

Meeting NCLB's Highly Qualified Requirement via Alternative Route Training: Opportunities and Pitfalls

Designing Effective Alternative Route Programs for SETs

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Features of Effective SE Alternative Route Preparation

- Rosenberg and Sindelar (in press). The proliferation of alternative routes in special education: A critical review of the literature. *Journal of Special Education*.
 - Based on 10 evaluations and studies
 - Measures include cost, teacher competence, student outcomes, and persistence

Features of Effective SE Alternative Route Preparation

- Meaningful Collaboration Among Program Providers (usually IHEs, SEAs, LEAs)
- Substantial, Rigorous, and Programmatic Content
- Supervision and Mentorship Support

Effective SE AR Preparation

- Alternative routes can produce competent teachers who persist in the field, however. . .
 - “alternative” is not a synonym for “streamlined”
 - more research is needed before we know the extent to which training may be abbreviated without diminishing competence and persistence
 - we know little about the effect that streamlining training may have on teacher professionalism

Part II: Insights from Economic Analysis

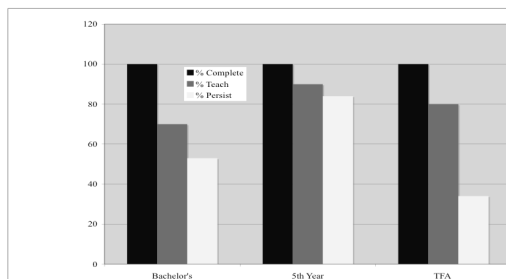
Participants

- Bureau of Economic and Business Research, Warrington School of Business Administration, University of Florida
 - Chifeng Dai
 - David Denslow
 - James Dewey
- Johns Hopkins University
 - Mike Rosenberg

Cost Effectiveness of Preparation Alternatives

- Darling-Hammond (2000), “Solving the Dilemmas of Teacher Supply, Demand, and Standards”
- Compared costs of (a) traditional bachelor’s degree programs, (b) 5th year Holmes-type programs, and (c) Teach for America.
- Considered attrition 3 years after program completion

Average Retention Rates



Average Costs/Participant, and Footnotes

	Initial Cost	Survivor Cost
Bachelor's*	\$18,300	\$43,800
5th-Year**	\$24,400	\$36,500
TFA***	\$10,000	\$45,900

*Based on NCES estimates of the average instructional FTE costs at public colleges and universities in 1996 dollars

**Based on same NCES estimate for four years.

***Based "on cost data from a number of programs."

Adelman (1986) estimated the cost of alternative route preparation at \$5,000 to which D-H added "\$3,000 to \$5,000" for "administration, mentorship, and facilities." The 1993 TFA Annual Report estimated cost per participant to be \$12,000.

Cost Effectiveness

- Cost effectiveness is a function of persistence as well as initial per trainee cost.
 - Thus, the program with the highest initial cost turned out to be the most cost effective after 3 years.
- Bachelor’s degree programs suffer significant attrition at graduation.
- Teach for America suffers most attrition during the first 3 years of teaching.

Cost Effectiveness Model

- Includes both initial per trainee cost and persistence
- We also believe that it’s essential to take into consideration the unique contribution that programs make to the supply of SETs
 - Because, if a *publicly subsidized* program merely draws candidates away from other programs, it only adds to cost, regardless of how cost effective it may be relative to the others
- Other important variables: potential supply of trainees, teacher quality, persistence in hard to staff schools

Project INVEST

How can states best allocate training funds to maximize the supply of highly qualified SETs?

1. What is the cost effectiveness of various special education teacher preparation alternatives?
2. Does the attrition rate of beginning teachers vary as a function of the nature of their initial preparation?
 - 2a. What program elements are associated with low attrition programs?
3. Does per student cost of initial preparation vary as a function of the nature of the preparation program?
4. Does beginning teacher quality vary as a function of the nature of initial preparation?
 - 4a. What program elements characterize programs that train highly competent teachers?

Economic Analysis and Program Design

Chifeng Dai, David Denslow, James Dewey, and David Lenze, BEBR

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Considerations

- Program location
- Candidate selection
- Other considerations
 - Program cost and sponsorship
 - Financial support
 - Program requirements
 - Practice teaching

Program Location

- Most beginning teachers stick close to home
 - Boyd, Lankford, Loeb, & Wycoff, 2003
- Districts with hard-to-staff schools should offer programs for members of the neighborhood and school community
 - People who have more location specific human capital (Becker, 1975)

Implications for Recruitment and Program Location

- Teacher labor markets tend to be local markets, so. . . .
- in planning an alternative route program, recruit locally!
- Operate programs in communities served by hard-to-staff schools.

Candidate Selection: Risks and Potential

New state subsidized programs should supplement the supply of special education teachers and not compete with existing programs for students and resources. Without supplementing supply, the addition of new programs increases costs.

- Alternative route programs tend to be targeted for particular populations of trainees
 - Mid-career changers
 - Early career changers
 - Retirees
 - Military Retirees
 - Paraprofessionals

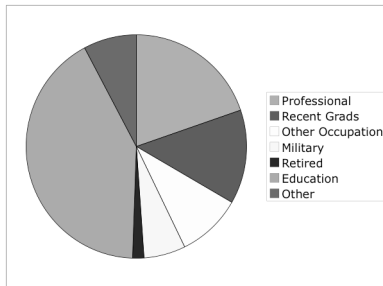
ARC Participants

- In defining teacher quality, USDE emphasizes teachers' content expertise and verbal ability, positing that these factors are more closely linked to student achievement than teachers' pedagogical skill.
 - So, an accountant may become a very good math teacher and an engineer, a very good science teacher.
- What's the analog for content expertise in special education? In elementary education?

ARC Participants

- Does anyone truly believe that teaching SWDs requires no pedagogical skill?
 - For that matter, does anyone truly believe that teaching math and science to secondary students requires no pedagogical skill?
- NCLB posits that eliminating barriers to entry will attract into teaching mid-career professionals and recent college graduates who did not major in teacher preparation.
 - What does the evidence show? Feistritzer, 2004

Among ARC Graduates Currently Teaching, There Are More Educators than Professionals and Recent Grads Combined



Why? What's at Stake for Mid-Career Changers?

- How much income does a mid-career changer (of the NCLB stripe) sacrifice to become a teacher?

	Income Sacrificed by Mid-Career Changers			
	Accountants/Auditors		Mechanical Engineers	
	Dade	Hillsborough	Dade	Hillsborough
Cut in lifetime earnings	\$447,102	\$362,296	\$486,179	\$584,531
Cut in annual pay	\$43,285	\$34,978	\$47,068	\$56,590
Cut in hourly pay	\$16.24	\$12.65	\$18.13	\$23.45

Who's Gonna Do That?

- Truly Altruistic
- Inspired
- Independently Wealthy
- Retired and Unfulfilled
- Incompetent
- Unemployed
- Unemployable. . . .

Thus, motive for change does become an important consideration in choosing mid-career changers for teacher preparation programs. There are good motives and poor motives for changing.

Cost and Program Sponsorship

- Because *initial preparation* is valuable to many districts, an individual district may be reluctant to finance it.
 - Human capital theory posits that participants should pay for general training, like initial preparation, that prepares them to work in any district
- However, districts may be more willing to finance programs for current employees who seek career change.
 - In this case, trainees have a stake in the community and district and are more likely to persist there

Financial Support

- High costs may discourage even highly motivated and highly qualified candidates
- However, when participants bear a share of the costs, less highly committed candidates may be weeded out
- May be awarded in exchange for service in hard-to-staff schools

Program Requirements

- Rigorous program requirements may discourage casual candidates, or candidates with less potential for or commitment to teaching.
- Requirements should be designed so that the *opportunity cost* of completing them is greater for less qualified candidates.
- But overly rigorous requirements may discourage even capable and motivated candidates.

Practice Teaching/OJT

- Bears a *high opportunity cost*: After all, it's a full-time, semester long uncompensated job!
- Reducing the cost could be a true incentive
- One way to do that is OJT--on the job training, just as it's done in CA and elsewhere.

Practice Teaching/OJT: Caveats

- OJT may be more appropriate for some kinds of trainees than others
 - For example, trainees with *occupation specific human capital*
- Impact on Students?
 - Sanders work makes clear the persistent and cumulative effects of poor teaching. . . .
 - Yet, are students with teachers learning on the job worse off than they would be with emergency licensed teachers, who are not necessarily in training?
 - That depends on whom the on-the-job trainee replaced. . . .

Putting It All Together

Comparison of Two Programs

Step Up Programs

- Bachelor's degree programs for paraprofessionals
 - Tend to be lengthy (because participants may enter with nothing more than an AA degree)
 - Because they are degree programs, there's typically extensive coursework
 - Practice teaching relative to coursework is deemphasized
- Example: VCUF Program

Mid-Career Changers

- Tend to be fast track programs
 - Training may be abbreviated
 - Participants may be moved rapidly into classrooms as teachers of records
 - Field experience emphasized over pedagogical coursework
- Example: TFA

Candidate Selection

- Step-up Program Candidates
 - Typically bring more knowledge about both the job of education and the school and community.
 - Economists say that they bring *job- and location-specific "human capital"* to their work, making them more likely to remain on the job.
 - *Job match* characteristics are better known to workers and employers in step up programs
 - Paraprofessionals do not take \$\$ hit from the change.

Candidate Selection

- Mid-Career Changers may be a riskier clientele, depending on
 - Their reasons for changing careers
 - The salary differential
 - The similarity between teaching and their previous careers (how much occupation specific human capital they bring to teaching)

Participant Selection: Reducing the Risk

- Build programs for qualified people who won't readily return to previous employment
 - Retired military officers are a good example
- If program participants are taking large pay cuts or are moving from fields quite unlike education, assess their motivation for making the change
- Make subsidies contingent on teaching
 - Like OSEP's service obligation requirement

Conclusions

- If any program can justify a large program cost, it is step up programs for current district personnel in high needs districts

On the Other Hand. . .

- Step up programs do have limitations
 - In most districts there is a limited supply of good candidates for such programs
 - Often, college degrees are awarded, necessitating IHE collaboration.
 - Districts are left with the problem of finding replacements for their best paraprofessionals.