



# CTSI Equity Roundtable: Engaging All Your Students with Universal Design for Learning

Ben Poynton  
AODA Officer

Cristina D'Amico,  
Faculty Liaison Coordinator,  
CTSI/TATP

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UNIVERSITY OF  
TORONTO

CENTRE FOR TEACHING SUPPORT & INNOVATION



# Land Acknowledgment

I wish to acknowledge this land on which the University of Toronto operates. For thousands of years it has been the traditional land of the Huron-Wendat, the Seneca, and the Mississaugas of the Credit. Today, this meeting place is still the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work on this land.





# Land Acknowledgment & Disability

"Until Indigenous people have a seat at the table that was made out of our stolen resources and sits on our stolen lands I will hold each and every one of you accountable. I do this with love because we can do better. I do this out of necessity because we must do better."



**Jen Deerinwater**

# Access Check

We understand access to be a shared responsibility between everyone in this space. We will strive to create an accessible space that reduces the need for you to disclose a disability or impairment for the purposes of gaining an accommodation. In doing this together, we strive to welcome disability, and the changes it brings, into our space.

- **Is there anything about the space that we should address now?**
- **Are there any other access needs that might effect your participation in the session that we could also address?**



# Learning Outcomes

By the end of the this session, you should be able to:

- understand the key principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL);
- identify strategies for engaging your students based on the principles of UDL;
- reflect on how you can incorporate accessible practices in your teaching.

# Poll question:

What is your level of knowledge of Universal Design for Learning (UDL)?

- a) Never heard of it
- b) You have heard a few things about it
- c) You have applied some UDL ideas in your teaching
- d) You use UDL quite extensively in your teaching
- e) You are an UDL wizard





# Understanding & Defining UDL

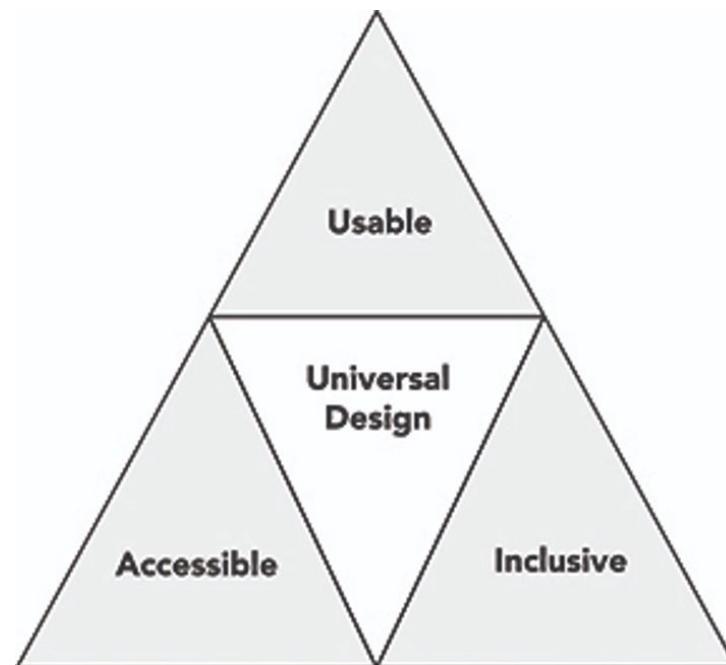




# Defining UDL:

“UDL is a set of principles for curriculum development that give all individuals equal opportunities to learn. [...] UDL provides a blueprint for creating instructional goals, methods, materials, and assessments that work for everyone—not a one-size-fits-all solution but rather flexible approaches that can be customized and adjusted for individual needs.”

(National Center on Universal Design for Learning)






# The UDL framework:



Provide multiple means of  
**Engagement** →


Affective Networks  
The "WHY" of learning



Students ask: Why should I care?

Provide multiple means of  
**Representation** →


Recognition Networks  
The "WHAT" of learning



Students ask: What are you teaching?

Provide multiple means of  
**Action & Expression** →

Strategic Networks  
The "HOW" of learning



Students ask: How do I use this?

**Expert Learners** who are...

Goal

**Purposeful & Motivated**

Big takeaway: Stimulate interest and motivation for learning.

**Resourceful & Knowledgeable**

Big takeaway: Present information and content in different ways.

**Strategic & Goal-Directed**

Big takeaway: Differentiate the ways that students can express what they know.

# UDL & accessible learning

## Access

Recruit interest & offer options for perception & physical action:

- Example, minimize distraction

## Build

Develop effort and persistence, use language and symbols, diverse expression & communication:

- Example, provide alternatives for auditory information

## Internalize

Empower learners through self-regulation, comprehension, and executive function:

- Example, optimize access to tools and assistive tech



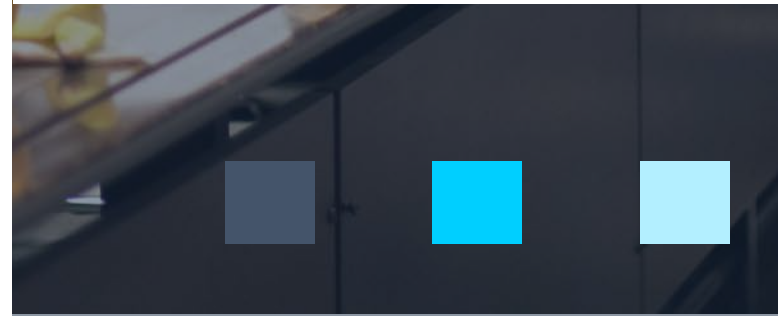
# PADLET ACTIVITY

## Think-Write-Share

- What are key barriers to learning that students experience in your discipline?

3 min for writing and 3 min for sharing

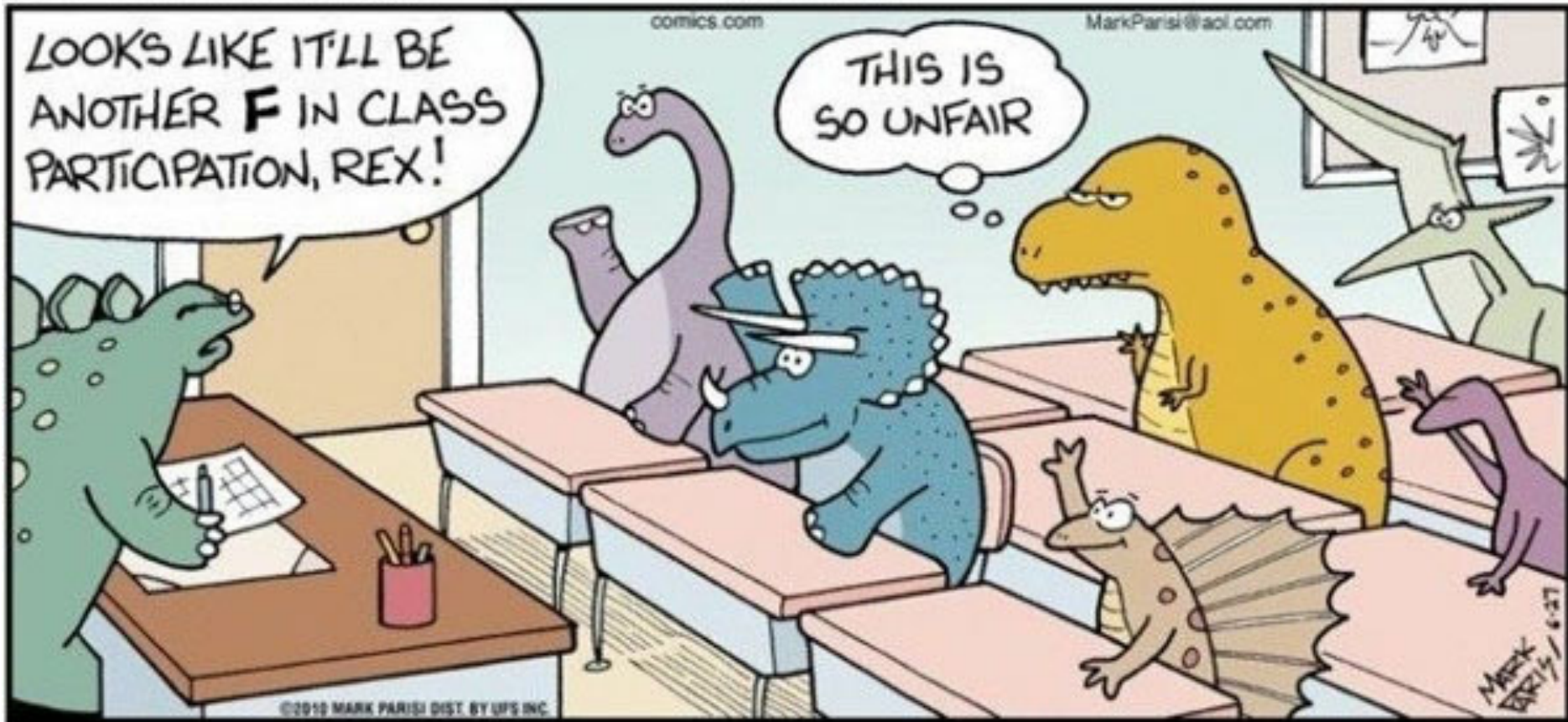
Use the QR code to log in if you're on mobile



# Challenge: Identifying Student Barriers

off the mark.com

by Mark Parisi



more funny stuff at [FUNNYASDUCK.NET](http://FUNNYASDUCK.NET)

Students can demonstrate their learning in diverse ways.





# Universal Design: Strategies for Student Engagement





## Let's explore four strategies:

- 1) Needs Assessment
- 2) Low Stakes Formative Assessment
- 3) Community Agreements
- 4) Multiple Means of Participation

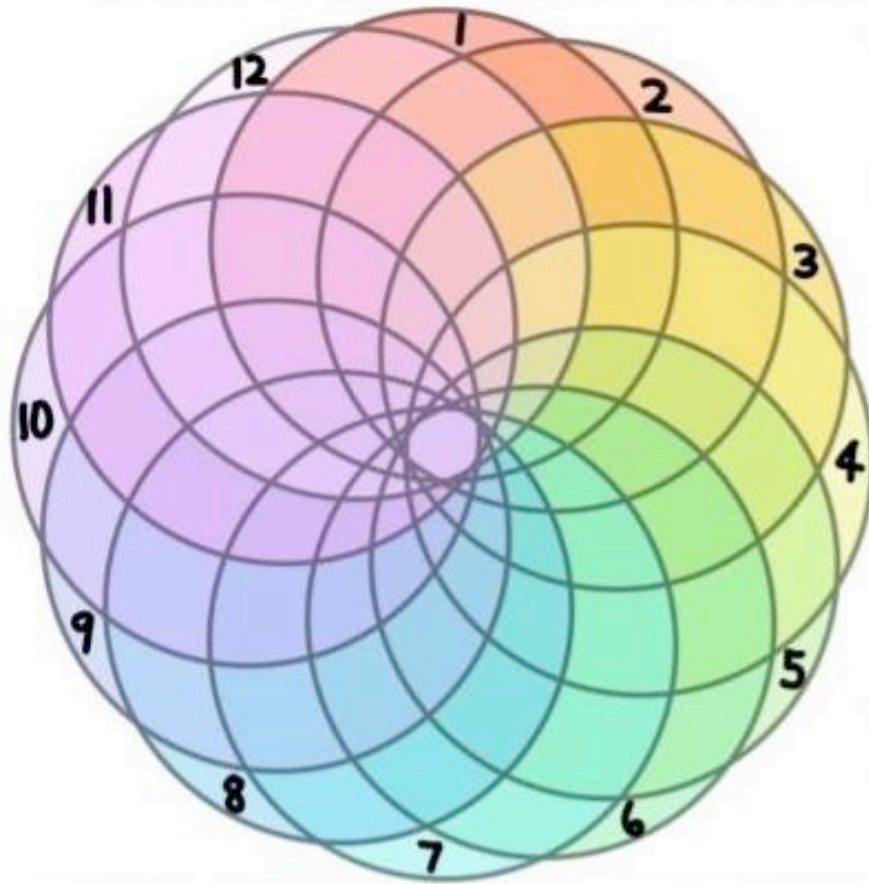
# 1. Needs Assessment

- A short (anonymous) survey to help you better understand your students. Sample questions:
  - What is your disciplinary training?
  - What are you most concerned/looking forward to in the course?
  - What would you like me to know about you?

Suggested tool: [Microsoft Forms](#)



# INTERSECTIONALITY



- 1 Race
  - 2 Ethnicity
  - 3 Gender identity
  - 4 Class
  - 5 Language
  - 6 Religion
  - 7 Ability
  - 8 Sexuality
  - 9 Mental health
  - 10 Age
  - 11 Education
  - 12 Body size
- (...and many more...)

Who are our students?

Reflect on the identity of students in your course(s).

What can be their needs?

Intersectionality is a lens through which you can see where power comes and collides, where it locks and intersects. It is the acknowledgement that everyone has their own unique experiences of discrimination and privilege.

- Kimberlé Crenshaw -

@sylviaaduckworth





## 2. Low Stakes Formative Assessments

- Provide students the opportunity to practice key course skills for assessments.
- Low stakes and opportunity for on-demand feedback.
- Offers instructors the ability to assess student learning and redirect course planning if necessary.



# 3. Community Agreements

- A shared agreement between learners about how you want to work together over a semester.
- Possible ingredients: respect for diversity; openness; active attention; netiquette; etc.

**TATP** Teaching Assistants' Training Program

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## Community Agreements

### What is a Community Agreement? Why make Community Agreements?

A community agreement (also known as group contract, learning agreement or classroom agreement) is a shared agreement between learners about how we want to work together over the course of our time together. This can include guidelines for what it means to be respectful, expectations about turn-taking, or accessibility needs (e.g. please don't bring peanuts to class). Discussing and deciding on how the group will work together builds a collective responsibility to make the classroom a safer place and give students an opportunity to voice their needs in co-developing a productive and equitable learning environment. In building community agreements as a class, we have the chance to foster shared accountability and student buy-in to the learning process.

### How to develop a community agreement?

During one of your first classes together, invite students to think about what they need in order to make the class environment safer, equitable, and productive for learning: What would help us work best together? You can do this through individual writing prompts, a think-pair-share, or another active learning strategy. After giving students time to reflect and discuss in small groups, collectively generate a list of agreements. You can also consider asking this question in advance through email or Quercus, and having students contribute digitally to the generation of ideas.

Make sure to clarify what each contribution means. For example, "being respectful" can mean different things in different contexts. Also check for active consent: are these the guidelines that people want to govern the group? Does anyone have concerns about them? Revise these guidelines until the class members are satisfied and feel ready to commit to the collective agreement.

You can also use group agreements for group project work. Allow each group time to develop their own agreements for how they will work together. This may help alleviate the stress of unclear expectations around group work, help students to advocate for themselves and resolve conflicts together.

### Looking for suggestions on things to include in a community agreement?

- **Respect**—Give undivided attention to the person who has the floor (permission to speak).
- **Openness**—We will be as open and honest as possible without disclosing others' personal or private issues (e.g., family, roommates, friends). It is okay to discuss situations, but we won't use names or other identifiers. For example, we won't say, "My older brother...", instead we will say, "I know someone who...".
- **Right to pass**—It is always okay to pass (meaning "I'd rather not" or "I don't want to answer").
- **Nonjudgmental approach**—We can disagree with another person's point of view without putting that person down.
- **Taking care to claim our opinions**—We will speak our opinions using the first person and avoid using 'you'. For example, "I think that kindness is important", instead of "You are just mean".
- **Sensitivity to diversity**—We will remember that people in the group may differ in cultural background, sexual orientation, and/or gender identity or gender expression and will be careful about making insensitive or careless remarks.

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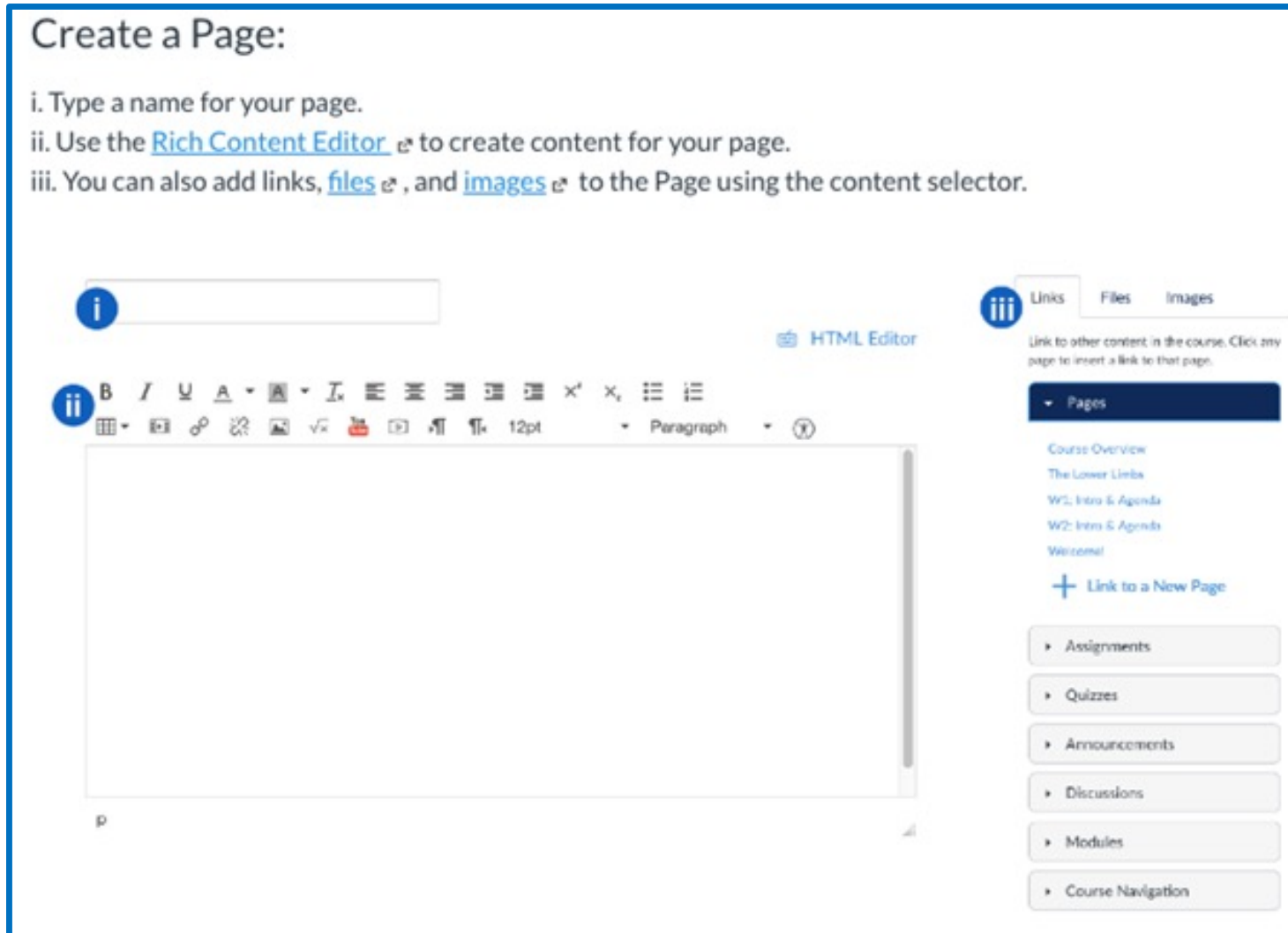


# 3. Multiple Means of Engagement: Sustaining Effort & Persistence

## Building a community agreement using Wikis in Quercus.

Create a Page:

- Type a name for your page.
- Use the [Rich Content Editor](#) to create content for your page.
- You can also add links, [files](#), and [images](#) to the Page using the content selector.



The screenshot displays the 'Create a Page' interface in Quercus. At the top, there are three numbered instructions: i. Type a name for your page. ii. Use the Rich Content Editor to create content for your page. iii. You can also add links, files, and images to the Page using the content selector. Below the instructions, there is a text input field for the page name, a rich content editor with a toolbar (including bold, italic, underline, link, image, video, and list options), and a sidebar with navigation options like 'Links', 'Files', 'Images', and a list of course pages.



# 4. Multiple Means of Participation

The image displays the Snagit Editor interface, which is used for capturing and editing content. The main window shows a screenshot of the University of Toronto website. The interface includes a menu bar (File, Edit, Image, Share, View, Help) and a toolbar with various tools like Capture, Arrow, Text, Callout, Shape, Stamp, Fill, Move, Simplify, Undo, Redo, Copy All, and Share. The Share button is highlighted with a red box. Below the toolbar, there are navigation tabs for WEBSITE, QUERCUS, and ACORN, and a section for FUTURE STUDENTS. A video player is visible at the bottom, with a red box highlighting the 'Cut' and 'Cancel' buttons. A 'Share' dialog box is open, showing options for File and Email, and a 'Video' tab is selected. The Video tab includes options for Selection (Region), Share (None), and Webcam (Off). There are also checkboxes for Preview in Editor, Capture Cursor, Record Microphone, and Record System Audio. A large red 'Capture' button is visible on the right side of the Video tab. The bottom status bar shows 'Recent', 'Tag', and '1920 x 944px'.





# Reflecting on UDL & barriers to student learning

**Let us know in the chat or by turning on your microphone/video:** did any of the suggested tips address barriers for your students? How or why not?

# Final Takeaways & Reflections



# ACTIVITY

## Give one, Get one:

### Exploring UDL practices

Many of us are already implementing UDL in our teaching but may not be calling it this:

- Strategy for providing effective feedback.
- Strategy for scaffolding assessments to optimize number of submissions (responding to your and your students' workload).
- Strategy for assessment to focus on both process and outcome.
- Strategy for offering assessments in different formats.

# THANK YOU

[ctsi.teaching@utoronto.ca](mailto:ctsi.teaching@utoronto.ca)



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