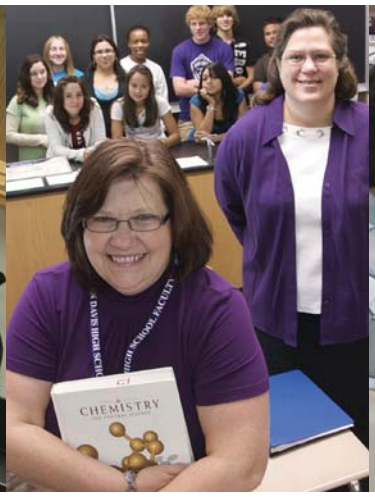

Career Changers in the Classroom: A National Portrait

Peter D. Hart Research Associates, Inc.

February 2010

conducted on behalf of

The Woodrow Wilson
National Fellowship Foundation

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by

Hart Research Associates

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Cover photos *(left to right):*
Woodrow Wilson Indiana Teaching Fellows Alan Stuckey, Tammy Vermillion, and David Johnson
with students at Ben Davis High School, Wayne Township, Indiana.
Courtesy D. Todd Moore (photographer) for the University of Indianapolis.

Table of Contents

FOREWORD

This volume on teachers who come to the classroom in midcareer is the third report in a series on the potential, promise, experience, and needs of career changers who are teaching in America's classrooms today. It is based on a survey of a cross-section of such individuals conducted by Hart Research Associates in 2009.

The earlier reports, released by the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation in fall 2008, included *Encore Performances: Tapping the Potential of Midcareer and Second-Career Teachers*, a review of the literature on career-changers who teach; and *Teaching as a Second Career*, the results of an earlier survey by Hart Research Associates that sought to determine what it would take to attract accomplished professionals from other careers into teaching.

The first two reports informed and complemented the Woodrow Wilson Teaching Fellowship, the Foundation's signature program. This report will as well. Created in 2007, the Teaching Fellowship builds on Woodrow Wilson's sixty-five-year commitment to strengthen American education by bringing talented individuals into education careers. The Woodrow Wilson Teaching Fellowship seeks both to recruit and prepare new teachers with outstanding records of achievement and to transform the college and university programs that prepare them. The Fellowship's ultimate goal is to help narrow the nation's achievement gap by preparing excellent teachers—the single most important factor in student achievement—to succeed in the schools that need them most.

When the first Woodrow Wilson Teaching Fellows were selected in Indiana in 2009, six out of every seven were career changers. The Foundation continues to learn, both from its ongoing recruitment efforts as the Teaching Fellowship expands to additional states and from the experiences of the new Fellows, what brings career changers to teaching and what keeps them teaching.

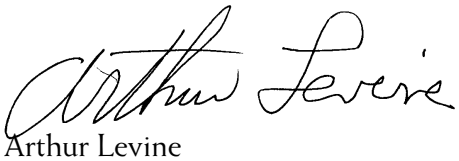
MetLife Foundation, concerned specifically with understanding the human resource potential of prospective career changers in teaching, funded Woodrow Wilson to undertake three projects that paralleled its Fellowship work. The Foundation is very grateful to MetLife Foundation for making these reports possible. Through the annual *MetLife Survey of the American Teacher* and other studies, MetLife and MetLife Foundation have made invaluable contributions to current understandings of both veteran and new teachers' attitudes and experiences, supporting improvements in the preparation, induction, professional development practices, and policies.

We are also thankful to Geoff Garin, chief executive officer, and Jeff Horwitt, senior research analyst, of Hart Research Associates. As with their earlier reports for Woodrow Wilson in 2008, the Hart team's enthusiasm, collegiality, and perseverance, as well as their extensive research expertise and sensitivity to key nuances, have been indispensable in the development of this study and report.

Four Woodrow Wilson staff played critical roles in producing this report. Edward Crowe, consultant to the Foundation for Teaching Fellowships; David Haselkorn, Associate Commissioner for Educator Policy, Preparation, Licensure, and Leadership at the

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and formerly senior fellow at Woodrow Wilson; and James Fraser, senior vice president for programs at the Foundation, all contributed to this report's introduction, which describes the context for the study and explicates its findings. Beverly Sanford, vice president for communications, guided it from research to publication.

As the Woodrow Wilson Foundation and other organizations continue to work to bring high-caliber career changers into teaching, we believe that a developing a fuller sense of their transition into the profession is crucial to attracting and retaining them. We are confident that this report adds new dimensions to the understanding of this process. We trust that it also suggests opportunities for both teacher educators and policymakers to improve national access to this pool of talent.



Arthur Levine
President

INTRODUCTION:
Career Changers in the Classroom—
New Opportunities and Persistent Challenges

Ensuring effective teachers in every classroom hasn't always been the central focus of school reform, but it has always been the central challenge. Today that challenge is more widely recognized than ever before. Across the country school district and state education leaders are looking for new ways to define, measure, and promote teacher effectiveness—with the widespread recognition that the achievement gap between low- and high-performing students is often underpinned by an educator quality gap. The strategic development and deployment of human capital in the nation's schools has rightly come to the fore in education reform. It has placed a new focus on how we attract, prepare, hire, induct, support, evaluate, and reward talented teachers; improve or remove chronically poor performing ones; and develop policies and practices that support continuous improvement.

As Baby Boom-era teachers continue their march to retirement, a new spotlight is being placed on recruitment strategies to replenish classroom ranks. New focus is being placed on "turning around" chronically underperforming schools and districts by developing cohort-based approaches that pair new and veteran teachers with transformational school leaders (both principals and teacher leaders) in tipping point strategies designed to reboot school operating systems and cultures and reorient them toward effectiveness and achievement. More societal focus is being placed on 21st-century skills of inquiry-based problem-solving and collaboration, as well as teaching and learning in STEM-related fields. In each of these areas, and others, recruiting, preparing, and sustaining a new generation of talented teachers will be essential.

For nearly three decades, the promise of attracting new recruits to the classroom from other fields and professions has been widely hailed as an important source of potential new teacher talent. State and federal policymakers, market-savvy higher education institutions, and hard-pressed school districts have sought ways to tap the human resource potential of career changers through a myriad of targeted programs, fast-tracks, alternative routes, internships, apprenticeships, teacher residencies, and more.[1]

Meanwhile, research shows that teaching has the largest single impact on student learning. Successful student learning depends on good teaching. The problem is we don't have enough good teachers, and we can't seem to keep them. The extent to which children are taught by well-prepared and effective teachers varies widely across the country, even *within* schools.[2]

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[1] "Realizing the Promise: How State Policy Can Support Alternative Certification Programs" (Washington, D.C.: Center for American Progress, 2009).

[2] For relevant discussion of teacher effectiveness and the highly differential access to quality teaching by K-12 students, see Suzanne Wilson, ed., 2009, *Teacher Quality: Education Policy White Paper*, produced and distributed by the National Academy of Education (www.naeducation.org); Steven Rivkin, Eric Hanushek, and John Kain, 2005, "Teachers, Schools, and Academic Achievement," *Econometrica* 73 (2), pp. 417-458. Other good analyses of these issues can be found in Charles Clotfelter, Helen Ladd, and Jacob Vigdor, 2007, *How and why do teacher credentials matter for student achievement?* NBER Working Paper 12828, (Cambridge: National Bureau of Economic Research); and in Donald Boyd, Pamela Grossman, Hamilton Lankford, and James Wyckoff, 2006, "How Changes in Entry Requirements Alter the Teacher Workforce and Affect Student Achievement," *Education Finance and Policy* 1 (2), pp. 176-216.

Many of those who do become teachers are driven away by poor support systems, inadequate preparation for their teaching responsibilities, and a reward system that recognizes time in the job rather than talent and effectiveness.[3]

These are not new problems. Ever since *A Nation At Risk* (1983), the country has agonized, innovated, and argued about how to solve them. Over the last decade or so, the twin dilemmas of teacher turnover and teacher shortages in key fields have opened our eyes to the need for better answers.

As a result, these concerns have created **demand** for talented individuals to enter the profession.[4] In fields like math and science, high turnover rates, low levels of program production, and small numbers of new college majors in particular fields have been exacerbated by the demand for new education and technology skills as a result of changes in the workforce.[5] For other shortage areas such as special education, and English language learning (ELL), massive shifts in the demographic composition of the school-age population are driving demand for more teachers with relevant expertise and commitment to work in challenging school environments.[6]

And as a consequence of the demand to grow the teaching talent pool, there are exciting new **opportunities** in teaching for men and women who began their careers in other fields. These expanded opportunities have been fed by policy changes that opened up teacher certification eligibility to "non-traditional' candidates, and were often linked to state regulatory actions authorizing newer types of teacher education programs, known initially as "alternate routes." State policies have been modified so that teacher candidates from "non-traditional" preparation programs can obtain licensure and certification, while state program approval policies allow "alternate route" providers to recruit, enroll, and prepare growing numbers of new teachers.[7]

General and specialized shortages—as well as worries about the quality of some traditional-age teacher candidates—are responsible for the higher demand for talented prospective teachers to enter the profession. Demand for their services comes from charter schools, public school districts, state education policymakers, foundation-funded programs, and universities trying to be responsive to K-12 schools. The push from NCLB for "highly qualified teachers" also generated need for teachers with specific content area training. Traditional-age college students have responded by joining Teach for America, the New York Teaching Fellows, the New Teacher Project, Transitions to Teaching, and "urban residency" programs in several major cities like Boston, Chicago, and Denver.

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[3] For an excellent overview of the literature, see C. Guarino, L. Santibanez, and G. Daley, 2006, "Teacher Recruitment and Retention," *Review of Educational Research* 76 (2), pp. 173-208. Recent work funded by the Carnegie Corporation of New York and by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation discusses many of these issues along with examples of effective strategies for coping with the problems. See Consortium for Policy Research in Education (CPRE), 2009, *Taking Human Capital Seriously: Talented Teachers in Every Classroom, Talented Principals in Every School*. Retrieved from http://www.smhc-cpre.org/about/.

[4] Wilson, *Teacher Quality*; Guarino et al., *Teacher Recruitment and Retention*.

[5] National Commission on Teaching and America's Future, 2003, *No Dream Denied*.

[6] S. Johnson, J. Berg, and M. Donaldson, 2005, *Who stays in teaching and why: A review of the literature on teacher retention*. Cambridge: The Project on the Next Generation of Teachers, Harvard Graduate School of Education.

[7] Findings and policy relevance of the best recent research on the topic can be found in Wilson, *Teacher Quality*, and in Daniel Humphrey and Marjorie Wechsler, 2007, *Insights into Alternative Certification: Initial Findings from a National Study*. Retrieved from http://policyweb.sri.com/cep/research_areas/displayRAPastProjects.jsp?Nick=tealearn.

Likewise, working professionals at various stages of their careers in non-teaching fields are responding in large numbers to this demand for new teachers with expertise in specific subject areas.[8] According to the *MetLife Survey of the American Teacher: Collaborating for Student Success* (2009) most principals (69%) and teachers (77%) say that they have colleagues in their schools who entered teaching from other careers. More than one-third of all teachers (35%) report that they themselves came to classroom teaching after having another career outside of education, a pattern even more prevalent for teachers in secondary schools (45%) than in elementary schools (31%).

Recruitment and Preparation Strategies

Teacher shortages and student demographic changes are not the only forces behind new policies regarding teacher education. Many federal and state policymakers worry about the quality of traditional, university-based preparation programs and see too little progress in improving the situation.[9] School districts have come to the same conclusion, fearing that traditional providers—and traditional pre-service students—cannot meet the quality and quantity needs of their schools. These trends have built over time. All this means that men and women who graduated from college and entered the workforce in professions other than teaching now find themselves encouraged to think about teaching as a career.

According to a recent IES study comparing "traditional" and "alternative" programs, as many as one-third of new teachers hired in the United States come from "alternative route" programs.[10] In general, many of those enrolled in alternative programs begin teaching before completing the program, while students in "traditional" programs do not (IES, 2009, 4). While not all career changers enroll in alternative programs (see, for example, the Woodrow Wilson Indiana Teaching Fellows Program), the difference can mean that career changers and others who enroll in the non-traditional route programs reach the classroom more quickly as teachers of record. This adds to the attraction of this preparation pathway for many would-be teachers (see previous Woodrow Wilson Foundation survey findings).

The teacher preparation landscape does not support an easy division of program types into "traditional" university-based and "non-traditional" alternate routes. For one thing, many programs enroll career changers in MAT programs whose structure and characteristics resemble (or may even be identical to) MAT programs that are thought of as "traditional" pathways into teaching. Further complicating the picture is that many universities have responded to market demands—from potential employers as well as prospective students—by establishing their own alternative certification programs.[11]

A practical consequence of this complexity is that efforts to classify (or label) programs run the risk of greatly oversimplifying reality. The fact is, of course, that what matters is not how programs are labeled but how well their graduates are prepared to meet the needs of their students. As the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (NCTAF) said in

[8] The extent to which school districts and charter networks are preparing their own teachers is noted in Wilson, *Teacher Quality*, and discussed more fully by CPRE, *Taking Human Capital Seriously*.
[9] Edward Crowe, 2008, "Teaching as a Profession: A Bridge Too Far." From M. Cochran-Smith, S. Feiman-Nemser, D. McIntyre, and Kelly Demers, eds., *Handbook of Research on Teacher Education*. Routledge.
[10] Institute for Education Sciences, 2009, *An Evaluation of Teachers Trained Through different Routes to Certification*. U.S. Department of Education, NCEE 2009-4043, page xv.
[11] Humphrey and Wechsler, 2007.

No Dream Denied: A Pledge to America's Children (2003, p. 74), "It is time to abandon the futile debate over "traditional" vs. "alternative" teacher preparation. The key issue … is not how new teachers are prepared but how well they are prepared and supported in whatever preparation pathway they choose. Developing high quality teachers is the responsibility of all who take on the task, whether in colleges and universities or in programs sponsored by school districts or other organizations. Because all routes lead to the classroom, no matter who sponsors them, all who take those paths should meet the same high standards for teaching quality."

Preparation Program Content and Outcomes

But what should teachers know and be prepared to do in order to be effective in the classroom?

Research "grounded in the disciplines of teaching and learning" has identified a set of teaching skills essential for K-12 teachers at all levels and in all kinds of classroom settings to implement effective instruction. A fundamental requirement for the exercise of these skills is an understanding of the learning process, which includes teaching strategies that are content specific; regular assessment of student learning by teachers in their own classrooms; and use of the frequent formative assessment findings to modify their instruction; the ability to identify and respond to individual student differences in ability and in instructional needs; classroom teaching strategies responsive to students with disabilities and those with limited proficiency in the English language; effective classroom management; and knowing how to communicate and work with parents.[12]

The 2009 white paper on teacher quality from the National Academy for Education notes that essential teaching skills include deep knowledge of the subjects taught, along with pedagogical strategies that are most effective in teaching these subjects. Other recent work also yields important information about the components of effective classroom teaching.[13] Unfortunately, we also know from research that little of this knowledge is built into the design and delivery of teacher preparation programs.[14]

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[12] This set of research-based teaching skills was developed by a coalition of psychologists with expertise in cognitive psychology and in teacher education that was assembled by the American Psychological Association. See Stephen Rollin, Rena Subotnik, Maya Bassford, and Jennifer Smulson, 2008, "Bringing Psychological Science to the Forefront of Educational Policy," *Psychology in the Schools* 45 (3) pp. 194-205. This work was sufficiently compelling and persuasive that a version of these teaching skills was included as requirements for federal policy in the 2008 reauthorization of the Higher Education Amendments (HEA). Important work is underway through numerous efforts to understand how teacher knowledge and skills affect student learning outcomes. For a concise summary of the issues, see the overview of one effort, Understanding Teacher Quality (UTQ): www.utqstudy.org.

[13] See Wilson, *Teacher Quality*, p. 6; Pamela Grossman and Alan Schoenfeld, with Carol Lee, "Teaching Subject Matter," in Linda Darling-Hammond and John Bransford, eds., *Preparing Teachers for a Changing World* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2005); Robert Pianta and Bridget Hamre, 2009, "*Conceptualization, Measurement, and Improvement of Classroom Processes: Standardized Observation Can Leverage Capacity*," *Educational Researcher* 38 (2), pp. 109-119.

[14] This can be seen most clearly in the work of D. Boyd, P. Grossman, H. Lankford, S. Loeb, and J. Wyckoff, 2008, *Teacher Preparation and Student Achievement*, NBER Working Paper W14314. Cambridge: National Bureau of Economic Research; but it also is a theme of the NAE white paper. The 2005 publication *Studying Teacher Education* (M. Cochran-Smith and K. Zeichner,eds.) shows how little is known with certainty about effective practices in teacher education. One clear implication of this work is how little in teacher education program design and delivery is constructed from research-based knowledge.

It is in the context of emerging knowledge about effective teaching and its impact on student learning that we find growing interest in new ways of attracting and retaining high quality teachers to the profession. This interest comes from school and district leaders, from private and public funding agencies, and from policy leaders at all levels of our society. Perhaps of most significance, however, is the intense interest shown by men and women willing to trade an established professional career for the chance to teach in our public schools.

Career Changers and the Programs That Prepare Them to Teach

This study is the third and final installment of the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation's exploration of the size, character, and potential of the pool of current and prospective career changers who teach, their aspirations and perspectives on teaching as a profession, and the myriad programs that have been created to prepare them to teach.

Our 2009 survey asked career changers about their experiences in three different kinds of preparation programs. The current reality is that there are as many variations within each preparation pathway as between them. Studies of so-called alternative certification programs confirm wide disparities in program design, enrollment, and outcomes among programs commonly thought to belong in a single category of preparation programs.[15]

Given all this, what matters is how well program graduates are prepared to be effective classroom teachers, not the labels attached to a specific program or program type. As a result, policymakers, district leaders, and principals now worry less about program characteristics or labels. They define teacher effectiveness in terms of pupil learning gains, instead of relying on the efficacy of "process outcomes" such as preparation program accreditation, degrees or certificates, or the labels attached to different preparation pathways.

Why Make the Switch?

The Foundation's interest in career changers as a source of talent and inspiration for our nation's schools is not new. In 2008, the Peter Hart organization conducted a national survey of 2,000 adults for us to identify those who might consider teaching as a career (*Teaching as a Second Career, 2008*; see www.woodrow.org/policy/current.php). That work found that significant numbers of college-educated adults would consider teaching as a future career. For those considering the switch and the training needed to make the career change, a number of things were cited as important factors. These included geographic location of the teacher education program (68%), obtaining real classroom experience as they learn to become teachers (65%), teaching preparation tailored to adults who already have working experience (63%), and mentoring support (56%). We'll see these factors re-emerge in our analysis of those who ***did make*** the switch.

On the other hand, perceptions of poor teacher pay were cited by 44% of the 2008 respondents as a deterrent to making the switch. This is an interesting finding in light of our later results showing that two-thirds of actual career changers either maintained or increased their previous compensation.

[15] See Boyd et al, *Teacher Preparation and Student Achievement*; and Humphrey and Wechsler, 2007, *Insights into Alternative Certification: Initial Findings from a National Study*.

Career Changers in the Classroom: A National Portrait takes up where our previous work left off, examining what career changers who have entered teaching say about their actual experiences of preparing to teach and the adequacy of their preparation for meeting the challenges they faced once in the classroom. Its findings provides an in-depth look at the preparation experiences, incentives, and supports that mattered most to individuals who have successfully made the mid-career move to teaching. In this new report, we asked career changers a range of questions:

- Their motivations for becoming teachers.
- Prior workforce and education experiences.
- Impact of the career switch on their financial circumstances.
- The experiences career changers had in teacher preparation programs, and
- The support they received from schools and school districts as new teachers.

Career changers are defined in this report as individuals who entered teaching after working three or more years in a different field. From the survey data, career changers are broadly representative demographically of all teachers in the United States. They decided to enter teaching for altruistic and practical reasons, and from expectations of personal satisfaction from their new career. Survey findings that combine those who responded "extremely important" or "quite important" to specific items tell us some interesting things about this growing population of public school teachers. From the perspective of ***altruism***, nearly nine out of ten respondents (89%) cited "contributing to society and making a difference" and almost as many (86%) said the attraction was "working with children."

We know from the data that ***practical considerations*** also motivate these teachers who are drawn from a variety of age groups and career backgrounds. These include having a schedule that "allows greater time for family and personal interests" (63%), health care benefits (43%), and the chance to improve their salary (34%).

Expectations of personal satisfaction also drew career changers into their new profession: 80% cited the attraction of "teaching a subject that really interests you," and 51% of our survey respondents noted the opportunity for professional growth. While comparable data on these motivations for entering the profession are not available for all teachers, it seems reasonable to think that career changers are probably like all teachers—drawn to the field by a combination of motives and interests.

One finding deserves a bit more scrutiny: 34% of our respondents said that improving "salary or compensation" was a strong pull into teaching. This information seems a bit out of place with common beliefs about teacher salaries, so we probed a little more. It turns out that 46% of our career changers ***increased*** their salary by the switch, while their new salary was ***about the same*** for another 21% in the sample. These data should be viewed in light of the most recent report from the Statistical Abstract of the United States, which found that classroom teachers had an average salary in 2008 of $51,329.[16]

[16] See National Survey of Salaries and Wages in Public Schools, Educational Research Service, Arlington, VA; also available through www.census.gov/compendia/statab/cats/education.html.

It's also worth noting here that for career changers who experienced a cut in salary by switching careers, ***altruism*** had the same high importance as a motive for becoming teachers as for those whose income went up. The only meaningful attitude differences between the two groups as motives for the switch have to do with perceived opportunities for professional growth, retirement benefits, better compensation, and the extent to which "the job is held in respect by our society." In all four cases, these motives were stronger influences on those whose salary went up.

Teacher Preparation

Our sample of 504 career changers obtained their teacher training from three sources: a traditional university-based master's degree teacher preparation programs (59%), a bachelor's degree or an "alternative" program at a college or university (33%), or a non-traditional program from a provider other than a college or university (8%). It was noted earlier that program labels like "traditional" or "alternative" tell us very little about the content or quality of a program. Perhaps the clearest distinction can be drawn between providers: thus, 8% of the career changers obtained their preparation for teaching from an organization that was not affiliated with a college or university. Even so, there appear to be few differences across program types in the content of their preparation.

Our 2008 study, *Teaching as a Second Career*, flagged preparation program characteristics that respondents said would be appealing to them (e.g., location, summer courses, focus on adult learners). Career changers who made the switch to teaching confirmed that several key features mattered to them in deciding where to enroll. Nearly 4 in 5 respondents said that "practical experience in a classroom" was an important feature in choosing a program (91% said that the program they enrolled in had this feature). 73% reported that guaranteed employment as a teacher was an important factor; unsurprisingly, only 26% found a program with this benefit. Other traits that mattered in program selection were taking courses over the summer (64%), availability of evening classes (62%), and mentoring (56%).

They also searched for a program tailored to adult professionals (59%), with subsidized tuition (59%), and loan forgiveness (55%). Except for the job guarantee, tuition breaks, and loan forgiveness, our career changers largely found what they were looking for.

On the financial side, the difference between what the career changers hoped to find and what was offered to them suggests that federal, state, district, and preparation program policies could be friendlier. On the other hand, given the growing demand for career changers, as well as the changing nature of American higher education these days, it seems likely that program flexibility in teacher training options will continue to match up fairly well with the needs of this group. Financial considerations may be a stumbling block here, but a more difficult hurdle will be blending the demand for flexible schedules with the need for classroom experience. Taking courses at night, on weekends, during the summer, and on-line may be the most effective ways to blend academic coursework with essential clinical experiences during the school day.

Once our career changers found the program they wanted, 90% or more took coursework in content, pedagogy, methods, and child/adolescent development. The same proportion participated in clinical experiences as part of their program. For most of the sample, preparation programs included classroom management courses (89%), course work in special

education (77%), and classes focused on assessment and use of data (85%). Fewer than half took courses working with English Language Learners (46%). More recent entrants to teaching were likelier to take courses in special education and about working with ELL students, but even these proportions are low enough to suggest that their programs are not current with the needs of today's students.

Career changers also were asked to assess the ***overall quality and helpfulness*** of their preparation programs. While most were inclined to rate their program as excellent or good as a generic rating (89% gave these ratings in our survey), they were far less positive about specific program components. Asked if the program prepared them for the challenges of teaching in 13 specific areas, a majority of career changers gave a high positive rating only to ***one*** item—"organizing instruction and developing effective lesson plans" (61% rated it 4 or 5 on a 5-point scale).

High proportions of career changers gave low ratings (3 or below on the 5-point scale) to their preparation to work with students of different abilities, incorporating state standards into their teaching, managing classroom behavior, using assessments to inform their teaching, communicating with parents, using technology, making effective use of feedback from mentors and school leaders, and teaching ELL students.

These self-reported preparation program deficiencies undermined the ability of career changers to make the transition to classroom teaching. Our survey list included items that are research-based core teaching skills in today's schools. We summarized these skills above. The career changers recognize the need to know these skills and be able to use them, but the programs that prepare teachers apparently do not share this commitment. Without a specific comparison group, it is difficult to say how "traditional" college students preparing to become teachers might respond to the same questions.

Support for Career Changers as New Teachers

Surveys of new teachers and research about teacher retention show that early and consistent support makes a difference. Mentoring and induction programs offer crucial advice and feedback to strengthen teaching skills, smooth the adjustment to daily teaching responsibilities, and help new teachers feel they are working in a supportive school culture. Like nearly all new teachers in the U.S., however, career changers need better support in the classroom.[17] In particular, only 53% of our survey respondents indicated they had worked with a mentor; 39% were oriented to their new school by the principal; and 64% benefited from "informal support" from other teachers and staff.

Of those who did receive formal mentoring (53%), most met with their mentor at least weekly, and 81% of the career changers with mentors said this was helpful. The fact is, however, that less than a third of all career changers experienced formal weekly mentoring (53% x 62%). Most of the career changers had to report that they did not benefit from high

[17] T. Smith and R. Ingersoll, 2004, "What are the effects of induction and mentoring on beginning teacher turnover?" *American Educational Research Journal* 41 (3), pp. 681-714. ; see the research resources available through the New Teacher Center (http://www.newteachercenter.org/cgi-bin/norti_area/research.cgi); CPRE, *Taking Human Capital Seriously*.

quality mentoring (81% x 53% were positive). No wonder only 68% of them said that the support received in their first teaching position was excellent or good.

Implications of the Findings

Like its precursor reports, *Career Changers in the Classroom* points toward a range of actions policymakers, preparing institutions, and others should take to tap the potential of individuals who come to teaching from other jobs and fields:

Recommendations for Preparation Programs

Our findings and recommendations start with a focus on the needs and interests of career changers. But all programs—and all teacher candidates—should have the same goals and outcomes.

- Too few programs today are characterized by careful recruitment and competitive selection of teacher candidates. These steps are essential for all preparation programs in order to improve the quality and impact of public school teachers in the United States.
- Programs to prepare career changers for the classroom should be designed to meet the needs of adult learners, recognizing prior education and experiences, and offering courses at times and places convenient for those already employed. These steps can be taken without neglecting the crucial importance of clinical practice in developing their teaching skills.
- To develop the set of teaching skills essential for positive student learning outcomes, all would-be teachers need deep and extensive experience in real-world classrooms. This will happen only as a result of integrated curricular and clinical experiences, extensive supervision and support from program faculty, and regular assessment of candidate knowledge and skills.
- Curricular and clinical experiences to foster essential teaching skills appear to be missing from many (most) teacher education programs in the United States—whether these programs seek to serve the needs of traditional students or of career changers. It is well past time for wholesale redesign of these programs so their graduates are able to meet the needs of today's students.
- Teachers, parents, school leaders, and policymakers continue to call for program coursework with more attention to the knowledge and skills needed to work with English Language Learners, as well as learning how to use assessment practices to modify instruction and tailor it to the needs of individual students.

Recommendations for Schools and Districts Hiring Career Changers

A powerful impetus for growth of career changers as a segment of the new teacher workforce is coming from schools and districts. District and school practices also create this need through working conditions and support mechanisms that routinely fail to new teachers make the transition to effective classroom performance.

- Research into teacher support systems—as well as feedback from new teachers—makes it clear that quality mentoring programs are essential to help new teachers flourish and grow in the classroom. Buddy systems and drop-in support are not effective. The

characteristics of effective support are well known, but too few schools, districts, or states invest the resources necessary for them to work.

- New teachers benefit from early and frequent assessment of in-class performance conducted by trained observers, with results used to guide professional growth.

Recommendations for the Skeptics

For those who might be skeptical that career changers are a positive force in the teaching profession and in the classroom, it turns out that they have the same set of motivations for becoming teachers as traditional-age college students (altruistic, financial, personal life, and professional growth).

- In fact, the career changers demonstrate commitment to their new careers *despite* the poor quality of their preparation programs and *in spite of* weak support from the schools that hire them. This, too, they have in common with other new teachers.
- Finally, research shows that career changers are as likely to be effective in the classroom as traditional route teachers—as measured by the learning gains of their pupils. The same factors count for both groups: good academic preparation, intensive clinical practice, careful oversight and support from program faculty, and the chance to learn how to teach in schools similar to the ones where they later hope to work.

Recommendations for National, State, and Local Policymakers

Political, business, and education leaders have made it possible to expand the pool of human capital for the teaching profession. Policy changes, funding incentives, encouragement, and many new programs have opened the door to talent. More can be done.

- Policymakers who want to tap the Career Changer talent pool should support incentives that attract talented professionals into teaching. These include stipends and other forms of financial aid, high quality preparation programs, and well-structured mentoring or induction.
- Treat all teacher education programs the same in terms of oversight and accountability policies. The old argument between "traditional" and "alternate" routes is a distinction without a difference.
- In particular, state program approval and teacher licensure policies should be built on evidence of outcomes: K-12 student learning gains, objective measures of successful classroom teaching performance, and persistence in teaching—especially in high needs schools. Simplify or eliminate outmoded state regulations that impede a relentless focus on these outcomes for every program and every teacher.

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In sum, America can—and should—do much more to tap the sizable talent pool for teaching that career changers represent. The full potential of their contribution—and the beneficial impact of their work on the lives of children—will not be achieved without additional changes across the educational career continuum—the way we recruit, prepare, select/hire, induct, evaluate, support, and reward our teachers and principals. The development of a more strategic approach to talent development in education is long overdue. In this regard, *Career Changers in*

the Classroom offers key insights and perspectives on how best to tap the sizable pool of potential career changers in ways that can meet the nation's teacher recruitment, development, diversity, and effectiveness challenges.

I. METHODOLOGY

This report presents the findings from an in-depth survey conducted on behalf of the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation among a representative national sample of career changers who teach who had entered the teaching profession from other jobs or fields.

To create this cross section of midcareer changers who teach, Hart Research first contacted a national sample of educators who have been teaching in a public school setting for no more than 20 years. Respondents were then accepted into the final sample after a screening process established that they entered the teaching profession only after working for at least three years in a different field.

Hart Research conducted a total of 504 interviews among respondents who passed these screening requirements. These interviews were completed in May 2009, with each interview lasting an average of 18 minutes.

The margin of error for the total sample of 504 interviews is ±4.4 percentage points and is higher for subgroups. Throughout the report there are comparisons between various subgroups that do not meet the standard of being statistically significant, but are directional in nature. We feel these comparisons are of interest and are important to include as part of the narrative, even if they might not be corroborated in a repeated experiment.

II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The following summary highlights the key findings from the survey research among career changers who teach.

Career changers enter the teaching profession from disparate fields and life experiences. While an impressive share of these new teachers accepted a reduction in compensation to enter the profession, for many others, entry into teaching represented upward mobility in financial terms. Midcareer entry into teaching also occurs across a range of ages and life stages. Recruitment policies that focus only on one source and one model for career changers entering the teaching profession are bound to miss large pools of the talent that can be tapped to meet the demand for qualified and effective teachers.

As we also found in previous research for the Woodrow Wilson Foundation among *potential* teachers, salary and financial concerns are not the prime motivations for making the midcareer move to a teaching career. Rather, like the majority of teachers who chose teaching careers without significant experience in other careers, teachers who come to the profession from other fields share the common intrinsic desire to make a difference, give back to others, or an interest in working with children. Many cite teaching as a dream that they were only able to pursue after embarking on other occupations or pathways. However, financial concerns do emerge, especially when career changers discuss the obstacles they encountered during their preparation to teach. While many career changers did in fact experience a salary increase, or at least receive a salary commensurate with that in their previous jobs, from our prior research we know that many other potential teachers are lost due to financial considerations. And when asked what steps state leaders can take to encourage more candidates from other fields to join the teaching profession, ensuring that teaching salaries are competitive tops the list.

Despite their heterogeneous backgrounds, career changers enter the teaching profession via two chief sources: either a traditional master's program at a university or college or a non-traditional alternative route at a university or college (either a bachelor's degree or shortened or alternative program).

Regardless of the pathway into teaching they pursued, career changers rate the quality of the teacher preparation program as excellent or good and feel that the specifics of the program were helpful to them. However, there is a real and serious disconnect here, as career changers are much less positive when asked how well their programs prepared them to meet specific classroom challenges. The data suggest that career changers do not see their preparation program in the context of preparing them for the real-world challenges of the classroom. So while they rate their preparation program highly, when it comes time to enter the classroom, in many instances their preparation does not serve them well for the challenges that they face. This dichotomy has implications for policymakers, as it shows that teacher education needs to be tailored much more to practical and applied real-world preparation rather to theoretical and contextual preparation.

Although respondents offer mostly positive evaluations of their preparation, this research also underlines a need to better gear teacher preparation to contemporary teaching challenges. As

noted above, many respondents say that they were not prepared for the challenges that they faced when they actually entered the classroom. Indeed, fewer than 30% say their preparation was consistently outstanding across a range of critical teaching knowledge areas and skills. Career changers give the highest marks to the training they received for organizing instruction and developing effective lesson plans, but on a variety of other key attributes, the ratings are tepid, at best. Career changers give particularly low grades to the preparation for dealing with the administrative aspects of teaching and for meeting the needs of ELL (English Language Learner) students. In many instances, it appears, teacher preparation programs fall short when it comes to preparing career changers to enter the classroom.

Once they are teaching, a majority of career changers report that the quality of support that they received at their first school was excellent or good. However, the support that they received was not uniform. Consider that 64% received informal support from teachers or other school staff and only 53% reported that they worked with a mentor. Among those who had access to a mentor, the overwhelming view is that the mentorship helped them. The longer and more intense the mentorship, the more strongly this view is held. That being said, only 35% of mentorships lasted beyond the teacher's first year.

Looking ahead, the majority of career changers plan to continue teaching for more than ten more years, and nearly all say that, looking back, they are glad about their decision to become a teacher.

The findings below offer a snapshot of career changers who teach today. Each finding is more fully detailed in the report that follows.

Career changers who teach are not a monolithic group. They enter teaching with a wide range of previous career experiences and perspectives.

- Three in 10 (31%) career changers worked at another full-time job for three to five years before becoming a teacher, 26% worked for six to 10 years, and 43% worked for more than 10 years before becoming a teacher.
- Career changers come to teaching with different work experiences, and no one sector of employment stands out. Consider that 12% of career changers entered teaching from the sales and retail sector, 10% from management/administrative positions, 7% from the food service/restaurant sector, 7% from a secretarial/clerical background, 7% from the banking/financial field, and 5% from nursing or health care.
- Career changers also enter the teaching profession at different points in their lives, with 30% becoming teachers between the ages of 25 to 32, 34% between the ages of 33 to 42, and 29% who started teaching when they were 43 years old or over.
- Demographically, teachers who come to the profession from other jobs or fields look similar to the teaching profession overall in terms of gender, race, and educational attainment.

As we found in last year's survey of potential teachers, career changers who teach also are more likely to be drawn to the profession because of its intrinsic benefits and rewards of giving back to others than because of the financial or other benefits.

- In their own words, 26% of career changers say that they entered the teaching profession because it was something that they always wanted to do/a dream, 24% say they enjoy working with children, and 11% wanted to make a difference and be a positive influence.

- When asked to rate specific job qualities on a scale of how important each quality was to them in deciding to become a teacher, 93% say that finding the job personally rewarding was extremely or quite important, followed by 89% who say the same about contributing to society and making a difference, and 86% who say that working with children was extremely or quite important in making their decision to become a teacher.
- While career changers are more likely to find aspects of teaching in the classroom most appealing, having a schedule that allows for family and personal interests also is a significant attraction (63% extremely or quite important).
- Salary and pay are important, but not a major consideration for why career changers decide to become teachers. Just 34% say this is an important consideration, and among those whose salary decreased due to their change in careers, just 16% say this is important to them.

Notwithstanding, salary and pay do matter to teachers. From our previous work for the Woodrow Wilson Foundation surveying potential midcareer recruits, we know that a significant proportion of those who are considering teaching ultimately do not pursue a career because they believe that the salary is not competitive with other jobs. Similarly, those who have made the midcareer move to teaching cite making salaries more competitive as the best course of action that state leaders can take to attract more career changers to teaching.

To help attract more career changers to teaching, policymakers should focus on both creating a better understanding of how much teachers actually do earn (to attract career changers who are currently receiving a lower or commensurate salary) and continuing to increase teacher pay to attract potential teachers who are currently earning more money and for whom salary is a major obstacle to a teaching career.

- Two in three (64%) career changers who teach began their teaching career earning less than $30,000, and 48% of career changers who teach who started teaching in the past six years say that this is the case.
- Teachers who came to the profession from other fields say that the top two steps state leaders could take to bring more career changers into the profession are making salaries adequate and competitive with other fields (37%) and providing financial incentives that make the transition to teaching more affordable (9%).
- Relatedly, career changers cite not having an income during their training or internship period (30%) and the cost of the program (19%) as significant obstacles during the course of their teacher preparation program.

Much of the public discussion about teachers who enter the profession from other fields or careers focuses on individuals moving from high-level professional jobs, and frequently emphasizes those who are doing so later in their career. The reality is more complicated. Some career changers do indeed fall into this category and do make financial sacrifices to enter the teaching profession. But for many, financially speaking, the shift to teaching is an upward move in salary, or no worse than a lateral move.

- For those career changers who actually switch, salary is not a barrier, because many are not losing money by switching careers. Still, the teaching profession is losing out on a significant number of people who are interested in teaching because of the pay issue. For policymakers, highlighting actual pay for teachers and continuing to increase teacher pay both would be helpful steps to attract more teachers.

- Some teachers do make financial sacrifices to become teachers at midcareer, but for the plurality of respondents, a switch to teaching represented upward mobility in terms of economic growth. Two in three career changers who teach (67%) report that becoming a teacher either increased their salary (46%) or their salary stayed about the same (21%) compared with their previous job.
- Only one in five (21%) career changers who teach falls into the category of working at another job for more than 10 years previous to becoming a teacher and having their salary decrease as a result of entering the teaching profession. Of these, a significant proportion, 36% possess a math or science background (in contrast to 20% in the overall sample). Moreover, a significant proportion of those for whom the move to teaching represents both a shift from a longer termed career and a financial sacrifice were men (39% vs. 27% overall).

Career changers come to teaching from two chief types of teacher preparation programs—a traditional master's program at a university or college or non-traditional alternative route at a university or college (either a bachelor's degree or shortened or alternative program).

- A majority (59%) of career changers into teaching report that they took a traditional master's program, whereas 33% reported that their preparation program was either a bachelor's degree (26%) or a shortened or alternative teacher preparation program at a university or college (7%). The remaining 8% of career changers say that their preparation program was a non-traditional, non-university based program.

The majority of career changers rate their program well in terms of preparing them for teaching. However, when career changers rate their preparation program in the context of the challenges that they faced when they actually started teaching, their preparation program falls short.

- Overall, 89% of career changers rate the overall quality of their program as excellent or good.
- When choosing a teacher preparation program, practical experience in a classroom (88% important), the option of courses over the summer (75%), and evening classes (73%) were the most important considerations for how career changers selected their specific program. By a striking majority, career changers rate clinical experience as the most helpful aspect of their preparation program (89% helpful).

  On the other hand, just 46% say that coursework in teaching or English Language Learners (ELL) was offered as part of the program; among those, only 52% say it was helpful to them. Given that ELL students make up the fastest-growing segment of the school-age population, this finding should serve as a wake-up call to both traditional and alternative teacher preparation programs seeking to prepare the nation's growing number of career-changers.

However, while career changers generally give their teacher preparation program good marks, their preparation falls short when they match it up to the complex, real-world challenges that they encountered when they actually entered the classroom. In fact, in only one out of 13 measures do career changers say that they received outstanding or good preparation for the challenges that they faced when they started teaching.

- On an indexed, 100-point preparation scale created for the survey, just 28% scored their preparation as a 70 or higher when it came to preparing them for the challenges that they faced in the classroom.

- Fully three in ten (31%) career changers who teach rated their preparation a 49 or lower, with 21% at the 60 to 69 level, and 19% at the 50 to 59 level.
- Even a majority (56%) of those who rated their teacher preparation program as excellent fall below a 70 on the index when it comes to how well their preparation prepared them for the challenges that they faced when they started teaching.
- In looking at specific challenges that they faced upon entering the classroom, just 37% of career changers say they were well prepared for managing student behavior in the classroom, 33% reported that they were well prepared for communicating with parents and other caregivers, and 32% were well prepared for adjusting to the culture of schools.

The majority of teachers who entered the profession from other jobs or fields feel that, once they entered the schoolhouse door, they received adequate support. Specifically, those who worked with a mentor report that the mentorship was helpful to them, and the more intensive and sustained the mentorship was, the higher it was rated. However, only two in five teachers report receiving orientation from their principal, and just one in three career changers had a meaningful mentoring experience.

- Overall, 68% of career changers report that the quality of support they received when they first started teaching was excellent or good.
- Fully 64% of career changers say that they received informal support from teachers or other school staff, but just over half (53%) worked with a mentor, only 39% received orientation by the principal.
- Four in five (81%) respondents who had a mentor describe the experience as being very or fairly helpful. Among those who met at least once a week with their mentor, 94% describe the mentorship as very or fairly helpful, compared with 59% of those who met less than once a week.
- However, many mentoring experiences were not in-depth and longer-term, which are important characteristics of a successful mentoring experience. Consider that among all career changers, just 33% had an in-depth mentoring experience, or one where the mentor and mentee met at least once a week in the first year of the mentor's teaching career.

III. Profile of Career-Changers Who Teach

Teachers who come to the profession from other jobs or fields are not a monolithic group. They enter teaching with a wide range of previous career experiences and perspectives, and at a variety of life stages and ages. Once they enter the teaching profession, career changers who teach continue to reflect considerable variety, in terms of where they teach, the types of schools that employ them, and how long they have taught. Demographically, however, career changers who teach look similar to teachers overall.

In terms of prior career experience, career changers have a diverse background both in terms of the number of jobs they held prior to teaching and the foci of their previous careers. Prior to teaching, 31% say that they worked at another full-time job for three to five years, whereas 26% say they worked for six to 10 years before becoming a teacher, and a plurality (43%) worked for more than 10 years in a different capacity before becoming a teacher. And 35% of the respondents had held a series of jobs in different fields, with 34% holding a series of jobs in the same field, and 31% saying that they held one job prior to pursuing teaching.

The types of jobs that career changers held are just as varied as their career paths. No sectors of the workplace are significantly more likely than others to produce career changers; instead, the talent pool is wide. Sales and retail (12%) and management/administration (10%) top the list of previous types of employment, but diversity of field is the norm, as food service/restaurant workers (7%), secretarial/clerical positions (7%), banking/financial employees (7%), and nursing/health care workers (5%) are all reflected in significant proportions.

Taking a look at a demographic profile of career changers who teach, we find that they look very similar to teachers overall in terms of gender, race, and education attainment.

Table 1: Profile of All Teachers and of Career Changers in the Classroom

	All Teachers[18] %	Career-Changers %
Men	25	27
Women	75	73
Whites	83	78
Blacks	8	8
Hispanics	6	6
Bachelor's degree	52	43*
Postgraduate work/degree	48	52*

**Sum reflects a 5% response of "not sure."*

Once career changers enter the schoolhouse door, heterogeneity continues to be a defining characteristic. There is a range in terms of how long they have been employed as teachers, at

[18] According to 2003-04 Public School Teacher Data from the National Center for Education Statistics.

what age they started teaching, the kind of schools that they teach in, the subject matter they teach, and how long they expect to teach.

- **Length of Service**: Two in five (41%) career changers have been teaching for 11 years or more, with another 44% teaching for four to 10 years, and 15% teaching for three years or less.

Table 2: How Long Have Career-Changers Been Teaching? (%)	
Length of service: 3 years or less	15
Length of service: 4 to 6 years	22
Length of service: 7 to 10 years	22
Length of service: 11 to 15 years	23
Length of service: 16 to 20 years	18

- **Age Started Teaching**: Three in 10 (30%) career changers started teaching between the ages of 25 to 32, 34% started teaching when they were 33 to 42 years old, and 29% when they were 43 years old or over.[19]
- **Type of School**: Three in five (40%) career changers teach in pre-K (2%) or elementary schools (38%), with 25% teaching at the middle/junior high school level, and 32% teaching high school. Men are much more likely to teach at the high school level (48%), whereas women are much more likely to teach at elementary schools (46%). Teachers who started teaching when they were 43 years old or over are more likely to teach in high schools (40% to 32% overall).

Career changers who teach math and science are more likely than other career changers to have worked outside of teaching for more than 10 years and to have taken a pay cut to teach—perhaps another indication of the difficulty of attracting STEM teachers.

- **Area of First School**: Career changers who started their teaching career in small town or rural schools are more likely to have taught for a longer duration than those from a metropolitan school. One in four (25%) teachers who started teaching at a small town or rural school has taught for 16 to 20 years, compared with 12% for those who started at a metropolitan school.
- **Subject Matter**: Nearly three in 10 (29%) career changers are general classroom teachers (nearly all of whom are elementary teachers), with 20% focusing in math and science, 13% in special education, and another 13% are English/writing or reading teachers. This is another instance of gender disparity, as women are more likely to be general classroom teachers (35%), whereas men are more likely to be math or science teachers (34%). Additionally, the vast majority of those with a degree in science or math are science or math teachers (67%).
- **STEM Teachers**: Taking a closer look at math and science teachers, who are in great demand, we find that in terms of gender, they are much more divided than the overall sample: 45% are men and 55% are women. They also are less likely to have a postgraduate education degree (27%, compared with 36% overall). And

[19] Age started teaching is an estimate using a formula based on how long a respondent has been employed as a teacher (Q2c) and their age (QF1).

in terms of their preparation, they are less likely to have pursued a traditional university or college preparation program than the overall sample (48% to 59%).

- **Educational Attainment:** A majority (52%) of career changers report that they have received a postgraduate degree (46%) or taken some postgraduate courses (6%), whereas 43% say that they have a bachelor's degree. Length of service in teaching is correlated with higher levels of educational attainment, with longer-serving teachers more likely to have a postgraduate degree. Consider that 63% of teachers who have taught for 16 to 20 years have taken postgraduate classes or achieved a degree, whereas 44% of those with six years or less in the classroom report having done so. Salary also is significantly affected by education attainment. Among teachers who earned a salary of $50,000 or more last year, 77% report that they had completed postgraduate work, compared with 58% among those with a salary between $40,000 and $50,000, and 43% among teachers with an income of less than $40,000.
- **Postgraduate Education Degree:** One in three (35%) career changers reports having completed a postgraduate education degree, whereas two in three (65%) career changers have not.

Table 3 (next page) provides a snapshot of career changers in terms of various demographics and attitudinal measures.

The data reveals that a significant proportion of career changers made their switch to teaching in middle age or close to it. However, an analysis of the data finds that many career changers enter the profession earlier in life and subsequently with a different career path. Taking a closer look at three groups of career changers by what age they entered the profession helps to underscore the heterogeneity of the midcareer teaching population.

Career changers who began their teaching career between the ages of 25 and 32 make up 30% of the sample. As Table 3 (next page) shows, they are currently much younger than the overall sample, and, relatedly, they are more likely to have less prior work experience before they became teachers.

Teachers on the other end of the age spectrum, those who started teaching when they were age 43 or over, look different than other teachers when it comes to work experience and impact on salary, as well as their reasons to teach and their assessments of specific aspects of their preparation programs. Overall, teachers who started teaching when they were 43 years old or over make up 29% of the sample. Because they started teaching when they were older, their prior work experience is much more robust, with 73% reporting that they worked for more than 10 years. That being said, they are not much more likely to say that they experienced a decrease in salary when compared with the overall sample (37% to 32%).

In terms of motivations to teach, those who started teaching when they were older offer a different perspective. They are less likely to say that salary or compensation is important (27%, compared with 34% overall) and much less concerned about opportunities for professional growth (37%, compared with 51%).

The following table presents data that should be interpreted as descriptive, though not necessarily statistically significant. As such, a more meaningful way to look at the table is to look at these groups by themselves rather comparing the groups to each other.

Table 3: Profile of Career Changers by Age When Teaching Career Began				
	All Career Changers %	Started: 25 to 32 %	Started: 33 to 42 %	Started: 43 and Over %
Men	27	35	21	25
Women	73	65	79	75
Current age: 25 to 34	12	33	1	–
Current age: 35 to 49	46	67	59	20
Current age: 50 and over	37	–	40	80
Age started teaching: 25 to 32	30	–	–	–
Age started teaching: 33 to 42	34	–	–	–
Age started teaching: 43 and over	29	–	–	–
Whites	78	80	81	84
Minorities	18	23	20	16
Bachelor's degree	43	47	41	48
Postgraduate degree	52	53	51	46
Graduate degree in education	35	33	43	34
No graduate degree in education	65	67	57	66
Previous work: 3 to 5 years	31	59	19	11
Previous work: 6 to 10 years	26	35	28	16
Previous work: More than 10 years	43	6	53	73
Held series of jobs/different fields	35	40	32	33
Held series of jobs/same field	34	20	40	42
Held one job	31	39	27	25
Pre-K/elementary school	40	45	41	31
Middle school/junior high school	25	25	27	26
Senior high school	32	29	29	40
General classroom	29	32	27	24
Subject: Math/science	20	17	24	20
Subject: Special education	13	7	14	18
Subject: English/writing/reading	13	16	9	14
Subject: Social studies/history/econ./gov't	9	14	8	8
Subject: Humanities	8	7	11	6
Subject: Other	8	7	7	10

IV. THE APPEAL OF TEACHING

While career changers come to the teaching profession from varied backgrounds, what ties many of them together is the clear passion that they have for teaching. Career changers are drawn to teaching because of what they can give back to others, not what they themselves get.

Respondents were asked to describe in their own words what motivated them to become a teacher. Most respond in altruistic terms, including 26% who say that teaching was something that they always wanted to do/a dream, 24% who enjoy working with children, and 11% who wanted to make a difference and be a positive influence. The following quotes reflect career changers' own words as to what motivated them to become a teacher.

"Impact on children. I enjoy helping students to learn and grow and a fulfilling career to help students."

"I feel like I'm helping and contributing to a better world. I'm leaving something here….I believe in education."

"It was what I always should have done. It is just what I'm supposed to be doing and what I love doing."

"I like to watch kids learn, the aha moment."

"I wanted to be able to make a difference in kids' lives."

"I always enjoyed working with kids...in another industry you might meet and change one life...with teaching you can actually make a difference in a kid's life forever."

"I wanted to do something meaningful."

"I wanted to help. I enjoy teaching and children and making a difference in people's lives and also in my life."

"The love of learning and being with the children all day and seeing the excitement of when they figure out they know it."

Career changers were asked to rate a number of job qualities based on how important each of them was in their decision to become a teacher (Table 4, next page). The rank order in which career changers place these various job qualities is similar to the motivations they outlined in their own words, with more aspirational and altruistic qualities at the top of the list, and financial and reputational qualities lower on the list. This result reinforces the results of our prior research, which found that potential teachers also place greater importance on intrinsic rewards and altruistic job qualities than on financial benefits or the perceived value that society places on various careers.

Table 4: Importance of Job Qualities in Decision to Become a Teacher	
	Extremely/ Quite Important %
Finding the job personally rewarding	93
Contributing to society and making a difference	89
Working with children	86
Teaching a subject that really interests you	80
Having a schedule that allows you greater time for family and personal interests	63
Opportunities for professional growth	51
The health care benefits you would receive as a teacher	43
The retirement benefits you would receive as a teacher	38
Improving your salary or compensation	34
The job is held in respect by our society	32
Needing a new job after being laid off or losing a previous job	10

Across the board, in their decision to become a teacher, career changers place great importance on finding the job personally rewarding (93% extremely/quite important), contributing to society and making a difference (89%), and working with children (86%). However, on some of the middle-tier qualities, differences in attitudes exist. Not surprisingly, elementary and high school teachers divide over the qualities of working with children and teaching a subject that really interests them. Elementary school teachers are more likely to say that working with children is more important than teaching a subject that really interests them (95% versus 71%), while high school teachers place greater import on teaching a subject that really interests them (87%) over working with children (78%).

Overall, 63% of career changers who teach say that having a schedule that allows them greater time for family and personal interests was an extremely or quite important reason to go into teaching. Relatedly, and also to be expected, 18- to 49-year-old women are more likely to say this is important than are women age 50 and over (71% versus 53%).

One in two (51%) career changers who teach says that opportunities for professional growth are important to them, and this aspect of teaching is more important for teachers under age 40 (63%), those who started teaching when they were 25 to 32 years old (61%), and minority teachers (72%). Additionally, significant differences on this dimension are seen among those who say that a switch to teaching increased their salary compared with those who say teaching decreased their salary. Three in five (60%) teachers who say that teaching increased their salary also say that opportunities for professional growth were an important factor to them in deciding to become a teacher, whereas two in five (40%) teachers who say that a career move to teaching decreased their salary felt that professional growth was an important factor in the decision.

Opportunity for professional growth is not the only area in which the impact on salary reveals differences in attitudes. On any number of job qualities, most notably related to

financial compensation, those who say that teaching increased their salary place greater importance on financial qualities than do those who say that teaching decreased their salary. This is most apparent on the item related to salary: Among those who say teaching increased their salary, 53% say salary was important to their decision to teach, compared with just 16% among those who say their decision to become a teacher decreased their salary. As Table 5 shows, on most non-financial qualities, both groups rate job qualities on par with each other. However, in four instances—opportunities for professional growth, anticipated retirement benefits as a teacher, improved salary or compensation, and society's respect for the job—there are real and meaningful differences between the two groups.

Table 5: Importance of Job Qualities by Impact of Salary
Proportion who say extremely or quite important

	Increased Salary %	Decreased Salary %
Finding the job personally rewarding	93	93
Contributing to society and making a difference	91	86
Working with children	88	87
Teaching a subject that really interests you	81	79
Having a schedule that allows you greater time for family and personal interests	67	55
Opportunities for professional growth	60	40
The health care benefits you would receive as a teacher	47	36
The retirement benefits you would receive as a teacher	44	28
Improving your salary or compensation	53	16
The job is held in respect by our society	40	25
Needing a new job after being laid off or losing a previous job	11	7

From our previous survey of potential teachers, we learned the importance of salary as a major factor in how likely potential teachers would be to actually pursue a teaching career. Potential teachers who had expectations for a lower salary were more likely to consider teaching in the near term, while those who required a higher starting salary said that they were not likely to pursue a teaching career for at least several more years.

When career changers compare their previous job's salary with their salary as a teacher, we find support for the finding from our previous survey. Two in three (67%) career changers report that switching to become a teacher either increased their salary (46%) or that their salary stayed about the same (21%), whereas 32% report that the switch decreased their salary.

Only one in three career changers takes a pay cut to teach, suggesting that the profession may still lose many potential teachers to salary issues.

While career changers are much more likely to pursue a career in teaching because of the rewarding experiences and challenges that teaching provides, money still does matter. Last year's survey of potential teachers, along with this year's result that most career changers did not take a pay cut to switch careers, suggests

that the teaching profession is losing a significant number of potential teachers to salary issues. Consider that two in three (64%) individuals who changed careers to teach began their teaching career earning less than $30,000 and 48% of career changers who started teaching in the past six years say that this is the case.

V. Work Experience and Impact of Salary

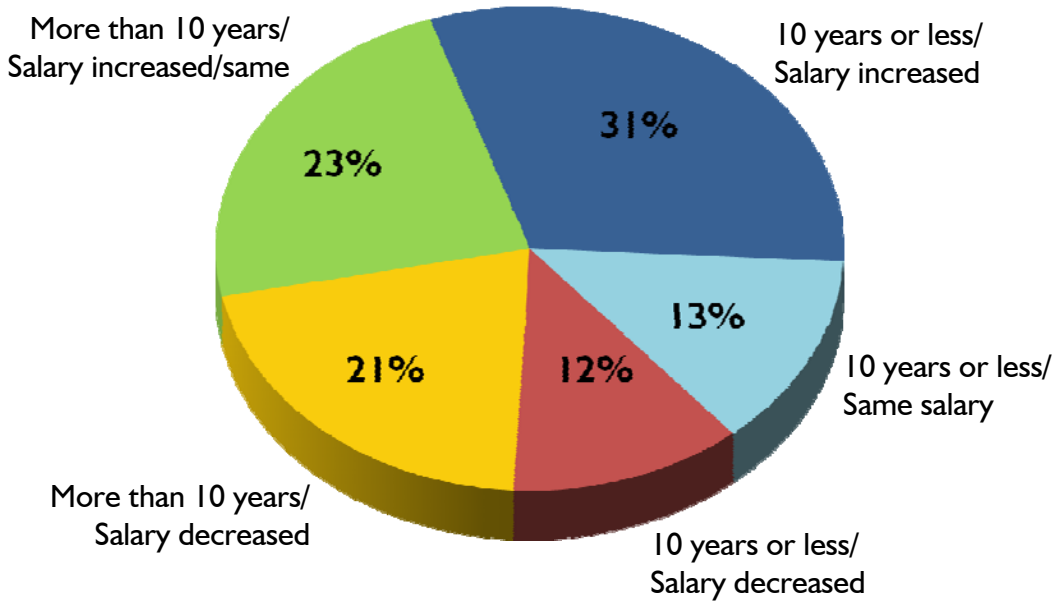
The data shows that teachers who come to the classroom from other jobs and professions are not a monolithic group. Their variety is seen in many ways, including demographically, attitudinally, and in the prior work experience and pathways that they bring to the classroom.

In thinking about career changers, much of the focus traditionally has been placed on those who enter the profession from high-level professional jobs, frequently later in their career. However, the reality is that this is just one group, and they are in the minority of career changers. Some career changers make financial sacrifices to enter the teaching profession, but for many, becoming a teacher is a move upward, or financially no worse than a lateral move. Understanding where career changers come from and how to appeal to them is a critical aspect of attracting more career changers. **Schools and school districts must develop strategies to appeal to both those who are making a financial sacrifice to enter the teaching profession as well as the majority, for whom a teacher's salary reflects either a similar salary to their previous job, or is an increase.**

The following chart breaks down career changers into several categories based on prior work experience and how a teacher's salary compares with the salary at their previous job. As the chart shows, only one in five (21%) career changers falls into the category of working for more than 10 years prior to becoming a teacher and having their salary decrease as a result of entering the teaching profession.

Based on the data, two archetypes emerge: those who worked for more than 10 years and took a pay cut to become a teacher, and those who worked for 10 years or less, and for whom teaching represents an increase in salary.

Figure 1: Career-Changing Teachers by Prior Work Experience/Salary Impact



A closer look at career changers who have more than 10 years of prior work experience and whose salary decreased when they became a teacher reveals a group that is highly motivated by teaching's intrinsic benefits and altruistic qualities. They have made a real and meaningful financial sacrifice to become a teacher. Three in five say that their salary decreased a great deal (61%) when they became a teacher, while 39% say that their salary decreased just somewhat.

Looking at their prior work experience, more-experienced career changers who took a pay cut to teach are much more likely to have worked a series of jobs in the same field (55% to 34%). They also are not as likely to say that opportunities for professional growth are important to them (34% to 51%). And these teachers appear to have entered the profession with their eyes wide open in terms of salary: Just 14% say that improving their salary or compensation was important to them. The extrinsic benefits and rewards that teaching offers are not major attractors for this group. For them, the appeal of being a teacher is more being in the classroom and teaching. On the whole, financial considerations and benefits are of less import to them.

On the other side of the spectrum are career changers who have 10 years or less of work experience and whose salary increased when they became a teacher (31% of the sample). They tend to be younger—one in four (25%) is 25 to 34 years old, compared with 12% overall and three in five (62%) members of this group worked for three to five years before teaching. They are more likely to work at the elementary school level (48% to 38%) and, relatedly, as general classroom teachers (37% to 29%). While they worked for a comparatively short period of time, 44% report that they held a series of jobs in different fields, compared with 35% overall.

Those who have 10 years or less of work experience and whose salary increased when they started teaching are more likely than those with longer experience and higher salaries before they entered teaching to have entered a traditional preparation program at a college or university (66% compared to 45%). They are more likely to cite financial considerations and how society views the job as being important considerations for them. A majority (55%) say that improving their salary or compensation was an important consideration to them in their decision to become a teacher (34% overall). And 43% say that the job being held in respect by society was important to them (32% overall). They also are more likely to say that other financial benefits were important considerations to them. In contrast with those on the other end of the prior work experience and salary spectrum, career changers who come to the classroom with 10 years or less of prior work experience and whose salary increased as a result of becoming a teacher also are more likely to say that opportunities for professional growth were an important consideration (61%).

Career changers who worked in other fields for 10 years or less, at lower salaries, are more likely to say they chose teaching for the financial benefits and social status.

Table 6 (next page) provides an overall demographic comparison of all career changers in the classroom, as well as across the two categories—those with less work experience who make more as teachers than they did previously as opposed to those with more work experience who took pay cuts to teach. The purpose of the chart is to gain an understanding of what each of

these distinct groups look like in broad, descriptive strokes and is not intended to compare the two groups against each other, as many of the differences are not statistically significant.

Table 6: Teachers by Previous Work Experience and Impact of Teaching on Salary			
	All Career Changers %	**Work More Than 10 Years/ Salary Decreased** %	**Work 10 Years or Less/ Salary Increased** %
% of sample	100	21	31
Male	27	39	20
Female	73	61	80
Age 25 to 34	12	–	25
Age 35 to 49	46	44	48
Age 50 and over	37	51	21
Undergraduate degree: Science or math	15	23	11
Undergraduate degree: Education	42	23	52
Elementary school	40	27	51
Middle/junior high school	25	33	20
High school	33	37	27
General classroom	29	19	37
Subject: Math/science	20	36	11
Subject: Special education	13	14	13
Subject: English/writing/reading	13	8	19
Subject: Social studies/history/econ./gov't	9	11	7
Subject: Humanities	8	5	9
Subject: Other	8	7	4
Held series of jobs/different fields	35	24	44
Held series of jobs/same field	34	55	22
Held one job	31	21	33
Traditional preparation program	59	45	66
Alternative shortened preparation program	26	34	23

VI. EVALUATION OF PREPARATION PROGRAMS

Career changers enter the teaching profession from varied backgrounds; **however, the majority (59%) of them enrolled in a traditional master's program at a university or college for their teacher preparation.** Another 26% enrolled in a shortened or alternative program at a university or college, while 7% received their preparation in a four-year bachelor's degree program (33% combined). The remaining 8% entered a non-traditional, non-university preparation program. Regardless of route into teaching, they rate the quality of the program that they enrolled in favorably and offer positive assessments for the specifics that the program offered. However, career changers believe that their preparation program falls short when they are asked how well it actually prepares them for the real-world challenges that they face in the classroom. This indicates a real and serious need for preparation programs to adapt their instruction to focus more on practical applications.

A traditional master's program at a university or college is the preparation program of choice across all subgroups. Notably, however, minority teachers, those who started teaching later in life, as well as more recently hired teachers, and high school teachers are more likely than others to have entered teaching via a non-traditional preparation program at a university or college. This holds true for teachers in STEM fields, as well (40% vs. 32% of the overall sample).

Table 7: Type of Teacher Preparation Program

	Traditional %	Non-traditional university based %	Non-traditional/ Non-university %
All career changers who teach	59	33	8
Whites	61	31	8
Minorities	45	43	12
Length of service: 6 years or less	49	40	11
Length of service: 7 years or more	64	28	8
Elementary school	68	26	6
Middle/junior high school	62	29	9
High school	49	41	10
Continue teaching for 5 years or less	47	41	12
Continue teaching for 6 to 10 years	63	26	11
Continue teaching for more than 10 years	59	34	7
Started teaching: Ages 25 to 32	62	32	6
Started teaching: Ages 33 to 42	59	32	9
Started teaching: Ages 43 and over	51	36	13

When asked to rate the overall quality of their teacher preparation program, career changers are overwhelmingly positive, but they do believe that their preparation program falls short when they evaluate it in the context of the challenges that they face once they enter the classroom.

As to overall quality, fully 89% say that their program's quality was excellent (48%) or good (41%), whereas just 10% say the program was just fair (8%) or poor (2%). Little differentiation exists on this measure, though those who enrolled in a traditional teacher preparation program at a university or college are more likely to give their program an excellent or good rating (94%) than those who enrolled in a non-traditional program at a university or college (85%).[20]

Career changers were asked to provide details on the specifics of their teacher preparation program, including whether various aspects were offered and how helpful each aspect was to them in their transition to teaching. At least three in four career changers report that their preparation program offered each aspect, except for one—course work in working with English Language Learners (ELL), which only 46% say their program offered.

Fewer than half of all career changers said their preparation programs had offered courses on how to work with English language learners.

Although little difference exists in what career changers report as being offered in their preparation programs, teachers prepared in traditional programs are slightly more likely to indicate that specific aspects were offered than are their counterparts prepared via non-traditional routes either at a university or college or outside of an educational setting. Length of service is more of a dividing line on several aspects, with longer-serving teachers progressively less likely to report that specific aspects were included in their program, reflecting both evolving challenges in the field and a concomitant evolving knowledge base in teacher preparation. The divide is most notable on course work in special education. (While the sample size of respondents who rated their teacher preparation program as just fair or poor is too small to make a definitive assessment, these respondents appear less likely to say that various aspects were included as part of their program.)

Table 8: Aspect Offered as Part of Teacher Preparation Program/ Proportion Who Say This Was Offered

	Length of Service: 6 years or less %	Length of Service: 16 to 20 years %
Course work in special education	84	64
Course work in standards-based instruction	85	65
Course work in English Language Learners (ELL)	54	28

Though these responses on overall quality of the teacher preparation program seem positive, responses were not as uniform when career changers were asked to assess how helpful they found various aspects of their teacher preparation programs when making the transition to teaching. Among those who say that an aspect was offered as part of their program, majorities

[20] The remaining 8% of the sample who took a non-traditional, non-university based program do not represent a large enough sample to look at by itself.

majorities say that this aspect was very or fairly helpful to them. However, the assessment varies—from 88% who say that the clinical experience or practicum that they received was very or fairly helpful to a slim majority of 52% for course work in ELL (remember that just 46% report that course work in ELL was offered as part of their program). Longer-serving teachers (16 to 20 years) were more likely to report that ELL was not offered as part of their program (70%).

On no measures does a significant difference exist between traditional and alternative programs in terms of how helpful specific program aspects are in the transition to becoming a teacher. A few interesting differences occur in assessing aspects, however. In looking at course work in diverse learners, women (73%) are more likely than men (57%) to say that this was very or fairly helpful. Course work in classroom management is deemed more helpful by elementary and middle school teachers (69%) than high school teachers (55%).

Table 9: Aspect Offered as Part of Teacher Preparation Program/ How Helpful Was Aspect in Transition to Teaching

	Offered %	Very/Fairly Helpful %
Course work in content or subject matter	94	77
Course work in pedagogy or methods	94	69
Course work in child or adolescent development	92	68
Clinical experience or practicum	90	88
Course work in classroom management	89	65
Coursework in diverse learners	88	69
Course work in assessment and use of data	85	62
Course work in curriculum design	84	65
Coursework in special education	77	62
Course work in standards-based instruction	75	64
Course work in English Language Learners (ELL)	46	52

Respondents also were asked to recall specific benefits or features of their teacher preparation program. Here, there is much more gradation as to whether the benefit or feature was offered. The vast majority of preparation programs offer practical experience in a classroom (91%), the option of summer courses (91%), and evening classes (84%). After that, options vary by program (Table 10), though no significant differentiation exists in offerings when comparing traditional and non-traditional programs. In general, respondents who give their program higher marks for preparing them to teach say that it included more features than those who are not as favorable to their program.

More recent teachers are more likely to say that several features— including mentoring, subsidized tuition, and online courses—were offered as part of their preparation program.

Table 10: Benefit/Feature Offered as Part of Teacher Preparation Program by Teacher Length of Service				
	6 Years or Less %	7 to 10 Years %	11 to 15 Years %	16 to 20 Years %
Mentoring	69	65	68	48
Subsidized tuition	53	47	38	38
Online courses	64	41	34	26

Minority teachers are more likely than white teachers to have attended a program that offered benefits that focus on support, including mentoring (78% among minorities, 60% among whites), subsidized tuition (60%, compared with 43%), and credit for life experience (49%, compared with 30%).

Looking at how important various features were to respondents in terms of selecting their teacher preparation program, we find that practical experience in a classroom (79% very important consideration) and guaranteed employment upon completion (73%) top the list. While the vast majority of teacher preparation programs offer practical experience in the classroom, this is not the case when it comes to guaranteed employment, as just 26% of respondents say this was offered in their program.

Table 11: Benefit/Feature Offered as Part of Teacher Preparation Program/ How Important a Consideration Was Benefit/Feature		
	Offered %	Very Important %
Practical experience in a classroom	91	79
The option of courses over the summer	91	64
Evening classes	84	62
A master's degree in education	70	57
Mentoring	64	56
The program was tailored to professionals rather than college-age students	63	59
Subsidized tuition	46	59
Online courses	45	44
Credit for life experience	33	52
Loan forgiveness	31	55
Guaranteed employment upon completion	26	73

Thinking back to when they were pursuing their certification, career changers cite the biggest obstacles as being the juggling of work and/or family responsibilities with preparation requirements (48%), not having an income during their training or internship period (30%), and the cost of the program (19%). For women, juggling work and/or family responsibilities with preparation requirements was much more of an obstacle (52%).

Notably, even though career changers largely give favorable ratings to their teacher preparation program overall, as well as to specific aspects of the program, they did not feel well prepared by their programs to meet the challenges that they faced once they entered the classroom. This dichotomy highlights the need for teacher preparation programs to more closely tailor their focus to the real-world challenges of the classroom.

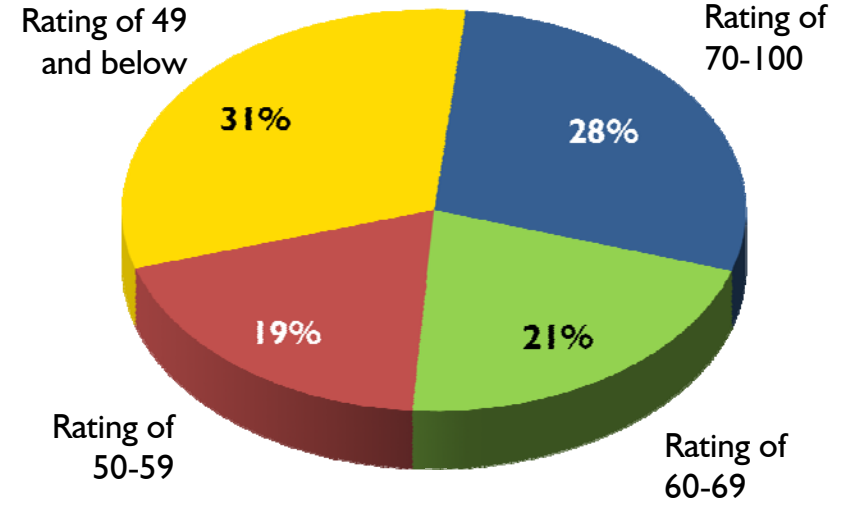
Respondents were asked how well they were prepared to face a series of different challenges related to teaching before they entered the classroom. While most respondents rate their teacher preparation program highly overall, in only one instance do a majority of teachers say that they received above-average preparation (a rating of "4" or "5" on a five-point scale). The higher teachers rated their preparation program, the better prepared they believe they were to meet specific challenges upon entering the classroom. The data in the following table suggest that, in general, more recent entrants into teaching may feel somewhat better prepared for classroom challenges than longer-tenured career changers, due perhaps to changes in teacher preparation over the past 15 years. Still, even more recent entrants considered their preparation program to have fallen short in most areas when it came to preparing them for real-world classroom challenges.

Table 12: Prepared for Challenges
Proportion who say "4" or "5" on a five-point scale

	All Teachers %	6 Years or Less %	16 to 20 Years %
Organizing instruction and developing effective lesson plans	61	67	49
Working with students of different abilities	43	45	33
Adjusting to the schedule of schools	40	48	31
Incorporating state standards	39	55	18
Managing student behavior in the classroom	37	40	22
Using assessment data to inform teaching and learning	37	46	30
Teaching students with learning disabilities	34	37	29
Communicating with parents and other caregivers	33	40	23
Using technology	33	48	11
Utilizing feedback from administrators and mentors	32	42	22
Adjusting to the culture of schools	32	36	20
Handling the paperwork and administrative responsibilities	23	25	20
Teaching English Language Learners	12	14	2

In addition to looking at the ratings individually, an index was created using the 13 challenges listed in Table 12 (above). The index assigned the same point value to each of the 13 challenges and a zero- to 100-point scale was created to measure overall how well career changers were prepared for the challenges that they faced upon entering the classroom. Based on this index, **only 28% of all career changers score their preparation in facing these challenges as a 70 or above, or in educational terms, a "C" or higher.**

Figure 2: Rating of Preparation Program
(on 0-100 scale)



Among those who scored their programs below 70 on the index, they are more likely to rate specific aspects of their teacher preparation program as being less helpful and also are more likely to say that specific aspects were not offered as part of their program. Career changers who rated their programs below 70 on the index are less likely to say that course work in pedagogy and methods was helpful to them as well as course work in content and subject matter, course work in curriculum design, course work in special education, course work in classroom management, and course work in child or adolescent development. And those who rated their programs below 70 are also less likely to say that specific components were offered as part of their program.

As Table 13 (next page) demonstrates, those who rate their preparation upon entering the classroom as low on the index (below 70) are less likely to say that the support that they received upon entering the classroom was excellent or good. And they are less likely to indicate that they received specific support, including mentoring and orientation from their principal. Looking more closely at those who rate their classroom preparation the lowest (49 or below, not reflected in the table), it is particularly noteworthy that they are considerably less likely to say that they received they received excellent or good support upon entering the classroom, including mentoring (46%, as compared with 68% overall), but are somewhat

more likely to teach at a school with students from a poor economic background (40%, as compared with 34% overall).

While 89% of career changers rate the overall quality of the teacher preparation program that they enrolled in as excellent or good and find various components of their teacher preparation program to be helpful, clearly preparation programs are not meeting all of the challenges that teachers face once they begin teaching. **Consider that a majority (56%) of those who say their teacher preparation program was excellent nonetheless rate that same program at 70 points or less on the index when asked how well it prepared them for specific challenges they encountered once they started teaching.**

Table 13: Profile of Teachers by Rating of Preparation Index

	All Teachers %	70-100 %	Below 70 %
Length of service: 6 years or less	37	46	35
Length of service: 7 years or more	63	54	65
Continue teaching: More than 10 years	52	61	49
Continue teaching: 6 to 10 years	26	21	28
Continue teaching: 5 years or less	15	13	16
Took a traditional program	59	61	58
Took a non-traditional university program	33	32	32
Took a non-traditional/non-university program	8	7	10
Rating of preparation program: excellent/good	89	96	87
Worked with mentor	53	64	49
Received orientation by principal	39	50	35
Received informal support from teachers/staff	64	65	64
Support at first teaching position: excellent/good	68	86	61
Students: Poor	34	33	34
Students: Working class or lower middle class	35	32	36
Students: Middle/upper middle class	21	26	19

VII. Support System for Teachers

Upon entering their first school, career changers report that the quality of support they received was high, however, many teachers are not receiving critical support including orientation by their principal or mentoring. The data does suggest that mentoring is important, particularly if the mentorship is long-term and in-depth. Unfortunately, even among those who did report having a mentor, for a significant proportion it was a shorter-term experience.

Thinking back to when they started teaching, 68% of career changers rate the quality of support that they received to be excellent (38%) or good (30%), whereas 32% say it was just fair (19%) or poor (13%).

Looking at specific types of support, 64% of career changers report receiving support informally from other teachers and staff, 53% say they worked with a mentor, and 39% received orientation by the principal. Women (57%) are more likely than men (43%) to say that they worked with a mentor. As we found in the teacher preparation program, mentoring does seem to be a newer concept—fully 63% of teachers who have worked for six years or less worked with a mentor, compared with 38% among those who have taught for 16 to 20 years. Mentoring also seems to be a bit more prevalent at the elementary school level (59%) than in middle/junior high schools (49%) or high schools (48%).

Two out of three career changers had little or no mentoring—and the literature is clear that limited mentoring correlates with high turnover.

For most career changers who did have a mentor, the mentoring relationship was meaningful while it lasted, but unfortunately for most it did not continue past the first year. In their first year in teaching, three in five (62%) teachers who had a mentor report that they met with their mentor teacher once a week (28%) or more (34%). Another 27% met with their mentor once or twice a month in the first year, with 9% meeting less frequently than that, and 2% never having met with their mentor. While 62% of those with a mentor met at least once a week, this actually means that just 33% of all career changers had a meaningful mentoring experience, leaving two in three (67%) career changers with either no mentoring at all (47%), or a less meaningful, less structured mentoring experience (20%). And only 35% of mentored teachers (or 18% of all career changers) say that they continued meeting with their mentor after their first year in the classroom. Importantly, the literature is clear that weak or non-existent mentoring is associated with dramatically higher rates of teacher turnover.[21]

Overall, the mentoring process was overwhelmingly beneficial for career changers who had a mentor, as 81% of those who were mentored say it was very (66%) or fairly (15%) helpful to them. And the more frequent the contact, the more beneficial the mentorship was. Among

[21] T. Smith and R. Ingersoll, 2004, "What are the effects of induction and mentoring on beginning teacher turnover?" *American Educational Research Journal* 41 (3), pp. 681-714. ; see the research resources available through the New Teacher Center (http://www.newteachercenter.org/cgi-bin/norti_area/research.cgi); CPRE, *Taking Human Capital Seriously*.

those who met with their mentor at least once a week, 94% describe the mentorship as very or fairly helpful, compared with 59% among those who met less than once a week.

Clearly mentoring is a major factor in teacher development. Overall, 53% of career changers report that they worked with a mentor. Among those who met with their mentor at least once a week, 93% described their quality of support as excellent or good. Among those who had a mentor but met less frequently, a still-respectable 69% rate their support highly. However, among those who did not have a mentor (47% of the sample), just 51% describe their quality of support as excellent or good and 49% say it was just fair or poor. And mentoring does have an impact on how long teachers plan to teach. Among those who met with a mentor at least once a week, 64% plan to teach for more than 10 years, compared with 50% for those who met with their mentor less frequently than that, and 45% for those who never met with a mentor.

Career changers felt most supported when they received not only mentoring, but also support from other teachers and staff, including their principal.

While mentoring clearly is important, it is not by itself enough. It does take an entire school working together to raise a teacher. Consider that among teachers who only received mentoring, 52% say that their quality of support was excellent or good while 48% say it was just fair or poor. However, when a teacher receives all three levels of support—mentoring, support from other teachers and staff, and evaluations by the principal—94% report that their quality of support was excellent or good.

Relatedly, overall, 24% of career changers report that they were evaluated four or more times by their principal in their first year of teaching. A majority (56%) of teachers say that they were evaluated two to three times, and 13% say they were evaluated once (6% say they were never evaluated by their principal). As is the case with the level of mentoring, the number of times that a principal evaluated a teacher does have a correlation with the teacher's rating of the quality of support that they received.

Table 14: Quality of Support by Frequency of Evaluation by Principal

	Once/ Never %	2 to 3 Times %	4 or More Times %
Excellent/good	44	70	84
Just fair/poor	56	30	16

VIII. LOOKING AHEAD

Near the end of the survey, career changers were asked what steps their state leaders could take to encourage more midcareer candidates to pursue teaching. Far and away the most common response focused on financial considerations, which is consistent with last year's Woodrow Wilson survey of potential teachers. When those potential teachers were asked what steps policymakers could take to encourage them to pursue a career in teaching, they cited competitive salaries as the best course of action.

As we learned from both last year's survey of potential teachers and this year's survey of career changers who have become teachers, those who pursue a career in teaching are not in it for the money. However, the marching orders to public officials are clear: in career changers' own words, **the top two steps that leaders could take are making salaries adequate and competitive with other fields (37%) and suggesting financial incentives that make the transition to teaching more affordable (9%)**.

Looking ahead, the majority (52%) of career changers plan to continue teaching for more than 10 more years, while 26% plan to teach for six to 10 more years, and 15% indicate that they plan to teach for five more years or less. Fully 78% of career changers under age 40 plan to teach for more than 10 more years; this is also the case for 69% of teachers who are 40 to 49 years old. Even one in four (25%) teachers who are age 50 and over plans to teach for more than 10 more years.

And when career changers who teach were asked to assess their decision to become a teacher, **a nearly unanimous 94% say that they are glad about the choice that they made**.