The Future of Teacher Preparation

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Presentation to the Utah Council of Education Deans

October 8, 2015 • Ogden, UT
What is Teaching Works?

- A national organization housed at the University of Michigan School of Education
- Focused on ensuring that every child gets skillful teaching every year by building strong professional infrastructure for the training, development, and assessment of teaching practice
- Based on work done at the University of Michigan in our own programs and also in partnership with other programs and organizations
Changing demographics of public schools

- Black: 2001 - 17, 2011 - 16, 2023 - 15
- Hispanic: 2001 - 17, 2011 - 24, 2023 - 30
- Asian/Pacific Islander: 2001 - 4, 2011 - 5, 2023 - 5
- American Indian/Alaska Native: 2001 - 1, 2011 - 1, 2023 - 1
- Two or more races: 2001 - 3, 2011 - 4, 2023 - 3

Language spoken at home

![Bar chart showing the percentage of people speaking English and other languages at home from 1980 to 2010. The chart indicates a decrease in the percentage of people speaking English only and an increase in the percentage of people speaking other languages over the years.](chart.png)
Spanish speaking in the home

- 1980: 10,000,000
- 1990: 15,000,000
- 2000: 25,000,000
- 2010: 35,000,000
Family income & educational attainment

Estimated bachelor’s degree attainment by age 24

- Bottom income quartile: 6.2% (1970), 10.7% (2010)
- Second income quartile: 10.9% (1970), 15.0% (2010)
- Third income quartile: 14.9% (1970), 33.9% (2010)
- Top income quartile: 40.2% (1970), 79.1% (2010)
Educational Attainment (2012)
Demographic divide in the U.S.: K-12 teachers and students

- **Teachers:**
  - Of Color: 17%
  - White: 83%

- **Students:**
  - Of Color: 44%
  - White: 56%
Three headlines:

1. We need a more diverse teaching force.
2. We need a teaching force that is much more capable at helping children from all kinds of backgrounds learn challenging and useable knowledge and skills.
3. To build such a teaching force, we need a common curriculum for learning to teach that spans pre-service training and the first years of practice and is:
   - Practices-focused
   - Serious about preparing novices to help diverse children learn meaningful academic content
1. Why does the teaching force need to diversify?

- It is important for children to interact with teachers with whom they can identify.
- It is important for children to interact with teachers who are different from them.
- The knowledge base of the profession requires the expertise and experience of people who are diverse with respect to SES, race, ethnicity, language, gender, and religion.
- Other reasons?
2. Why do we need a teaching force more capable at teaching diverse students?

- The student population is diversifying.
- The goals we hold for all students are higher now than they ever have been before:
  - We expect all students to achieve challenging academic goals, including the ability to analyze text for sophisticated purposes, to use technology, to communicate across all kinds of boundaries, and to solve complex mathematical and scientific problems.
  - Many more jobs now require these kinds of sophisticated skills.
3. A common, practices-focused curriculum that spans pre-service and early career teaching and is serious about the need to help all kids learn:

Why build it?
And what does it look like?
Skills for plumbing
(United Association of Plumbers, Fitters, Welders, and Service Techs)

• Install copper and copper alloy piping
• Build a plumbing trap
• Vent a sanitary drainage system
• Disassemble and rebuild a centrifugal compressor
• Maintain joints, connections, supports, and hangars
• Install and maintain storm drainage systems
Plumbing training and assessment

• Clear, detailed performance expectations
• 5 year apprenticeship
• 1700-2000 hours on-the-job training
• 246 hours related classroom instruction
• 1-year probationary period with on-the-job evaluations
Skills for medical practice
(American Medical Association)

Conduct a chest examination:

- Observe respiratory efforts and note presence/absence of respiratory distress
- Confirm midline tracheal position with gentle palpation anteriorly
- Percuss the chest on left and right
- Auscultate the chest using the diaphragm of the stethoscope on both right and left sides
Physician training and assessment
Skills for piloting
(Federal Aviation Administration)

• Conduct a preflight inspection
• Perform normal and cross-wind approaches and landings
• Execute straight turns and climbing turns
• Perform effective visual scanning
• Avoid a runway incursion
• Perform crossed control stalls
• Perform s-turns across a road
Pilot training and assessment

- 100+ hours of flight-time
- Knowledge tests
- Practical tests conducted by an FAA inspector
No equivalent in teaching

- Performance expectations for novice and more experienced teachers alike underspecified
- No common curriculum for teacher training, with specific, professionally-agreed upon learning goals
- Over 2000 independent providers of initial teacher training; over 2000 curricula
- No common standard of performance, instantiated in licensure assessments, for entry to independent practice
- Teachers report doing most of their learning on the job, with little or no coaching or formal guidance
Why a common curriculum?

- The core work of teaching – designing lessons, leading discussions, giving explanations, building relationships with students – is not so different from one community to the next.
- To act as though it is runs the risk of significant inequities for children.
- Teachers move around, and some leave the community or even state in which they are trained.
- It is much harder to assure the public that a new teacher is safe to practice— one of our responsibilities as professional educators— when the standards vary from one place to the next, and every preparation program is free to do its own thing.
- A common curriculum would make it much easier to develop and share infrastructure for teacher preparation, including materials and other resources and training for teacher educators.
Why a curriculum that spans pre-service preparation and early career teaching?

- It is not reasonable to expect that novices will learn everything they need to know and be able to do in two years – or less.
- It would help dissolve the disconnect so many new teachers experience between their pre-service preparation and the “realities of the classroom.”
- Professional development in many places is woefully inadequate; it is irresponsible not to provide structured opportunities for coaching and continued improvement to novices.
- Teacher preparation that continues into the first few years of practice would be an excellent place to reinforce common, essential teaching practices and also to work on elements of teaching that do legitimately vary from one community to the next – such as how to unpack content in ways that work for a particular population of students, or how to interact with parents who face particular kinds of circumstances.
How can we develop a common curriculum for learning to teach that will help all kinds of teachers help all kinds of kids learn?

1. Start by identifying and specifying the core practices of teaching that is aimed at helping all kids learn meaningful academic content.

2. Identify the knowledge teachers need to carry out those practices, including:
   - The special ways they need to know the academic content they are teaching;
   - The professional and practical knowledge that supports good teaching, including knowing how social and cultural factors affect kids’ experience in school.

3. Develop a curriculum and testing and licensure system directly focused on those practices and that knowledge.
What does practices-focused teacher education look like?

- **Curriculum**: All coursework and field experiences focused on specific skills and practices of teaching, well-known to students, instructors, and mentor teachers, and on the knowledge and orientations that support and enable teachers to use them.

- **Instructional activities and settings**: Repeated opportunities to practice specific teaching skills, with close, detailed coaching, in settings that support professional learning.

- **Assessment**: Periodic and culminating performance assessments that provide information about novices’ developing competence and readiness for independent practice.
Curriculum: Practices as the center and source

- Practices as the central focus of a teacher education program: Everyone knows what they are and students are held accountable for showing that they can do them.

- Other parts of the curriculum—namely, content knowledge and knowledge of psychology, culture, policy, sociology, etc.—are there if and only if they directly support the carrying out of practices: There’s not enough time in initial teacher education to include topics that are not directly relevant to teaching.
Foundations of the HLPs
5 core ideas about teaching and learning

1. The goal of classroom teaching and learning is to help students learn worthwhile knowledge and skills and develop the ability to use what they learn for their own purposes.

2. All students can learn and deserve the opportunity to learn worthwhile content.

3. Learning is an active sense-making process.

4. Teaching is interactive work.

5. The contexts of classroom teaching matter, and teachers must manage and use them well.
How do these ideas shape the identification of HLPs?

1. The goal of classroom teaching and learning is to help students learn worthwhile knowledge and skills and develop the ability to use what they learn for their own purposes. group discussions, small group work, norms and routines for classroom discourse and work

2. All students can learn and deserve the opportunity to learn worthwhile content. modeling and explaining content, eliciting and interpreting thinking, building respectful relationships with students, selecting and modifying tasks and texts, providing oral and written feedback, learning about students and their resources, designing lessons

3. Learning is an active sense-making process. discussion, small group work, designing tasks and texts, learning about students and their resources

4. Teaching is a contingent practice, dependent on students and their ideas and inclinations. eliciting student thinking, diagnosing common patterns of student thinking, checking student understanding during lessons, group discussions, small group work, implementing norms and routines for classroom discourse and work

5. The contexts of classroom teaching matter, and teachers must manage and use them well. implementing organizational routines, talking with parents and caregivers, learning about students, designing lessons, interpreting the results of student work
Bundling HLPs into mini-courses

- **Children as Sense-makers** (eliciting and interpreting student thinking, diagnosing common patterns of student thinking)

- **Managing to Teach** (building relationships with students, implementing norms and routines, specifying and reinforcing student behavior, managing materials, managing participation/calling on students, use of “strong voice,” establishing a professional persona)

- **Social Foundations** (learning about students and their resources, managing participation, talking with parents and caregivers)

- **Methods** (leading group discussions, modeling and explaining content, checking student understanding during and at the conclusion of lessons, selecting and designing formal assessments)
Example: Coursework in the U-M elementary undergraduate program
Junior Year

Fall (semester 1)
- Practicum and seminar – 1 credit
- Educational Psychology – 2 credits
- Culturally Responsive Pedagogy – 2 credits
- Literacy I – 3 credits
- Children as Sensemakers – 1 credit
- Managing to Teach I – 1 credit
- Teaching with Curriculum Materials – 1 credit
- Teaching with Digital Technologies – 1 credit

Winter (semester 2)
- Practicum and seminar – 1 credit
- Literacy II – 3 credits
- Children as Sensemakers II – 2 credits
- Managing to Teach II – 1 credit
- Facilitating Classroom Discussions & Teaching Social Studies – 3 credits
- Teaching Students with Exceptionalities – 1 credit
Example: Coursework in the U-M elementary undergraduate program

Senior Year

Fall (semester 3)
- Practicum – 2 credits
- Working with Families – 1 credit
- Managing to Teach III: beginning the school year – 1 credit
- Teaching Elementary School Math – 2 credits
- Teaching Elementary School Science – 2 credits

Winter (semester 4)
- Directed Teaching in the Elementary Grades – 12 credits
- Seminar: Problems and Principles of Elementary Education – 2 credits
- Teaching Students with Exceptionalities – 1 credit
What does practices-focused teacher education look like?

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- **Instructional activities and settings**: Repeated opportunities to practice specific teaching skills, with close, detailed coaching, in settings that support professional learning.

- **Assessment**: Periodic and culminating performance assessments that provide information about novices’ developing competence and readiness for independent practice.
Focus for video viewing

- What do you notice about the way the teacher educator is working with these students? What seems important?
- What are the strengths of this approach? Does anything concern you?
Video context

- Novice elementary school teachers in their first month of professional training
- Field-based literacy methods course: Students spend each morning rehearsing the lessons they will teach in the afternoon
- In this video: Preparing to engage in a storybook read-aloud with first graders
- Teacher educator: Sarah Scott
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Challenges of designing teacher training around high-leverage practices

- Developing consensus around core practices; building corresponding curriculum materials and assessments
- Effectively integrating work on practices with work on the knowledge and orientations needed to carry out the practices; ensuring that one doesn’t overwhelm the other
- Ensuring that everyone who works with residents/interns, including classroom teachers who serve as mentors, can effectively coach the practices
- Crediting (or compensating, etc.) instructors for non-traditionally sequenced and timed teaching responsibilities
- Developing policies for handling student failure at HLP assessments
Managing these challenges

- Working deliberately and collaboratively, and systematically compensating instructors for their work on program design and redesign

- Always keeping practices at the center of the bull’s-eye; asking, “What do teachers need to know and be able to do in order to carry out X practice?
  - If a potential piece of curriculum content isn’t necessary to carrying out an HLP, it might not belong in the curriculum given the short duration of initial teacher training.

- Enlisting the support of policy people and other “higher ups” from the very beginning

- Over-communicating with residents/interns about program expectations and requirements for graduating
Discussion

- How does this match your vision of the future of teacher preparation?
- What are the risks inherent here?
- What would it take to scale up this vision?
TeachingWorks

Website: www.teachingworks.org
Email: info@teachingworks.org
Great teachers aren’t born. 
THEY’RE TAUGHT.
Viewing a segment from a classroom

- Grade 3 class
- multi-lingual and multi-cultural
- mid-January
- middle of a unit on even and odd numbers and their arithmetic properties

Shea:
“I was just thinking about 6 ... it can be an odd number, too.”
What to watch for

1. What might the students be learning and is the teacher doing anything to support that?
2. Is the teacher teaching?

What is your evidence?
Viewing focus and discussion

1. What might the students be learning and is the teacher doing anything to support that?
2. Is the teacher teaching?
3. If you think the teacher is teaching, what are the affordances for students of this kind of teaching? Drawbacks?
Overview

1. Definition of and rationale for a common, practices-based curriculum that spans pre-service preparation and early career teaching and is subject-matter serious.
   - How teacher preparation looks different from other fields of professional training
   - What it means to focus training on practices

2. The TeachingWorks high-leverage practices: Where they came from and how they are shaping our own program

3. The need for a more diverse teaching force

4. Discussion: Is this where the future is heading? Should it be? What are risks? Alternatives?