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AUTHOR Knauth, Shaunti; Kamin, Colleen
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is twofold. First, it describes "Teachers for Chicago" (TFC), an alternative entry program into the teaching profession aimed specifically at developing teachers for urban schools. Second, it examines how novice teachers in the program were influenced by university coursework, mentor teachers, and the communities in which they were placed. The program is not an "alternative certification" program because all candidates entirely fulfill state requirements for licensure. It does, however, present an opportunity to enter the teaching profession without any education background at the outset. The paper presents an evaluation of the process and analyzes effects of the program during its first two years of operation. Discussion centers on: (1) how the interns developed their sense of effectiveness as teachers; (2) significant sources for learning about teaching strategies; (3) obstacles to teaching; (4) satisfaction with the choice to become a teacher; and (5) withdrawal from the program. Analysis found that several factors significantly influence the satisfaction participants have found in their new profession. Data were gathered through interviews with program participants and through surveys. Contains five references. (LL)

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Abstract

The *Teachers For Chicago* program is an alternative entry program into the teaching profession aimed specifically at developing teachers for urban schools. It is not an "alternative certification" program because all candidates entirely fulfill state requirements for certification. It does, however, present the opportunity to enter the teaching profession without any education background at the outset. This paper examines how the novice teachers in this program have been influenced by the various components of the program: university coursework, mentor teachers' input, and the Chicago Public School communities where these novice teachers are placed. Several factors are found to significantly influence the satisfaction these teachers find in their new profession.

What Happens When It's Not Training or Induction but Training and Induction

by: Shaunti Knauth, University of Chicago
and Colleen Kamin, Loyola University

When reviewing the history of teacher education it seems, as is often true in reading about schooling, that the debates and problems have sounded very much the same over a number of years. Saranson, writing in 1962, gives quotes from 1885 that have a familiar rather than an outdated ring: "It cannot be said that we have in England, at this moment, any profession of teaching...

(P)rofession...involves a scientific training for a particular calling in life, and (being) duly authorized to pursue it". (Saranson, 1962) Questions about what constitutes the profession of teaching and whether pedagogy or subject matter should be emphasized still ring out in debates on teaching and teacher preparation. Currently, these issues are raised by proponents of induction programs, advocates of alternative entry programs, and the myriad assaults on teacher education. Is preparation of teachers more effective if it is an apprenticeship, experienced-based and hands-on? Or is prior learning about teaching a more solid base from which to first face a classroom?

A unique view of these issues comes from looking at Teachers for Chicago, a teacher preparation program that begins with an intensive selection process and then combines training and induction phases. Teachers for Chicago (TFC) provides a setting in which we can examine the responses of new teachers to a range of influences - university coursework, mentoring, and their daily classroom experiences in urban schools. In this paper, we examine the process and effects of the program during its first two years of operation. We focus the discussion on indicators of how the interns are developing their sense of effectiveness as teachers. Our guiding questions, then, are how the components of TFC appear to be influencing its new teachers in whether they are satisfied with their choice to become a teacher, whether they feel that they are able to implement innovative teaching techniques, and the extent to which they feel able to bring change in their classroom

and in their school. Our information has been gathered during the ongoing evaluation of the program, and our data sources include interviews with the program participants and surveys administered to the new teachers.

The paper has three sections. We begin with a description of the program, followed by discussions of findings during the first and second years of the program.

Program Description

Teachers for Chicago (TFC) is a graduate-level teacher preparation program. The program begins by using the Haberman interview process to select among candidates. Candidates come from a variety of backgrounds, i.e. social work, dentistry, truant officers, nursing, business, etc.; but they must already hold a B.A. and minimum grade point average. For the most part they do not have to have experience in training or teaching. Those selected enter a graduate degree program of education at one of nine area universities. After a summer of university coursework, the new teachers (interns) are placed in Chicago Public School classrooms as teachers, working under the guidance of experienced mentor teachers. During the first two years of teaching (and the three consecutive summers), these new teachers continue to take university coursework leading to a masters degree in education and to state certification.

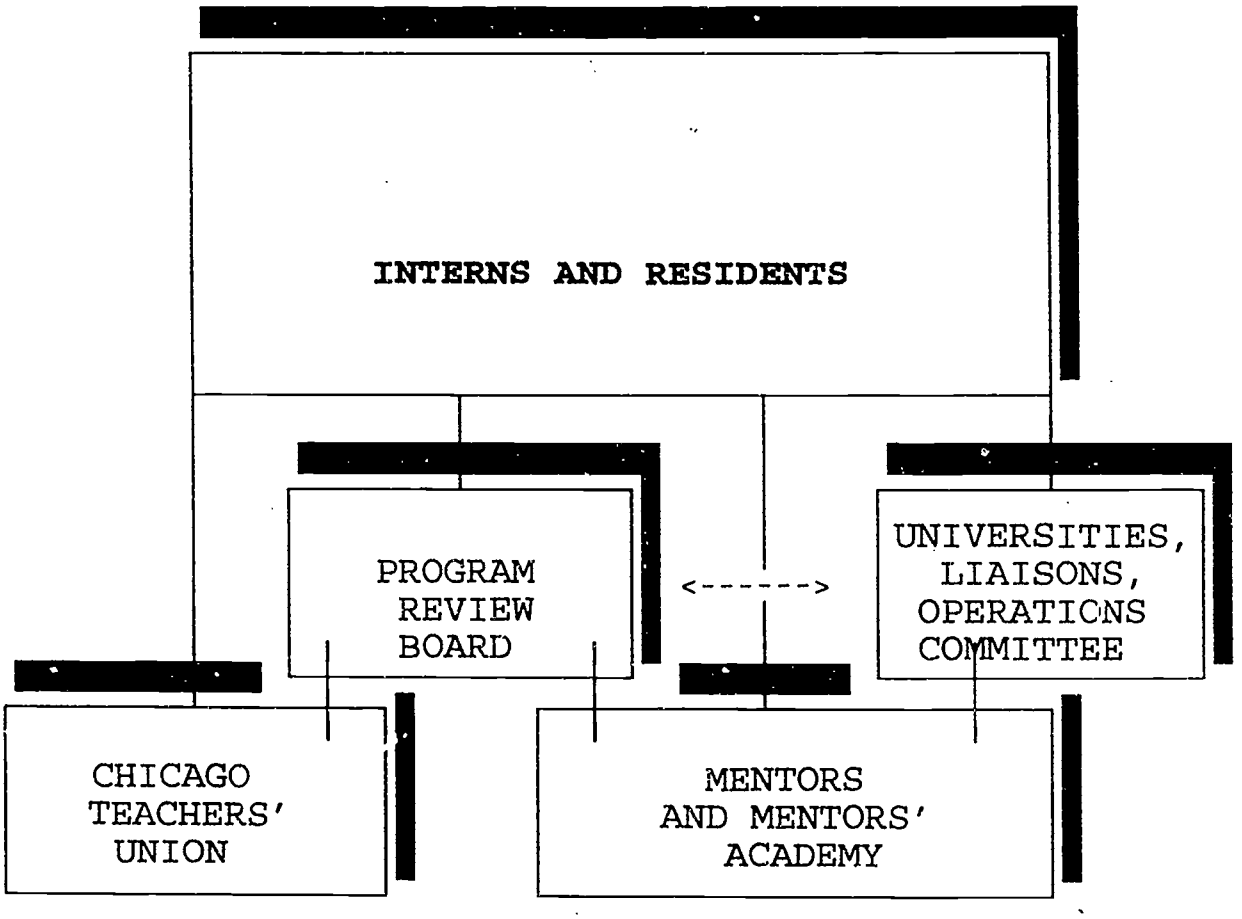
In the participating schools, there is one mentor for every four interns. The interns fill actual teaching vacancies (including the mentor's usual classroom assignments) in elementary,

secondary and special education classrooms. Interns are fully responsible for their classrooms. Since interns (first year TFC participants) and residents (second year TFC participants) are paid a substitute wage, the TFC program can pay for all tuition leading toward the masters degree. The program then, in essence, pays for itself. At the completion of the two years of internship and all required coursework, the new teachers, now certified and with a masters degree, are committed to teach in a Chicago Public School for two more years (at full salary).

The mentor role, which has a large degree of flexibility, was originally conceived as 1) availability to meet the day-to-day needs of interns and residents, 2) serving as adjunct faculty in the universities their interns (or residents) attend, 3) participation in the monthly meetings of the Mentor's Academy where mentoring and other professional issues are discussed, 4) trained interviewers in the Haberman process selecting the candidates that fill the Chicago Public School vacancies and TFC positions.

Each university appoints a liaison to the program, who is the contact person for the mentors and is expected to visit the interns at the school site. They too attend a monthly "Operations Committee" meeting to iron out program problems. The program can thus be depicted by the factors that are intended to directly influence the intern/resident's work: university, mentor, and school community. Figure 1 is that representation.

Figure 1: REPRESENTATION OF *TEACHERS FOR CHICAGO* SUPPORT SYSTEMS and SCHEMA FOR CONTINUING CONVERSATIONS RELATING TO TFC ISSUES



In addition, a Program Review Board (the oversight committee for the TFC program) meets monthly and includes members of the Chicago Board of Education and the Chicago Teachers Union as well as the TFC coordinator, the TFC evaluator, principals, teachers, mentors, university representatives and a Golden Apple Foundation representative. This group regularly addresses problems faced by the program and brings together a uniquely diversified pool of talent willing to lend their varied points of view.

In September of 1993, nine universities and 25 Chicago Public

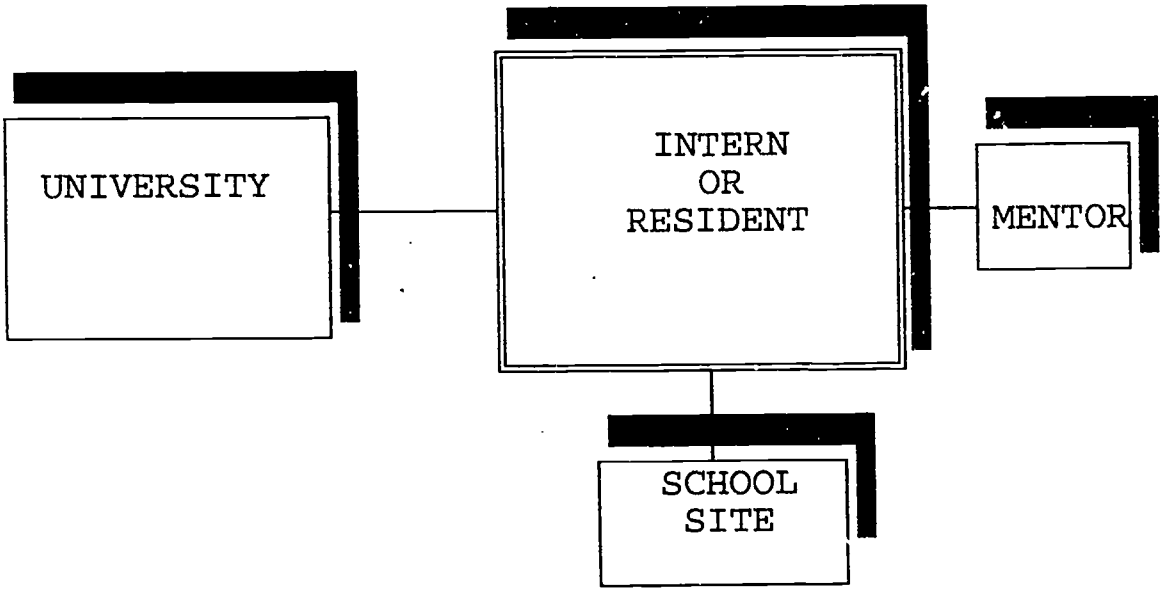
Schools were involved for the 100 interns who were selected for the program. As of March 1994; nine universities, 42 schools, 45 mentors and 185 interns and residents carry on the work of TFC. The ethnic breakdown is currently 44% African American, 14% Hispanic, 30% Caucasian, and 5% Other. The age of candidates reflects Haberman's interview bias against younger (20-25 year old) candidates. In the first year only 4% of candidates were in the 20-25 year age category while 35% fell in the 33-40 year age group. Although the second year candidate group is generally younger than the first, nearly 40% are over 33.

As might be evident from this description, TFC is a complex and strenuous one for its participants. Further, it is shaped by the needs and circumstances of schools. By placing interns in actual teaching vacancies, TFC is rooted in the urban reality. The participants are brought together around the needs of urban students. The program builds on the knowledge and the dedication of those with long experience in the schools. However, the difficult aspects of the schools are also integrated into TFC - the complexities of working within a large city school system, the conditions and lack of resources at some schools, and the disadvantages many urban students face in their lives. As we examine the program here, we try to disentangle among these factors and their effects on the interns and residents.

One of the unusual and most exciting aspects of this particular program is that it brings together, for regular conversations, a variety of educational groups invested in TFC.

The Chicago Teachers' Union is in partnership with the Chicago Board of Education on this project. Experienced urban teachers (mentors) are affecting university coursework in teacher preparation. The Program Review Board, as described above, brings together representatives from eight educational contingents on a monthly basis. The nine universities involved are forming strong relationships in their monthly meetings. Figure 2 describes these support systems for the novice teachers and the resultant conversations involved in Teachers For Chicago.

Figure 2: REPRESENTATION OF INFLUENTIAL FACTORS ON NOVICE TEACHERS IN THE *TEACHERS FOR CHICAGO* PROGRAM



Findings from the First-year evaluation

The first year of the evaluation was highly formative, focusing on the program structure. The methods of gathering data

included interviews, classroom observations, and a survey. Findings from interviews and the survey are discussed here. The interns' response to their entry into the classroom is described first, followed by discussions on influences on the interns' teaching and what they felt to be obstacles to their effectiveness in the classroom. An analysis of survey response in relation to the interns' sense of satisfaction with their choice to become a teacher.

Entry into the Classroom: One intern told a poignant story about his beginning as a teacher. "I fantasized about my first day in the school, that after I met everyone, I'd get the key to my classroom. I'd go open the door, and start decorating and arranging the room. When I got here, my first surprise was that I would have different classes in four different classrooms. The second surprise was that there were no materials available (for what I was teaching)." While his entry was particularly difficult, it was not atypical. Interns were asked in a fall interview what had been most unexpected about their experience in the program so far. Most mentioned either the lack of resources in the school, particularly textbooks, or the disadvantages students brought to the classroom, such as low reading skills and the effects of the extraordinarily difficult conditions they sometimes faced in their lives. One principal said that she felt the interns had experienced a kind of "culture shock" when they encountered the behavior of urban children who live with extraordinary disadvantages. Perhaps most telling was the comment of an intern

teaching at the high school level who said that when he tried innovative techniques in his classroom "...the kids rebelled. They've been trained to worksheets. And so my guess is that my classroom looks pretty much like the one down the hall, and like everybody else's."

Analysis of Survey Results: A survey was administered to the first-year interns in February of 1993, with administration done at a meeting and through mail-in. There was a return rate of just over 50%. The return rate, though somewhat disappointing, did capture aspects of the entire population by the range of school sites and characteristics of interns as a total group. Responses to the survey are discussed here in relation to the interns' sources for learning about teaching, obstacles to effectiveness, and the interns' satisfaction with their choice to become a teacher.

Sources for Learning About Teaching: When the interns were surveyed on what they felt had been the three most important sources for learning about teaching strategies, the most frequent response was "my own classroom experience" (chosen by all respondents), followed by a fairly even distribution among: other interns, other teachers in the school, university coursework, and mentors as sources for learning. That other interns were mentioned as frequently as mentors points to the importance of the collegiality developing among interns, which they also reported frequently in interviews and discussion. It went beyond the school sites to networks between inters attending the same university. The close connections among a new cadre of teachers is emerging as a program

strength.

The interns' survey responses also reinforced comments made by mentors and university liaisons that the mentors often were not able to act as instructional leaders for the interns. As their role as mentor took them out of the classroom, they often could not provide opportunities for the interns to observe their teaching. Several mentors commented that they spent far more time than they had expected helping the interns with paperwork and other logistics.

Obstacles to Teaching: The interns were asked what they felt were obstacles to becoming effective teachers. The most frequent responses were related to their students and to logistics of TFC; the outside conditions students faced, a lack of students motivation, and the current level of students' academic preparation were all considered major obstacles, as were the financial difficulties faced by the interns, and the heavy workload created by the responsibilities of teaching and university coursework. Concerns about possible negative effects of some of the program logistics were also heard from mentors and university liaisons. Mentors often commented that the lack of sick days and personal leave for the interns made life not only financially difficult for the interns, but undermined their status--"They are <u>not</u> substitutes", said one mentor.

Satisfaction with Choice to Become a Teacher: To examine the interns' beginning sense of effectiveness as teachers, we used as a proxy their satisfaction with their choice to become a teacher.

We used analysis of variance to examine the factors that related their level of satisfaction with their choice. We looked for variation within several factors: the interns' satisfaction with their mentoring relationship and with their university, with their school site, and their involvement at the school site in activities other than teaching.

We found that the interns' satisfaction with their choice did not significantly vary with their satisfaction with their mentor. It also did not vary significantly by school site. We found highly significant variation, however ($p < .001$), by whether the interns were involved with committees and other planning efforts at their school. This is similar to findings such as those by Bryk and Lee. It suggests that as well as teacher's role within a classroom, their role within the school organization must be constantly examined in discussion of teacher efficacy.

Significant variation was also found according to the interns' overall satisfaction with their university ($p < .05$). To examine the factors that determined the interns' satisfaction with their university, we examined further survey questions that asked the interns how satisfied they were with several aspects of the university - whether they felt that they were able to apply what they learned in their university coursework to their teaching, whether staff from the university had observed their teaching, and whether the educational philosophy of the school and university were compatible. The most significant variation with overall satisfaction was the extent to which the interns found their

university coursework relevant to their current experiences in the classroom.

Findings from the Second-year Evaluation

Interviews with mentors, residents and interns have been ongoing in the second-year evaluation. At this point, a survey (based on last year's work) has been implemented and tabulated for 143 (of 185) interns and residents.

In this year's survey, outcome variables were extended to include additional efficacy-related concepts. For example: interns and residents were asked if they felt they have had positive effects on their students' achievement, were making a difference in their students' lives and if they are comfortable in their knowledge of all subjects they are required to teach. These new teachers show remarkably strong self-confidence in their responses to efficacy questions of this type.

Statement	% who agree or strongly agree
My work in the classroom, thus far, has had positive effects on my students achievement.	93%
I am satisfied with the way my teaching competence is developing.	84%

I have developed positive relationships with my students.	95%
I am certain I am making a difference in the lives of my students.	92%

While continuing to examine the factors influencing our novice teachers' satisfaction with their choice to become a teacher, another factor came to light. Included in this year's evaluation were items relating to the interns/residents interactions and relationship with their principals. Those interns/residents who felt that they were developing a positive relationship with their principal are overwhelmingly those who were satisfied with their choice to become a teacher ($p < .01$). Whether the interns/residents felt that the principal was supportive of the TFC program did not vary significantly with their satisfaction, but it was a significant factor in the novice teachers perception about developing positive relationships with other faculty and staff in their school ($p < .01$).

Experiences of the Interns and Withdrawal from the Program: Factors cited above underscore the depth of complexity facing the program and its participants. Our final avenue for addressing issues of satisfaction is to use a convex lens - by looking at the dissatisfaction of those interns/residents who withdrew from the program. This has been a nagging difficulty despite programmatic changes that have attempted to reduce the withdrawal rate. By the

close of the first year of implementation, 92 of the 100 interns remained in the program. During the summer and first 3 months of the second year of implementation, an additional 19 interns and residents withdrew. Nationwide, dropout rate figures for novice teachers are not readily available, but the statistics that are accessible have not changed much over the past 20 years. A 1983 time series study cites a 40-50% dropout rate within seven years of entering the teaching profession, with 15% typically leaving after their first year.

To cite the generally high rates for withdrawal is not to suggest an alibi for the dropout rates from TFC. The problem is taken to heart in part because, of the intern withdrawals during the second year evaluation, 50% were rated as Star candidates during the interview process. (Research shows that, also among traditionally trained teachers, it is very often the outstanding candidates that quickly abandon the profession.) Characterizing the reasons for withdrawal is difficult because of the wide variety (family difficulties, moves from the State, no confidence in math ability, students were from more troubled backgrounds than anticipated, stress, etc.). The two most often cited reasons for leaving the program were the shock at the conditions of teaching in Chicago Public Schools and the financial considerations of living on a substitute teacher's wage for a two year period.

In conclusion: Both evaluators have felt fortunate to have been a part of this multi-faceted and important project. Although it is

early to look at the classroom successes of these novice teachers, these successes have been cited by principals, mentors, peers, parents and university faculty. In this initial attempt at unraveling influences upon this group of novice teachers, we have untangled only of few of the intricate knots. While mentor relationships in TFC must be examined more closely to determine why they didn't make the Who's Who list of influences, relationships with university and principal need to be nourished because they already show such excellent promise for supporting novice teachers.

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