Increasing Mini-Batch Size While Preserving Accuracy for Distributed Deep Learning

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Introduction

- Data-parallel distributed training among multiple workers reduces training time

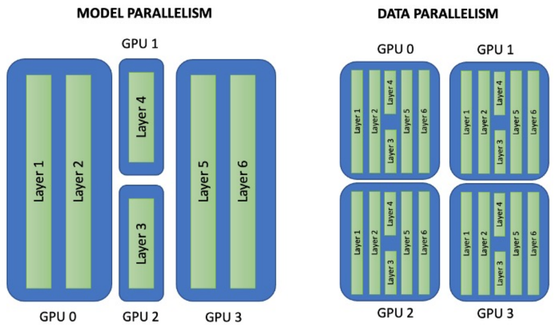


Figure 1: Distributed training techniques [1]

- Large mini-batch sizes help maintain a balanced computation-to-communication ratio among workers
- Beyond a certain size limit, the benefits of large mini-batch sizes come at the cost of accuracy

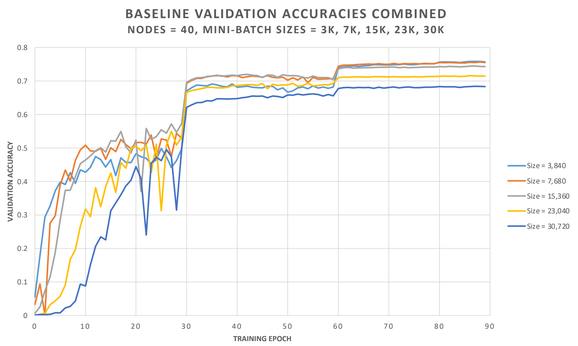


Figure 2: Accuracy decreases as mini-batch size increases.

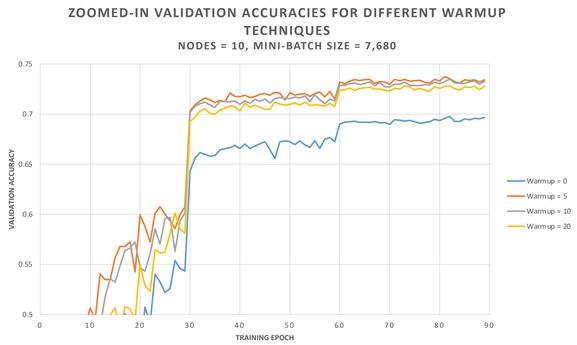
- *Gradual warmup* and *linear rate scaling* have been shown to scale mini-batch size to an extent
- *Gradual warmup* slowly increases a very low learning rate to the desired rate during the first few epochs
- *Linear rate scaling* linearly scales the learning rate with mini-batch size

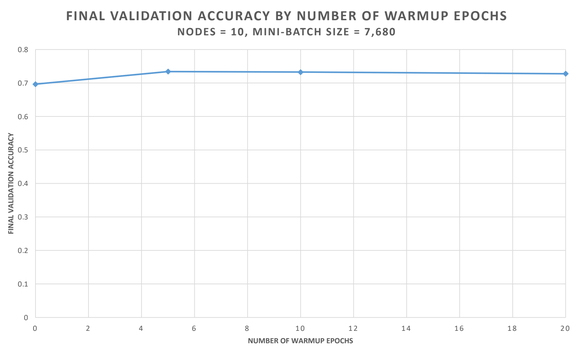
Methods

- Experimented with the ResNet-50 model trained for 90 epochs on the ImageNet dataset
- Analyzed gradual warmup by training model with 0, 5, 10, and 20 warmup epochs
- Analyzed linear rate scaling by comparing to training without scaling of the base learning rate

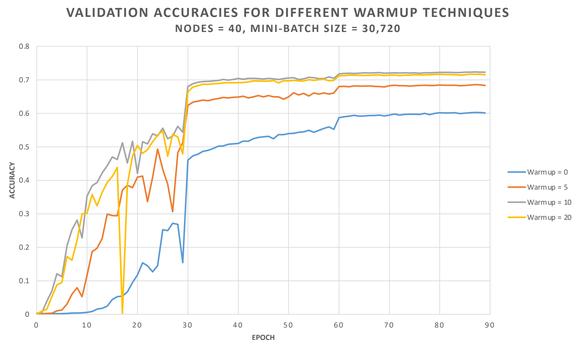
Results

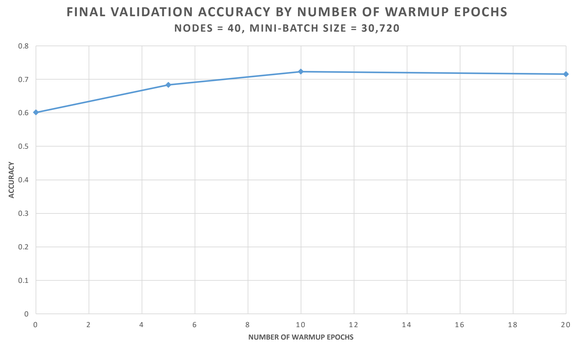
Gradual Warmup Technique:





Figures 3 & 4: No warmup epochs produces the worst accuracy rates. 5 warmup epochs is optimal for mini-batch size 7K. Accuracy decreases beyond 5 warmup epochs.





Figures 5 & 6: No warmup epochs produces the worst accuracy rates. 10 warmup epochs is optimal for mini-batch size 30K. Accuracy decreases beyond 10 warmup epochs.

Learning Rate Scaling:

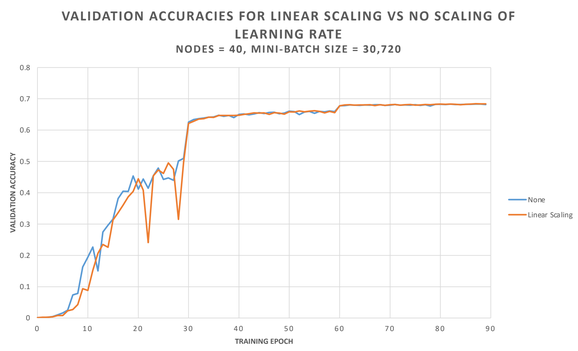


Figure 7: No significant difference between training with linear rate scaling and without scaling of base learning rate = 0.0125

Conclusions

- Gradual warmup is needed to stabilize early training phases, which are highly sensitive to learning rates after random weight initialization
- There is strong indication that the optimal number of warmup epochs is linearly scaled with mini-batch size
- This linear association is because larger mini-batch sizes reduce the number of training iterations, and fewer weight updates require a longer warmup period
- Gradual warmup beyond the optimal number of epochs reduces accuracy due to prolonging low learning rates that update weights too slowly
- There is no evidence linear rate scaling has a noticeable effect on mini-batch sizes as large as 30K

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References

[1] Torres.AI, J. (2020, November 23). [Model parallelism vs data parallelism]. Towards Data Science. https://towardsdatascience.com/scalable-deep-learning-on-parallel-and-distributed-infrastructures-e5fb4a956bef

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