

Newcomers and Old-Timers: Educational Philosophies-in-Action of Parent Volunteers in a Community of Learners School

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Contrasting educational philosophies-in-action were used by 45 parent volunteers working with children in a school organized as a community of learners. Newcomers were more likely to employ a one-sided philosophy-in-action (with either adult-directed or child-directed organization), whereas parents with several years of experience were more likely to use a collaborative philosophy-in-action, consistent with the philosophy of a community of learners. A pedagogical implication is that adults need opportunities to learn new educational philosophies as they work with children.

Discussions of educational reform frequently argue for the importance of parental involvement, and educators expect that innovative educational institutions can be built by teachers and parents having a similar vision (Epstein 2001; Fullan 1993). However, there has been relatively little attention to parents' forms of involvement, and many efforts to create innovations in education have failed because of philosophical disagreements among parents and teachers (Firestone 1977). We observed the philosophies-in-action of new versus old-time parent volunteers in an innovative school, in order to infer developmental changes in philosophies of practice that newcomers undergo with experience participating in the school's practices. We focused on educational philosophies-in-action, with the idea that observable regularities in approaches to interaction reveal important aspects of people's philosophies of practice.

Our study occurred in a public elementary school program (known as the "OC," in Salt Lake City, Utah) initiated by parents two decades previously as a community of learners. The OC requires three hours of parent participation in instruction per week and emphasizes collaboration among children and adults in learning, decision making, and guidance. Parents and teachers in this school regard it as a challenge for newcomers to learn how to participate in ways that are consistent with the conceptual shift to the underlying educational philosophy of the school, from contrasting educational philosophies with which newcomers often arrive (Rogoff et al. 2001).

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Our focus on participants' philosophies-in-action is consistent with work that suggests that when people join institutions, they may learn not only new skills but also new *philosophies of practice*, encompassing new relationships, values, tools, and systems of belief (Erickson and Mohatt 1982; Heath 1989; Lave and Wenger 1991; McDermott 1977; Wapner and Craig-Bray 1992). Philosophy of practice goes beyond participants' declarations (both ideological and reflective) about their philosophy or their practices—or what Argyris and Schön (1978) call "espoused theory." It involves the general coherence underlying a person's approach to participation in practice, similar to Argyris and Schön's (1978) notion of "theory-in-use." Paradise (1994) reviewed the importance of this idea in the work of numerous anthropologists, citing especially LeVine's reference to this sort of knowledge as involving basic assumptions that are more fundamental in the organization of ideas than what people can verbalize.

The process of learning a new philosophy of practice may require changing worldviews and transforming personal identity (Lave and Wenger 1991; Osborne 1985). As noted in the literature on adult workplace learning, transformations of attitudes, values, skills, and expectations go beyond minor modifications of individuals' activity or skills (Argyris and Schön 1978; Forman 1994; Marsick 1987). Such deep transformations may occur when many U.S. middle-class adults join a community of learners, as they learn unfamiliar practices based on an educational philosophy that is distinct from their prior traditional schooling.

In the OC, what is meant by educational philosophy is acting according to the school's principles in classroom interactions, not formally stating principles of teaching and learning—although the parents and teachers have created written philosophy statements and engage in many discussions about educational principles (see Rogoff et al. 2001). For many parent volunteers, their educational philosophy of practice is largely implicit and difficult to state. However, teachers and more experienced parent volunteers commonly observe and comment on the educational philosophies of other participants that are visible in classroom interactions. We focus here on three prominent philosophies-in-action that are observable in regularities of participants' ways of interaction: collaborating with the children, directing them, or treating them in a *laissez-faire* fashion.

Collaborative and One-Sided (Adult- or Child-Run) Approaches in Schooling

The collaborative philosophy of this community of learners school contrasts with the transmission model of education, where adults control learning activities—an adult-run model that characterizes the prior traditional U.S. schooling of most of the parent volunteers. The collaborative philosophy also contrasts with an alternative that is sometimes suggested—a children-run approach in which children are given control

(Rogoff 1994; Rogoff et al. 1996). Both of these approaches involve one-sided interactions, contrasting with the collaborative approach emphasized in this school. Our study examines whether newcomers are more likely to employ one-sided philosophies-in-action and old-time parent volunteers are more likely to employ a collaborative philosophy-in-action.

In traditional U.S. classrooms, children's learning is presumed to be based on the teacher's provision of information. This adult-run model has been compared with assembly-line factories because the children are seen as receivers of a body of knowledge but not as active participants in learning (Callahan 1962; Freire 1986; Rogoff 1994; Rogoff et al. 1996). The adult "transmits" skills, preplans the learning activity in detail, controls activities and communication in the classroom, and motivates students to attend to the teacher (McRobbie and Tobin 1994; Mehan 1979).

In reaction to the adult-run model, some have proposed a self-directed model of children's learning (Firestone 1977; Graubard 1972; Neill 1960). The children-run model requires adults to refrain from active guidance, limiting participation to providing an enriched environment and minimal guidance when asked for help. Children are seen as constructors of knowledge on an individual basis and adults are viewed as potential hindrances to learning by limiting children's creativity and exploration.

Both adult-run and children-run approaches involve a one-sided philosophy in which responsibility for learning is assigned either to adults or to children (see Silberman 1971). Pendulum swings between the adult-run and children-run poles of the one-sided philosophy characterize many reforms of U.S. schooling (Gold and Miles 1981).

Such pendulum swings seem to have contributed to the short lifetime of many attempts to democratize U.S. schools by establishing parent cooperatives in the late 1960s and 1970s (with an average lifetime of only 18 months; Firestone [1977]). In the reformist efforts to get away from anything resembling a traditional adult-run structure, it was difficult for innovators to find an alternative to one-sided approaches to teaching and learning. Many participants did not seem to appreciate the developmental processes required to develop an alternative educational philosophy. Rather than attending to the process of developing new pedagogical principles, they seemed to expect immediate switches in the participants and the institution (Firestone 1977; Johnston 2001).

Developing a collaborative philosophy-in-action seems to require moving beyond the idea that either adults or children need to be in control (Rogoff et al. 2001). Rather, both the children and adults are active in structuring inquiry—they share responsibility for managing learning activities, group relations, guidance, and planning of activities. In the collaboration, adults assume responsibility for guiding the process and children learn to participate in the management of their own learning (Dewey 1916).

A Study of Philosophies-in-Action of Newcomers and Old-Timers in the OC

The OC had functioned for 16 years as a public elementary school program at the time of the study (1993), when it included six mixed-grade classrooms of about 28 to 30 children each. The school was started by a group of primarily white middle-class parents who were dissatisfied with traditional public education. After several years as a private school, the parents and teachers worked with the Salt Lake City Schools superintendent to transform the program into an optional program within the Salt Lake City public schools (functioning like a magnet school that families can choose instead of their neighborhood school).

From the start, a central feature of the OC philosophy was collaboration between teachers, parents, and children, with all participants learning from each other (Rogoff et al. 2001). Parents are expected to commit to three hours per week (per child) of classroom instruction, as "co-operators." The OC provides new co-operators with an orientation and classroom teachers help co-operators understand the program's collaborative philosophy and practices.

The main question of this study was whether parent volunteers who are new to this community of learners school show more one-sided (esp. adult-run) approaches in how they organize learning activities, and whether old-time co-operators show a more collaborative approach with the children, marked by shared responsibility and flexibility, consistent with a community of learners philosophy. We examined the relation between parents' years of experience "co-opting" (i.e., involved in classroom instruction) and how they worked with small groups of children in the classroom.

To supplement videotaped observations of the parents' approaches to teaching, we also asked the parents for a self-evaluation of their grasp of the "OC way of co-opting" and we asked the teachers to evaluate the co-operators' understanding of the OC instructional approach, based on their observations of the co-operators' everyday classroom participation. We also considered possible contributions to co-operators' learning from co-operators' own increasing comfort and their interactions with the children and the teachers. Finally, we considered how co-operators' approaches to teaching relate to their supportiveness with the children and the developmental suitability of their activities for the children's learning.

Through qualitative methods involving videotaped and direct observations and interviews, we constructed and abstracted distinct patterns of parents' philosophies-in-action. We used quantitative graphical and statistical methods to check whether these distinct patterns of parents' philosophies-in-action were differently distributed between novice and old-time parent volunteers.

Our questions as well as our categories for coding parents' approaches are based not only on psychological, anthropological, and educational literatures, but also on longstanding participation as co-operators

and researchers in the OC over seven years (Eugene Matusov) and 17 years (Barbara Rogoff). They were also guided by ethnographic data from a larger project focusing on how this innovative institution develops and maintains itself as new members join. The larger study includes participant-observations; interviews and discussions with parents, children, and teachers; a survey of parents; archival documents; and audiotapes of many committee and classroom meetings over a seven-year period. Our involvement in the larger project has yielded a collaboratively written volume explicating principles of learning as a community, with articles by parents, teachers, students, and an administrator (Rogoff et al. 2001).

At the time of data collection, we had recently made the transition from being ordinary co-operators to being researchers in the program (Matusov had co-oped for his son for two years, and Rogoff had co-oped for her three children over seven years). The transition accompanied each of our families' moves out of state, which meant that we ceased being co-operators. Becoming researchers in the program also meant that our occupations (as graduate student and professor of developmental psychology, respectively) also came to attention; as co-operators, our roles were defined in terms of whose parents we were.

The transition from being parent volunteers to being researchers in the eyes of the OC community members was rather smooth, although there was a need for us to become clear ourselves that the role of researcher did not mean becoming aloof from the everyday events of the community and to diplomatically deflect a few attempts to transform our role to that of experts. Parents, teachers, and children treated this research as valuable internally, especially to help understand the learning process for parents. They also welcomed the opportunity to make "OC ways" more publicly known.

Videotaping Parents Teaching

The participating OC families were primarily European American from a wide spread of middle-socioeconomic status (SES) backgrounds (ranging from some families that qualify as low income for the school lunch program to some families with professional incomes), occupations (e.g., chefs, university professors, carpenters, small business owners, paralegal clerks, artists, computer programmers, and teachers), and a diversity of religious backgrounds (e.g., Mormon, Jewish, Protestant, Catholic, atheist). The OC's emphasis on respect for diversity (notably, religious and economic) is cited by many parents as a reason that they chose this school for their children, rather than neighborhood or private schools. The co-operators that we observed were mostly mothers, in about the proportion of gender involvement as in the OC as a whole (37 mothers versus eight fathers, with similar distribution of genders across the years of experience in the OC; no gender differences in the parents' approaches were noted).

We videotaped naturally occurring interactions of 45 parent volunteers (one session per parent) teaching small groups of two to six children, usually working in mixed-gender, blended-grade groups, as is usual in this school. The groups worked within an all-program six-week theme on "Inventors and Inventions," which was developed by OC members during several parent-teacher classroom and committee meetings and teacher meetings, and discussed with the children in the classrooms as a part of the OC curriculum. All-program studies of this sort typically occurred several times per year.

Each co-oper was usually responsible for preparing a 20- to 40-minute activity and working with a small group in activities such as inventing a map of "troll town" with kindergarten children; inventing pet toys with first and second graders; and inventing new dictionary words, their definitions, origin and context of their usage with fifth and sixth graders (see Figure 1). In addition to the information on the videotapes, background information about the specific activities was available from co-operators' explanations to the class, as they recruited children to volunteer for their upcoming activity, and from our clarification questions with co-operators right after the activity.

Determining Educational Philosophies-in-Action

Our coding system employed qualitative pattern analysis (Rogoff and Gauvain 1986; Rogoff et al. 1993) to abstract the coding categories through



Figure 1a.
A co-oper working with her group, inventing music (photograph by Cynthia White).



Figure 1b.
Co-ops, teacher, and children from another classroom looking at the 4th- and 5th-grade students' inventions during the Invention Convention (photograph by Cynthia White).

close observations of the activities, attempting to describe the events in terms that reflect the meaning to participants. This approach is consistent with methodologies that take advantage of explicit evidence regarding the meaning of actions that participants provide to each other in jointly created discourse and action (Bremne and Erickson 1977; Cicourel 1974; McDermott et al. 1978; Mehan 1979).

Determining educational philosophies-in-action requires contextual examination of the whole activity (see Cole 1995; Cuban 1984; Leont'ev 1981). Simply counting discrete utterances or other actions would have fallen short of grasping a co-oper's teaching approach as it played out over time (Crow 1994). Almost any discrete statement or move could fit any of the three teaching approaches in some context. For example, a co-oper who lets children work independently with no guidance may exercise an adult-run approach if the co-oper has assigned the children to do what they are doing, a children-run approach if children are left to their own devices, or a collaborative approach if children are trying the activity on their own to assume more responsibility for their learning before asking a co-oper for help.

To aid in deciding whether a co-oper used an adult-run, children-run, or collaborative approach, coders made descriptive notes of the following aspects of the co-ops' activity:

- how the co-oper helped children and shared responsibility for help with the children;
- who was responsible for handling problems and uncertainties during the activity;
- how the co-oper organized space, materials, and seating arrangements;
- how progress in the activity was monitored and the goal revised if it became unrealistic given the time, materials, and other constraints at hand; and
- how children were motivated to join and stay in the activity.

Using these notes to support their judgments, coders decided whether the co-oper substantially used an adult-run, children-run, or collaborative approach, or a mixed approach.¹

The *adult-run approach* involves a unilateral chain of decision making by the adult, who controls the activity definition and the activity, taking the role of transmitting knowledge. The adult provides closely controlled guidance requiring detailed preplanning of the activity, and preempts children's inquiries and addresses them in a unilateral way. The activity settings are designed to facilitate the adult's control over the children (e.g., removing distractions by moving objects in and out of the activity space and blocking children's movements), even at the expense of students' interest and active participation. The co-oper also assumes all responsibility for fixing problems and treats uncertainty as an obstacle to overcome (which could have been anticipated by "better" planning). The following vignette illustrates the adult-run approach:

A second-year co-oper prepared a social studies activity of "Cooking Inventions" in the first/second-grade classroom. She brought in foods that pioneers might have eaten; the children helped cook the meat, sampled the goodies, and voted on which tasted best. The co-oper seemed product-oriented, prioritizing the outcome of the cooking. She assigned the children small "hands-on" operations in the meat preparation (e.g., turning a piece in the frying pan). She lectured them about pioneers without checking what information about pioneers the children might want or need to know.

The co-oper took responsibility for all emerging problems from looking for necessary utensils to searching for something lost by one girl. The co-oper tried to control the children, positioning herself above them, often asking them to sit and not move around, and controlling all materials and books. She was fully responsible for management—when recess approached, she almost physically moved children along in the activity. She struggled to keep the children in the task, and tried to make them work by referring to the structure of her activity or simply commanding them. She was tense throughout and appeared frustrated. In the follow-up interview, the co-oper described the activity as "hands-on" and "informative."

In the *children-run approach*, the co-oper allows the children to control the activity definition and the activity, leaving them with minimal, reactive

guidance. The co-oper might simply observe the children or follow their direction, or be uninvolved, staying available only for minor help. The co-oper provides an enriched environment, but does not otherwise contribute to the ongoing activity. This approach treats children as discoverers, with the co-oper not sharing his or her own inquiries, ideas, or interests with the children.

A ninth-year co-oper introduced "Inventing with Blocks" in the fourth/fifth-grade classroom. The co-oper oriented the children to build creative marble tracks using wooden blocks, demonstrating how some blocks could be connected. She articulated her approach in the interview after the activity, "What I want them to do is to manipulate with physical objects, create something, experiment with it, and change it."

After introducing the activity, she sat aside and let them explore, withdrawing and watching as children built with the blocks. She interacted only reactively; when the children asked for help, she provided just enough help to move them in their activity. She left responsibility for problems to the children, monitoring their conflicts often without intervening unless things escalated out of control. She was relaxed and tolerated a lot of noise, disruptions, and minor fights among kids. Motivation to be involved was left to the children; they could work on the marble track or just entertain themselves by any means available in the classroom, or physically leave the activity. There were no limitations on using the blocks or any other objects in the classroom; the children freely moved in and out of the activity (some went to play with costumes), while the co-oper sat on the periphery watching or left the classroom from time to time.

The *collaborative approach* involves guidance emerging from shared participation and interests, with mutuality between the co-oper and the children, who share the opportunity for learning, participating actively together, and assisting each other, with direction and anticipation provided by the co-oper. Preliminary planning by the co-oper has a general outline rather than a detailed character, anticipating the children's contributions in planning and modifying the activity. Problems and uncertainties emerging in the activity (including interpersonal conflicts, lack of materials or time, or unexpected events) are to be expected and welcomed as learning opportunities rather than seen as obstacles to be avoided or overcome.

A fifth-year co-oper engaged the children in "Inventing Words" in the fifth/sixth-grade classroom—children invented their own words with definitions. The purpose of the activity, according to the co-oper, was "to experience creative language;" she supported the activity with a book full of fanciful words and with dictionaries. Her instruction was embedded in children's inquiry with flexible planning. The co-oper was not satisfied with shallow contributions from the children; she helped them to elaborate and extend ideas and the activity (e.g., asking for pronunciation of the invented words, their possible origin, context of use). She was supportive of students' contributions

and asked for children's help in defining words, and she redirected children asking for help to other children.

When problems emerged, the co-oper treated them as shared opportunities for learning—she helped the children use dictionaries or turned spelling questions back to them, and when they were out of supplies (e.g., pens, dictionary), she discussed where and how they could get them. The co-oper sat at the same level as the children, around a big table at which all could easily communicate with each other; materials were moved freely on the table. She was relaxed and comfortable with the children, and playful at times. When the teacher announced that recess was in five minutes, the co-oper asked the students whether they could finish or stop at some step to finish later. The co-oper tried to help each child to manage his/her own learning, assisting them in moving into and out of the activity by discussing when they might join or leave the activity and why.

The collaborative approach has an emphasis on process in the activity, with a kind of communication that relates individual contributions together through sharing and integrating ideas. The collaborative building of ideas is illustrated in another example:

In a science activity of inventing clay boats to carry as much cargo weight as possible, one child commented that he could not put more cargo on his boat because there was no more room on the boat. The co-oper asked the other children how they were dealing with that problem, and a few students showed their boats. The co-oper used this opportunity to discuss the importance of the boat shape as a relevant variable in the children's experimentation. One child suggested using a heavier type of block, so fewer cargo blocks would be needed. The co-oper commented that this was another, complementary way of solving the problem, and asked the children what kind of cargo could be used to make a heavier cargo load. The co-oper used a variety of collaborative means including asking for help and sharing, comparing, and bridging ideas to integrate themes.

Evidence of Parents' Learning of the Collaborative Educational Philosophy

To examine whether the more experienced co-ops more commonly demonstrated collaborative approaches and newcomers more often showed one-sided (adult-run or children-run) approaches, we first examined the seven possible patterns of the three teaching approaches and their combinations (see Figure 2). On the basis of similarity, we grouped the 45 co-ops into two experience groups: 21 newcomers, who were in their first or second year in the OC and 24 old-timers who were in their third or later year in the OC.² We reduced the seven combinations of the three teaching approaches to five mutually exclusive groups by making one category ("mixed one-sided and collaborative") out of the three rarely observed categories that mixed adult-run/children-run approaches with the collaborative approach.

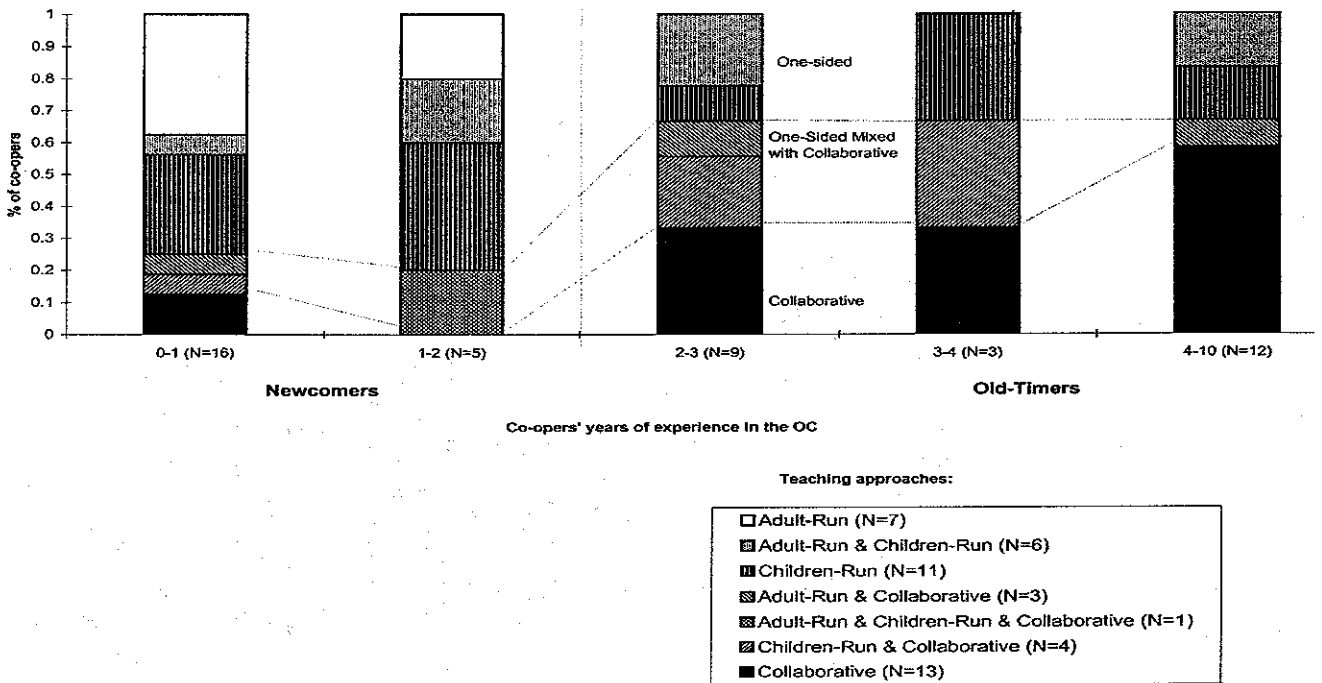


Figure 2. Percentage of co-ops with the different teaching approaches across years of OC experience.

Table 1.
Number (and percent) of newcomers and old-timers judged to demonstrate adult-run, children-run, and collaborative teaching approaches.

Teaching approaches	Newcomers (N = 21)	Old-Timers (N = 24)	Chi ²	p
Adult-run	7(33%)	0(0%)	7.1	< .01
Mixed adult-run and children-run	2(10%)	4(17%)	.1	n.s.
Children-run	7(33%)	4(17%)	1.7	n.s.
Mixed one-sided and collaborative	3(14%)	5(21%)	.0	n.s.
Collaborative	2(10%)	11(46%)	7.2	< .01

As expected, use of the collaborative approach was judged more common among more-experienced co-operators than among less-experienced co-operators (see Table 1). The collaborative approach was coded for only ten percent of the newcomers compared with 46 percent of the old-timers. Figure 2 suggests that the increase in the collaborative approach jumps with co-operators' third year of experience in the OC.

One-sided approaches were more common among new co-operators than old-time co-operators. A one-sided philosophy (adult-run, children-run, or both) was coded for 76 percent of the newcomers but only 34 percent of the old-timers. The difference was mostly because of the extent of adult-run approaches, which were coded for 33 percent of the newcomers but none of the old-timers (see Table 1 and Figure 2; Fisher's Exact test was significant at the 0.005 level). The other types of one-sided approaches (the children-run and mixed categories) did not differ significantly with extent of co-operators' experience.³

Specific activities seemed not to determine the teaching approaches. We examined the approaches of ten co-operators who engaged in the "same" activity—helping children fill out "patent" forms for the Invention Convention (a "fair" culminating the six-week all-program study). Four used the collaborative approach, two mainly used the adult-run approach, three used the children-run approach, and one used a mixture of all three. For example, in a collaborative approach, one co-teacher discussed with the children what other people might want to know about their inventions and how to make the description of the inventions more comprehensible and attractive. In an adult-run approach, another co-teacher was mainly concerned with filling in the form correctly, with proper spelling. In a children-run approach, another co-teacher treated the activity as a "free" activity where the children wrote or drew whatever they wanted while the co-teacher was available to answer questions.

We interpret the differences in the teaching approaches of the new and old-time co-operators as indicating a shift toward collaborative teaching as co-opping experience in the OC increases. Of course, our observations of old-timers and newcomers involved different individuals, not a longitudinal study of the same individuals, so the idea that the variations

across experience groups represent co-operators' learning is an inference. We cannot rule out selection effects, such as the possibility that parents with one-sided approaches who are dissatisfied with the program might simply leave it. (But only one parent out of the 45 withdrew from the OC the next year because of disagreement with the OC teaching philosophy.) We also cannot rule out the possibility that different numbers of parents with one-sided or collaborative approaches might have joined the OC in different years, creating different distributions in different cohorts.

However, these explanations are rendered less plausible by converging evidence that the differences between newcomers and old-timers are a function of learning with experience. Our interpretation that the results suggest learning by the co-operators is supported by self-reports in an earlier survey of most of the co-operators in the OC (Rogoff et al. 1996; see also Rogoff et al. 2001). In response to a written question, "Did you feel like you didn't know what you were doing at first?" most co-operators answered "yes." They referred to difficulties in understanding the structure and processes of the OC classrooms, their own role, and how to organize collaborative guidance with the children. One-sixth of them reported beginning to feel like they knew what they were doing in their first year, one-third reported the transition in their second or third years, and one-sixth said it occurred after their third year in the OC. (For some newcomers and old-timers the transition had not yet happened.) These self-reports are consistent with the suggestion from our data of a difference around the second and third year, and the observation that not all of the old-timers were coded as using collaborative approaches. They are also consistent with our follow-up questionnaires of co-operators and teachers.

Co-Operators' and Teachers' Judgments of Co-Operators' Understanding of OC Co-opping

In follow-up questionnaires, both the teachers and the co-operators themselves judged most of the co-operators to be OK or model co-operators. Teachers judged only seven of the 45 co-operators to be having difficulty; only eight of the 39 co-operators responding judged themselves to be having difficulty.

The judgments of which parents were having difficulty lend support to the idea that co-operators develop understanding of the OC philosophy of practice with greater experience (although, of course, these are not longitudinal data). Newcomers were more likely than old-timers to represent themselves as not having a clue about the OC way of co-opping, struggling to understand it, or just beginning to grasp it (38 percent versus 9 percent). Old-timers were more likely than newcomers to represent themselves as seasoned co-operators who understand the OC way and can fill various roles in the structure (65 percent versus 12 percent).⁴

Similarly, the teachers reported that there were more model co-operators among old-timers than among newcomers (54 percent versus 24 percent). They also reported that more newcomers than old-timers were

having difficulties (beginning or struggling to understand the OC way or in the dark about OC co-oping: 29 percent versus 4 percent). The teachers' and co-operators' judgments support the idea that many new co-operators learn to teach in ways that are more compatible with the OC philosophy while co-oping.

Relation between Teachers' and Co-Operators' Judgments of Quality of Co-Oping and Our Coding of Co-Operators' Philosophy-in-Action

The teachers and parents showed some agreement regarding which co-operators were the model or seasoned co-operators (sorting them rather similarly, according to a Chi-square test yielding a value of 4.2, $p < .05$). However, teachers and parents seem to have used somewhat different criteria in their judgments of which parents were having difficulty (their agreement was not high; Kappa = .33, $p < .05$). Although both groups seemed to associate nonmodel co-oping with one-sided approaches, the co-operators seemed more favorable toward children-run approaches and more critical of adult-run approaches than were the teachers.

Most of the co-operators who were reported by teachers to be having difficulty (four out of seven co-operators) used the children-run approach in the videotaped activities.⁵ But almost all (eight of nine) of the co-operators coded as using the children-run approach judged themselves as "an okay co-oper, who basically understands the OC way" or "a seasoned co-oper, who understands the OC way and can fill various roles in the structure." (Of the eight co-operators who judged themselves to be having difficulty, only one had been coded as using the children-run approach in the videotapes; the remainder were spread in the other teaching approaches.) Co-operators' judgments of not being seasoned co-operators were associated with using the adult-run approach in our videotaped observations. This pattern supports the idea that co-operators develop away from adult-run approaches of traditional schooling toward children-run approaches, in a classic pendulum swing, and with greater experience become more collaborative.

Possible Contributions to Co-Operators' Transitions

The OC has several formal mechanisms for aiding newcomers in understanding how to co-op, including provision of written materials (a manual, handouts that sometimes accompany the newsletter to parents, and books available in the Parent Resource Library), philosophy and curriculum workshops, and a committee to orient new families. Here we discuss several other possible contributions to the co-operators' development: the children themselves, the co-operators' own increasing familiarity and comfort with co-oping, and interactions with teachers.

Informal observations of our videotapes suggest the importance of children's contributions to co-operators' approaches (see also Rogoff et al. 2001). Some co-operators who generally demonstrated the children-run

approach switched to the collaborative approach with children who insisted on collaboration. For example, a boy in the first/second grade classroom seemed to contribute to shifting a few co-operators who worked with him from one-sided approaches to a more collaborative approach by using collaborative means. With a co-oper mainly using the children-run approach, the boy asked many questions about his own project and interpreted the co-oper's answers in a way that moved the co-oper to elaborate more. With a co-oper using the adult-run approach, this boy involved the co-oper in considering modifications to the co-oper's assignment of inventing cookie recipes—for example, by asking how a cookie is different from other food and considering broadening the conventional definition of cookie.

It also appears that a co-oper's familiarity or comfort with an activity can shift her or his teaching approaches. In separate data, we happened to observe one co-oper three times over his first month in the OC. His familiarity or comfort with the activities seemed to contribute to a shift from a children-run to a collaborative approach. In the first observation, the teacher asked him to facilitate an activity of inventing new board games. The co-oper stayed at the periphery of the children's activity, spending most of the time observing them and helping when asked, in a children-run approach. A few weeks later, the teacher asked him to help the children disassemble old equipment so the children could use the parts for their inventions. The mechanical work of disassembling seemed more comfortable for the parent than inventing board games. At the end of the third observation, he easily extended and elaborated questions that children asked him and initiated his own topics of discussion in a collaborative approach.

The role of co-oper comfort and interest in their contributions to instruction is supported by teachers' organization of co-operators' activities. Carolyn Turkans, a seasoned teacher, told us that she sees her role as helping co-operators "connect to something they enjoy doing" (personal communication July 20, 1994). To plan the classroom structure in a way that fosters and builds on co-operators' interests and comfort, at the beginning of the school year, she interviews the co-operators about their subject areas of co-oping and the number of children they work with comfortably. In the classroom, OC teachers often ask co-operators how many children they can handle in their activity, assisting them in working within a comfortable zone.

We observed a few cases where co-operators switched their co-oping approaches from collaborative to adult-run apparently because they could not manage a large group of children in a collaborative way. In one case, a co-oper worked collaboratively only with one child while rigidly assigning work to other children to put them on hold. Another co-oper worked collaboratively only with a small group of two to three children—she easily incorporated children's different suggestions and tracked the development of themes—but when the group expanded and

children's communication intensified, she switched her role to acting as a "filter" that unilaterally defined which of the children's suggestions were acceptable without providing the rationale of her decisions to the children.

In addition to being sensitive to particular co-ops' comfortable group size, often the teachers provide tried-and-true activities that allow newcomers to engage in effective instruction without needing to devise the activity. The teachers observe the co-ops' activities over time, giving co-ops opportunities to try new things and encouraging greater responsibility when they judge that a particular co-op is ready. The teachers thus ensure that the children benefit from the contributions of newcomers as well as old-timers, and support the co-ops in their own learning.

The teachers assist co-ops' development by consulting with them collaboratively. Their assistance does not preach one approach, but builds from the co-ops' perspective. Leslie Bartlett, a seasoned OC teacher, reported that she uses the co-op's point of view and philosophical model when she helps a co-op—asking how the co-op perceives the problem, how to solve it, and how the teacher or somebody else might help (personal communication July 20, 1994; see Tharp and Gallimore [1988] for a similar description of how one seasoned educator collaborates with a new teacher to improve her teaching). By helping the co-op collaboratively from the co-op's own teaching approach, the teacher opens a channel of communication and learning, which paradoxically may lead co-ops into the collaborative approach of a community of learners. The teacher involves the co-op in a collaborative process of thinking about why, for example, there was "a disciplinary problem" (from the co-op's adult-run perspective), and through this collaboration with the teacher, the co-op had the chance to participate in a collaborative model of teaching and learning that may extend eventually to their work with the children.

A Coherent Philosophy-in-Action, and the Role of Heterogeneity

To fill out our understanding of the coherence of an OC philosophy-in-action, we considered the emotional supportiveness of the co-ops with the children and the developmental suitability of their activities for fostering children's involvement in learning. We also were interested in examining these aspects of co-oping to see whether co-ops unfamiliar with the collaborative approach may yet make important contributions to instruction. Using the videotapes, we examined the prevalence of these aspects of co-oping for the 24 co-ops who used one-sided approaches (adult-run, children-run, and their mixture) and the 21 co-ops who used collaborative approaches (collaborative or a mixture of collaborative and one-sided).

Supportiveness of Relations with the Children

Most of the co-ops demonstrated supportive relations; only one session was judged as involving adversarial relations and only a few were judged as involving unilateral relations. In *supportive relations*, the co-op promoted respect, used compromise to solve interpersonal problems, and often prevented problems from becoming overwhelming by changing the emotional climate or the topic or tempo of the activity; the co-op appeared nurturing and secure, acknowledged his or her own mistakes, and made suggestions with justifications and openness. In *unilateral relations*, the co-op was strictly task oriented, constantly reminding the children of rules, physically moving objects or children to solve problems, and directing children without providing rationales.

Supportive relations with children occurred in all of the sessions using collaborative approaches, suggesting that they are part of the definition of the collaborative approach in the OC. Supportive relations were also used by 79 percent of the co-ops using one-sided approaches, not significantly less than for the co-ops judged as using collaborative approaches. An example of a co-op using the adult-run approach and engaging in warm, friendly relations was one who thanked each child at the end of the activity for the child's willingness to "work for" her.

However, compared with co-ops using collaborative approaches, co-ops using one-sided approaches were more likely to use unilateral relations. In the five sessions (21 percent) with mainly unilateral relations, all involved co-ops whose teaching was judged as one-sided (see Figure 3).⁶

Although the results indicate that supportive interpersonal relations always occurred when the co-op's approach was collaborative, relations of the co-ops and children were almost never adversarial, and co-ops using one-sided approaches were usually also in supportive relations with the children.

Developmental Suitability of the Activity

This was a judgment of how effective the co-op's activity was for children's engagement in learning. (To make sure that coders' preconceptions did not link developmental suitability with the teaching approaches, developmental suitability was checked in an independent coding of 22 sessions by an assistant unfamiliar with the study's focus on teaching approaches and the co-ops' experience in the program. Reliability Kappa coefficients of this blind coder with the original coders were .65 for low developmental suitability and .64 for high developmental suitability—which reflect good levels of agreement—suggesting that coders' knowledge of co-ops' teaching approaches or experience did not affect their judgments of developmental suitability.)

We distinguished low and high suitability: *Low suitability* involves insufficient challenge or support, with expectations that are too high or

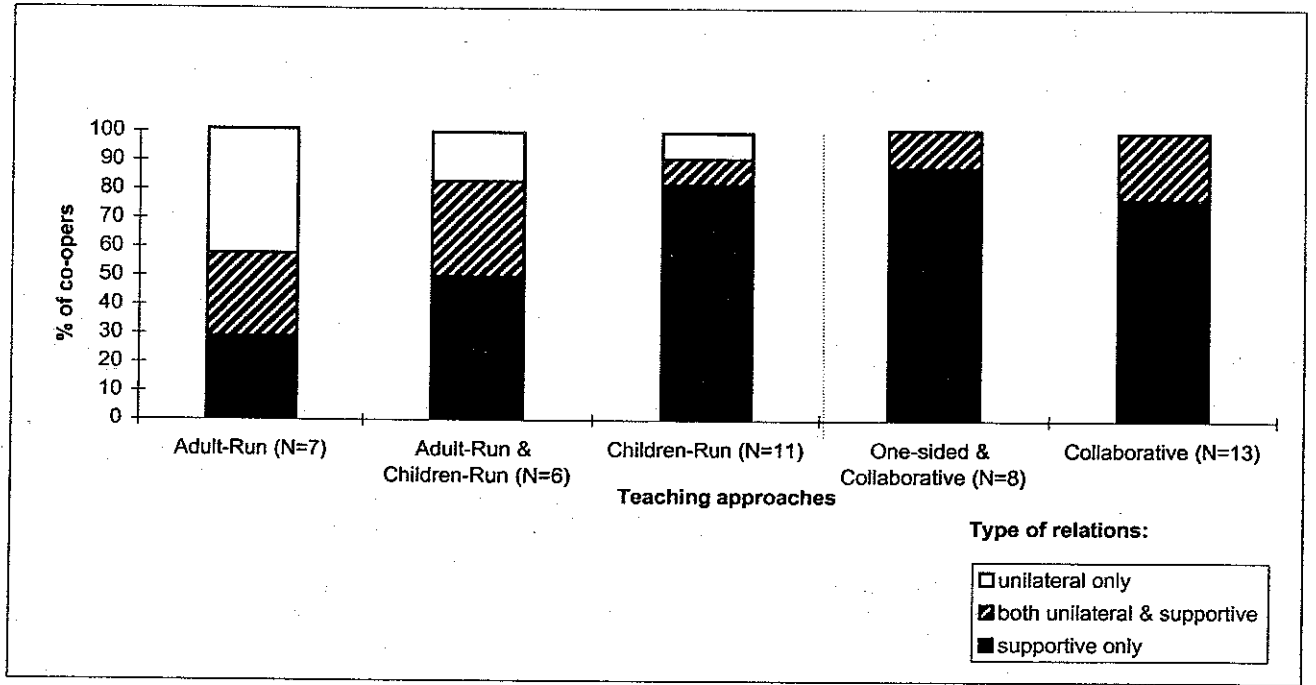


Figure 3. Distribution of co-ops with unilateral and supportive interpersonal relations in the different teaching approaches.

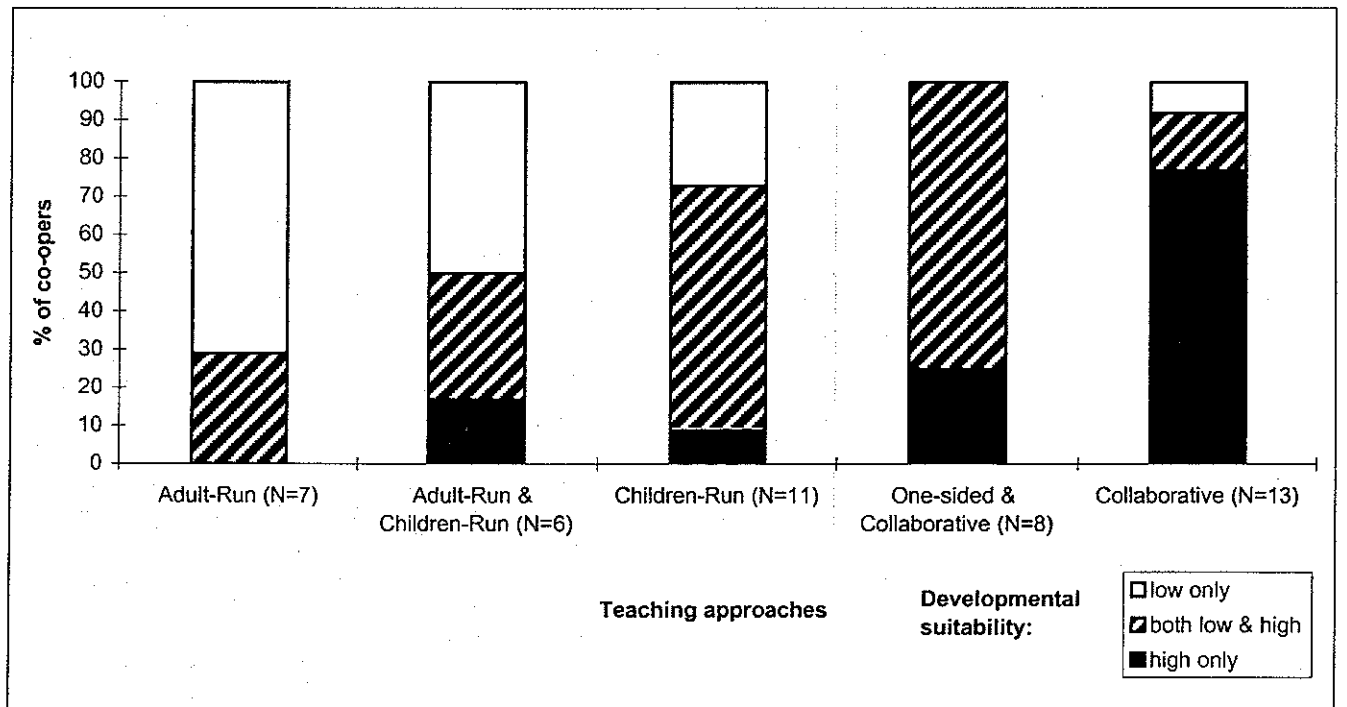


Figure 4. Distribution of co-ops with low and high developmentally suitable activities in the different teaching approaches.

low. The activity could be too familiar for the children or the co-oper could fail to communicate the challenge of the activity (see Lave 1990). The co-oper might "feed" the children factual nonproblematic information that requires only simple decoding, with shallow participation by the children. Alternatively, the co-oper might withdraw from active guidance, not providing elaboration and support. For example, one co-oper asked children to mix primary colors without any reflection on the process or a system; some children treated the activity as entertainment whereas others seemed to feel lost without clear direction. *High suitability* involves activities that are in the children's "zone of proximal development" (Vygotsky 1978:86). They are challenging yet approachable for the children, encouraging them to elaborate ideas or themes or make links between ideas. For example, the co-oper in the Inventing Words activity (above) presented ways for the children to take the activity deeper, including how to make the definition sound more dictionary-like, possible language origins of the word on the basis of phonetic analysis, and possible contexts of usage of the invented word.

Almost all (95 percent) of the co-operators who used collaborative approaches organized their activity with high developmental suitability, whereas only about half (54 percent) of the co-operators who used one-sided approaches provided activities with high developmental suitability, a significant difference (see Figure 4).⁷

The nearly 100 percent association of the collaborative approach with both high developmental suitability and supportive relations seems to provide a profile of the philosophy-in-action corresponding with the OC's philosophy-of-practice—a coherent unity that many co-operators may come to use as they become more seasoned members of this community of practice.

In support of the idea that the philosophy-in-action forms a coherent unity is the finding that co-operators' provision of activities that were developmentally suitable for children's learning was associated with the co-operators' teaching approach but not with their extent of co-opping experience (although teaching approaches varied with years of experience). Almost the same numbers of newcomers and old-timers organized activities with high, mixed, and low suitability. The close association of the collaborative approach with high developmental suitability, and lack of association of years of schooling with developmental suitability, suggests that working within the OC philosophy-in-action—rather than simply number of years co-opping—is central to development as an OC co-oper.

At the same time, it is important to note that the collaborative approach was not the only approach in which co-operators were supportive with children and provided developmentally suitable learning activities. Most of the co-operators who employed one-sided approaches also used supportive relations with the children (and adversarial relations almost never occurred); about half provided activities of high developmental

suitability during at least part of their sessions. (In addition, teachers judged only a few of the co-operators as just beginning to understand the OC way or struggling or in the dark; they judged 71 percent of the newcomers and 96 percent of the old-timers as OK or model OC co-operators.)

Compatibility of a co-oper's approach with the community's practices is based on a synergy of mutual tolerance and adjustment, multiplicity of community practices and values, and open-endedness in developing ways of doing things (Matusov 1999). Members of a community that is built on a collaborative philosophy might find an ecological niche where they can be supported by and contribute to the community while practicing different teaching approaches, including one-sided ones (as was the case for 34 percent of the old-timers in our study). Other characteristics of the co-operators such as open-mindedness, comfort with children, willingness to risk and experiment, and helpfulness might contribute to being valued and effective OC co-operators. Despite the need for many newcomers to learn to function within a new philosophy-of-action, there is room for heterogeneity in the overall profile of such a school community.

Ecology of Educational Philosophies-in-Action

Our findings suggest that OC parents may learn a collaborative approach to teaching as they participate in this community of learners, perhaps involving a transformation from their own schooling experience, which was likely to have involved an adult-run model of instruction. Among old-time co-operators, there was greater use of the collaborative philosophy-in-action, in which learning activities and guidance are based on mutuality between the adult and the children, and less use of one-sided approaches controlled either by the adult or by the children. Most old-time parents—67 percent—were judged to be using a collaborative approach to teaching (46 percent) or collaborative mixed with one-sided approach (21 percent). In contrast, most newcomer parents—76 percent—were judged to be using a one-sided educational philosophy-in-action.

In this concluding section, we argue that the particular teaching approaches that we studied need to be understood in the context of the overall ecology of the school and its surroundings (Fein 1971). For some newcomers to a school like the OC, the collaborative approach may not require a philosophical shift from one-sided approaches. In societies such as Japan where a community of learners model of education may be common in elementary schooling (Chikako Toma, personal communication, November 12, 1994), a collaborative philosophy-in-action would presumably be congruent with many participants' prior educational experience. This seems also to be the case for a few newcomers who join the OC already familiar with a community of learners model from their own schooling experience or from volunteering in some cooperative preschools.

It is possible that in other institutional and cultural settings, other approaches might have more "ecological validity" than the collaborative approach. For example, in a school where teachers and students expect and effectively employ an adult-run approach, the introduction of a collaborative approach might cause institutional backlash and resistance from the teachers, the administrator, and even the students (see Fullan 1993).

The prevalence of the adult-run approach in U.S. schools emanates from a historical context that prioritized bureaucratic efficiency, based on an industrial model—with hierarchical organization of decision making—over the past century or more, during which public schooling became compulsory and widespread in the United States and other nations (Callahan 1962). The broader context of this model of instruction contributes to everyday practices in many U.S. (and other) schools, although it contrasts with collaborative models that prevail in informal learning and schooling in some communities (Chavajay and Rogoff 2002; Erickson and Mohatt 1982; Hatano and Inagaki 1991; Lipka 1991; Madas 1987; Paradise 1991; Peltier 1970; Phillips 1972). Clearly, the value of diverse approaches varies with different communities' values and goals, and child and adult participants likely learn different "lessons" from engagement in collaborative, adult-run, and children-run approaches (see Matusov et al. 2002).

This study addressed the development of adult participants in an innovative institution and, by extension, how a community of learners maintains and develops its philosophy of teaching and learning with inclusion of new generations of adults that need to explore the community's practice and philosophy. The community itself develops, in part from the process of assisting newcomers' learning and the resulting attempts to articulate its philosophy and practices (Fullan 1993; Johnston 2001; Rogoff et al. 2001) as well as by adapting to address the challenges presented by incorporating new generations in the community. Our study suggests that educational institutions seeking change of philosophies-in-action need to provide opportunities and means for adults' development and learning that are embedded in the development of the institution itself.

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Notes

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1. For reliability, all 45 sessions were coded by the team of two people who had videotaped the interactions, and 23 sessions (51 percent of the database) were coded by another team of two research assistants who did not know the questions of this study and were unfamiliar with the OC. Cohen's Kappa ranged from .64 to .82, reflecting good agreement.

2. We also examined the data treating years as a continuous variable rather than in the two categories, and the results were similar.

3. Co-ops' teaching approaches did not seem to be related to children's grade level, except for the adult-run approach [Chi-square (1 df, $N = 45$) = 4.2, $p < .05$]—all seven co-ops using the adult-run teaching approach were newcomers in lower grades, so we cannot tell whether the adult-run approach only occurs with newcomers in the lower grades. The collaborative approach and collaborative-mixed-with-one-sided approach were more common for old-timers than newcomers in both lower and upper grades. In the lower grades, only 24 percent of the newcomers (versus 66 percent of the old-timers) used the collaborative or mixed-collaborative approaches—the remaining 76 percent of the newcomers used one-sided approaches. In the upper grades, only 25 percent of newcomers (versus 67 percent of the old-timers) used the collaborative or mixed-collaborative approach (and 75 percent of the newcomers used one-sided approaches).

4. All comparisons reported in this section were significant at least at the $p < .05$ level, according to Chi-square tests: 4.8, 10.7, 4.3, and 5.1.

5. All patterns reported in this paragraph were significant at the $p < .05$ level, according to Chi-square tests: 4.8, 4.8, and 4.4.

6. Chi-square cross-tabulation yielded a coefficient of contingency of .31, significant at the .05 level. Tests of paired Chi-square comparisons show that the children-run approach was more associated with supportive co-oper-children relations than was the adult-run approach, with a coefficient of contingency $C = .47$, $p < .05$ (see Figure 3).

Use of unilateral relations was also more common among co-ops new to the OC. Five newcomers and no old-timers showed mainly unilateral relations ($\chi^2 (1) = 4.2$, $p < .05$).

7. The coefficient of contingency was .42, $p < .005$.

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