RAISING THE QUALITY OF BEGINNING TEACHING
AN AGENDA FOR OUR NATION’S YOUTH—AND ITS FUTURE
—BUT WHAT WILL IT TAKE?

Deborah Loewenberg Ball
University-School Partnerships for the Renewal of Educator Preparation (USPREP)
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WHY, WHAT, AND HOW? LEARNING WITH AND FROM ONE ANOTHER

1. Why the work of improving teacher preparation matters
2. Our legacy in the U.S. about teaching as a barrier to overcome
3. What does it look like to prepare a diverse skilled teaching force for the 21st century
4. Challenges for leaders
WHY IS THIS WORK SO IMPORTANT?

1. 50,000,000 children and youth in our nation’s schools
2. Schooling as our society’s commitment to individuals’ lives and to the future of our country
3. Evidence of the power of skillful teaching
4. Huge gap between who the children are and who the teachers are
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

1400
1/3
50
1.5 million

15%, 45%

11%
9%
26%
78,000,000
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.
- Workforce and preparation gap related to race, ethnicity, language
- Distribution of beginning teaching is concentrated disproportionately in low-income and high-minority schools.
“Teaching has always come naturally to me.”

“I have learned teaching 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 a style of teaching that works for me.”
KEY ELEMENTS OF A PRACTICE-BASED APPROACH TO TEACHER PREPARATION

- High-leverage practices of instruction
- Content knowledge for teaching
- Specific coached practice

1. How do we teach these to beginning teachers and support their development, not just test them?
2. What does this mean for teacher educators, coaches and mentors, others who help novice teachers learn to teach in ways that reach their students?
HIGH-LEVERAGE PRACTICES

- Explaining and modeling content, practices, and strategies
- Leading a group discussion
- Eliciting and interpreting students’ thinking
- Establishing norms and routines for classroom discourse and work
- Diagnosing particular common patterns of student thinking and development
- Learning about students’ cultural, religious, family, intellectual, and personal experiences and resources for use in instruction
- Setting up and managing small group work
- Building respectful relationships with students
- Checking student understanding during and at the conclusion of lessons
- Providing oral and written feedback to students on their work
- Setting long- and short-term learning goals for students
- Talking about a student with parents or caregivers
PURPOSE OF THE HIGH-LEVERAGE PRACTICES

The high-leverage practices:

1. Decompose the work of teaching into learnable chunks that support learning to do that work (and teaching it to novices).

2. Intertwine central aspects of instructional practice:
   - developing students’ academic and social-emotional skills;
   - valuing diversity (e.g., learning and using students’ funds of knowledge and resources) and promoting and advancing equity and inclusion (e.g., building respectful classroom communities, connecting with and also extending and supporting students’ possibilities, interests, and agency).
PRACTICING DEFIBRILLATION
PRACTICING A GUIDED READING LESSON
CHILDREN’S TASK

What number does the orange arrow point to? ____________

Explain how you know: ____________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________
WHAT DO YOU SEE AND HEAR ABOUT ANIYAH AND TONI IN THIS SHORT CLIP?
ANIYAH AND TONI
WHAT DO PEOPLE TYPICALLY SEE?

ANIYAH
- Wrong answer, not identifying the correct whole

TONI
- Giggling while talking
- Playing with her hair
WHAT STRENGTHS DO YOU SEE?

ANIYAH
- Her presentation skills
- Production of a mathematically well-structured explanation
- Knowing the definition for a fraction, which she uses carefully

TONI
- Her careful attention to another child’s thinking
- Her skill in asking a perfectly posed question about Aniyah’s reasoning
ELICITING AND INTERPRETING AS A FOUNDATIONAL HIGH-LEVERAGE PRACTICE

1. This practice is a building block for so many other HLPs—e.g., leading a discussion, formative assessment, building relationships. Strong skills in this practice strengthen one’s skill in these related practices.

2. This practice orients novices well to the absolute core of teaching, which is the development of skills and knowledge of focusing on others’ thinking (interests, ways of knowing, knowledge). It is an HLP about curiosity and about valuing a young person’s sense-making.

3. Eliciting provides a concrete opportunity to learn to see students’ strengths, upon which you can build—orienting novices away from seeing deficits.
ELICITING AND INTERPRETING STUDENT THINKING

Teachers pose questions or tasks that provoke or allow students to share their thinking about specific academic content in order to evaluate student understanding, guide instructional decisions, and surface ideas that will benefit other students. To do this effectively, a teacher draws out a student’s thinking through carefully chosen questions and tasks and considers and checks alternative interpretations of the student’s ideas and methods.
CORE STRATEGIES AND TECHNIQUES

- Using questions, prompts, or tasks to elicit student thinking
- Using language in ways that will make sense to the student
- Comparing the student’s ideas and work to established common patterns of thinking in relation to the subject-matter in question
- Drawing on knowledge of the student’s previous work and thinking to make and then test conjectures about current understanding (both what students know and are able to do and where their current understandings are limited)
- Using questions with tone of voice and approach to connect with and support students
\[
\frac{3}{4} \div \frac{1}{2}
\]
KNOWING MATH FOR TEACHING
WRITE A STORY OR DRAW A REPRESENTATION

\[
\frac{1}{4} \div \frac{1}{2}
\]
I have two pizzas. My friend eats one quarter of one of the pizzas. I have one and three quarters pizzas left. Then I split it evenly between two of my other friends. Each person gets three and a half pieces of pizza.

1. What is wrong with this?

2. Write a story problem that correctly represents the division.
KNOWING HOW TO DO MULTI-DIGIT MULTIPLICATION

49
× 25
SEEING MULTIPLICATION FROM THE LEARNER’S PERSPECTIVE

(a) $49 \times 25$
   
   $\underline{405}$
   
   $\underline{108}$
   
   $\underline{1485}$

(b) $49 \times 25$
   
   $\underline{225}$
   
   $\underline{100}$
   
   $\underline{325}$

(c) $49 \times 25$
   
   $\underline{1250}$
   
   $\underline{25}$
   
   $\underline{1275}$
CHALLENGES OF LEADING CHANGE TO RAISE THE QUALITY OF TEACHING

1. Deficit narratives about teachers and students and teacher preparation programs
2. Other pressures in the environment
   - Testing
   - Coverage
3. Academic freedom and professional independence
   - Resistance
   - Lack of respect for diversity
4. Support for professional learning to do new things
   - Emphasis on evaluation affects risk-taking
   - Is this really different? (“We do this already”)  
   - Incentives
   - Lack of resources
5. What other challenges do you face? How can we support one another?
THANK YOU!
dball@umich.edu
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