A CURRICULUM AND PEDAGOGY TO PREPARE TEACHERS FOR RESPONSIBLE BEGINNING PRACTICE

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MOFET Professional Development Institute • 22 May 2014

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THE PROBLEM

Evidence that skillful teaching is important, but no system to ensure that we can produce it for all young people.

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TODAY

1. The problem: Ensuring responsible "entry-level" teaching
2. What is responsible beginning teaching?
3. What would it take to build a system for developing responsible beginning teaching?

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MY TALK AND YOUR CHALLENGE

- I will present perspectives from our problems in the U.S.
- Please consider what is the same and different in Israel.

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① PREFACE
PROBLEM FRAMING

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

- 74,000,000 children in U.S.; 2.5 million in Israel—approximately ¼ of the total population
- Schooling: Our society's commitment to individuals' lives and to the future of our society
- Evidence of the power of skillful teaching
- 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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WHAT HOLDS PROMISE?

- Research shows the power of skilled teaching, as well as the damage done by ineffective teaching, especially across more than one year
- Advances in knowledge about skillful teaching
- Widespread consensus about the importance of "teacher quality"

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BEGINNING TEACHING AS A CRITICAL FOCUS

1. More U.S. schoolchildren have beginning teachers than at any time in our history.
2. Most beginning teachers say they are underprepared for teaching, and on average they are less effective.
3. Beginning teaching is concentrated disproportionately in low-income and high-minority schools.

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WHY IS IT DIFFICULT TO ENSURE RESPONSIBLE BEGINNING TEACHING?

1. Problems of recruitment
2. Low status of teacher education and skepticism about its importance
3. Lack of a professional system to prepare and license teachers

***This is a large scale problem.**

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TEACHING IS THE LARGEST OCCUPATION

- U.S.: 3.75 million teachers / 314 million population
- Israel: 120,000 teachers / 8 million population

No other occupation is nearly as large.

- ➢ This means that to have responsible teaching for all students, "ordinary" adults must learn to be skillful teachers.
- ➢ This presents challenges for both recruitment and for preparation.

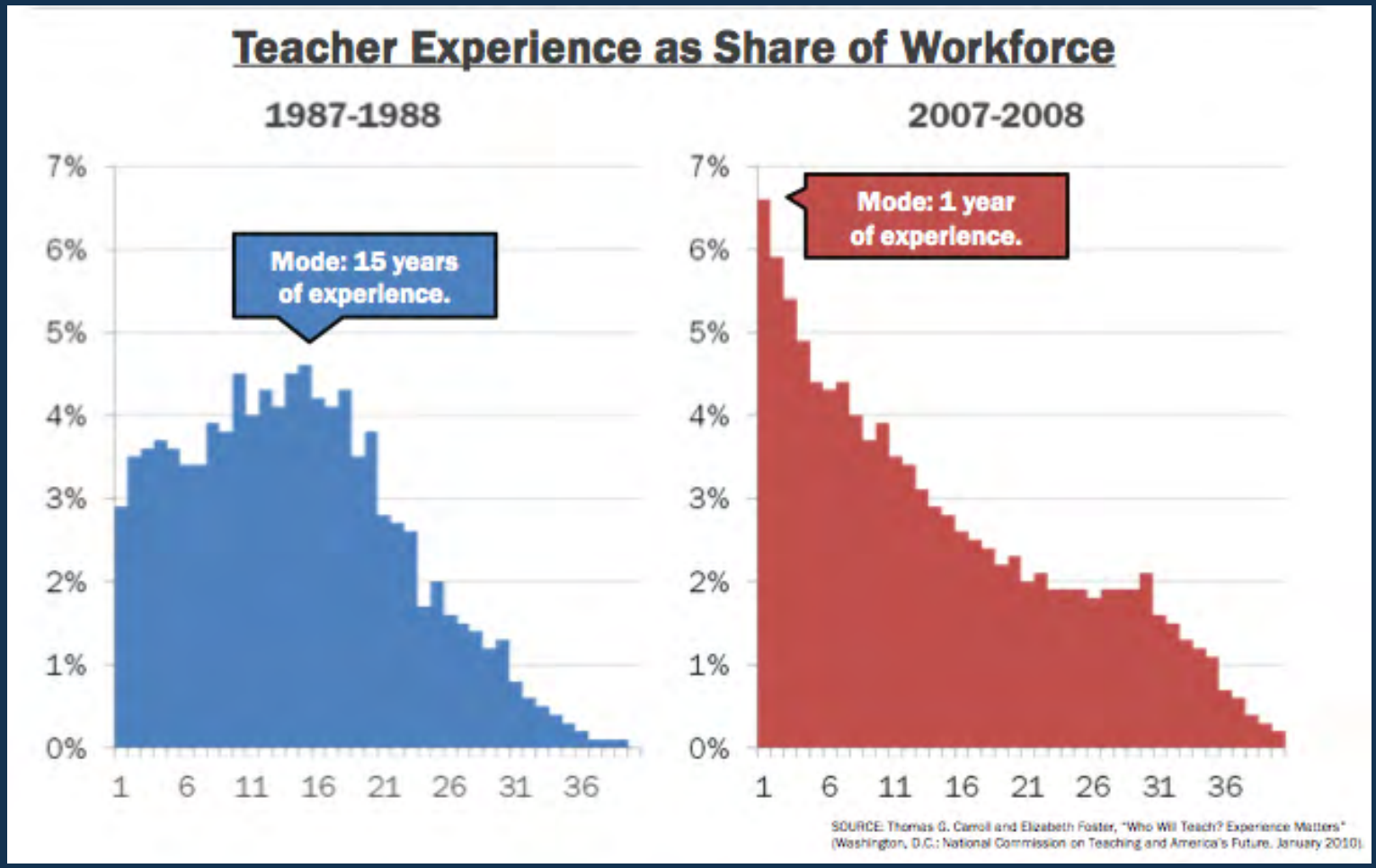
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RECRUITMENT OF PEOPLE INTO TEACHING

- More opportunities in 2014 than 50 years ago.
- Low public esteem for teaching.
- Lots of talk about “raising standards”—but these are about academic background, not experience and skills for learning to teach.
- Turnover in the teacher workforce is higher than ever.

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TEACHER TURNOVER IS HIGHER THAN EVER



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LOW STATUS OF TEACHER EDUCATION AND SKEPTICISM ABOUT ITS IMPORTANCE

- Teaching is not seen as complex because everyone has watched teaching, and most think they do it
- Teachers are often regarded as less academically capable than others
- Learning teaching seen as a matter of "on the job" learning, not something that can be taught
- Educators often not good advocates for the importance of professional training

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NO PROFESSIONAL SYSTEM FOR TEACHER PREPARATION OR CONTINUED DEVELOPMENT IN THE U.S.

- More than 1,400 colleges and universities provide teacher preparation, plus many "alternative" programs
- No common specific curriculum for teacher preparation
- Over-emphasis on academic subject knowledge
- No common standard of performance for entry to independent practice

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EARNING A TEACHING LICENSE (IN THE U.S.)

- States grant teaching licenses
- License usually almost automatic for completing an “approved program”
- Program approval involves review of requirements
- Requirements vary, but usually a test of basic content knowledge, sometimes professional knowledge, some portfolios

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② A LOOK AT BEGINNING TEACHING

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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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CONTEXT FOR THE VIDEO

- Urban U.S. classroom, first-year teacher
- Teaching textbook lesson on concept of “average”

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EXAMINING BEGINNING TEACHING

SKILLFUL

1. Using an equitable problem context
2. Engaging many learners
3. Moving around classroom space
4. Using strong voice and presence

LESS SKILLFUL

1. Managing the mathematical-pedagogical issues with the context
2. Focusing on the key mathematical point
3. Eliciting student thinking
4. 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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③BUILDING A SYSTEM FOR RESPONSIBLE BEGINNING TEACHING

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NO EQUIVALENT IN TEACHING

- Objectives for coursework and for practicum experiences lack similarly precise professionally-determined and agreed-upon learning objectives
- Practicum often not focused enough on development of specific skill and judgment
- Performance expectations for graduates underspecified and weakly assessed

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"SAFE TO PRACTICE" AS THE STANDARD FOR THE TEACHING LICENSE

A teaching license should certify that the beginning teacher is ready for responsible entry-level practice.

By "safe" we mean teaching that cares for students academically, socially, emotionally, and physically and does not place them at risk for harm in any of those ways.

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MOVING FORWARD TO A PROFESSIONAL SYSTEM OF TEACHER PREPARATION

1. CURRICULUM: Identify **practices of teaching** and **content** necessary for responsible beginning teaching; also professional and ethical knowledge and orientation to role
2. PEDAGOGY: Develop **specific approaches to clinical instruction—helping** beginners learn to do those practices in practicum placements
3. ASSESSMENT: Develop **performance assessments of specific practices and content** and make them required for entry

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HIGH-LEVERAGE PRACTICES

High-leverage practices (HLPs) are specific tasks of teaching that are fundamental to safe and 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
- Formulating and posing questions
- Establishing norms and routines for classroom discourse and work that are central to the content
- Recognizing particular common patterns of student thinking and development in a subject-matter domain
- Setting up and managing small group work
- Selecting and using specific methods to check understanding and monitor student learning during and across lessons
- Composing, selecting, adapting quizzes, tests, and other methods of assessing student learning
- Conducting a meeting about a student with a parent or guardian

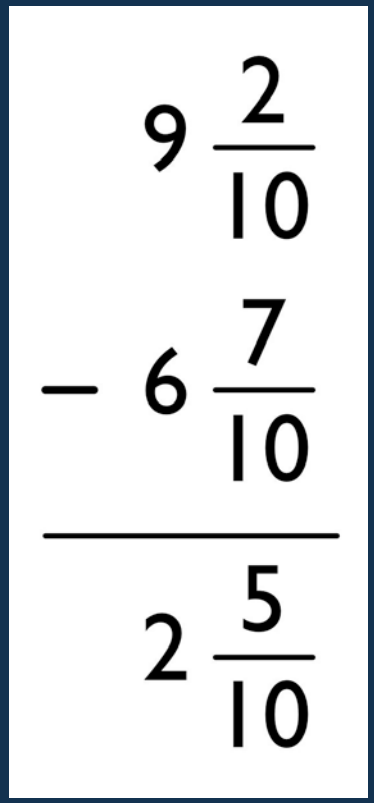
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BUILDING NEW ASSESSMENTS OF TEACHING PRACTICE

- Based on actual performance of specific high-leverage practices
- Tied to teaching specific academic content
- Conducted in a variety of settings for practice, depending on what is being assessed
- Built as part of an ongoing program of research and development

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DOES THIS STUDENT UNDERSTAND?



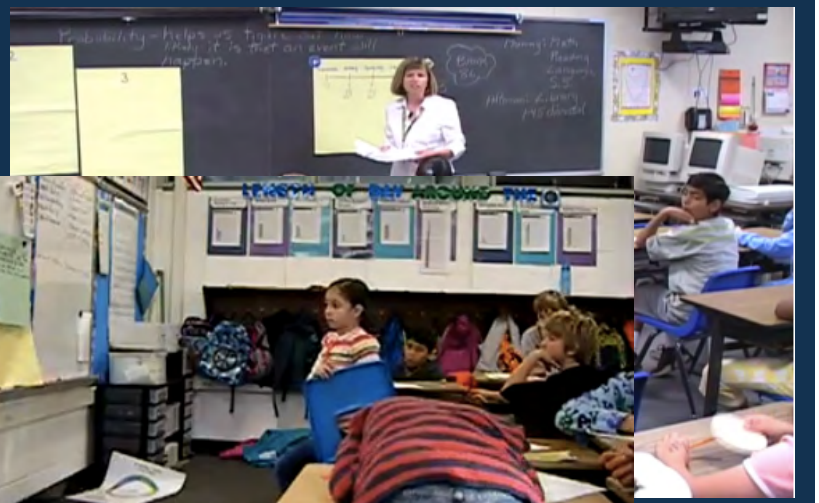
POSSIBILITIES?

1. The student does understand the underlying concepts.
2. The student subtracted "up" and made a basic calculational error.
3. The student overgeneralized from base 10 whole number subtraction.

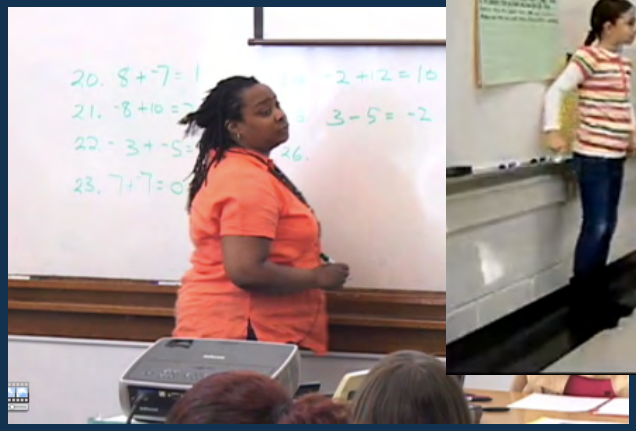
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LEADING A WHOLE-CLASS DISCUSSION IN MATH

1. A specified discussable math problem
2. Guidance for setting up the task and goals for the discussion
3. Rubric for assessing quality of the discussion







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INTERPRETING LEARNERS' THINKING: ANALYZING ERRORS

What mathematical steps could have produced this answer?

(a)

$$\begin{array}{r} 49 \\ \times\ 25 \\ \hline 405 \\ 108 \\ \hline 1485 \end{array}$$

(b)

$$\begin{array}{r} 49 \\ \times\ 25 \\ \hline 225 \\ 100 \\ \hline 325 \end{array}$$

(c)

$$\begin{array}{r} 49 \\ \times\ 25 \\ \hline 1250 \\ 25 \\ \hline 1275 \end{array}$$

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RAISE THE BAR FOR ENTRY TO INDEPENDENT BEGINNING TEACHING

- Agree on common high-leverage teaching practices and content knowledge, as well as ethics, necessary for safe and skillful practice
- Determine how these can be most validly assessed
- Build supports to help teachers develop these capabilities
- Carry out ongoing research and development on teacher preparation and licensure

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IT WON'T BE EASY

1. Teaching is seen as more individual and personal than professional.
2. Teaching is not respected as complex work that requires specific preparation.
3. Many are skeptical that teaching can actually be taught ("born to teach").
4. Low status of teacher preparation.

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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 profession in the last couple of decades on which we can build.
- It will take courage and confidence.

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GREAT TEACHERS AREN'T BORN.
THEY'RE TAUGHT.



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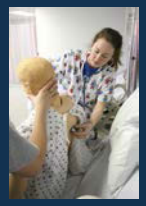


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