

Batch Model Consolidation: A Multi-Task Model Consolidation Framework

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A. Experiment Details

A.1. Stream Dataset Details

In total, we pre-process and use 71 datasets from the computer vision literature and Kaggle [1–71]. We use the train and validation split from each original dataset and for each task. Some datasets have multiple ways to label an image, for example, CelebA [9] assigns 40 binary labels to each image, such as ‘Brown Hair’ or ‘Blurry’. We use ‘Sub Task’ to denote which split or sub-task we use for each dataset and refer the reader to the original dataset documentation on the details of each split. We do not modify or alter any of the datasets in any way. To speed up training and evaluation, we extract the image feature vectors for each dataset using a CLIP model and use them for the classification task directly. Tab. 6 and Tab. 7 contain the statistics for each dataset.

Task difficulty. SGD performance can be used as a proxy for task difficulty [72]. Some tasks, such as Planets [51] (task id 50), have really low difficulty and thus high performance on SGD. The inflated performance on the task can be caused by over-fitting or be a reflection of the poor curation process and similarity between the train and validation split of the dataset. The purpose of the Stream dataset is to introduce nuances between tasks, such as with the varying training dataset size. As such, we welcome the nuances and errors that are inherited in each task, as they are a reflection of a realistic training and evaluation scenario. Since all methods are evaluated under the same conditions, the comparison is equivalent. Lastly, the Stream dataset contains a diversity of images, reflected by the curation protocol used to compose each task dataset.

A.2. Training Configurations

We report the performance of SGD on each task in Tab. 6 and Tab. 7. SGD performance can be considered as an upper bound for our model and train configuration. We compute SGD performance by training on the task in an isolated manner and without applying any method to mitigate forgetting. We evaluate SGD performance on the validation set of each task.

When evaluating the time performance of each method we compute the total time for the method to train on a task. The total duration of the training run can include a warm-up and post-train phase as part of each method. We use CIFAR-100 as an auxiliary dataset for DMC [73].

The train configuration is reported in Tab. 1. We reset the learning rate before and after each rehearsal episode. For both the baseline methods and our method, we use an MLP with residual connections as a backbone model. We apply Batch Normalization [74] after every layer and the ReLU activation function [75]. All experiments run on identical hardware of a V100 GPU cluster and we distribute the workload using Ray [76].

We provide in Tab. 2 and Tab. 3 the hyper-parameters used in Stream Benchmark experiments. We use the reported hyper-parameters for all baseline methods. When experimenting BMC on split CIFAR-100 and split Tiny-ImageNet, we use a memory size of 2,000 and a buffer size of 200 with all other settings the same as learning on Stream Benchmark.

Benchmark	Num. tasks
Optimizer	SGD [77]
Rehearsal Scheduler	ReduceLRonPlateau ¹
Learning Rate	0.1
Train epochs per Task	2
Rehearsal epochs per Task	100
GPU	V100
Model	Residual MLP
Res. Blocks	2
Res. Layers	3
Dropout	0.3
Res. Dim	256
Hidden Dim	128
Initialization	Xavier [78]

Table 1. Train Configuration. Detailed overview in Appendix A.2.

¹https://pytorch.org/docs/stable/generated/torch.optim.lr_scheduler.ReduceLRonPlateau.htm

Baselines	Hyper-params	Values
	Memory size	10,000
ER	Replay coef.	1.0
DER	Distill coef.	0.5
DER++	Replay coef. Distill coef.	1.0 0.5
GDumb	Max/min LR Epochs Cutmix	5e-2 / 5e-4 256 None
HAL	Penalty coef. Beta Gamma	0.1 0.5 0.1
LwF	Penalty coef. Temperature	0.5 2.0
GSS	Minibatch size Batch Num	10 1
DMC	Consolidation LR Consolidation Epochs	0.05 10
EWC _{on}	Penalty coef. Gamma	0.7 1.0
MAS	Penalty coef. Gamma	0.7 1.0
SI	c xi	0.5 1.0

Table 2. Hyper-parameter settings for training the baseline methods on Stream Benchmark. Baselines that do not have extra hyper-parameters are omitted (A-GEM, iCaRL).

Phase	Hyper-params	Values
Regularization	Stability coef.	1.0
	Buffer size	10,000
Consolidation	Num. Experts	10
	Task loss coef.	1.0
	Consolidation coef.	1.0
	Buffer sampling	Random

Table 3. Hyper-parameter settings for training BMC on Stream Benchmark.

B. Stream Benchmark Analysis

Methods	Stream Benchmark \uparrow	Time \downarrow
SGD	2.1	100%
Multi-Task	89.3	100%
AGEM [79]	6.6	231%
AGEM _R [80]	4.3	230%
DER [81]	5.6	170%
DER++ [81]	19.4	205%
DMC [73]	1.0	140%
ER [82]	41.4	184%
ER-ACE [82]	29.3	184%
EWC _{on} [83]	2.1	172%
GDumb [84]	33.0	129%
GSS [85]	-	1203% ²
HAL [86]	-	730% ²
iCaRL [87]	23.4	141%
LwF [88]	-	201% ²
MAS [89]	2.1	144%
SI [90]	1.4	515%
BMC (Ours)	70.4	78%

Table 4. CIL performance on Stream Dataset for 71 tasks. We use ‘-’ to denote results that were not feasible to obtain for all 71 tasks due to intractable runtime. ²Signifies incomplete time-performance evaluation. Detailed explanation of the results in Appendix B

We evaluate a set of recent (*e.g.* DER++ [81]) and old baselines (*e.g.* ER [82]) applicable to our setting, while some other recent baselines have a limited setting, *i.e.*, Transformer models [91]. Recent methods achieved better performance on standard benchmarks (*i.e.* CIFAR-100) did not outperform a naive baseline (ER) on Stream.

Some methods such as GSS [85] can have an intractable run-time that grows with the number of tasks learned. Other methods, such as LwF [88], have a warm-up stage that requires using the train dataset. Such methods fail to complete past Task id 34 (iNaturalist [35]) since the step of the method is coupled with the size of the task. iNaturalist [35] is made up of 2686843 images, so if a step of a method requires constructing a buffer with new artifacts for each sample [88] or performing multiple back-pros [85], the method may not complete the task. The time-performance factor in Tab. 4 may not reflect the failure, such as for LwF [88], since the factor is calculated at the end of training on a task.

We allow all baselines to run uninterrupted for 4 days and we terminate the experiment on the last day. All methods for which we report results finish the benchmark within 24 hours.

B.1. Normalized Performance

Fig. 1 presents the normalized performance by task difficulty as discussed in Appendix A.1. It can be observed that there is noise when normalizing for task difficulty, or that the method performs better than the upper bound for that task. The results can be explained as an artifact of forward transfer [72] as well as inherited problems with the task dataset, such as overfitting or an imbalanced train-validation split [16].

B.2. First Task Performance

When evaluating the performance of a method on first task, we observe similar results to the mean task accuracy (Fig. 2), with some exceptions. BMC, our method retains performance on the first task as compared to other baselines. Additionally, the performance difference between mean accuracy and first task accuracy between our method and the baselines is more prominent when evaluating only on the first task. GSS [85], retains performance on the first task but does not learn new tasks. iCaRL [87] outperforms other baselines on the first task accuracy, but it does not perform as well when evaluated in mean accuracy. We hypothesize that this is due to the herding strategy used by iCaRL to compose the buffer that can avoid the task-recency bias.

B.3. Time Performance Evaluation

Most methods perform similarly in terms of run-time on the benchmark. Some notable exceptions are SI [90], GSS [85] and HAL [86]. Other methods can have a run-time performance that can be seen as non-equivalent. Such methods can perform a step that is agnostic to the task dataset size, such as constructing an auxiliary dataset [73] or training on an auxiliary buffer [84, 87]. As such, the run-time performance of such methods can fluctuate greatly between tasks Fig. 3 (Middle). Additionally, the relative time performance Tab. 4 can appear inflated.

Our method, BMC, can take advantage of training multiple tasks in a distributed fashion and, as such, perform better than the baseline SGD Fig. 3 (Middle). Our method has a run-time bottleneck by the largest task in each train incremental step. This is due to the wait operation between each task-batch in order to apply batched distillation loss. For the last task of the 71 datasets, our method is slower than SGD as the performance effect of batched-task incremental learning is not utilized.

B.4. Pareto Front

The Pareto front of our method shows a trade-off between the Total Cost of a memory and a buffer with Mean Accuracy. We run multiple experiments and vary the buffer size and memory size. We independently sample the Buffer and Memory size configuration between 8k to 20k exem-

plars at the start of each experiment. The Total Cost represents the mean number of exemplars stored at each train incremental step of our method. The performance gain plateaus as we increase TC. Some configurations are not Pareto optimal, such as the use of a very small buffer and really large memory or vice versa. Both the buffer and memory are integral parts of our method’s performance but observe a limitation on the improvement they provide to the performance beyond a certain point. As such we hypothesize that improvements in both the utilization and construction of the buffer and memory are more significant than the size of the buffer.

Lastly, we motivate a method not to be evaluated at a single point when evaluating the cost performance of the method. As can be observed, the relationship between TC and Mean Accuracy is not linear and requires that more than one configuration be evaluated.

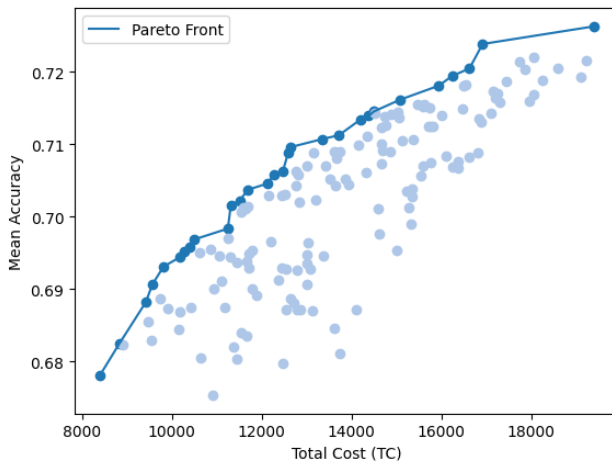


Figure 4. Trade-off between TC and Mean Accuracy for our method (BMC) with details discussed in Appendix B.4.

C. Ablation Experiments

We motivate our ablation study in performing an unbiased estimate of each component of our method. Using the benchmark dataset can be a biased estimate of a component of a method for the following reasons. First, we need a dataset for which we have access to a large number of tasks that are evenly divisible by the number of experts we evaluate, i.e. 128 by 16. Second, for the benchmark the tasks have different domain-gaps, for example the difference between ‘Lego’ and ‘Rooms’ datasets. Third, the tasks have varying lengths and numbers of classes, such that ‘Lego’ has 32,000 train images with 46 classes and ‘Rooms’ has 3,937 images with 5 classes. An ablation study on a dataset with multiple sources of experimental variance requires additional experimental trials for an unbiased estimate. Permuted-MNIST meets all of the above require-

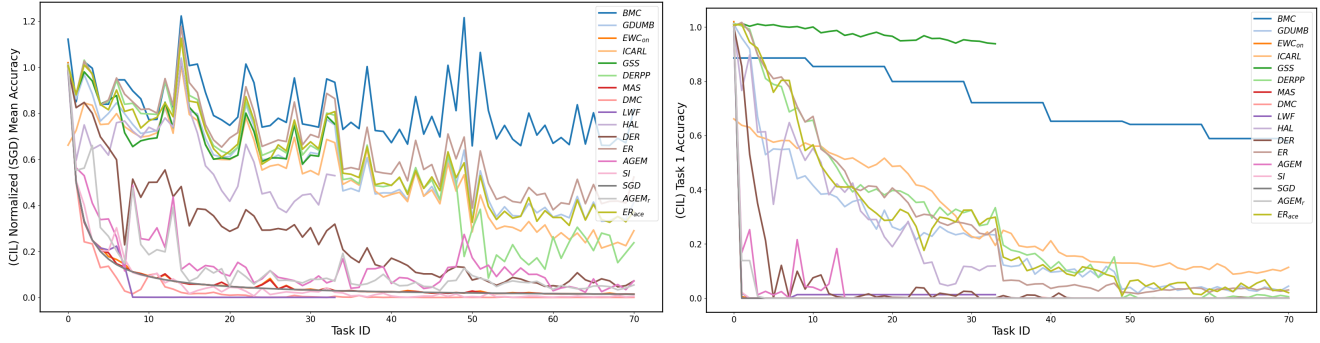


Figure 1. **Left** mean accuracy normalized for task difficulty. Easier tasks are less difficult to forget. **Right** performance on the first task. GSS maintains performance on the first task but fails to learn new tasks Fig. 2.

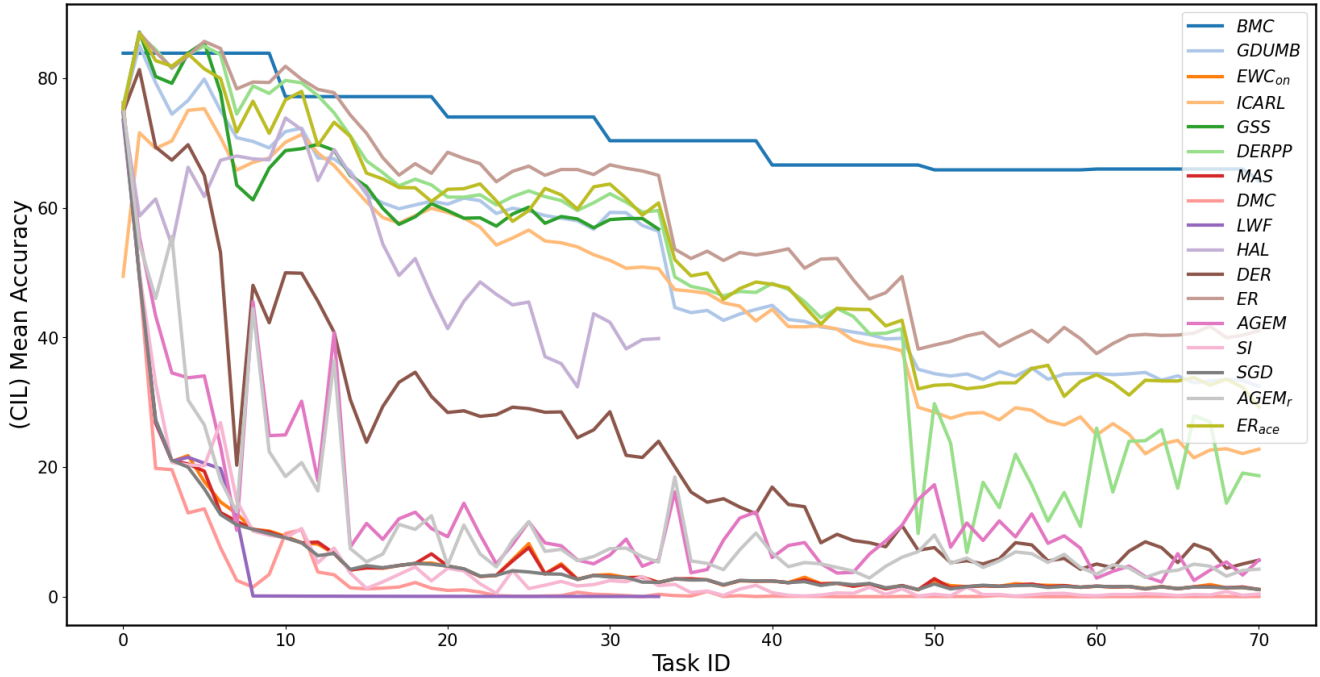


Figure 2. (CIL) Mean Accuracy, some methods (GSS, HAL, LWF) [85, 86, 88] fail to complete task 34 (iNaturalist [35]) due to the size of the dataset.

ments but for the same reasons is not suitable for a benchmark.

We run 629 experiments of 128 tasks and randomly sample each hyper-parameter that controls a different component for our method, which require 1 week of training time on a GPU cluster of x8 V100. We vary the stability coefficient (λ), consolidation coefficient (β), Number of Experts, Consolidation Loss \mathcal{L}_{bmc} , Stability Loss \mathcal{L}_{bd} and both Memory and Buffer sampling Method. Each experimental configuration is randomly sampled, and as such, it is important to consider both the mean and the best-performing configuration when evaluating a setting. The reason is that there can be poor synergy between two randomly sampled

settings or that a method is not fully evaluated. For example, consider that a really small value for λ can be used and as such the full effect of the loss function used for a stability loss cannot be evaluated in that context. Additionally, each Stability Loss can have different sensitivity to λ and as such maintaining the coefficient fixed or evaluating on different ranges can make the comparison non-equivalent. All settings have their values randomly sampled from the reported interval. Results presented in Fig. 5, Fig. 6, Fig. 7 and discussed in this section.

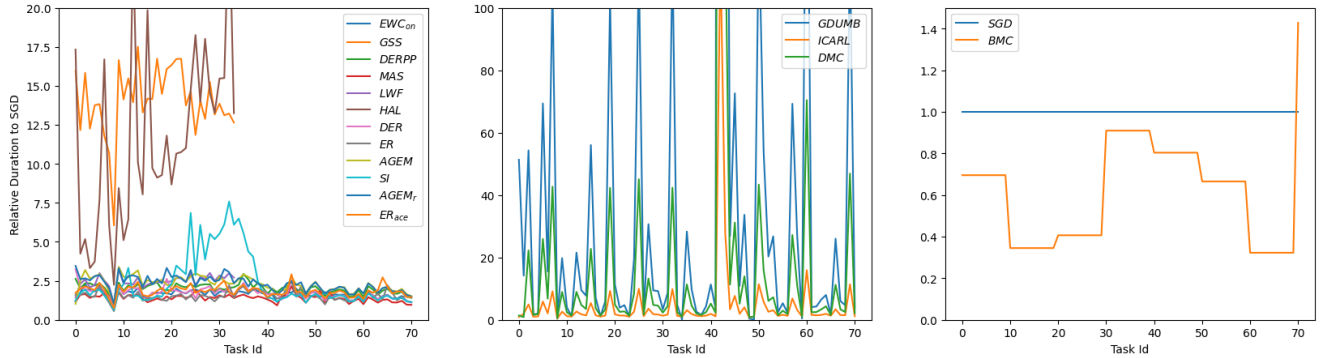


Figure 3. Relative time performance of each baseline compared to run-time using SGD (Left). A factor of 1 signifies equivalent performance to SGD. SGD performance is independent of the task dataset size, while some methods can have a component that depends on the size of the task dataset (Middle). Our method (Right) performs better than SGD under a distributed setting.

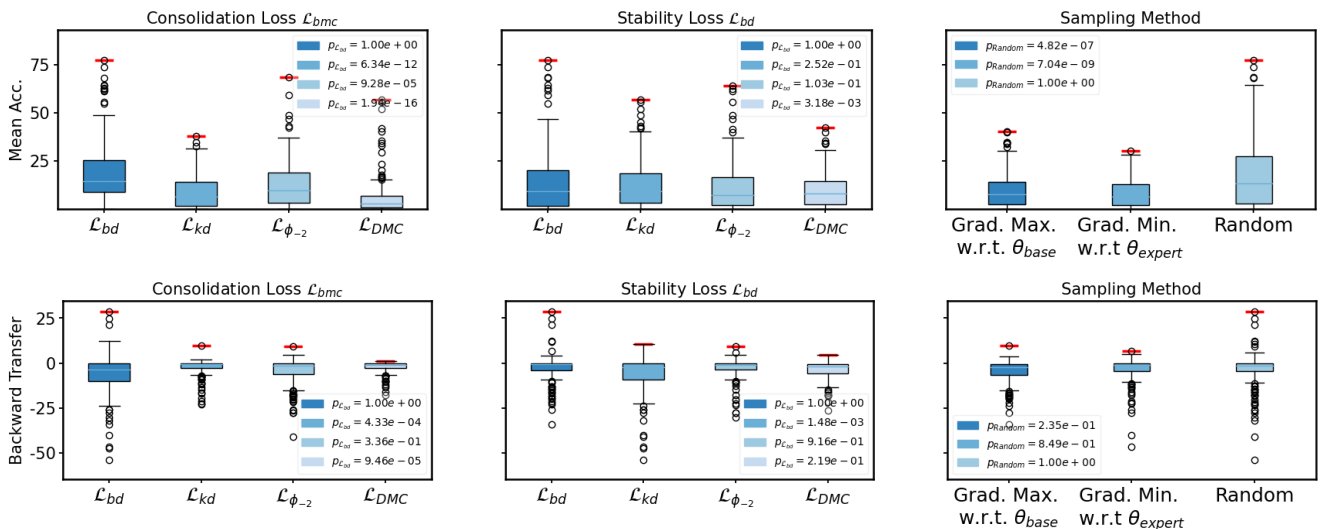


Figure 5. Aggregated results on an ablation study with 629 experiments for Permuted-MNIST. We randomly sample the type of loss for each phase of our method, the weight coefficient of each component as well as the sampling method. From Left to Right. Evaluation of loss in direct replacement to \mathcal{L}_{bd} (Ours) for alternative losses \mathcal{L}_{kd} , $\mathcal{L}_{\phi_{-2}}$, \mathcal{L}_{DMC} . Stability Loss as a regularization component in replacement to \mathcal{L}_{bd} and sampling method in replacement to Random. (Top) row reports the Mean Accuracy, where higher is better. (Bottom) row reports the Backward Transfer, where higher is better. \mathcal{L}_{bd} has both the best-performing trials and a higher mean score for each metric. Naive random sampling for constructing the buffer performs the best. p values are reported from one-way ANOVA between our purposed method and each corresponding method. Additional details in Appendix C.1, Appendix C.2 and Appendix C.3

C.1. Batched Distillation Loss

We consider several alternatives in direct replacement to \mathcal{L}_{bd} . We use \mathcal{L}_{bd} for two components of our method, on the Consolidation Loss for \mathcal{L}_{bmc} and as a Stability Loss. We report the results in Fig. 5 (Left and Middle). We evaluate three alternative methods, such as \mathcal{L}_{kd} , $\mathcal{L}_{\phi_{-2}}$, \mathcal{L}_{DMC} . \mathcal{L}_{kd} is Knowledge Distillation (KD) [92] applied on the logit space, similar to [81, 87]. $\mathcal{L}_{\phi_{-2}}$ is Knowledge Distillation applied on the pen-ultimate representation [93, 94]. \mathcal{L}_{DMC} is Knowledge Distillation applied on a slice of logits using double distillation loss [73], similar to [95]. We eval-

uate the statistical significance on both evaluation metrics, Mean Accuracy and Backward Transfer. When considering the statistical significance on both metrics, \mathcal{L}_{bd} outperforms other alternatives when used in \mathcal{L}_{bmc} and as a Stability Loss. $\mathcal{L}_{\phi_{-2}}$, performs similarly to \mathcal{L}_{bd} and is able to reach a higher Mean Accuracy in the study. However, we find that the results are not consistent and the mean value for $\mathcal{L}_{\phi_{-2}}$ on each metric is lower. The result is not statistically significant based on a p -value > 0.05 . As such, the two methods can be evaluated further in future work.

C.2. Regularization Loss

Elastic Weight Consolidation (EWC) [96] uses an alternative loss term to the current task loss that provides an optimization constraint on the parameters when training on a new task. The importance of each parameter to the current task is calculated based on an approximation of the Fisher Information Matrix. We use EWC as *stability-loss* in direct replacement for \mathcal{L}_{bd} . Figure 6 shows that EWC poses a strict constraint to the parameter and is unable to learn new tasks. \mathcal{L}_{bd} outperforms EWC in this context. This could be explained by the large domain shift between each permutation and the limitation in the capacity of the backbone model for which it is not possible to isolate all parameters while learning new tasks. As such, we hypothesize that constructive interference methods such as KD are better candidates for both components of our method.

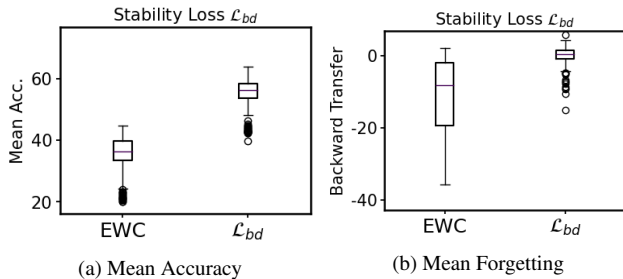


Figure 6. Comparison of using EWC in replacement to \mathcal{L}_{bd} for Mean Accuracy (Left) and Backward Transfer (Right).

C.3. Buffer Sampling

We examine two alternatives to Random sampling. We use gradient information as a heuristic when constructing the Buffer. In detail, we use the samples that produce the largest gradient with respect to the base model (θ_{base}) with the intuition that they will be the most informative during the consolidation of θ_{base} . We also use samples that produce the smallest gradient norms w.r.t. the expert model (θ_{expert}) with the intuition that they are the most representative of the task the expert was trained on. Both methods perform poorly as compared to Random sampling. We hypothesize alternatives or improvements in the buffer sampling method can outperform Random in terms of task performance, but also consider that they can perform poorly in terms of run-time.

C.4. Parameter Importance

We evaluate the most important component of our method using fANOVA parameter importance [97]. We find that the Number of Experts contributes the most to both the Mean Accuracy and Backward Transfer. Interestingly, both \mathcal{L}_{bmc} and the sampling method contribute more to the Mean

Accuracy than Backward Transfer. Our findings in Fig. 7 agree with our analysis that \mathcal{L}_{bmc} provides a better approximation to the multi-task gradient as opposed to single-task consolidation and finally achieves higher Mean Accuracy within a batch of tasks. Likewise, a higher Number of Experts puts more constraints on the gradient updates than a small Number of Experts, making the gradient less ‘sharp’. It reduces the bias toward every single task and benefits the Backward Transfer as it protects the parameters for previous tasks.

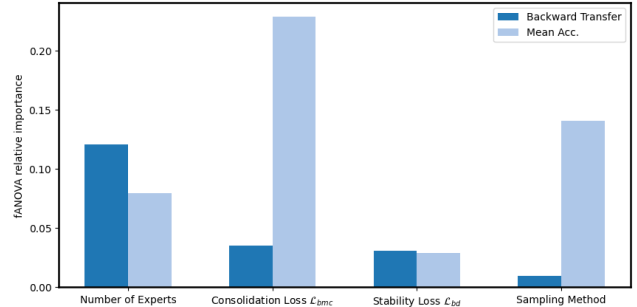


Figure 7. Importance of each component of our method in Backward Transfer (Dark Blue) and Mean Accuracy (Light Blue). We report the importance score using fANOVA [97]

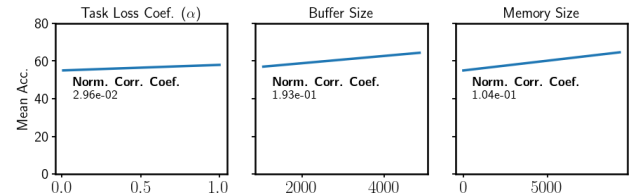


Figure 8. We vary the coefficient of task loss as well as the buffer and memory size to examine their effects on final average accuracy performance.

C.5. Task Loss Coefficient & Buffer-Memory Sizes

We attach the ablation study results for task loss coefficient in the consolidation phase, buffer size and memory size in Fig. 8. Figures for buffer and memory size are as supplementary to the correlation we reported in the main text. In task loss coefficient, we find its low correlation to the final average accuracy.

C.6. Backbone Model

Results obtained in Tab. 4 are subject to the backbone model used in extracting feature vectors. As we have to optimize 16 baselines; for 6,770,722 images and 2,866 classes, CLIP embeddings allow us to evaluate the merits of each baseline without extra computational cost. We include the

Method	CLIP	ViT	ResNet50	Avg.
ER	41.4	32.8	27.6	33.9
DER++	19.4	15.1	12.7	15.7
BMC	70.4	60.2	47.0	59.2

Table 5. Comparing BMC (ours), ER and DER++ on different backbone models CLIP, ViT [98] and ResNet50 on Stream Benchmark following the same experiment configurations. BMC outperforms other methods constantly on all backbones.

results of the ablation between the pre-trained CLIP, ViT and ResNet50 features on Stream Benchmark and show that our method can work across different backbones in Tab. 5. BMC outperforms the next best method (ER) by 25.3% on 3 backbones in average. We emphasize that the evaluation of the backbone model is orthogonal to both our method and the benchmark, as any backbone can be used in direct replacement.

Task ID	Name	Num. Classes	Num. Train Images	Num. Val Images	Sub Task	Val. Acc. (SGD)
0	Aircraft [1]	70	3334	3333	Family	74.74
1	Apparel [2]	6	8538	2847	Color	98.63
2	Aptos2019 [3]	5	2746	916	-	81.88
3	Art [4]	14	72009	24004	-	84.21
4	Asl [5]	29	65250	21750	-	99.89
5	Boat [6]	9	2193	731	-	99.86
6	Cars [7]	196	8144	8041	-	88.70
7	Cataract [8]	4	901	301	-	88.70
8	CelebA [9]	2	151949	50650	Shadow	93.42
9	Colorectal [10]	8	7500	2500	-	97.16
10	Concrete [11]	2	30000	10000	-	99.90
11	Core50 [12]	50	123649	41217	Object	99.69
12	Cub [13]	200	5994	5794	-	82.31
13	Deepweedsx [14]	9	15007	2501	-	93.24
14	Dermnet [15]	23	15557	4002	-	63.09
15	Dtd [16]	47	1880	1880	Split 1	76.60
16	Electronic [17]	36	16152	5384	-	76.10
17	Emnist [18]	47	112800	18800	Balanced	86.61
18	Eurosat [19]	10	20250	6750	-	97.61
19	Event [20]	8	1180	394	-	100.00
20	Face [21]	3	10902	3634	-	98.98
21	Fashion [22]	5	33329	11112	Gender	94.47
22	Fer2013 [23]	7	28709	7178	-	72.99
23	Fgvc6 [24]	251	118475	11994	-	79.31
24	Fish [25]	9	6750	2250	-	100.00
25	Flowers [26]	17	1020	340	Split 1	99.12
26	Food101 [27]	101	75750	25250	-	95.03
27	Freiburg [28]	25	3710	1237	-	97.33
28	Galaxy10 [29]	10	13302	4434	-	77.60
29	Garbage [30]	12	11636	3879	-	98.20

Table 6. Dataset used in Stream benchmark. Where applicable, Sub Task refers to the dataset split used in classifying each dataset. Additional details in Appendix A.1 and additional dataset in Tab. 7.

Task ID	Name	Num. Classes	Num. Train Images	Num. Val Images	Sub Task	Val. Acc. (SGD)
30	Gtsrb [31]	43	39209	12630	-	94.13
31	Ham10000 [32]	7	15022	5008	-	95.09
32	Handwritten [33]	33	1237	413	Letters	74.09
33	Histaerial [34]	7	26460	11340	Small	75.26
34	iNaturalist [35]	51	2686843	100000	Species	96.36
35	Indoor [36]	67	5360	1340	-	92.46
36	Intel [37]	6	14034	3000	-	95.90
37	Ip02 [38]	102	52603	22619	-	70.14
38	Kermany2018 [39]	4	83516	968	-	97.00
39	Kvasircapsule [40]	14	28342	9448	-	97.52
40	Landuse [41]	21	9450	1050	-	99.05
41	Lego [42]	46	32000	8000	-	91.20
42	Malacca [43]	3	121	41	-	100.00
43	Manga [44]	7	341	114	-	76.32
44	Minerals [45]	7	4111	1371	-	93.87
45	Office [46]	65	1820	607	Art	84.68
46	Oriset [47]	4	11110	3703	Origami	95.52
47	Oxford [48]	17	3797	1266	-	66.03
48	Pcam [49]	2	262144	32768	-	82.06
49	Places365 [50]	365	1803460	36500	-	54.79
50	Planets [51]	11	1228	410	-	100.00
51	Plantdoc [52]	28	2340	236	-	61.86
52	Pneumonia [53]	2	5232	624	-	81.09
53	Pokemon [54]	150	4994	1665	-	95.62
54	Products [55]	12	59551	60502	-	88.10
55	Resisc45 [56]	45	23625	7875	-	95.77
56	Rice [57]	5	56250	18750	-	99.84
57	Rock [58]	7	1515	506	-	82.21
58	Rooms [59]	5	3937	1313	-	93.37
59	Rvl [60]	16	320000	39999	-	88.03
60	Santa [61]	2	614	616	-	98.54
61	Satellite [62]	4	35679	11894	-	94.97
62	Simpsons [63]	42	31399	10467	-	99.38
63	Sketch [64]	250	15000	5000	-	78.82
64	Sports [65]	100	14072	500	-	99.00
65	Svhn [66]	10	73257	26032	-	82.23
66	Textures [67]	64	4335	4340	-	99.82
67	Vegetable [68]	15	18000	3000	-	99.93
68	Watermarked [69]	2	24987	6588	-	95.39
69	Weather [70]	4	841	281	-	98.22
70	Zalando [71]	6	24270	8090	-	78.44

Table 7. Dataset used in Stream benchmark. When applicable, Sub Task refers to the split of the dataset used in classifying each dataset. Additional details in Appendix A.1 and additional dataset in Tab. 6.

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