

HIGH-LEVERAGE TEACHING PRACTICES: WHAT IS THE CORE WORK OF TEACHING, AND WHAT IS REQUIRED TO LEARN IT AND TO DO IT?

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Center for Educational Transformation Ed Perspectives Meeting

April 1, 2016 • University of Northern Iowa • Cedar Falls, Iowa



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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. Persistent gross inequities of opportunity and outcome
4. Evidence of the power of skillful teaching
5. Overwhelming lack of public respect for the work of teaching

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

THE MORAL URGENCY, BY THE NUMBERS

11% 70%

1/3

15%, 45%

50

1.5 million

78,000,000

>1400

2x

WHAT HOLDS PROMISE?

- Research shows the power of skillful 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”

WHAT ARE THE BARRIERS?

- We don't prepare teachers nearly well enough.
- The U.S. has no system for ensuring that teaching is skillful.
- We treat skillful teaching as something remarkable, rather than the right of every child.
- There is widespread skepticism that teaching can be taught.
- The teacher workforce is massive, with high turnover.

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 and make entry to independent practice selective and based on skill.

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



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WHAT GREAT TEACHERS OFTEN SAY

“Teaching has always come naturally to me.”

“I have learned what I do from experience; I like to pass on what I know to student teachers.”

“Teaching requires a lot of improvisation and can’t be specified in advance.”

“I have developed my way of doing things that works for me.”

REPRESENTING TEACHING AS SKILLFUL WORK THAT DEMANDS AND DESERVES TRAINING

- Share examples that display the complexity of the work (and that “regular” people can’t do)
- Stand up for the importance of rigorous licensure for beginning to teach
- Help to develop shared knowledge useful for initial and continuing professional training

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?

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?



Teacher: Okay. So this morning, we took some time to measure our

DISCUSS: A GLIMPSE OF BEGINNING TEACHING

1. What does the video clip show about the challenges of teaching?
2. What is skillful about the teaching on the video?
What is less skillful?

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



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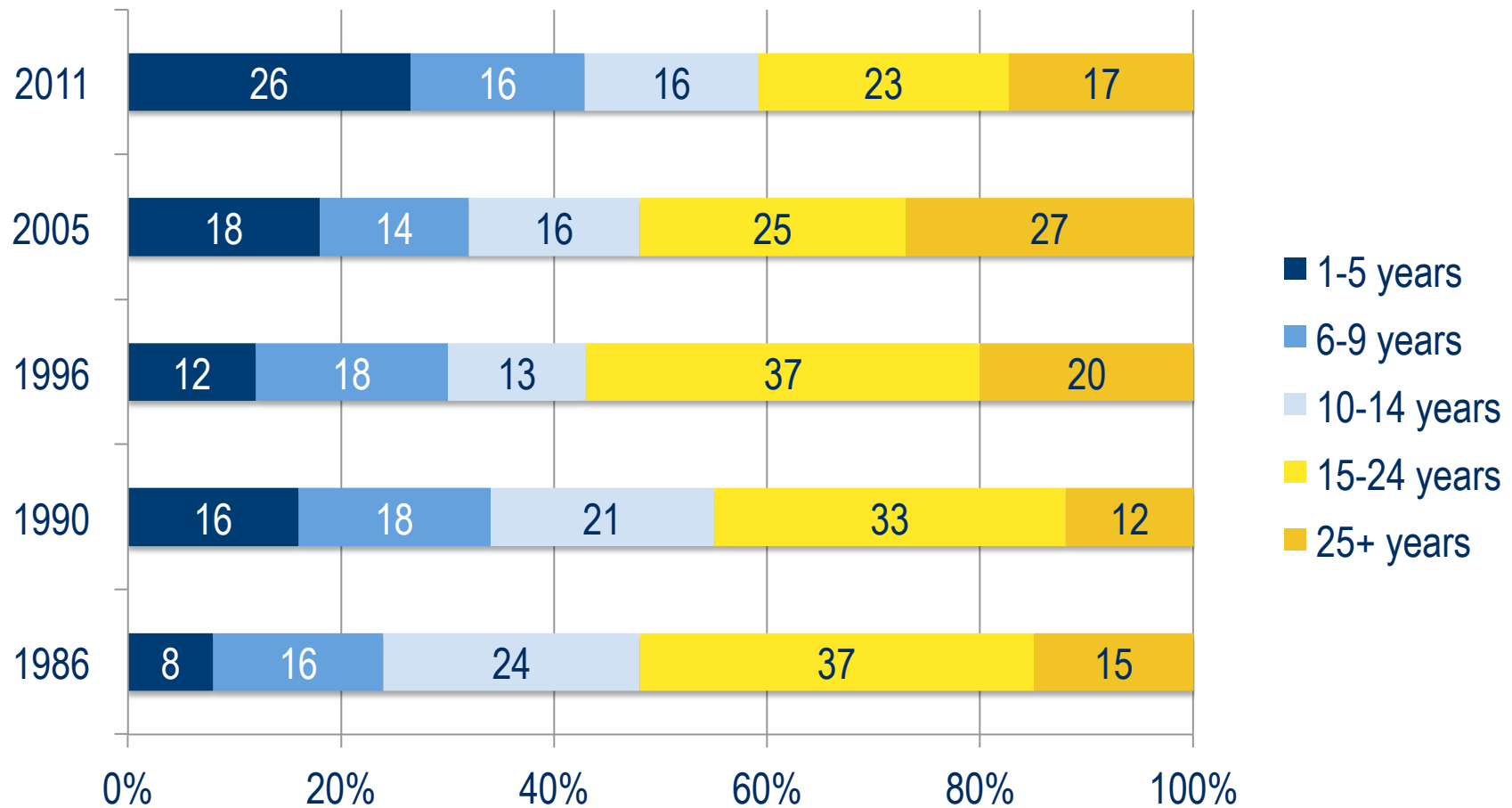
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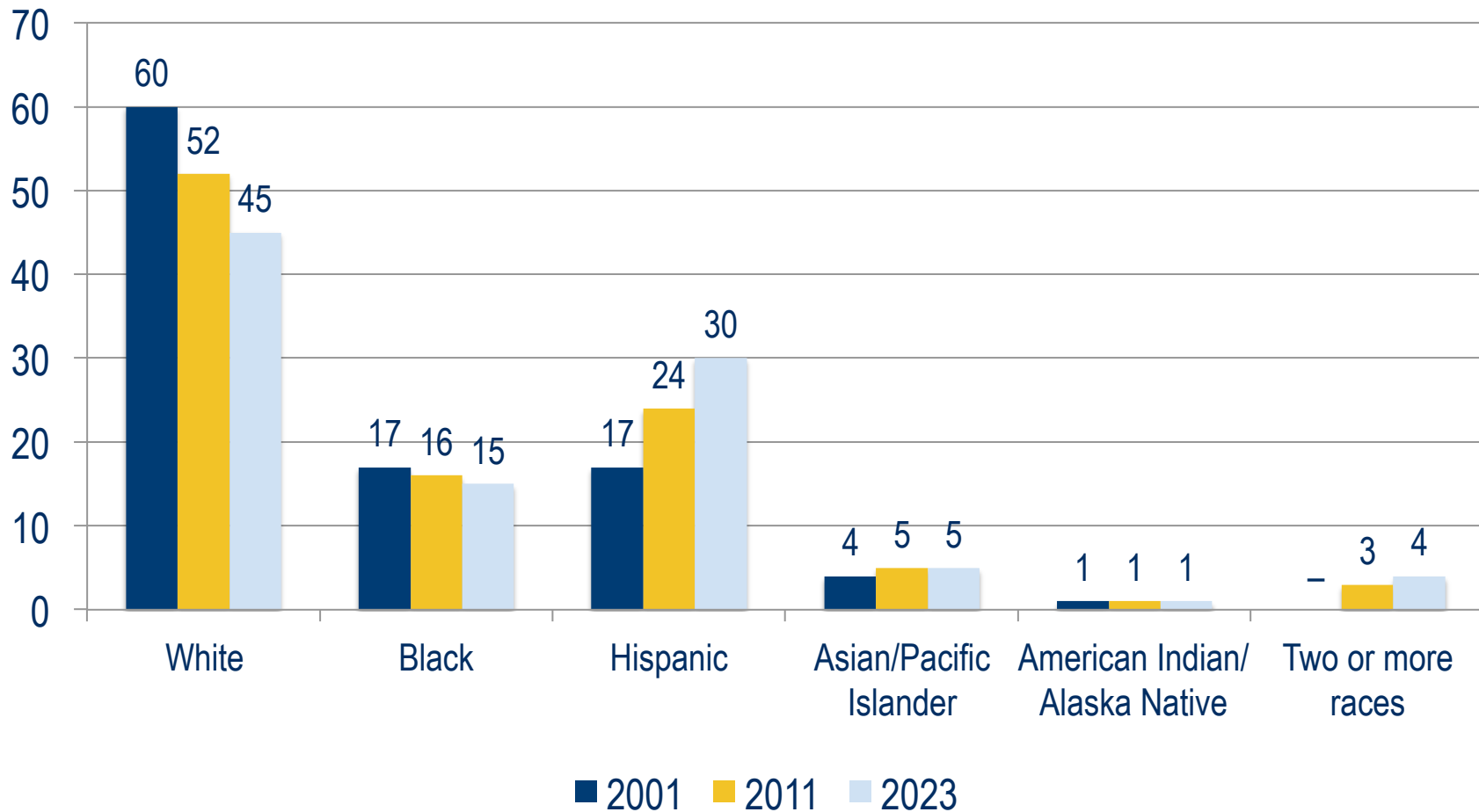
KEY FEATURES OF THE CONTEXT

1. The concentration and impact of beginning teaching
2. The underrepresentation of diversity in the teaching workforce
3. The sprawl and roots of the U.S. approach to teacher preparation

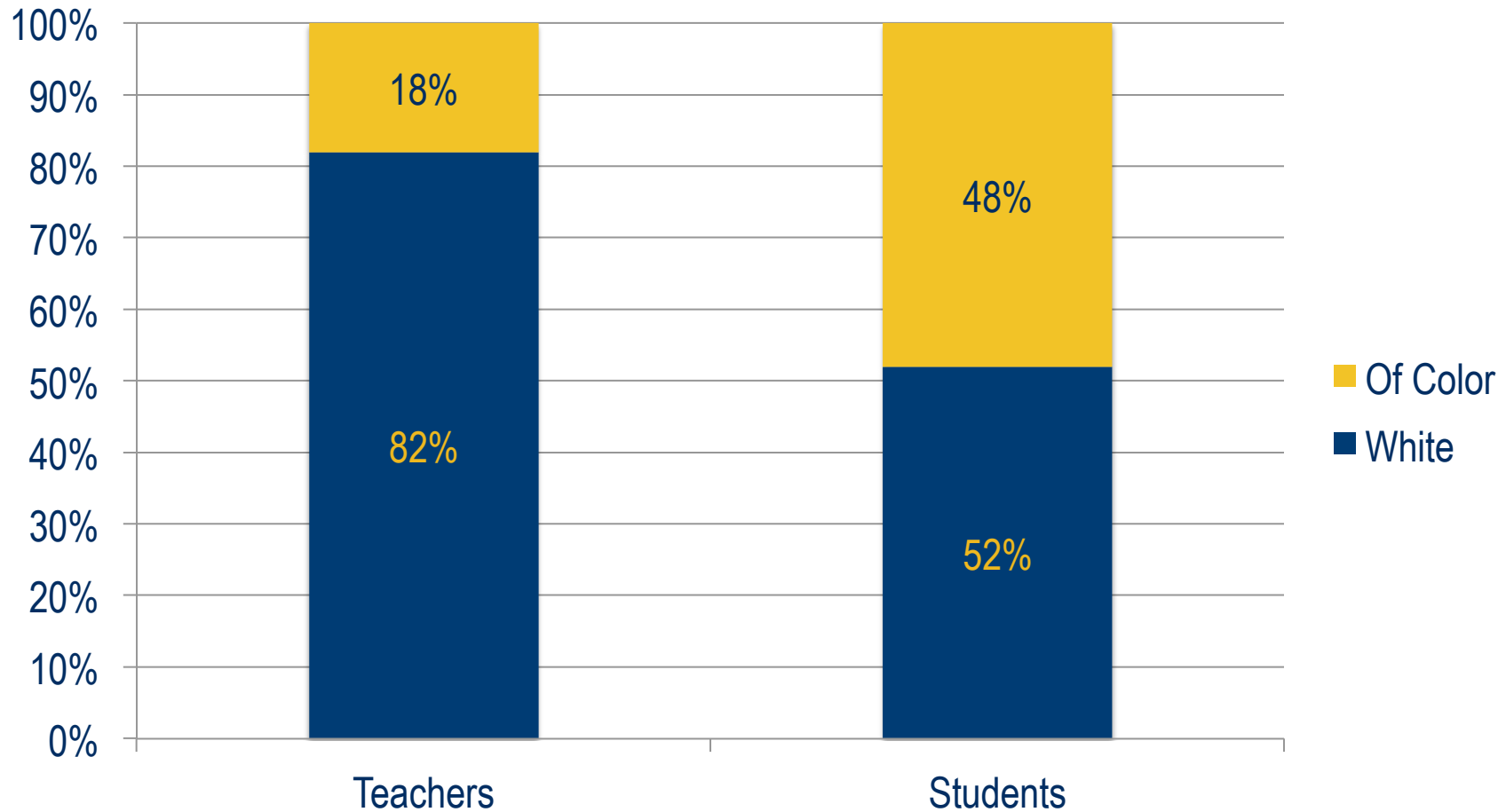
YEARS OF EXPERIENCE: CHANGING TRENDS



CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS OF PUBLIC SCHOOLS



DEMOGRAPHIC DIVIDE IN THE U.S.: K-12 TEACHERS AND STUDENTS



WHY IS THIS GAP SUCH A CRITICAL PROBLEM?

- The profession responsible for developing the primary human capital of our society should reflect our population
- Importance of children interacting with adults in school with whom they can identify, and expanding the diversity of adults with whom children interact with in school
- The knowledge base of the profession requires the expertise and experience of people who are diverse with respect to race, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, language, gender
- Other reasons?

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.

NO PROFESSIONAL SYSTEM FOR TEACHER PREPARATION OR CONTINUED DEVELOPMENT

- More than 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

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 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”



FEATURES OF STRONG TRAINING FOR RESPONSIBLE INDEPENDENT PRACTICE

1. **Clear specification of knowledge, skills, capabilities, and qualities of performance** necessary for independent practice
2. **Detailed developmental clinical training**, progressing from observing to simulations to supervised apprenticeship to supervised independent practice
3. **Performance assessment of individual competence** before allowing independent practice

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 practices of teaching** and **high-leverage content** essential for responsible beginning 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 make them required for entry

HIGH-LEVERAGE PRACTICES

High-leverage practices (HLPs) are instructional tasks and activities that powerfully promote learning and are fundamental to skillful teaching.

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 is to improve the quality of teaching and learning by transforming teachers' education.

HIGH-LEVERAGE PRACTICES AS A THRESHOLD FOR RESPONSIBLE BEGINNING PRACTICE

- Based on empirical, professional, and logical warrants
- Skill with these make it much more probable that students will develop and grow
- Important for promoting diversity and equity
- Can be identified, studied, modeled, rehearsed, coached, and assessed
- Bundle qualities, knowledge, and judgment into specific things to be able to do
- Are learnable by beginners to a reasonable professional standard
- Support ongoing professional learning

HIGH-LEVERAGE PRACTICES

1. Leading a group discussion
2. Explaining and modeling content, practices, and strategies
3. Eliciting and interpreting individual students' thinking
4. Diagnosing particular common patterns of student thinking and development in a subject-matter domain
5. Implementing norms and routines for classroom discourse and work
6. Coordinating and adjusting instruction during a lesson
7. Specifying and reinforcing productive student behavior
8. Implementing organizational routines
9. Setting up and managing small group work
10. Building respectful relationships with students

HIGH-LEVERAGE PRACTICES (CONT.)

11. Talking about a student with parents or other caregivers
12. Learning about students' cultural, religious, family, intellectual, and personal experiences and resources for use in instruction
13. Setting long- and short-term learning goals for students
14. Designing single lessons and sequences of lessons
15. Checking student understanding during and at the conclusion of lessons
16. Selecting and designing formal assessments of student learning
17. Interpreting the results of student work, including routine assignments, quizzes, tests, projects, and standardized assessments
18. Providing oral and written feedback to students
19. Analyzing instruction for the purpose of improving it

CHOOSING ELEMENTS OF PRACTICE MOST IMPORTANT FOR BEGINNERS

Criteria central to the practice of teaching:

- Occurs with high frequency from a teacher's first day on the job
- Cannot be done for the beginning teacher by another school professional
- Useful across subject-areas, grade levels, curricula, and instructional approaches

Criteria central to the context and demands of teacher education:

- Can be unpacked and taught to beginners
- Is generative of additional learning and skill development
- Can be assessed

LET'S BE HUMBLE.

**WE ARE IN A LONG LINE OF PEOPLE WHO
HAVE TRIED TO TRANSFORM TEACHER
PREPARATION, WITH LITTLE EFFECT.**

**WHAT WOULD HAVE TO BE DIFFERENT
THIS TIME?**

WHAT WOULD HAVE TO BE DIFFERENT THIS TIME?

The *profession* could organize *collectively* to:

- Identify the core professional knowledge and skills needed for responsible entry-level practice
- Refine and develop specific methods of clinical experience to fine-tune pedagogies of teacher education to focus on candidates' levels of skill and knowledge in practice
- Develop measures and tools for assessing candidates' specific levels of skill and knowledge
- Work in connection with K-12 schools to build quality teaching

THANK YOU!

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Slides will be available on my website
("Google" Deborah Ball)

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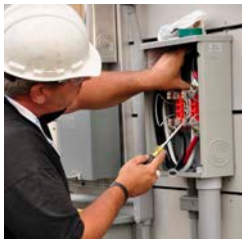


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