Michigan School Testing Conference
February 18, 2016 • Ann Arbor, MI

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SAFE TO PRACTICE?

ASSESSING BEGINNING TEACHERS WITH THE NATIONAL OBSERVATIONAL TEACHING EXAMINATION



SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

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RAISING UP TEACHING AS THE #1 POLICY IMPERATIVE OF OUR TIME

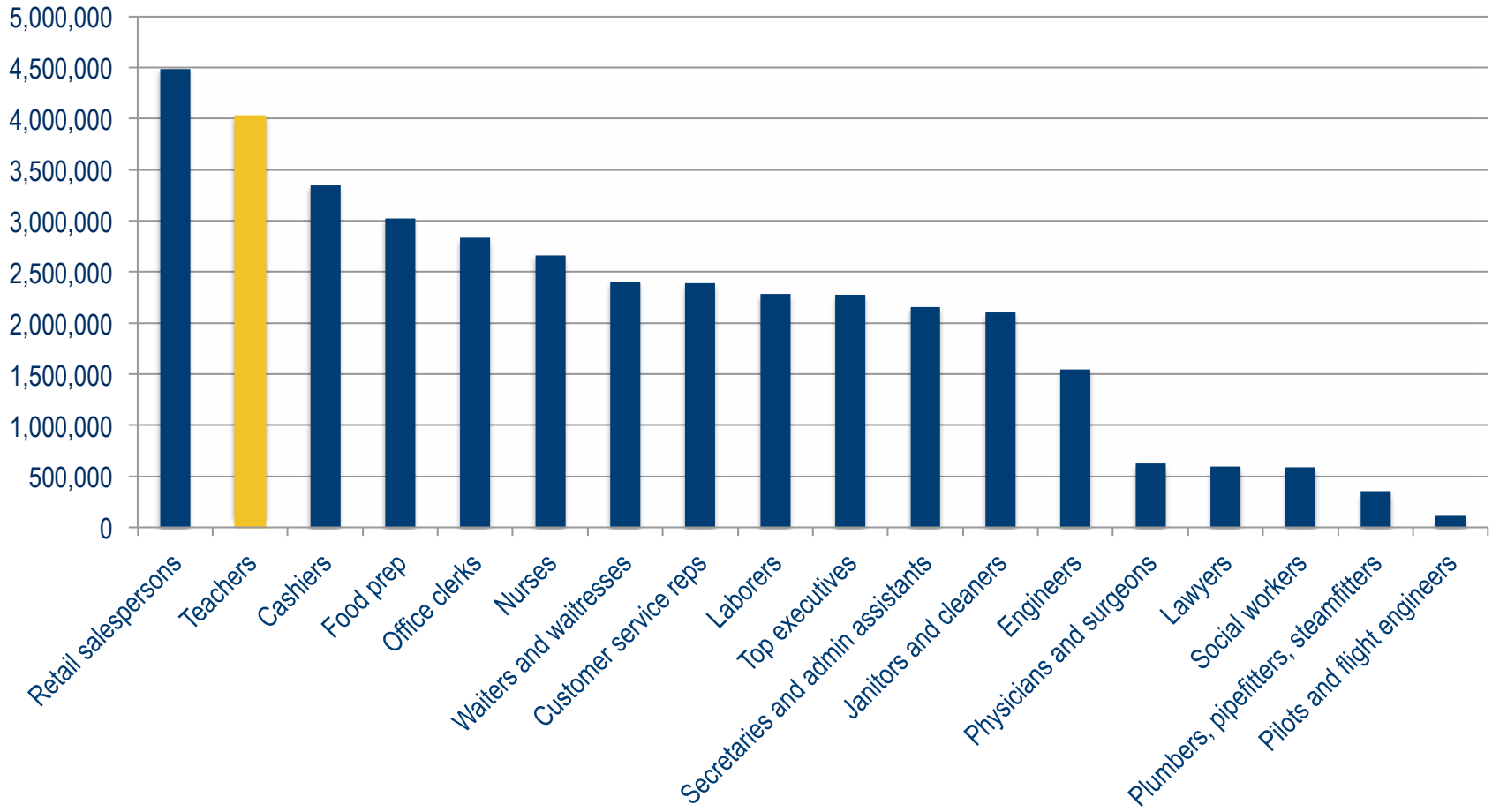
1. 50,000,000 children and youth in our nation's schools
2. Schooling: Our society's commitment to individuals' lives and to the future of our country
3. Evidence of the power of skillful teaching
4. Overwhelming lack of public respect for the work of teaching

→ **This is a public policy problem of vital moral, practical, and political urgency.**

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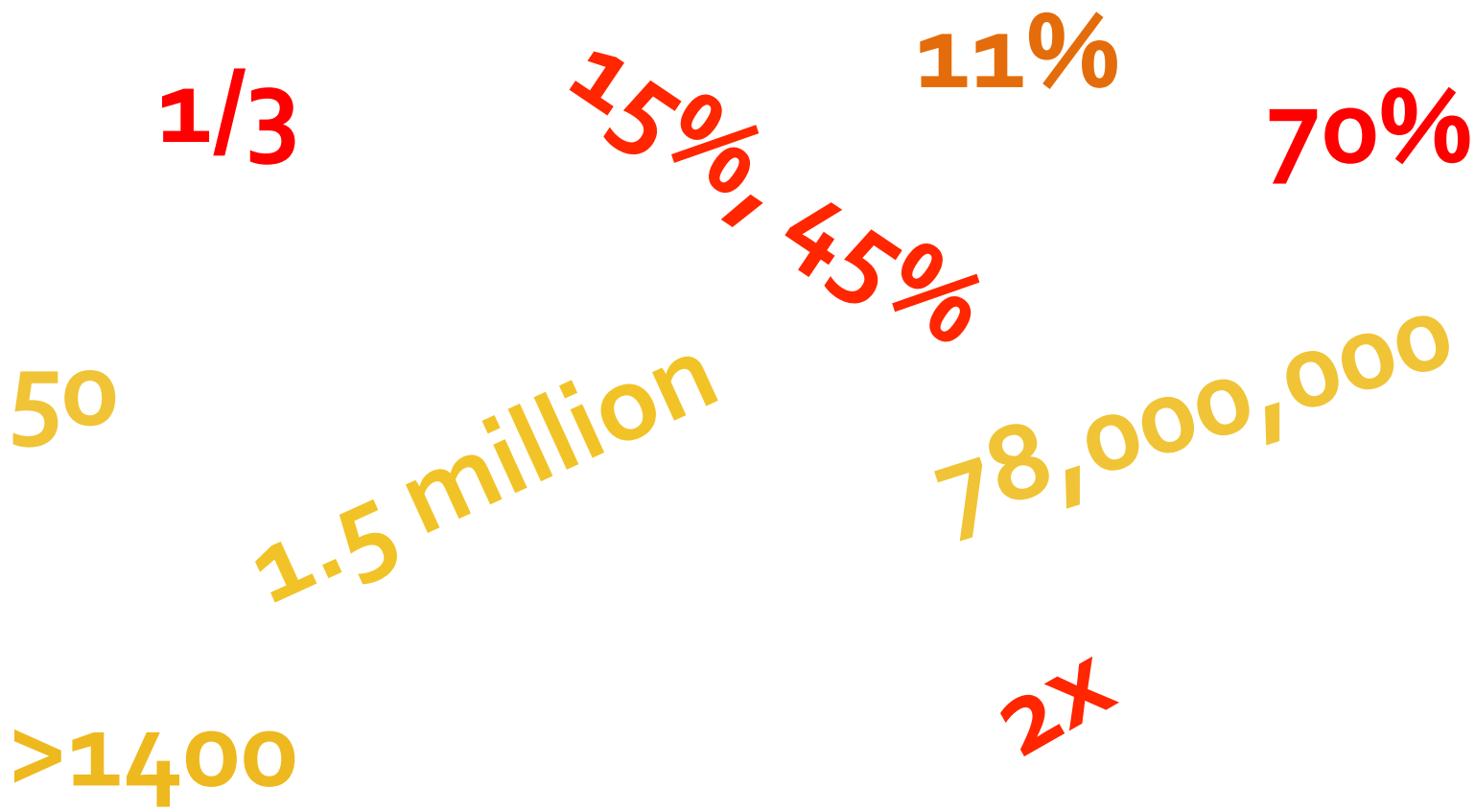
THE SCALE OF THE TEACHING PROFESSION



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THE MORAL URGENCY, BY THE NUMBERS



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A LEGACY OF BENIGN NEGLECT

- High demand led to an occupation that was easy to enter, and high turnover
- A broadly shared conviction that teaching cannot be taught, and depends on either
  - Talent (the "natural born" teacher), or
  - "Hard knocks" figuring out what works through experience
- The result? A "hit or miss" approach to supplying skillful teaching
- **It's time to put a stop to this.**

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. . . AND ITS CRUCIAL ROLE FOR OUR NATION'S MOST IMPORTANT RESOURCE

- Differences in teachers account for 12%–14% of total variability in children's mathematical achievement in each of grades 1, 2, and 3.
- Children assigned to three effective teachers in a row score at the 83rd percentile in math at the end of 5th grade; children assigned to three ineffective teachers in a row score only at the 29th percentile.
- The cumulative effects of being taught by a highly effective teacher can substantially reduce differences in student achievement that are due to family background.

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Let's visit the classroom of a beginning teacher.

Serena

Urban school, grade 4

Teaching from a common U.S. textbook; concept of average with linear measure

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THE CONCEPT OF "AVERAGE"

- What is an "average" of a set of data?
- How would you explain the key idea to a group of 10-year-olds?

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LEADING A CLASSROOM DISCUSSION FROM A TEXTBOOK LESSON ON "AVERAGE"



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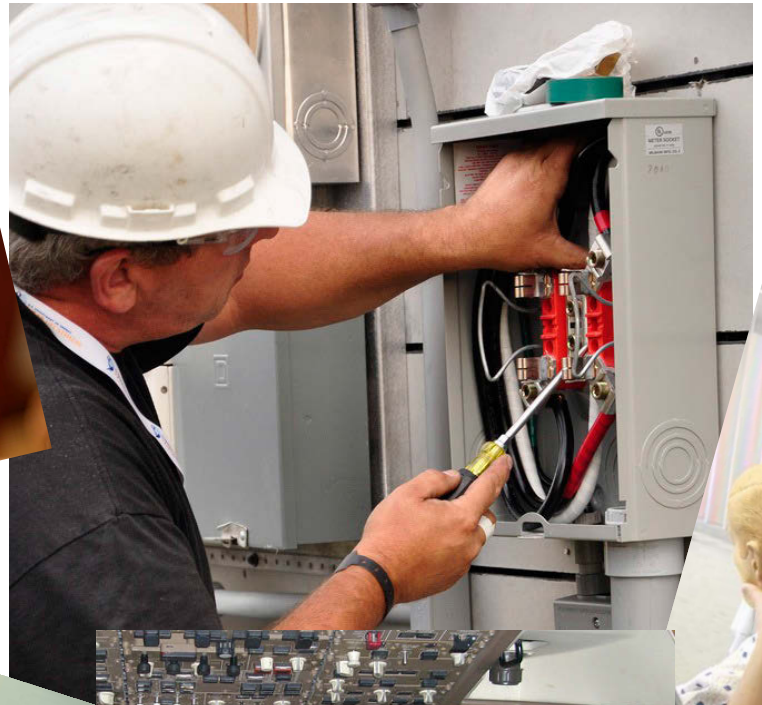
ENTRY-LEVEL TEACHING AS A CRITICAL FOCUS

- More U.S. schoolchildren have a teacher with fewer than five years of experience than a teacher with any other number of years of experience.
- Most beginning teachers say they are underprepared for teaching.
- Distribution of beginning teaching is concentrated disproportionately in low-income and high-minority schools.

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WHAT SHOULD INITIAL TRAINING AND LICENSURE DO?

1. Take as the central imperative the **rights of children**
2. Focus on preparing entry-level teachers who are ready to care for the **academic, social, emotional, and physical safety** of children, and to conform to standards of **ethical practice**
3. Provide assurance to parents and to the public that the beginning professional has met the standards necessary to be given **initial responsibility for students' learning**

In other words, ensure that the beginning teacher meets the standard of "safe to practice"

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MOVING FORWARD TO A PROFESSIONAL SYSTEM OF TEACHER PREPARATION

1. Identify **key practices of teaching*** and **high-leverage content** essential for responsible beginning practice

*http://www.teachingworks.org/work-of-teaching/high-leverage-practices

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NEW EVIDENCE

- The specialized knowledge needed for teaching (MKT) may be more predictive of student learning than courses taken or a major in mathematics (Hill, Rowan, Ball, 2005)
- Mathematical knowledge for teaching includes "content knowledge," as well as more specialized mathematical knowledge, and "pedagogical content knowledge" (e.g., Ball, Thames, Phelps, 2008, but several other relatively similar schemes)

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COMMON CONTENT KNOWLEDGE

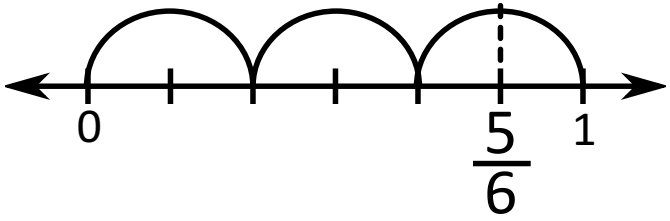
Calculate:

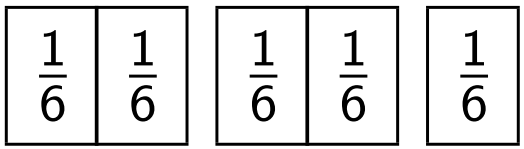
$$\frac{5}{6} \div \frac{1}{3}$$

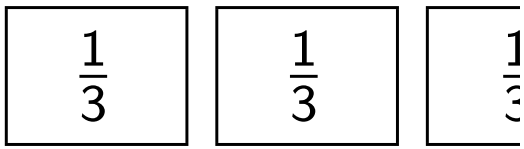
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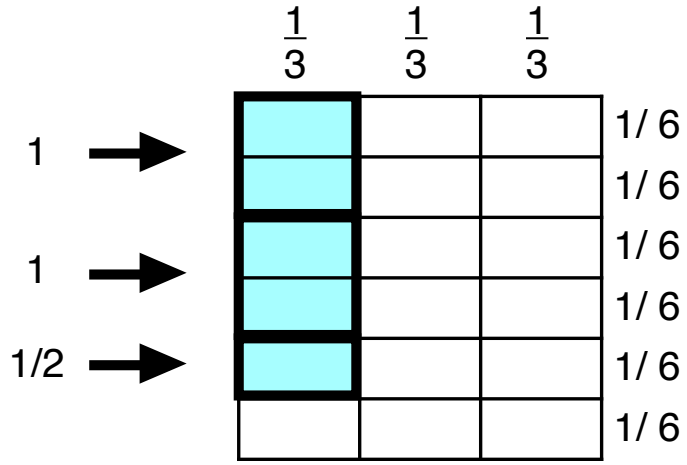
SPECIALIZED CONTENT KNOWLEDGE

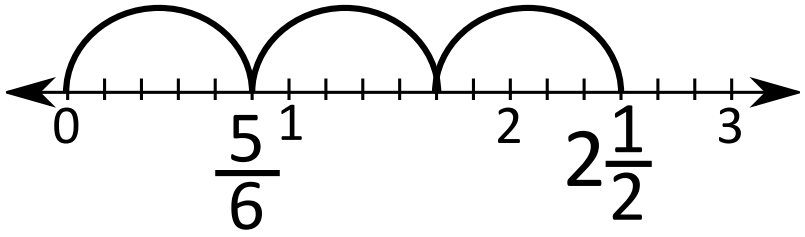
Which of these can be used to represent $\frac{5}{6} \div \frac{1}{3}$?











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MOVING FORWARD TO A PROFESSIONAL SYSTEM OF TEACHER PREPARATION

1. Identify **key practices of teaching*** and **high-leverage content** essential for responsible beginning practice
2. Develop **specific approaches to training** beginners to carry out those practices, along a **continuum of contexts** for learning and practicing practice
3. Develop **performance assessments of specific practices and content** and make them required for entry

*http://www.teachingworks.org/work-of-teaching/high-leverage-practices

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ASSESSING PRACTICE

- Need to assess actual practice of teaching, not just written reports and reflections
- Create common assessments to assess candidates' progress equitably on key knowledge, skills, and dispositions

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WHAT IS THE NATIONAL OBSERVATIONAL TEACHING EXAMINATION (NOTE)?

- A suite of **on-demand performance assessments** that measure teaching candidates' performance, including their level of skill, knowledge, and judgment, with a specific set of high-leverage practices and content.
- Developed by TeachingWorks and ETS.
- Currently being field-tested in states across the country.
- Slated to be ready for states to adopt from ETS by 2017.

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TESTS FOR NEW TEACHERS THAT FOCUS ON:

Content Knowledge for Teaching (CKT)

The specialized knowledge of content that a teacher uses in the work of teaching

High-Leverage Practices (HLPs)

Basic teaching activities directly linked to student learning

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PRACTICES FOR TEACHING CONTENT: THREE HLPS

1. Modeling and explaining content
   - Thinking aloud and demonstrating
   - Narrating the work to make strategies and processes explicit
2. Leading classroom discussion
   - Launching the discussion
   - Supporting students in doing the work of the discussion
   - Coordinating student contributions and moving the discussion in a productive direction
   - Bringing the discussion to a productive close
3. Eliciting student thinking
   - Positing questions and tasks
   - Analyzing student responses

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A NOTE EXAMPLE
LEADING CLASSROOM DISCUSSION

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HLP: LEADING A WHOLE-CLASS DISCUSSION

In a whole-class discussion, the teacher and all of the students work on specific content together, using one another's ideas as resources. The purposes of a discussion are to build collective knowledge and capability in relation to specific instructional goals and to allow students to practice listening, speaking, and interpreting. In instructionally productive discussions, the teacher and a wide range of students contribute orally, listen actively, and respond to and learn from others' contributions.

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LEADING A WHOLE CLASS DISCUSSION

Grade level: First grade
Content area: English language arts
Task: The candidate will facilitate a small group discussion aimed at helping students develop their ability to make and support inferences.

- Elicit thinking from all students by asking targeted questions about the main character in the book. What is he like as a person?
- Coordinate students' ideas and steer the discussion toward the learning goal.
- Represent the content accurately, either verbally or visually, as you would do with typical first graders.
- Conclude the discussion by summarizing the key ideas covered during the discussion.

Materials: *Pet Show!* by Ezra Jack Keats
Performance time: 15 minutes.

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Video example (omitted here) from the Educational Testing Service, shown with special permission

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QUIET WRITING TIME (QWT)

- Jot a few notes about what surprised you, what this makes you imagine, what worries you.

2:00

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MORE ABOUT NOTE
ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

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NOTE: ELEMENTARY EDUCATION TWO PARTS

Content Knowledge for Teaching:

- Mathematics
- English language arts
- Science
- Social studies

Performance assessment: Practices for Teaching Content:

- Modeling and explaining content
- Leading classroom discussions
- Eliciting student thinking

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DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES ON THE WAY TO ROLLOUT

Content Knowledge for Teaching

- Pilot: October 20 to December 4, 2015
- Standard Setting Study: May 2016
- Available for operational use: October 2016

Practices for Teaching Content:

- Tryouts:
  - January 2016
  - April 2016
  - June 2016
- Pilot: January to March 2017
- Standard Setting Study: February 2017
- Available for operational use: October 2017

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Our goal is that all students, wherever they are or whoever they are, receive responsible teaching that can help them grow and develop—every single year.

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