Self-Efficacy, Habits and Mindset Development

Keywords: mindset development, growth-mindset, self-efficacy

What Is the Topic

Self-efficacy, habits, and mindset development (also known as growth-mindset) are essential for enhancing student success and overall well-being. The Oregon Department of Education defines self-efficacy as a student's self-appraisal of their ability to perform tasks related to specific content areas. Research indicates that self-efficacy is a strong predictor of future academic performance, often surpassing other non-cognitive skills in predictive power (Aro et al., 2018; Bandura, 2006). Students with high self-efficacy are more likely to challenge themselves, remain motivated, and recover from setbacks. On the other hand, habits and growth-mindset are interconnected processes that significantly impact personal growth and academic achievement. Habit development involves creating consistent behaviors through repeated practice, leading to efficiency in daily routines (Spiess & Cooper, 2020).

Growth-mindset centers on the belief that students' abilities, academic and social skills, and self-confidence can be developed through dedication, effort, and learning. Unlike a fixed mindset, which views abilities as static and unchangeable, research has shown that a growth mindset promotes the idea that skills and intelligence are malleable (Zhao et al., 2023). This perspective encourages students to embrace challenges, persist in the face of setbacks, and view effort as a path to mastery. Research shows that cultivating a growth mindset within K-12 education can significantly enhance resilience, fostering a greater willingness to tackle difficult tasks and learn from mistakes (Claro & Loeb, 2024; Yeager et al., 2022).

For English learners (ELs), self-efficacy, habits, and mindset development are critical as ELs often experience specific challenges such as language barriers, unfamiliar cultural norms, and adjusting to new educational methods (e.g., immigrant students). A growth-mindset can help ELs view these obstacles as opportunities for development rather than insurmountable barriers. While a fixed mindset might lead ELs to believe that achieving fluency in English is unattainable due to these difficulties, a growth mindset fosters confidence and a positive attitude. Furthermore, self-efficacy supports ELs in

effectively addressing these challenges, enhancing their ability to adapt and succeed in their new educational environment (McMahon et al., 2009; Usher et al., 2019).

What Is the Evidence Base

Research shows that helping students develop underline positive habits, encourage self-efficacy and nurture mindset development can significantly improve academic achievement, foster socio-emotional well-being, and increase confidence (Caprara et al., 2008; Fast et al., 2010). For example, this study investigated self-efficacy among low- to intermediate-proficiency English learners (ELs), focusing on how their beliefs about their English abilities impact their learning experiences. The findings demonstrate that higher self-efficacy is associated with more positive engagement and persistence in learning, while lower self-efficacy often leads to school avoidance and frustration. However, self-efficacy can be developed and improved. For instance, effective social-emotional learning (SEL) programs and assessments have been proven to enhance self-efficacy, leading to increased academic motivation, learning, and achievement (Lee et al., 2020).

Furthermore, Zimmerman (2000) demonstrated that student self-efficacy significantly influences motivation to learn, impacting factors such as activity choices, effort, persistence, and emotional responses to challenges. The connection between self-efficacy and these motivational aspects correlates with academic outcomes like grades and educational attainment. Similarly, Fast et al. (2010) discovered that caring teachers positively impacted self-efficacy in math for English learners (ELs), which was subsequently linked to better math test scores.

Framework 1: Social-emotional Learning (SEL)**:** This is a structured approach that outlines how to integrate social and emotional learning into educational settings to support development of positive habits and mindset development in students (Durak et al. 2017; Usher et al., 2019). It provides guidelines, practices, and strategies for helping students develop self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship-building, and responsible decision-making. The Oregon Transformative Social and Emotional Learning Framework supports the idea that integrating SEL into the curriculum helps ELs build the resilience and interpersonal skills needed to navigate the dual challenges of mastering academic content while developing English proficiency.

- Zins and Elias (2007) and Durak et al. (2017) found that ELs with strong SEL skills perform better academically and show higher levels of school engagement compared to their peers without SEL support. This finding supports the idea that SEL supports self-efficacy as an effective approach to improve academic performance.
- In this review of literature, the authors describe various studies that demonstrate the positive impacts of incorporating social-emotional learning (SEL) in mainstream classrooms, including those with English learners. These findings show that SEL programs effectively enhance mindset growth by fostering beliefs that skills and intelligence can be developed through effort, thereby promoting resilience and a willingness to embrace challenges.

Framework 2: **Funds of knowledge** refers to the wealth of cultural, linguistic, and experiential knowledge that students bring with them from their homes and communities. The Oregon Department of Education Intervention and Indicators System states that "the most successful actions are informed by the strengths and funds of knowledge that come from those who will be served." The Funds of Knowledge literature emphasizes the importance of educators tapping into students' background knowledge and experiences to develop positive habits and encourage mindset development by enriching learning (Lee et al., 2020; Verdín, et al., 2021). Yosso's community cultural wealth model identifies six forms of cultural capital students bring to their educational environment, all of which contribute to the funds of knowledge framework emphasizing an asset-based perspective. Different studies indicate that incorporating funds of knowledge in schools can help educators understand how to meaningfully connect these experiences with classroom curriculum, enhancing self-efficacy (Fast et al., 2010; Zimmerman, 2000).

- This study illustrates the application of principles of funds of knowledge in a 9th grade English Language Arts class. The study showcases how students engaged with broader lesson goals by sharing their lived experiences. Findings show that ELs demonstrated improved self-efficacy and agency in choosing what to share, drawing from their cultural backgrounds, and engaged with peers in a more empathetic manner.
- Chen et al. (2017) found that for English learners (ELs), culture-based writing topics based on funds of knowledge, mirrored the ELs' multicultural backgrounds and provided EL teachers a creative way to incorporate students' prior knowledge into their English language learning. Findings also showed that EL parents played a critical role in academic success, contributing to mindset development by enhancing positive beliefs about themselves and fostering resilience and a willingness to embrace challenges such as emotional stress and negative beliefs about their EL classification (Claro & Loeb, 2024).

Summary

Review of relevant literature: Theoretical basis	Review of relevant literature: Support of identified research and practice	Empirical evidence on how it serves students and promotes systemic change
Social-emotional Learning (SEL): It supports the development of positive habits and mindset growth in students (Durak et al., 2017; Usher et al., 2019). It includes SEL strategies for self-awareness, self-management, and relationship-building, among others.	The Oregon Transformative Social and Emotional Learning Framework highlights that integrating SEL helps students build resilience and interpersonal skills necessary for navigating academic content successfully. Research by Zins and Elias (2007) and Durak et al. (2017) supports the effectiveness of SEL in improving academic performance and school	Studies show that SEL programs improve academic performance by enhancing self-efficacy and mindset growth. SEL fosters beliefs that skills and intelligence can be developed through effort, promoting resilience and a willingness to embrace challenges. This integration effectively benefits ELs in mainstream classrooms by improving engagement and academic outcomes.

	engagement.	
Funds of knowledge It refers to the cultural, linguistic, and experiential knowledge students bring from their homes and communities. The Oregon Department of Education emphasizes using this knowledge to inform educational actions (Lee et al., 2020; Verdín et al., 2021). It helps develop positive habits and mindset by connecting students' experiences to the curriculum.	Utilizing students' funds of knowledge helps educators create meaningful connections between students' backgrounds and classroom content, enhancing. Studies, including those by Fast et al. (2010) and Zimmerman (2000), demonstrate that incorporating these experiences can support self-efficacy and mindset development.	Chen et al. (2017) found that culture-based writing topics aligned with students' backgrounds enhanced their learning and academic success. EL parents also played a key role in fostering resilience and positive beliefs.

Equity Considerations

Addressing equity concerns for families and students navigating economic instability requires a nuanced understanding of how economic disadvantages intersect with factors like self-efficacy, habits, and mindset development. Additionally, economic hardship often limits access to essential educational resources such as books, technology, and extracurricular activities, which are crucial for academic growth and enrichment (McMahon et al., 2009; Usher et al., 2019). Research indicates that students experiencing poverty often start school with fewer academic and non-academic skills compared to their more affluent peers, and this disparity can widen as they progress through their education. This early skills gap can translate into lower academic performance, decreased motivation, and higher dropout rates (Ashcraft, 2023)

> ### *Example from the Field*
>
> "Self-efficacy, or students' personal beliefs about their capabilities to learn or perform behaviors at designated levels, plays an important role in their motivation and learning. Self-efficacy is a key mechanism in social cognitive theory, which postulates that achievement depends on interactions between behaviors, personal factors, and environmental conditions" (Schunk, 2003).

Research shows that English learners (ELs) experiencing income disparities can face a range of socio-economic challenges that impact their educational experiences. Moreover, these students may show lower self-efficacy due to external stressors and fewer opportunities for positive reinforcement. For ELs, language barriers further complicate their ability to keep pace with peers, as they may experience heightened levels of stress and instability related to financial insecurity (Renzulli, 2021). These factors can impede cognitive functioning and limit their engagement in the learning process. Moreover, the lack of supportive educational environments outside of school, such as tutoring or enrichment programs, exacerbates these disadvantages (Kim et al., 2018).

Educators, counselors, and school leaders play a pivotal role in developing strategies and programs to support ELs experiencing income disparities. They must recognize the impact of socioeconomic factors on students' learning experiences and be prepared to address these challenges in their teaching practices.

Considerations for Local Context: Strategy Selection

When determining the best strategies for supporting school leaders and educators in integrating practices that foster self-efficacy and habits and mindset development, it's essential to consider the local context of the district or school. By "local context," we mean the unique community factors that may influence how educators implement strategies.

The guiding questions below can help educators and leaders effectively apply these approaches with English learners (ELs):
1. How can educators integrate socio-emotional learning (SEL) strategies into their curriculum to enhance self-efficacy for English learners (ELs)?
2. In what ways can educators leverage students' funds of knowledge to develop positive habits and a growth mindset, particularly for ELs facing socio-economic challenges?
3. How can school leaders and counselors effectively address the unique socio-economic barriers faced by ELs experiencing poverty to enhance their mindset development and overall academic performance?
4. What role do families play in supporting the socio-emotional development and self-efficacy of ELs, and how can schools collaborate with families to support these efforts?

School districts may offer different resources like programs or other initiatives aimed at fostering mindset development and self-efficacy. For example Central Point School District and Beaverton School District' s program models. Also, consider the different components that encourage self-efficacy in schools that promote student outcomes, as shown in Figure 1.

The Oregon Department of Education states six mindset standards that can guide educators and school leaders in informing programs and strategies:
1. Belief in development of whole self, including a healthy balance of mental, social/emotional and physical well-being
2. Self-confidence in ability to succeed
3. Sense of belonging in the school environment
4. Understanding that postsecondary education and life-long learning are necessary for long-term career success
5. Belief in using abilities to their fullest to achieve high-quality results and outcomes
6. Positive attitude toward work and learning

Lewis et al. (2012) and Paura et al. (2019) offer recommendations that educators and school leaders can consider to enhance self-efficacy in English learners:

1. <u>Leverage EL Skills</u>: Empower ELs by allowing them to use their language skills to translate and teach simple phrases, building their confidence and sense of value within the classroom.
2. <u>Assign Leadership Roles</u>: Designate ELs as reading buddies or group leaders to foster their leadership abilities and integrate them into the classroom community.
3. <u>Guide Group Work</u>: Model and teach collaborative skills like active listening and turn-taking, and use written roles to facilitate participation in group tasks.
4. <u>Foster Peer Connections</u>: Use icebreakers and buddy systems to help ELs connect with peers, share cultural traditions, and feel a sense of belonging while discouraging teasing of non-native accents.

Figure 1. Components of Self-efficacy in Schools

What Can Educators Do: Strategies for Success

To support an effective implementation of strategies, check out the Oregon Department of Education's six mindset standards that can guide educators and school leaders in informing programs and strategies:

1. Belief in development of whole self, including a healthy balance of mental, social/emotional and physical well-being
2. Self-confidence in ability to succeed
3. Sense of belonging in the school environment
4. Understanding that postsecondary education and life-long learning are important for long-term career success
5. Belief in using abilities to their fullest to achieve high-quality results and outcomes
6. Positive attitude toward work and learning

Educators and school leaders can use the following behaviors associated with self-efficacy levels to identify areas to better support students.

- High Self-Efficacy Behaviors:
  - View challenges as opportunities to overcome rather than threats to avoid.
  - Are more inclined to tackle difficult material and persist until they master it.
  - Develop a deeper interest in learning and demonstrate perseverance.
  - Respond to negative feedback constructively and quickly recover from setbacks.
- Low Self-Efficacy Behaviors:
  - Tend to shy away from challenging tasks due to fear of failure.
  - Believe that difficult tasks are beyond their abilities.
  - May focus on their personal deficiencies rather than finding solutions to challenges.
  - React negatively to constructive feedback, giving up more easily and losing confidence when facing setbacks.

The strategies below are examples rather than definitive recommendations. Effective approaches should consider various factors related to the specific school or district, including existing methods or programs. The resources provided can help educators understand how to identify, adapt, and implement strategies tailored to the demographics and backgrounds of their students and families. Also consider that this requires more than just a single program; it demands a coordinated approach across classrooms, the school, homes, and communities.

Strategy 1: Crumpled Reminder
Primary audience: K-12 students, but can also be adapted for professional development for school staff
Description: This strategy helps students confront and reinterpret their mistakes. By physically crumpling up their written mistakes, students symbolically address and let go of the negative emotions associated with making errors. This activity promotes a growth-mindset by emphasizing that mistakes are a natural part of learning and can lead to personal and academic growth (Yeager et al., 2022).
How to use it?
We suggest the following steps to use this strategy.

- Preparation:

- ○ Reflect on a mistake you've made and the feelings associated with it.
        - ○ Write it down, crumple it, and follow the activity to understand the process from the students' perspective.
    - **Activity**:
        - ○ Ask students to write about a recent mistake and how it made them feel (2 minutes).
        - ○ Give each student a fresh piece of paper, instruct them to crumple it up and throw it at the board, replicating their feelings about making a mistake (2 minutes).
        - ○ Retrieve the paper, un-crumple it, and color each line with different colors, symbolizing the synaptic activity that occurs when a mistake is made (2 minutes).
        - ○ Keep the paper as a physical reminder of the learning process.
    - **Discussion**:
        - ○ Lead a discussion with prompts about how students feel when making mistakes, how others perceive them, and the learning experiences that resulted from mistakes.
    - **Closure**:
        - ○ Ask students to crumple the paper again and throw it away, symbolizing letting go of the past mistake.
        - ○ Encourage them to yell "Done!", "Next!", or "Goodbye!" as they do so.

How is it beneficial? Who benefits from it?
This activity benefits both students and educators. Students learn to see mistakes as opportunities for growth rather than failures, fostering resilience and a willingness to take on challenges. Educators benefit by creating a classroom culture that values learning from mistakes, which can enhance student engagement and participation.

How does it support changes in the systems?
It normalizes mistakes and promotes a growth mindset. This strategy helps create an educational environment where students feel safe to take risks and learn from their errors. This can lead to more innovative thinking and problem-solving skills.

Known or potential cautions? What not to do?
Ensure that the activity is conducted in a supportive and non-judgmental atmosphere. Avoid making students feel singled out or embarrassed by their mistakes. It is essential not to force students to share their mistakes if they are uncomfortable doing so. This activity should be a positive experience that reinforces the idea that everyone makes mistakes and can learn from them.

Strategy 2: Goal Setting and Reflection
Primary audience: students and educators
Description: This strategy involves students setting specific, achievable goals and regularly reflecting on their progress. It helps students build self-efficacy by breaking down large tasks into manageable steps and celebrating their achievements along the way (Aro et al., 2018). Through this process, students learn to take control of their learning, build confidence, and stay motivated by recognizing and valuing their progress (Schunk, 2003).
How to use it?
We suggest the following steps for implementation.

- When to Use It:
  - At the beginning of a new term or project.
  - During regular intervals throughout the school year.
  - After completing major assignments or exams.
- Preparation:
  - Introduce the Concept: explain the importance of setting realistic goals and breaking tasks into smaller steps.
  - Discuss the concept of self-efficacy and how setting and achieving goals can enhance it.
- Goal Setting Framework:
  - Introduce the SMART criteria (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) for setting goals.
- Setting Goals (5 minutes):
  - Have students write down one academic and one personal goal they want to achieve within a set period.
  - Ensure that these goals are specific and achievable within the timeframe.
  - Outlining Steps (10 minutes):
    - Ask students to outline the steps they need to take to achieve these goals.
    - Encourage them to think about potential challenges and how they might overcome them.
    - Sharing Goals (5 minutes): Have students share their goals with a partner or the class. This builds accountability and allows for peer support and feedback. Schedule regular check-ins where students can reflect on their progress.
    - Discuss challenges, successes, and any adjustments needed to stay on track.
    - Encourage students to keep a reflection journal to document their progress and feelings about their goals.

How is it beneficial? Who benefits from it?
It benefits students by helping them develop a sense of control over their learning and progress. It teaches them to set realistic goals and develop strategies to achieve them, boosting their confidence and motivation. Educators also benefit by understanding their students' aspirations and providing targeted support.

How does it support changes in the systems?
This strategy can lead to a more personalized learning environment, where students are encouraged to take ownership of their learning journey. This approach fosters a supportive classroom culture where effort and progress are valued over innate ability.

Known or potential cautions? What not to do?
Avoid setting goals that are too broad or unattainable, as this can lead to frustration and decreased self-efficacy. Ensure that goals are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART). Be mindful of individual differences in goal-setting abilities and provide necessary support to help each student succeed. Do not neglect regular reflection sessions, as they are crucial for maintaining motivation and adjusting goals as needed. Additionally, avoid creating an overly competitive environment; focus on individual progress and effort rather than comparisons with peers.

Since nurturing a growth mindset has been proven to be a highly effective approach to support student socio-emotional development and academic success, we encourage educators to consider the following recommendations for fostering a growth mindset in the classroom:

- Normalize Struggle: Reinforce that struggle is a natural part of learning, helping students to embrace challenges positively.
- Encourage Challenges: Present challenges as exciting and engaging, contrasting them with easier tasks which can be seen as less stimulating.
- Use the Word "Yet": Add "yet" to statements about abilities to indicate that skills can be developed over time, e.g., "You're not a math person yet."
- Promote Brain Growth: Teach students that the brain can grow and improve through effort, similar to developing a muscle, based on research about brain plasticity.
- Model Mistake Correction: Show that mistakes are learning opportunities by demonstrating how to correct them and celebrating this process.
- Set Achievable Goals: Encourage students to set small, attainable goals to demonstrate that progress and growth are possible.
- Foster Cooperation: Use cooperative tasks to highlight the value of teamwork and problem-solving, emphasizing the process over individual outcomes.
- Provide Meaningful Challenges: Offer tasks that are challenging and stretch students' abilities, reinforcing the importance of overcoming obstacles for growth.

> Note: Avoid praising intelligence directly, as it may imply fixed traits, and be cautious with overly simplistic encouragement, ensuring that students' growth efforts are validated.

Implementation Considerations

To foster a growth-mindset in teachers and administrators, it's essential to address both the benefits and the challenges of implementing such initiatives. Research shows that growth mindset and self-efficacy approaches are more effective in supportive learning environments, but cultural changes within institutions can face resistance. Understanding these challenges is key for educators and school leaders to learn how to overcome them.

- Resistance to Change: Educators who have invested time in their current methods may resist adopting new practices, especially if their existing methods have been successful.
- Skepticism About New Methods: There may be skepticism regarding the benefits of new approaches, particularly if educators have frequently encountered changes.
- Time Constraints: Teachers and administrators often have limited time, making it difficult to learn and apply new methods or policies.
- Existing Fixed Mindsets: Some educators may have fixed mindsets themselves, potentially discounting the value of growth mindset theory.

Here are five tips for developing a growth mindset in English learners:

1. <u>Use Growth-Oriented Language</u>: Model a positive, progress-focused approach by using encouraging language and creating visual reminders, like a growth-mindset bulletin board, to demonstrate how to handle challenges and mistakes constructively.
2. <u>Address Mental Health</u>: Recognize that ELs may experience mental health challenges due to adjusting to a new environment and cultural differences. Discuss mental health openly and provide support and resources to help students build a solid emotional foundation.
3. <u>Identify Strengths and Weaknesses</u>: Highlight students' strengths to show that growth is achievable, even if they are still learning English. Acknowledge their successes and set realistic expectations for challenging areas to foster a positive mindset.
4. <u>Document and Share Progress</u>: Track and share students' progress to help them see their growth over time. Allow students to monitor their own progress to build confidence and a sense of ownership in their learning journey.
5. <u>Incorporate Reflection</u>: Include time for reflection in your lessons to discuss what went well and what could be improved. This practice helps students process their experiences and reinforces their growth mindset.

Consider reflecting on these questions:
1. How can educators effectively normalize difficulties in the classroom to support English learners in developing a growth mindset?
2. What strategies can be used to present challenges as exciting opportunities rather than intimidating obstacles for English learners?
3. How can the use of the word "yet" be integrated into feedback for English learners to emphasize the potential for growth and improvement?
4. What methods can educators employ to model and celebrate mistake correction in a way that resonates with English learners?
5. How can setting achievable goals be tailored specifically to the needs of English learners to demonstrate progress and foster self-efficacy?
6. What are some effective ways to incorporate reflection into lessons for English learners to reinforce their growth mindset and track their progress?

Consider as well:
- <u>Geographical Factors</u>:How do the location and size of the district/school impact the practical aspects of plan implementation?
- <u>Learning Mode</u>: What considerations are needed based on the learning mode (in person/remote/hybrid/other) prevalent in the local context?
- <u>Duration</u>: How long is the plan designed to last, and what measures are in place for its continuous effectiveness?
- <u>Reliability</u>: Is the implementation plan reliable and realistic given the local context, and what factors contribute to its sustainability?

What is our capacity for implementation?
Our capacity for implementation hinges on leveraging existing frameworks and integrating them into

current educational practices. The Oregon Transformative Social and Emotional Learning Framework and principles of Funds of Knowledge provide structured approaches for enhancing self-efficacy, positive habits, and growth mindset among English learners (ELs). The effectiveness of these frameworks in supporting ELs has been demonstrated through research, which highlights their ability to improve academic performance and engagement (Durak et al., 2017; Zins & Elias, 2007; Lee et al., 2020). Educators can build on these existing models, utilizing their knowledge and skills to integrate SEL strategies and culturally responsive practices into their curricula.

How are families involved in the implementation of the plan?

Families are integral to the implementation plan as they support ELs' socio-emotional development and self-efficacy through collaborative efforts, consistent communication, and targeted workshops. Schools should work closely with families to incorporate students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds into their learning, making education more relevant and supportive (Chen et al., 2017). Establishing regular channels of communication allows educators to update families on their child's progress and gain valuable insights into the home environment. Additionally, offering workshops can equip families with strategies to bolster their children's academic and socio-emotional growth at home.

How will we know if the implementation is successful?

Success can be measured through various indicators:

- Academic and Engagement Metrics: Improved academic performance, increased classroom participation, and enhanced student engagement are key success indicators (Lee et al., 2020).
- Self-Efficacy Assessments: Evaluations of changes in students' self-efficacy, such as their confidence in handling academic tasks and resilience in the face of challenges, will provide insight into the effectiveness of the implementation (Fast et al., 2010).
- Feedback from Stakeholders: Regular feedback from students, teachers, and families can offer qualitative data on the impact of the strategies and areas for improvement.

What resources do we need to implement the program, plan, or strategies?

Implementing the strategies and approaches may require:

- Training and Professional Development: Educators need training on SEL strategies and culturally responsive teaching practices (Durak et al., 2017).
- Curricular Materials: Resources for integrating socio emotional learning (SEL) and funds of knowledge into the curriculum, such as lesson plans and teaching materials, are essential.
- Support Services: Access to counselors and SEL specialists to provide additional support and guidance to both educators and students.

While funding may not always be readily available within school budgets, educators and school leaders can explore external funding opportunities. For instance, Oregon's Department of Education offers grants and funding opportunities, and organizations like Peter G. Peterson Foundation may provide additional financial support. Additionally, fostering financial stewardship and involving District Equity Committees in the budgeting process can help prioritize resources based on student and community needs. Also consider the Oregon Department of Education's Guideline to spending funds responsibly.

Are accessibility supports in place?

Accessibility supports should include:

- **Differentiated Instruction**: Tailoring teaching methods and materials to accommodate various learning needs and language proficiencies (Zimmerman, 2000).
- **Language Support**: Providing translation services and bilingual resources to ensure effective communication with ELs and their families.
- **Assistive Technologies**: Utilizing technology to support learning and communication for students who may need additional assistance due to language barriers or learning disabilities.

Learn More

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