

Comparison of Teaching Planning in Learning Activities: Conventional and Innovative Approaches in the Era of Educational Transformation

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the comparison between conventional and innovative instructional planning models in the context of educational transformation. The objectives are (1) to describe the characteristics of various instructional planning models, (2) to analyze their differences and similarities, and (3) to evaluate the effectiveness of new approaches such as the Merdeka Curriculum, Project-Based Learning, and differentiated instruction in improving the quality of teaching and learning processes. The research method includes a literature review and comparative analysis of various instructional planning approaches. The findings indicate that (1) modern instructional planning must be student-centered, (2) competency- and character-based, and (3) make optimal use of technology. Innovative models prove to be more effective due to their flexibility, participatory nature, and ability to adapt to student diversity through active learning methods such as Project-Based Learning, Differentiated Instruction, and Backward Design. New approaches like the Merdeka Curriculum have demonstrated positive impacts on learning quality by fostering active, collaborative, and contextual learning environments, thereby promoting the development of 21st-century skills and character values in a sustainable manner. The study recommends the need for professional teacher training, strengthening educators' capacity in designing innovative lesson plans, and policy support to enable the implementation of adaptive and relevant learning practices. Thus, instructional planning can serve as a key strategy in creating high-quality and transformative learning experiences.

Keywords: Teaching Planning; Innovative Learning; Independent Curriculum; Learning Differentiation

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengkaji perbandingan model perencanaan pengajaran konvensional dan inovatif di era transformasi pendidikan. Tujuannya adalah (1) mendeskripsikan karakteristik, (2) menganalisis perbedaan, serta (3) mengevaluasi efektivitas pendekatan baru seperti Kurikulum Merdeka, Project-Based Learning, dan pembelajaran diferensiasi. Metode yang digunakan meliputi studi literatur dan analisis komparatif. Hasil menunjukkan bahwa (1) Perencanaan pengajaran modern harus berorientasi pada peserta didik, (2) berbasis kompetensi dan karakter, serta (3) memanfaatkan teknologi secara optimal. Model inovatif lebih efektif karena bersifat fleksibel, partisipatif, dan mampu menyesuaikan dengan keragaman siswa melalui metode aktif seperti project-based learning, diferensiasi instruksional, dan backward design. Pendekatan baru seperti Kurikulum Merdeka terbukti meningkatkan kualitas pembelajaran dengan menciptakan suasana belajar yang aktif, kolaboratif, dan kontekstual, sehingga mendorong pengembangan keterampilan abad ke-21 dan nilai karakter secara berkelanjutan. Rekomendasi penelitian adalah perlunya pelatihan profesional guru, penguatan kapasitas dalam menyusun rencana pembelajaran inovatif, serta dukungan kebijakan untuk implementasi pembelajaran adaptif. Dengan demikian, perencanaan pengajaran dapat menjadi strategi utama dalam menciptakan pembelajaran yang berkualitas dan transformatif.

Kata Kunci: Perencanaan Pengajaran; Pembelajaran Inovatif; Kurikulum Merdeka; Diferensiasi Pembelajaran



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INTRODUCTION

Lesson planning is the main foundation in the entire educational process, as it determines the direction, goals, and quality of learning in the classroom (Pawero, 2021). According to Inayah et al. (2024), good planning is not just an administrative document, but more than that it is a strategic process to ensure the achievement of learning objectives that are meaningful and relevant to the needs of learners and the dynamics of the learning environment that continues to develop. (Adha et al., 2024). Teachers as learning designers are required to not only formally prepare lesson plans, but also integrate contextual pedagogical visions to create effective, adaptive, and transformative learning experiences.

However, the reality of education in Indonesia still shows a gap between the quality of lesson plans and practice in the field. Many teachers still develop lesson plans only to fulfill administrative demands without being used as a reflective guide in designing meaningful learning. (Nursalam, 2016 & Fallis, 2013; Rahman & Kurniawan, 2025). This is becoming increasingly complex along with the challenges of today's education, such as

the diversity of learner characteristics, inequality of access to technology, and demands for the development of 21st century skills, including critical thinking, collaboration, communication and creativity. If planning is not based on analyzing students' needs and characteristics, learning objectives will not be achieved optimally, and may even lead to failure in knowledge transfer and student character building (Mustofa, 2022).

While there have been many studies on instructional planning models, there are not many that systematically compare the application of conventional and innovative approaches in Indonesia's multicultural and disruptive post-pandemic educational context. Most previous research tends to focus on one particular approach or context, thus lacking a comprehensive perspective on how the various models can complement each other or be selected according to local needs. In addition, the relatively new implementation of Merdeka Curriculum in Indonesia poses its own challenges for teachers in developing innovative lesson plans while still complying with national education standards (Santika et al., 2022; Sulthan Saladin Usman, 2024).

This research offers a more holistic approach by conducting an in-depth comparative study between conventional and innovative approaches in teaching planning, complemented by contextual analysis related to the implementation of Merdeka Curriculum, project-based learning, and instructional differentiation. (Alamin & Ali, 2025; Listrianti & Nuzulah, 2025). This study not only compares the structural aspects of lesson plans, but also empirically evaluates their impact on student learning processes and outcomes. This approach is expected to provide new insights for teachers in designing lessons that are more inclusive, flexible and theoretically data-driven.

Theoretically, this research contributes to the enrichment of educational literature, especially in the field of learning planning relevant to the transformation of national education. Practically, this research is very important for educators, curriculum designers, and policy makers in improving learning planning practices that are more effective and responsive to the needs of diverse learners. (Mobonggi, Arten, Ibnu Rawandhy N. Hula, Fatimah Djafar, Febrianto Hakeu, 2024). The results of this study are also expected to be the basis for the preparation of teacher professional training and improvement of education policies, especially in order to improve the quality of learning in education units.

The current condition of education also requires the implementation of student-centered learning, project-based learning, integrative, and optimal use of digital technology (Amaliyah et al., 2024; Pokhrel, 2024; Sufia, 2025). The paradigm shift from conventional learning to transformative learning requires more careful, creative and evidence-based planning efforts. Learning planning is no longer static, but must be flexible, adaptive to change, and able to answer the challenges of global education disruption. In connection with this, teachers are required to have the competence to design and implement learning that is responsive to the needs of diverse students, both in terms of learning styles, interests, and socio-cultural backgrounds.

Various approaches and models of teaching planning have been developed in response to the needs of modern education, such as backward design, differentiation-based learning, and the Independent Curriculum approach (Syafei, 2019). The backward design model starts from the formulation of expected learning outcomes, then the appropriate learning activities and assessments are designed (Azharghany & Unniam, 2023; Lungu, 2025). Meanwhile, differentiation-based learning emphasizes the arrangement of learning based on students' individual needs (Istika et al., 2024; Rosaliana, 2025). On the other hand, Merdeka Curriculum provides greater space for teachers to design contextual, flexible, and student-centered learning (Meiria Nurphi, Bima Fandi Asy'arie, Rachmad Arif Ma'ruf, 2024; Putri Rizki Utami, Lili Rahmawati, 2025). This diversity of approaches shows that teaching planning today must be able to respond to the complexity of needs and expectations in the world of education.

In addition, national policies such as the implementation of Merdeka Curriculum, the use of formative and diagnostic assessments, and the integration of digital technology in learning further emphasize the importance of innovative and reflective teaching planning. These policies require teachers to understand, compare and evaluate various approaches in developing lesson plans in order to improve students' competencies holistically, both cognitive, affective and psychomotor (Ali et al., 2025; Febrianto Hakeu¹, Arten Mobonggi, 2024). Therefore, a comparative study of instructional planning models is highly relevant to assist educators in selecting and implementing the most effective approaches according to their learning contexts.

In the current context, the need for resilient and flexible teaching plans is increasingly urgent. Teachers must be able to design learning that can take place online, offline, or hybrid (Alfani, 2023; Febrianti Zulaicha et al., 2022). In addition to time allocation and teaching materials, planning must consider the readiness of devices, digital media, and psychosocial support for learners. Failure to plan carefully and adaptively during this transition period can lead to significant lost learning opportunities for students, especially those in marginalized areas (Febrianti Zulaicha et al., 2022).

Based on this complexity, a comparative study of teaching planning models is very important. This study will open a reflective space for educators to re-examine the extent to which the lesson planning that has been carried out has responded to the needs of students and the challenges of contemporary education. By placing teaching planning as a strategic and transformative process, education is expected to run not only as a process of transferring knowledge, but also as an effort to form human beings who are smart, have character, and are ready to face the changing times (Azizah, 2025).

This study aims to (1) Describe the characteristics of teaching planning applied in various learning approaches that have developed in the era of educational transformation (2) Analyze the differences and similarities between conventional and innovative teaching planning models in responding to the needs and characteristics of students, (3) Evaluate the effectiveness of teaching planning based on new approaches, such as the

Merdeka Curriculum, project-based learning, and differentiated learning, in improving the quality of learning processes and outcomes in educational units.

METHOD

Merdeka Curriculum, research journals, scientific articles, textbooks, and guidelines for implementing project-based learning, differentiation, and backward design. These data are analyzed to understand the characteristics, differences, and effectiveness of each instructional planning model in responding to the needs of students and the challenges of modern education.

Data collection procedures were carried out through searching and selecting relevant literature sources from national and international journal databases, Ministry of Education official websites, and trusted academic references. The selected sources were limited to literature that discussed the teaching planning model, its implementation in the field, and the results of the evaluation of its effectiveness. This process was carried out systematically using keywords such as “teaching planning”, “innovative learning models”, “Merdeka Curriculum”, “project-based learning”, and “learning differentiation”.

Data analysis techniques are carried out through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and verification. Data reduction was done by selecting and simplifying important information from various literature sources. Furthermore, the data was presented in the form of a comparative narrative to compare teaching planning models. The last stage is verification, which is summarizing the findings based on the analysis that has been done to answer the formulation of the research problem. Overall, this research method is designed to provide a comprehensive picture of the development, differences, and effectiveness of teaching planning models relevant to the current educational transformation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Characteristics of Teaching Planning in Various Learning Approaches in the Era of Educational Transformation

Instructional planning in the current era of educational transformation has much more complex characteristics compared to previous approaches. This transformation is not only triggered by changes in education policy, but also by social dynamics, advances in information technology, and global demands for 21st century competencies. In this context, it is no longer enough for teaching plans to contain time allocations, lists of materials, and lecture methods, but must reflect the integration of knowledge, skills, and character (Paper et al., 2023).

Teachers are required to be learning designers who are able to develop contextualized, problem-based learning experiences and accommodate the diverse backgrounds of learners. Therefore, the teaching plan applied today must contain elements of flexibility, relevance and meaningfulness.

1. Oriented to Learner-Centered Learning

One of the main characteristics of teaching planning in the contemporary approach is student-centered learning. The teacher is no longer the center of information delivery, but rather a facilitator who directs learners to discover knowledge independently (Tang, 2023).

In this framework, planning is not only designed for one type of student, but should consider the different learning styles, interests, readiness and abilities of individuals in a class. This approach emphasizes the importance of early assessment and formative assessment as an integral part of planning

Table 1. Comparison of Student-Centered Learning and Teacher-Centered Learning Approaches

Aspects	Teacher-Centered	Student-Centered
The Role of the Teacher	Information center	Facilitator
Method	Lectures, practice questions	Exploration, discussion, collaboration
Evaluation	Summative	Formative and authentic
Media	Limited	Interactive and digital
Method	Lectures, practice questions	Exploration, discussion, collaboration

2. Competency-based Learning

A competency-based learning approach characterizes modern teaching planning. Learning outcomes are not only expressed in terms of material mastery, but also in terms of critical, creative, communicative and collaborative thinking skills (Stanikzai, 2023).

Teachers are required to develop learning objectives that lead to strengthening the core competencies and character of students. This is different from the previous approach which tended to emphasize the completion of material in the textbook.

Table 2. Conventional vs Competency-Based Learning Objectives

Aspects	Conventional	Competency-Based
Method	Lectures, exercises	Projects, simulations, case studies
Purpose	Memorization of concepts	Application of the concept
Evaluation	Final test	Reflection and presentation
Result	Memorize	Understanding, analyzing, creating

3. Integration of Technology in the Learning Process

Another characteristic is the integration of technology as part of the learning process. Teaching planning in the current digital era cannot be separated from the use of digital platforms, interactive media, and online learning resources that can be accessed flexibly by students (Hanik et al., 2022).

Teachers are required to design learning that utilizes Learning Management System (LMS), learning videos, online discussion forums, and various educational digital

applications. In addition, planning must consider students' digital literacy, infrastructure readiness, and the potential for online collaboration that can enrich the learning process.

Table 3. Digital Technology in Teaching Planning

Technology	Function in Learning	Application
LMS	Classroom and material management	Google Classroom, Moodle
Learning Videos	Concept visualization	YouTube Edu, Khan Academy
Discussion Forum	Collaboration and reflection	Padlet, Microsoft Teams
Educational Applications	Exercises and evaluations	Kahoot, Quizizz, Canva
Presentation Applications	Convey learning outcomes	PowerPoint, Prezi, Google Slide

4. Continuous Reflection and Adjustment

The last characteristic that stands out in today's teaching planning is the emphasis on reflection and continuous adjustment. Teachers no longer prepare plans as final and static documents, but as living documents that must be continuously evaluated and adjusted based on real conditions in the classroom (Al-Riyami et al., 2024).

This includes adjustments to classroom dynamics, policy changes, changing student needs, and feedback from previous learning processes. Thus, lesson planning becomes a continuous, reflective cycle, in which teachers play an important role as lifelong learners (Manfra, 2019).

Table 4. Reflective Cycles in Teaching Planning

Technology	Function in Learning	Application
Structure	Remain	Flexible
Evaluation	End of semester	Daily/ Formative
Adaptation	None	Based on feedback
Dokumen	Final	Flower
Responsivitas	Slow	Fast and reflective

Based on the analysis of the characteristics of teaching planning in the era of educational transformation, several important findings are obtained as follows: (1) Modern teaching planning must be student-centered learning. Teachers are no longer the center of information conveyors, but rather facilitators who guide students to actively explore, collaborate, and participate independently. Lesson plans should be designed to accommodate the various learning styles, interests and abilities of individuals in a class and consider the results of initial and formative assessments as an integral part of the process. Thus, lesson plans not only provide space for students' exploration and active participation, but also create contextualized and meaningful learning experiences. (2) Current learning planning must be competency and character-based. Learning outcomes

are not only measured by mastery of the material, but put more emphasis on developing 21st century skills such as critical thinking, creativity, communication, and collaboration, as well as strengthening character values such as responsibility, empathy, and integrity. In this approach, teachers design activities that encourage higher-order thinking skills, such as project creation, case studies, simulations and presentations. This shows that teaching planning has shifted from content-centric to competency-centric models, making it more relevant to the demands of today's dynamic and complex world of education (Silva et al., 2023).

B. Differences and Similarities between Conventional and Innovative Teaching Planning Models

The conventional teaching planning model is generally designed based on a linear and strictly structured instructional approach. In this model, teachers organize learning based on a logical sequence: delivery of material → practice questions → final (summative) assessment. The main focus is on achieving instructional objectives that have been formulated in the form of measurable behaviors, as stated in the format of the Learning Implementation Plan (RPP) which refers to the national curriculum rigidly. In practice, the teacher plays a dominant role as the main source of information, while students are more passive and only receive knowledge. This model was widely used in the past because it was considered easy to implement and provided clarity of flow and ease in the administrative evaluation process (Baumgartner et al., 2022).

In contrast, the innovative teaching planning model emphasizes flexibility, active learner participation and meaning in the learning process. Approaches such as backward design, Problem-Based Learning (PBL), Project-Based Learning (PjBL) and differentiation are integral to this model (Sudarso et al., 2024). It is characterized by starting from the desired learning outcomes and then designing the learning process and assessment. In this context, planning is no longer top-down, but can be customized based on students' individual interests, needs and abilities. Teachers act as facilitators who guide students to discover knowledge through collaborative, investigative and reflective activities. The assessments used tend to be formative and authentic, thus providing continuous feedback to learners..

Table 5. Comparison of Characteristics of Conventional and Innovative Teaching Planning Models

Aspects	Conventional models	Innovative Models
Structure	Linier dan statis	Dynamic and flexible
Focus Goal	Content mastery- test access	Competency and character development
The Role of the Teacher	As an information center	As a facilitator and learning companion
Role of Students	Passive, receiving only information	Active, exploratory, and collaborative
Learning Methods	Lectures, practice questions, tests	Discussions, projects, simulations, case studies

Evaluation	Summative (end of learning)	Formative and authentic (throughout the process)
Technology	Limited-visual complement	Integrated in the learning process
Student Needs	No individual customization	In accordance with the student's learning style and interests
Application Context	Suitable for technical/procedural learning	More relevant for complex and transformative learning

Despite the significant differences, the two models still have important similarities. Both make planning a strategic first step in ensuring the effectiveness of the learning process. Both conventional and innovative models still refer to the principles of organizing learning objectives, materials, methods, media and evaluation (Cordova-Pozo & Rouwette, 2023). In addition, both also require clarity of learning objectives and basic competencies to be achieved. At the operational level, planning in both models remains a tool for teachers to manage the class, set learning achievement targets, and ensure the learning process runs systematically and purposefully.

Table 6. Structural Similarities between Conventional and Innovative Models

Aspects	Conventional models	Innovative Models
Learning Objectives	Formulated before the implementation of learning	Formulated from the beginning according to learning outcomes
Teaching Materials	Compiled based on the official curriculum	Tailored to local context and needs
Learning Methods	Fixed and uniform methods	Diverse and situationally adjusted
Learning Media	Textbooks and stationery	Digital and interactive media
Evaluation	Final assessment and written test	Holistic, authentic, and sustainable assessments
Time Organization	Fixed and rigid time allocation	Flexible according to class dynamics
Plan Document	Final and static documents	Live and dynamic documents
Context Fit	Suitable for both technical and procedural domains	Relevant for contextual and transformative learning
Diverse and situationally adjusted	Diverse and situationally adjusted	Diverse and situationally adjusted

The fundamental difference between the two models lies in the way the roles of teachers and students in learning are perceived. In the conventional model, the teacher is the sole authority in the classroom, so students have very limited space and minimal room for expression or initiative. In contrast, the innovative model positions students as active, independent subjects of learning and entitled to learning experiences that suit their needs and learning styles. This implies a more dynamic and inclusive planning structure and allows for the integration of various humanist, contextual and social reality-based learning approaches.

While conventional models still have a place in certain contexts - such as basic

procedural or technical learning - innovative models are more responsive to the complex demands of modern education. Therefore, an in-depth understanding of the differences and similarities between these two models is important for teachers to choose and adapt the right planning model based on the situation, learners' needs and institutional context. Selective integration between the two models can also be done to create effective, efficient and contextualized learning designs.

C. The Effectiveness of New Approach-Based Lesson Planning in Improving the Quality of Learning Processes and Outcomes

Teaching plans developed using new approaches, such as Merdeka Curriculum, Project-Based Learning (PjBL), and differentiated learning, have shown a positive impact in improving the quality of the learning process in the classroom. These approaches are personalized and contextualized to address students' diverse learning needs (Oktoma et al., 2025). In practice, lesson planning that adopts innovative models can create an active, participatory and collaborative learning atmosphere. The learning process is no longer teacher-centered but provides more space for students to explore knowledge, relate it to real-life experiences and develop 21st century skills. This has direct implications for increasing students' learning motivation, emotional engagement, and critical thinking skills during learning.

Table 7. Structural Similarities between Conventional and Innovative Models

approach	Positive Impact on Students	Achievement of 21st Century Competencies
Independent Curriculum	Providing teacher autonomy in developing learning plans that are appropriate to the local context	Mastery of Pancasila character, creativity, and responsibility
Project-Based Learning (PjBL)	Improve social, leadership, and time management skills	Collaboration, communication, problem-solving
Differentiated Instruction	Tailor learning to individual learning styles	Adaptability, self-awareness, self-confidence
Backward Design	Ensure the efficient achievement of learning objectives	Think critically, analytically, and reflectively

The effectiveness of the new approach can also be seen in the increasing relevance of teaching materials to students' daily lives. One example is the implementation of Project-Based Learning, where students are invited to solve real problems related to their social environment. In this case, a good lesson plan will organize the flow of learning activities from problem exploration, idea generation, project implementation, to presentation of the final results (Rachmawati et al., 2024). This process not only develops cognitive abilities, but also important life skills such as teamwork, leadership and responsibility. Thus, students indirectly learn to apply theory in concrete situations, so

that learning outcomes become more meaningful and sustainable.

In addition, differentiated learning in teaching planning has proven effective in responding to the diverse characteristics of learners in the classroom. Through early diagnostic assessments, teachers can develop learning activities that are tailored to students' readiness levels, interests and learning styles. This approach makes planning more inclusive; respects difference and encourages each student to develop to their potential. The main advantage of differentiation is its ability to create a learning atmosphere that is not homogeneous, but instead fosters the awareness that each student is unique and entitled to an appropriate learning experience. In the long run, this method can increase self-confidence, active participation, and more equitable learning outcomes among learners (Taylor, 2017).

Table 8. Factors Supporting the Effectiveness of New Approaches to Lesson Planning

Factor	Description	Implementation Examples
Initial Needs Analysis	Diagnostic assessments to understand students' characteristics and learning readiness	Initial tests, observations, study interviews
Technology Integration	Use of digital platforms to improve interactivity and access to information	LMS (Learning Management System), learning videos, educational applications
Collaborative Activity Design	Develop student groupwork and active participation	Discussions, group projects, simulations
Continuous Formative Assessment	Regular feedback to customize the learning process	Daily assessment, student reflection, assessment rubric
Teacher Autonomy	Teachers are given the freedom to adapt the lesson plan to the local context	Flexible lesson plan design, integration of local learning resources
Character Strengthening	Character values are included in each stage of learning	Activities that foster responsibility, empathy, and integrity

The Merdeka Curriculum, Indonesia's newest education policy, also supports the effectiveness of transformative lesson planning. Teachers are given the freedom to design lessons based on local contexts and student needs, with an emphasis on strengthening the Pancasila Learner Profile. In lesson planning, teachers do not only rely on textbooks, but also use various learning resources, design ongoing formative assessments, and insert character values in every learning activity. The flexibility and autonomy given to teachers are the main advantages of this approach, so that learning becomes more authentic, meaningful, and relevant to students' future challenges.

While this new approach has been shown to be highly effective, its success is highly dependent on the quality of planning done by teachers. Without careful, data-driven planning, the implementation of innovative approaches can lose its direction and purpose.

Therefore, teachers must be equipped with the conceptual understanding and technical skills to develop lesson plans that are both creative and measurable (Dwivedi et al., 2023). Professional training programs, collaboration between educators, and continuous evaluation are important to ensure that teaching plans are not just administrative documents, but real strategies in realizing quality and transformative learning processes.

In this context, teaching planning based on new approaches is not only effective, but also a major necessity in responding to the demands of today's education. Especially in the world of Islamic education, this approach needs to be emphasized more so that the learning structure is more flexible, students are seen as dynamic individuals, and always interact with the environment actively and meaningfully.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes several important findings, namely: (1) Teaching planning in the era of educational transformation now has more complex characteristics. Lesson plans must be student-centered, competency- and character-based, and optimally utilize technology. Additionally, plans must also be flexible, reflective, and able to adapt to classroom dynamics, educational policies, and digital developments. (2) The conventional model tends to be teacher-centered with a rigid structure and focus on final evaluation, whereas innovative models are more participatory and emphasize the development of students' potential through methods such as Project-Based Learning, instructional differentiation, and backward design. (3) Although both models still refer to the basic principles of lesson planning, the innovative model excels in personalization, technology integration, and adaptation to student diversity. (4) New approaches such as the Merdeka Curriculum, project-based learning, and instructional differentiation have proven to improve learning quality. These approaches create an active, collaborative, and contextual learning atmosphere, thus encouraging motivation, emotional engagement, and students' critical and creative thinking abilities. In the long term, the application of innovative approaches has a positive impact on character development and 21st-century skills such as responsibility, leadership, collaboration, and adaptability.

Recommendations for further research include the need to examine the use of technology in data-based instructional planning, studies on the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum, long-term evaluations of innovative approaches, capacity building for teachers, development of integration guidelines for conventional and innovative models, contextual factor analysis, impact on student character, and cross-country comparative studies. This supports the development of transformative, inclusive, and relevant learning in accordance with today's educational needs.

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