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April 15, 2015

Effectiveness of Alternative Teacher Preparation on Student Academic Achievement:
A Comparative Study of Teach for America and the Memphis Teacher Residency

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Abstract

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By Alexis Haley Jones

This research study provides insight into two alternative teacher preparation programs located in Memphis, Tennessee. It uses a review of current literature, examines both program websites and a yearbook and the Tennessee Higher Education Commissions 2014 Report Card for each program, and interviews with first year teachers to understand the effectiveness of alternative teacher preparation programs on student academic achievement. The findings show that the Memphis Teacher Residency and Teach for America Memphis have aspects that prepare effective teachers, as student test scores indicate. The findings suggest that education reformers could benefit from additional program research in order to pinpoint which program aspects result in teacher effectiveness in order that they might be replicated.

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CHAPTER 1

THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

Two years into college, I decided to change my primary field of study from biology to education. Initially, my goal was to become an orthopedic surgeon. However, after learning about the injustices that existed, and still exist, in American education, the field of education became increasingly more attractive. I had a desire to serve as a teacher in the urban context and I wanted to enter the classroom full time following graduation. When I see an issue or set my mind to do something, I am determined to act on it and begin to move full speed. There was a roadblock, though – where would I even learn how to teach?

While I was an Educational Studies major, the department in which I studied only offered a theoretical, historical, philosophical and psychological overview of education. Opportunities to practice teaching techniques through student teaching, for example, were non-existent. Any hands-on experience would have to be acquired during a summer internship or outside of class. In addition, I would have to earn my teaching license elsewhere. Teach for America offered a solution. I could train for five weeks during the summer following graduation and have my own classroom by the fall of the same year. The roadblock could now be removed, or so I thought.

During the summer following my sophomore year in college, I spent six weeks working at a Christian sports camp in Missouri. While there, I heard about another teaching opportunity with an organization called the Memphis Teacher Residency (MTR). The primary difference I noted between MTR and TFA was that the former consisted of a longer commitment period and extended training. I was then faced with

choosing between two reputable programs that offered prospective teachers like me an alternative route to the classroom. The question became a matter of which program would best prepare me to enter an urban classroom.

As my junior year at Emory ended and senior year was upon me, I became interested in how the effectiveness of alternative teacher preparation differed across the Memphis Teacher Residency and Teach for America Memphis, specifically. After spending my last summer as a college student interning in Memphis, Tennessee as a math teacher, I knew that it was the city I wanted to teach in. Yet, deciding which of the two alternative routes I would take remained a difficult decision. As I will explain later, both the Memphis Teacher Residency and Teach for America are attractive for differing reasons and both have their strengths and weaknesses. In spite of public opinions surrounding these alternative teacher preparation programs, my goal was to remain as objective as possible.

The purpose of my honors thesis is not to pit one program against the other or to say that one is better than the other. The “ultimate purpose [of qualitative research] is learning” (Rossman and Rallis, 2003, p. 4). My research focuses on comparing how teachers from each program are trained to enter the classroom and the effectiveness of that training. In this study I conducted a document analysis to understand pertinent aspects of each program. In addition, I compared the Tennessee Higher Education Commission’s report card for the Memphis Teacher Residency and for Teach For America Memphis, as well as interviewed first year teachers to understand how they feel about the amount and quality of preparation they received and the effect it has on their current experience.

Statement of the Problem

Alternative teacher preparation programs have increased in number over the last decade. According to the National Research Council, “between 70 and 80 percent [of aspiring teachers] are enrolled in ‘traditional’ programs housed in postsecondary institutions” (2010, p. 2). This leaves between 20 and 30 percent of aspiring teachers to be drawn from alternative teacher preparation programs. More recently the efficacy of these programs has been called into question. With an increase in accountability for student learning and achievement, and a greater emphasis on the role of educators, comes the need to evaluate teacher preparation programs as teacher quality and effectiveness significantly influence the performance of students.

Alternative routes to teaching are relatively new compared to traditional routes to teaching and are attractive for a number of reasons. Prospective teachers are drawn to the opportunity to bypass most certification prerequisites and enter the classroom full-time after just a few short weeks of training. In addition, alternative programs are arguably more suitable in terms of providing school districts with teachers to match their needs (Kee, 2012). Differences in training exist not only between alternative and traditional routes, but also within alternative teacher preparation itself. In Memphis particularly, two distinct alternative teacher preparation models exist. One provides its participants with five weeks of preservice training while the other provides its participants with a yearlong residency prior to entering the classroom full-time. How the two programs differ in length and coursework could have significant implications for “teachers’ feelings of preparedness, their persistence in the teaching profession, and ultimately, student outcomes” (Kee, 2012). Before seeking to understand how teacher quality and

effectiveness influence student achievement, I first need to research how teacher feelings of preparation vary across alternative teacher preparation programs.

The purpose of this study is to compare the approaches and effectiveness of two teacher preparation programs for high-needs schools in Memphis, Tennessee, Teach for America and the Memphis Teacher Residency. Although there is an abundance of literature on teacher preparation programs, little research has answered the question of what elements of the existing programs produce effective teachers. With the constant addition of school reforms and fads, it is important to pause and review the programs already in place to prepare teachers to enter high-needs schools, especially. This study contributes to the current literature on teacher preparation programs in that it explores the methods employed and measures used to develop and evaluate the quality of educators.

Background

Limited research exists to support the direct impact of teacher preparation on student achievement. This is not to say that a correlation between teacher preparation and retention or success does not exist. The lack of data simply points to a greater need for research to clarify the impact. The argument that the underpreparation of new teachers contributes to poor achievement has led to “concerns regarding new teachers readiness for the workforce, calls to improving teacher preparation, and more recently, to interest in examining the achievement of students who are taught by new teachers who enter the profession through different programs or pathways” (Gansle, Noell & Burns, 2012). Recently, longitudinal achievement data that links a network of students, teachers and preparation programs has become available, providing useful information for examining

teacher preparation programs in terms of their influence on student outcomes determined by standardized testing (Gansle et al., 2012).

A high demand for educators has led many states and districts to lower their standards for their entry into schools. As a result underqualified and underprepared teachers enter the classroom, many of which are disproportionately assigned to high-needs schools dominated by minority and low-income students. (Darling-Hammond, Chung & Frelow, 2002). In a country that prizes the education of the next generation, especially for citizenship purposes and the creation of a good society, teachers should be better prepared to educate them. As the demand for educators has increased, so has the number of alternative teacher certification programs for individuals holding a bachelor's degree. These alternative programs vary in length of preparation from "short summer programs that place candidates in teaching assignments with full responsibility for students after a few weeks of training to those that offer 1- or 2-year post-baccalaureate programs with ongoing support, integrated coursework, close mentoring, and supervision" (Darling-Hammond, et al., 2002). With the percentage of alternatively certified teachers entering the classroom, it is important to qualify their sense of preparedness as well as understand how varying alternative preparation programs impact student outcomes.

Research Questions:

The following three questions will guide this study of two alternative teacher preparation programs in Memphis, Tennessee.

1. How does the Memphis Teacher Residency (MTR) model of teacher preparation differ from that of Teach for America (TFA) in Memphis, Tennessee?
2. How do student achievement outcomes differ across the MTR and TFA programs?
3. How well do teachers in each program feel about the preparation received from their respective programs?

Research Goals:

The purpose of this study is to determine the effectiveness of alternative teacher preparation programs through the comparison of the Memphis Teacher Residency and Teach for America's models for preparing teachers to enter Memphis city schools, to investigate how student achievement outcomes differ across the two programs, and to qualify how well each program prepares teachers to succeed in urban schools in Memphis.

Educational Significance:

Unfortunately, determining the efficacy of nontraditional routes to teaching is a difficult task given the amount of variation in program design and implementation across the existing alternative routes to teaching, and the evident disagreement amongst educational researchers in terms of the most effective methods of training (Seftor and Mayer, 2003, p. 1). However, the need to carefully examine alternative teacher preparation programs remains important for several reasons: 1) the an increase in accountability for student learning following the No Child Left Behind legislation, 2) the

significant influence of teacher quality on student achievement, and 3) the types of participants currently recruited to participate in nontraditional routes to teaching.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

This report of my research study begins with a literature review: (1) defining alternative teacher preparation, (2) surveying existing program designs and implementation, (3) briefly discussing the purpose for alternative teacher preparation programs, and (4) contextualizing the effectiveness of alternative teacher preparation on student achievement.

Alternative Teacher Preparation: Definition and Implementation

Teacher education programs that prepare teachers to enter the classroom and acquire licensure fall into two major categories: traditional and nontraditional, or alternative. Traditional programs are “university based” and are “completed prior to a first year of teaching,” while nontraditional programs are for “university graduates who have not gone through a teacher education program while obtaining a degree” (Linek, Sampson, Haas, Sadler, Moore and Nylan, 2012, p. 67). Alternative teacher preparation programs are “designed with the academic background of the student in mind, and usually requires from one to two additional years of education beyond the baccalaureate degree” (Adcock & Mahlios, 2005, p. 60). As Vicki LeeAnn Hall writes, “Non-traditional programs are usually less expensive than a four year teacher training program, [potentially] compress training into five to eight weeks of summer training, and allow candidates to become full time teachers while earning certification” (2008, p.14).

The types of programs implemented and their goals vary from state to state. Because of this variation in management and configuration, there is a growing debate, not

only surrounding whether or not alternative programs are effective, but which ones are more effective than others (Adcock & Mahlios, 2005, p. 62). Educational reformers in favor of alternative routes to teaching claim “teachers going through these programs are typically required to do more hours of supervised field experience than students in traditional certification programs” and believe in its “potential to increase both the quantity and quality of teachers” (Adcock & Mahlios, 2005, p. 62; Linek et.al., 2012, p.68) Opposing reformers are concerned that these alternative programs “reduce the amount of preparation teachers have before taking on full time classroom responsibilities” (Linek et. al., 2012, p. 68). In other words, “not everyone is convinced that the alternate route to teacher certification is beneficial” (Zumwalt, 1991, p. 83)

One of the most visible “specialized alternative entry programs” is Teach for America (TFA) (Henry, Purtell, Bastian, Fortner, Thompson, Campbell, and Patterson, 2014, p.8). Teach for America is described as operating in the following manner:

“[Teach for America] programs provide their own training and often operate across states...Prior to beginning teaching, TFA corps members attend a 5-week summer preparation program, and throughout corps member’s teaching commitments, TFA provides mentoring and professional development” (Henry et al., 2014, p. 8).

Teach for America has corps members working in over fifty cities across the nation and has grown since beginning in 1990.

Urban teacher residencies (UTR), such as the Boston Teacher Residency and the Memphis Teacher Residency merge elements of both traditional and alternative teacher

preparation programs (Papay, West, Fullerton, and Kane, 2012, p.413). The teacher residency models are described as operating in the following manner:

“Typically run by a school district independently or in partnership with an intermediary organization, residency programs select uncertified teaching candidates through a competitive process to work alongside a mentor for a full year before becoming a teacher of record. Residents also complete a streamlined set of coursework leading to both state certification and a master’s degree from a partner university. In exchange for tuition remittance and a residency-year stipend, they commit to teaching in the district for a specified period, generally 3 to 5 years” (Papay et al., 2012 p. 413-414).

Following the launch of urban teacher residencies in Chicago, Boston, and Denver between 2002 and 2004, the UTR model has attracted attention and investment, and has spread to other major cities like Los Angeles across the United States. The National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (as cited in Papay et al., 2012, p. 414) has endorsed the movement towards what they deem “programs that are fully grounded in clinical practice and interwoven with academic content and professional courses” (2010, p. ii). There does not currently exist research on the Memphis Teacher Residency. Although it is part of the UTR Network and similar to programs included, it still retains unique aspects deserving of further study.

There are a variety of alternative teacher preparation programs. This is beneficial to prospective teachers who may have program aspect preferences. However, the abundance of new routes also brings a set of challenges as indicated by Henry et. al.:

“Because of this proliferation of new routes in to the profession, teachers now enter the classroom with a wide range of preparation experiences. Furthermore, the criteria used to select teacher candidates into preparatory programs vary both across states and across alternative routes. As a result, new teachers exhibit a wide range of skills, abilities, and other important characteristics” (2014, p.8)

As mentioned, the more program variation exists, the more difficult it is to determine which program aspects are most effective and the more disagreement arises between educational researchers.

Alternative Teacher Preparation Programs: Supply, Demand, and Purpose

There are several factors contributing that contribute to the high demand for teachers. According to the U.S. Department of Education,

“Along with teacher retirements, high attrition among novice educators, and student enrollment growth, other contributing factors include class-size- reduction policies and a salary schedule that does not provide incentives to teach in hard-to-staff subjects or schools” (2004, p. 2)

The shortage of teachers is especially significant in urban areas and compounded by high rates of teacher attrition (U.S. Department of Education, 2004, p. 2). In order to fill the vast amount of empty spaces, “many school districts have turned to bringing in uncredentialed teachers on emergency permits” (U.S. Department of Education, 2004, p. 2). As a result, underqualified and underprepared teachers enter the classroom, many of them disproportionately assigned to high-needs schools dominated by minority and low-income students (Darling-Hammond, Chung & Frelow, 2002).

As the demand for educators has increased, so has number of alternative teacher certification programs for individuals holding a bachelor's degree. These alternative programs vary in length of preparation from

“short summer programs that place candidates in teaching assignments with full responsibility for students after a few weeks of training to those that offer 1- or 2-year post-baccalaureate programs with ongoing support, integrated coursework, close mentoring, and supervision” (Darling-Hammond, et al., 2002, p. 287).

With a rising percentage of alternatively prepared teachers entering the classroom, it is important to qualify their sense of preparedness as well as understand how varying alternative routes to teaching impact student outcomes.

According to Vicki LeeAnn Hall, “[alternative teacher preparation] programs are developed to recruit under-represented subgroups such as men or minorities. They also attract people from other professions who might not otherwise enter the teaching field” (2008, p.14). Alternative routes to teaching are attractive to prospective teachers who want to bypass most certification prerequisites and enter the classroom full-time as soon as possible. In addition, alternative programs are arguably more suitable in terms of providing school districts with teachers to match their needs (Kee, 2012). Furthermore, alternative routes to teaching are purposed to “enable mid-career recruits and other college graduates to enter teaching through programs other than the traditional four-year undergraduate models that have dominated since the 1950s” (Darling-Hammond, 2009, p.1). Alternative preparation programs have sought to fill the shortage of teachers, primarily existent in high-need schools, in a smaller amount of time.

Differences in training exist not only between alternative and traditional routes, but within alternative teacher preparation itself as well. Referencing Linda Darling-Hammond:

“In some states, such programs are Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) programs that provide all or most coursework and student teaching prior to their candidates’ assuming a teaching position. In other cases, candidates receive several weeks of training in the summer and take on responsibilities as teach of record in the fall, while they complete coursework for a credential — sometimes comparable to that completed by other recruits, and sometimes less —while they receive mentoring of varying amounts and quality, depending on the program. (2009, p. 1)

As proposed by Linda Darling-Hammond, the question remains “To what extent do teacher education programs of different kinds...improve student achievement?” (2009, p. 1).

Alternative Teacher Preparation: Student Achievement

Limited research exists to support the direct impact of teacher preparation on student achievement. This is not to say that a correlation between teacher preparation and retention or success does not exist. The lack of data simply points to a greater need for research to clarify the impact. The argument that the underpreparation of new teachers contributes to poor achievement has led to “concerns regarding new teachers readiness for the workforce, calls to improving teacher preparation, and more recently, to interest in examining the achievement of students who are taught by new teachers who enter the profession through different programs or pathways” (Gansle, Noell & Burns, 2012). Recently, longitudinal achievement data that links a network of students, teachers and preparation programs has become available, providing useful information in examining

teacher preparation programs (TPPs) in terms of their influence on student outcomes determined by standardized testing (Gansle et al., 2012).

Urban teacher residencies have become increasingly popular, however, few studies have compared UTR graduates to other first-year teachers in terms of their effectiveness on student achievement (Papay et al., 2012, p.14). The common denominator is the role of teachers. Like Linda Darling-Hammond affirms, “Teachers clearly affect student learning” (2006, p. 19) Furthermore, Darling-Hammond recognizes that “despite a growing consensus that teachers matter, the role of teacher education in teachers’ effectiveness is a matter of debate” (2006, p. 19). For this reason, I reiterate the importance of clarifying the impact of teacher preparation on teacher efficacy. Another important question remains surrounding the extent to which teacher efficacy impacts teacher retention. Papay et. al. theorizes in this manner:

“Improving teacher retention in urban schools could in theory improve student achievement by reducing both staff churn and the reliance on novice teachers, who tend to be less effective in the classroom. Yet, the degree to which these benefits materialize hinges largely on the relative effectiveness of those teachers who are retained” (2012, p.14).

Whether or not his theory can be supported with evidence rests in the hands of educational researchers. As the field of alternative teacher preparation grows, the more important it will become to study the details such as this.

Summary

Alternative teacher preparation programs serve as an option for prospective teachers who desire a route to teaching other than the traditional four-year preparation provided by universities. There exists a great deal of variation in program design and implementation, which can be a challenge for educational researchers to overcome in their study of alternative routes to teaching. Alternative teacher preparation programs serve as a means to supply the high demand and need for teachers especially in the urban educational system. In terms of data supporting the efficacy of alternative teacher preparation on student academic achievement, little to none currently can be found in the literature. However, this is where my research study begins to fill the gap.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Restatement of Purpose

This qualitative case study includes interviews with three first year teachers from the Memphis Teacher Residency program and three first year teachers from Teach For America in Memphis, Tennessee. The purpose of this work was to determine the effectiveness of two distinct models of alternative teacher preparation through comparison, to investigate how student achievement outcomes and teacher ratings of preparation differ across both programs, and to qualify how well each program prepares teachers to succeed in urban schools in Memphis, Tennessee. Situating this research in one particular city allows for the opportunity to theoretically understand the larger educational conversation around the efficacy of alternative teacher preparation methods.

Specifically, this study asks first year teachers about their experiences in the classroom following the training they received from their respective preparation programs. In addition, this study asks them to qualify their feelings of preparation in terms of classroom management, applying instructional methods, assessing students, and teaching in their primary content area. It provides context for considering whether and how the efficacy of teacher preparation differs across alternative programs. This study may also offer considerations for future alternative teacher preparation program features, as one of the guiding questions of the study asks participants to think critically about the ways in which alternative routes to teaching can better equip and prepare teachers to enter classrooms in urban and high-needs schools.

Research Design

This research uses a qualitative interviewing method as well as a review of current literature to investigate how student achievement outcomes and teacher ratings of preparation differ across two distinct models of alternative routes to teaching. In addition, this research uses document analyses of program websites, the Memphis Teacher Residency Yearbook, and state report cards provided by the Tennessee Higher Education Commission for the Memphis Teacher Residency and Teach for America in Memphis. Taking the form of a case study, it permits an in-depth exploration of my research question in the context of Memphis, Tennessee. As described by Robert S. Weiss, “the qualitative interview study is likely to rely on a sample very much smaller than the samples interviewed by a reasonably ambitious survey study” (1995, p.3). Conducting a case study provides an opportunity to understand the larger conversation of alternative teacher preparation by closely examining the aforementioned alternative teacher preparation programs. Robert K. Yin explains, “the case study has been a common research method in [...] education,” among other fields of research (2013, p.4). Using the qualitative interviewing method in this research will, hopefully, provide a means of understanding how first year teachers feel about the preparation they received from their respective programs, and allow the researcher to interpret the effectiveness of alternative teacher preparation on teacher retention. From there inferences can also be made about the impact this correlation has on student achievement.

Research Setting

Although the interviews were conducted by phone between Atlanta, Georgia and Memphis, Tennessee, the primary setting for my honors thesis was Memphis, Tennessee. Memphis is the largest city in the state of Tennessee and is located in the southwestern

corner of the state. According to the United States Census Bureau statistics for 2010, Whites and Blacks or African Americans form the racial majority, making up 29.4% and 63.3% of the population respectively. The 2012-2013 program completers for the Memphis Teacher Residency, however, were primarily White and made up 64% of the program, more than double the 28% who were Black or African American (Report Card, 2014). The 2012-2013 program completers for Teach for America were also primarily White and made up 72% of the program, more than three times the 17% who were Black or African American (Report Card, 2014).

Sample Questions to Guide the Dialogue

1. What did you study in college?
 - a. Did your college provide opportunities to student teach or to earn your teaching license?
2. Why did you pursue the teaching route non-traditionally?
3. What about (the Memphis Teacher Residency/Teach for America) attracted you to the program?
4. What did your preparation/training consist of prior to entering the classroom?
5. In what ways are you succeeding in your first year as a teacher?
6. How do you define failure as an educator?
7. What do you find to be the most challenging aspect of teaching as a first year teacher?
 - a. Is there any aspect that you wish you had been told about prior to entering the classroom full time?
8. How well do you feel your training prepared you to manage a classroom?

9. Do you believe you needed more or less time to prepare before entering the classroom?
10. If you could design a program to prepare teachers, what would it look like?

Profile of Participants

1. Joseph is a young man who completed the residency year for MTR and is currently in his first-year of teaching three different high school courses including Advanced Placement United States History, United States History 1877-Present, and Contemporary Issues. He wants to teach because he wants to be involved in Christian Community development and education is a means to that end. He studied Religion and Arts in college.
2. Lindsey is a young woman who completed the residency year for MTR and is currently in her first-year of teaching high school biology. She wants to teach because she loves science and wants others to enjoy the subject. She studied Biology, Psychology, and Biblical Studies in college.
3. Derek is a young man who is currently in his second year of teaching and is a Teach for America Corps member. He teaches World and United States History. He wants to teach in order to play a roll in the progression from generation to generation. He studied Political Science and Educational Studies in college.

Data Collection and Analysis

I was able to phone interview two first year teachers from the Memphis Teacher Residency (MTR) in Memphis, Tennessee. Unfortunately, I was unable to obtain participation from Teach for America corps members specifically located in Memphis. Instead I obtained participation from a TFA corps member currently teaching in New Orleans, Louisiana.

It should be known that the president of the Memphis Teacher Residency, who agreed to choose them at random, suggested the participants from MTR. I then contacted prospective participants by email and sent them an introductory letter outlining the goals and procedures of my research, as well a consent form for them to sign, scan, and email back to me. Once consent was obtained, the participant and I exchanged numbers and agreed on an interview time.

I used a series of open-ended questions to guide the dialogue with the participants, which I had sent to them via e-mail prior to the conversation. The goal was to provide the participants ample time to constructively consider the guiding questions prior to the interview. I called each participant at the designated time each found to be convenient. Each conversation was recorded electronically using the GarageBand application on a MacBook Pro laptop while the phone call was on speaker on an Android cell phone. During the interview, notes were also taken to keep track of points I found significant and wanted to come back to. Conversations were transcribed within twenty-four hours of each interview in order to prevent the build-up of tasks to complete as I continued writing my honors thesis. Each participant was aware of my purpose for conducting this research, my previous internship with MTR, as well as my recent acceptance into the MTR program. Prior to interviewing for my honors thesis, each participant provided consent and understood that each interview would be under the condition of anonymity. In addition, participants were made aware that names of people, places, or experiences that could be identifying would be redacted from the written thesis.

Conducting the analysis was made easier because the questions were already numbered and each number already pertained to a particular category. These categories

are outlined and explained in Chapter IV. In a way, the answers were already coded for, and I just read and compared responses side by side. Many of the responses were worded differently but generally conveyed the same idea between the participants.

Profile of the Researcher

Upon entering Emory University my heart was set on following the pre-medicine track. In my pursuit of a career in orthopedic surgery I had no interest in the field of education. However, through several humbling experiences my heart towards teaching and imparting knowledge to others changed. I had come to realize that social injustice existed in American education and wanted to be a part of the mission to provide quality education to students, especially in the urban context. In the spring semester of my freshman year at college I made education my primary major and began studying the institution of schooling from a theoretical perspective.

When I began to think about teaching after completing my studies at Emory, I realized I would need an alternative route into the classroom. Initially, the only program that had my attention was Teach for America. They would regularly host information sessions on my campus and each time I would grow more excited about this quick way into an urban classroom upon graduating and completing five weeks of pre-service training. It was not until the summer of 2013, while working at a Christian sports camp for urban youth in Golden, Missouri that I heard about the Memphis Teacher Residency. Their model of teacher preparation, which required residents to complete a yearlong Masters in Urban Education prior to entering the classroom, intrigued me. In addition, the Memphis Teacher Residency offered incentives such as a stipend and housing. Now faced with two alternative routes into an urban classroom, the pressing question was

“Which alternative teacher program would best equip and prepare me to enter a high-needs school?”

Having spent this past summer teaching and living in the urban context, I knew I wanted my research to be centered on some aspect of urban education. After realizing that this project would span two semesters, it became increasingly important that I choose something I was passionate about writing and researching, and something that was very specific because there would be time constraints. The former proved itself easier and I decided to work under the umbrella of teacher preparation. As I began to ponder and brainstorm specific ideas for my thesis, I found it difficult to narrow my focus. Eventually, it became clear that I could take this invitation to research an educational topic as an opportunity to answer my previous question concerning the effectiveness of alternative teacher preparation programs. In desiring to be better equipped to enter into a high-needs classroom, the Memphis Teacher Residency and Teach for America were the alternative routes I weighed in my mind. I decided to specifically set my research in Memphis because I desire to relocate to that city, in particular, after graduation.

It should be known that I interned for the Memphis Teacher Residency and have been accepted as a resident in the class of 2016. I have done my best to remain objective and to only assess the literature and interviews in my writing. It should also be known that, although I do not know him on a personal level, I had met one of the participants before. As the interviewer, I desired to allow the interviewees to speak without any influence of mine through remarks, comments, or the like to provide for similar formats. I also followed the same numerical order of the questions for each interview.

Protection of Human Subjects

This research followed the guidelines and procedures set forth by Emory University's Institutional Review Board and was classified as "Exempt" from IRB approval as the research will not contribute to generalizable knowledge. As the questions were related to personal experiences and knowledge, there is identifiable information contained within the answers. The PI knows the names and positions of the participants and this information will be kept on a single document, protected by a password, on a password-protected computer. In all assessments and analyses the participants will be referred to using a pre-determined code. Only the PI will have access to the document linking the identification code to the participant. All writing and data will be identified using only the predetermined identification code.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

Introduction

In this chapter, I provide insight into the Memphis Teacher Residency and Teach for America, Memphis programs. Using a document analysis, an analysis of the Tennessee Higher Education Commission's Report Cards for each program as well as an analysis of the information provided by each program, and two interviews from first year teachers from the Memphis Teacher Residency, I will answer the following research questions:

1. How does the Memphis Teacher Residency (MTR) model of teacher preparation differ from that of Teach for America (TFA) in Memphis, Tennessee?
2. How do student achievement outcomes differ across the MTR and TFA programs?
3. How well do teachers in each program feel about the preparation received from their respective programs?

This chapter will address each of the research questions in order and Chapter V will provide a final synthesis of the information from the Report Cards and the interviews with members of the Memphis Teacher Residency. For more information concerning the affiliations of the interviewees who participated in this study, please refer back to Chapter 3.

Research Question 1:

How does the Memphis Teacher Residency (MTR) model of teacher preparation differ from that of Teach for America (TFA) in Memphis, Tennessee?

The Memphis Teacher Residency, like the Boston Teacher Residency, is a “comprehensive teacher recruitment, preparation, and induction program created by and

housed in an urban school district,” Memphis City Schools (Solomon, 2009). MTR is part of the larger Urban Teacher Residency United (UTRU) Network whose similar goal is to “recruit teaching talent aggressively, with the supply and demand needs of local districts in mind. They also insist on extensive preparation, whereby recruits are paid a stipend while learning to teach in a full-year residency, under the watchful eye of expert K-12 teachers” (Berry, Montgomery & Snyder, 2008, p. 1). This portion of the paper will further explain and compare MTR’s specific vision and mission, aspects of the residency year, and program details with those of TFA Memphis.

Mission and Vision

The most immediate difference between the Memphis Teacher Residency and Teach for America Memphis is the faith-based aspect of MTR. The Memphis Teacher Residency began with the motivation to express Christian love through equal education for the city of Memphis. In other words, MTR’s response to the injustices in academic achievement between children living in impoverished communities and their wealthier counterparts is one that is gospel-centered. The goal of the Christian and for the Memphis Teacher Residency is what Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. popularized as “The Beloved Community.” This philosophy forms the foundation for MTR’s vision. It states the following:

“The vision of MTR is to use [MTR’s] specific work within education, in partnership with other holistic organizations, to help restore communities so that all individuals can become empowered contributors to our city and people of all races and classes can engage with one another in peace” (MTR Yearbook, 2014).

At the heart of the Beloved Community, is a desire for peace and justice that results in the ability of a group of people to coexist with dignity and respect.

In order to see the fruition of this vision, the Memphis Teacher Residency has also established a mission motivated by a biblical mandate to love God and to love people. MTR believes “unequal education is an inhibitor to peace, unity, and the Beloved Community” and that “the Church must help bring equality of education to all children” (MTR Yearbook, 2014). The motivation of MTR is summarized in the mission statement, which states:

“The mission of MTR is that as a response to the gospel mandate to love our neighbors as ourselves, MTR will partner to provide students in Memphis neighborhoods with the same, or better, quality of education as is available to any student in Memphis by recruiting, training, and supporting effective teachers within a Christian context” (MTR Yearbook, 2014).

It is important to note that while the Memphis Teacher Residency has its roots in Christian values, its teachers are not there to convert their students. They simply desire to teach to the best of their ability and in that way serve their students.

Teach for America has also taken note of the achievement gap between students living in low-income communities and those living in more affluent areas. Although TFA is not a faith-based organization, it shares MTR’s desire for equality. The vision for Teach for America is that “all children in this nation will have the opportunity to attain an excellent education” (www.teachforamerica.org). In other words, they seek to provide access to a great education for students regardless of race, address, or household income. Teach for America’s mission, in the form of a diversity statement, reads as follows:

“Teach for America seeks to enlist our nation's most promising future leaders in the movement to eliminate educational inequity, and we know these leaders will be diverse in ethnicity, race, and economic background. Their places on the political spectrum and their religious beliefs will be similarly varied, and we seek individuals of all genders and sexual orientations and regardless of physical disabilities” (www.teachforamerica.org).

Teach for America explicitly welcomes members from various belief systems. Although MTR is explicit about their foundation in the Christian faith they do not exclude those who do are not Christians.

Application and Recruitment

Twice a year, prospective residents have the opportunity to apply to the Memphis Teacher Residency. Applicants are not required to have a degree or training in Education. They are required, however, to: 1) hold a bachelor’s degree from a regionally accredited college or university, 2) have at least a 3.0 grade point average (GPA), and 3) pass the Praxis II Content Knowledge Exam once accepted and before beginning the program. The application process is comprised of four steps that include the online application, a recorded video interview, a phone interview, and, if invited, the opportunity to attend Selection Weekend. This mandatory semi-annual event is “designed to expose applicants to MTR in-person and gain a clear picture of the environment and dynamics of the program. The weekend includes a tour of MTR offices, resident apartments, and partner schools.” Applicants are also required to prepare a five-minute teaching sample in the topic area and on the grade level of their choosing, complete a writing sample, participate in a group case study, and interview with a graduate and staff member.

There are six application deadlines for Teach for America. Applicants for TFA, like those of MTR, are required to hold bachelor's degree, which can be in any subject area as long as it is from an accredited college or university. In addition, an undergraduate cumulative GPA of 2.50 is required along with US citizenship, or national or permanent resident status. The application is a four-step process of which the online application is first. This portion allows prospective teachers to share their personal information, academic history, and leadership experiences. If invited to complete, a phone interview, an online activity, and a final interview that includes a teaching sample are the subsequent and final steps in the application process.

Teach for America is interested in candidates who demonstrate nine key characteristics that include: 1) the belief that all kids have the potential to succeed and a commitment to helping their students do so, 2) leadership capabilities, 3) strong academic achievement, 4) determination, flexibility and perseverance in the midst of challenges, 5) commitment to a set of goals, 6) critical thinking skills, 7) organizational abilities, 8) interpersonal skills, and 9) respect for diversity and willingness to work with others from various backgrounds. Teach for America recruiters and selectors look for these qualities throughout the application process and “admit those individuals who show the most potential to succeed in high-need classrooms.”

Recruiters and selectors from the Memphis Teacher Residency look for candidates who demonstrate four key selection competencies. They desire someone who is a “determined or disciplined driver,” a “trustworthy leader,” a “diligent learner” and/or a “humble servant.” The selection process is competitive with selection rates averaging between 13% and 18%. Selectors are looking for “outstanding persons who have the

desire and potential to be Master Teachers in Memphis' high-need schools.” The high rate of teacher turnover in these schools is not only a concern for the nation but for MTR as well. A reported 90% of their teachers remain in the classroom for four years, exceeding their goal of “at least 75% of four-year graduates choosing to stay in the classroom, school administration, or as a staff member of MTR” (www.memphistr.org)

Program Overview

The Memphis Teacher Residency program is a four year program that seeks to blend theory and practice, especially during the resident year. Three major aspects of training—theory, practice, and support— are combined in the residency design of teacher preparation. This model is “a cohort format of training where individuals receive graduate-level instruction, in-class experience, and on-going mentoring simultaneously and lock-step with classmates” (www.memphistr.org). The Memphis Teacher Residency is partnered with Union University to offer residents a Master’s degree in Urban Education (M.UEd.) during their first year in the program. Participants put into practice what they learn through the M.UEd. program in an internship setting. Each participant is assigned to a mentor teacher at a partner school whom they observe, allowing for the opportunity to gain additional classroom and teaching experience. Finally, each resident is paired with coach who provides support through on-going feedback and guidance. Support also comes from the rest of the MTR community, which helps in the building of both professional and personal relationships. Unless granted permission to do otherwise, residents are to live in MTR provided housing at an apartment complex.

There exist several benefits of the MTR program that prospective teachers would find attractive. In addition to hands-on experience, cohort fellowship, and on-going

feedback, residents receive housing and a monthly stipend during the training year. Additionally, residents receive a Master of Arts in Urban Education through Union University along with a State of Tennessee Educator License at no cost. In return, they commit to teach for at least three consecutive years in high-need Memphis school. Before beginning the program, residents sign a contract with MTR. For residents who do not uphold this agreement by teaching for three consecutive years immediately following the residency year, a balance of \$10,000 is incurred for each uncompleted year.

Teach for America Memphis is a two-year program that begins in the summer with a five-week institute during which “corps members teach summer school for four or five weeks and help their students master critical content for the fall” (www.teachforamerica.org). Important components of the institute include teaching, observations and feedback, rehearsals and reflections, lesson planning clinics, and curriculum sessions. The Memphis Teacher Residency shares many of these aspects. However, they are taught and practiced over an extended period of time. Teach for America also has a different approach to teaching, training, and supporting. The framework employed by TFA is termed “Teaching as Leadership” and it “introduces corps members to the principles that successful teachers take to lead their students to success” (www.teachforamerica.org). This framework also influences the elements of institute coursework. The following provides a summary of the goals for coursework and the summer institute:

“Coursework is designed to help corps members establish a bold vision for summer school and learn essential teaching frameworks, curricula and lesson planning skills while building relationships within their school and community.

Corps members work with experienced teachers who observe and coach them to improve their skills quickly throughout the summer. By the end of institute, corps members have developed a foundation of knowledge, skills, and mindsets needed to be effective beginning teachers, made an immediate impact on students, and built relationships that will support them throughout their corps experience (www.teachforamerica.org).”

Although TFA is an accelerated program, their techniques prove to be effective as indicated in the Report Card provided by the Tennessee Higher Education Commission. I will further explain indications of the Report Card in the next section.

Like the Memphis Teacher Residency, Teach for America also offers prospective teachers several benefits. TFA does provide housing and food during the summer institute at a local university. In addition, TFA offers a faster route to full-time teaching as corps members begin teaching in the fall following the summer training. Corps members receive a full salary and the same health benefits as other first-year teachers in their district. For this reason, corps members are responsible for housing and other living expenses after training concludes. Teach for America clearly states that they are “not specifically a certification or graduate program” (www.teachforamerica.org). A one-year Master’s degree in Education program, through Christian Brothers University, is an option for corps members and not a mandatory part of the program as it is for MTR residents. Teach for America does not pay for the cost of the Master’s degree, though. The commitment is for a shorter period of time, two-years, and members do have the option to resign without a financial penalty. As outlined in the contract, the consequence for resignation from TFA is that the corps member “will automatically not be considered

an alum of [TFA] and will not have the privileges and benefits that are reserved for alumni of Teach for America” (www.teachforamerica.org).

Research Question 2:

How do student achievement outcomes differ across the MTR and TFA programs?

Each year the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC), in conjunction with the Tennessee Department of Education and Tennessee State Board of Education, releases a *Report Card on the Effectiveness of Teacher Training Programs*. As the title indicates, this report provides current and informative data on the effectiveness of teacher preparation programs and “look[s] at the success of Tennessee’s 43 teacher training programs in terms of licensure exam pass rates, placement and retention, and value-added data analysis.” It is important to note that Report Card only provides this information for public school teachers. In other words, although TFA corps members and MTR graduates teach in public, private, and/or charter schools, this Report only includes information about those teaching in the public school setting. One unique feature of the yearly report is that the findings contained become public knowledge. This is not only beneficial to residents of Tennessee communities but also to the reported teacher training programs. Tennessee’s teacher preparation programs can then see both areas of progress and areas in which improvement is necessary. Furthermore, these programs can see how their scores relate to others and can begin to brainstorm ways to incorporate aspects of other programs that seem to produce results.

The 2014 Executive Summary for teacher effect data states that the

“Analysis of the 2012, 2013, and 2014 Report Card effect scores indicates that several programs have consistently produced teachers that are outperforming or underperforming other teachers in the state. Programs with three years of available [Tennessee Value-Added Assessment

System] TVAAS data were analyzed using the percent of results available compared to the percent positive and negative statistically significant results for their combined Apprentice and Transitional completers. The following programs have completers that have consistently outperformed other teachers in the state: [...] Memphis Teacher Residency, Teach for America Memphis [...].”

As the Report Card indicates, both the Memphis Teacher Residency and Teach for America Memphis have shown promising results over the past three years. To understand how student achievement differs across the two programs, I analyzed the individual and more specific reports for each program.

Beginning in 2006, Teach for America corps members were placed in Memphis City Schools. As mentioned, corps members commit to teaching for two years and are required to complete professional development in order to obtain a teaching license. The Memphis Teacher Residency class of 2010 was the first cohort for the program, making this program relatively new compared to TFA Memphis. MTR is partnered with Union University to allow members to work toward completing a Master’s degree in Urban Education. At the same time, members intern in the classroom to gain hands-on experience during the residency year. Upon graduating the program, MTR participants are granted their state teaching license and commit to teaching for three years within an urban Memphis school. The *2014 Report Card on the Effectiveness of Teacher Training Programs* provides highlights for the institutions, which can be seen in Table I.

Discussion of program differences and similarities can be found in the final chapter.

Table I: Institutional Highlights

	Teach for America, Memphis Program Completers	Memphis Teacher Residency Program Completers
2012-2013 Cohort	187	28
Praxis II Principles of Learning and Teaching Examination Pass Rate	100%	100%
High School End of Course Exam Composite	More effective than other beginning teachers in composite, Algebra I, and biology	More effective than teachers statewide
	More completers in the highest performing quintile in comparison to all teachers performance distributions across the state in composite, Algebra I, English I, and English II	More effective than other beginning teachers
		More completers in the highest performing quintile in comparison to all teachers' performance distributions across the state
4th-8th Grade TCAP	More effective than teachers statewide in science, biology, and English I	Less effective than teachers statewide in reading and social studies
	Less effective than teachers statewide in math and reading	More effective than other beginning teachers in math
	More effective than other beginning teachers in composite, science, and social studies	Less effective than other beginning teachers in reading and social studies
	Less effective than other beginning teacher in math	Higher number of completers in the least effective quintile as compared to all teachers' performance distributions across the state in composite, reading, and social studies
	More completers in the highest performing quintile in comparison to all teachers performance distributions across the state in composite and science	
	Higher number of completers in the least effective quintile as compared to all teachers' performance distributions across the state in math, reading, and algebra I	

Program Highlights Provided by THEC in the 2014 Report Card

Research Question 3:

How do teachers in each program feel about the preparation received from their respective programs?

The interview questions used in my research study were designed to address five areas of interest including educational background, program attraction, definitions of success and failure, feelings of preparedness, and the design of an alternative teacher preparation program.

I interviewed two first-year teachers from the Memphis Teacher Residency and also received responses from a Teach for America corps member in New Orleans, Louisiana. All participants are high school teachers. Lindsey attended a college that did provide opportunities to teach and earn a teaching license. Her primary area of study was biology. Lindsey had “planned on becoming a physical therapist but in [her] senior year began looking into teaching.” Like Lindsey, Joseph also attended a college that provided the opportunity to student teach and obtain licensure. He studied religion and arts but also “had not considered education as a viable option prior to [his] senior year of college.” Both Lindsey and Joseph pursued the teaching route non-traditionally as neither had contemplated entering the field of education as teachers until late in their college careers. Derek, too, attended a college where he was allotted opportunities to student teach but there lacked a licensing program. Lindsey remarked that her content knowledge in biology was half the battle because she could then focus on and devote her time to developing the necessary skills to teach it.

When asked what he found most attractive about the Memphis Teacher Residency, Joseph responded with “Christian community development.” Lindsey appreciated the community focus, and the “full year of residency as opposed to just a

summer of training.” In addition she liked the “personalities of the staff members of MTR” and the “Christian emphasis that provided for a different foundation.” Lindsey considered herself to be “very familiar” with Teach for America. She shared that she applied and “was accepted but chose MTR over TFA.” Lindsey felt that Teach for America was “not really the way to start a teaching career, but a way to build your resume and get into the education field.” Joseph also claimed to be “pretty familiar with TFA [because] some co-workers are members.” He described the Teach for America program as “resume builder” and a place where you “teach for two years and then you dip.” On another note, he did explain that success in either program simply “depends on the person. Many struggle their first-year because they are just thrown in.” Joseph did consider applying for Teach for America but found MTR. He favored the Memphis Teacher Residency’s “localized, focused, and critical mass” and for this reason, never officially applied for Teach for America. The idea of critical mass comes from the residency’s belief that “when a critical mass of effective educators works together as a team with students, students’ families, and community partners, schools can be transformed in lasting, positive ways” (www.memphistr.org). I did not receive a response from Derek for this particular question.

Preparation and training begins in the summer following acceptance into the Memphis Teacher Residency. Residents do not begin interning in the classroom until the fall season when school begins again for students. According to Lindsey, her preparation consisted of “Master’s classes on Saturdays” and “talking with coaches.” Additionally, she “was with a mentor teacher and got to teach in classes four days a week.” Joseph recalled the summer preparation primarily and shared about the types of classes residents

were enrolled in. They included a cultural foundations course, a class on race and structural poverty in which they discussed “acclimation to the environment and racial reconciliation,” a class on leadership, and a class on special education. Interestingly enough, the strategies for teaching come from Doug Lemov’s “Teach Like a Champion,” the same book employed by Teach for America. Derek shared that his training was coupled with previous experiences including “several opportunities at Emory student teaching, as well as teaching debate after school in local Atlanta schools through the Barkley Forum.”

In terms of community to aid in the first year of teaching, Joseph remarked that community is “MTR’s greatest strength” and that he “feels very supported.” Joseph mentioned that there were about fifty-four residents in his cohort and that having everyone live at the Georgian Woods apartments allows them the opportunity to “live together” and to “talk through the day” during the residency year. Lindsey also commented that she felt “fairly well supported by MTR and [her] coach.” According to Lindsey, the resident year community building was key and now she “get[s] together weekly” with the “friends [she] made during the residency year.” Joseph highlighted the spiritual life course that also assisted in the initial building of the community. As a result, they can share in the fruit of the established relationships amongst one another at their respective schools in Memphis. Derek spoke of community in the same manner as Lindsey stating “I have good coaching at my individual school, a KIPP charter high school, infrequent check-ins from TFA, though [there] can be more if I need help, and [parental community] depends on the situational need.”

The underlying theme in the definition of success for both Lindsey and Joseph was the development of students' abilities to think critically. Lindsey recognizes that while "others say good EOCT scores and mastery of the subject" define success, she has her own personal definition. Success for her is when "students leave the classroom and are able to think critically, examine evidence, and give their opinion." As a regular, honors, and advanced placement (AP) level biology teacher, Lindsey has witnessed "huge progression in student knowledge and question responses." Her students are "able to write a lot more [...] getting towards college level" and in this way she sees her success as a teacher. Joseph defines success as the ability to "create a classroom in which thinking critically is valued," and where "test taking strategies take a back seat." He desires for his students to "learn to think even when they become adults" and wants his students to "be able to make meaningful choices in life." Success for Joseph is unifying his students in the knowledge that they are "work[ing] hard for one goal and we are going to make it there together." In his first year teaching, he sees success in "challenging his students to become independent, creative, and critical thinkers" and in "meaningful dialogue." In terms of personal success, "consistent presence" demonstrated by always coming to work and "showing up with something he put his heart into," and "building relationships with other teachers" is what Joseph continually strives for.

In addition to sharing their definitions of success and the ways in which they are succeeding as first-year teachers, Lindsey and Joseph also shared about failure and ways in which they are struggling as first-year teachers. Joseph believes failure "has nothing to do with test scores" and all to do with "allowing what has been the norm to be the norm," "laziness," "low expectations," and "to not require his kids to think." Joseph struggles

with balancing his life as a teacher with his personal life. He feels like it is a cycle where he “goes to school and then comes home.” For him, it is “difficult when kids are not engaged” and it is hard “seeing test scores of students without their hearts in the work.” Unlike Lindsey who is teaching what she studied in college, Joseph did not study history and now is teaching it. He says, “I am giving the best AP history class I can,” and wants to do better. Lindsey also believes that failure goes beyond test scores as evident in her remark that failure is more than students “failing a quiz or not getting above a 70% in a course.” Instead, she believes “failure would be if [she] did not believe her students were capable or that she was capable.” She shared two main areas of struggle that include classroom management and “getting used to [Tennessee] standards that are different from Philadelphia and Ohio.”

For Derek the definitions of success and failure differ from those of Lindsey and Joseph. He explains that success is “being able to balance teaching students the skills needed to succeed and the self-awareness needed for character development.” Currently a second-year teacher, Derek reflects on his success during his first-year in this way: “My best quality as a first-year was my growth mindset and willingness to put in time to develop relationships with my students that I could leverage in the classroom.” Failure as an educator, for Derek, is “not meeting the aforementioned definition of success.” When asked about what he was struggling with currently he shared “I struggle with my students’ reading and writing levels. My high school seniors currently read at an estimated seventh to eighth grade level on average, and finding ways of pushing that growth faster than expected is the challenge.”

The first-year of teaching is quite challenging, especially if one has never taught before. There are countless aspects to teaching, some more detailed than others, and for this reason one will never fully know what to expect prior to entering the classroom. When asked if there was any aspect to teaching that she wished she would have known during preparation, Lindsey replied, "I wish I would have known the amount of time teaching takes." She spends twelve hours at school only to come home and have to put in another three to four hours of planning, grading, and preparation for the following day. Her weekends are quite full as well. Lastly, she would have liked to have been told to "use the internet as much as possible instead of recreating the wheel." Joseph expressed his desire to have known "how much weight the absenteeism of students places on the instructor" especially when students do not ask for what they missed. Derek replied with "Everything." Explaining this further, he lists "situational awareness, when to pick your battles and which to pick," and "translating content knowledge into effective delivery." Finally, he wished he "had been told to go through a formal co-teaching program first."

As mentioned, classroom management is an area of struggle for Lindsey. On a scale of one to ten, she feels that a six or seven is an appropriate rating for how well she felt prepared to manage a classroom. Although she felt prepared, Lindsey realized that employing all of the techniques she learned during the residency was a hard task. This is in part to "previously being at a private school that was strict and where students knew this was the case. The new school I am at is not as strict." Derek shared in the struggle and says his is due to "not enough knowledge or practice." On the other hand, Joseph was elated to share that his training prepared him "so well!" to manage a classroom. He believes the "residency model was fantastic for this" because it allowed him the

opportunity to “understand what expectations you can set for the students,” as well as “understand what kids expect from teachers.” Joseph also owes feeling prepared to “watching the mentor teacher and making mental notes of things [he] admires and things [he] doesn’t.” According to Joseph, classroom management was half the battle and this allowed him to focus on the content.

In terms of applying instructional methods, both Lindsey and Joseph expressed that they were pleased with the training they received in this aspect of teaching. Lindsey felt “super confident” and credited having coaches to help her during the initial year of preparation especially. Joseph felt “pretty good” and also says he had a great instructor. The only downside to his experience with a mentor teacher was “breaking out of the mold of the mentor teacher and what you have seen” because as a result he was afraid to try new things and “find [his] own groove.” Since the first semester, Joseph shared that he has grown and made improvements in this area. Derek, contrastingly, stated that “biggest weakness from TFA’s end is practice. One month of TFA summer institute isn’t enough.”

In terms of assessing students and analyzing the results, Joseph felt “greatly prepared to do so” as a result of the content methods course and “learning to write meaningful multiple choice and essay or short answer questions.” His assessments are geared more toward “higher order thinking as opposed to comprehension and association.” Lindsey attributes the same feeling to “great coaches and a good mentor teacher that helped.” She also has a background in statistics that helps her in analyzing student results. Like Joseph and Lindsey, Derek also felt “well prepared” as his school “places a high premium on data.”

As mentioned, Joseph did not study his primary content area of history in college, making preparing to teach three different history courses quite challenging. For him, “the residency year really helped in this area,” meaning it allotted him the opportunity to learn the content during this time and he was able to gather examples and stories for future use in his own classroom. Joseph now teaches AP U.S. History, United States History 1877-present, and Contemporary Issues, which is a semester long course. Although Lindsey felt very well prepared, all credit is not given to the Memphis Teacher Residency. Having studied biology in college for four years, she was already knowledgeable of the content and simply needed to focus more on instructional methods. The same is true for Derek who also felt “very well prepared.” He gives credit to the “excellent coaches in [his] content” but also recognizes his subject knowledge as “formidable.”

Lindsey and Joseph were both asked if the yearlong preparation was enough before entering the classroom full time. Lindsey expressed that “a full year was perfect” and Joseph agreed that it was the “right amount of time.” Both, although they felt quite confident, still had moments of “self-doubt, as expressed by Joseph, and times where they still felt “slightly nervous,” as articulated by Lindsey. Derek did not express the same and said that he believed he “most definitely [needed] more [time].”

Given the opportunity to imagine the design for an alternative teacher preparation program, both Lindsey and Joseph expressed their ideas, which can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2: Alternative Teacher Preparation Program Design

Preparation Aspects	Joseph's Design	Lindsey's Design
Structure/Model	-A lot like MTR -Residency model would be essential	-Very similar to MTR
Mentors	-Streamlined experience across mentors -Eliminate some of the disparity	-Collaboration over simply observation in the mentor/mentee relationship
Coaches	-Keep	-Keep
Classes/Seminars	-More classes and seminars on questions people are having throughout the year -Child psychology class (cultural vs. developmental milestones)	-Keep the Master's coursework
Other Personal Preferences	-Free counseling like offered through MTR (more than one counselor)	

Designs Shared by Joseph and Lindsey of the Memphis Teacher Residency

Derek summarized his ideal alternative teacher preparation program design with the following statement: “Teachers should be paired with veteran teachers in their first year for co-teaching to learn tactics, before receiving their own classroom the following year.” Although he had no knowledge of the Memphis Teacher Residency, he was describing an urban teacher residency model of alternative teacher preparation.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND CONCLUSION

Introduction

The findings from the study provide insight into the effectiveness of alternative teacher preparation on student achievement and the differences between two specific programs—the Memphis Teacher Residency and Teach for America Memphis. This study was predicated on the following three research questions:

1. How does the Memphis Teacher Residency (MTR) model of teacher preparation differ from that of Teach for America (TFA) in Memphis, Tennessee?
2. How do student achievement outcomes differ across the MTR and TFA programs?
3. How well do teachers in each program feel about the preparation received from their respective programs?

Discussion

How does the Memphis Teacher Residency (MTR) model of teacher preparation differ from that of Teach for America (TFA) in Memphis, Tennessee?

As explicated in Chapter IV there were four primary areas in which the Memphis Teacher Residency differed from Teach for America Memphis. The first difference is found in the overall structure of each program, which in turn affects the length of teacher preparation. MTR differs from TFA in its employment of a residency model. By combining elements of alternative teacher preparation programs that provide instant classroom experience, like TFA, with elements of the extended traditional model of teacher preparation, the Memphis Teacher Residency provides a gradual approach to full-time teaching in the classroom. Whereas TFA corps members have the option to earn a Master's degree in Education, residents of MTR do not and spend a full year earning a

Master's degree in Urban Education during the first year of the program. I believe the M.UEd. is a key component in preparing teachers to enter schools classified as urban because it provides a framework and understanding of the context in which they will teach, especially if they have never been exposed to one similar. Although both programs provide teachers in training with classroom experience, the manner in which teachers gain in-class experience differs. Teach for America corps members gain in-class experience during the summer while teaching classes. Working alongside a mentor teacher, Memphis Teacher Residency residents have opportunities to learn to teach during the school year in assigned schools. No learning experience is worthless. However, learning to teach during the school year may provide a more realistic experience. In summer school, the group of students who chose to attend may not be representative of the group of students who will be mandated to attend during the fall.

The second area in which the alternative teacher preparation programs differ was found in their philosophies. Unlike Teach for America, the Memphis Teacher Residency is a faith-based organization. The founders of MTR recognized the injustices that exist in academic achievement amongst students residing in low-income neighborhoods and those living in high-income neighborhoods. The gospel-centered response and motivation of MTR is to invite teachers to come and be a part of the program where they too can express Christian love in the provision of equal education for children in the city of Memphis. MTR's framework is "The Beloved Community" which simply expresses a deeper desire for peace, justice and dignity in the city of Memphis, specifically. The founders of TFA also recognized the existing injustices and desire to provide an equal opportunity to attain a great education. However, the resulting program is not grounded

in faith or a core belief, but rather in morality, or what is considered the right thing to do. While Teach for America does strive to maximize diversity in all aspects, including values, there remains something to be said about having a single and strong foundation built upon one unified set of values, as in the case of the Memphis Teacher Residency. This provides for a more solid community of like-minded individuals. This also brings into question, however, the extent to which diversity is more helpful than harmful and the extent to which single-mindedness is more helpful than harmful. A question such as this is an important one to study, but would be difficult to answer.

The third area, in which Teach for America and the Memphis Teacher Residency differ, is in terms of the application and recruitment process. Prospective teachers have six opportunities to apply for Teach for America during the year, thrice the amount of opportunities to apply for the Memphis Teacher Residency. If invited by MTR, prospects must attend a weekend event Memphis where they learn in depth about the program, are required to teach a five-minute lesson, complete a writing sample, and have one final interview. In this way, applicants meet staff members of MTR and put faces to names, tour Memphis, and really think about whether or not the program is for them. On the other hand, staff members are able to get to know applicants in person and consider whether or not to accept them into the program. Teach for America selectors do get to go through applicant videos of five-minute teaching samples and conduct phone interviews. However, meeting and conversing with a person provides a completely different perspective as gestures and body language can be observed more closely.

The fourth major difference between the featured alternative teacher preparation programs is in terms of the benefits provided. The Master's degree offered by the

Memphis Teacher Residency is paid for. If a TFA corps member does decide to pursue a Master's degree, they must accept the responsibility of paying the cost. With the free Master's, however, comes a binding agreement to teach in Memphis City Schools for three consecutive years following graduation. The consequence for breaking the agreement is a balance of ten thousand dollars for each incomplete year. There is not a binding contract for Teach for America. If one decides to leave, the only personal consequence is not being considered an alumnus. Having a binding agreement helps to ensure a higher teacher retention rate and encourages perseverance. The lack of one allows teachers more freedom to leave but can negatively impact teacher retention rates. The contrary can also have negative effects. By this I mean that retaining a "bad" teacher can negatively impact student performance and achievement.

Taking a look at the Tennessee Higher Education Commission's Report Card for each program helps in understanding the impact these differences may have on student achievement.

How do student achievement outcomes differ across the Memphis Teacher Residency and Teach For America Memphis programs?

By law, the Tennessee Higher Education Commission (THEC) is required to examine the performance of teacher preparation programs across several different aspects including Praxis II pass rates, retention, and teacher effectiveness as determined by an analysis of the Tennessee Value Added Assessment System (TVAAS). In addition, the report includes an academic profile of accepted residents and corps members. In this section, I examine the differences in student achievement outcomes across the Memphis Teacher Residency and Teach for America Memphis.

According to the Report Card, Memphis Teacher Residency and Teach for America Memphis program completers tend to be “more effective than other beginning teachers” and tend to have “more completers in the highest performing quintile in comparison to all teachers’ performance distributions across the state” on the high school End of Course exam composite. While MTR program completers are generally more effective across varying subject areas, TFA Memphis program completers are specifically more effective in the areas of Algebra I, biology, English I, and English II. Another difference is that MTR program completers are not only more effective than beginning teachers, but also tend to be more effective than teachers statewide, in terms of student scores on the high school End of Course exam composite.

The report on the effectiveness of program completers varied more significantly in student achievement on the 4th-8th Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (TCAP) scores. Both groups of program completers showed a tendency to be more effective than other teachers and beginning teachers statewide, but differed in terms of which content areas they were most effective in. Compared to teachers statewide, TFA Memphis program completers tended to be more effective in science, biology, and English I. Compared to beginning teachers, they tended to be more effective in composite, science, and social studies. In addition TFA Memphis program completers had more completers in the highest performing quintile in comparison to all teachers’ performance across the state in composite and science. MTR program completers tended to be more effective than other beginning teachers in math.

Additionally, both MTR program completers and TFA Memphis program completers demonstrated areas in which they tended to be less effective than other

teachers. TFA Memphis program completers tended to be less effective than teachers statewide in math and reading and less effective than beginning teachers in math. MTR program completers tended to be less effective than both beginning teachers and other teachers statewide in reading and social studies.

These findings demonstrate that both the Memphis Teacher Residency and Teach for America Memphis program completers have consistently outperformed other teachers across the state of Memphis. However, these findings also demonstrate deficiencies in both programs, which is to be expected, as neither is perfect. It is important to keep in mind that the number of program completers from each program. MTR had 28 program completers while TFA Memphis had 187. This impacts how percentages are understood and, in turn, discussion around effectiveness. For example, 30% of teachers from MTR is different from 30% of teachers from TFA in that in the former it is quite a significant number whereas in the latter it is not. This should be kept in mind when examining the number of teachers in the least or highest performing quintiles.

The goal should be continuous improvement. THEC examines each program individually in order to understand the larger picture of how effective program completers are in terms of student achievement. The goal as indicated by both programs is to provide students with equal education. I firmly believe that both the Memphis Teacher Residency and Teach for America Memphis can learn from one another. By this I mean, MTR can note the strength of TFA specifically in 4th-8th Grade TCAP social studies and inquire about effective methods. In the same way, TFA can note the strength of MTR specifically in 4-8th Grade TCAP math and inquire about effective methods. Students are and should be the focus in education and it is up to alternative teacher

preparation programs to look at scores such as these provided by THEC and make the necessary improvements, and learn from one another.

How well do teachers in each program feel about the preparation received from their respective programs?

In this section I will discuss how first-year teachers of the Memphis Teacher Residency feel about the preparation they received, as I was unable to obtain participation from first-year teachers of Teach for America Memphis. In addition, I will share the feelings of preparedness expressed by a TFA corps member currently in his second year of teaching in New Orleans, Louisiana. Initially I solicited participation of TFA first-year teachers who, like MTR first-year teachers, were located in Memphis, Tennessee. After not being able to find TFA participants in the research setting of my study, I expanded my horizon to include TFA corps member in other cities. However, I discovered that many were unwilling to participate due to personal time constraints and the busyness that the first full-time year in the classroom brings. As far as why the TFA corps members in Memphis were unwilling to participate, I am not quite sure. My theory is that beyond being busy, they may be skeptical of me as the principal investigator, especially without having any personal ties to myself as in the case of MTR teachers whom I will be joining in the summer. Yet, I do not believe they should have any reason to fear, seeing TFA Memphis has reportedly consistently outperformed many teacher preparation programs both city and statewide (Report Card, 2014). I understand, though, the concerns the organization may have with participating in research, seeing as not all educational researchers have painted the most positive picture of Teach for America as a national

program in the past. My only recommendation is that educational researchers take into account the affect their publications may have on future participation.

In asking about feelings of preparedness, I was interested in four particular abilities including classroom management, application of instructional methods, assessing students and analyzing results, and teaching in primary content area. According to both first year teachers of MTR, the yearlong preparation was just the right amount of time to gain experience and be prepared in their abilities to do the aforementioned. While the TFA corps member expressed a need for more preparation time, this is not to say that he felt entirely unprepared. Like Joseph and Lindsey, there were areas in which he felt considerably prepared and others that proved to be challenging. In particular, all teachers felt prepared to assess students and analyze the results because of prior experience with statistics, a content methods course that provided direction in how to do so, and/or placement in a context where data is highly valued. For Teach for America and the Memphis Teacher Residency, there was evidence of areas in which preparation was lacking or seemed hard to translate in the first year.

While Lindsey studied in her primary content area over the course of four years, Joseph had not and found it challenging to learn the material for three different history courses. Derek, who also teaches high school history courses, was not a history major either. However, his personal acquisition of knowledge of his content area, as in Lindsey's case, helped significantly in terms of preparation. I am confident that if Joseph had studied in his primary content area throughout college, he would have felt more prepared to teach in his primary content area.

Joseph felt quite prepared to manage a classroom, owing his feelings of preparedness to yearlong preparation and observation of his mentor teacher but Lindsey, who is also part of MTR, rated her feelings of preparedness a 6 on a 10-point scale. She did have the opportunity to learn to manage a classroom, however, the classroom she managed as a resident is completely different from the one she manages now as a full-time teacher. Derek simply felt minimally prepared as a result of the lack of time to practice this skill. Josh, a former TFA corps member explained “We never really had to handle our own class for one entire day, let alone weeks on end, which is what happens when you begin to teach your own class” (Veltri, 2010, p. 59). Whereas Lindsey was offered the opportunity to practice this particular skill over the course of a year before teaching full-time, Derek only had five weeks to do so. Although neither raved about their ability to manage the classroom the first-year, their reasoning for why not are entirely distinct.

Overall both of the MTR teachers felt significantly prepared to apply instructional methods. The only downside to this aspect of preparation, as indicated by Joseph, is that it was hard to develop more of an original style to instruction, as opposed to doing everything exactly as the mentor had done during the residency year. Application of instructional methods proved to be a greater weakness in the case of the TFA corps member. He did not critique the methods employed by TFA but rather the time constraints surrounding the practice of this teaching skill. Ernesto, a TFA alumnus expressed “We had a veteran person who was kind of our contact. She came in and observed us, I believe once or twice, and offered us very minimal feedback... basically saying, everything looks great” (Veltri, 2010, p. 58). Ernesto’s perspective provides

insight into another possible reason Derek felt minimally prepared—because of minimal feedback. With training only five weeks in duration, can a corps member receive a sufficient amount of feedback? My resulting belief is that if corps members had a longer preparation time, they would feel better prepared to apply instructional methods upon beginning to teach full-time.

What I find to be at the heart of areas where feelings of preparedness are lacking is the difficulty of translating these abilities to varying classroom contexts. A teacher may have the opportunity to prepare to apply instructional methods, assess students and analyze results, or manage a classroom at one particular school and with one particular group of students, however, that particular school and those particular students may be completely different from where he/she is placed to teach full time and the students there. Yes, no teacher is ever fully prepared. Yet the question remains, how can they be set up for success in a variety of schools in the urban context? Is Joseph on the right track in suggesting more classes and seminars during the preparation year based on questions and issues people are having during the year? Is there a way to provide opportunities where alternative teacher preparation program teachers in training can experience a private, charter, and public school setting? Or is there a way to create a program where a one size fits all approach works? Without any knowledge of an urban teacher residency, Derek expressed that this design would be ideal. Is the residency model the solution?

There is a chasm between several weeks of training and a full year of preparation. My theory is that time is not the only factor but a significant one. Marco seems to agree in the following statement:

“Two years is far too short a time... I must admit that this leads me to question

the Teach for America Program in general. Can I really become an effective educator in such a short period of time? What is the actual quality of education I am providing to my students? Am I even affecting the inequality that infects our nation's educational system?" (Veltri, 2010, p. 161).

These were the same questions I asked myself at the start of my research. I shared the same goal of bringing justice to where it is lacking in the American educational system. I ended up choosing the Memphis Teacher Residency, not because I believe it to be the best program but because I believe it to be the most effective program, one in which I can slowly cultivate the necessary skills to provide my students with a quality education. Personally, five weeks is not enough. A year may not even be enough time to prepare me for what I will face in the classroom. The goal and motivation, as both programs express, is to provide a quality and equal education to students in low-income neighborhoods. One cannot successfully do so without the proper training and preparation to do so. Programs are important and so is progress in terms of student achievement. However, the students and their education should remain at the forefront as research on alternative teacher preparation continues.

Recommendations

This study was primarily a case study of two alternative teacher preparation programs. For this reason, the findings are not necessarily generalizable because they relate to specific experiences and feelings of a small group of people in Memphis, Tennessee and New Orleans, Louisiana. However, the findings point to a larger question in urban education—How effective are alternative teacher preparation programs and to what extent to they impact student achievement? This study could prompt further studies

of the efficacy of other alternative teacher preparation not only in Memphis, Tennessee, but also in urban cities across the United States of America. As Linda Darling Hammond does, I too suggest that we “open up the teaching profession to a wider range of talented recruits, better prepare them, and create pipelines of candidates into hard-to-staff schools in poor urban and rural communities” (Darling-Hammond, 2009, p. 1).

Conclusion

This research provides insight into how two alternative teacher preparation programs, the Memphis Teacher Residency and Teach for America located in Memphis, Tennessee differ in their models, how student achievement outcomes differ across both programs, and how well MTR and TFA teachers feel about the preparation they received. The findings point to the greater need for more research in order to refine existing alternative preparation programs as well as create new programs, all with the same goal to increase teacher effectiveness and capacity in high-needs schools across the nation. Studying more alternative teacher preparation programs to identify their effective aspects and replicate them remains an important goal.

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APPENDIX A: INTERNAL REVIEW BOARD DETERMINATION

EMORY
UNIVERSITY

Institutional Review Board

Date: February 02, 2015

Alexis Jones
Principal Investigator
Educational Studies

RE: **Exemption of Human Subjects Research**
IRB00078493
Effectiveness of Alternative Teacher Preparation on Student Academic Achievement:
A Comparative Study of Teach for America and the Memphis Teacher Residency

Dear Principal Investigator:

Thank you for submitting an application to the Emory IRB for the above-referenced project. Based on the information you have provided, we have determined on **02/05/2015** that although it is human subjects research, it is exempt from further IRB review and approval.

This determination is good indefinitely unless substantive revisions to the study design (e.g., population or type of data to be obtained) occur which alter our analysis. Please consult the Emory IRB for clarification in case of such a change. Exempt projects do not require continuing renewal applications.

This project meets the criteria for exemption under 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2). Specifically, you will conduct telephone or video conference interviews with teachers of both the Memphis Teacher Residency and Teach for America to qualify how well teacher in each program rate their preparation. The following documents were approved for this study:

- IRB Proposal_Alexis Jones Modification date 01/23/2015 Version 0.05
- Interview Questions Modification date 01/21/2015
- Verbal/Online Consent Modification date 02/05/2015 Version 0.07
- Introductory Letter Modification date 01/22/2015

Please note that the Belmont Report principles apply to this research: respect for persons, beneficence, and justice. You should use the informed consent materials reviewed by the IRB unless a waiver of consent was granted. Similarly, if HIPAA applies to this project, you should use the HIPAA patient authorization and revocation materials reviewed by the IRB unless a waiver was granted. CITI certification is required of all personnel conducting this research.

Unanticipated problems involving risk to subjects or others or violations of the HIPAA Privacy Rule must be reported promptly to the Emory IRB and the sponsoring agency (if any).

In future correspondence about this matter, please refer to the study ID shown above. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Will Smith, BA
Research Protocol Analyst

This letter has been digitally signed

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An equal opportunity, affirmative action university

APPENDIX B: LETTER OF INITIAL CONTACT

Letter of Initial Contact

Dear Prospective Participant,

My name is Alexis Jones and I am student at Emory University. I am double majoring in education and Spanish. I am writing an honors thesis and am interested in studying the effectiveness of alternative teacher preparation programs on student achievement. I have chosen to focus on two in particular, the Memphis Teacher Residency (MTR) and Teach for America (TFA) programs, both of which are located in the city of Memphis, Tennessee. In desiring to be better equipped to enter into a high-needs classroom, these were the routes I weighed in my mind. However, most of the information I gathered had come from information sessions, websites, and word of mouth. Having two distinct models of preparation to look at, I grew curious and wanted to explore them further. As I conduct this study, I hope to answer the following questions:

1. How does the Memphis Teacher Residency model of teacher preparation differ from that of Teach for America in Memphis, Tennessee?
2. How do student achievement outcomes differ across the MTR and TFA programs?
3. How well do teachers in each program rate their preparation?

This form is designed to tell you what you need to think about before you agree to participate in this study. Again, being in the study is entirely your choice.

Your name, or other facts that might identify you, will not appear when this study is presented or published.

As a participant, you will be able to contribute to an understanding of efficacy of alternative teacher preparation programs. Findings can be compiled and shared with both teacher preparation programs represented by the subjects. Your participation is optional. If you decide to be in the study now, you can change your mind later and withdraw. The interview questions should be simple to answer and should only require 30-45 minutes of your time. They are designed to help understand your feelings of preparedness as a first year teacher. An example question might be “If you could design a program to prepare teachers, what would it look like?” You do not have to answer any questions that you do not wish to answer.

Please send all questions and concerns to Alexis Jones at (404) 789-8071 or ahjone4@emory.edu. Also, if you have questions about your rights as a research subject or other questions or concerns about the research you may contact the Emory Institutional Review Board at (404) 712-0820 or irb@emory.edu. Thank you for considering this opportunity.

Sincerely,

Alexis Jones

APPENDIX C: PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Emory University
Oral/Online Consent Script/Information Sheet
For a Research Study

Study Title: Effectiveness of Alternative Teacher Preparation on Student Academic Achievement

Principal Investigator: Alexis Jones, Educational Studies

Introduction

Thank you for your interest in my alternative teacher preparation research study. I would like to tell you everything you need to think about before you decide whether or not to join the study. It is entirely your choice. If you decide to take part, you can change your mind later on and withdraw from the research study. You can skip any questions that you do not wish to answer.

Before making your decision:

- Please carefully read this form or have it read to you
- Please ask questions about anything that is not clear

You can take a copy of this consent form, to keep. Feel free to take your time thinking about whether you would like to participate. By signing this form you will not give up any legal rights.

Study Overview

- 1) The purpose of this study is to compare the approaches and effectiveness of two teacher preparation programs for high-needs schools in Memphis, Tennessee, Teach for America and the Memphis Teacher Residency
- 2) This study will take about 30 to 45 minutes to complete.
- 3) If you join, a researcher will conduct a recorded interview with you over the phone where you will be asked about how well you felt prepared in terms of classroom management, application of instructional methods, teaching in their primary content area, and student assessment.
- 4) There are no foreseeable risks of participation in this study, but breach of confidentiality is a potential risk.
- 5) This study is not intended to benefit you directly, but you will be able to contribute to an understanding of the efficacy of alternative teacher preparation programs.
- 6) Your privacy is very important to us.
- 7) You may revoke your authorization at any time by calling the Principal Investigator, Alexis Jones.
- 8) You will not be offered compensation for your time and participation in the study.

Confidentiality

Certain offices and people other than the researchers may look at study records. Government agencies and Emory employees overseeing proper study conduct may look at your study records. These offices include the Emory Institutional Review Board. The PI will know the names and positions of the participants and this information will be kept on a single document, protected by a password, on a password-protected computer. In all assessments and analyses the participants will be referred to using a pre-determined code. Only the PI will have access to the document linking the identification code to the participant. All writing and data—digital voice files, transcriptions, and notes—will be identified using only the predetermined identification code. The writing and data will also be kept in a single folder, protected by a password, on a password-protected computer. These files will be destroyed on or around April 15, 2015, upon completion of the written portion of the research project.

Voluntary Participation and Withdrawal from the Study

You have the right to leave a study at any time without penalty. You may refuse to do any procedures you do not feel comfortable with, or answer any questions that you do not wish to answer.

The researchers also have the right to stop your participation in this study without your consent if:

- They believe it is in your best interest;
- You were to object to any future changes that may be made in the study plan;
- Or for any other reason.

Contact Information

If you have questions about this study, your part in it, your rights as a research participant, or if you have questions, concerns or complaints about the research you may contact the following:

Alexis Jones, Principal Investigator: 404-789-8071

Dr. Aiden Downey, Thesis Advisor, cadowne@emory.edu

Emory Institutional Review Board: 404-712-0720 or toll-free at 877-503-9797 or by email at irb@emory.edu

Consent

Do you have any questions about anything I just said? Were there any parts that seemed unclear?

Do you agree to take part in the study?

Participant agrees to participate: Yes No

If Yes:

Please print your name and sign below if you agree to participate in this study. By signing this consent form, you will not give up any of your legal rights. You may request a copy of the signed consent, to keep.

Name of Participant

Date

Name of Person Conducting Informed Consent Discussion

Date

Signature of Person Conducting Informed Consent Discussion

APPENDIX D: SAMPLE QUESTION GUIDE

1. Why do you want to teach?
2. What did you study in college?
 - a. Did your college provide opportunities to student teach or to earn your teaching license?
3. Why did you pursue the teaching route non-traditionally?
4. What about (the Memphis Teacher Residency/Teach for America) attracted you to the program?
5. MTR: What, if anything, do you know about TFA?
 - a. Did you consider apply for Teach for America?
6. TFA: What, if anything, do you know about MTR?
 - a. Did you consider applying for the Memphis Teacher Residency?
7. What did your preparation/training consist of prior to entering the classroom?
8. How well are you supported as a teacher in terms of community?
9. How do you define success as an educator?
10. In what ways are you succeeding in your first year as a teacher?
11. How do you define failure as an educator?
12. What are you struggling with?
13. What do you find to be the most challenging aspect of teaching as a first year teacher?
 - a. Is there any aspect that you wish you had been told about prior to entering the classroom full time?
14. How well do you feel your training prepared you to manage a classroom?
15. How well do you feel to apply instructional methods taught by your program?
16. How well prepared do you feel to assess students and analyze the results?
17. How well prepared do you feel to teach in your primary content area?
18. Do you believe you needed more or less time to prepare before entering the classroom?
 - a. Why?
19. If you could design a program to prepare teachers, what would it look like?

APPENDIX E: SAMPLE INTERVIEW RESPONSES

1. Why do you want to teach?

Progress generation to generation is not guaranteed, or even probable- it happens only through hard, conscientious struggle. Education represents the best hope for that progress, and I want to be a part of that movement. As the son of first generation immigrants coming from a low income background, that movement also had a deeply personal connection to me.

2. What did you study in college?

- a. Did your college provide opportunities to student teach or to earn your teaching license?

Political Science and Educational Studies. Opportunities to student teach, no licensing program attached.

3. Why did you pursue the teaching route non-traditionally?

School did not have a teacher licensing program.

12. What are you struggling with?

I struggle with my students' reading and writing levels. My high school seniors currently read at an estimated 7-8th grade level on average, and finding ways of pushing that growth faster than expected is the challenge.

13. What do you find to be the most challenging aspect of teaching as a first year teacher?

- a. Is there any aspect that you wish you had been told about prior to entering the classroom full time?

Everything. Situational awareness, when to pick your battles and which to pick, translating content knowledge into effective delivery, etc. Wish I had been told to go through a formal co-teaching program first.

14. How well do you feel your training prepared you to manage a classroom?

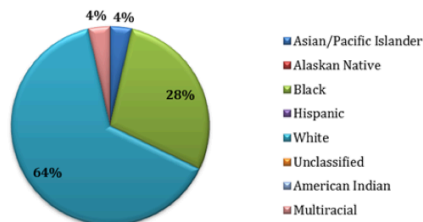
Minimally, not enough knowledge or practice.

APPENDIX F: PROFILE OF PROGRAM COMPLETERS

Memphis Teacher Residency 2012-2013

2012-2013 Program Completers

Total Completers	28
Male	36%
Female	64%
In-State	100%
Out-of-State	
Apprentice License	28
Transitional License	
Completers Statewide	>1%

Race & Ethnicity**Academic Information**

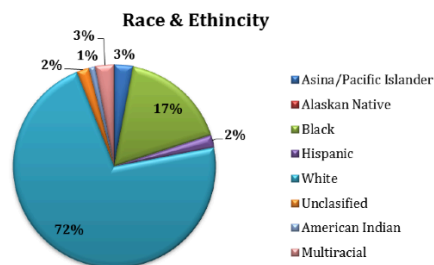
	Average All Completers		Range All Completers		Average Apprentice		Average Transitional		State Average All Completers	
	Average	N			Average	N	Average	N	Average	N
Final GPA									3.56	4258
Major GPA									3.58	1932
High School GPA									3.40	2240
ACT Composite									23.1	2406
ACT Reading									24.4	2212
ACT Science									22.5	2181
ACT English									24.1	2222
ACT Math									21.8	2220
SAT Cumulative									1110	294
SAT Math									549	283
SAT Verbal									557	282
GRE Composite									1034	228
GRE Math									549	239
GRE Verbal									480	240
MAT Score									399	275

**Preparation programs not associated with an institution of higher education are not included in academic information analysis.*

Teach for America Memphis 2012-2013

2012-2013 Program Completers

Total Completers	187
Male	26%
Female	74%
In-State	32%
Out-of-State	68%
Apprentice License	
Transitional License	187
Completers Statewide	3.9%

**Academic Information**

	Average All Completers		Range All Completers	Average Apprentice		Average Transitional		State Average All Completers	
	Average	N		Average	N	Average	N	Average	N
Final GPA								3.56	4258
Major GPA								3.58	1932
High School GPA								3.40	2240
ACT Composite								23.1	2406
ACT Reading								24.4	2212
ACT Science								22.5	2181
ACT English								24.1	2222
ACT Math								21.8	2220
SAT Cumulative								1110	294
SAT Math								549	283
SAT Verbal								557	282
GRE Composite								1034	228
GRE Math								549	239
GRE Verbal								480	240
MAT Score								399	275

**Preparation programs not associated with an institution of higher education are not included in academic information analysis.*