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(FOR WHAT AND TO WHOM) SHOULD TEACHER PREPARATION HOLD OURSELVES ACCOUNTABLE?

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TeachingWorks

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AN INDUSTRY OF MEDIOCRITY?

"How America prepares its teachers has been a subject of dismay for many years. . . .There are 3.3 million public school teachers in America, and they probably can't all be trained by start-ups. Raising up the standards of our university programs should be an urgent priority. But one reason for the widespread mediocrity is that universities have had a cozy, lucrative monopoly. It's about time the leaders of our education schools *did* feel threatened."

Bill Keller, *New York Times*, October 20, 2013

http://www.nytimes.com/2013/10/21/opinion/keller-an-industry-of-mediocrity.html

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OBJECT OF CHANGE, OR ITS LEADER?

Keller: “The heartening news is that the universities that for so long have resisted pleas to raise their standards are now beginning to have change pushed on them from the outside.”

Professionalizing teaching and teacher preparation is our responsibility, not something others can—or should—do.

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A SPECIAL MOMENT FOR CHANGE

OPPORTUNITIES

1. "Teacher quality" of more interest than ever
2. Higher education teacher education dominates the market
3. Teacher shortages

CHALLENGES

1. Lack of belief in and concern about teacher preparation (e.g., public reaction to NCTQ report)
2. Dominance of individualism in education and ed reform

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TO WHOM SHOULD TEACHER PREPARATION HOLD ITSELF ACCOUNTABLE?

- To the students in the classrooms of first-year teachers.
- To the families of those students.

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TO WHAT SHOULD TEACHER PREPARATION HOLD ITSELF ACCOUNTABLE?

- To the quality of entry-level teaching.
- To the ability of their first-year graduates as first-year teachers to continue to learn in and from practice, and from the contexts in which they work.

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WHAT WOULD WE HAVE TO DO?

1. Stand up for the power of teaching, and the moral imperative.
2. Understand the context and history of the teaching profession and preparation for teaching in the U.S.
3. Articulate a specific common curriculum for initial preparation.
4. Make entry to independent practice selective and based on skill.

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① STAND UP FOR THE POWER OF SKILLFUL TEACHING, AND FOR THE MORAL IMPERATIVE

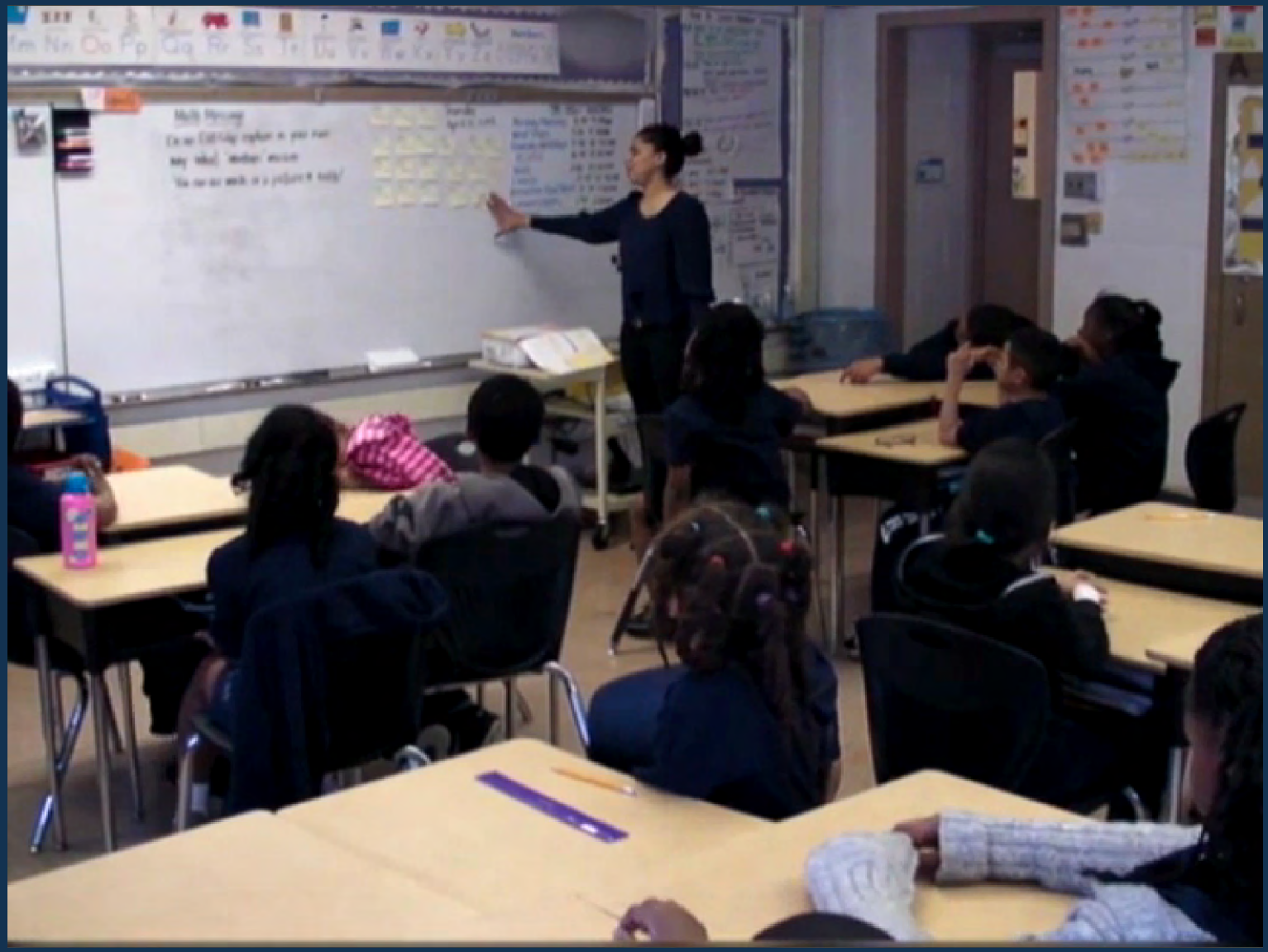
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A GLIMPSE OF BEGINNING TEACHING

1. What is skillful about this teaching? What is less so?
2. What does the video reveal about the challenges of beginning teaching, with respect to:
   - Knowing the content?
   - Knowing students?
   - Specific instructional capabilities?

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EXAMINING BEGINNING TEACHING

SKILLFUL

- Using an equitable problem context
- Engaging many learners
- Moving around classroom space
- Using strong voice and presence

LESS SKILLFUL

- Managing the mathematical-pedagogical issues with the context
- Focusing on the key mathematical point
- Eliciting student thinking
- Talking mathematics in teaching

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WHAT ABOUT TEACHING THIS LESSON COULD BE TAUGHT?

- To understand the core mathematical idea of "average" and what there is to understand
- To appraise the appropriateness of the context and to replace it with a better but mathematically similar one
- How to conduct a discussion about students' data and steer to the key mathematical point(s) (Sleep, 2010)
- Ways to engage all learners in the activity

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TEACHERS MATTER—A LOT

- Differences in teachers account for 12%–14% of total variability in students' mathematical achievement in each of grades 1, 2, and 3.
- Students 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 skillful teaching can substantially reduce differences in student achievement that are due to outside-of-school factors.

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② UNDERSTAND THE CONTEXT AND HISTORY OF THE TEACHING PROFESSION AND PREPARATION FOR TEACHING IN THE U.S.

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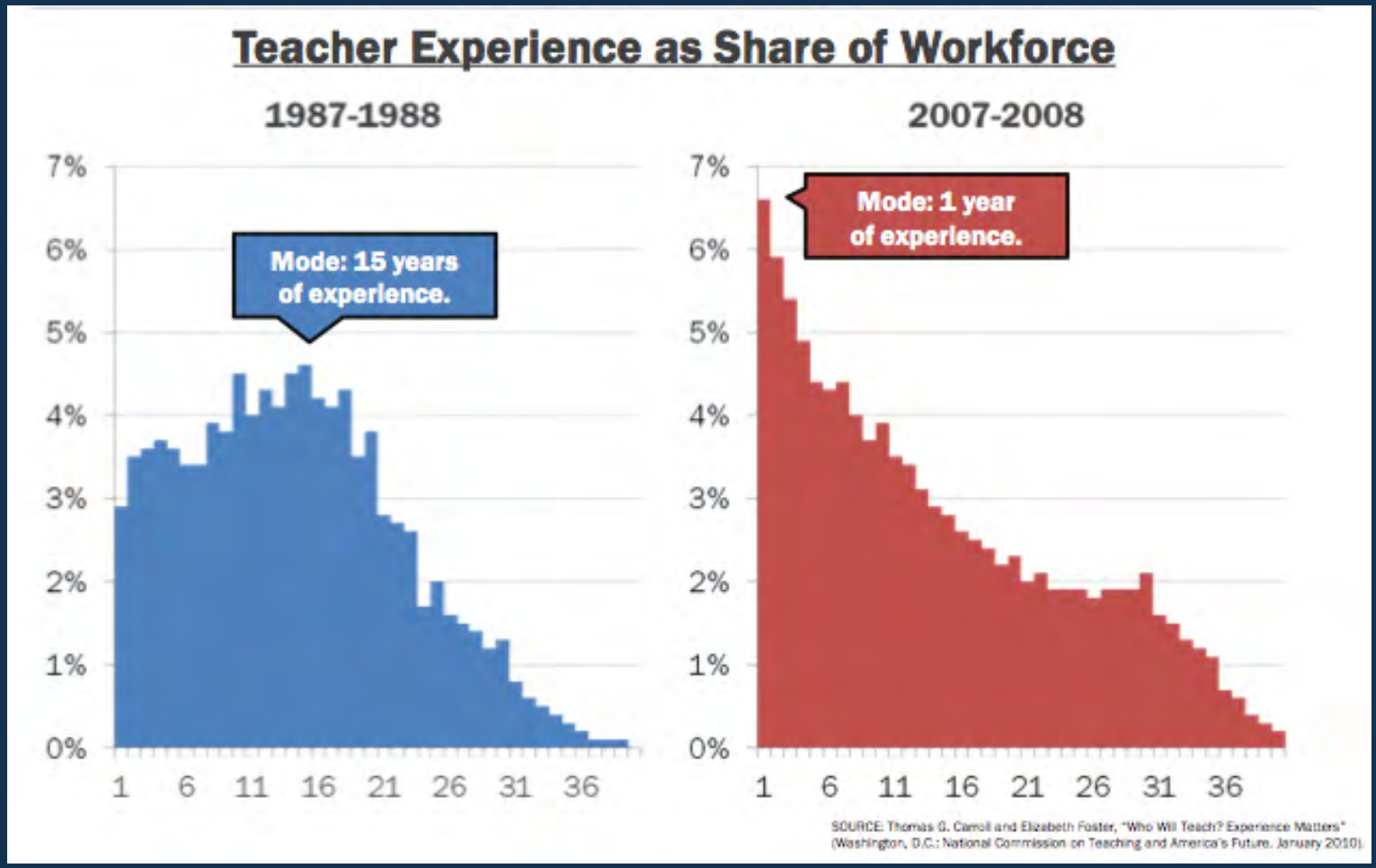
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KEY FEATURES OF THE CONTEXT

1. The concentration and impact of beginning teaching
2. The sprawl and roots of the U.S. approach to teacher preparation

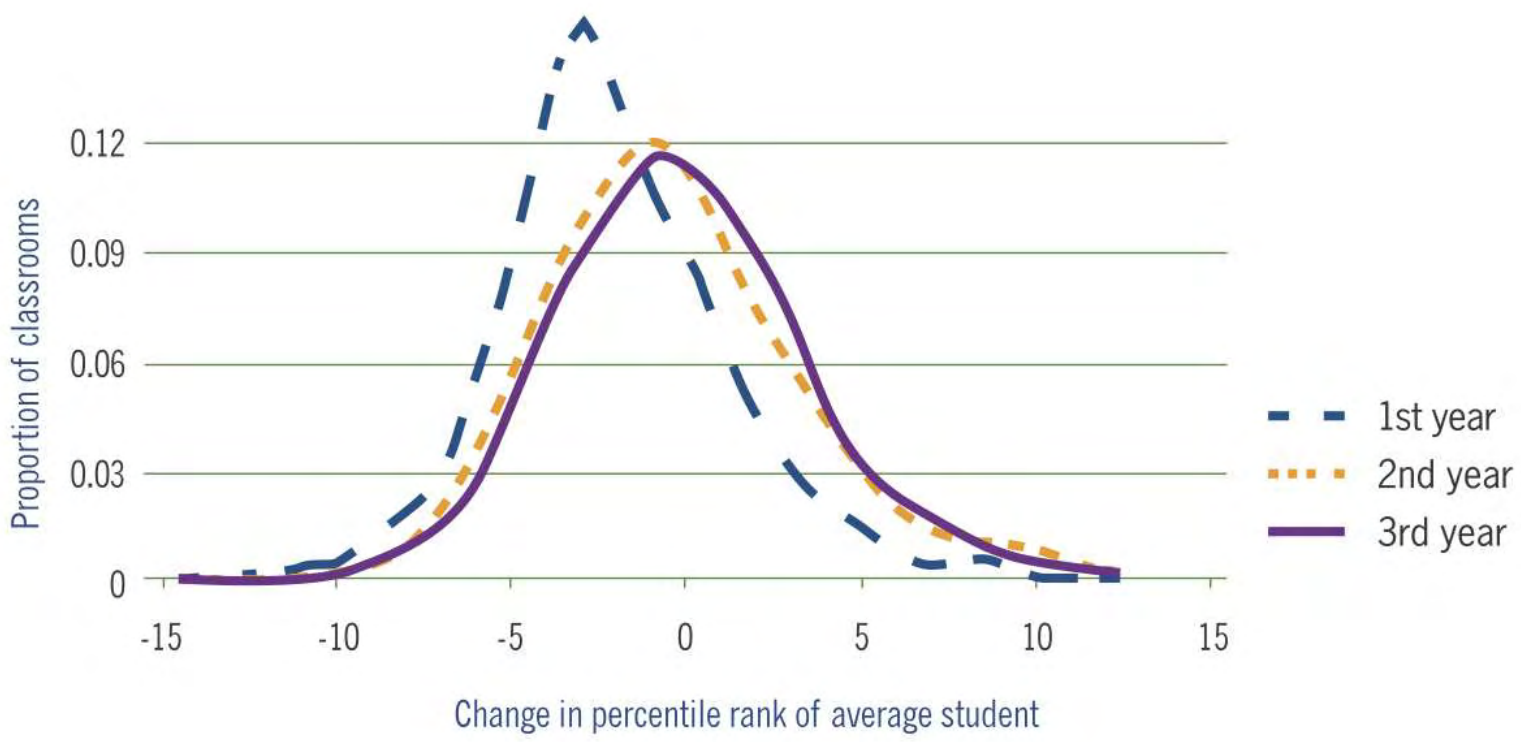
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BEGINNING TEACHING ON THE RISE



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BEGINNING TEACHING IS ON AVERAGE LESS EFFECTIVE



Source: Gordon, R., Kane, T. J., & Staiger, D. O. (April 2006). Identifying effective teachers using performance on the Job (Hamilton Project Discussion Paper). Washington, DC: Brookings Institution.

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ENTRY-LEVEL TEACHING AS A CRITICAL FOCUS

1. More U.S. schoolchildren have a first-year teacher than a teacher with any other number of years of experience.
2. Most beginning teachers say they are underprepared for teaching, and on average they are less effective.
3. Distribution of beginning teaching is concentrated disproportionately in low-income and high-minority schools.

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WHY IS THIS THE CASE? TWO BIG THREADS FROM OUR NATION'S HISTORY

1. The development of the occupation of teaching

   → Lack of respect for teaching

   → Lack of shared codified professional knowledge, shared standards for teaching quality

   → Lack of investment in professional training

2. The development of localism

   → Highly varied and inequitable opportunities and outcomes for students

   → Democratic political authority and governance of schooling

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NO PROFESSIONALLY GROUNDED SYSTEM FOR TEACHERS' TRAINING

- Over 3,000 independent providers of initial teacher training
- No common specific curriculum for preparation for initial teaching
- A reliance on conventional academic credentials as the standard content knowledge
- No common standard of performance for entry to independent practice with (on) young people

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WHY IS THIS THE CASE? TWO BIG THREADS FROM OUR NATION'S HISTORY

- The development of the occupation of teaching in the U.S.: eased entry, cellular structure, and easy replacement
  - Lack of shared codified professional knowledge, lack of shared standards for teaching quality
  - Lack of investment in professional training
- The development of localism: cultural diversity, parental rights
  - Democratic political authority and governance of schooling
  - School management and unionization
  - Highly varied and inequitable opportunities and outcomes for students

A widely shared view of teaching as individual and learned on the job

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THE CONSEQUENCES ARE SERIOUS FOR EDUCATIONAL EQUITY AND QUALITY

Could we change this? What would have to be done?

Solving this is a moral imperative.

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WHAT IS THE PROBLEM? WHAT ARE THE SOLUTIONS? ALTERNATIVE VIEWS

PROBLEM	SOLUTION
One view: Teacher candidates are weak and programs are too easy; university-based teacher education is inherently mediocre	Make teacher preparation tougher: encourage programs outside of universities, increase admissions selectivity, extend field experience; use teacher evaluation to weed out bad teachers
A different view: The country views teaching as something one must learn from experience, and that good practice is personal	Create and agree on a common professional standard of initial performance for entry to beginning teaching

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③ ARTICULATE A SPECIFIC COMMON PROFESSIONAL STANDARD FOR INITIAL TEACHING AND TEACHER PREPARATION, AND MAKE ENTRY TO TEACHING SELECTIVE AND BASED ON SKILL

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WHAT SHOULD INITIAL PREPARATION AND LICENSURE DO?

1. Prepare entry-level teachers who are ready to care for the **academic, social, emotional, and physical safety** of children, and to fulfill the **ethical imperatives** of teaching, and who are prepared to continue to improve.
2. 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.**
3. Take as the central imperative the **rights of children.**

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MOVING FORWARD TO A PROFESSIONAL SYSTEM OF TEACHER PREPARATION

1. *Build on basic agreements about domains of teaching and evidence about content knowledge for teaching:* Identify **key specific practices of teaching** and **high-leverage content** essential for responsible entry-level practice
2. *Build on commitment to clinical preparation:* Develop **specific approaches to training** beginners to carry out those practices, along a **continuum of contexts** for learning and practicing practice
3. *Build on commitment to performance assessment:* Develop **performance assessments of specific practices and content** and require individuals to demonstrate entry-level standard of practice before beginning

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HIGH-LEVERAGE PRACTICES

High-leverage practices (HLPs) are specific tasks of teaching that are fundamental to skillful practice.

Based on work done at the University of Michigan School of Education in the redesign of our teacher education program, and at TeachingWorks, an organization housed at U-M whose mission it is to improve the quality of teaching and learning by transforming teachers' education.

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EXAMPLES OF HIGH-LEVERAGE PRACTICES

- Leading a whole-class discussion
- Eliciting and interpreting individual students' thinking
- Explaining and modeling core content
- Establishing norms and routines for classroom discourse
- Recognizing particular common patterns of student thinking
- Setting up and managing small group work
- Selecting and using specific methods to check understanding and monitor student learning
- Composing, selecting, adapting quizzes, tests, and other methods of assessing student learning of a chunk of instruction
- Conducting a meeting about a student with a parent or guardian

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CONTENT KNOWLEDGE **FOR TEACHING*

- Knowing the content that the students are supposed to learn
- Knowing ways to unpack, represent, and make that content learnable
- Knowing how students think about the specific content
- Knowing ways to teach the specific content

(Ball, Thames, and Phelps, 2008, *JTE*)

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ETHICAL PRACTICE AND THE COMMITMENT TO EQUITY AND DIVERSITY

- Inequity is reproduced inside of instructional practice.
- Teachers have leverage at strategic points in their work.
- This depends on joining concerns for equity with the daily and minute-to-minute work of teaching.

(Ball, Shaughnessy, Mann, Farmer, 2014)

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"SAFE TO PRACTICE" AS THE STANDARD FOR LICENSURE

Licensure should certify that the beginning teacher is ready for responsible entry-level practice.

By "safe" we mean teaching that does not place students at risk academically, socially, emotionally, or physically.

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RAISE THE BAR FOR ENTRY TO INDEPENDENT ENTRY-LEVEL PRACTICE

- Agree on common high-leverage practices and content knowledge, as well as ethics, necessary for safe and skillful practice
- Determine how these can be most validly assessed to assure probability of safe practice: on-demand, other (portfolio, etc.)
- Build common supports to help candidates develop the requisite skill and capabilities
- Carry out ongoing research and development to improve validity and precision of licensure system

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IT WON'T BE EASY.

- The scale of the enterprise is vast and the U.S. has weak educational infrastructure.
- It will take a movement to build a rigorous system of professional training for the responsibility of teaching our nation's youth, in order to achieve fairness in common access to skilled teaching.
- This argument focuses on ***teaching***, not ***teachers*****.** It focuses on building capacity, not finding talent and firing.
- It is not the "American way"—it is detailed (even prescriptive), not individually discretionary, common.

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BUT IT IS OUR MOMENT.

- Teaching is more broadly understood as crucial to children's life chances.
- There's more attention to teacher preparation than ever before.
- We've done more as a community in the last couple of decades (InTASC, edTPA, AACTE, CCSSO. . .)

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WHAT WOULD IT TAKE TO ESTABLISH A PROFESSIONAL SYSTEM FOR ENTRY TO TEACHING?

1. A common standard for the capabilities required, and common tools for determining readiness for practice
2. Resources for the teaching of teaching, including specific pedagogies, video libraries, and instructional materials and methods for teaching particular high-leverage practices and content knowledge for teaching
3. The development of teacher educators

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GREAT TEACHERS AREN'T BORN.

THEY'RE TAUGHT.



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