Qualifiers That Matter (And Those That Don’t)

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Overview

- We need to diversify and improve teacher training
- But we don’t actually know that much about how to train teachers well
- “Raising the bar” on the teaching profession can lead to false negatives... and false positives
- Even if we did know what “worked” in teacher training, we’d have an implementation challenge
- Schools know much more about teachers after they become teachers than beforehand
In theory, effective preparation is a function of four inputs:

- Admission
- Coursework
- Licensure
- In-service

Taken together, these barriers to entry should ensure that the best candidates – and only the best candidates - end up in front of students.
Unfortunately, program-level inputs have little to no bearing on teacher effectiveness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coursework</th>
<th>Type of coursework</th>
<th>Length of coursework</th>
<th>Licensure status</th>
<th>Alt vs. traditional prep</th>
<th>Different formats of professional development</th>
<th>Content-specific PD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Additional content courses, such as math or English, nor education courses, such as classroom management or child development improved student outcomes</td>
<td>No evidence that length of preparation program leads to better student outcomes (IES)</td>
<td>Study of Los Angeles teachers found no difference in student outcomes among teachers who were traditionally certified, alternatively certified, or uncertified</td>
<td>Multiple studies show no difference in student outcomes by preparation route</td>
<td>TNTP reviewed district PD activities and found that only 30% of teachers showed noticeable improvement</td>
<td>Randomized controlled studies conducted by IES found PD in reading, math, and science did not improve teacher effectiveness in those subject areas</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Researchers tried to find differences between preparation programs in 6 states, but could find no meaningful differences in the quality of teachers produced.
There are far larger differences *within* programs than between them.

Figure B.3. The Distribution of Teacher Effectiveness for In-State Prepared vs. Out-of-State Teachers. 
*Note:* Lines for in-state prepared teachers are continuous and on the left. Lines for out-of-state prepared teachers are dashed and on the right.
Candidate-level requirements are slightly better predictors of effectiveness...

These individual characteristics have some predictive power, but:

- All of these characteristics combined explain only a tiny portion of teacher variation
- Individuals with strong test scores may not be the best teachers, and vice versa
...But candidate-level measures can lead to false negatives or false positives.

“Raising the bar” via tests like Praxis II also has diversity implications. Nationally, Black candidates have Praxis II passing rates 30-40 percent lower than white candidates.
Even if we knew how to improve teacher training, we may not be able to implement it

- As of 2019, North Carolina had...
  - 73 preparation program providers with...
  - 765 programs, which recommended...
  - 4,611 licenses, for an average of...
  - 4.8 licenses per program

- The vast majority of the programs are very small
  - Only 5 programs had more than 50 completers
  - 354 programs had more than 1 but less than 20 completers
Early-career results are far more predictive than all pre-service indicators combined

• On average, teachers tend to improve rapidly in their early years, but early performance results offer insights into future gains.
The same growth pattern shows up in principal observations.

Figure 6. Within-teacher returns to experience for prototypical teachers at the 75th and 25th percentile of returns to experience rates.
Lesson: Past teaching performance is the best predictor for future teaching performance

• Eliminate barriers that don’t have a strong link to actual teaching performance
• Make it less risky to try teaching, perhaps through the apprenticeship model
• Allow schools and districts, especially high-performing ones, to select, train, and license their teachers
• Encourage great teachers and leaders to mentor new candidates
References

• Slide 4: See endnotes via No Guarantees: Is it Possible to Ensure Teachers Are Ready on Day One?
• Slide 5: Rating Teacher-Preparation Programs
• Slide 6: Teacher Preparation Policies and Their Effect on Student Achievement
• Slide 8: Can We Simply Raise the Bar on Teacher Quality? and Evaluating Prospective Teachers: Testing the Predictive Validity of the edTPA
• Slide 9: Data on North Carolina teacher preparation programs via Title2.ed.gov
• Slide 10: Do First Impressions Matter? Predicting Early Career Teacher Effectiveness
• Slide 11: Teacher Skill Development: Evidence from Performance Ratings by Principals
• Slide 12: Leveraging the student-teaching experience to train tomorrow’s great teachers and Ready to Lead on Day One: Predicting Novice Principal Effectiveness with Information Available at Time of Hire