

Utilizing Storytelling Activities to Enhance Communication Skills and Creativity Thinking of Primary School Teacher Students

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Abstract

This study investigates the effectiveness of storytelling as a communication technique in the learning management process for primary school teacher students. It emphasizes the importance of storytelling in facilitating knowledge exchange, fostering shared understanding, and improving communication between teachers and students. The study aimed to develop and implement storytelling activities based on diverse elements like experiences, drawings, stories, and local wisdom. These activities were created through workshops that addressed effective storytelling strategies and story planning. The research used a workshop technique with a representative group of primary school teacher students. The workshops covered story planning, presentation design, and communication skills for effective storytelling. The results showed that the participants' comprehension of storytelling as a teaching tool had significantly improved. The primary school teacher students showed improved skills in creating captivating presentations and telling tales in a way that held the attention of the audience. Furthermore, the activities helped them gain confidence in delivering knowledge in an entertaining and compelling way. This study highlights the value of using storytelling exercises to give aspiring elementary school teachers the fundamental pedagogical and communication skills they need. The participants acquired useful information and useful skills to use storytelling as an effective teaching technique and to create engaging learning environments in their classrooms.

Keyword: Storytelling Activities, Communication Skills, Creativity Thinking

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1. Introduction

1.1 Why Good Communication Skills and Creative Thinking Important for Teacher in Classroom?

1.1.1 Communication Skills

Communication skills involve the methods used in conveying, receiving and processing information through verbal and non-verbal means. It includes speaking and listening effectively, interpreting gestures, body language, and emotions and being able to use the right communication on the right occasion. Communication skills broadly refer to a person's ability to establish rapport, work in teams, negotiate, quit and effectively deliver messages. (cite in <https://www.theknowledgeacademy.com/blog/communication-skills/>) Effective communication skills are crucial for individuals in all professions, and teaching is no exception. Teachers must communicate effectively with their students, colleagues, and parents to ensure everyone is on the same page and that learning can occur smoothly (cite in <https://lrnkey.com/blog/why-good-communication-skills-important-for-teachers>).

Communication is the most important aspect of classroom management. It is essential to have clear and consistent lines of communication with our administration, colleagues, students and parents. Without it we will lose the respect of peers, the attention of students, and the cooperation of parents (Hans, E., & Rayat-Bahra, 2017). Improving communication skills in teachers is important that can assist students to enhance learning for a variety of reasons such as:

- Teachers with strong communication skills can manage classrooms more efficiently. They can convey instructions clearly, establish expectations, and foster a positive learning environment. Effective communication helps in addressing students' queries and concerns promptly, reducing misunderstandings and disruptions.
- Good communicators can engage students more effectively by making lessons interactive and interesting. They can adapt their communication style to suit different learners, thereby improving student participation and retention of information.
- Communication skills are essential for building strong relationships with parents. Teachers need to convey students' progress, discuss concerns, and collaborate with parents to support students' education. Clear and empathetic communication fosters trust and cooperation.
- Strong communication skills are critical for teachers' professional growth. They enable teachers to share their ideas, collaborate with colleagues, and contribute to the academic community. This can lead to better career opportunities and professional recognition.

Therefore, supporting communication skills in teachers is paramount for fostering an effective educational environment. Effective communication is the cornerstone of successful teaching, as it directly influences classroom management, student engagement, parent-teacher relationships, and professional development. Teachers who communicate well can create a positive and inclusive classroom atmosphere, address students' needs more efficiently, and build strong, collaborative relationships with parents. Furthermore, these skills enable teachers to articulate their ideas and strategies, contributing to their professional growth and the advancement of educational practices.

1.1.2 Creative Thinking

Creativity refers to the ability to produce new products or ideas that are novel and useful. Whether addressing problems, creating works of art, developing innovations, or offering a unique perspective, creativity often involves thinking outside the box. Seeing connections between seemingly unconnected objects and bringing knowledge and experiences together perfectly (Runco, M. A., & Jaeger, G. J., 2012). In the future, we will not compete for knowledge but they will have to compete with innovation, inventiveness, and never-ending learning. Classrooms and teachers are another key beginning point in education that will ensure that children start well, run swiftly, and cross the finish line successfully. Teachers may need to take a break from reading textbooks and writing on the board in front of the class. Turn on your creativity and create learning activities for children to have fun and can reach full potential on your own. Nicola Whitton (cite in <https://thepotential.org/knowledge/creativity-and-innovation/>) claimed in her paper titled 'To Improve Education, We Need to Incorporate Imagination' that there are variables that help students learn and having creative thinking skills mean teachers must make learning the topic enjoyable, create opportunity for students to engage in group activities and have fun while learning. Therefore, teachers must be creative thinkers, don't become stuck in the past, always seek to expand knowledge or discover new approaches that can be utilized to enhance classroom learning. Why is learning with creative thinking just as important as having knowledge? Why must both teachers and learners use creative thinking in learning? Creativity thinking is important for teaching with teachers in the classroom for several reasons such as (Robinson, K., 2001., Craft, A., 2005., Sawyer, R. K., 2006., Beghetto, R. A., & Kaufman, J. C., 2010):

- Creative thinking allows teachers to develop innovative teaching strategies that cater to diverse learning styles. By thinking outside the box, teachers can create engaging and effective lesson plans that make learning more enjoyable and impactful for students.
- Creative thinking equips teachers with the skills to address various challenges in the classroom. They can devise unique solutions to problems such as student disengagement, behavioral issues, and resource limitations, enhancing the overall learning experience.
- Creative thinking helps teachers to remain flexible and open to new ideas and approaches. This is especially important with the integration of technology and changing educational standards.
- Teachers who demonstrate creative thinking can inspire their students to think creatively as well. This can lead to a more dynamic and stimulating classroom environment where students feel encouraged to explore their ideas and think critically.

In conclusion, creative thinking is essential for supporting teachers in their teaching endeavors due to several key reasons. First, it enhances student engagement and motivation by making lessons more interesting and interactive. Second, it fosters the development of critical problem-solving skills, encouraging students to think innovatively and analytically. Third, creative thinking allows teachers to be adaptable and flexible, tailoring their methods to meet the diverse needs and learning styles of their students. Additionally, it promotes a positive and stimulating learning environment, where students feel valued and confident in expressing their ideas. Moreover, integrating creativity into teaching facilitates interdisciplinary learning, helping students connect concepts across different subjects. Lastly, it cultivates a lifelong love of learning, inspiring students to continually seek knowledge and develop new skills. Therefore, cultivating creative thinking in teaching is crucial for

enhancing the overall effectiveness and enjoyment of the educational experience for both teachers and students.

1.2 How Can Storytelling Activities Enhance Teacher Students in Communication Skills and Creative Thinking?

A basic human activity, telling stories is an art form that crosses historical and cultural boundaries. It is an age-old custom that has been utilized to educate people, uphold customs, and amuse crowds. Storytelling is still a significant tool today, not just for maintaining cultural legacy but also for improving critical communication and creative thinking skills.

Storytelling is the art of conveying narratives through words, visuals, or experiences to engage, inform, or entertain an audience. It is a powerful and timeless practice that captures human emotions, experiences, and ideas. Thus, it enables us to connect with others, convey messages effectively, and inspire action. Whether through spoken words, written stories, visual presentations, or immersive experiences, Storytelling plays a pivotal role in human communication and expression. (cite in <https://www.theknowledgeacademy.com/blog/what-is-storytelling/>) Storytelling activities are activities that use stories to create interesting and effective learning experiences. It is usually presented in the atmosphere of a classroom or study group. This activity has a variety of characteristics and can be improved according to the objectives and goals that require learners to have an experience that matches their learning.

In the field of education, storytelling has been offered as an effective teaching tool. This was especially true during the 21st century when educational theories were developed using about storytelling to develop students in learning, communication skills and creative thinking in the classroom. Educators such as Kieran Egan (1986), Jerome Bruner (1990), Haven, K. (2007), Miller, S. (2010) believe that storytelling is an excellent technique to make instructional content more engaging and fascinating for students and using storytelling activities in the teaching process is important in developing teachers' communication and creativity skills, such as:

- Storytelling helps teachers develop communication skills in speaking clearly using language that is easy to understand and displaying appropriate emotions.
- Storytelling helps teachers attract students' attention, making teaching more exciting and memorable.
- Storytelling activities encourage teachers to practice listening skills and respond appropriately to student comments and questions.
- Storytelling encourages teachers to think outside the box and create new, interesting and meaningful stories.
- Storytelling fosters positive relationships between teachers and students by exchanging experiences and ideas through stories, which make students feel relaxed and open to learning.
- Complex and multifaceted storytelling allows students and teachers to practice analytical and critical thinking, while discussing stories fosters the development of skills in criticizing and critically evaluating material.

In conclusion, good storytelling significantly enhances communication skills and creative thinking in teachers. Through storytelling, teachers improve their ability to communicate clearly and effectively, engaging students and making lessons more memorable. The creative process involved in crafting stories encourages teachers to think imaginatively and develop

innovative teaching strategies. Storytelling also fosters emotional connections, simplifies complex concepts, promotes critical thinking, and enhances listening skills. Moreover, it builds confidence in teachers, empowering them to create dynamic and interactive classroom environments. Overall, storytelling is a powerful tool that enriches the educational experience for both teachers and students, making learning more engaging, relatable, and effective.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

While storytelling has been recognized as an effective pedagogical tool to enhance communication skills and creative thinking, its integration into teacher education programs faces several challenges. Despite its potential benefits, there is a lack of structured training and resources for teacher students to effectively utilize storytelling in their future classrooms. Additionally, many teacher education curricula do not prioritize or adequately emphasize the development of storytelling skills, leading to a gap in the practical application of this method. The researcher noticed throughout the years of teaching experience in teacher students at Education Faculty UdonThani Rajabhat University, Thailand, that when 1st year or new comer of teacher students that they change level education from secondary education to bachelor's degree come out and present in front of the classroom, usually the response is:

“I feel afraid to speak in front of the class.”

“I'm not sure if I've presented it appropriately.”

“I'm scared I am not like my fellow classmates.”

“I'm afraid of receiving debilitating advice.”

“I'm not sure whether my friend will understand what I'm saying or not.”

“I can't figure out how to design a presentation.”

“I'm not sure whether I can tell my pals the story I'm trying to understand.”

Based on the statements of the teacher students, it may be specific problems that teacher students may lack the confidence and skills necessary to create and deliver compelling stories, which is crucial for engaging students and enhancing learning, the existing curricula may not sufficiently highlight the importance of storytelling in teaching, resulting in inadequate exposure and practice for teacher students, teacher education programs often do not provide systematic training on how to incorporate storytelling into teaching practices, leaving teacher students unprepared to use this method effectively and Limited access to resources and examples of effective storytelling in educational contexts can hinder teacher students' ability to learn and apply this technique. Addressing these problems is crucial for maximizing the benefits of storytelling in enhancing communication skills and creative thinking among teacher students. By providing structured training, emphasizing storytelling in the curriculum, and developing robust assessment methods, teacher education programs can better prepare future teachers to use storytelling as a powerful educational tool. In response to this problem, the goals of this study were to answer the following questions: *“What effect does storytelling have on the development of communication skills and creative thinking competency among primary school teacher students at UdonThani Rajabhat University's faculty of education?”*

2. Purposes of the Study

The study attempted to:

1. To study and compare communication skills before and after learning of primary school teacher students by using storytelling activities
2. To study and compare creative thinking before and after learning of primary school teacher students by using storytelling activities

3. Research Questions

This study sought to find answers to the following questions:

- What effect does storytelling have on the development of communication skills and creative thinking competency among primary school teacher students at UdonThani Rajabhat University's faculty of education?

4. Research Hypothesis

Based on the research questions, the following hypothesis was formulated:

- There are statistically significant differences between the pretest and posttest in terms of developing their communication skills and creative thinking proficiency after applying storytelling activities in favor the posttest higher than pretest.

5. Significance of the Study

The significance of the study attempted to:

1. Investigate the effectiveness of using storytelling activities in enhancing communication skills and creative thinking of primary school teacher students at UdonThani Rajabhat University's faculty of education.
2. Provide a new perspective for 1st year or newcomer of teacher students that they change level education from secondary education to bachelor's degree through the use to storytelling activities in developing communication skills and creative thinking to build confidence in public speaking and presentation. This is a valuable skill for teachers who need to present information confidently and clearly to their students.
3. Direct the attention of instructors lecture and educators to the importance of adopting a new strategy in this case "storytelling activities" that has proven to be effective in developing communication skills and creative thinking of teacher students as mentioned in earlier.

6. Delimitations of the Study

The study was delimited to:

1. The population of the study that consisted of a sample of 1st year primary school teacher students at UdonThani Rajabhat University in Faculty of Education, Thailand.
2. Research design used is one group pretest and posttest design.
3. Conduct research in the 2nd academic semester of 2023.
4. Using storytelling activities as an instructional strategy in Bachelor of Education Program in Elementary Education.
5. Developing communication skills and creative thinking proficiency of classroom learning management activities for developing language skills and communication.

6. Communication skills is the ability oral communication skills in front of the classroom of primary school teacher students that assessment related to preparation, clarity, voice and body language, engagement with audience, and interest and persuasiveness.
7. Creative thinking is the ability creative presentation use a variety of techniques, including storytelling, visual aids, interactive elements, and innovative technologies, to capture the audience's attention and leave a lasting impression that assessment related to creativity and Innovation, structure and organization, use of media and technology, communication and presentation, and audience engagement.

7. Research Methodology

7.1 Population and Sample Selection

The population for this study is first-year primary school teacher students from the Faculty of Education at Udon Thani Rajabhat University, Thailand in Semester 2, academic year 2023, with one classroom and 30 students. The sample group used in this research, it is a population group of 15 students, obtained from simple random sampling.

7.2 Research Design

This research is designed to the investigation into 2 phases:

Phase 1: Developing and finding the Quality of Instruments of Research

1.1) Create experimental instruments the storytelling activities, there are four storytelling activities, 1) Tell stories based on experiences, 2) Tell stories based on drawing, 3) Tell stories based on fairy tale, 4) Tell stories based on local wisdom. The storytelling activity will be through learning by the experiential learning cycle as focus on four steps 1) Creating a storytelling experience, 2) Reflect storytelling approaches, 3) Identify issues and develop concepts, and 4) Use knowledge to create new stories. Storytelling through experiential learning cycle passed 3 experts in learning management and language communication conducted a quality inspection, evaluating the appropriateness of organizing learning activities, timing, measurement and evaluation and media used in learning management. Overall, storytelling activities through experiential activities were of high quality. The activities were tested with primary school teacher students who were not in the sample to determine their appropriateness, timing, and measurement and assess the suitability of the media, concluding that the activities were appropriate for organizing learning activities. Students enjoy and want to learn in activities like this again.

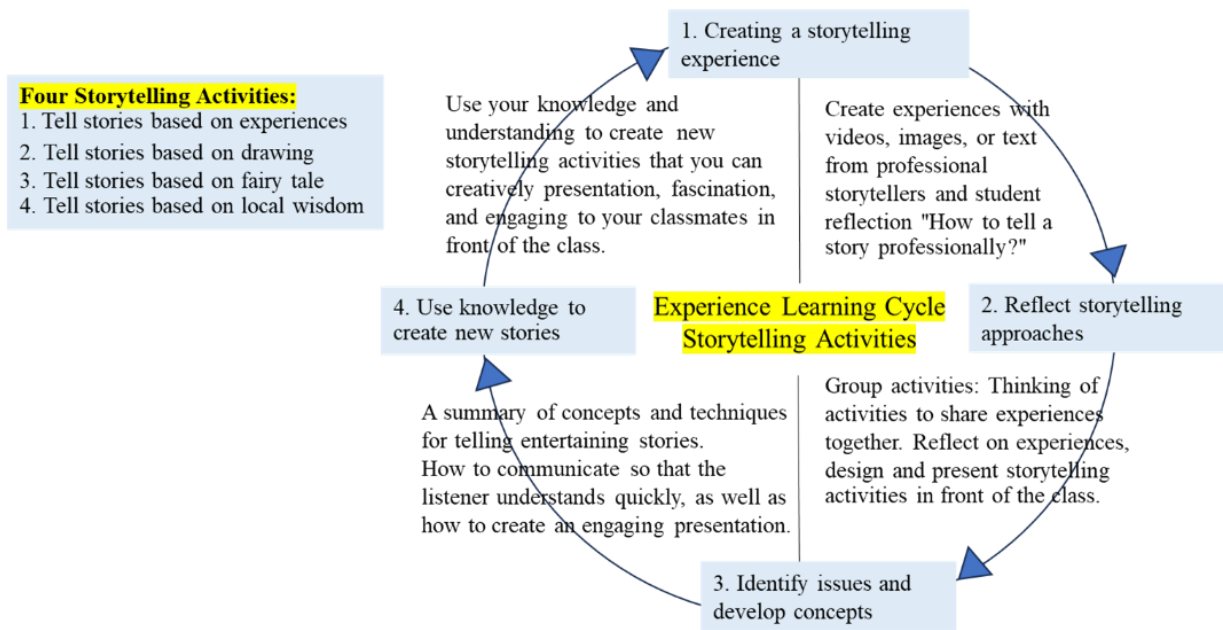


Fig.1 Conceptual framework storytelling activities through experiential learning cycle

1.2) Create evaluation instrument communication skills and creative thinking by the testing was conducted by telling stories based on random words such as food, mountains, sea, temple, waterfall, and others in 10 minutes for presentation. There are 2 types of evaluation instruments 1) communication skills assessment related to preparation, clarity, voice and body language, engagement with audience, interest and persuasiveness, and 2) creative thinking assessment related to creativity and innovation, structure and organization, use of media and technology, communication and presentation, audience engagement. The scoring is an estimation of rubric score. The quality of the evaluation instruments was determined by experts who were also responsible for reviewing the experimental instruments. Consider content validity when the index of consistency (IOC) score is 0.67 or higher. According to the test evaluation results, the test's IOC value was between 0.67 to 1.

Phase 2: Experiment Teaching Storytelling Activities to a Sample of Students

The researcher conducted the experiment teaching storytelling activities to a sample group of students and collected data. Follow the steps outlined on table 1 as below:

Table 1: Experiment teaching storytelling activities to a sample of students

Before	Experimental	After
The sample group applied scale pretest of 1) communication skills and 2) creative thinking in the testing was conducted by telling stories based on random words such as food, mountains, sea, temple, waterfall, and others in 10 minutes for presentation.	The teacher was informed about the purpose of the study, using instruction based on four storytelling activities in classroom research, and during the process teacher was observed, the interaction between teacher-students and students-students.	Applied scale of posttest of 1) communication skills and 2) creative thinking in the testing was conducted by telling stories based on random words such as food, mountains, sea, temple, waterfall, and others in 10 minutes for presentation that test same pretest.

The study instruments 6 weeks, 4 weeks for the instruction workshop, 2 weeks for the application of the pretest and the posttest.

7.3 Research Variables

The study included three variables:

1. The Independent Variable is: The storytelling activities.
2. The Dependent Variable 1 is: Communication skills.
3. The Dependent Variable 2 is: Creative thinking.

7.4 Data Analysis

Mean (\bar{X}), percentage (%), and standard deviations (S.D.) of measured quantities were determine and t-test for dependent samples done for hypothesis testing.

8. Findings

1 Communication Skills: The comparison between pretest-posttest of communication skills of primary school teacher students by using storytelling activities this can be summarized in table 2 as below.

Table 2: Data analysis results of communication skills.

N	Test	Mean Score	S.D.	%	t-test	p
15	Pretest	9.47	1.060	37.87	14.099**	.000
	Posttest	19.93	2.282	79.73		

Note.**p<.01

According to table 2, the mean communication skills pretest score obtained by primary school teacher students was 9.47 (37.87%). After learning, their mean posttest score is 19.93 (79.73%). This is a comparison to determine how there is improvement from pretest to posttest; the results reveal that the posttest mean score was higher than the pretest.

2 Creative Thinking: The comparison between pretest-posttest of creative thinking of primary school teacher students by using storytelling activities this can be summarized in table 3 as below.

Table 3: Data analysis results of creative thinking.

N	Test	Mean Score	S.D.	%	t-test	p
15	Pretest	10.73	1.050	42.93	17.238**	.000
	Posttest	19.40	1.502	77.60		

Note.**p<.01

According to table 3, the mean creative thinking pretest score obtained by primary school teacher students was 10.73 (42.93%). After learning, their mean posttest score is 19.40 (77.60%). This is a comparison to determine how there is improvement from pretest to posttest; the results reveal that the posttest mean score was higher than the pretest.

9. Results Discussions

Enhance communication skills and creativity thinking among primary school teacher students through storytelling activities, it was found that primary school teacher students have improved their communication skills and creative thinking after studying than before in significant at the .01 level, this may be due to:

- In this activity encourages on students' learning and reflecting on the learning outcomes of the activity.
- For example: Students find inspiration by watching VDO of storytellers, then they reflect "How to Tell a Story like a Storyteller."
- The process of working in groups is emphasized to allow students to think together, confident in working and thinking creatively to communicate stories that are new and unique in their own ways.
- Focus on asking questions that allow students to describe the concept of being a good storyteller in their own particular way.
- The emphasis is on practicing storytelling and accepting feedback for improving storytelling.

This is compatible with Bandura's (1977) social learning theory, which states that social learning occurs through observational or modeling, listening and simulating behavior from models such as seen on TV, movies, animations, spoken words or written information as a result, storytelling enhance learning through communication with each other. In the storytelling activity, it is language teaching that emphasizes communication through linking knowledge, skills, and ability to communicate in language to be able to use the language fluently and be accurate in using language at the same time. This type of learning management focuses on developing students' listening and speaking skills with students at the center of learning through a fun atmosphere, this is compatible with theory communicative language teaching Richards, J. C., & Rodgers, T. S. (1986), which is a theory that has been developed in foreign language learning and teaching in the 1960s - 2020s and is still widely used to until now. Storytelling activities also emphasize knowledge creation through experience and interaction. Therefore, storytelling helps create new knowledge and enhance creativity. which is consistent with theory constructivist learning theory of Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky Piaget, J. (1972).

For example, classroom reflections students' opinions on learning with storytelling activities are as follow:

"I'm developing confidence in standing up and delivering stories in front of the class."

"I realize now that I need to thoroughly understand what story that I intend to tell before telling it."

"I must tell the story with my feelings inside, the face has to correspond to the story, and always to keep consideration that the listener will like what we're saying."

"I know I'll need to practice it frequently, and don't be afraid to seek assistance; it will help me become a better storyteller."

According to all of this, it is reasonable to suppose that storytelling activities require clear speaking abilities and careful listening. Students who are given the opportunity to tell stories

will practice using language, organized thoughts and successful communication. At the same time, the listener must practice listening carefully in order to understand the content and feelings of the storyteller. Storytelling also gives students the opportunity to use a variety of vocabulary and expressions that improves language skills. The content creation and storytelling activities help students practice expressing their emotions through the use of voice, facial expressions, and body language, which affects the development of complete communication skills. Moreover, storytelling requires the creation content and stories that students will practice their imagination in creating interesting and meaningful stories that are develops creative thinking skills. In the storytelling activities, students must create ways to present stories in an organized and interesting way, as well as practice problem solving and analytical thinking. Storytelling requires the application of previous knowledge for creating new content, which helps students build skills in connecting knowledge from various sources. As a result, incorporating storytelling activities into the teaching and learning process improves students' communication and creativity significantly. Storytelling not only helps students improve communication and creativity skills, but it also fosters self-esteem and teamwork in group projects.

10. Conclusion and Recommendations

1. As a result, Storytelling makes presentations more structured, emotionally engaging, visually appealing, and remembered. By incorporating storytelling strategies, presenters can create a more exciting and impactful experience for their audience, increasing both creativity and communication efficacy.
2. Storytelling should be practiced on a regular basis so that students can continuously improve their skills. Teachers should provide advice and foster an environment suitable to storytelling, application in real life, storytelling talents can be used in a variety of settings so that students can apply it in real world.
3. Furthermore, storytelling activities also include communication skills that are listening skills, writing skills, confidence in public speaking, and training in telling stories through video, YouTube, Tik Tok, or other social media platforms to communicate stories, It will allow students to gain storytelling techniques and be able to use them in classroom learning activities as a teacher.
4. Storytelling activities, when integrated into classroom instruction, will assist students gain knowledge and understanding of the material more quickly. As a result, these dependent variables should not be disregarded in further study.

In summary, using storytelling activities is an effective way to develop students' communication and creativity skills. However, proper application and support from teachers will help to make the results more effective.

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