
Education for Institutional Library Service

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"INSTITUTIONAL LIBRARY SERVICE" as considered in this article will include service to residents and staff in institutions for the physically and mentally ill, the developmentally disabled, the aged, the abandoned, as well as to those in prisons, jails and other correctional institutions. It will include federal, state, county and local institutions, private as well as public. Although emphasis will be given to long-term care institutions, general hospitals and jails will not be excluded. Library service administered by state and public libraries and library systems, as well as services provided by institutions themselves, will be included.

The term *education* will cover professional preparation for institutional library service on both the preservice and continuing education levels. It will include education carrying graduate credit, noncredit workshops, in-service training by state and public libraries, and activities of library associations.

Although too many institutions and too many libraries imagine that library service can be provided by unattended (and often ill-chosen) collections, this article assumes the central importance of qualified staff to the quality of institutional library service. As Rittenhouse wrote in his article on "Prisoners, Patients and Public Libraries," "without a personable, sympathetic, and competent staff member at the point of contact with his patrons, no amount of provision in top quality facilities, collections, and programming will succeed."¹ Again, as House stated in *Adult Leadership*, "The staff itself is of utmost importance in the development and growth of the corrections library."²

This centrality of the librarian to quality library service is recognized in the various standards articulated by professional associations con-

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cerned with institutional library service. "A qualified, competent professional librarian is the key to any successful program of library service," states the *Standards for Library Service in Health Care Institutions* approved by American Library Association, and the Catholic, Medical and Special library associations:

These concepts of library service [upon which the Health Care Standards are based] imply that an academically and professionally qualified librarian will be responsible for administering an institution's library programs. Where the level of need for service does not require the full-time employment of a professional librarian, the following should be considered:

- (1) the use of consultant service or supervisory personnel,
- (2) the pooling of resources and the sharing of services by two or more health care institutions in a geographic area, and
- (3) service supplied through a regional library system.³

The *Standards for Library Service for the Blind and Visually Handicapped*, now being revised by the ALA Health and Rehabilitative Library Services Division (HRLSD), recommends for state and regional libraries for the blind and physically handicapped: "an administrative librarian plus one professional staff member for each 750 registered readers, and additional professional staff as needed." The standards require that regional libraries "employ professional staff members who are graduates of an accredited library school and/or meet state library certification," and that they "recognize the importance of professional library experience with readers and of personal qualifications for competent performance."⁴

The *Minimum Standards for Public Library Systems*, in its consideration of library service to "individuals and groups with special needs," emphasizes the necessity for "staff with special competence."⁵ The *Standards for Library Functions at the State Level* acknowledge the obligation of the state library to provide state institutions and state agency personnel responsible for them with "continuing and consistent advisory and consultative services . . . including participation in in-service training programs for library staffs."⁶ The chapter on library services, issued by the American Correctional Association as part of its *Manual of Correctional Standards*, states: "Undoubtedly the most vital element of good library service is the librarian and library staff. Without the knowledge and skill of a trained librarian, the other essential elements of a library cannot be achieved."⁷ Such underscoring of the importance of qualified personnel could be multiplied from numerous standards and guidelines.

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What are the special insights, skills and personality characteristics necessary for the institutional librarian? In the first place, institutional librarianship is interdisciplinary in nature. In order to function as part of the institution team, the librarian must possess a minimal understanding of the other disciplines in the institution in addition to his/her own professional skills. Ruth Tews, formerly librarian at Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, underscored this point in a speech on "The Role of the Librarian on the Interdisciplinary Team," delivered at an adult services institute at the University of Wisconsin at Madison. "Planning library activities," she said, "involves inter-team collaboration."⁸ She called for a preservice curriculum designed to prepare the institution librarian to participate in the "remedial, therapeutic, and rehabilitative care of the individual"; such a curriculum, she proposed, must include a "balance of the behavioral and biological sciences . . . in addition to library techniques and an extensive knowledge of literature."⁹ Arleen Hynes, speaking from her experience as a librarian in a mental hospital, stated: "The librarian interested in bibliotherapy needs courses in psychology and literature in undergraduate and continuing education, as well as courses in group dynamics."¹⁰ Ruth Tews and Arleen Hynes view the interdisciplinary team from the standpoint of hospital librarians. For a librarian in an institution for the mentally disabled, other disciplines might include occupational therapy, nursing or social work. For a correctional librarian, the need might be for a background in criminology, educational psychology, recreation, and adult basic education. In prisons especially, but potentially in all institutions, the Supreme Court decision of November 1971 (that indigent prisoners have a right to adequate law libraries) is requiring of librarians the skill to select, organize and retrieve law materials.

In addition to having ordinary library skills (and some not-ordinary skills in law librarianship), and at least a measure of academic/theoretical grounding in other relevant disciplines, the librarian needs, in order to function as a productive member of the institution team, a practical understanding of how specific institutions function—where the lines of authority are, how the various services of the institution relate to each other, what the written and unwritten rules of procedure are. Some sophistication and sensitivity in this area, which can only be gained by on-the-job experience and training, can be crucial. As Clara Luciola, pioneer director of Cleveland Public Library's institutional service, observed: "When we send staff to outside institutions, armed with books, exhibits, films, audio-visual reading aids, their strength must de-

rive from confidence in their training and the supporting help of their supervisors through advice, counsel, conferences and staff meetings."¹¹

Along with some acquaintance with the literature, language and modus operandi of other appropriate disciplines, and a basic understanding of how the institution works, the institutional librarian must above all have the ability to relate to people in a warm, empathetic, un-sentimental, personal manner. As Lucioli has stated, it is the "interpersonal exchange with books and ideas as the medium [which leads to] renewal of mind and spirit for the patient and deeper understanding for the librarian."¹² Ruth Tews concludes that in addition to "technical knowledge in librarianship," and some knowledge and experience in related fields, the hospital librarian must: "have developed a sensitivity to people and their needs. It is this sensitivity which is the hidden quality, the undefinable skill, which sets therapy in motion and establishes interpersonal relationships, respect, mutual trust and understanding. When this is established with the patient, the service of books in therapy can begin."¹³ As David Rittenhouse sums up, "Sympathetic contact with the patient is a key element in this service to institutionalized persons."¹⁴

Whether this outgoing, empathetic personality can be developed at the graduate or postgraduate level or whether it must be recruited is a moot question. One can only hope that librarians will self-select themselves into institutional service, or at least that librarians who do not have the necessary personality will recognize the demands of institution service and will seek employment elsewhere.

For the librarian working directly with institutionalized persons, commonly in a site far from a catalog and other library tools, and often with patrons who have limited library experience, a wide knowledge of books is also vitally important. As Lucioli wrote: "The librarian who goes into this field must follow the path of omnivorous reading, of searching, sifting, exploring and exchanging ideas, experimenting with subjects and styles and levels of writing — all with one aim — to satisfy the reader, to make the act of reading an enjoyable experience."¹⁵ Because many institutionalized persons are functionally illiterate, the librarian must also have skills in identifying materials of high interest and easy readability, and some understanding of both the mechanics of reading and how to help individuals to teach themselves to read.

Institutional library consultants, employed by most, if not all, state libraries, are key personnel in the development of quality institutional library service. Among their duties are the development and improvement of library service in state correctional, mental health and mental

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retardation institutions, technical assistance to state officials in planning and evaluating library service, consultant services to public libraries in the development of outreach services to local institutions and homebound patrons, direct administration of regional libraries for the blind and physically handicapped, and the provision of statewide information and training concerning institutional library programs. Andree B. Lowry, formerly institution library consultant for the state of Florida, identifies the personal qualities, experience and training required for this demanding and key job: "The person should be dynamic, intelligent, emotionally mature, empathetic, patient, personable, and not easily discouraged. Prior course work in penology, sociology, psychology, and developmental disabilities . . . [and] a minimum of two years post-MLS experience in a public service area of a public, institutional, or state library" are usually necessary.¹⁶ In summary, the institutional librarian as well as the institution library consultant should possess, in addition to the ordinary library science skills and insights, some background in other disciplines relevant to the institution or institutions in which he/she works, some knowledge of psychology, some sophistication in institutional structure, a wide and deep reading knowledge and acquaintance with nonprint media, and above all, a warm personality anchored in the bedrock of common sense.

Training for institutional library service can begin with the pre-service level in the graduate library schools. In 1976 the ALA Office for Research conducted a survey of specializations offered by ALA-accredited graduate library education programs.¹⁷ The survey was in two parts, one on schools offering specializations or concentrations, and the second on schools providing one or two courses. Among the specializations identified were: "Institutions-General," "Institutions-Prisons," "Hospitals," "Bibliotherapy," "Rehabilitation," the "Physically Handicapped," "Aging," and "Literacy Programs." Seven library schools—North Texas, San Jose State, Syracuse, Wayne State and Catholic universities, and the universities of Wisconsin and North Carolina—offered students the opportunity to specialize in five of these eight fields: Aging, Hospitals, Institutions-General, Institutions-Prisons, and the Physically Handicapped. Four of the seven schools offer specialization in aging. Only one school, Wayne State University, offers specialization in all five of the concentrations (see Table 1).

Wayne State's library/gerontology curriculum may be typical of the specialized curricula offered at all seven schools. It depends for its success on interdisciplinary strength in gerontology throughout the university and opportunity for field experience in nearby public and institution libraries.

<i>University</i>	<i>Aging</i>	<i>Hospitals</i>	<i>Institutions— General</i>	<i>Institutions— Prisons</i>	<i>Physically Handicapped</i>
Catholic					X
North Carolina		X			
North Texas	X				
San Jose State				X	
Syracuse	X				
Wayne State	X	X	X	X	X
Wisconsin	X				

Table 1. Accredited Library Programs Offering Specializations

Students pursue the regular library science core curriculum and elect library science courses relevant to service to the aging, such as: "Public Library Systems and Services," "Selection and Evaluation of Library Materials for Adults," and "Library Service to Special Groups." In addition, they complete at least twelve quarter hours of cognate courses in gerontology in such fields as sociology, political science, psychology, communication, and special education. Supervised field experience in a library offering excellent service to the aging and a research project focused on some aspect of library service to the aging are required. Most students have gained their field experience in the Detroit Public Library's services to the institutionalized and retirees, although some have gone as far afield as the Library of Congress Division for the Blind and Physically Handicapped, and the Cleveland and Milwaukee public libraries. Students affiliate with the Institute of Gerontology, a training-research institute operating on the campuses of Wayne State University and the University of Michigan, and are required to attend a noncredit seminar which brings gerontology students in all schools and departments together about once each quarter to consider some aspect of service to the aging.

This library/gerontology program serves as a model for specialization in other aspects of institutional library service. Electives and cognates, as well as field experience, are tailored to each student's particular interest and background. The essential ingredients are a knowledgeable faculty member in the library school, suitable courses in other schools and departments in the university, and good libraries available for field service. At Wayne State, only one course ("Library Service to Special Groups") is offered in the library school itself, although if the student wishes, he/she may also prepare for medical librarianship. Students aspir-

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ing to work as patients' librarians in hospitals find this additional preparation important, since the health care standards recommend that both medical and patients' library service be administered under a single head.

In its 1976-77 catalog, St. John's University lists an area of specialization not reported in the ALA 1976 survey: a "specialty in drug information." According to the catalog:

Students with appropriate bioscience background and an interest in a career in drug information may elect courses from the College of Pharmacy and Allied Health Professions. Six or more credits may be elected, subject to the approval of the Chairman . . . [in] drug information, biostatistics, pharmacology . . . [and] an internship . . . in a drug information center, industrial pharmacy library, or drug information organization.¹⁸

Table 2 charts those schools which do not have a program of specialization or concentration, but rather offer one or two courses in some phase of institutional library service, or service to target groups often found in institutions (see Table 2). Nineteen schools, the survey documented, offer one or two courses in areas relating to institution library service, with the heaviest emphases on hospital librarianship (8 schools) and institutional service in general (7 schools). Although course descriptions in catalogs are not totally revealing of content and/or methodology, the two course descriptions which follow may be somewhat typical. Columbia's 1973-74 catalog describes "Institution and Hospital Library Services" (3 semester hours) as: "Development and trends in library programs for patients, inmates and staffs of health, hygiene, social welfare, correctional and other institutions that serve the needs of handicapped, deprived or disadvantaged persons."¹⁹ St. John's University 1976-77 catalog lists "Materials and Services to the Handicapped and Aged" (3 semester hours) as:

A study of services for the exceptional reader, e.g., the retarded reader, the visually, physically, mentally handicapped, the aging. Consideration of professional attitudes, as well as materials, techniques, equipment and programs aimed at helping teachers and librarians work with all levels and types of readers in classroom, library or home setting.²⁰

The names of the instructors of the courses identified in the ALA survey, their qualifications in education and experience, the degree to which the courses draw on insights from other disciplines and from

	<i>Aging</i>	<i>Hospital</i>	<i>Institu- tions— General</i>	<i>Institu- tions— Prison</i>	<i>Literacy Programs</i>	<i>Physi- cally Handi- capped</i>	<i>Rehabil- itation</i>
Alabama AGRI & MECH U.					X	X	
British Columbia	X		X				
U. of Calif. Los Angeles	X						
Catholic Univ.				X			X
Clarion State College				X			
Columbia		X	X				
Florida State	X						
Iowa		X					
Long Island Univ.-Post		X					
Louisiana State U. of Maryland	X	X	X		X	X	
Michigan							X
Oklahoma	X						
St. John's	X		X				
South Carolina			X				
SUNY—Geneseo		X					
Syracuse		X	X				
Texas Women's		X					
W. Michigan	X	X	X	X		X	

Table 2. Accredited Library Schools Offering One or Two Courses in Institution Library Service

practicing librarians, the frequency with which they are offered, and the number of students counseled into them are all data which would require much more extensive research than the ALA survey entailed. Without extensive research it is also impossible to discern whether there is a trend in preservice library education toward more emphasis on institutional library service. It is this writer's impression that library schools and libraries are becoming more aware of the potential in library service to the aging. In 1976, eleven of the sixty-seven accredited schools (16 percent) offered either a specialization or at least one course in services to the aging; at least two other schools have recently entered or are planning soon to enter this field. However, since only 5 percent of those over 65 are institutionalized (according to the 1970 census), library service to the aging is or should be only marginally institutional.

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In summary, the evidence collected by ALA in 1976 would certainly document that library schools generally placed low priority on education for institutional library service, and related fields at the first professional-degree level.

Continuing post-master's education of practicing librarians by library schools, state libraries and library associations may present a slightly brighter picture. For example, the University of Wisconsin at Madison conducts a sixth-year specialist program for librarians interested in library service to the aging, with courses and learning experiences tailored to the needs and interests of the individuals enrolled. Catholic University announced in its 1975-77 catalog a series of three semester-hour summer courses "open only to persons who hold a graduate degree in librarianship and to advanced library science students who have relevant working experience." Among these are "Developing Library Programs to Serve the Handicapped," "Library Service to the Aging," "Seminar on Institutional Library Services," "Workshop on Library Service to the Hearing Impaired," and "Bibliotherapy."²¹ Further inquiry might substantiate that all or most of the library schools reporting courses in the ALA survey open those courses to practicing librarians, as well as to preservice students.

Institutes and fellowships funded under the Higher Education Act Title II-B have provided opportunity and incentive for preparation of librarians for institution library service. The following data have been taken from reports on institutes for training in librarianship supplied by the Division of Library Programs, USOE, through the courtesy of Frank Stevens. Since the beginning of the institute program in 1968-69, a total of 16 institutes have trained more than 500 librarians in some phase of institutional library service. Institutes have been held throughout the country: four in the middle west (Michigan and Wisconsin), five in the west (Utah, Arizona, Oklahoma, New Mexico and Texas), three in the south (Georgia, Florida, and Kentucky), and four in the east (Pennsylvania, New Hampshire, New York, and New Jersey). No grants were made for institutes in institutional library service or related areas in 1975-76 or 1976-77. Whether this is coincidental or indicates a declining interest in institutional library service on the part either of the library schools (who submit the bulk of the proposals) or of the Bureau of Libraries and Educational Technology (which administers the program) is difficult to assess. The record of the last two years must be judged against the fact that the total number of grants for institutes under Title II-B of HEA has declined from a high of ninety-two in 1969-70 to five in 1976-77.

With the exception of one grant to the New Jersey State Library, all HEA Title II-B grants for institutes relating to institutional library service went to universities, the bulk of them to library education programs accredited by ALA.

Intensive, short-term institutes bring together librarians from across the country to learn from experts in the library and institution disciplines. Usually offered by a university library education program and funded by the U.S. Office of Education, the institutes are one excellent way to enhance professional competence and motivation, but they are not the only method.

Out of a lifetime of dedication to hospital and institutional library service, Eleanor Phinney recommends for the hospital librarian an informal program of self-education, which includes regular attendance at meetings and workshops, lectures and seminars planned for the medical staff, and a systematic reading program of general and specialized medical journals, focused on a few topics of local concern.²² Phinney also suggests that patients' librarians in large residential institutions for the mentally retarded hold workshops for nearby public libraries, sharing their expertise and stimulating them to serve the retarded living in their own communities.²³ With the policy in most (if not all) states to move patients from large state institutions to adult foster-care homes (in effect, into small community-based institutions), this suggestion is especially timely.

Ruth Wender describes a project, conducted by the University of Oklahoma Health Sciences Center Library under a grant from the National Library of Medicine, to train librarians in small hospitals by the "preceptor method."²⁴ The plan included two weeks of on-the-job training in one of two excellent area medical/hospital libraries and at least two followup consultation visits to participants in their own hospitals. Although the Oklahoma project focused on medical libraries, it might well serve as a model for training librarians responsible for library service to residents in a wide variety of institutions.

Some of the most productive preparation for library service to institutions is currently being conducted by state libraries under the direction of the state institution library consultants. As an example of an excellent program, a description follows of education for institutional librarianship offered by the Ohio State Library. These data were supplied from the reports and records maintained by Philip Koons, Institutional Library Consultant, Ohio State Library.

Although "Library Service to Institutions" had been identified as one of ten state library programs as early as 1946, Ohio's emphasis on insti-

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tutional library service did not get into high gear until 1966 with the passage of Title IV-A of the Library Services and Construction Act. The state library program over the last eleven years has been based on three ingredients, two of which relate directly to personnel: (1) consultant services, (2) in-service training, and (3) grants-in-aid.²⁵ In addition to the support of institution officials, the state library recognized that capable library staff were vital to a successful program. Capable staff should be characterized, the library believed, by commitment to service, understanding of the programming techniques, and rapport with staff and residents.²⁶

During the 10-year period, 1966-76, the state library sponsored 11 in-service training workshops for 351 participants, including 23 community librarians. During that time, the content of the workshops moved from an emphasis on internal library problems (cataloging and classification, book selection, reference) to one on management concepts (the role of the library in the institution, objectives and planning, interpreting the library to the institution community).²⁷

A vigorous consultant program over the years has focused on the development of objectives for library programs in Ohio's institutions and has increased awareness on the part of state officials of the value and importance of library service to institution residents. Library committees bring together librarians from the several adult and youth correctional institutions — providing in themselves a learning experience.

As a result of Ohio's ten years of effort, fourteen institution libraries were professionally staffed in 1976, whereas in 1966, no institution library had professional staff. Moreover, by 1976 all Ohio institution libraries had developed short- and long-range plans. Priorities for future development include continued consultant services directed at librarians and institution officials, in-service training programs for institution librarians and supportive staff, and increased involvement of institution libraries with local public libraries and public library cooperative systems.²⁸

In 1976, the state library board directed the state librarian to develop plans for a "study of the accomplishments and potential of public library participation in the improvement of institutional library service." The study, completed by Lucioli,²⁹ traces a new dimension of education for institutional library service. Exploring what relationship the local and area public libraries can offer to the institutional librarian, Lucioli found that not only does such association extend institution resources by inter-library loan, but also (and more importantly) it provides opportunity for professional growth through interaction with other librarians: "Keeping

current in association with colleagues of related interest makes the difference between a career commitment and a sense of being at a dead end."³⁰

Speculating on what the public librarian can learn from institutional librarians, Lucioli indicates that all signs point to an end of the "warehousing of human beings" in large institutions, and an average stay for most residents of state institutions of from a few months to two years.³¹ Within this context, patrons previously institutionalized for long periods now become squarely the public library's responsibility. In relating to this new public, public librarians have much to learn from their institutional colleagues — insights into how members of the "new public" were conditioned to the fears, misconceptions and prejudices which make them hard to deal with; techniques of user counseling and referral to other agencies and libraries; development of user advisory committees for materials selection; use of filmstrips and correlated paperbacks to stimulate "rap" sessions; inexpensive and effective modernization of drab space with paint and paper; the teaching of storytelling to develop self-respect among troubled boys; the use of poetry as therapy — all activities carried on by competent institutional librarians. Most importantly, good institution librarians could share their ability to create in the library a warm, informal atmosphere where a "mingling of trust, respect and affection characterize attitudes of clients toward the librarians."³²

Agnes Griffen, one of the leaders in institutional library service, underscored Lucioli's opinion when she wrote in *Illinois Libraries* that:

[The institution library is but] a microcosm of the world of library service delivery systems. . . . While the closed institution setting provides an exaggerated situation (everything is more closely linked so everything has a more immediate impact upon each interdependent factor), it could serve as a superb training ground for testing and refining the kind of people that librarianship desperately needs — people who know how to fight for the freedom to read against all the subtle and not-so-subtle pressures now threatening the right of the people to know. Where better could we teach the *realities* of censorship, the necessity of political involvement and action and compromise, the requirements of strategic and tactical planning, the methods of developing services to meet human *needs*, than in the prison library?³³

In conclusion, Lucioli's study led her to recommend to the state library the following activities to enhance the competence of Ohio librarians to serve people who are or have been institutionalized:

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1. Use the able and resourceful people now operating libraries in some of the state institutions in "Peace Corps" visits to the graduate library schools, the undergraduate library programs and O.L.A. annual meetings. These people could tell the institution story and present it *realistically* to the profession.
2. Explore the possibility of reinstating the fairly generous paid internship programs once operated by state departments. Three to six months' internships could interest work-study students. The Library Development Consultant for Institution Services could coordinate the program and deploy the interns to stable and well-organized sites.
3. Use Library Development Consultants as liaison between the public and institution libraries to encourage an exchange of visits, field trips and short in-service training sessions. The public library could deal with materials and techniques. The institution libraries could draw on the institution's specialists to speak on behavior and human needs, etc.
4. Develop publicity. A newsletter four times a year is needed to create an identity for institution libraries both internally and externally.³⁴

Since the completion of Clara Luciola's study, the Ohio State Library has implemented her recommendations by: (1) producing a slide/tape program about institutional library service to be shown at Ohio Library Association regional conferences, and other meetings; (2) convening quarterly meetings of an advisory committee for institutional library service; and (3) conducting a major conference in April 1977 of departmental, institutional and community library personnel, highlighting accomplishments in institution library service during the past eight years, and setting directions for the future.

Much of Ohio's impressive record in institutional library service is due to genuine commitment on the part of the state library board and administration, the dedication and ingenuity of Ohio's state institution library consultant, a tradition of cooperation between the Ohio State Library and the Ohio Library Association, and the availability of LSCA funds to support the vigorous program of continuing education and consultation. The same winning combination could be identified in many, if not most, states.

In summary, empathetic, competent librarians are the key to productive library service to institution residents and staff. In addition to

technical library skills in the selection, organization and retrieval of print and nonprint materials, institution librarians need a comprehensive reading background and the ability to work with law materials. They need, as well, familiarity with other professions and other disciplines represented on institution staffs, and sophistication in the modus operandi of specific institutions.

Preservice education for institutional librarianship should be interdisciplinary and should include internship or supervised field experience. It requires a knowledgeable faculty member and careful selection policies to recruit candidates who are empathetic and highly motivated. Because institution librarianship is a (slowly) growing field, library schools need to develop competency-based specialization in this area. Continuing education to upgrade the quality of institution library service is currently being offered by a few library schools and by most state libraries, often in cooperation with library associations.

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