

# Frequency-aware multigrid training of **P**hysics-**I**nformed **N**eural **N**etworks

**Elisa Riccietti**

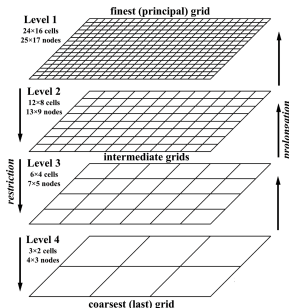
Collaboration with  
S. Gratton and V. Mercier (INP Toulouse), P. Toint (Unamur)

**LIP-ENS Lyon**

Journée Représentations Neuronales Implicites : des NeRF aux PINN  
04 November 2025

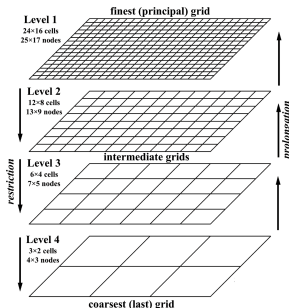
# The context: multigrid methods and PINNS

**Classical multigrid (MG)** : **accelerate** the solution of PDEs by exploiting the **structure** to build a hierarchy of subproblems



# The context: multigrid methods and PINNS

**Classical multigrid (MG)** : **accelerate** the solution of PDEs by exploiting the **structure** to build a hierarchy of subproblems



**Question:** can we extend this concept to PINNs training?

# Outline

Multigrid (MG) methods

Multigrid training of PINNs

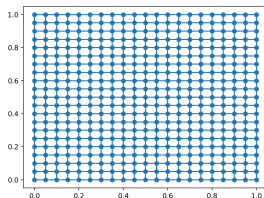
# Outline

Multigrid (MG) methods

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# The numerical solution of PDEs

- ▶ Classically PDEs are **discretized** on a grid
- ▶ The resulting **linear system**  $Au = f$  is solved using a fixed point method
- ▶ The size of the grids impacts:
  - ▶ the **size** of the system
  - ▶ the **accuracy** of the solution approximation



# Fixed point schemes

**Fixed point scheme:**

$$\begin{aligned}u^* &= Bu^* + g \\ u^{(m+1)} &= Bu^{(m)} + g\end{aligned}$$

# Fixed point schemes

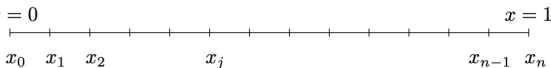
**Fixed point scheme:**

$$\begin{aligned}u^* &= Bu^* + g \\ u^{(m+1)} &= Bu^{(m)} + g\end{aligned}$$

**Limitations:** What are the limitations of such schemes?

$$\begin{cases} -u''(x) = f(x), & \text{for } 0 < x < 1 \\ u(0) = u(1) = 0 \end{cases}$$

$\Omega^h$ :



► Jacobi method

# Reduction of the error

After  $M$  iterations:

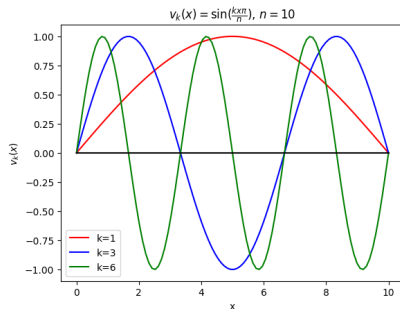
$$e^{(M)} = u^{(M)} - u^* = \sum_{k=1}^{n-1} c_k \lambda_k^M(B) \mathbf{v}_k$$

Fourier modes:

$$\mathbf{v}_k(j) = \sin\left(\frac{kj\pi}{n}\right), \quad k \text{ frequency component}$$

On a  $n$ -point grid:

- ▶  $1 \leq k < \frac{n}{2}$  low
- ▶  $\frac{n}{2} \leq k < n-1$  high

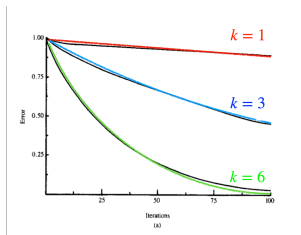
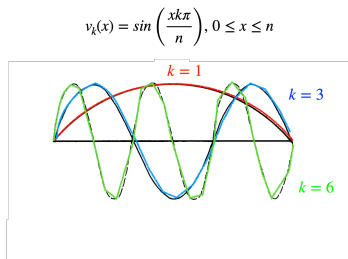


# Limitation of iterative schemes: the smoothing property

$$e^{(M)} = u^{(M)} - u^* = \sum_{k=1}^{n-1} c_k \lambda_k^M(B) v_k$$

- ▶  $\lambda_1(B) \approx 1$
- ▶  $|\lambda_k(B)| < 1/3$  for  $n/2 \leq k \leq n-1$

Hard to reduce the **low frequency** components of the error

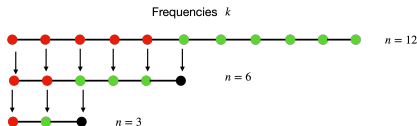


# How to make the methods efficient on all frequencies?

## Frequency shift!

- ▶ **Fine** grid  $\Omega^h$  with  $n$  points:  $1 \leq k \leq n-1$
- ▶ **Coarse** grid  $\Omega^{2h}$  with  $n/2$  points:  $1 \leq k \leq n/2$

**Property:**  $v_k^h(2j) = v_k^{2h}(j) \quad k < n/2$



# Two-level multigrid methods

Consider a PDE:

$$\mathcal{A}(u) = f.$$

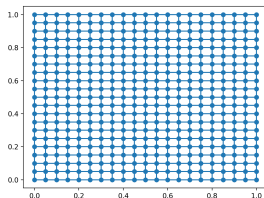
Consider two discretizations:

- ▶ Fine grid:  $\mathcal{A}_h(u_h) = f_h$
- ▶ Coarse grid:  $\mathcal{A}_H(u_H) = f_H$

Idea: write the solution  $u$  as the sum of a fine and a coarse term:

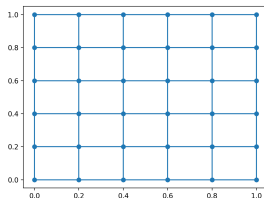
$$u \sim \underbrace{v_h}_{\in \mathbb{R}^h} + P(\underbrace{e_H}_{\in \mathbb{R}^H}), \quad H < h.$$

and update the two components in an **alternate** fashion.

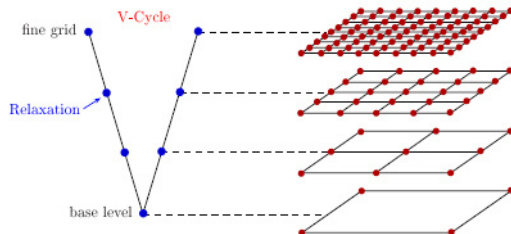


$R \Downarrow$

$P \Uparrow$



# General multigrid methods



W. Briggs, V. Henson, S. McCormick. A Multigrid Tutorial, SIAM, 2000.

Two beneficial effects:

- ▶ dimensionality reduction
- ▶ efficiency in attacking selected frequencies

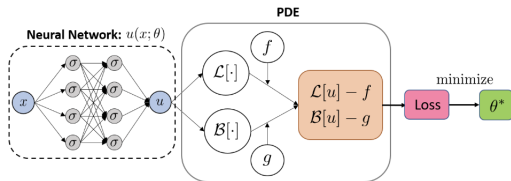
# Outline

Multigrid (MG) methods

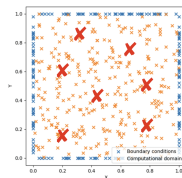
Multigrid training of PINNs

# Physics Informed Neural Networks (PINNs)

Neural network  $NN(\theta, x) \approx u(x)$



Training data



Training problem:  $\min_{\theta \in \Theta} L(\theta) = L_{OBS}(\theta) + L_{PDE}(\theta)$

**Aim:** We want to accelerate the solution of this problem

# The F-principle

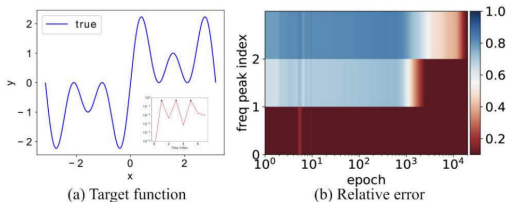


Figure 1: 1d input. (a)  $f(x)$ . Inset :  $|\hat{f}(k)|$ . (b)  $\Delta_F(k)$  of three important frequencies (indicated by black dots in the inset of (a)) against different training epochs. The parameters of the DNN is initialized by a Gaussian distribution with mean 0 and standard deviation 0.1. We use a tanh-DNN with widths 1-8000-1 with full batch training. The learning rate is 0.0002. The DNN is trained by Adam optimizer [20] with the MSE loss function.

⇒ PINNs are not effective  
in approximating **highly**  
**oscillatory** solutions

## On the Spectral Bias of Neural Networks

Nasim Rahman<sup>1,2</sup> Aristide Baraitz<sup>1</sup> Devansh Arpit<sup>1</sup> Felix Draxler<sup>1</sup> Min Lin<sup>1</sup> Fred A. Hampprecht<sup>1</sup>  
Yoshua Bengio<sup>1</sup> Aaron Courville<sup>2</sup>

## WHEN AND WHY PINNS FAIL TO TRAIN: A NEURAL TANGENT KERNEL PERSPECTIVE

A PREPRINT

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# How to transpose the ingredients of success of MG

Basic idea of MG: Exploiting “complementarity” between problems involved

## Classical MG vs Neural networks

- ▶ Consider a minimization method and a class of problems for which this method is efficient

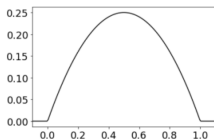
smoothing (GS or J)	first-order (GD, SGD)
high-frequency	low-frequency

- ▶ Split the problem depending of its frequency content
- ▶ Shift the frequencies

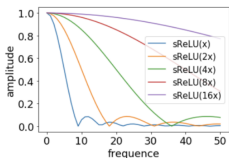
Coarser discretizations	Specialized architectures (Mscale networks)
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# Specialized architectures

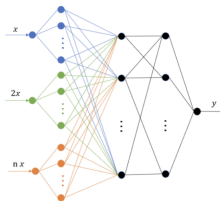
- **Mscale networks:** [Liu, Cai and Xu, (2020)]  
frequency-selective subnetworks + wavelet-inspired and frequency-located activation functions



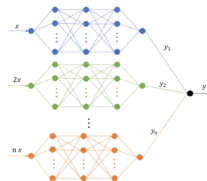
(b) sReLU



(a) sReLU

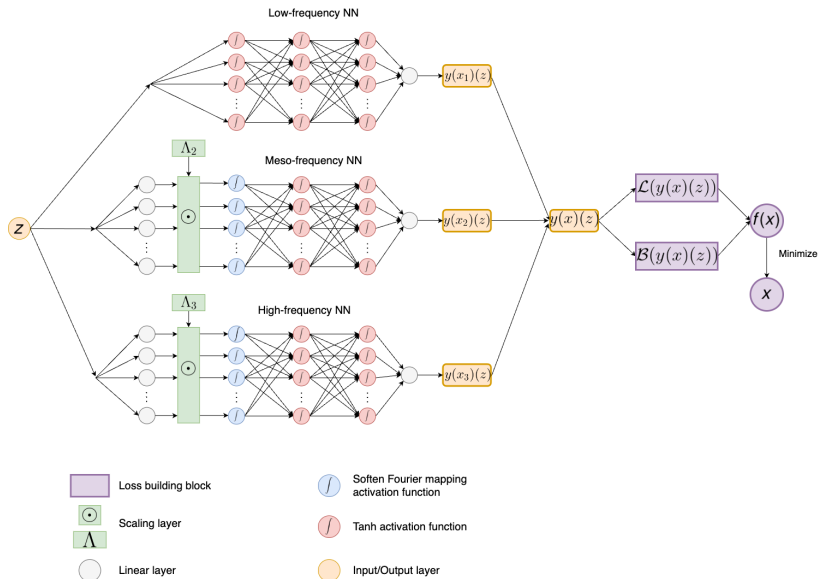


(a) MscaleDNN-1



(b) MscaleDNN-2

# Our architecture



## A BCD-MG algorithm: an iteration

$$\min_x f(x)$$

1 Partition  $x$  in blocks:

$$x = \begin{array}{|c|c|c|c|} \hline x_1 & x_2 & x_3 & x_4 \\ \hline \end{array}$$

# A BCD-MG algorithm: an iteration

$$\min_x f(x)$$

- 1 Partition  $x$  in blocks:

$$x = \begin{bmatrix} x_1 & x_2 & x_3 & x_4 \end{bmatrix}$$

- 2 Select a block  $i$  ( $x_1, \dots, x_i, \dots, x_n$ )

► Criterion:  $\|\nabla_i f(x)\| \geq \tau \|\nabla f(x)\|$ ,  $\tau \in (0, 1)$

$$\begin{bmatrix} x_1 & x_2 & x_3 & x_4 \end{bmatrix}$$

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$$\begin{bmatrix} x_1 & x_2 & x_3 & x_4 \end{bmatrix}$$

- 3 Update the block:

- $p_k$  iterations of a first-order method (possibly *stochastic*)

$$\min_{x_i} f(x_1, \dots, x_i, \dots, x_n) \rightarrow x_i^{\text{new}}$$

- $x_i \leftarrow x_i^{\text{new}}$

# A BCD-MG algorithm: convergence theory

Theorem (Gratton, Mercier, R., Toint, 2023)

If  $f$  has  $L$ -Lipschitz continuous gradient and step-size  $\alpha_k = \alpha < 1/L$

► **Deterministic**

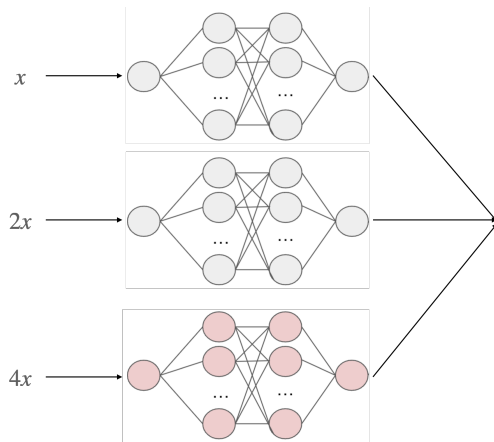
$$\|\nabla f(x^{(K)})\| \leq \epsilon \rightarrow K = O\left(\frac{1}{\epsilon^2 p}\right)$$

► **Stochastic**

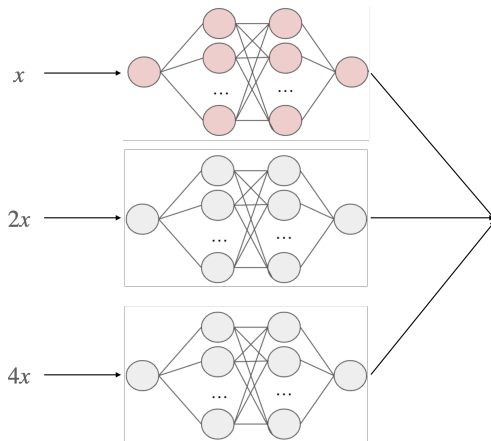
$$\mathbb{E} \left( \sum_{k=1}^K \|\nabla f(x^{(k)})\|^2 \right) \leq C_1(\sigma^2) + O\left(\frac{1}{K}\right) - C_2(\sigma^2) p$$

$p$  coarse iterations,  $\sigma^2$  variance of stochastic gradient

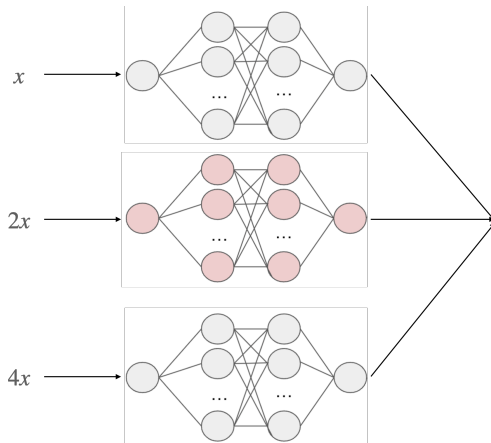
# BCD-MG training of PINNs



# BCD-MG training of PINNs

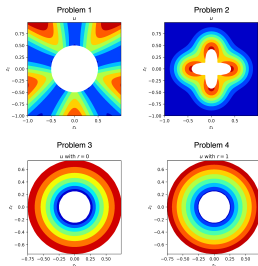


# BCD-MG training of PINNs

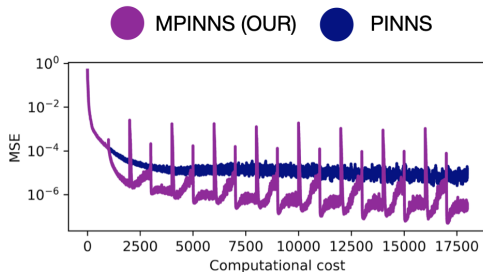


# Numerical results: MSE vs iterations

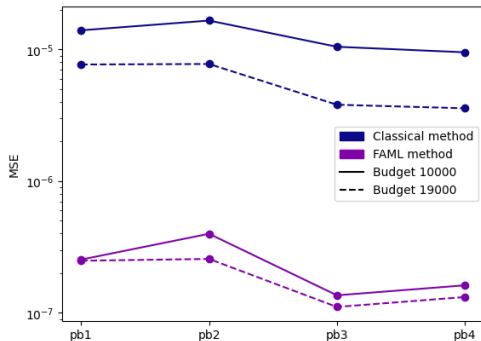
**Problem:** Poisson problem with Dirichlet/Neumann BC on  $\Omega$



$\Omega$



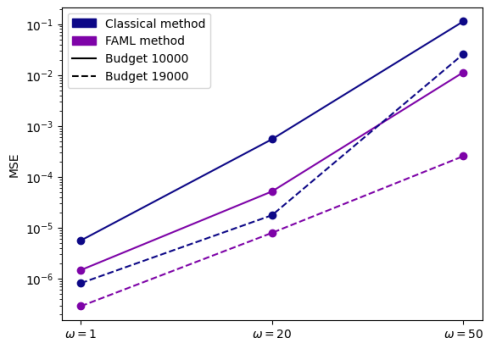
# Numerical results: final MSE on average (10 runs)



# Numerical results: MSE vs iterations

**Problem:** Heat equation

$$\begin{cases} \frac{\partial u(z, t)}{\partial t} = \frac{1}{(\omega\pi)^2} \frac{\partial^2 u(z, t)}{\partial z^2}, \\ u(z, 0) = \sin(\omega\pi z), \quad z \in [0, 1], \\ u(0, t) = u(1, t) = 0, \quad t \in [0, 1], \end{cases}$$



# Conclusions

- ▶ We have presented a new **MG training method** for PINNs
- ▶ We have proved its convergence as a **BCD method**
- ▶ We have demonstrated that exploiting multiple scales provides **significant computational benefits** (faster convergence) and **more accurate solution**

**Thank you for your attention !**



S. Gratton, V. Mercier, E. Riccietti & Ph. L. Toint,  
*A block-coordinate approach of multi-level optimization with an  
application to physics-informed neural networks, COAP, 2024.*