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A Review of Research on the 'Teach for' Programs Based in the USA, UK, and Other Countries (Teach for All) Completed for the Queensland College of Teachers

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Table of Contents

Tabl	e of Contents	ii
Exec	cutive Summary	3
1	Introduction	5
2	Background	5
3	Responses to QCT Questions	7
4	Discussion	10
Refe	erences	12
APP	ENDIX 1 Structure of the two years for TFA and Teach First Programme	es13

Executive Summary

Background

A review of the available research on intensive teacher preparation programs is presented. The review is focused on the initial training programmes of Teach for America (TFA) and of Teach First (England). The review provides a summary of key journal articles that related to either of these programs, and has also reviewed those articles which make some reference to alternative certification programs generally.

The search for articles was initially conducted through an electronic database using a key word search for the two key intensive teacher training programs of interest to QCT: *Teach for America* and *Teach First (England)*. Papers meeting this criterion and published from 2000 to the present were examined. The majority of papers were focused on Teach for America, not Teach First. There is no obvious reason for a dearth of articles on Teach First appearing in the search.

The Times Education Supplement provided a number of short editorial pieces from 2008 to the present on the Teach First program. The major source of research of Teach First reported here is the 2008 report of Ofsted: *Rising to the challenge: a review of Teach First Initial teacher training programme.* The Ofsted review draws on evidence from a national survey of newly qualified teachers conducted by the Training & Development Agency for schools (TDA).

Teach for America is the focus of several academic papers. Most appear in teacher education journals such as Educational Researcher and Journal of Teacher Education. There are also some published in policy journals such as Journal of Policy Analysis and Management.

Key Findings

Question 1: Is there any evidence that teachers prepared through the 'Teach for' route are any more or less effective than those prepared through traditional routes?

Short Response:

No: There is very limited research on this.

A 2006 research paper by Glazerman et al 2006 found there to be "little evidence whether teachers with strong academic backgrounds but limited exposure to teaching practice can be effective " (p.72).

Question 2: Do students of teachers prepared through the 'Teach for America', 'Teach First' (UK) and 'Teach for all' courses do better on measures of student outcomes than those of teachers prepared via traditional courses for teachers?

Short Response:

No: There is very limited research on this.

Cochran-Smith(2005) and Darling –Hammond (2006) concur that there is limited reliable evidence of the relationships between teachers' certification status to student learning gains –and much more research is needed in this field.

Question 3: What are the shortcomings of the 'Teach for' courses from the viewpoint of participants?

Short Response:

The research suggests evidence of the following but it is difficult to isolate these only to TFA recruits – as they are often mixed with other newly placed teachers. This evidence is linked to the final question regarding retention.

- o Poor sense of preparedness
- o Poor sense of efficacy
- o Poor school-based mentoring
- Negative views of others

Question 4: How do exit rates from the profession for those prepared via 'Teach for America', 'Teach First' (UK) and 'Teach for all' compare to exit rates of teachers prepared via traditional courses?

Short Response:

In the USA and England between 50% and 60 % remain after the two years of the programs. The factor that is strongly argued by the Executive of these programs is the claim that while not actively in teaching, there is a strong alumni of these programs who are influencing policy and school reform from their high level professional positions.

Summary

This review provides some confirmation of key issues for framing future decisions about teacher preparation in Queensland:

Three important issues that have been identified are:

- o teaching as a profession to be aspired to;
- o role of school based mentors;
- o university and school partnerships

As Darling-Hammond succinctly explains (2010,42):

The central issue I believe teacher education must confront is how to foster learning about and from practice **in** practice"

This review includes a one page appendix to assist readers in quickly understanding the key components of each of the two programmes as they are operating currently in their respective countries.

1 Introduction

The following review was completed in response to a request from the QCT. The QCT brief for the review focused on any research or evidence of four questions:

- 1. Is there any evidence that teachers prepared through the 'Teach for' route are any more or less effective than those prepared through traditional routes?
- 2. Do students of teachers prepared through the 'Teach for America', 'Teach First' (UK) and 'Teach for all' courses do better on measures of student outcomes than those of teachers prepared via traditional courses for teachers?
- 3. What are the shortcomings of the 'Teach for' courses from the viewpoint of participants?
- 4. How do exit rates from the profession for those prepared via 'Teach for America', 'Teach First' (UK) and 'Teach for all' compare to exit rates of teachers prepared via traditional courses?

2 Background

TFA began in 1990. Teach First began in 2002. Both TFA and Teach First are specifically developed to staff schools which have low student achievement in maths, reading and language arts and are located in socially disadvantaged areas. It is important to note that both countries continue to have other models of teacher preparation, including 4 year undergraduate programs and immersion programs. Thus the research findings of these "Teach for" programs are presented as a comparison with a cohort of teachers representing the full range of preparation models – bot traditional and alternative.

There have been intensive teacher training programs modeled on Teach for America (TFA). In particular, Teach for All was formed in 2007 through the collaboration of TFA and Teach First as a result of "social entrepreneurs from more than a dozen countries" seeking support. Further, the original TFA and Teach First programs in their respective countries developed in different ways and have over time changed their practices in ways which they argue have improved the programs.

In England Teach First has had a major Ofsted review, and is currently trialing a primary Teach First – it originally was only for secondary school settings. Also, a further program called Teach Now is about to launch. This will be a scheme for career changers; specifically: "high flying bankers, lawyers and others to retrain as teachers" (TES, 2009)

In the following section a brief background is provided to inform the reader of the key features that are currently practised. Appendix 1 provides a summary of the structures of the two programs as they now operate. Then four sections follow in which each of the questions raised by the QCT are addressed.

Brief Background to the TFA

When considering the TFA the following points concerning teacher preparation in America need to be kept in mind:

- o different states have different systems;
- Alternative Certification Programs (ACP) vary considerably from no prior preparation to levels of support pre and during. Darling-Hammond & Youngs (2002) describe some as "Carefully constructed" alternative certification programs.
- ACPs exist in fields where teacher shortage is a major problem – eg science; maths

The No Child Left Behind policy stimulated alternative certification programs admitting recruits before they have completed or sometimes even begun formal preparation for teaching. There is now greater commonality in licensing categories and reciprocity arrangements that apply across states due to the operation of the National Association of State Directors of Teacher Education & Certification [NASDTEC]. There is now in any certification process, a requirement that teachers, while being given 'emergency' or 'probationary' certification, be completing certain courses and testing.

There are 15 regions where TFA teachers are placed – including Chicago, Los Angeles, Houston, and New Orleans. The founder Wendy Kopp is reported in Darling-Hammond (1994) as arguing that "we really believe teachers are made through experience". By 2009 TFA received 35,000 applications for 4000 places. David Labaree (2010) from Stanford University describes the TFA program as one "that we teacher educators love to hate" (p.48). His paper focuses on the marketing advantage that TFA enjoys over teacher education programs in recruiting students into the role of teacher. "TFA's escape clause allows graduates to do good without major personal sacrifice" (p.49). I refer to this again in my summary comments.

Brief Background to the Teach First

The stated mission of Teach First is: "to address educational disadvantage by transforming exceptional graduates into effective inspirational teachers and leaders in the field". The trainees are placed into challenging secondary schools for 2 years. In the first year they are trained to meet the Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) standards. By the end of the second year (while completing a Masters of Teaching and Learning) the trainees become fully qualified teachers.

In an Oftsed report that evaluated the program in London schools, Teach First was described as a charitable organisation and the training year is funded by the Training and Development Agency [TDA] on behalf of the Dept of Children, Schools & Families (DCSF). The employment based nature of the scheme "relies heavily on the quality of training provided by schools" (Ofsted

2008): The Oftsed report in 2008 used a case study approach selecting London (28 schools with Teach First trainees).

More than 3,000 graduates applied in 2009. 580 were selected to start the 2009 summer course. Places on the course have increased from 260 when Teach First was launched in 2002.

3 Responses to QCT Questions

Question 1: Is there any evidence that teachers prepared through the 'Teach for' route are any more or less effective than those prepared through traditional routes?

Short Response:

No: There is very limited research on this.

A 2006 research paper by Glazerman et al 2006 found there to be "little evidence whether teachers with strong academic backgrounds but limited exposure to teaching practice can be effective " (p.72)

Explanation:

Determining 'effectiveness" of the TFA and Teach First programs is problematic. Research is particularly limited in England. In the US, Linda Darling-Hammond and colleagues from Stanford University are the most prominent critics of the Teach for America program.

- In 1994 Darling-Hammond published a paper in which she argued that TFA had serious shortcomings particularly for students' learning.
- Since 2002 several papers have been published challenging the claims made by the TFA administrators.

A major problem for gaining clear understandings about the impact of the TFA is that across the USA there are

- o several Alternative Certification Programs (ACP), and
- a range in the quality of 'traditional' (four year undergraduate) teacher training programs.

Thus when researchers investigate the effectiveness of TFA graduates in schools they are comparing them with other teachers who may be poorly trained but from 'traditional' programs as well as teachers from other ACPs such as "Troops to Teachers".

Darling-Hammond (2010) argues that the length of time to complete teacher training programs should not be considered as the key determinant of the quality of that preparation.

In the English context, a similar pattern of certification exists. The major recent source of evaluation of Teach First is the 2008 Ofsted report. In this report, reference was made to the limited skills and knowledge of Teach First trainees to

- o employ a range of teaching strategies and
- o to manage student behaviour.

Ofsted 2008 stated that these aspects of their teaching "could have been improved with more sustained focused training & supervision in the school from an early stage in the year" (p.11). In their evaluation schools, the report identified that the breadth of university tutors' responsibilities "is wider than normally found elsewhere in teacher training" (p.13).

Question 2: Do students of teachers prepared through the 'Teach for America', 'Teach First' (UK) and 'Teach for All' courses do better on measures of student outcomes than those of teachers prepared via traditional courses for teachers?

Short Response:

No: There is very limited research on this.

Cochran-Smith(2005) and Darling –Hammond (2006) concur that there is limited reliable evidence of the relationships between teachers' certification status to student learning gains –and much more research is needed in this field.

Explanation:

It is difficult to provide a clear answer to this question within the USA context due to the range and quality of teacher preparation. The following points emerge from examination of the literature:

- Houston research in 2001: An evaluation of the performance of TFA teachers relative to new teachers and all teachers found no statistically significant difference in learning gains of students of TFA teachers compared with students of all new teachers (Raymond & Fletcher, 2002). What isn't highlighted in this study is that Houston has an unusually high number of uncertified teachers.
- 2. The sites where the recruits of these programs are specifically placed are in the hardest to staff schools. Darling-Hammond (2008, 2006) highlights the less prepared and less experienced teachers are being placed in the neediest schools.

But

- Cochran-Smith (2005) refers to a reliable study linking teacher preparation with pupils' learning: the *Mathematica Study* (2004: Decker, Mayer & Glazerman). Cochran-Smith (2005) describes the study as a methodological breakthrough in the research on teacher preparation – "It is one of the few studies in the broad field of teacher education that links teacher preparation with pupils' learning (p.5)"
 - This study was carried out independently to assess the impact of TFA recruitment and training on pupils' test gains
 - It used an experimental design and a large nationwide sample (2000 students in 100 elementary classrooms).

Glazerman et al (2006) concluded that TFA teachers had "a positive impact on the math achievement of their students." and "no impacts on reading". (p.94)

For the English Teach First trainees, the only available independent document containing reference to impact on student outcomes was the Oftsed report

(2008). This report did not focus on test results but on "a markedly beneficial impact on the schools involved, including":

- o commitment to students in the lessons and
- in the broader life of the school eg clubs.

Question 3: What are the shortcomings of the 'Teach for' courses from the viewpoint of participants?

Short Response:

The research suggests evidence of the following:

- a. Poor sense of preparedness
- b. Poor sense of efficacy
- c. Poor school-based mentoring
- d. Negative views of others

Again it is difficult to isolate this evidence only to TFA recruits – as the research considers the results from mixed teacher cohorts. This evidence is linked to the final question regarding retention.

Explanation

A recent study in New York (Darling-Hammond, Chung & Frelow, 2002) reported on TFA recruits feeling markedly less well prepared for teaching than graduates of teacher education programs. These teachers were under 3 years experience and included participants from a variety of programs (TFA, Peace Corps or Teacher Opportunity Corps and traditional teacher education programs). A general finding was that recruits who had taken pathways in to teaching that were not 'traditional' felt less well prepared– particularly regarding:

- (a) curriculum and
- (b) teaching strategies including ow to meet student learning needs

The only difference was on use of technology.

Evidence from recruits collected for the 2008 Oftsed report, highlighted a major shortcoming of the Teach First program to be the quality of the school based teacher mentoring: "the quality of mentoring for about half the trainees was good" (Oftsed, 2008:13)

One trainee identified the negative views of experienced teachers in the school where she was placed as problematic i.e. they questioned why she would choose teaching.

Darling Hammond (2002) links the issues of preparedness for TFA recruits to efficacy research. She argues that there is a strong relationship between teachers' views of their preparedness and their sense of teaching efficacy. This then affects their plans to stay.

Question 4: How do exit rates from the profession for those prepared via 'Teach for America', 'Teach First' (UK) and 'Teach for All' compare to exit rates of teachers prepared via traditional courses?

Short Response:

In the USA and England between 50% and 60 % remain after the two years of the programs. The factor that is strongly argued by the Executive of these programs is the claim that while not actively in teaching, there is a strong alumni of these programs who are influencing policy and school reform from their high level professional positions.

Explanation

Four years after TFA began, Darling Hammond wrote that of the 489 original corps of TFA who entered in 1990 only 206 were still teaching after 2 years. This attrition rate she argued was nearly twice that of other new teachers (1994,p.22). More recently Darling-Hammond & Youngs (2002) cite Raymond, Fletcher & Luque's 2001 research into TFA recruits in Houston where high attrition rates for TFA teachers were reported. Over the three years of the study "from 60 to 100% of TFA recruits had left after their second year of teaching" (Darling-Hammond & Youngs, 2002:22).

For Teach First, in 2006/2007 according to the evaluation by Oftsed – there were 210 in the first year in 70 schools – by the end of the year very few trainees had withdrawn. For those who completed the two year programme, "around half remain in teaching" (Ofsted, 2008). In 2009, 50% alumni of Teach First are still teaching and 30% of these are in leadership positions. Of those alumni who have left it is claimed that 70% continue to engage in some way in Teach First – e.g. Ambassadors for the program or 'guests' in schools.

4 Discussion

What is emerging in the USA as intensive graduate programs become more popular?

By 2008, a particular intensive preparation model emerged and such researchers as Darling-Hammond are giving it some support. It is referred to as the "residency" model (Darling-Hammond, 2008), and has some similarities to TFA. The "Residency" model (occurring in Chicago and Boston) involves:

- o a careful screening for recruits;
- an offer of a year long paid "residency" under the "tutelage" of "master teachers" and
- o carefully constructed coursework from partner universities.

Recruits beyond their first year continue to receive mentoring and are expected to teach for 5 years in the district or are required to pay money back.

What are the critical success factors for the "Teach for" programs?

The quality of outcomes for these programs rely on:

- i. critical role of school based mentors and
- ii. provision of support tutors visiting the recruits; and thirdly
- iii. importance of establishing a network and a means for a community or team approach for these new teachers.

It is reasonable to conclude that these success factors are common to all teacher preparation programs.

Why are the "Teach for" programs successful?

As the debates continue regarding TFA, it continues to be very successful and it is important to ask 'why?' Labaree (2010) provides an analysis worth considering in the context of teacher preparation. He focuses on the marketing of TFA and its emphasis on selection. TFA candidates are selected in the context of "high status". TFA is very exclusive and very rewarding – for those who stay the two years. It is a fully paid internship. As a result teacher recruits who do not come through TFA – and in fact are studying through traditional programs - are becoming viewed as less able – needing longer – not as 'talented'. (Labaree, 2010, 53).

In England, the status of the Teach First graduates is evidenced by their recent development of a Policy First publication: *Lessons from the Front 2009*. They describe this recent innovation as providing opportunities for Ambassadors (alumni of the Teach First programme) to share insights on issues in education and shape policy for the future. It "constitutes a movement towards the greater involvement of teachers in policy discussions". But currently, it should be noted - Scotland does not register Teach First graduates. (TES 2009).

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APPENDIX 1 Structure of the two years for TFA and Teach First Programmes

Details	Teach for America: TFA	Teach First
Began Costs per recruit for training (Teach First figures are based on London Schools' Advisory Group – Oftsed 2008) The final dot point for Teach First is from a Times Education Supplement (April, 2009: "Platinum" sponsors have included the Canary Wharf Group, HSBC and the now defunct Lehman Brothers Foundation Europe").	1990 US\$20,000 for preparation. There are now approx 880 corps members teaching 130,000 secondary school students There is currently a \$2000 Fellowship offered to 50 Maths, Science and Engin graduates - this is a sign on bonus.	 2002 £2500 from TDA for funding school based mentoring Each participating school pays Teach First a deposit plus a term amount for each trainee The school pays the trainee on the unqualified teacher scale. about half of Teach First's annual budget is raised from one-off and long-term grants
Foundation Europe). Levels	Primary and Secondary High performing academic graduates More applicants than places Recruit becomes a corps On completion becomes an Ambassador or a Program	Secondary only – but trialing Primary and Early Childhood High performing academic graduates More applicants than places Recruits become trainees in first year (QTS by end of year) and participants in second year (fully qualified at and)
Pre Training	Director 5 weeks intensive coursework and student teaching (70 hours per week) + 1-2 weeks in assigned region	 (fully qualified at end) 6 week "summer institute" – with a partner university 1. 2 weeks in a school (one week in the placement school) 2. 4 weeks course work
In school support	 On going support from other TFA and Faculty located in each district: 200 program directors with a responsibility for 30 corps members each Commitment to helping recruits to exhibit effective teaching practices. Web portal- directors are "on demand" to give web support 	 First year "traineeship" with univ tutor and school based mentor to be in two schools + 6 individual days of pd at a central location organised by the university Plus a journal kept by trainee with input from mentor
	 Teaching as Leadership framework provides a set of professional standards for TFA. Regional support network annual TFA Symposium 	 Plus a Leadership Development Programme Bi-Annual Teach First Report to Government Completing a Masters in Teaching & Learning