it is a professional practice.

For teacher education in South Africa we cannot look further than Report of the Ministerial Committee on Teacher Education 2005; The National Policy Framework for Teacher Education

and Development in South Africa of 2007; and Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa (ISPFTEDSA) 2011-2025 Technical Report.

The Report of the Ministerial Committee on Teacher Education 2005 has been shaped by the following broad principles (DoE, 2005):

- The right to quality education for all is a right without limitation, and it is one of the basic rights in a democratic South Africa.
- Schooling is a public good, for which public funding is provided.
- Teachers are the key agents in the quality of the education system. They should be treated and conceptualised as members of a profession (as opposed to as 'service workers'), and higher education qualifications for teachers need to be protected and benchmarked.
- One of the key principles of a healthy democracy is that there should be various sources of authority to prevent the abuse of power by any one authority. This principle is of particular significance in relation to defining professional teaching and the 'public good', conceptualising teacher education, and benchmarking 'quality education for all'.

The National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa of 2007 which has the motto or slogan of “more teachers, better teachers” has the following scope and purpose: it is designed to equip a teaching profession to meet the needs of the democratic South Africa in the 21st century. It brings clarity and coherence to the complex matrix of teacher education activities from initial recruitment and preparation to self-motivated professional development. The framework deals with teachers from schools and is not directed to teachers in adult education, early childhood development, or further education and training colleges. The policy framework aims to provide an overall strategy for the successful recruitment, retention and professional development of teachers. More specifically it aims to ensure that:

- Teachers are properly equipped to undertake their essential and demanding tasks;
- Teachers are able to continually enhance their professional competence and performance;
- Appropriately qualified teachers fill all vacancies in all schools, and that there is a dynamic balance between demand and supply of teachers;

- There is a community of competent teachers dedicated to providing education of high quality, with high levels of performance as well as ethical and professional standards of conduct; and
- Teachers are deservedly held in high regard in South Africa.

According to the Teacher Development Summit Declaration, the new, strengthened, integrated national Plan for teacher development should:

- Define clear roles, responsibilities and innovative, collaborative relationships among the key stakeholders for the improvement of teacher development;
- Relate key decisions to the broader context of teacher supply, utilisation and demand;
- Define the appropriate institutional arrangements for the delivery of key components of teacher development such as teacher education and professional development;
- Contain clear priorities and realistic timeframes for implementation;
- Recognise the needs of Early Childhood Development (ECD) practitioners and Foundation Phase educators as a particularly important aspect of the Plan;
- Reduce the overload of policy prescriptions and regulations;
- Provide for an equitable, adequate and efficient allocation of funds and other resources (including the source and destination of such funds and resources) to enable all teachers to perfect the art of teaching – the central concept underpinning the Summit; and
- Provide a platform for the development of robust human resource management and information systems that facilitate equitable and efficient provision of and support for teacher development (DoE 2011).

Initial teacher education

According to **Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa 2011-2025 Technical Report** (2011) initial teacher education should consider the following:

- The capacity, quality, cooperation, relevance and initial teacher education programmes should be improved.
- The total output of new teacher graduates should be increased to around 12 000 per annum by 2014 and 18 000 per annum by 2019.

- More aspirant teachers should be encouraged and supported to qualify as FET Phase mathematics, mathematical literacy, physical sciences, language, life orientation, economics and geography teachers.
- More aspirant teachers should be encouraged and supported to qualify as Senior Phase mathematics, natural sciences, economic and management sciences, arts and culture and language teachers.
- More aspirant teachers should be encouraged and supported to qualify as Intermediate Phase mathematics, natural sciences, arts and culture, economic and management sciences and technology teachers.
- More aspirant teachers should be encouraged and supported to qualify as Foundation Phase teachers, with particular emphasis on the ability to teach in an official language other than English or Afrikaans.
- Ways and means of encouraging and supporting private higher education institutions to increase their contribution to producing new teachers should be investigated.
- Direct incentives and other support should be provided to newly qualified teachers to teach in rural and remote schools and in quintile 1–4 schools.
- Efforts to attract and recruit more teachers into the profession should be redoubled, including targeting foreign educators and retraining unemployed teachers or teachers employed elsewhere.

Teacher education induction

South African policies on teacher education do not state induction as part of teacher education. Policies and strategic framework emphasise initial teacher training and teacher continuous development and leave out component of induction which is part and parcel of teacher education. Induction is a programme of teacher education which takes place during that critical period at the beginning of the newly qualified teacher's career, usually the first year after qualifying as a teacher. Induction, as the process of introducing the employee to the organization and the organization to the employee, begins at the time of appointment. Its purpose is to help new staff achieve competence quickly through having the necessary knowledge, support and guidance to carry out their duties effectively within a system that provides a foundation for further development (Early and Kinder 1994). To be effective, induction should lay foundation for a

lifelong professional career (Coleman 1997). Recognising the importance of the continuum of teacher education, induction aims to develop a culture of lifelong learning in each teacher. The purpose of an induction programme is to offer systematic professional and personal support to the newly qualified teacher.

In Pfitser, Huberman, Moon, Boud, Loughran, Johnson and Birkeland; Okumuş and Biber (2011) state that beginning teachers face many challenges and often have many problems and areas of concern. There is evidence from the literature that a teacher's first years in the profession are often challenging. These beginning years have been described as the "discovery and survival" phase of teaching. Educators and education researchers have long recognized the importance of teacher reflection as a means to foster teachers' growth in their professional practice. Since first years are different from what has gone before and what comes after, these years represent a special time in a teacher's career. Some examples that novices face are listed in this form:

- Problems that originated from instruction,
- School environmental problems,
- Workplace problems, and
- Supervisional problems.

First year is a difficult year to overcome problems for novice teachers. A new teacher faces the challenge of understanding and fitting into the culture of his or her new school. So, it is needed to support them. These include administrative support, continued support from teacher preparation institutions, colleagues with similar beliefs about teaching, and a supportive school community. In addition to the classroom-specific and school problems that new teachers often have, they are also adjusting to new situations in their personal life (Okumuş and Biber 2011).

After teachers have completed initial teacher training and are employed in different schools, they need to be inducted in order to understand transition from theory and practice. Induction is a comprehensive process of sustained training and support for new teachers. In concurrence, Kengwee and Adjei-Boateng (2010) state that significant mark of the teaching profession is its ability to ensure the smooth transition and success of its new entrants by bridging the gap between classroom learning and actual field practice. Beyond the initial excitement of joining the teaching profession, beginning teachers generally experience multiple challenges related to the

profession. The discrepancy between their vision of teaching and the reality on the ground makes things more difficult than they had anticipated.

AFT, Ingersoll and Smith in Kengwee and Adjei-Boateng (2010) state that induction and mentoring are necessary to help beginning teachers to succeed in their first years and remain in the profession as well as beginning teachers who are provided with support, are less likely to leave their schools and the noble profession. There has been a growth of teacher mentoring.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

CPD obligations are common to most professions. Many professions define CPD as a structured approach to learning to help ensure competence to practice, taking in knowledge, skills and practical experience. CPD can involve any relevant learning activity, whether formal and structured or informal and self-directed. There are however some factors to be considered when dealing with CPD. Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa (ISPFTEDSA) 2011-2025 Technical Report (2011:15) states that continuing professional development should consider the following:

- Responsibility for continuing professional development should be devolved to more local levels, and allow for the participation of a variety of role-players, while ensuring that national and provincial priorities are addressed.
- The personnel and paperwork required in order for teacher development to occur should be reduced.
- Teacher development should be separated from performance appraisal.
- Meaningful teacher induction programmes should be developed and supported.
- Teachers in all schools should be encouraged and supported, through an informational and advocacy campaign and the use of appropriate facilitators, mentors and guidelines, to establish new or strengthen existing professional learning communities.
- Time for teachers to participate in professional learning communities and engage in quality teacher development must be deliberately and formally scheduled.
- Teacher knowledge and practice standards for all teaching specialisations and professional practices should be developed.

- Diagnostic self-assessments tailored to assess teacher knowledge and practice standards should be developed and made available, with associated professional developmental resources, in both paper-based and electronic (including online) formats.
- Continuing professional development courses that are pedagogically sound, content rich, curriculum relevant and quality assured, should be identified and/or developed.
- Specific groups of teachers and schools in need of targeted development should be identified on the basis of the Curriculum Assessment Policy Statements National Curriculum Statements (CAPS) implementation review, National Senior Certificate (NSC) examination results, Annual National Assessments (ANA) and research on teacher qualification profiles.
- All Grade R teachers should be encouraged and supported to become professionally qualified. All unqualified and under-qualified teachers should be encouraged and supported to become professionally qualified at REQV 13 level or higher.
- All Special Needs teachers and teachers in Special Needs schools should be encouraged and supported to improve their qualifications and also their competence to teach in sign language and/or Braille.
- All subject advisors should be encouraged and supported to improve their curriculum competence.
- The number of subject advisors should be increased, possibly by redeploying competent excess provincial managerial staff, recently retired teachers and/or 'excess' teachers.
- All provincial and district managers involved in teacher development should be encouraged and supported to improve their competence.
- The kinds of programmes, services and partnerships offered via teacher development institutes and education resource centres need to be regularised and quality assured.
- Direct incentives and other support should be provided to teachers in rural and remote schools to improve their qualifications.
- Ways and means of encouraging and supporting private higher education institutions to increase their contribution to developing practising teachers should be investigated.

CONCLUSION

Teacher Education in South Africa has challenges, although the challenges are not insurmountable. The challenges include amongst others: The capacity, quality, cooperation, and relevance of teacher education to be improved, Continuing Professional Development (CPD) to be taken seriously and giving attention to inducting novice teachers. Induction programme which is neglected should be considered in order to retain trained teachers for longer period. Russels (2006) states that if educators are to become skilled professionals they need to be inducted and if they are to stay in the field, stake-holders need to take coordinated action to expand and improve induction programmes and to take them more universal.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Teacher education is composed of three components which are of equally importance. They are initial teacher training, induction and teacher continuous development. If all these components are equally considered, South Africa will never run short of teachers.

Initial teacher training: Recruitment and selection of candidates should be more effective in order to attract and retain the best candidates for the teaching profession and to promote teaching as an attractive career.

Induction: Induction programme should be developed in order for novice teachers to acclimatise with their new profession. Induction is the process of introducing the employee to the organization and the organization to the employee; it should begin at the time of appointment.

Continuing Professional Development: This should involve any relevant learning activity, whether formal and structured or informal and self-directed because teacher knowledge and practice standards for all teaching specialisations and professional practices should be developed.

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