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Framing Teaching in Retrospect: A Qualitative Study of Educational Philosophies and

Teacher Socialization through the Teach for America Experience

A Dissertation in Education
with a Concentration in Curriculum Studies
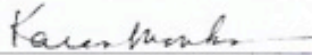
by

Angela M. Kraemer-Holland

Submitted in Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

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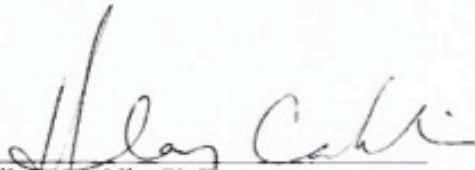
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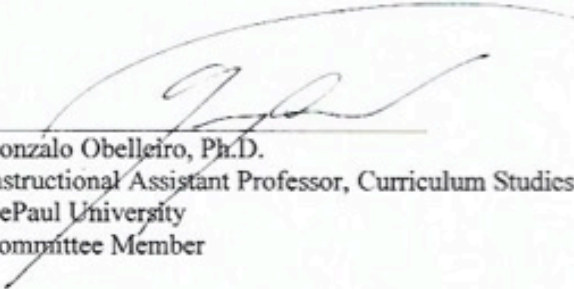
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Certification of Authorship

I certify that I am the sole author of this dissertation. Any assistance received in the preparation of this dissertation has been acknowledged and disclosed within it. Any sources utilized, including the use of data, ideas and words, those quoted directly or paraphrased, have been cited. I certify that I have prepared this dissertation according program guidelines, as directed.

Author Signature _____ Date ___5/1/19___

ABSTRACT

This study examines the capacity of neoliberalism and organizational socialization to shape alternatively certified teachers' preparation and understanding of their teaching roles within the context of Teach for America. Using theoretical lenses of both neoliberalism and organizational socialization, I conducted a qualitative study on Teach for America teachers' previous educational experiences, participation in the program, and the impact of this preparation on their careers post-teaching. None of the five participants are currently classroom teachers. Data collection included semi-structured interviews and critical discourse analysis of program documents. Findings reveal how participants' educational and program experiences challenged their initial conceptions of teaching and learning and left them minimally prepared and supported for the pedagogical and sociopolitical components of teaching in high-needs areas. Conclusions illuminate TFA's efforts to shape participants' understanding of teaching and learning—framing teaching as a temporary career—in order to create and sustain a broader movement in education and beyond that is reflective of neoliberal ideas. Recommendations for future research encourage the investigation of teacher preparation organizations as social and political actors, along with calling for a larger, more collective investment in teacher education.

Keywords: neoliberalism, Teach for America, teachers, qualitative research, critical discourse analysis, teacher education, alternative teacher education, traditional teacher education, neoliberal education, teacher retention, teacher attrition.

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my husband, Clifford Holland, who made the ultimate sacrifice in uprooting his life to move to an unknown country while I pursued this dream. Thank you for being the strongest anchor in my support system.

This dissertation is dedicated to my family, who was not totally certain about what I was doing, but still nodded and affirmed and supported me regardless. Thank you for instilling in me the values of playing school, telling stories, and elevating the human experience.

And, this dissertation is dedicated to fearless educators everywhere, most notably those who participated in this study. Thank you for your testimonies, your commitment to this research, and your commitment to education.

"… You cannot afford to think of being here to receive an education: you will do much better to think of being here to claim one. One of the dictionary definitions of the verb 'to claim' is: to take as the rightful owner; to assert in the face of possible contradiction."

–Adrienne Rich, "Claiming an Education"

"… One of the simplest paths to deep change is for the less powerful to speak as much as they listen, and for the more powerful to listen as much as they speak."

–Gloria Steinem, *My Life on the Road*

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I would like to acknowledge and thank my committee members for their unwavering commitment during my dissertation. Thank you for the shop-talks and pep talks and guiding me through this formative journey. I would especially like to thank my committee chairperson, Dr. Karen Monkman. Thank you, Dr. Monkman, for providing extensive support, guidance, and for serving as an exemplary role model throughout this research process.

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Background and Context

Though neoliberalism has progressively evolved economically and politically, its rise in American public education has been relatively recent. Paired with crisis language (Taubman, 2009) signaling public institutions in peril, neoliberalism has sought to shape multiple landscapes in favor of elitist agendas and to refashion not only public institutions, but also the people who work within them. As an economic and political ideology, neoliberalism operates under values of privatizing public resources, preserving individual choice, and free-market fundamentalism. Interestingly, little scholarship exists explaining the positive impact of neoliberalism in education (Apple, 1995; Cochran-Smith & Villegas, 2014; Giroux, 2004; Lipman, 2011; Sleeter, 2008; Ravitch, 2013; Weiner, 2015), thus warranting deeper research into its effects on education at large. Critical scholars poignantly establish connections between the origins and practices of neoliberalism and the current state of public education and teacher education. Others extend these critiques by arguing that as the private sector attempts to gain control over knowledge, America's preparation of teachers, or rather, those who impart what is worth knowing, has become increasingly influenced by instrumentalities that characterize neoliberalism (Taubman, 2009). These instrumentalities are shaping our understandings of both the teacher and the teaching profession more broadly. Changes in teacher preparation impact how teacher educators and organization-based programs approach guiding pre-service teachers, thus shifting the landscape of public education and how beginning teachers understand their roles within it.

Socialization involves the internalizing of values, norms, and the culture of an organization (Fogarty & Dirsmith, 2001). Not only is socialization important in regards to the functioning of an organization, but it is also critical in the process of how new employees or

recruits come to understand and either embrace or challenge the practices and philosophies embedded within their work and organization at large. The process of organizational socialization (Van Maanen & Schein, 1977) examines the methods in which organizations come to prepare new employees, and how these organization-specific methods produce subsequent employee responses *to* those methods. In addition, organizational socialization examines how employees' responses to an organization's preparation techniques and ideological framing of these techniques can shape employees' interpretations of their work experiences (Fogarty & Dirsmith, 2001). Rarely are implications of both systemic processes and the implications of ideological organizational socialization examined within schools. In addition, rarely are these elements examined when it comes to preparing, mentoring, and developing teachers (Kuzmic, 1994). Moreover, these external elements may reflect the embedded philosophical conflicts that impact teacher success, retention, and the overall conception of what it means to be a teacher in the United States. This is especially true of examining neoliberal ideology within school settings and as part of teacher preparation. Teacher socialization is especially important when examining historical and contemporary trends in teacher attrition and retention. Examining these trends offer clues into the reasons for staying or departing from the profession, notably as these relate to pre-service preparation.

Teacher attrition and retention has remained a consistent focus of energies and research within the education sector. According to Podolsky et al. (2016), "recurrent teacher shortages are a function of both declines in entrants to teaching and high rates of teacher attrition" (p. v). These teacher shortages are especially pronounced in low-income districts, both urban and rural. A combination of factors such as salary, preparation, personnel management, teacher induction, and working conditions play a part in a teacher's decision of whether to stay or depart from the

profession. Teacher attrition is especially common among those who lack full preparation for the classroom, with the rate of attrition at twice to three times the level of a fully prepared teacher (p. vi). Though some districts may seemingly benefit from increased teacher attrition through the ability to hire cheaper, less experienced teachers, the long-term cost of high teacher turnover over time greatly outweighs the initial savings incurred upon circulating more inexperienced teachers into and out of the classroom (National Commission on Teaching for America's Future, 2007). Coinciding with an economic recession, applications to university-sponsored teacher education programs declined from 2008-2014 (U.S. Department of Education, 2015; Podolsky et al., 2016). This application decline originated in part due to the reduced demand for teachers, difficult working conditions, and stagnant wages in some areas of the country. However, applications for alternative teacher preparation programs, like Teach for America, continued to grow (Heilig, Cole, & Springel, 2011).

Wendy Kopp's undergraduate thesis in 1990 detailed a "fast track" teacher preparation program that would pull from the most elite universities to train and transform teacher candidates into "corps members" as designated by the organization, to work in America's most impoverished neighborhoods (Fraser, 2007). This program is known as Teach for America, or TFA (Ravitch, 2013). Though TFA has shifted away from exclusively recruiting at the Ivy League colleges, its structure and overall approach to teacher preparation remain relatively stagnant. Teacher education scholars have continuously criticized TFA's ideology since its creation (Zeichner, 2010). This criticism largely originates from scholars' attachment to education and teacher education's democratic, progressive roots (Labaree, 2004). In addition, teacher education scholars argue that such roots do not form the basis of TFA ideology, instead citing the managerial, business-like practices as more dominant in the preparation of their

teacher-corps members (Lahann & Reagan, 2011; Ravitch, 2013). Departing from their original pursuit of addressing the nationwide teacher shortage in high-need communities, TFA's mission evolved in 2008 to closing the achievement gap (Document #75, 2017), raising questions of TFA's role in teacher preparation, retention, and within the wider public education landscape (Ravitch, 2013). This mission remained for the duration of most participants' years in the corps, thus shaping the preparation they received as corps member-teachers within TFA.

This shift in mission signaled the organization's battle against educational inequity (Document #75, 2017) as something intended to reach well beyond just teacher preparation but instead toward pervading educational policy at the local, state, and federal levels to align more heavily with their mission and vision for teacher preparation and quality, and to further this mission in K-12 settings (Scott, Trujillo, & Rivera, 2016). Critics admonish TFA for its alleged capacity to reduce teachers into mere transmitters of content or replaceable sources of labor (Labaree, 2004; Lahann & Reagan, 2011), for shaping the purpose of education into one grounded on instrumentalities (Kretchmar, Sondel, & Ferrare, 2016), and for instituting venture capitalist opportunities into education and teacher education (Ravitch, 2013; Zeichner & Peña-Sandoval, 2015), all as a means to promote a neoliberal agenda within multiple levels of education leadership and policy (Brewer & deMarrais 2015). In addition, questions around TFA's minimal teacher preparation—around five to eight weeks for most corps members—continue to spark criticism of the organization's efforts to retain teachers in the communities it hopes to assist, as these are the very communities that continue to suffer from teacher shortages in multiple content areas (Podolsky et al., 2016), even as surpluses in some communities and content areas concurrently exist (Darling-Hammond et al., 1995). Furthermore, the "disproportionate placement of underprepared teachers" (Darling-Hammond et al., 1995 p. 189)

in the country's neediest communities calls into question the "student-driven" mission of the organization (Document #48, 2014 p. 2). Though there are TFA corps members who elect to stay in the profession, little literature exists around TFA's corps member retention efforts (Straubhaar & Gottfried, 2014).

Some would argue that the organization's means of preparing teachers is to perpetuate an economic model that thrives on consumerism and a disabled public's understanding of education as a public good (Apple, 2006), the very same elements characteristic of neoliberalism's role in public education on a broader scale (Lahann & Reagan, 2011; Ravitch, 2013, Weiner, 2007; Zeichner, 2010). By couching managerial practices to prepare their teachers with efforts to address educational inequity (Document #75, 2017) through their capacity to recruit high-quality teachers to high-needs areas, the masses view TFA as both a noble and necessary organization. However, these efforts do not demonstrate the entire truth to the public, especially the high-needs communities in which these teachers are placed, resulting in the public's distorted view of teacher quality, retention, and of the profession as a whole. Moreover, the question remains of whether preparing teachers for a sprint instead of a marathon—a short-term or long-term career—in teaching addresses the shortages existing in the very communities where TFA sends its corps members. Such questions and potential misrepresentations are cause for concern, specifically in relationship to how we speak and think about and understand teachers and effective teacher preparation and teacher education.

Lahann and Reagan (2011) label TFA as a "progressive neoliberal" organization, that is, an organization communicating a social justice mission, but relying on business-like models for ideological practices of this mission (p. 11). The researchers' classification of TFA as a progressive neoliberal organization characterizes its ideology and practices as stemming from

noble intentions by adhering to the fundamental belief that all students, regardless of socio-economic, racial, or linguistic background, deserve high-quality teachers, illustrating the organization's mission to address educational inequity (Farr, 2010; Document #75, 2017). However, despite the social justice underpinning within TFA's mission, their practices in preparing teachers further the deregulation of the teaching profession through adherence to managerial models found within the corporate sector, practices that ultimately destroy the progressive nature of teacher education, and thereby tighten the ties between education, economics, and politics in order to reshape public education and teacher education to better align with their vision for teacher quality (Scott, Trujillo, & Rivera, 2016). These methods are not always sustainable, forcing corps members to abandon their teaching posts immediately following their two-year commitments, or sometimes even sooner.

Many argue that private investment in education has become a significant problem that negatively affects the quality of schools, teachers, and teacher retention efforts as a result of neoliberalism's role in education (Ravitch 2013; Stern, 2014; Weiner, 2007). The rise in alternative teacher certification programs, like TFA, illustrates corporate and political efforts to undermine already-existing university-sponsored teacher education programs by choosing to invest in and expand alternative pathways over traditional or university-based ones, though not addressing the root causes of teacher attrition in urban and rural areas (Podolsky et al., 2016). This perpetuates a progressive deregulation of the teaching profession by championing programs that seek to limit or eliminate necessary coursework and pedagogical growth before becoming a teacher (Ravitch, 2013; Weiner, 2007), and discourages the examination of the pervading questions around teacher sustainability in the profession (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). Alternative teacher education has emerged as a popular route to bypass what many

lawmakers allege to be tedious university coursework, such as pedagogical, methods, and content coursework, for young college graduates (Fraser, 2007). The bypassing of teacher education coursework alters the understanding of what it means to be a high-quality and well-prepared teacher the United States.

While dominant discourse continues to fashion teachers as both saviors for students and their communities, and simultaneously as figures entirely responsible for the failures within public education (Labaree, 2004), we must critically examine the foundations for such beliefs, and how these impact the current teaching force and teacher preparation in all of its forms (Kumashiro, 2012). Examining TFA's evolving ideology and presence within teacher education grounds the necessary research around the evolving role of the teacher within public education, and how neoliberal ideology may impact this transformation for public education and for the teachers themselves. We must inquire how former TFA corps members' experiences within a progressive neoliberal organization (Lahann & Reagan, 2011) have shaped their understanding of the role of the teacher, their experiences within the organization, and their decisions to stay in or to depart from teaching. And, because education possesses strong progressive underpinnings (Labaree, 2004), we have reason to question whether TFA's seemingly progressive mission is sustainable and demonstrable amidst neoliberal influence within teacher education.

Statement of Problem

Brewer and deMarrais (2015) expose the difficulties teachers experience working within and against underlying beliefs and practices embedded in TFA and its culture. The central focus of this literature tends to be critical of the organization itself and its limited coaching and preparation of its recruits, often through the eyes and perspectives of the recruits themselves (see also Ravitch, 2013). In addition, some literature examines TFA teachers' impact on student

achievement in comparison to "traditionally" prepared teachers, though with inconclusive findings (see Darling-Hammond et al., 2005; Heilig, Cole, & Springel, 2011). However, little literature introduces the neoliberal aspects of TFA as potential catalysts for shaping teachers' philosophies and beliefs of education beyond the classroom through teachers' own lived experiences (see Brewer & deMarrais, 2015). Moreover, existing literature fails to include the previous educational experiences of TFA recruits that may have shaped their beginning understandings of and interests in teaching and education more broadly, such experiences that may have thus shaped their TFA participation, and their post-TFA careers.

This qualitative study's research problem explores how the perpetuation of neoliberal practices and philosophical underpinnings within TFA have shaped the lived experiences and approaches to teaching of TFA alumni. Because TFA shifted their mission to one of closing the achievement gap in 2008 (Brewer et al., 2016; Farr, 2010) and to preparing leaders instead of teachers (Document #75, 2017), the focus has increasingly become less about classroom-based, teacher-driven change, and one of multifaceted influence within teacher education, and public education as a whole. We must inquire what this means for the state of education, since many TFA participants teach for the minimum requirement of two years, before moving on to lead charter schools and networks, work in nonprofits, or write federal education policy (Brewer et al., 2016). As recruits from TFA depart from the classroom and venture into the world of education policy, we must inquire how their participation within an allegedly progressive neoliberal organization (Lahann & Reagan, 2011) shaped their experiences as current and former practitioners, as well as their overall understanding of a teacher's role within the educational landscape, and their understanding of public education. Moreover, we must consider their

decisions in departing from teaching in light of politically touted, highly esteemed, and seemingly rigorous preparation for classrooms in underserved communities.

Statement of Purpose

If the goal of TFA is no longer to address the teacher shortage by training informed and experienced practitioners, but rather to mold leaders (Document #75, 2017), how do former corps members understand the role of the teacher within this educational landscape? How has TFA "re-visioned" teaching for them (Crotty, 1998 p. 51), and, if at all, prepared them for long-term careers in teaching? Have participants stayed connected to TFA and its mission in some way, largely due to positive and formative experiences during their corps years? Or, have they departed completely as a result of challenging the organization's conception of the teacher in order to champion their own? From here, how did these teachers interpret the function of the teacher and of teaching itself, and how have and are these beliefs manifested in their former and current careers? This qualitative study examines the impact of both neoliberalism and TFA's philosophical underpinnings on former TFA corps members' lived experiences, both within and beyond the organization and the classroom. More broadly, this qualitative study examines the power of both neoliberalism and TFA in influencing TFA corps members' understanding of a teacher's role within the broader educational landscape.

Research Questions

This study is guided by the following research questions:

1. How, if at all, does TFA prepare its corps members for long-term careers in teaching?

2. In what ways do TFA alumni articulate educational philosophies that are consistent with, or divergent from, the stated philosophies of TFA?

3. In what ways do TFA and TFA alumni articulate educational philosophies that are consistent with, or divergent from, neoliberalism?

Epistemology

As mentioned, a qualitative approach guides this study, which beckons the researcher to embrace uncertainty and multifaceted, rich data elevating the human experience (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016; Geertz, 1973). Qualitative research concerns itself with examining phenomena and how people make meaning of particular phenomena, experiences, and the contexts in which they occur. This research approach serves as the most appropriate one in order to honor the perspectives of research participants, as well as the meaning-making of and reflection upon their participation within TFA. Furthermore, a qualitative approach will expand the capacity to offer rich and thick descriptions of participant experiences, allowing them to be co-constructors of this meaning.

Ontologically speaking, this qualitative study structures social reality as the product of processes and multiple meanings (Crotty, 1998 p. 11) through a constructivist-interpretivist framework. Lincoln and Guba (1985) assert the basic underpinning of interpretivism: reality is socially constructed through context-specific phenomena (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016 p. 42). In addition, people develop subjective meaning in relationship to these context-specific phenomena, eliciting multiple meanings from even common, shared experiences. Deriving from the interpretivist perspective, social constructionism acknowledges the institutions in which we are "already embedded" as structures that allow for meaning making to happen (Crotty, 1998 p. 52). Here, culture—symbols, norms, and accepted practices—becomes "the source" of human thought and behavior (p. 53). Functioning under this research approach beckons my pursuit of

these multiple meanings from varied participants around the phenomena of teaching within a progressive neoliberal organization, Teach for America (Lahann & Reagan, 2011).

Bloomberg and Volpe (2016) highlight the "value-bound" nature of this perspective, reiterating the capacity of this framing to pervade research. Such an assertion illustrates the ability of the research process to influence the researcher and the context of the study. In addition, such meaning making within a constructivist-interpretivist perspective posits that the culture in which we are embedded shapes our worldview. Not only is meaning transmitted, but also generated and re-generated to reinforce particular social structures unique to the individual. Researchers adopting this perspective must then acknowledge their own worldviews and how these can shape interpretation (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016 p. 43) in an inductive research endeavor. In this way, culture and our capacity to make meaning is both widened and stifled— that which we experience closes off meaning making in other contexts (Crotty, 1998).

Research Approach Overview

This qualitative study frames Teach for America participation as a common experience that unites participants. However, this study also illustrates the multidimensional aspects of each participant's set of experiences in the program as these relate to their educational philosophies built upon from their experiences as students, former practitioners, and former TFA corps members. Research participants were selected on a first come, first served basis, with the primary criterion for selection representing participation in TFA from the years 2007 to present. As a group, the five participants completed their corps years post-Recession—at a time of TFA applicant growth (Heilig, Cole, & Springel, 2011)—with participation happening within a range from 2009-2016. One participant of the five did not finish their two-year teaching requirement. Post-recession TFA applications grew significantly, potentially as a result of the dire job market

(Podolsky et al., 2016). The five participants hold a range of post-TFA careers, some of which are still education-focused, but none are currently classroom teachers.

Though this study does not adopt phenomenology as a methodology, I practiced phenomenological interviewing techniques (Bevan, 2014), which I describe more in-depth in chapter three. I utilized a phenomenological interview approach (Bevan, 2014) in order to develop a deeper understanding of participants' experiences before, during, and after TFA. I also conducted critical discourse analysis of documents (Gee, 1990; 2004) focused specifically on gaining a comprehensive understanding of TFA's philosophical underpinnings as reflected in the organization's documented policies, procedures, and beliefs. I conducted two cycles of coding for interview transcripts and documents. Coding establishes "critical links" (Saldaña, 2013 p. 3) between sets of data that allow researchers to make or generate meaning from the material presented, while still preserving the content. "Cycles" here signify the processes by which I perused one set of data until tangible and applicable codes emerged. The first cycle was inductive, with the subsequent cycles as deductive. Chapter three discusses these coding cycles more in-depth.

Rationale and Significance

As mentioned previously, much of the existing scholarly literature focuses either on TFA teachers' impact on student achievement (see Darling-Hammond et al., 2005; Heilig, Cole, & Springel, 2011) or on the negative experiences of former TFA corps members (see Brewer & deMarrais, 2015). Zeichner and Tabachnick (1985) argue that rarely are perspectives of teachers represented within literature, which is especially true of neoliberal discourse currently enveloping the contemporary education landscape that renders teachers as replaceable (Darling-Hammond, 2007) and as passive technicians (Labaree, 2004; Zeichner, 2006). In addition, Scott,

Trujillo, & Rivera (2016) note that little literature explores TFA's position as a social and political entity within and beyond public education. This research is both important and necessary for us as practitioners and researchers to better understand how different pathways conceptualize teacher quality and preparation in a neoliberal era, which will challenge practitioners, teacher educators, and policymakers to critically examine whether and how we prepare our teachers to be (hopefully) critical practitioners within their school communities.

Therefore, I believe it is important to find a platform in which to share these histories because of their exclusion from literature and contemporary discourse regarding teacher preparation and education. In addition, as it relates to this particular study, I also believe it important to expose the ideological pervasiveness associated with teacher preparation programs, where TFA functions as one particular case. Finally, it is vital to showcase potential connections between neoliberalism and components of participants' experiences and education philosophies in light of neoliberalism's and TFA's significant capacities to shape public education and teacher education.

Gaps in the literature exist regarding the socialization processes of TFA teachers before, during, and after TFA, in addition to the gaps in literature that explore TFA's social and political significance beyond education (Scott, Trujillo, & Rivera, 2016). I hope that this study helps to shed light on the implications of neoliberalism as an ideology, TFA as a teacher preparation and leadership training program, and the influence of the organization's philosophical practices on corps members' conceptions of teaching, and what these factors mean for the profession and the roles of policymakers and teacher educators moving forward. Ideally, my research findings would be used to better describe both the lived experiences of TFA teachers as members of a progressive neoliberal organization (Lahann & Reagan, 2011), as well as to add to the existing

literature around both the philosophical and widespread influence of TFA's agenda within contemporary education and teacher education, as well as to illuminate the lived experiences of teachers so often lost in educational research (see Zeichner & Tabachnick, 1985).

Dissertation Overview

This chapter introduces the research study. This beginning chapter presents an overview of the context and problem surrounding the study, summarizes the study's purpose, identifies the research questions and the study's rationale and significance, and outlines the epistemological perspective and an overview of my research approach.

Chapter 2 critically reviews literature around neoliberalism and neoliberalism in education. Chapter 2 also reviews scholarship on teacher identity and the role of the teacher within the context of neoliberalism and the various program structures present within teacher education. Chapter 2 outlines TFA and its relationship to neoliberalism, and how this relationship has come to shape contemporary teacher identity.

Chapter 3 identifies and explains the research design, its methodology and qualitative methods. This chapter introduces the theoretical framework adopted for the research study. Chapter 3 also details the participant selection and recruitment strategies, data collection, and data analysis methods for the interviews and documents. Finally, chapter 3 includes the researcher positionality, the ethical issues that arose during the study and the remedies executed, the criteria and strategies for working toward trustworthiness, and the study's delimitations and limitations.

Chapter 4 includes participant profiles, detailing their previous educational experiences, their TFA placement, and the impact of their TFA experiences on their current careers. These participant profiles have preserved the testimonies gained from in-depth interviews, but have

protected the identities of participants, those mentioned in their testimonies, as well as locations of schools, TFA institute sessions, and TFA placements.

Chapter 5 details the findings that emerged from the interview and document data analysis. Findings from this study illuminated TFA's desire to build a movement within and beyond education, the dichotomous role of a TFA teacher, and the varied preparation participants received during their TFA teacher preparation. Though TFA is a national organization, it demonstrates policies and practices that are region-specific that came to shape participants' extent of preparation, support, and approaches to their placements.

Chapter 6 describes the analysis of the findings in Chapter 5 in light of the study's proposed research questions. Chapter 6 is organized in light of three analytic categories originating from separate findings and the study's research questions. These analytic categories highlight and expand the question of TFA's efforts to prepare its teachers amidst recurring teacher shortages in the areas it purports to address, the efforts of TFA to shape corps members' conceptions of teaching, and TFA's role as a political and social agent within the educational landscape relative to their pursued niches and alumni movement.

Finally, Chapter 7 includes proposed conclusions and potential recommendations, some of which were exposed in a participant interview that are worthy of including, as these recommendations reflect changes TFA has made to its organizational structure in light of changes within teacher preparation and public education more broadly. Conclusions part of chapter 7 originate from the previous chapter's analytic categories and the issues surrounding teacher retention that are impacted by preparation routes and sponsoring institutions, school leadership, and education policy on local, state, and national levels.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Researchers in economics, politics, and education (Apple, 1995; 2006; Chomsky, 1998; Giroux, 2004, 2014; Harvey, 2005; Lipman, 2011; Teeple, 1995) offer detailed definitions of neoliberalism, substantial explanations of its causes, and its grave potential implications for the American public. Neoliberalism is both an economic and political ideology founded on beliefs of privatization, increased choice, and liberated economic markets to allegedly maximize citizens' well-being and individual freedoms. Unfortunately, profit, taking precedent over the good of the public, stands in direct conflict to our history of providing adequate public services to all citizens. For a neoliberal society, individuals' desires and acquisitions supersede the needs of the people, allowing for increased individualized, private control of public life and its institutions as a means "to maximize personal profit" (Chomsky, 1999 p. 7). Other implications of neoliberalism include increased protections of financial institutions, redefining common sense (Harvey, 2005; Lipman, 2011), and finally governance by alleged experts, or those in positions of power, instead of the critical participation of the masses in shaping public institutions (Apple, 1995; Giroux, 2004).

Though neoliberalism has continued to evolve economically and politically, its presence in American public education is relatively recent. Little scholarship exists that explains the positive impact of neoliberalism in education (Apple, 1995; Cochran-Smith & Villegas, 2014; Giroux, 2004; Lipman, 2011; Sleeter, 2008; Ravitch, 2013; Weiner, 2015). That said, critical scholars poignantly establish connections between the origins and practices of neoliberalism and the current state of public education and teacher education as a result of its increased presence. Others extend these critiques by arguing that as the private sector attempts to gain control over knowledge, America's preparation of teachers—those who impart what is worth knowing—has

become increasingly influenced by the instrumentalities that characterize neoliberalism (Taubman, 2009). This impacts how teacher educators approach both teacher education and preparation for school settings in a neoliberal society and whether teachers choose to remain in the profession long-term.

This literature review aims to define the concept of neoliberalism and how its insurgence in the education world has impacted how we prepare our teachers for roles in the classroom. Two sides or critiques exist in the discussion of neoliberalism's role in public education: one in support of its shaping of public education, and one harshly critical of its involvement, though the former neglects to characterize such documented strategies as privatization, educational choice, and instrumental evaluations as "neoliberal." The literature within this review illustrates the latter, more critical stance, as a means to better situate my own positionality as a former public school educator within a neoliberal era. The review of the literature to follow represents both a comprehensive and critical stance in regards to neoliberalism's place in society and in teacher education specifically, in hopes of answering the following: what is neoliberalism, and what is its relationship to education? I have surveyed critical literature from economic and political perspectives to introduce a comprehensive definition of neoliberalism, explain neoliberalism as both an economic and political ideology, and to expose the particular facets that encompass the economic and political sides of neoliberalism.

The second portion of the review will identify, analyze, and critique neoliberalism's role in education and in education policy (Giroux, 2004). Moreover, this portion will attempt to illustrate the impact of neoliberal ideology and policy on the history, criticisms, current agendas, and program formats present in teacher education. As is the case regarding neoliberalism's capacity to shape public education, two sides to the debate exist regarding the success of

particular program structures within teacher education. The literature in this portion represents theorists who are predominantly critical of neoliberalism's role in shaping teacher education. Ravitch (2013) and Taubman (2009) expose neoliberalism's place in education through its manipulation of common sense toward one of framing education-in-crisis. To answer the question of how neoliberalism has shaped teacher education, I introduce critical arguments from Giroux (2004; 2014), Kumashiro (2012), Labaree (2004) and others, each of whom expose the deep impact of neoliberalism on teacher education. The final portion of this review situates a social justice-grounded vision of teacher education within a neoliberal era and offers possible means of implementing this agenda against the rising instrumentalities in education and teacher education. Literature surveyed explores these areas in light of neoliberalism's influence on the inherent purpose of education.

Neoliberal Ideology

Goals of Neoliberalism

For David Harvey (2005), a poignant researcher of neoliberal ideology, two primary goals of neoliberalism include the curbing of inflation and restoring class power to the elites (Apple, 1995; Dumenil & Levy, 2011) through instituting market ideology. Harvey (2005) cites 1970s policymakers' solution to inflation as the institution of market ideology, where the open financial market and consumers dictate the price and value of goods and services (McLaren & Farahmandpur, 2001). The employment of market ideology to dictate public life serves as a characteristic element of neoliberalism and as a means to redistribute wealth toward the elite, rather than to regenerate it to include the masses. In this sense, wealth can be loosely defined as economic capital and power. Market ideology operates under the belief that seemingly objective and freed economic markets will solidify citizens' individual prosperity. Neoliberalism frames

free markets as an answer to any economic or social ill: be it inflation or poverty, free markets

have the capacity to generate equal opportunity for the success of everyone.

However, market ideology reduces citizens to consumers of privatized public services,

taking advantage of an economic climate controlled by a small few. Framing citizens as

consumers diminishes public agency and reduces their capacity to obtain economic capital.

Giroux (2004) cites the dependence upon market ideology as a way to dictate human behavior

and resource distribution. One consequence of market ideology involves the commercialization

of needs and services, or consumerism. Consumerism relies heavily upon discourse around

preserving individual choice (Teeple, 1995), especially within the economic market. However,

those who control the market's structure also control the extent to which individuals can make

choices within this arena (Harvey, 2005). Instead of treating citizens as informed, active

participants in public life, neoliberalism shifts their role into little more than passive consumers.

Market ideology allows for control of public economic behavior while redistributing wealth and

power toward the elite (Harvey, 2005).

Harvey (2005) asserts that neoliberalism attempts to reduce the role of the state in favor

of individual assertion of power. Envisioning the "state" as a political body or community,

neoliberalism diminishes state power at the local, state, and federal levels (Teeple, 1995). This

ideology advocates for a minimized state at the behest of the financial market and social control.

In a neoliberal society, the state functions only to support the deregulation of economic markets

and to suppress resistance to this deregulation from the masses. Harvey (2005) and Teeple

(1995) expose the reasoning behind a disengaged governing body stemming from

neoliberalism's portrayal of the state as inept, a force that Apple (2006) argues, perpetuates

social ills and encourages individualism. Nevertheless, such assertions are contradictory in

nature: neoliberal ideology tends to blame the state for social inequality, perpetuating the belief that the masses, who have voting power at most, assist in their own economic and social misfortune.

Giroux (2004) notes that neoliberal advocates do not call into question financial deregulation as a primary source for economic inequality, even as this deregulation augments economic inequity. Proponents instead force blame upon frameworks and policies that ensure collective welfare. As a result, elites not only remain in economic power, but they also exert control over the discourse surrounding both power and the circumstances surrounding social and economic inequity. While simultaneously discouraging the role of the state, neoliberalism openly allows free markets to flourish, two concepts working in tandem to undercut public agency and deepen economic inequities. Though neoliberalism may have curbed inflation after the financial crises sparking its origin in the 1970s, its ability to achieve its second goal—restoring class power to the elites—exemplifies its continued influence across multiple sectors.

Origins of Neoliberalism

Harvey (2005) critically examines both the economic and political origins of neoliberalism. By extension, Giroux (2004; 2014) exposes neoliberalism's capacity to pervade public discourse and public sectors without resistance as a driving force behind neoliberalism's movement from government—or the power of governing bodies—toward governance—toward the power and control of economic elites. This shift illustrates a change from the government's distribution of resources to the masses toward the private sector's control over this distribution of resources for public life. However, Lipman (2011) and Teeple (1995) extend these claims by illuminating neoliberalism's dependence upon governance, in addition to its fundamental belief that the *public* should not be in control of *public* life. Ideologically, neoliberalism discourages

civic engagement beyond actions associated with exercising a finite civic duty, such as voting. This is due to the belief that the public is a reflection of the government, something that is an inherent failure. As such, the public must be treated simply as a body of consumers, capable of exercising individual freedoms within the market, which Sleeter (2008) argues diminishes collective power. Citizens internalize a belief that collective power is unnecessary, since it relates little to individual prosperity (Apple, 1995). As the public loses influence, the neoliberal misconception of the state-as-inept—or rather, the state's poaching of individual freedoms—becomes a common collective belief. Harvey (2005) argues this misconception stems from economic policy shifts of the 1970s to curb inflation and to restore elite power. This ongoing dependence upon the free market to dictate human behavior serves as a cornerstone of economic neoliberalism through its capacity to restore unequal class power and *commodify public power* to shift civic engagement away from the masses.

Giroux (2004) suggests the fusion of conservative and liberal ties, a product of the post-1970s political landscape, as a catalyst for the creation of neoliberalism and the movement of public power toward political and economic elites. These political ties stemmed from the right and left wing politicians succeeding in pulling away state control to make way for financial markets' control through the privatization of public institutions. He credits these influential political alliances between the ideological right and ideological left as assisting in the insurgence of neoliberalism. The ideological right, or conservative, is often associated with tradition, bemoaning the current state of affairs; while the ideological left, or liberal, also criticize contemporary society but while striving toward equity (Gordon, 2017). Apple (2006) argues that these alliances formed from the ideological left's compromising of policies benefitting the middle class, as a means to lobby the same corporate and financial actors with whom the

ideological right had established a close relationship. Harvey (2005) further attributes these

political alliances as the reason behind the restoration of elite class power. Not only did these

political alliances impact the American economy, but they also allowed economic institutions,

such as corporations, an increased presence in writing local and federal policy (Harvey, 2005).

Such overarching political power of corporate and financial institutions anchored neoliberal

facets, such as market ideology and political bipartisanship, in order to benefit the wealthy elite.

This elite power then dissolved into public institutions without collective engagement or

resistance, shaping the lives of citizens on an even larger scale. We now turn toward an

examination of neoliberal discourse as a means to better classify its ideological influence within

public spheres and within the minds of citizens.

Neoliberal Discourse

Harvey (2005) exposes neoliberalism's public influence through its capacity to alter the

dominant discourse, what both he and Lipman (2011) term as the remaking of "common sense"

(Harvey, 2005 p. 39). Discourse signifies the socially constructed communication that is imposed

on others (Stern, 2014). Harvey (2005) classifies this change in common sense as an ideological

shift: a shift in how the population speaks about and thus what the population believes to be true

about certain aspects of society (Gramsci, 1971). Harvey asserts that the remaking of the

dominant discourse surrounding public institutions illustrates an ideological shift from what is

deemed "good sense" and what is deemed as "common sense" (p. 39). Both Harvey (2005) and

Lipman (2011) discuss "good sense" as the capacity for one to critically engage in social life,

while "common sense" arises out of commonly practiced traditions or socialization (2005 pp. 39-

41). Common sense can become what is previously deemed "good sense" based on the ability of

those in power to employ rhetorical devices to conceal "other realities" or problems (Harvey,

2005 p. 39). Thus, what *seems* good to the public—as defined by those who shape the definition of "good"—can become a commonly held belief or set of beliefs perpetuated by the masses, even if what is seemingly good hardly represents the truth.

However, Lipman (2011) builds on her analysis of good sense in neoliberalism to critique its supposed objective approach, used to subtly shape what the masses interpret as good sense. This alleged objectivity stems from neoliberalism's neutrality to particular social interests in favor of what discourse agents and policymakers market as effectiveness and efficiency. However, neutral approaches to social interests later demonstrate neutrality toward the needs of the masses, a collective body that advocates a particular agenda in and of itself. Without knowing, the masses are then trapped in and perpetuate particular ideological perspectives and social practices not defined by them, but instead by elites. From here, the question then becomes to what extent can this neoliberal discourse shape the masses' beliefs about what is good and commonsensical while still maintaining an aura of objectivity and fairness.

Both Harvey (2005) and Lipman (2011) illuminate neoliberalism's ability to do both: to illustrate a seemingly objective rationale, while instituting and normalizing beliefs that erode collective agency and opportunities for social and economic equity. They argue that the neoliberal fashioning of common sense can be "misleading" (2005 p. 39), often masking deep, systemic issues that pervade a society. This involves shaping of what the masses see as their world or reality. Control over discourse lies within the dominant or ruling class to be imposed upon the public[1]. Gramsci (1971) and Harvey (2005) imply that this control has the capacity to alter the collective definition of common sense. Neoliberal power rests in its capacity to expose what is common sense to be also good sense. Or rather, what those shaping discourse

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[1] This point draws from my course paper, *The Impact of "Crisis" Rhetoric, Audit Culture, and Neoliberal Hegemony*. (2016, CS 761), DePaul University.

communicate to be traditional and valued in society, are elements worth valuing and cherishing as part of American public life.

What neoliberalism frames as both good and commonsensical centers on pushing for individual freedoms and the government's perceived impediment of these freedoms (Harvey, 2005; Teeple, 1995). Though the concept of freedom sounds convincing, Lipman (2011) cautions the reader of the ways in which neoliberal society manipulates words and concepts such as choice and freedom to imply public input and power within these elements. Neoliberal elites have the capacity to control how discourse and specific terms are constructed and re-constructed to convey their own agendas and subsequently mask systemic issues and root causes. Examples of these agendas over time involve preserving family values, education for all, and defending traditional American freedoms. Though appealing to the masses, notions of choice, individual freedom, and democracy rest in the hands of those who control politics, the market, and discourse. Evidence of neoliberalism's capacity to infiltrate discourse is especially illuminated in the areas of education and teacher education.

Neoliberal Education Discourse

Neoliberal education policy discourse constructs a form of thought regarding education that is imposed on the public (Stoddart, 2007) through shaping discourse to manipulate alleged existing educational crises. Neoliberals attempt to fashion a new common sense (Harvey, 2005) through controlling the discourse surrounding education (Apple, 1995). As Taubman (2009) argues, neoliberal education discourse executes a common sense of public education's perpetual state of crisis. Education's state of crisis illustrates a public institution plagued by consistent and widespread problems worth solving. Stairs and Hatch (2008) point out the neoliberal language of change and reform as a rhetorical tool to gain public support for transforming seemingly failing

public institutions, with public education serving as a prime example. Because of crisis language's deep history within public education, reforms perceived as leveling disparities between low-income and affluent communities are welcomed and encouraged by the masses. However, these transformations often occur without public input, which Lipman (2011) argues to be a glaring divide between the proof of and the rhetoric of progress preached by neoliberal policymakers.

Despite the seemingly well-intentioned use of the word "reform" in education, neoliberal policymakers who utilize this in discourse and in practice hardly address sources of inequity in education. Ravitch (2013) argues "'reform' is a misnomer" (p. 19), since neoliberal education discourse prides itself on progressive change and equality, but institutes policies that deepen the opportunity gap between affluent and low-income communities. Though progressive in rhetorical arguments, as the word "reform" appears seductive to those wishing for radical change, neoliberal education policies do not work toward social change. Instead, these policies exacerbate social inequities. Examples of neoliberal policies that deepen inequalities are most evident in curricular mandates. Low-income schools are subjected to significant high-stakes testing curricula to showcase instrumental academic gains, while more affluent schools benefit from rich, well-rounded course offerings and curricula (Zeichner & Peña-Sandoval, 2015). Neoliberal education policy discourse rejects formally addressing systemic inequalities within public education, opting for policies that resolve superficial, instrumental issues but speak of these as the best possible solutions to widespread disenfranchisement. The masses readily accept the solutions provided, however narrow in scope. These beliefs in the alleged do-good nature of neoliberal education policy shape how the public understands both good teaching and a good education more broadly. Neoliberal education policies are thus perpetuated ideologically by both

the elite and the disenfranchised, the latter operating within "conditions not of their own making" (Lipman, 2011 pp. 61-65).

It is important to contextualize the arrival of the neoliberal education agenda through crisis language, which continues to shape discourse around the state of education. Upon the publishing of *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983), the language of crisis took on a new form and paved the way for much of what we see in contemporary education policy (Stern, 2014). To Kumashiro (2012) and Ravitch (2013), *A Nation at Risk* grounds our understanding of the state of our schools, teachers, and public education in both failure and crisis. This sense of crisis stems from perceived mediocrity that has seemingly characterized education for decades. This perceived sense of mediocrity stems from perceived inadequacies in curricula and teachers, leading to numerical—arguably more concrete and quantitative—measurements of learning, as well as teacher scapegoating for the lag of American students behind their international counterparts. From here, a sense of hyper-urgency emerges, highlighting an effort to quickly solve these alleged education ills formed within subsequent neoliberal education policy and through its discourse. Though neoliberalism serves as a set of responses to both real and perceived crises within the public sphere (Taubman, 2009), neoliberal reforms attempting to solve these crises only exacerbate the perceived shortcomings in education that such reforms are supposed to solve (Stern, 2014).

Many decades before, Milton Friedman, a key economic scholar and one of the gurus of neoliberalism, once argued that "only a crisis, real or perceived, [can] produce real change" (Friedman in Taubman, 2009 pp. 9-10). Since the publication of *A Nation at Risk*, the language employed to speak about public education has centered on a crisis to be solved with a sense of urgency. Policymakers manipulate this public sense of crisis to put forth what may be deemed

necessary solutions at the time, but only serve to illustrate a particular agenda as dictated by those in power. As a result, the general public feeds on the perception of crisis and perpetuates this aforementioned sense of urgency for finding suitable solutions. This "crisis," whether "real or perceived," (Friedman in Taubman, 2009 pp. 9-10) illustrates the capacity of ideas in manufacturing and creating social change (Lipman, 2011; Hyslop-Margison & Sears, 2006; Stoddart, 2007). In this case, the discourse around the perceived crisis in public education has the capacity to shape the masses' beliefs around what constitutes a good education, and what kinds of reforms, whether egalitarian or not, make the concept of a good education seemingly more achievable. The perception of a crisis reflects the powerful neoliberal policymakers' capacity to alter public life and beliefs. Crisis language instills both distress and fear within the public, but this language exacerbates the very problems such neoliberal policies claim to solve (Saltman, 2007). It is vital to contextualize the arrival and maintenance of crisis language through the lens of market ideology in education, a critical component of neoliberal ideology.

Market Ideology in Education

Olssen, Codd and O'Neill (2004) expose neoliberalism's capacity to erode democracy within public education through instituting market ideology, which Harvey (2005) argues has allowed for the restoration of elite class power. Market ideology in education occurs in the form of privatization, venture philanthropy, and school choice. Taubman (2009) labels this "audit culture," a facet of market ideology, which involves the increased presence of venture philanthropists and business models as a means to maximize both profit and influence in education. Privatization is the process by which the state's control of public institutions is shifted to control by private companies or individuals. This serves as one aspect of elites' capacity to govern and shape education through market ideology. The influx of market ideology in education

has increased the prevalence of privatization of individual schools and districts, and thus competition between schools for individual students (Saltman, 2007; Zeichner, 2010). Privatization, in this way, holds some responsibility for the increasingly competitive nature of school, what neoliberals deem as healthy and necessary to ensure economic preparedness beyond the classroom. Giroux (2004) and Apple (1995) affirm that privatization in education involves redefining education's purpose through instrumental means marketed as benefitting student preparedness.

Lipman (2011) and Ravitch (2013) apply this argument of privatization in redefining public education through the shift in control from public to private, elite entities. This process helps to institute market ideology associated with neoliberalism. Privatization reduces the state's responsibility in providing adequate and equitable education for every student; reduces costs of resources, teachers, and schools managed by the state itself; and supports the illusion of increasing efficiency in education, again, in order to solicit personal profit. As economic neoliberalism entrusts the market and corporate experts to control public resources, contemporary education relies on financial and corporate figures to control public education and the public presence within it. The process of privatization purposely does not account for systemic inequities within and between communities and instead relies on the governance of elites to institute seemingly equitable public education and to remedy social ills (Giroux, 2004). However, Lipman (2011) argues this model is not meant to address the needs of the masses. Both Saltman (2007) and Sleeter (2008) expose elites' desire to maintain both profit and influence within education, oftentimes at the expense of the general public. In any case, the increase of venture capitalists in the field of education not only diminishes the state's role in providing equitable education for the masses, but it also reduces their capacity to hold influence over

decisions made within the sector, opening up opportunities for individuals to maintain influence over education, as well as capitalizing on the freedom to enact their own agendas.

In neoliberal education policy, elites' control over education illustrates one aspect of governance through privatization (Giroux, 2004). Stern (2014) characterizes venture philanthropy as an effective means to shift control over education toward private entities and away from the public. Venture philanthropy intends to shift education toward prioritizing quantitative learning measurements, similar to what exists in the business world. This involves public-private partnerships to promote market reforms in order to enact social change (Lipman, 2011; Ravitch, 2013). However, the origin and power of these partnerships rests in the assumption that significant disruption of the education sector can only happen through entrusting leadership to those who think beyond its constraints (Zeichner & Peña-Sandoval, 2015), those who are allegedly seen as experts. These groups rarely consist of or represent practitioners in the field of education (Ravitch, 2013; West & Reitzug, 2009). The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Broad Foundation, and the Walton Family Foundation are all examples of venture capitalists funding particular aspects of education in order to exert influence over education policy. Entrusting power to external organizations or foundations not only shifts power away from the state and the public, but it also ensures that venture philanthropists maintain control of a particular facet of education. Such partnerships exist in order to provide private sector funding for economically drained public sectors, such as education. Public-private partnerships become vital in implementing neoliberal agendas in public spheres.

Venture philanthropy allows for a shifting concentration of power and economic capital away from the masses and toward the elite, what Harvey (2005) terms as "accumulation by dispossession" (p. 174; see also Saltman, 2007). Lipman (2011) applies this argument to specific

urban environments that have fallen victim to venture philanthropy, asserting that these shifts in wealth have resulted in historical disenfranchisement over decades. When this is applied to education, venture philanthropists focus heavily on reshaping historically disenfranchised communities under neoliberal ideology. Venture capitalists view these situations as investment opportunities within the public sector to institute particular agendas within communities desperate for egalitarian educational opportunities. Such communities often crave change or reform (Lipman, 2011). This philanthropic involvement results in a shift in control toward those attempting governance over education while projecting a façade of educational equity through expanded—though privatized—opportunities (Apple, 2006; Giroux, 2004).

Though seemingly empowering to communities craving expanded educational opportunities, the concept of choice in neoliberal education policy is one grounded in consumerism (Saltman, 2007; Ravitch, 2013). Choices in the neoliberal education era are controlled by the ruling class and do not represent genuine, egalitarian options for the masses (Giroux, 2004; Lipman, 2011). As Lipman (2011) asserts, the masses often operate within conditions they did not create, and are caught between choices that reflect social or economic disenfranchisement, or the lesser of two evils. Much like their economic and political counterparts, neoliberal policies in education value competition, choice, and diminished public power (Giroux, 2004; Ravitch, 2013). Though neoliberal language in education heavily communicates choice, choice for all communities does not look the same. Neoliberal education policy frames choice as giving quality options to disenfranchised communities as a means to place members of these communities on equal footing with the affluent. However, privatized schools that extract resources from public neighborhood schools—an example of privatization—or the staffing of under-certified teachers to institute scripted, test-based curricula—an example

of instituting public-private partnerships through venture capitalism—in favor of expanding the knowledge and influence of veteran teachers—illustrates the inequitable options available to the masses. Neoliberal choice is seductive to those who must wrestle with the possible inadequacy of many neighborhood schools (Lipman, 2011; Ravitch, 2013), and are willing to accept whatever choices neoliberal reforms produce. In turn, policymakers frame students and families as merely consumers of a public, privatized service. Though language appears to increase individual control through choice, the neoliberal process of choice instead diminishes the public's ability to control available education options (Saltman, 2007). This does not take into account already existing differences in power; thus, this inequity grows over time, allowing for the restoration and strengthening of unequal class power and an increasingly disenfranchised public (Harvey, 2005).

The Purpose of Education within Neoliberal Ideology

The purpose of education within a neoliberal ideology reflects a striking departure from the progressive underpinnings of education. Labaree (2004) details the role of progressivism in education, characterized by social justice and student-centered pedagogies. For Labaree and others, education's progressive roots serve as a tool for sustaining a democratic society (Giroux, 2004; 2014; Ravitch, 2013). However, the instrumental underpinnings within the neoliberal education ideology illustrate a significant retreat from progressivism. These underpinnings involve competition for economic preparedness, numerical measurement of learning, and instituting market ideology. Neoliberal ideology reflects contradictory ideas regarding its communicated beliefs around the purpose of education. Former education secretary Arne Duncan, arguably a champion of neoliberal education policy, classifies education as the one factor to eliminate poverty (2009), a common refrain for those looking to place responsibility on

a public sector for stagnant social ills. However, neoliberal education policy fashions the purpose of education to be one grounded in instrumentalities, competition, and inequality (Giroux, 2004; Zeichner, 2010), hereby eroding its role as an economic and social equalizer (Duncan, 2009).

Zeichner (2010) asserts that schools have become a private interest meant to foster competition as a means to prepare students for the workforce or economic competition, sacrificing the development of relationships in the process (Giroux, 2004; Noddings, 1992), and negating education's role as an alleged equalizer. Schools that operate within this framework produce passive and compliant students, feeding into the consumerist underpinning within neoliberal education policy, where students are framed as passive receptors of transmitted content. This process diminishes students' potential to emerge into active citizens. Neoliberal education policy views schools as apolitical institutions, though Giroux (2004) argues that schools have the capacity to still mirror the communities in which they reside, including communities of crisis. Neoliberal education policy cannot remedy such systemic crises, since the variables contributing to them lie outside of the school building. Despite the neoliberal claim that classifies education as an economic equalizer, such assertions no longer apply due to the deepening gap between races and social classes produced in a large part by neoliberal education policies (Ravitch, 2013). As these policies prepare passive students, this very passivity assists in the weakening of public agency that would allow for organizing toward educational improvements, and thus the deepening of social and educational inequities.

Neoliberal education policy perpetuates education as a mechanism of arbitrary sorting, deepening inequities within and between populations (Apple, 2006). Deepening disenfranchisement distances certain populations from positions of power and opportunities to gain forms of capital (Giroux, 2004; Tuck, 2013), where capital can mean both resources and

power. For education in a neoliberal era, it is imperative that students add value or capital to

one's worth (Ladson-Billings, 2001) in order to serve the global economy (Hyslop-Margison &

Sears, 2006). Adding value appears through instrumental performances of knowledge, such as

through high-stakes testing (Apple, 1995). Though seemingly valuable in a neoliberal era, such

measurements of learning do not reflect high-quality education; nor do these measurements

reflect democratic or critical civic participation in education. McLaren and Farahmandpur (2001)

argue that the neoliberal presence in education has shifted pedagogical discourse to quantifiable

measurements of learning, what Dewey (1916/2012) cautions as a significant threat to the

democratic groundwork of public education. Neoliberal education policy continues to spur

competition within and between students, schools, and communities, thereby creating clearer

division between haves and have-nots. This competition erodes the democratic foundation of

public education and perpetuates the very inequalities neoliberalism claims to address, most

specifically through education itself.

Until this point, this review aimed to define neoliberalism, describe its ideology, and

explain its capacity to pervade public institutions and discourse, specifically where education is

concerned. The remainder of this review intends to apply these aspects of neoliberal ideology to

the history and contemporary landscape within teacher education. Neoliberalism has infiltrated

education policy and teacher education in the following ways: shaping education discourse

through manufactured crisis language—and how teacher education programs must address this—

(Ravitch, 2013; Taubman, 2009), instituting market ideology to further venture philanthropy in

teacher preparation (Ravitch, 2013; Saltman, 2007), framing teaching as a technical profession

(Weiner, 2007; Zeichner, 2006), and criticizing the ineffectiveness of particular education

programs in the process (Labaree, 2004; Lucas, 1997). Each element connects to further the

neoliberal agenda and to cement a set of beliefs about teachers in a neoliberal era. Moreover, each aspect is worthy of further discussion as a means to examine the impact of neoliberal education policy on teacher education. In the second portion of this review, and drawing from critical education scholarship, I hope to illuminate how neoliberalism has shaped teacher education's relationship to academia, its program structures, current agendas, and to provide a possible roadmap for its future.

The Complicated History of Teacher Education

Operating from different points of critique, education theorists Fraser (2007) and Labaree (2004) provide accounts of the history surrounding teacher education. Labaree (2004) tends to focus energy surrounding the dilemma between teacher education's progressive roots and the declining popularity and public trust of teachers and teacher educators. Fraser (2007) portrays a critical stance toward teacher education's origins, longevity, and capacity to develop with society. Nevertheless, both catalogue the origins and evolution of teacher education across decades. Education emerged as a course of study in higher education in the late 1800s, with the capacity to teach serving as the principle requirement for the profession. Teacher knowledge measured through early licensing exams was largely based on disposition criteria, reflecting haphazard requirements for the profession. Modeled from France, states developed normal schools from 1870-1930 to quickly train teachers to fill classrooms as the student population grew, with certification standards holding secondary importance to the staffing of positions. Each school reflected various requirements for teacher certification, or rather, the authorization to teach in a public school (Lieberman, 2007). These schools illustrated the first movement toward formal higher education opportunities in teaching, despite the variation of certification requirements, something still discussed within contemporary education discourse.

Normal schools' immersion into universities in the 1960s illustrates the beginning of higher education's heavy presence in teacher preparation. Fraser (2007) asserts this immersion has eroded current education schools' ability to offer quality certification processes and has established education schools' monopoly over teacher certification. Though Labaree (2004) and Lucas (1997) introduce such critiques as existing, neither adopts these arguments for their own texts; as Labaree focuses on the development and struggles of education schools, while Lucas details the development of reforms and their efforts over the last century. Fraser (2007) classifies the 1960s as a decade of change in teacher education: such changes include exposing the states' control of licensure requirements, the necessity of college education for pre-service teachers, and the origin of alternative certification pathways. Exemplifying the latter change, Columbia Teacher's College introduced a fast-track teacher education program dubbed the Teacher Corps, as a take on the popular Peace Corps. The Teacher Corps grew out of the need for high-quality teachers in hard-to-staff school environments (Zeichner, 2006). However, this first formal alternative certification program ultimately failed due to political and fiscal difficulties, and fueled the criticisms of teacher education and preparation that still clouds the discourse (Fraser, 2007).

As we begin to distinguish the agendas, discourses, and program structures within teacher education, it is helpful to think of "teacher education" more broadly as grounded in scholarship, while "teacher preparation" illustrates a training, with more technical and job-specific underpinnings (Evans, 2010 p. 184). Evans argues that regardless of method, sponsoring institutions provide an "ideological basis" by which to train and socialize their pre-service teachers before entering the profession. Thus, both teacher education and preparation pathways

provide ideological frameworks for understanding what successful, effective teacher certification might mean, in addition to prescribed teacher's role within the educational landscape.

The Role of the Teacher in a Neoliberal Era

Conceptualizing Teacher Identity

We often associate teaching with a moral responsibility to serve the greater population. Nevertheless, teaching is considered a "semi-profession" (Evans, 2010 p. 184; Ingersoll, 2004), where we tend to professionalize its knowledge sources, the need for certification in order to enter the profession, the existing professional organization to which one can belong; but we also consider the bureaucratic structures that govern the teaching profession, such as school administrators, districts, and state and federal policies. As a result, the questions of how and whether to professionalize teaching begets a nebulous response in light of teaching's semi-professional status. Wilson et al. (2016) illustrate three ways in which to conceive of a teacher's role: as a professional, as labor, or as someone fulfilling a calling. Thinking of teachers as professionals holds value in their specialized, professional knowledge and upholding rigorous entry processes into the profession, often advocating for more stringent requirements nationally. Conceptualizing teachers as sources of labor characterizes their knowledge base as something built and developed on-the-job. Conceptualizing teachers as sources of labor adheres to the bureaucratic structures in place that put certain limitations on the teacher's position, relative to the school environment or state in which the teacher works. Finally, framing teachers similar to clergy in answering a calling of sorts conceptualizes teaching as a form of public service. Constructing teaching as a form of vocation frames the teacher as a vital part of their educational community holding a position of integrity as an "agent of personal transformation" (p. 168). The

ways in which we conceptualize teachers shapes how we define and construct teacher quality and identity.

Teacher Quality

The issues most frequently discussed in teacher education are improving teacher quality and improving the knowledge and skill base of teachers in the profession (Fraser, 2005; Labaree, 2004). However, these issues illuminate the question of how we collectively frame the role of the teacher: as a professional, as a source of labor, or as answering a calling of sorts (Wilson et al., 2004). The second Bush era introduced the concept of "highly-qualified" teachers into the education discourse, though debates over its definition reflect value judgments over the importance of content vs. pedagogical knowledge (Lewis & Young, 2013; Zeichner, 2013). To be designated "highly-qualified," a teacher must be certified to teach in the area in which they are assigned to teach; however, the means of acquiring certification can vary in terms of time frame and quality. Neoliberal policymakers worry less about the means of certification, and more about the raising of student test scores, what has come to serve as an indicator of teacher quality in a neoliberal era. The common belief rests in increased teacher quality as being the solution to increasing student achievement (Lewis & Young, 2013). Lahann and Reagan (2011) argue that neoliberal education policy embeds particular beliefs about teacher quality, fashioning the teacher into little more than an agent for transmitting content and increasing test scores.

Lipman (2011) cites the relationship between testing culture and the increased individual teacher responsibility for student success and failure. Such a relationship enables neoliberal policymakers to designate the teachers who can raise scores as good, while all others are not. Moreover, tying student test scores to teacher evaluations serve as concrete, albeit instrumental evidence of teacher quality, as well as a means to control teaching practices desired in neoliberal

education policy. Kumashiro (2012) asserts that language within neoliberal education policies connects poorly performing schools with the employment of incompetent teachers, adding another layer to designating teacher quality. These policies attempt to shape common sense around teachers and teacher education through characterizing incompetent teachers as those who participated in university-sponsored teacher education, beyond just teaching evaluations and student test scores. Scapegoating of university-prepared teachers to explain the allegedly widespread decline in public education and student achievement coincides with the deskilling of the teaching profession, or the reduction of skills and knowledge necessary to hold a teaching job, and the incessant discussion of how to define teacher quality and effectiveness within narrow margins of teacher evaluation.

As a result, many argue that full certification matters when speaking about teacher effectiveness (Allen, 2003; Kumashiro, 2012; Ladson-Billings, 2001; Labaree, 2004). Full certification involves holding subject certification and pedagogical training prior to becoming a teacher-of-record. However, varied systemic factors associated with teaching as a profession have made it difficult for the development of effective teacher education programs. Labaree (2004) asserts that the idea of effective teaching remains complex and contradictory because it cannot be completely measured on a numerical scale. For example, standardized tests cannot account for student hunger, morning gang violence, single-parent families, or teachers' context-specific responses to these factors. An adherence to equating learning with higher test scores serves as a highly effective means of suppressing critical curricular engagement of the masses and of critical teaching pedagogies, despite this measurement of learning's neglect of social or systemic factors that may impact student achievement.

It would appear that neoliberal efforts to tie teaching to test scores would falter due to external variables that cannot always be controlled, such as social inequities that may greatly impact student achievement and teacher-student relations (Zeichner, 2003). However, the contemporary state of teacher quality and evaluation is increasingly measured numerically. Moreover, the discourse around efforts to hold both schools and teachers *accountable* through measured growth is framed as a solution to both social inequities and incompetent teachers, which has shaped the public's understanding of teacher quality and the accuracy of neoliberal teacher accountability. Through neoliberal education policy, education is defined through test scores (Saltman, 2007; Stern, 2014) and as something apolitical (Lewis & Young, 2013). As a result, good and effective teaching is defined by how much a teacher can raise test scores (Scott, 2004). The capacity to increase numeric achievement holds a direct relationship to a teacher's success or worth (Kumashiro, 2012). The assumption that passively transmitting rote knowledge will result in higher test scores seems to guide most instruction and national policy (West & Reitzug, 2009), as teachers are framed as passive technicians or labor sources by neoliberal policymakers (Zeichner, 2006), despite practitioners' desire and efforts to be framed as professionals and change-agents.

Teacher Identity in a Neoliberal Era

Weiner (2015) argues that neoliberalism poses a threat to both education and teacher education. Though teachers' identities are being shaped by the market and policies that inhibit their autonomy, rarely does education research provide life histories of teachers (Anderson & Herr, 2015; Zeichner & Tabachnick, 1985), as neoliberal education policy makes little room for the personal within the teaching profession. Much of this could be attributed to the grouping of teachers in discourse, contrasted with the individual responsibilities of teachers as practitioners.

Labaree (2004) argues that teachers hold a dichotomous role in neoliberal society: considered as both savior—in their prescribed role to educate all students despite insurmountable odds—and squalor—responsible for all social ills, including inadequate education and academic and social resources that students face. Teachers have the capacity to change the lives of thousands (Ladson-Billings, 2001), while they are also deemed as potentially greedy, lazy, and less-than-experts within their fields (Kumashiro, 2012). Neoliberal education policy exacerbates this dichotomous role for teachers, suppressing teacher agency and identity formation, while expecting the near impossible of eradicating poverty as under-valued, allegedly ill-experienced practitioners. Thus, life histories and identities are not deemed as important, especially since teachers' voices do not count within the neoliberal education landscape (Zeichner, Payne, & Brayko, 2015) in as much as their ability to numerically increase student achievement.

Despite teachers' magnitude of influence within their classrooms, schools, and communities, teachers hold a low status within academia and within the job market. Kumashiro (2012) and Ravitch (2013) contend that in a neoliberal era, teaching has become a temporary, stopover career. Teachers are portrayed as replaceable sources of labor, something exacerbated through rapid certification and simultaneous layoffs (Darling-Hammond, 2007), adding difficulty to professionalization efforts. Labaree (2004) exposes the conception of the natural teacher: limitlessly and effortlessly illustrating one who can instruct despite social factors, pressures, and irrespective of extensive pre-service training. The natural teacher illustrates a common belief yet an impossible achievement. Teachers, in a neoliberal society, are individuals capable of closing the achievement gap between students of affluent and non-affluent communities on their own (Duncan, 2009), which reinforces the idea of a natural teacher (Kumashiro, 2012; Ladson-

Billings, 2001). Neoliberals and the general public believe everything depends on the teacher, yet concurrently struggle to view teachers as experts within their fields (McIntyre, 1997).

Neoliberal components of free markets and competition impact teacher education by deskilling the teaching profession (Stairs & Hatch, 2008). The deskilling of the teaching profession illustrates another means neoliberalism has infiltrated teacher education. This comes in the form of framing teachers as technicians (Zeichner, 2006), increasing the number of teacher education programs to create competition between them, and exhibiting teaching as just transmission of content (Ravitch, 2013; Stairs & Hatch, 2008). Giroux (2004) argues for the importance of treating teachers as public intellectuals, despite neoliberalism framing teachers as mere technicians or sources of labor (Zeichner, 2006). He continues by cautioning the role of the teacher in questioning their own authority, as teachers are, in fact, professionals in their field. Shulman (1986), though not entirely contemporary, argues against the neoliberal idea by exposing the complex role of the teacher, a figure with the capacity to address elements of uncertainty within a varied and extensive professional position. Teachers are professionals who can implement procedures based on content knowledge with justifiable rationale (Lucas, 1997).

In addition to possessing content, pedagogical, and pedagogical content knowledge, teachers must also have the capacity to establish an emotional connection with students, and to educate students holistically. Such a skillset contradicts agendas portraying teachers as passive transmitters of content (Labaree, 2004). As a process, teachers give their knowledge to eventually render themselves useless: the purpose of teaching is to eventually allow students to become independent learners, which inherently diminishes the power of the teacher (Labaree, 2004). Again, despite neoliberal conceptions of teachers circulating some education discourse

circles, critical researchers in the field negate such portrayals of teachers as mere technicians by exposing the complexity of the profession and those who work within it.

Despite a teacher's extensive kinds of knowledge, Olssen, Codd, and O'Neill (2004) expose the influence of the market upon a teacher's position and role within the educational landscape. In light of neoliberalism's dependence upon the financial market, a teacher has become a commodity to be traded and replaced, illustrating why teacher identity is not prioritized in neoliberal education policy and discourse (Anderson & Herr, 2015). This reflects the lack of value surrounding teachers' skills and knowledge. Since teachers' skills seem relatively ordinary, there exists the common belief that anyone can be a teacher (Shulman, 1986; Labaree, 2004). Such a belief perpetuates the idea that teachers should be little more than transmitters of material, as seemingly not much else is required. Here, a teacher's most pertinent skills are learned on the job (Wilson et al., 2004), and a teachers' knowledge base becomes irrelevant. Kumashiro (2012) argues that neoliberal education policy makes little room for teacher educator or practitioner input. As a result, not only are teachers overlooked regarding policy decisions that impact their careers, but these very decisions are left to those who may have little to no experience in education (West & Reitzug, 2009). Coupled with diminished conceptions of professional roles, decreased agency, and hierarchical control, neoliberal education policy assists in the creation of an environment ideal for the passive and conception of the allegedly replaceable teacher. Despite its seemingly objective appearance (Kumashiro, 2012; Saltman, 2007), the neoliberal conception of the teacher-as-technician lacks trust and encourages compliance (Olssen, Codd & O'Neill, 2004; Zeichner, 2006).

Current Agendas in Teacher Education

Zeichner (2003) cites three major agendas in teacher education representative of the figures and their ideologies applicable to this facet of the education landscape: the professionalization agenda, the deregulation agenda, and the social justice agenda. Zeichner and Peña-Sandoval (2015) classify supporters of each agenda: the defenders, the reformers, and the transformers respectively. Though these agendas formed around a common goal to improve education and teacher education, the minimized dialogue focusing on genuine efforts to developing teachers through improving teacher education raises concerns for its future. It is important to explain the three agendas in teacher education, as well as to contrast the particular conceptions of the teacher that originate from these agendas. The defenders support the professionalization agenda, an agenda that paints the teacher as a professional, worthy of social and academic esteem in an effort to elevate the teaching profession itself. However, the deregulation agenda's reformers support education reform on multiple levels, often advocating for those outside of education to address the alleged crises within the sector. Reformers illustrate the teacher-as-worker; a passive employee that transmits scripted content often developed by allegedly expert sources often from outside of education (Giroux, 2014; Zeichner, 2006). Finally, the transformers who support the social justice agenda argue that the teacher represents an agent capable of social and academic change. Though actors in teacher education may gravitate toward one particular agenda's underpinnings, these actors can adopt snippets of multiple agendas.

It is important to further explain the three agendas in teacher education, as well as to juxtapose the conceptions of the teacher as professional, the teacher as worker, and the teacher as change-agent embodied in each of these agendas (see Wilson et al., 2004). However, I will explain the philosophical underpinnings of the social justice agenda in a later section, as this

agenda advocates for a deeper conversation on where teacher education should be headed. The remainder of this section will endeavor to unpack the professionalization and deregulation agendas, while the "Future of Teacher Education" section will unpack the social justice agenda within the context of a potential conversation around practitioners' roles in shaping the discourse around teachers, and the landscape of teacher education and public education more broadly.

The defenders are those who argue for teacher education as it currently stands, often holding positions within the education sector; while those who embody a professionalization agenda advocate for national, performance-based standards to dictate licensure and to rigorously build upon the already existing university teacher education requirements (Zeichner, 2003). However, standards demonstrate a broad encompassing of a particular skill-set, and may not showcase skills that are specific to individual teachers (Cochran-Smith & Villegas, 2014). Ladson-Billings (2001) argues that teacher education programs in their current state do not fully address cultural competency for teachers of students of color, nor do programs explicitly address issues experienced by teachers of color. This results in catering to particular demographics for the teaching force, as the profession still remains predominantly white and female (Podolsky et al., 2016). Giroux (2004), arguably a defender due to his critical stance of neoliberal education agendas, argues the classification of teaching as a professional career must be met with national policy that would assist in shifting public opinion in the direction of professionalization. Nevertheless, steps toward professionalizing both teachers and teaching is lacking in light of neoliberal education policy, which is often closely linked to a deregulated agenda in teacher education.

Zeichner (2003; 2006) explains characteristics of reformers and the potential problems with their deregulation agenda. Reformers advocate for a complete destruction-then-restructuring

of teacher education, but often do not have experience working in education (Ravitch, 2013; Zeichner & Peña-Sandoval, 2015). Venture philanthropists—those involved with alternative teacher education programs—and neoliberal policymakers would fall into this category. Reformers typically champion alternative pathways to teaching, fewer teaching methods courses, and privatized strategies for acquiring and training teachers, characteristic of neoliberal education policy and a deregulated agenda framing teachers as replaceable workers (Zeichner, 2003; 2006; Weiner, 2015). Reformers tend to advocate for on-the-job training as a determining factor in teacher quality, prioritizing fieldwork experiences. This on-the-job teacher preparation is often found in programs like Teach for America or other alternative certification pathways.

One problem with a deregulation agenda rests in the argument for minimized methods courses in favor of content knowledge and fieldwork training to represent teacher quality (Zeichner, 2003; 2006). Fewer courses in pedagogy results in less pre-service training and capacity to unite both content and pedagogy in order to create an informed and accomplished teaching force. Reformers often falsely frame proper teacher education as grounded in either practice or theory, instead of in both. Reformers' agendas have gained traction in contemporary education discourse due to the political power behind its education policies, coming at a time when many in education advocate more heavily for full certification for teachers (Cochran-Smith & Villegas, 2014; 2016; Darling-Hammond, 2007; 2010; Darling-Hammond & Youngs, 2002; Sleeter, 2008). Olssen, Codd and O'Neill (2004) maintain minimized pedagogical training can lead to the institution of scripted curricula and the absence of social foundations represented within individual classrooms. Few reformers in support of deregulation of teacher education criticize the structure of alternative teacher education programs, which often push under-qualified teachers into classrooms with little to no training or ongoing mentoring. Under-

qualified teachers are more likely to teach in hard-to-staff schools, environments that would most readily need and benefit from having more qualified teachers (Ladson-Billings, 2001). The discussions around teacher quality, the level of professionalization, and the overall conception of the teacher continue to ground the debate around what constitutes a successful and robust teacher education program.

Program Structures within Teacher Education

This section will focus specifically on university-based or "traditional" teacher education programs, in contrast to "alternative" teacher preparation program structures. Neoliberal policymakers tend to advocate for teacher preparation programs that demonstrate cost-effectiveness and efficiency in training time (Kumashiro, 2012; Lucas, 1997) in an effort to circumvent the alleged bureaucracies found in university-based teacher education programs. For reformers described by Zeichner and Peña-Sandoval (2015), the robustness they desire in teacher education stems almost exclusively from on-the-job training in the classroom, rather than from methods courses taken in university-based settings (Kumashiro, 2012; Olssen, Codd, & O'Neill, 2004). However, policy research generates inconclusive answers regarding teacher quality, the use of standards-based assessment, and the most effective format of teacher education (Darling-Hammond & Youngs, 2002). These inconclusive findings do not assist in informing the debate between camps supporting particular teacher education program structures.

Contemporary research exposes the significant differences between and within "traditional" and "alternative" teacher education programs as it relates to teacher quality, as well as the proponents who champion each format (Cochran-Smith & Villegas, 2014). However, it is best not to distinguish teacher education or preparation programs based on these labels, but rather on the length of clinical experience and coursework (Podolsky et al., 2016 p. 19). As much

as practitioners and policymakers would like neat definitions and exact components that characterize every traditional and alternative teacher education program, this does not represent the reality of the current teacher education landscape. Not every traditional and alternative teacher education program looks the same. Notable differences between traditional and alternative programs involve the sponsoring institution, the course sequencing for certification, and the terminology to describe the programs (Evans 2010 p. 184). Due to the murkiness of clearly defining each program type, it becomes more difficult for both defenders and reformers to argue for one particular model over another.

Nevertheless, Lewis and Young (2013) and Lucas (1997) list general components that classify a traditional or university-based teacher education program. These programs unite extensive university-based teaching methods and content coursework with 8-16 weeks' of field experience focusing on the beginning stages of pre-service teacher practice development in an effort to fuse developing pedagogy with theoretical understandings found in the coursework. Such programs range from one to two years. However, Zeichner (2006; 2012) argues that lengthier programs, or extending the practicum of traditional teacher education programs, do not always warrant a more successful pre-service education program, because a longer program does not necessarily equate to more effective pedagogical training. Traditional teacher education programs continue to evolve around cornerstones such as standards (both local and national), strengthening fieldwork requirements, and through uniting and developing content and pedagogical knowledge (Lewis & Young, 2013). Inclusion of and addressing these areas result in the robustness desired from a teacher education program. However, Ajayi (2011) and Kumashiro (2012) indicate that despite university-based programs endeavoring to address each of these components, ongoing criticisms of traditional teacher education programs have increased. These

criticisms will be explored in the following section in light of current obstacles traditional teacher education programs face due to neoliberalism's increased presence in teacher education. The following section explores Labaree's (2004) discussion of university schools of education, and how the marginalization of these academic departments helps to fuel current criticisms of university-based teacher education programs.

The Trouble with Ed Schools

It has been a bipartisan effort to point out the shortcomings of teacher education (Labaree, 2004; Taubman, 2009). In *The Trouble with Ed Schools,* Labaree (2004) exposes teacher education's retreat into its marginalized role in academia, which it still holds as a result of economic and social pressures to justify the traditional teacher education program model within education schools. An education school is defined as a college, school, or department of education within a university. The role of the education school is to assist candidates in questioning, challenging, and critiquing through the lens of education; to recruit, admit, and prepare future teachers; and to produce education research (Ajayi, 2011; Labaree, 2004). Zeichner (2012) argues that excessive pressure on education schools to rationalize their programs and practices inhibits educating prospective teachers because much of the energy is now focused on addressing bureaucracies, rather than the education of pre-service teachers in their placement settings. This pressure augments the already prevalent criticisms of programs from neoliberal policymakers and from the public (Giroux, 2014; Lucas, 1997). Schools of education must work with the university institution, their departments, and with individual schools hosting and assisting with the training of pre-service teachers. These external conflicts and criticisms between program structure camps heighten the difficulty of teacher education establishing legitimacy within and outside academia.

Many tend to believe education professors, like the K-12 teachers they train, hold lower ranks within academia and within the job market (Labaree, 2004). As a result of this belief, it becomes a task in itself to dispel the collective argument that teachers and the professors who educate them are esteemed professionals within their field. Schools of education struggle to change the existing structure of not only public education, but also where to situate themselves within the education landscape (Kumashiro, 2012). Because of teaching's seemingly ordinary skill set, a degree in education holds a low exchange value, since education degrees do not lead to high-standing jobs or social positions. Neoliberalism in teacher education capitalizes on this common belief and subsequent low esteem of teachers and education professors by perpetuating alternative pathways to teacher certification, painting the picture that university degrees in education are not as sophisticated, contain allegedly tedious coursework (Fraser, 2007), and result in lowly positions within the workforce (Kumashiro, 2012). Neoliberal education policies thus attempt to dismantle the perceived monopoly that university programs hold over teacher certification, with the intention of allowing for choice between programs, whether traditional or alternative (Lahann & Reagan, 2011). Nevertheless, this weakens university-based programs in the process.

By weakening university-based programs, schools of education struggle to recruit potential teacher education candidates (Ladson-Billings, 2001). This obstacle puts monetary pressure—already an issue due to decreased funding for education schools—on universities to train teachers under the most cost-effective terms and as quickly as possible (Lieberman, 2007), which proves especially difficult when faced with criticisms regarding admission standards (Ladson-Billings, 2001). Thus, criticisms of education schools and their teacher education programs continue, as neoliberal policymakers and the public continue to call into question the

quality of the teachers trained under these program models. To Labaree (2004), the education school has slipped into an even more marginalized role within academia, which Lucas (1997) believes to be a cause of the rise in alternative teacher education programs. Nevertheless, Zeichner (2003; 2006), though critical of neoliberalism's infiltration into teacher training, does not discount the resilience and progressive reputation of university-based education schools.

According to Labaree (2004) and Evans (2010), education schools still struggle to merge theory and fieldwork. In some circles, theory remains secondary (Shulman, 1986), while fieldwork serves as the primary method of teacher preparation. Researchers advocate for well-designed fieldwork experiences, though teacher educators are struggling to guide candidates through consistently changing mandates in K-12 education (Evans, 2010; Zeichner, 2003). Teacher educators also struggle with the desire to create meaningful field experiences, endeavoring to create closer relationships between the host schools and the university itself. Zeichner (2012) argues that the increasing focus on practical knowledge and on-the-job training found in field experiences and diminishing pedagogical courses to supplement fieldwork results in a less valuable degree. In addition, neglecting pedagogical courses to supplement fieldwork seeks to erode education's progressive roots (Labaree, 2004; Lucas, 1997). Education researchers point to the increasingly instrumental practices of education schools, beckoning teacher education candidates to work within the existing public school setting that often mirrors neoliberal education policy dominating the K-12 setting.

Instead of instructing pre-service teachers to work against the neoliberal status quo, education schools face increasing pressure to instruct pre-service teachers to survive and succeed within the dominant education agenda in K-12 classrooms. This could result in perpetuating neoliberal ideology in education. This enactment of increasingly instrumental pedagogy

supersedes the university-sponsored coursework that teacher education programs attempt to unite

with practice (Allen, 2003). Though integral in any teacher education program, critics argue that

field experiences do not always invite critical thought (Fraser, 2005), but rather encourage

emulation and compliance within existing pedagogies (Hyslop-Margison & Sears, 2006), and

even deficit perspectives of minority cultures (Ladson-Billings, 2001). In light of these

difficulties, alternative certification pathways have gained both popularity and recognition.

Alternative Teacher Education Programs

Arguments about varied quality of teacher education candidates from traditional

programs have prompted the birth of alternative pathways to teaching and criticism of the idea

that there is one best system of teacher education (Darling-Hammond & Youngs, 2002; Fraser,

2005; Kumashiro, 2012; Lewis & Young, 2013). An "alternative certification program" is

defined as a program with specific curriculum and offers a shortcut that enrolls noncertified

individuals with at least a bachelor's degree (Adelman, 1986 p. 2 as cited in Zeichner & Conklin,

2005). However, Cochran-Smith and Villegas (2016) argue that the definition of an alternative

teacher education program varies between programs and individual states: each program model

has different components, and has been developed to achieve different goals within teacher

education. As a result, practitioners and policymakers must be cautious in generally singing these

programs' praises, or admonishing their faults, despite significant media coverage and political

support (p. 451).

Fraser (2005) argues that alternative teacher preparation programs serve as pathways to

recruit those who would not normally consider teaching, as well as a means to dismantle the

alleged control of university-based teacher education over the training of teachers. Education

researchers tend to argue that teachers from alternative routes are less qualified practitioners and

the insurgence of these teachers has helped to fashion the teacher-as-technician paradigm (Cochran-Smith & Villegas, 2014; Lucas, 1997; Zeichner, 2006) through the constant circulation of minimally trained teachers into and out of the profession. This argument originates from the belief that alternative teacher preparation programs require less, if any, pre-service fieldwork experience, or rather, teaching experience prior to serving as a teacher-of-record. Though the research is inconclusive. In any case, less guidance and assistance of newer teachers significantly attributes to new teacher attrition, regardless of program structure (Ladson-Billings, 2001; Podolsky et al., 2016; Sleeter, 2008). Darling-Hammond (2010), a frequent critic of alternative teacher preparation programs, asserts that almost half of under-certified teachers depart from the classroom in their first five years, triple the percentage of certified teachers who choose to leave (p. 37). With this in mind, we must question the purpose of alternative teacher preparation programs that could contribute to teacher attrition, thereby fueling instability within public schools and the potential for deeper inequities within public education.

Teach for America

Teach for America (TFA) is one particular case worthy of examination due to its significant influence over teacher education, public education, and education policy (Scott, Trujillo, & Rivera, 2016). Though TFA is considered as an alternative teacher preparation program, it does not exemplify every facet of programs of this classification. Most of the literature around TFA focuses on organizational merits, qualitative accounts, and some sources that illustrate TFA alumni and the organization as social and political entities (Scott, Trujillo, & Rivera, 2016). Zeichner (2006; 2012) argues that reformers champion TFA, a missionary-like teacher education program (2003) that, as a result of its influence in multiple areas within public education, holds deep corporate and federal ties (Ravitch, 2013). Demand for teachers has

increased, and states have opted to partner with nonprofits, like TFA, to train teachers. These kinds of partnerships between outside organizations that train teachers and individual school districts diminish the need for university-based teacher education programs (Brewer et al., 2016), weaken the credibility of the education school, and frame teacher education as on-the-job preparation with few academic requirements (Sleeter, 2008; Wilson et al., 2004).

In 1990, Wendy Kopp, then an undergraduate candidate, drafted a proposal for a "fast-track teacher preparation program" that is now known as Teach for America (Brewer & deMarrais, 2015; Fraser, 2007). Kopp framed her proposal around a "crisis in education and a critical shortage of qualified teachers" (Price & McConney, 2013 p. 98). Brewer et al. (2016) extensively examines the mission, vision, and influence of TFA within school districts and in policy. Kopp's assumption that existing, traditionally trained teachers were less qualified has sparked criticism of the organization, its policies, and its teachers by the university community and teachers' unions (Kretchmar, 2014). Despite the rise in criticism, immense legislative and corporate support for TFA increased dramatically, ensuring its place in teacher education (Ravitch, 2013). Though many studies have devoted efforts to comparing efficacy of TFA teachers and university-trained teachers, potentially directly addressing Kopp's claim regarding recruits' superiority, the results are inconclusive (Zeichner & Conklin, 2005; see also Cochran-Smith & Villegas, 2016).

Teach for America struck a chord with the politically powerful, resulting in the outpouring of funding from school districts, federal and local governments, and venture philanthropists into this organization as a means to further its efforts in teacher education (Ravitch, 2013), enacting TFA-sponsored education policy (Kretchmar, Sondel, & Ferrare, 2016). Furthermore, the increase in federal funding has allowed TFA to expand its recruitment

efforts, which in the process, has allowed a vast political network to emerge (Scott, Trujillo, & Rivera, 2016). This network of actors created a well-funded and influential leadership pipeline— a clear pathway to transition out of the classroom and into nonprofit or federal policy sectors— for its recruits to further its mission from all corners of the education sector (Lahann & Reagan, 2011).

Structure of TFA

The primary mission of TFA rested in its desire to address the nationwide teacher shortage. The recent 2008 recession halted much of the hiring across the country, while TFA recruits and alumni numbers skyrocketed (Heilig, Cole, & Springel, 2011). As a result, TFA and its publications had shifted their rhetoric toward the mission of "closing the achievement gap" by providing the highest-quality educators in the hardest-to-staff school environments to address what was marketed as a civil-rights issue in K-12 education (Brewer & deMarrais, 2015). The achievement gap is commonly conceptualized as the gap between affluent and non-affluent students' test scores (Kumashiro, 2012). The achievement gap framed education as a "great equalizer" capable of addressing and eradicating poverty (Duncan, 2009), with teachers at the front-line of this crusade toward equitable education. This mission has since been adjusted to address an "opportunity gap," (Document #78, 2019 para. 9) to illuminate more deeply rooted inequities where education plays a part in addressing these. Nevertheless, the participants included in this subsequent research study trained and taught as corps members under the "achievement gap" framework.

Potential recruits, or whom TFA call "corps members," often find their way to TFA through college-based recruitment events that TFA hosts on campuses or through regional events. Ideal corps members have leadership experience, high performance academically, and a

strong work ethic (Stern & Johnston, 2013 p. 2). However, for some participants, they "knew of TFA" earlier in college, and even before. TFA originally "started with the Ivy Leagues" as one participant noted, which solidified its reputation for recruiting high-achieving undergraduates at selective universities. However, another participant indicated this recruitment has since expanded to include state universities and Historically Black Colleges and Universities. One stagnant quality that TFA looks for in potential applicants is well-established leadership endeavors during undergraduate work. Upon initial interest, the application process is rigorous, multi-step, and time consuming. The beginning stage involves an online application that requires a short writing component. Some participants indicated this prompt is philosophically focused, in an effort to gauge the applicant's perception of a teacher's role. The application also includes the component where applicants select preferred—and for some applicants, the potential to list undesired— placement regions, in addition to preferred grade levels and teaching subjects. The subject that a corps member teaches is dependent upon their college major. This is especially true for corps members looking to teach high school. However, a few participants reiterated that due to the high need for Special Education teachers across the country, an applicant's selection of Special Education all but guarantees placement in this subject area.

The second stage can either involve a phone interview or an in-person, group interview. For all participants, the application process moved right from the online application to the in-person interview. For some, this involves traveling to a larger city to partake in the daylong endeavor. This stage involves a group component, where applicants teach a quick sample lesson to 10-15 other applicants and TFA staff members, where TFA staff can play the parts of "misbehaving students" whom applicants are inclined to address in their lesson. The group

portion also involves facilitated discussions around particular questions TFA staff encourage applicants to verbally explore with each other.

From here, applicants are either admitted or denied. If admitted, the corps member receives notification of their placement region, their teaching subject, and whether they will teach in an elementary or high school setting. Depending on when applicants apply—there are three separate application deadlines—this may give them ample (or very little) notice before they must think about finances, transportation, housing, or state licensing requirements before embarking on their five to eight-week "institute" experience, what some participants referred to as "boot camp." Brewer et al. (2016) and Ravitch (2013) chastise the minimal training of TFA teachers, arguing such a requirement hardly encompasses enough pedagogical knowledge to teach America's neediest students effectively. Institute is often conducted at a larger regional site encompassing multiple regions, where corps members stay in college on-campus housing while taking TFA-administered sessions (thought of as classes or "clinicals") and teaching summer school. However, corps members are not always placed in a summer school classroom of the same subject as their teaching placement. Institute coincides with focused roles as summer school teachers—where corps members often alternate teaching with one-three other corps members—before becoming full teachers-of-record in the fall (Kretchmar, 2014; Lahann & Reagan, 2011). This amounts to roughly 45-minutes to an hour per day of teaching per corps member, where a CMA, or corps member advisor, and a FA—faculty advisor or veteran teacher—are also present to offer coaching during the teaching process. Following institute, corps members either return home or immediately depart for their teaching placements.

Within their placements, TFA corps members serve as teachers-of-record for their classes and content areas, with significant variety of experiences between individual schools, districts,

and regions. Often, corps members find housing together—connections to other corps members initially made during institute—as a means to more seamlessly transition into a new profession and location. Corps members are assigned an advisor as a first point-of-contact with TFA who endeavors to coach and mentor the corps member throughout their two-year teaching requirement. For study participants, these advisors were either termed "program directors" or PDs; or "Managers of Teacher Leadership Development" or MTLDs. The latter reflects are more recent development and terminology. Though corps members are at-will employees of their school districts, they must also participate in TFA-required Saturday professional development sessions and submit required paperwork, lesson plans, or student data as part of their duties as a TFA corps member. TFA is also considered an AmeriCorps organization, whereby corps members who successfully complete their two-year teaching requirement are eligible to some loan forgiveness for the graduate or certification courses taken to obtain their state's teaching credential. Through TFA's gradual but significant expansion, further research has emerged focusing on its teacher preparation, its mission and vision, and its place in the broader education landscape.

TFA and Progressive Neoliberalism

Lahann and Reagan (2011) expose the ideological departures that occur when neoliberalism is applied to education. They extend these ideological challenges to teacher preparation by classifying TFA within these competing ideas. Many of the neoliberal policies, rhetoric, and actors found within education today operate under what Lahann and Reagan characterize as "progressive neoliberalism" (pp. 11-12). Progressive neoliberals find the state of public education to be in crisis and deficient in providing equal educational opportunities to all students, framing such a crisis as a social justice issue that cannot be solved by free market

fundamentalism alone. Lahann and Reagan (2011) label TFA as a "progressive neoliberal" organization (p. 11). The "progressive" aspect of this classification champions a discussion around educational equity, recognizing efforts to provide equitable opportunities as a necessary and noble endeavor. However, the neoliberal aspect involves the incorporation of venture philanthropists and privatized education options into how these opportunities are presented and provided in communities. In addition, the application of corporate sector-like practices to train teachers adheres to principles of neoliberal education policy by demonstrating a results-oriented vision of teaching and learning. Labeling TFA as a progressive neoliberal organization acknowledges its dual mission and vision for teacher education: to train teachers to "fight" educational inequity (Document #75, 2017), but to train teachers under a results-oriented, no-excuses success model (Sondel, 2015) to close the "achievement gap," a model often found in the corporate sector. Neo-conservatives support the organization's business model for teacher training, while the progressive and well-intentioned neoliberals wishing to reform education's state of crisis support TFA's social justice mission. As a result, teacher education through TFA becomes an investment opportunity for proponents from both ideologies.

As briefly mentioned, TFA reflects a progressive neoliberal framework in numerous ways. The organization champions its mission to "close the achievement gap" as a crusade against educational inequity (Farr, 2010 p. 5), while simultaneously applying business frameworks, soliciting corporate philanthropy, and employing managerial language in training its corps members (Brewer & deMarrais, 2015). TFA's progressive neoliberal identity reflects social justice underpinnings in its mission and appeal to corps members' potential desire to embark on a noble and good-intentioned endeavor, but also incorporates marketization of both the teaching profession and the education sector (Kretchmar, 2014; Kumashiro, 2012; Weiner,

2015). Lahann and Reagan (2011) and Ravitch (2013) suggest that technical approaches to teacher education undermine efforts to frame teachers as professionals, and instead place teaching and teacher education within control of the market. This makes it more difficult for university-based teacher education programs to uphold legitimacy within a neoliberal landscape. However, TFA's enormous influence across the education landscape, both here and abroad, continues to raise questions of its genuine commitment to improving American public education and teacher education. Their influence further calls into question their efforts to shape education on the basis of technical, neoliberal foundations (Kretchmar, Sondel, & Ferrare, 2016) or to erode the role of the teacher by establishing a leadership pipeline to easily and quickly transition out of the classroom (Brewer et al., 2016).

A Transformative Vision for Teacher Education

Teacher education and public education are both at a crossroads. Corporations, figures at various levels of government, and the public represent a handful of voices bringing forth concerns and opinions in official and unofficial capacities regarding education and teacher education. However, discouraging practitioner voice as part of policy conversations hardly benefits the profession and public education as a whole. In addition, pitting teacher education program types against each other creates an increasing division within teacher education (Zeichner, 2003; 2006), further diminishing the agency of practitioners and teacher educators and structuring effective teacher education programs. As a result of competing perspectives, researchers in the education field offer ideas for reshaping both teacher education and public education in the United States by positioning teachers and teacher education in roles to enact social change. Their ideas focus on restructuring discourse around the role of the teacher and on increasing stakeholder involvement in developing and educating teachers for long-term positions

in teaching in order to elevate the teaching profession to ultimately preserve public education as a public good (Apple, 2006; Giroux, 2004). The perspectives outlined in this section are grounded in a social justice agenda. They each attempt to address the practical gaps in teacher education, but all contribute to envisioning teacher education as a critical professional endeavor and thus capable of real and lasting change in public education.

Zeichner and Peña-Sandoval's (2015) discussion of the social justice agenda in education encompass transformative aspects that can apply to reshaping teacher education and thus public education. Named by Zeichner and Peña-Sandoval (2015), the transformers championing a social justice agenda, expose a vision for teacher education that has the capacity to reshape the program structure debate and to elevate practitioner voice, shifting where we place expertise in the discussion of public education. This agenda advocates for incorporating multiple forms of knowledge to pre-service teachers' repertoires, and to find space for critical pedagogy within teacher education. In addition, this agenda argues for building upon programs that model integral elements from which to build a successful structure of teacher education, such as clear visions of teaching and learning (Nelsen, 2015), articulation of standards, and integrating courses and fieldwork (Ajayi, 2011; Grubbs, 2009). Each of these points will be explored in more detail in this section through other researchers' support of incorporating multiple knowledge sources, critical pedagogy, and restructuring the discourse hierarchy in order to create a cohesive, transformative vision for teacher education.

Other researchers propose advocating for deeper partnerships with public schools in teacher education programs, sites that serve purposes beyond training teachers (Sleeter, 2008; Zeichner, 2006; 2012). Lipman (1997) and Zeichner, Payne, & Brayko (2015) argue that bridging the expertise of staff from universities, community organizations, and public schools

would develop teacher candidates' knowledge and pedagogical base. Restructuring the discourse around program formats *and* establishing deeper partnerships with site schools may impact the role of teachers in a positive way (Lucas, 1997; Kumashiro, 2012). These elements could potentially diminish the belief of teachers-as-technicians and elevate teaching to a professional status career. Deeper partnerships with K-12 settings would create lasting relationships between schools and universities to better develop fieldwork experiences. In addition, deeper partnerships between universities and schools could enrich pre-service teachers' theoretical and pedagogical knowledge.

To extend this argument, the unification and prioritizing of multiple sources of knowledge (from K-12 settings, university settings, and community partners) would enrich the pedagogical knowledge of pre-service teachers. In addition, it would disrupt stereotypes created through neoliberal education policy that teacher candidates from university-based programs are only equipped with theoretical knowledge of teaching (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1999; Sleeter, 2008). Furthermore, challenging existing stereotypes of teachers trained within university-based programs elevates the position of newer teachers as they enter the workforce, and creates a foundation for which these teachers can continue relationships with external partners as practitioners in the field. Kumashiro (2012) characterizes varied stakeholder involvement in reshaping teacher education as a movement. Involving numerous stakeholders in this process opens possibilities to challenge hegemonies within public schools, higher education, and within policy. Such collective challenges to existing hegemonic ideologies could allow teacher education candidates to learn to do the same (Ajayi, 2011; Ladson-Billings, 2001).

Finally, McLaren and Farahmandpur (2001) argue for the importance of teaching critical pedagogy in teacher education programs as a means to further challenge the existing discourse

around education's place in academia. Ravitch (2013) and Shulman (1986) further champion critical pedagogy instruction as a means of continuing robust pre-service teacher training in education schools, despite neoliberal policymakers diminishing the support for such instruction. Moreover, critical pedagogy would serve as a strong tool against neoliberal education agendas and to develop teacher agency (McIntyre, 1997; Stairs & Hatch, 2008). In their view, teacher retention proves critical, as teachers and teacher educators anchor the movement Kumashiro describes (2012).

Though researchers offer differing perspectives on how to reshape teacher education, McIntyre (1997) exposes an embedded but deeply powerful point: an urge to diminish hierarchical structures within the education discourse. As mentioned previously, corporate and political elites have taken control of the discourse around public education and teacher education, and what it means to teach successfully. It is vital that we make space for which to honor and elevate practitioner perspectives, and that practitioners spearhead their own efforts in asserting agency and expertise, irrespective of policymakers' efforts to potentially undermine these stakeholders. In order to diminish the discourse hierarchy in education, it is important to begin to challenge existing hegemonies within higher education institutions and public discourse surrounding the position of teachers and the teaching profession, and finally, to create opportunities for practitioners to showcase their expertise on a larger scale and to establish long-term careers in the profession.

Conclusion

Neoliberalism serves as a highly contested economic and political ideology that has influenced countless aspects of public life, including education (Apple, 2006; Giroux, 2004). However, since neoliberalism's role in education has been fairly recent, the literature chosen for

this review has coincided with its arrival in this particular sector as a contemporary issue (Cochran-Smith & Villegas, 2014). The literature surveyed in this review exemplifies a particularly negative outlook on the state of education and teacher education within a neoliberal era; nevertheless, this does not entirely represent the scope of literature within education detailing the achievements and challenges to hegemonic practices and discourses by practitioners and institutions (see Ambrosio, 2013; Anyon, 2005; Bazzul, 2012). Though the grim viewpoints represented within this review do not represent the beliefs and writings of all researchers within the field, those represented do offer cautionary words for practitioners, teacher educators, higher education institutions, policymakers, and the general public.

This review explicates the current issues plaguing education and teacher education in a neoliberal world (Lipman, 2011), as well as neoliberalism's capacity to impact policy and discourse (Apple, 1995; 2006; Giroux, 2004). Some cited in this review even extend far enough to offer holistic criticisms of neoliberalism's ideological presence in not just education, but rather within public life in general (Hyslop-Margison & Sears, 2006). Much to the dismay of neoliberal policymakers in education, it is not possible, despite concerted efforts, to control every outcome of education as a means to further a particular agenda (Dewey 1916/2012; Rodriguez, 2001). Despite this, neoliberalism's ideological power remains in education and teacher education. Ideally, this review not only illustrates neoliberalism's induction and rise in the education sector as a result of its political and economic power, but also hopefully exposes the grave concerns regarding the state of teacher education, and as a result, public education, with the institution of neoliberal policy.

My research study stems from the body of research within teacher education and the role of neoliberalism in shaping the conception of the teacher and of teacher education. This research

grows out of my desire to examine a specific teacher preparation program—Teach for America—that has been characterized as a neoliberal arm of teacher preparation (Lahann & Reagan, 2011; Ravitch, 2013). This study examines how TFA prepares its corps members for long-term careers in teaching, and how both this preparation and participants' educational experiences shaped their understanding of teaching, their experiences within the organization, and on their developed educational philosophies.

CHAPTER 3. RESEARCH DESIGN

This study examined how former corps members' experiences in Teach for America have shaped their education philosophies, in addition to their conception of a teacher's role and approach to teaching in a neoliberal era. As mentioned at the outset, much of the literature on Teach for America corps members falls into three camps: the descriptive, yet largely negative anecdotes former corps members experienced at the hands of the organization (Brewer & deMarrais, 2015), the dichotomy between Teach for America and university-trained teachers' impact on student achievement (Cochran-Smith & Villegas, 2016; Heilig, Cole, & Springel, 2011), with little literature examining the social and political influence of TFA and its alumni (Scott, Trujillo, & Rivera, 2016). This research endeavor will hopefully add to the existing, yet smaller subset of literature that broadly engages with the discussion around TFA's social and political influence in education. However, I approached this research with the intention to focus on individual participants' testimonies, as a means to better understand their specific experiences, in addition to the ways in which their TFA participation illuminates TFA's own philosophy-shaping strategies that warrant the expansion of the organization's brand and education framework.

My mission in exploring the phenomenon of the TFA experience in relationship to the shaping of corps members' teaching philosophies originates from a desire to examine former corps' members experiences of learning to teach under TFA's ideology and pedagogy. Moreover, because TFA embodies numerous elements of neoliberal ideology (Lahann & Reagan, 2011; Ravitch, 2013; Stern & Johnston, 2013), I hoped to gain a better sense of how participants' experiences in the organization may have influenced their understanding of a teacher's role, and how TFA's ideological framework influences participants to either internalize

or challenge these conceptions through TFA's means of socializing corps members in preparation for their roles as classroom teachers under the TFA mission and vision. I coupled my understanding of neoliberalism with a broader framework of organizational socialization to better conceptualize the teacher socialization and philosophy-development processes that occurred as part of the program.

My research study explores the following research questions:

1. How, if at all, does TFA prepare its corps members for long-term careers in teaching?

2. In what ways do TFA alumni articulate educational philosophies that are consistent with, or divergent from, the stated philosophies of TFA?

3. In what ways do TFA and TFA alumni articulate educational philosophies that are consistent with, or divergent from, neoliberalism?

Conceptual Framework

Fogarty and Dirsmith (2001) define socialization as the learning and internalizing of an organization's norms, rules, and culture. The organizational socialization process examines the inductee's learning of the organizational structure, rules of conduct, and the means of survival within the organizational world (Van Maanen & Schein, 1977 p. 4). Internalizing an organization's culture aids the employee in "interpreting their everyday work experiences" (p. 247); whether the place of work or institution provides the "ideological basis" for better understanding one's role and status more broadly (Evans, 2010 p. 184). This interpretation of work can dictate the employee's behaviors and attitudes as a member of an organization, and the degree to which an employee executes the organization's ideological underpinnings. Interpreting one's work within an organization can cause a shift internally, resulting in an employee's philosophy-shaping as it relates to their role and to their position within organization more

generally. From here, new recruits to an organization begin to interpret their perceived successes or failures in relationship to their sense of belonging and alignment with the organization and its values (Fogarty & Dirsmith, 2001).

Teaching is a "semi-profession," where teachers require professional knowledge and certification, but are subjected to overarching bureaucratic structures that govern their profession (Evans, 2010 p. 184; Ingersoll, 2004). As a result, multiple factors can shape a teacher's formation of their teaching identity and philosophical approach to their work. For teachers in a neoliberal era, the capacity to become inducted into one's role largely depends on one's school environment. The school is an organization, complete with its own norms, rules, culture, and desired employee behaviors. The degree to which a particular school executes the neoliberal conception of the teacher in an increasingly neoliberal education climate illustrates the extent to which a school will invest in the inherent qualities and teaching philosophies of new teachers, challenging the conception of teachers as passive technicians (Giroux, 2004; Ravitch, 2013; Zeichner, 2006). However, as an organization, TFA upholds its own norms, rules, culture, and desired teacher-corps member behaviors. Therefore, teachers who are corps members in TFA must fulfill roles that are two-dimensional: they must execute what is expected of a teacher within their school and school community, as well as executing what is expected of a TFA corps member. These roles may conflict with each other, or with the teaching philosophy of the individual teacher-corps member. As a result, corps members may experience points of alignment and resistance when attempting to rationalize both settings in relationship to their teaching roles.

Part of TFA's conception of the teacher highlights significant responsibility placed upon the teacher, especially as it relates to student achievement (Farr, 2010). Rather than overtly

portraying teachers as labor (Zeichner, 2006; Wilson et al., 2004), TFA teacher-corps members must consistently seek improvement to their role as a means to benefit student achievement, placing significant responsibility on the teacher-corps member to expand their conception of what they can control in their teaching role. Therefore, the process of socialization for teacher-corps members in TFA reflects a disjointed experience in demonstrating success or satisfaction within their two-dimensional role. Despite the consistent control and success-seeking that TFA desires from its recruits in their teaching posts, the organization still views teaching as a temporary career (Brewer et al., 2016), advocating for the preparation of future leaders rather than classroom teachers (Document #75, 2017). The temporary nature of teaching TFA envisions calls into question the extent to which corps members develop their own teaching identities and philosophies irrespective of TFA, and whether corps members are prepared and socialized to embrace teaching as a long-term career. Findings in chapter four will also dive more deeply into TFA's conception of the teacher and how this impacted participants' understanding of their roles within and outside TFA, and their broader approaches to teaching and education.

Methodology

This research study utilized a qualitative approach in order to examine how TFA's ideological underpinnings have shaped both participants' education philosophies and their conception of a teacher's role within a neoliberal era. The qualitative research approach beckons the researcher to embrace uncertainty and to seek out multifaceted, rich data (Geertz, 1973), as participants anchor the construction of meaning around a particular phenomenon (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016). Qualitative research served as the most appropriate approach for two reasons: this approach maintains authenticity of participant responses and worldviews; and, this approach is best because it counteracts the dominant discourse of instrumentality in education (Taubman,

2009). A qualitative research approach honors and elevates the lived experiences of the participants involved in this study, meant to counter the often-elevated numerical, "hard" data increasingly dominating public education discourse (Gorlewski & Gorlewski, 2012; Taubman, 2009).

As a qualitative researcher, it is my belief that teachers' experiences and frames of reference are limited if we attempt to quantify such beliefs and experiences. Thus, a qualitative and constructivist approach better reflects the multiple dimensions of such experiences and worldviews. This approach is necessary to providing thick, rich description (Geertz, 1973). Epistemologically, in embracing constructionism and an interpretivist framework (Crotty, 1998), the participants drove the meaning-making based on their experience in Teach for America. Each participant represents one individual experience. Qualitative research—and this study is no exception—is not meant to generalize participants' experiences to encompass a larger collective body of teachers, but rather to elevate rich participant-focused data and apply these strategies to similar research contexts. Specific to this study, each participant experienced TFA participation differently. Thus, it was necessary for me as a researcher to listen to their construction and reflection of meaning around "significant symbols," or nuances of TFA culture and philosophy (Crotty, 1998 p. 53), and how these symbols assist in the formation of participants' education philosophies. From here, data revealed the potential impact of allegedly progressive neoliberal ideology on participants' teaching philosophies and conceptions of the teacher within public education.

As mentioned, I chose not to adopt phenomenology as a methodology to drive this study, but adhered to its epistemological underpinnings through my interviewing techniques. The intention of this study was not to capture the essence of a particular, shared experience, though

TFA participation is a common experience of this participant group. In fact, the intention of interview-focused research—with document analysis meant to heighten and enrich these participant perspectives—is to expose the multifaceted nature of participants' experiences. Seidman's (2006) three-segment interview approach encouraged participant reflection around TFA participation and socialization, as well as the capacity of both personal and professional experiences to shape participants' educational philosophies. In addition, the focused life history interview segment—the first in Seidman's series—will help to contextualize participants' previous educational experiences that shaped their TFA participation and subsequent socialization within the program. My decisions regarding research design stem from my desire to focus on the participants and their individualized experiences as TFA corps members. Adopting phenomenological interviewing allowed participants to construct knowledge and meaning surrounding the phenomena—their educative experiences and their experiences as corps members in TFA—through which I was able to expose themes emergent in multiple data sources, including of course, interviews.

Participant Recruitment and Sample Selection

Participants were selected if they participated in TFA between 2007 and the present. The selection of this particular time period aligns with the heavy insurgence of neoliberalism in education (Ravitch, 2013), coincides with TFA's mission statement change (Brewer et al., 2016), and with an economic recession, which may have impacted the selection of teaching as a career for some people (Podolsky et al., 2016; U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2013), where TFA may have represented an organization aiding in a seamless transition into teaching. The single criterion of TFA participation reflects a purposive sampling strategy: participants must have experienced a process of socialization within TFA as corps members. The

purposive selection of participants reflects the need to better understand the phenomenon of Teach for America participation as reflected through individual corps members' experiences (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016).

Though the ideal participant number ranged between ten and fourteen participants, five participated in the study. Four of five participants completed their two-year teaching requirement with TFA. All participants completed their TFA participation between the years of 2009 to 2016, illustrating a period of time in TFA where corps members operated under a mission and teaching framework meant to close the achievement gap (Document #32, 2010). Participants' teaching experience ranged from one year to five years, though none are currently classroom teachers. Three are currently in graduate school: one in medical school, one in law school, and one in an educational doctoral program. One operates a tutoring center. One participant currently owns and operates her own gym. I found it important to include participants who have varied involvement in and relationships to teaching and education more generally, since former corps members' experiences may have influenced their decisions to stay or depart from education. I also found it important to draw from various post-TFA careers as a means to better understand each participant's experiences before, during, and after the program. Nevertheless, because the goal of qualitative research is not the generalization of findings to a population (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), my intention in selecting participants with varied years in teaching, relationships to teaching and education, and potentially diverse careers post-TFA rests in my desire to examine how participation in TFA can shape former corps members' understanding of teaching and education, even if they chose not to further pursue teaching as a career.

I obtained the Institutional Review Board approval in order to conduct this study (see Appendix C), and IRB-approved consent forms were offered to and signed by participants. I

posted and distributed recruitment flyers at local universities, to professors and alumni coordinators in Schools of Education and TFA-partnered graduate programs, employers who partner with TFA to employ alumni, and contacting acquaintances who may have friends or colleagues who participated in the program. I also utilized both my personal Facebook page and education-related Facebook groups of which I was a member or affiliated with to post the recruitment flyer. I did not elect to employ neither social media outlets, nor reaching out to employer partners until after a month or two of slow recruitment.

Participant recruitment proved somewhat difficult. Participation in the study was voluntary, and participants were free to withdraw at any time. In light of these freedoms, one participant did elect to withdraw from the study after the first interview due to time constraints. However, another participant did not finish out the interview segments, lacking a third interview and final follow-up session; and a third participant elected to have their data redacted from the study after concluding their three interviews. Not offering incentives as part of the research study also may have deterred potential participants from engaging in the study, as a few others had initially reached out to gain more information, but ultimately chose not to pursue participation in this research without incentives for dedicated interview time. (I did not offer incentives because I did not want to create a situation of buying data.) Despite initial recruitment difficulties, two participants contacted me via email upon seeing my flyer posted, one participant expressed interest in the study through contacting an acquaintance of mine, and two participants gave consent to include their pilot study data in this dissertation research. The first participant who opted out of the study expressed interest in the study via email after seeing my flyer posted at a university building. The decision to include the pilot study participants was made because the data collection was very similar.

Data Collection Methods

Interviews

For this qualitative study, data collection spanned from August of 2018 until January of 2019. Data were collected through both document analysis—with documents obtained through the Internet and from participants—and through semi-structured participant interviews. I collected data through interviews and through critical discourse analysis of documents. I utilized a phenomenological interview approach (Bevan, 2014; Seidman, 2006) in order to develop a deeper understanding of participants' experiences within TFA. Seidman's (2006) three-part model of phenomenological interviewing allowed me to gain contextualized information and accounts through a focused life history (first interview), details of experience (second interview), and reflection on meaning (third interview). The first interview explored participants' experiences as students before their time in TFA. The second interview – the details of experience – examined participants' involvement within TFA. Finally, the third interview—the reflection on meaning—explored how the participants understood these experiences, and how their TFA participation may have shaped their current careers, their time as both students and practitioners, and their current educational philosophies.

The purpose of this interview structure rested in my desire to elevate and preserve the in-depth perspectives of former teacher-corps members. Learning to teach under the umbrella of TFA is worthy of exploration, as well as how this came to shape participants' philosophies and conceptions of teaching and public education. Nevertheless, this study provides better insight into aspects that may have shaped understanding of teaching and TFA participation. My write-up of the study discusses the following for each of the participants: educational background, the TFA placement, and the impact of TFA on current career and conception of teaching. These

sections of the study write-up for each participant exist in order to provide thick description of their backgrounds, philosophies, and experiences. As such, this approach honors the lived histories and experiences of teachers and former teachers that are often forgotten (see Zeichner & Tabachnick, 1985). A three-part interview approach allowed for space to reflect, conduct member checks, and for participants to arrive at or generate meaning from previous interviews and probing questions toward the end of subsequent interview. Adopting Seidman's (2006) structure of three sequential 90-minute interviews exposed opportunities for more in-depth data collection and analysis.

Table 1. Interview Structure

Seidman's model	*My interview sections*
Focused Life History (context; grand tour questions)	Questions to participant: Tell me about your educational experiences as a student, and the schools you attended.
	Questions for me to consider: How do former TFA teachers make meaning of their prior school experiences? Of their former teachers? Did these teachers shape participants' decisions to enter education? How might their schools/schooling experiences have shaped their understanding or value of education? Of teaching?
Details of Experience	Questions to participant: Why TFA? Tell me about your time in the program.
	Questions for me to consider: How might TFA have prepared them (or not prepared them) for bureaucracies in teaching? In education? How have participants' perceptions of TFA changed in light of participating? And, did/do the participants buy into it? Was it consistent with TFA's ideas? How did participants perceive TFA at the outset? What means of socialization were successful, not successful? What is the conception of a teacher that TFA communicates?

Reflection on Meaning	Questions to participant: Why teaching? Describe your understanding of teaching, of education.
	Questions for me to consider: How do/did participants contextualize or understand their teaching experience? How might their initial conception of teaching have been a departure from what they were faced with in TFA? How did this translate in their teaching? How do participants understand their roles as current or former practitioners?

Interview questions were largely open-ended focusing on three areas: previous education experiences, experiences teaching in general and with TFA, and reflection on each of these. However, some questions were narrower in scope for clarification purposes specific to individual participants' anecdotes. These interview themes guided the semi-structured interviews and were aligned with Seidman's (2006) phenomenological three-part interview series I used to better understand corps members' TFA experiences. Questions were open-ended in order to establish a constructionist orientation: the participants detail this journey and whether there were other figures, ideologies, or events that impacted their responses to socialization processes and education more generally before, while in, and after TFA. Interviews allowed for the potential to contextualize their specific teaching decisions in light of TFA's prescribed teaching frameworks, whether such policies were points of acceptance or resistance for the teacher, and based on their experiences as a student.

This dissertation research included three (new) participants plus incorporated the two pilot study participants. I included pilot study data in this dissertation research in addition to the three other participants' data. Though the questions asked in my pilot study interviews were similar to those asked in my dissertation interviews, my pilot study encompassed shorter interview times that amounted to roughly sixty minutes each, where I left a few minutes at the

beginning of the second and third interview segments for member checking and follow-up questions to the previous segment. I conducted the final follow-up sessions to the pilot study in December of 2017. Because these interviews were shorter, I conducted a separate, roughly 45-minute follow-up session to conduct a separate member check opportunity after gaining permission from pilot study participants to include their data in this research study. These 45-minute follow-up sessions—conducted in late 2018 and early 2019—reviewed our last interviews during the pilot study, informed them of the direction for this dissertation research, and included follow-up questions and member checking opportunities to more seamlessly incorporate their testimonies into this research.

I built upon questions asked in my pilot study in 2017 to create a more thorough, comprehensive set of questions exploring prior educational experiences, in addition to diving more deeply into participants' retrospective understanding of their time in TFA and this formative experience's capacity to shape their current understanding of teaching. I made more of an effort to focus on developing questions in the second and third interview segments for this dissertation research. Though the questions appear in a particular order in the interview guide (see Appendix A.), I used these questions as a rough guide from which to build an organic conversation around prior educational experiences, program participation, and retrospective understanding of teaching and education. As such, these questions were not often asked directly in order, but rather, they arose in the conversation with my participant as it evolved.

It became clear after the first interviews with participants that conceptions of teaching, program participation—including the decision to embark on a career in teaching—and their educational experiences, were all heavily intertwined, where the interview guide served as a road map for exploring each of these concepts separately, but to the same degree over the course of

multiple interviews, sometimes—or not—requiring more probing questions. Sometimes, participants' responses to questions around educational experiences in the first interview explored their teaching assignments or initial views of teaching (in a sense, skipping ahead to second and third interviews' material). Instead of feeling limited or immediately steering questions toward a prescribed pathway into prior educational experiences, I allowed our conversations to flow more meaningfully toward investigating their teaching experiences or the like. I found myself taking notes of follow-up questions to ask around particular, participant-specific experiences or concepts to explore later in the segment or in subsequent interview sessions. From here, I used these subsequent sessions to dive more deeply into some of those concepts or anecdotes I had noted, eventually circling back to questions on the interview guide. For some of my interviews with participants, the interview guide served as a general roadmap for me, where asking an open-ended question required very little prompting and more participant-driven dialogue. In some situations, I found myself probing the participant more often, in order to gain a sense of their rich experiences (Geertz, 1973) and an understanding of how they framed concepts of teaching, teachers, or pedagogical structures, for example. Participants' approaches to the emerging researcher-participant relationship during interviews may have also dictated the extent to which I felt it necessary to add more probing questions into the offered anecdotes.

For the purpose of this study, locally based participants were preferred in order to conduct in-person interviews; however, only some were local. Interviews were conducted in person for those participants; while for those who were not locally based, I conducted interviews through Skype. In an effort to accommodate scheduling conflicts, one participant's 90-minute interview segments were each divided into two halves, where 24-48 hours existed between each half. Though this deviated from the original 90-minute model, it did allow for better

accommodation, in addition to both parties being able to reflect on the previous day's conversation and come prepared—which meant, in my case—with additional follow-up questions.

I found that after my second interview with another participant, they were willing to expand on a salient point after the tape had stopped due to time. During this time, I shared a bit more about my teaching experiences, highlighting practitioner struggles, ones similar to those of the participants. I allowed this conversation to flow organically, but jotted down some notes after our session. Without the tape, this participant felt comfortable to give a bit more information, and I was aware that our final interview segment felt more relaxed, where I could acknowledge a new sense of trust existed. This also became apparent in our follow-up session, where the participant felt empowered to make corrections and offer clarity to some of my ideas, enhancing the accuracy of our work together.

Locations for face-to-face interviews included libraries with private conference rooms, offices, and participant workplaces. As a researcher, it was important to take participants' schedules into account, especially since many were juggling multiple obligations at once and not all were local. In this way, I made every effort to make myself available for different work hours, meeting locations, and to be flexible in light of other logistical obstacles. Member checks were present at the beginning of the second and third interviews in the series. A fourth, brief, conversation occurred after the entire interview series. These final follow-up sessions lasted anywhere from 30-45 minutes. Participants reflected various racial, cultural, and gender backgrounds that more closely mirrored the current teaching force, rather than toward the demographics of TFA corps members (Teach for America, 2017).

Figure 1. Diversity of TFA Corps Members

3,500 first-year corps members in 2017

Corps Diversity
- **51%** White
- **17%** African American
- **14%** Latinx
- **6%** Asian American/Pacific Islander
- **6%** Multi-ethnic/Multi-racial
- **4%** Another race/ethnicity
- **1%** Do not wish to identify
- **1%** Native [1]

- **43% Pell Grant Recipients** Common Indicator of Low-Income Background
- **33% First in family to graduate from college**

15% of applicants were admitted [2]

Graduates of **720** colleges and universities

40 DACA Recipients

43 Military Vets

25 NCAA Division I athletes

155 Taught by Corps Members

Teach for America Inc. (2017). Is TFA for you? Retrieved April 9, 2018, from Teach for America website: https://www.teachforamerica.org/join-tfa/is-tfa-for-you

Document Analysis

The TFA experience is unique to its corps members; not every teacher experiences this program. Moreover, each corps member holds an individualized interpretation of their experience in the program, which is something I hoped to capture through interviews. In addition, TFA's numerous and varied regions also illustrated aspects of TFA participation that were region-specific. However, a form of "ideological shaping" exists in preparing emerging

teachers (Evans, 2010 p. 184), I found it vital to incorporate other forms of data to elevate and enrich participants' testimonies. Because of TFA's capacity to reach beyond corps members' classrooms into the world of venture philanthropy, nonprofits, and policy (Ravitch, 2013), this work raises a need to dive deeply into factors that may have the ability to shape a lived experience of a TFA recruit and thus shape the public education landscape. Critical discourse analysis of TFA-related documents endeavored to achieve this.

For Gee (2004), language holds a "meaning potential" (p. 21) that is grounded in the ways in which we use particular words or phrases relative to sociopolitical and cultural contexts. Though generic on the surface, language can allow various meanings to emerge that are specific to the individual or group. Gee distinguishes two types of tasks when conducting discourse analysis: utterance-type and utterance-token (p. 25). The former involves studying the relationship between language form and function (between syntactic structures and the communicative purpose), while the latter involves analyzing situation-specific meanings of these language forms in particular contexts. However, the mission of critical discourse analysis goes beyond grammatical analysis to instead examine the patterns between and across sentences more broadly to offer commentary around the social and political contexts in which these language patterns emerge, resulting in discussions of power (Gee, 2004).

I compiled a diverse set of documents (see Appendix B) for analysis in order to understand both the social and philosophical means of preparing corps members reflected within TFA's documented policies, procedures, and beliefs. The texts and documents provided a means to "track changes and development" within TFA, in addition to "providing context" in which participants operated (Bowen, 2009 pp. 29-30). These included TFA documents received from participants, as well as those generated by TFA as an organization. Documents included

frameworks, mission and vision texts, personal correspondence, and documents related to specific TFA placements. In addition, documents also included materials from the TFA website. Such a choice stems from the necessity of triangulation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), as well as to establish a context for socialization procedures and ideological frameworks within TFA. Examining these documents proved necessary to understand ideological underpinnings within the organization. "Ideology" here signifies the relationship between language and context (Gee, 1990). These ideological aspects translated into how TFA prepares and socializes its teacher-corps members, to what extent these aspects of TFA ideology reflect the teaching experiences of corps members, and whether these ideological facets inform and shape alumni work post-TFA.

Data Analysis Methods

By employing a qualitative study with phenomenological interviewing techniques, the researcher and participants constructed meaning around participants' educational philosophies related to their participation in TFA and the potential involvement of neoliberalism and neoliberal ideology. Data analysis involved two cycles of coding for documents and three cycles for interview transcripts. According to Saldaña (2013), coding serves as one particular way of analyzing qualitative data (p. 4). "Cycles" here signify the process by which I read through one set of data until tangible and pertinent codes emerged. I chose both inductive and deductive coding cycles in order to primarily let the data dictate the emergent codes at the beginning, while employing these codes during the second and third deductive cycles to ground my capacity to build particular patterns and themes.

The first cycle of coding for each method was inductive: I employed a combination of initial, in vivo, and versus coding (Saldaña, 2013). Inductive coding proved to be useful for this research in order to let the interviews and documents drive how I analyzed the data, rather than

testing a particular theory or set of theories. Initial or open coding, commonly used in grounded theory studies, produced codes organically, allowing the interview transcripts and documents to drive what emerged. Because my research questions endeavored to examine participants' philosophy development through TFA and through their own educational experiences, I chose values coding (Saldaña, 2013) as a second cycle of coding to examine the data for emergent participant beliefs and attitudes around teaching, TFA, and their developing educational philosophies. My third cycle of coding employed a combination of pattern and focused coding (Saldaña, 2013) to not only winnow down the values codes—of which there were many for each participant—but also to begin the process of establishing connections and patterns between codes that resulted in three overarching themes, detailed in Chapter 4.

For document analysis, I conducted two cycles of coding. I had been given upwards of 500 documents. I began my first cycle of coding my analytic comments of each document's language. I conducted initial or open coding in conjunction with values coding during this beginning cycle, I read through each of them annotated documents with questions, concerns, and for emergent salient issues. Once I found excerpts most salient and encompassing of a general TFA experience and a TFA education and teaching philosophy, I constructed document summaries for these data excerpts to contain the amount of document data (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016). These document summaries extract particular language, statements, and emphasis I had noted previously, as well as my initial comments on these components. From here, I themed these codes into emergent, thematic categories. These categories assisted in the construction of sub-codes through which overarching themes emerged.

These analysis methods allowed the data to generate specific codes for the second cycle, where I themed the data deductively. I themed the data into more specific categories after finding

emergent patterns in the raw data, reflecting specific components of the emergent, first cycle codes. I was fortunate enough to receive significant documents from my participants, through which I unpacked the salient key words and phrases, questions or issues worth exploring, and Big C's or conversations (Gee, 2004) that illustrate the sociopolitical underpinnings of particular word choice in each document. I took significant statements from both documents and interviews to illustrate a "chunking" (Saldaña, 2013) of the data to prepare for further analysis. The rough open or initial codes provided starting points from which to examine the finer points of discourse around teaching, education, socialization, and neoliberalism in participants' experiences.

Finally, my reflections noted in my analytic memos as they relate to the ongoing coding and analysis process exemplified consistent threads to assist in my reasoning behind the classifications for each piece of data (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016). These analytic memos appeared through journaling. Memoing illustrated an "internal dialogue" about particular data or occurrences (p. 204) that informed and expand the coding, analysis, and interpretation processes. In addition, memoing not only triggered thinking on my part as the researcher, but it also encouraged reflection in how I am processing the data in light of potential biases that I may have brought to the research process. These points of reflection assisted in mentally chunking "what [was] of interest" in the data (Seidman, 2006 p. 117) to eventually structure participant profiles that illuminated a larger social context (p. 122). My memoing during the data collection and analysis processes encouraged reflection and reflexivity while preserving the accounts of the participants.

Researcher Positionality

I am a former high school English and Spanish teacher who worked in traditional public and public charter high schools in the city of Chicago. However, my place in a classroom as a

student began as one characterized by isolation and an overall distaste for formal schooling. I did not arrive at the idea of myself on the other side of the desk until my junior year of college when I was studying and teaching in Mexico over the summer of 2007. My experience studying in Mexico during this time impacted my decision to pursue teaching opportunities in settings different from my own educational experiences (and my decision to pursue teaching at all). However, I was unaware of the challenges I would face entering into an Anglo-dominated profession to educate young people in Chicago. As a result of my teaching experiences, I dedicate my former and current work to the advancement of educational opportunities inside and outside of the traditional classroom for youth of various backgrounds. My commitment to progressive and democratic education—which I define as equitable education that addresses the desires and needs of the public or the masses—stems from my first teaching experiences in southern Mexico, where teachers were devoted to preserving their agency as powerful and critical social figures and to working with and for the people.

I received extensive guidance—both practical and theoretical—through my undergraduate teacher education program at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. I obtained my bachelor's degrees in Secondary Education, English, and Spanish. When I was accepted into a teacher residency program in 2010, immediately after graduating from undergrad, I completed the school's mandatory alternative Masters in Education and residency program by teaching at a turnaround high school in Chicago and completing fast-track Masters in Education classes. "Turnaround" schools are existing neighborhood schools that have had their entire staff "turned over" by educators hired by private companies; the residency program I completed prepared me to be one of these teachers. Some might see similarities between this program's underpinnings to those within TFA. Thus, I have experienced what some would consider a "traditional" teacher

education program (as an undergraduate), as well as an "alternative" university-contracted

teacher education program (at the graduate level). My time in the latter challenged my initial

care-centered philosophy of teaching through the diminishing of my authority by resident

coaches and administrators. The reliance upon rigid behavior and curricular models, to me,

eroded student and teacher agency and again challenged my teaching philosophy and practices,

positioning our values and visions for school at odds. Though I did not feel like a passive

transmitter of content (Giroux, 2004), the narrow scope of my practice, growing narrower with

each passing day, shaped my later approaches to both content and pedagogical instruction.

Working in a high-needs school district placed special demands on teachers like myself

in the form of student achievement, by and large determined through district-mandated and state-

mandated tests. As a teacher in Chicago, there would be weeks where I would hardly speak to

my students because of school-mandated and/or district-mandated test prep, coupled with

students even being pulled out of my classroom for more test prep. In addition, I often felt

responsible for not only my students' education, but also for those factors that existed outside of

school but still impacted student learning: such as whether my students had a home to return to

after dismissal, whether they were hungry, or whether they had adequate winter coats. Despite

these worries, my career largely depended on how much I could advance their learning

numerically and to prepare them for the ACT—the state-required test that also served as a high

school graduation requirement. I found myself embodying a "no-excuses" approach to teaching

(see Sondel, 2015): hunger, inadequate resources, and poverty more broadly could not and would

not deter student achievement on the ACT and the state-mandated tests, which I felt both my

students and I should exclusively depend upon to demonstrate success. Though I was not aware

at the time, I had spent the better part of my teaching career aiding and perpetuating a neoliberal

conception of teaching and learning. By my fifth year of teaching, I could not understand why I felt disgusted with myself as a practitioner, so I left teaching.

I had briefly departed from the classroom until February of 2018, where I remained until August of that same year before embarking on this research full-time. What remained stagnant throughout my experience as a teacher were these ideological and philosophical points of contention that reflected the impact of bureaucracies upon my role as a practitioner, as well as the inherent political nature of the profession, regardless of school site or teaching preparation pathway. These bureaucracies were both tangible and intangible but nonetheless, were agents I could not name at the time that I chose to leave the classroom. It became difficult to rationalize these inconsistencies between practice and policy, as would be the case for many teachers; and this left me feeling powerless in my role as a teacher, up against the sources of such frustrations that I could not name (Wells et al., 1995). Despite this feeling of powerlessness, education and my experiences as a practitioner were powerful enough to beckon me to return to the classroom, albeit briefly, while so many teachers depart from the classroom permanently within their first five years (Ladson-Billings, 2001; Podolsky et al., 2016). Despite leaving the high school classroom, I have come to realize that the desire to teach is an incurable condition: it has stayed with me even during these departures. Teaching is vital to my existence and I anticipate I will be involved in education permanently.

I expose these biases and philosophical underpinnings as someone who left teaching amidst some of the same circumstances during which my participants made that same difficult choice. My time away from the classroom and this ongoing research has allowed me to articulate why structural issues in education weighed on me to a point where I decided to leave the classroom in order to see education more clearly. I began to see the deeply embedded

relationship between economics, politics, and contemporary public education, and how these relationships shape how we discuss what it means to be educated and to educate others. This time away from teaching also forced me to deeply question how we as practitioners can unknowingly aid the perpetuation of a neoliberal framework in our classrooms, schools, and districts, instead of preparing teachers to push against economic elements that now characterize public education.

I look toward this research with concerns for the state of both teacher education and public education, and whether the latter will remain a public good (Apple, 2006). In addition, I question where teacher education situates itself with regard to the economic underpinnings that exist within public education, and whether schools of education will prepare teachers to challenge the existing framework for public education, or to work within it. Many of my difficulties experienced within my alternative Masters program stemmed from my rejection of neoliberal ideology embedded within the school-based practices communicated to me as necessary and indicative of seemingly good teaching. The alumni of this program also gain the capacity to shape local, state, and federal education policy in alignment with philosophical underpinnings present within their residency, much the same way that TFA alumni acquire an ideological framework and a leadership pipeline beyond the classroom. Therefore, the ways in which former TFA corps members have been socialized to eventually challenge or embrace TFA ideology and adopt this in practice *beyond* their time in TFA may illuminate concerns regarding where teacher education, and public education more generally, are headed.

I no longer personalize the implicit, policy-driven attacks on teacher agency, but instead can process such decisions as originating from politically-motivated individuals that attempt to shape our profession and public education on a much larger scale. As a practitioner whose

teaching experience had been negatively impacted by neoliberal policies and conceptions of both the teacher and of teaching as a profession, it is vital I resist the urge to impart these biases upon my participants. I have arrived at a progressive, equitable, and democratic conception of education and a conception of teachers as powerful change-agents capable of exercising critical pedagogy through my lived experiences teaching in Title 1 schools and working and living in Mexico. The endeavor of increasing my own cultural competence, my belief in strong worker's unions, and the drastic impact of systemic inequities upon the capacity to provide equitable education in light of much larger, systemic issues have also informed my conception of education and therefore my education philosophy.

In this way, I must honor the lived experiences of my participants because these experiences have assisted in their formation of their teaching philosophies and their capacity to make meaning of both teaching and the teacher's role within the greater education landscape. Because of my participation in a university-based teacher education program to obtain my initial teaching credentials, I lack the experience as a participant in TFA. Thus, I do not have first-hand experience of what it was like to become a teacher within this organization. However, I am cognizant of my biases as a university-prepared teacher who left teaching in order to understand the overarching discourses and policies that have shaped classrooms across the nation. These biases must be preserved and guarded as part of this study.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are especially important when embodying a qualitative research approach. Issues of ethics must be addressed in order to ensure the safety of participants involved in the study. This process of informed consent gave an overview of the study and allowed participants to elect whether or not to participate. Following IRB approval, I provided consent

forms for participants to indicate their willingness to participate and safeguarded these as a researcher. The consent forms provided a statement of confidentiality throughout the study and an exit clause, should participants make the decision to not answer particular questions, or to not continue with the prospective study after it has started, which was the case for a couple of participants. Pilot study participants had signed a similar consent form in 2017, so received a short consent permitting their data incorporation into the current dissertation research. Participant identity remained disguised throughout transcripts in the study. All data, documents, and materials related to the study remained confidential, locked away safely, and labeled accurately to correspond with participant and interview segment. Despite providing documentation of the data collection and analysis process, I continued to use pseudonyms for locations and names of participants to protect their identity.

However, I was transparent with participants that some raw data may be shared with my dissertation chair. Again, identity of the participants remained disguised. Before every interview, I asked participants' permission to be recorded, giving them an opportunity to not only opt out of being recorded, but also an opportunity to omit responses to particular questions if the desire arose. In addition, because some documents participants shared indicated specific teaching regions and other parties involved, I ensured these names, schools, and locations were protected. I remained mindful of keeping names disguised, as well as school locations and their neighborhoods, staff members from the school mentioned by participants, staff members from TFA mentioned by the participant, and anyone else mentioned that may indicate a particular school or time period affiliated with a TFA placement or era.

I provided participants information regarding the study, though I worked through this process of rationalizing what information served as sufficient enough for participants to feel

informed, but also sufficient enough not to influence participants' responses in our interviews throughout the interview process. I found it beneficial to briefly discuss my background, indicating that I had previously been an educator, though one who had not completed TFA, as a means to establish the ability to speak a relatively common language in light of both my work and participants' work in education. I chose not to discuss my background in an alternative Masters program. I felt this detail was not pertinent for the participant interviews and could have influenced participant responses to the questions in our interviews.

Issues of Trustworthiness

To address issues of quality, I adopted Lincoln and Guba's (1985) conceptualization of trustworthiness, and its four criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. These concepts are an alternative to the more positivistic concepts of reliability, validity and generalizability, and so, are more appropriate for qualitative (non-positivist) research. I will begin by defining the criteria; then I will discuss the strategies I utilized for this research.

Criteria for Trustworthiness

Lincoln and Guba (1985) identify four criteria for establishing trustworthiness in qualitative research: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. They define credibility as the capacity to which the researcher has accurately recorded and analyzed the data and phenomenon in question. Transferability involves the capacity to which the reader can apply the findings to other contexts or situations. Again, because qualitative research does not seek to generalize findings over a larger population (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016; Rossman & Rallis, 2012), Shenton (2004) argues for caution when envisioning the execution of transferability. Since the goal of qualitative research involves applying findings to similar contexts—though not

generalizing—transferability beckons the researcher to provide social and cultural contexts in which the study and its methods occur. In addition, dependability can be similar to transferability, in that similar conditions of a research endeavor in one context could elicit similar outcomes if applied in another context. Transparency regarding participant recruitment selection or data analysis does not ensure transferability or dependability. However, providing rich description regarding the context in which these aspects arose as part of research will enable other researchers to judge the possible conditions in which to conduct a similar study. Finally, Lincoln and Guba (1985) define confirmability as ensuring the qualitative study represents the participants' ideas and experiences, rather than those of the researcher. I implemented particular strategies to address each criterion explained.

Strategies to Ensure Trustworthiness

Strategies to ensure trustworthiness include thick description, member checks, reflective memoing, audit trail, triangulation, and peer review. Each of these strategies reflects active reflection on the part of the researcher. Instituting thick description in the study's write-up involves how the researcher constructs what is both observational and interpretive of a given situation (Geertz, 1973 p. 9). Grounded in ethnographic research, thick description seeks to unpack the complex structures "often superimposed" upon one another (p. 10) within the context presented. Member checks involve dialogue between the researcher and participant regarding raw interview data interpretation and analysis. Reflective memoing and audit trails illustrate the researcher's efforts to maintain ongoing, written reflection of the data collection and analysis and the documentation of these endeavors. Triangulation requires the researcher to conduct multiple forms of data collection, allowing for the examination of claims or patterns interpreted in one kind to be added to or compared and contrasted with those that emerge in the other (Rossman &

Rallis, 2012). Finally, peer review brings in a qualified, outside reviewer to examine the research for issues of accuracy, clarification, and ethics.

Nevertheless, Lincoln and Guba (1985) reason that contextual information and thick description in the write-up of the study as a result of data collected can produce conditions for transferability. Thick description (Geertz, 1973) involves the description of participant behavior and the context in which it occurs, resulting in what are often considered to be subjective explanations of these facets to elicit a better understanding of the participant in question. As I execute the study's write-up, I was transparent regarding the number of participants, where and how the data was collected, as well as the time period of the data collection process. This transparency may allow for the *transferring* of this study's elements to other, future research endeavors concerned with teachers and teacher education. In addition, this transparency hopefully provided thick, rich description meant to elevate the perspectives of participants involved in the research.

Member checks provided opportunities for the participants and me to discuss my interpretation of interview data and the credibility of the summary of the participant's experiences and perceptions (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2016). Member checks of interview segments for meaning and accuracy at the beginning of the second and third interviews within the series increased credibility of interview analysis and interpretation and gave participants an opportunity to enhance, challenge, or affirm what I shared. The participant provided a second perspective to maintain relative accuracy of recorded data. These member checks examined the accuracy for which I transcribed conversations at the conclusion of interviews through restating questions and summarizing information regarding participants' experiences, perceptions, and feelings during the interviews.

A fourth, brief, conversation occurred after the conclusion of all three interviews. Though the consent form indicated this would happen about a week after the third interview segment, scheduling did not always permit this to be the case; where the brief fourth conversation occurred anywhere from one to two weeks after the third segment. I used the follow-up sessions with participants following interview segments to not only conduct member checks to ensure accuracy in my interpretations of interview data; but I also used our follow-up sessions to give an overview of my emerging analysis in light of what participants shared with me. This last conversation also proved necessary for trustworthiness. It gave participants an opportunity to disclose other, sometimes oppositional, vantage points of understanding. Understanding and grappling with opposition to emerging analytic points proved critical for how I moved forward with analysis and began to settle the existing power dynamic between researcher and participant.

As mentioned previously, reflective memoing served as an important aspect to ensure credibility of the study. Reflective memoing is the process by which the researcher reflects on the ongoing data collection and analysis process as a means to critically examine researcher biases that may cloud participant stories. This will be especially helpful as it relates to my positionality as a critical researcher of neoliberalism in teacher education, and bracketing these biases from my analysis of the data. This memoing process not only assisted in the bracketing of biases and encouragement of reflection regarding the emergent analyses, but also illustrated an audit trail to enhance the discussion section of the study regarding my methods.

Finally, an audit trail logically shows how a researcher arrived at particular ideas or conclusions, and the methods employed to arrive at these points as they relate to data collection and analysis (Merriam, 1995). An audit trail can sometimes be an extension of reflective memoing, in that audit trails may expose problems or issues encountered during the data

collection and analysis phases. Audit trails may include not just reflections but also lingering questions that may help guide the study. My audit trail fluctuated between reflective journaling, implementing document summaries, voice memos that I later transcribed, and concept mapping as a means to initially chunk and unpack salient information from the plethora of documents provided. Providing documentation of this process will allow an outsider's perspective to check the data against the prospective findings of the study. Establishing a well-documented audit trail not only encouraged constant reflection and inquiry on my part as the researcher, but it also clearly documented and added confidence to my emergent findings as a result of data collected and analyzed. Audit trails enhanced credibility of the study by providing a documented map of my inquiry and analysis.

In addition, data triangulation encouraged both the richness and trustworthiness of the study. Triangulation of document and interview data analysis aided in best understanding how participants understood and shaped the phenomenon of learning to teach under TFA, and to ensure that the findings grew out of their experiences and ideas emergent in the data. I triangulated participant documents specific to their regions, TFA-generated documents, and interview transcripts for points of convergence and divergence. This triangulation process addressed the existing limitations that occurred in one source of data (i.e. interviews) that was remedied by the information gained from other data sources.

Finally, I employed peer review as a strategy to enhance trustworthiness. I elected someone from my doctoral program to review chunks of data and chapter writing for which I sought more clarification. This person completed the CITI training that ensures trustworthiness in research and the research community. This reviewer conducted an initial impression of the work, commenting on structural issues and clarification of meaning in order to improve the

quality and credibility of my research. This encouraged not only reflection on my part as the researcher, but also encouraged my experience of holding my writing and analytic claims under the scrutiny of others.

Limitations and Delimitations

According to Bloomberg and Volpe (2016) study limitations represent the "external conditions" that may impact the study's execution and outcome (p. 12). Delimitations represent researcher-imposed limitations to regulate the scope of the study. Recruitment proved to be the most challenging limitation of the study regarding reliable and accessible data. As a result of this obstacle, I elected and received permission to include data from my 2017 pilot study—for which research questions and interview questions were relatively similar—in order to create a deeper data conversation within and among participant experiences. I was based in Chicago, but did not have the financial resources to travel extensively in pursuit of participants. Therefore, I relied on local distribution of recruitment materials. However, this still resulted in each participant completing his or her TFA participation in different regions. The difficulty in recruitment could have also stemmed from a hesitation to engage with an independent researcher around their experience in TFA. Because the recruitment flyer did not indicate whether this was an exclusively pro or anti-TFA study, participants may have been hesitant to reach out in lacking my stance as a researcher (though potential participants may not have been familiar with the ramification of inserting my own stance into the research, and the efforts qualitative researchers take to expose their biases that may hinder the analysis process.) This limitation may have incited potential fear of retribution if they had an almost exclusively positive or negative experience under TFA.

In addition, in order to retain participants and ensure both their security and position of importance in the research, I needed to adhere to various schedules, time zones, and resources in order to conduct interviews and gain insight into participants' experiences. Though face-to-face interviews were ideal, not every participant was based in Chicago, where Skype served as a feasible substitute. In addition, not every participant had two-hour blocks of time available. Thus, one participant and I conducted hour-long interview blocks with 24-48 hour time frames in between each hour. This allowed both parties to marinate on what was asked and discussed, and allowed me to return with more developed follow-up questions when we met the next day. However, this method broke up the three-segment model and cut short the capacity for an organic conversation to develop within that 90-minute window.

As mentioned, not every participant retained documentation from his or her time in TFA. Therefore, I relied on what was provided to me from participants, in addition to the documents provided by a participant that seemed general in scope and applicable across regions. These general, TFA-generated documents anchored my understanding of TFA's conception of both education and the role of the teacher, and provided a background for understanding the organization's philosophical underpinnings. Nevertheless, the documents I received that were specific to particular regions were minimal. This limitation also dictated the extent to which participants could convey the documented experiences they had during institute and teaching under TFA for their two-year requirement.

Finally, I chose not to offer research participation incentives as part of this study. Though I received contact from a handful of other potential participants in late 2018, they were not willing to commit if "compensation" for their time was not provided. One participant mentioned that colleagues to whom she had mentioned the study were not willing to consider participation

if an incentive was not offered. I approached this dilemma with my dissertation chair, and framed my decision from both a practical standpoint, as well as in light of the haphazard understanding or conventional relationship between compensation and research participation involving a study that could pose marked risks to participants' health, of which this study did not. I elected not to offer incentives not only for financial reasons, but also in light of the murkiness associated with incentives and data collection in qualitative research (Bailey, 2017). As a result, this limitation may have impacted the participants who were willing to engage in the research.

Two delimitations should be exposed in order to better present the scope of the study, as well as the participants involved. My choice to conduct a qualitative study involves my pursuit in elevating the perspectives, descriptions, and experiences of my prospective participants. Granted, TFA participation may represent a shared experience on the surface, I was interested in the multifaceted nature of these experiences as conveyed through different participants. This qualitative study was not a longitudinal study of participants' time in TFA, limiting some information I received from my participants. Furthermore, I could only rely on participants' recollection of their time in TFA in retrospect because I selected participants after they had participated in TFA, which may have proven more difficult the further removed they were from the classroom or organization in recalling especially their institute experience, a much shorter and quickly-paced window of time. Because this is not formatted to be a longitudinal study, any gaps in data collection and analysis will need to be remedied or exposed as areas of growth or further research.

Moreover, I only selected participants from a particular time period, limiting the scope of data to a particular era in TFA and in teacher education. Scott, Trujillo, & Rivera (2016) note an

"organizational evolution" (p. 4) within TFA, highlighting a marketized, reform-focused agenda around the time at which participants took part in TFA. Thus, the majority of the experiences participants conveyed represent this particular time period in TFA. Though I continued to conduct research of TFA as an organization throughout the research process, documenting some of the structural and ideological changes that have occurred, my decision against formatting this study as an in-depth analysis of TFA as an organization rests in the desire to preserve, honor, and elevate the lived experiences of the former teachers in this study, and to examine the impact of socialization on their histories and future experiences as they relate to public education within a neoliberal society.

Study Overview

Again, the purpose of this study is to examine the impact of both neoliberalism and TFA's communication of its education and teaching philosophies on its former corps members' experiences as teachers within the organization, as well as their overall conceptions of teaching and of education. As previously mentioned, much of the literature surrounding Teach for America teachers examines their perceived effectiveness or success as these relate to student achievement (see Darling-Hammond et al., 2005; Heilig, Cole, & Springel, 2011). Instead of focusing on these aspects, I elected to examine lived experiences of former teachers, nuances consistently absent both from existing literature and the dominant discourse surrounding teachers and teacher efficacy (see Kuzmic, 1994; Zeichner & Tabachnick, 1985). In addition, critical education scholars often seek to compare "traditionally-prepared," or rather, university-prepared teachers and "alternatively-prepared" or non-university prepared teachers, and their measurement of success within their positions or regarding their commitment to teaching (Zeichner & Conklin, 2005). My choice to examine just TFA teachers illustrates my commitment to better

understanding the organization's impact on its teachers, how this might give insight into TFA-prepared teachers' philosophy development, as well as TFA's broader role in education.

In this way, I chose to examine the problem of teacher identity and teacher socialization as it relates to the dominant, neoliberal discourse, for two reasons. The first reason rests in my desire to grapple with the practices that do or do not allow for retaining effective and committed teachers. It is my belief that programs like TFA have threatened the capacity for universities to maintain an elevated status in teacher preparation—a belief and assumption I had to bracket for the purpose of this study. From here, it is assumed within the dominant neoliberal education policy discourse that university-prepared teachers are ill prepared in comparison to TFA teachers, potentially a belief that could be communicated internally within TFA (see Darling-Hammond et al., 2005; Kumashiro, 2012; Ravitch, 2013).

Such an assumption brings me to my second reason for this problem selection, which rests in TFA's overreaching influence into teacher preparation and public education in general (Ravitch, 2013). Because of neoliberalism's capacity to pervade sectors beyond education (Scott, Trujillo, & Rivera, 2016), and its relative newness as a topic of discussion within teacher education, I committed my study to the examination of to what degree TFA's neoliberal underpinnings can and may impact the teaching philosophies of its corps members, and how such an ideology may in turn, impact the greater teaching force, educational policy, and public education. The very areas that TFA claims to address are still consistently plagued by teacher shortages (Podolsky et al., 2016). Therefore, my desire to understand the ways in which participants were prepared for teaching as a long-term career rests in examining to what extent the sustainability of a teaching force remains a cornerstone of TFA's organizational philosophy,

and to what extent participants thus approach and believe teaching to be a desirable and

sustainable career.

CHAPTER 4. PARTICIPANT PROFILES

The purpose of this study is to examine TFA alumni's teaching and education philosophies in light of their previous educational experiences and their participation and socialization in TFA. From here, this study endeavors to investigate how these developed understandings of teaching and education have shaped participants' current careers and visions of both teaching and education more broadly. The following profiles illustrate those alumni who elected to participate in this study, where four of the five participants completed their two-year teaching requirements. These participants held diverse educational and teaching experiences, growing up and teaching in regions that spanned the United States. The names of participants and teachers are pseudonyms to protect their identities, though gender identification has been preserved. TFA regions, institute locations, schools, and other influential figures have been generalized to allow for increased anonymity.

Each profile explores the following as these relate to the participant: education background, the TFA placement, and the impact on the participant's current career. The selection of these components align with the study's interview model—the examination of participants' previous educational experiences, their participation in TFA, and the impact of these components on their current careers and overall conceptions of teaching and education. Participants' teaching and education philosophies, in addition to TFA's role in the philosophy-shaping process, are explored more in-depth in the Findings presented in chapter five. Nevertheless, participants' previous educational experiences and their TFA placements proved to be formative in their construction of their teaching philosophies. As a result, these profiles highlight some overarching components of their teaching and education philosophies, and where TFA may have played a part in this construction.

Catherine: 2009-2011

Education Background

Catherine, currently a gym owner, participated in Teach for America from 2009-2011, in an area where TFA's presence was relatively new. For Catherine, not only has education been highly valued; in addition, public education has been part and parcel of the educational process within her family. Her hometown touted numerous public high schools with successful track records for student achievement, athletics, after-school programs, and graduation rates. Despite hers and her family's value in education—and Catherine's natural academic ability—she consistently rebelled as a student, especially in high school. As Catherine got older, the more talkative she became. Much of this stemmed from boredom: school for Catherine had a tendency to be "tedious and slow." Her parents "were regulars" at report card pick-up, and from adolescence onward, the reports from teachers consistently centered on Catherine's ability to distract others, incessant talking, and interrupting of teachers. She felt the need to "take on a leadership role" for those who she deemed were not able to exude this themselves. Nevertheless, these reports hardly characterized every class: the teachers and subjects that challenged her, figures that demonstrated both command and investment in their students and content, warranted an interested and invested Catherine.

Her 9th grade English teacher, Ms. Stafford, illustrates an example of a teacher who not only challenged Catherine, but also invested in her sense of rebellion. Ms. Stafford zeroed in on Catherine's rebellion from the beginning of her freshman year, and convinced her to "use her [rebellious] skills somewhere else," celebrating the skills she brought to her classes and to the school as a whole. At Ms. Stafford's request, Catherine joined and eventually student-led mock trial for all four years of high school and served as class vice president her junior and senior

years. For her, it was never about the philosophy behind an argument, but rather *winning* the argument (emphasis in interview), the performative nature of that success. Not only did this investment in Catherine's alleged deficits alter Catherine's own understanding of herself, she also learned the value of a teacher's investment in their students and the power of relationship building. A handful of teachers like Ms. Stafford gave Catherine the tools and fostered her already-existing rhetorical and social skills in order to propel her into a position in which this kind of leadership could become a reality.

At her college, Catherine took on informal leadership opportunities. She played collegiate sports for three of her four years and taught a sex education course for incoming freshmen. Catherine enjoyed these community-building experiences that also emerged as chances for her to develop her own leadership skills. These opportunities, in addition to those during high school, reveal her inherent desire and value in working with others. The mission to foster community, establish relationships, and to impart a positive impact upon those with whom she worked undergirded each experience. Catherine carried these values into the classroom as she embarked on her career as a teacher.

The TFA Placement

Catherine participated in Teach for America from 2009-2011 as a middle and high school science teacher. After her two years as a corps member, she spent one more year as a teacher before leaving the profession. Catherine taught in three different charter schools, one for each year she taught. Originally, Catherine had not seriously considered Teach for America until getting denied from an environmental fellowship before her college graduation. Missionary-like programs (Zeichner, 2006) such as Peace Corps and Teach for America were on her short list if the fellowship fell through, especially for the potential to make radical, national change. These

options became more attractive in light of the dire economic climate when she graduated from college and the scarcity of employment in multiple sectors.

Before embarking on her journey as a teacher-of-record in school serving an immigrant population, Catherine attended her TFA institute in another area of the country. She was part of a corps member teaching team for the morning, with TFA-led sessions on teacher practice in the afternoons. The explicit purpose of institute was to prepare corps members to be teachers-of-record. However, for Catherine, the implicit purposes of institute were to accomplish the following: to keep corps members isolated to "keep you so focused" on internalizing the TFA ideology—which, she cites, grounds itself in feeling consistently overworked—and to weed people out who could not keep up with the work. Most of her weekends during institute were spent sleeping, since corps members worked long hours during the week. The minimal amount of teaching time, and the significant differences between her institute and her region, she recalls, did not entirely prepare Catherine to manage her own classroom.

Catherine spent her first year of teaching as what she described as a "TFA golden girl." Catherine's methods, curriculum, and classroom procedures were consistently cited as examples of "success;" many corps members and TFA employees visited her classroom to observe excellence in action. In addition, because Catherine participated in the first TFA corps in her region; and because the science curriculum had been minimally developed, she spent most free nights of her first corps year developing new STEM curricula for use within her region and nationally. Catherine felt a sense of investment from her PD (program director) and TFA as an organization. It was after her first year and as a result of her "bolstered ego" from TFA that Catherine gave significant consideration to teaching as a long-term career.

After her first year, teaching and teaching as a TFA corps member became increasingly difficult. Catherine had been fired from her first placement because "TFA was asking too many questions" about school policies that held legal ramifications for her students, and she believed it was her duty as a teacher to challenge her school's policies. Her PD encouraged her to "move on" after this event, forcing her to question her value as a teacher, an alleged change-agent, and her status within TFA as a whole (especially since Catherine's PD knew of her firing before it happened and elected not to inform her of this). In addition, her approach to TFA and TFA-mandated professional development sessions began to shift—the radical change that she had been promised to make no longer resonated with her. "I had to shift my reality" in regards to what educational change meant to TFA, and what it really looked like in her classroom.

Her second school's principal was a TFA alum, and instilled discipline and order, components Catherine appreciated as a cart-bound science teacher. Catherine's second-year position was temporary, so she entered the job market again before her third year of teaching. Mid-way through her third year, she had become aware teaching's impact on her physical and emotional states, as the school's instability took a toll on her professionally and personally. She called on her former program director for assistance, though received little help, arguing she should "figure out a way to work through it," but Catherine disagreed. She could no longer ignore the negative turmoil teaching was having on her physical and emotional well being, and left the profession at the end of her third year. Since her departure from teaching, Catherine has had little contact with TFA, save for the couple of friends she made in her cohort, and for the mass alumni emails she receives. Despite the bitterness of her last year, she holds "no shame" toward her participation in the program, but rather, acknowledges she wasn't "effectively" being

"that person" that fosters the mission that "one day, all children will have access to an excellent education" (Document #32, 2010 p. 12; Document #74, 2017 para. 1).

Impact on Her Current Career and Conception of Teaching

Catherine still lives in her teaching community and has developed a deep investment in her community and in her city. Catherine started attending a gym during her first year of teaching as a physical outlet, in an effort to "not lose it" and to maintain a sense of control over her own existence. After resigning at the end of her third year, she already had a part-time job at the gym; and eventually, acknowledging the sense of community within this fitness community in the region, she decided to open her own. As a gym owner and instructor, Catherine has arrived at the conclusion that education is everywhere. However, she argues that teachers are still limited in what they are able to control outside of their classrooms, in addition to the minimized autonomy within their classrooms. To effectively teach in any form involves constant learning, "otherwise [you're] not a good teacher anymore." In keeping with her understanding of holistic education, her focus has shifted toward "community politics" instead of a consistent focus on schools and public education in a formal sense.

Her current work mirrors her teaching philosophy in its foundational commitment to fostering community and relationship building. As an instructor and owner, she conceptualizes her role as an informal educator: she transmits knowledge about the body and challenges the average person's conception of who they are physically. Her tight-knit gym community allows for her to redefine the conception of "athlete" and build on clients' vulnerability to physical education in order break down the teacher-student power dynamic found in traditional classrooms and empower her clients. Catherine thrives on this lack of a "gap" or diminished power dynamic between her and her clients, as some of them are teenagers. Despite her role as a

physical educator, one heavily dependent upon her clients' buy-in and participation, Catherine

values the increased autonomy that comes with owning her own business, a feeling she sought as

a teacher. Though she is responsible for the safety and security of others in her current work, she

enjoys a position of both power and leadership as a prominent figure in her gym, her community,

and within the region's fitness world at large.

Dominic: 2009-2010

Education Background

Dominic participated in TFA from 2009-2010. He grew up in an affluent suburb.

Dominic attended a selective, private school, though he prefers to call it an "independent" one,

due to the "connotation of exclusivity" often associated with private schools. Many adults in his

community held careers in law or in finance, including his parents, who were both lawyers. For

him and for his family "education was everything," and teachers were seen as sources of

immeasurable knowledge. Dominic describes his teachers as "excellent," and lays credit for his

value and appreciation for school and for education more broadly at the feet of those teachers,

and at the feet of his parents. Though Dominic attended a public elementary school briefly, his

parents made the decision to transfer him to a private school at a young age in order for him to

gain increased teacher attention for academic growth.

Though Dominic held appreciation for both his teachers and his educational

opportunities, he described his high school as "awful," with a particular negative view of what he

considered student "entitlement." As a student, Dominic struggled to find a place in his high

school despite its smaller student population. He quickly learned that his values did not always

coincide with the values of his peers. Dominic worked on the school newspaper and found a

niche with this particular crowd, publishing stories that encouraged a "point-counterpoint" on school discipline policies, an academic cheating scandal at his school, and on larger social issues. They also published album reviews. Despite attempting to "change the school culture" and bring light to salient social issues, Dominic still is not sure how many students read the newspaper or engaged with his ideas.

Dominic describes himself as an "average" student in high school; however, he did go on to rigorous coursework in college. The college's larger population would serve as a "challenge" for him, as someone who always valued close-knit communities and support systems. Dominic had always enjoyed his English classes, so he pursued a philosophy major in college—as "English was the closest thing to philosophy" he was exposed to in high school—he figured this initial interest would translate to his college coursework. His mother chastised this choice, instead encouraging him to pursue coursework and a career that "engaged with the real world." Nevertheless, Dominic persisted in his studies, which allowed him a little more time "in [his] own head," in addition to the capacity to think critically about the world around him.

The TFA Placement

Dominic "had known of TFA since high school," and had always aspired to apply. For him, the "most noble thing" is to teach, and to "spread around" his knowledge illustrated what he believed to be a "moral responsibility." Despite his emerging desire to pursue teaching, his parents questioned this decision, but felt more at ease when Dominic chose to begin teaching through TFA, due to its selectivity and its temporary requirement for corps members. His mother saw it as a chance to get teaching "out of [his] system," and anticipated this would be a temporary experience before a seemingly better career. However, Dominic hoped gaining

certification through TFA would get him "a salary and a teaching job" for the long-term and was anxious to find a pathway toward this goal.

As a philosophy major, Dominic studied math and logic, but had always found passion for his English classes. Therefore, he applied for TFA with hopes of gaining an English placement, but conducted a Math lesson at his all-day interview due to its ease in planning. As a result, Dominic gained a Math placement, despite his question of whether he had taken enough Math classes in college to actually be certified to teach it. And, despite his placement in high school Math, Dominic was placed in middle school Social Studies at institute. His efforts in trying to convince institute staff that he "needed special skills" to teach high school Math—and thus had been placed in the incorrect subject area—were not recognized by the institute staff. His impression was that the staff "didn't really care," so Dominic spent his institute experience teaching and learning "some" pedagogical strategies for middle school Social Studies.

The structure of Dominic's institute and placement region did not set him up for success contextually. Upon arriving in his placement region, he had just two weeks to plan his course. However, he was "relieved" he received his placement assignment at institute, as he remembered that "they had trouble placing corps members that year," so many did not receive their school assignments until after the start of the year. Dominic was struck by the "overwhelming poverty" and the rampant de facto segregation still occurring in his teaching community, something discussed as a "sidebar" in TFA-led sessions in the region. To him, it seemed implicitly understood that teachers were responsible for "figuring out kids' lives" in addition to teaching their courses and managing their classes, the latter of which served as a significant barrier for Dominic. Despite his best efforts to refine his classroom management strategies, he was not prepared or supported to do so.

Dominic lacked necessary support systems during his time with TFA. Dominic's program director (PD) and principal "were not as invested" in his growth, which became evident both early on and as the year progressed. On meeting Dominic, his principal suggested he "start doing pushups," implying Dominic's stature "was not physically intimidating" enough for him to be a teacher in his school community. He credits his principal as the most prominent figure in influencing the "fear" that shaped his teaching. To add to his difficult experience, Dominic's PD only observed him a few times over the course of the year, and was "generally encouraging" at the beginning, but often discouraged Dominic's ideas for class and instead asked him to opt for more structured, routinized teaching. His principal was, as well—indicating, "This is sort of how it goes" for a first year teacher. Dominic knew he was struggling and requested his PD come to conduct an observation, where Dominic received "vague pointers" and a "complicated rewards system" he found difficult to implement and counter to his teaching style.

However, as Dominic's classes remained difficult to manage, his principal's feedback "changed abruptly" and insisted he attend an off-site management workshop. Afterward, Dominic was determined "to lay down the law" and requested his principal's support. "The first student I sent to the principal's office, came right back to me…she didn't have my back," he remembered. Though his principal did not observe him after his workshop attendance, she informed him a few weeks later that his contract would not be renewed, with eight weeks left in the year. And, though Dominic stayed the remainder of the school year, he had requested a different placement from his PD. Nevertheless, his PD was "not helpful" in granting Dominic's request.

Impact on His Current Career and Conception of Teaching

Dominic is currently in medical school. Upon leaving his placement region, Dominic "had no real plans" or direction for his career, so found himself tutoring and conversing with others about their careers with hopes of gaining a better direction for himself. A few sources contributed to his decision to pursue medical school. Dominic's grandmother worked as a radiologist, and had always not only communicated the importance of education, but also gave Dominic insight into strong career options while giving him enough freedom to make his own choices. His grandmother's work in the medical field, despite "escaping a pretty difficult situation" in her home country, served as one source of inspiration. However, he cites two other reasons for pursuing a path toward medical school.

Dominic found himself listening to talk radio frequently after his TFA placement, and noted an ignited passion over a story discussing a medical career, as such figures could "solve problems" as part of their work, but could also establish relationships with patients. He had worked previously as a college peer counselor that not only helped ignite his passion for working with others—which led him to teaching—but also in counseling others, as he controlled the phones for a mental health line. Dominic had always enjoyed science, as well; thus, a career combining science, the power in solving pertinent issues, and establishing relationships with others felt like a good career fit. For Dominic, this was the "medical school answer" for why he chose to pursue this career option. The "real answer" involves a film he saw upon returning from his placement: "Dr. Zhivago." The film explores the life of Yuri, an Eastern European philosopher-poet-medical student living under a Soviet regime. He recalls a scene in the film where the main character must answer a call for a "woman in distress," where Yuri sees her sweating and without makeup. What struck Dominic about this scene involved the capacity as a

doctor "to see like, like real people without their makeup." Thus, the ability to access the vulnerable and the real in people also drew him to a career in the medical field.

Dominic is currently in residency for medical school. He is working in internal medicine with the objective of becoming a primary care doctor. Choosing primary care puts Dominic as "people's first contact with the medical system," giving him a platform on which to establish relationships with individual patients. Dominic appreciates the ability to still have "one-on-one interactions" with others as he had done with his students, and that yelling is no longer part of his job. What he has also noticed about being a medical student is the meaning and significance that his expertise and intelligence encompasses, something lost in teaching. Dominic acknowledges that he "get[s] more respect whether it's earned or not" simply through the knowledge he holds as evidenced through "a longer white coat." As a result, a sense of trust emerges between him and his patient. He also "hold[s] [his] head high" in light of the shared respect, trust, and his body of knowledge being seen as something valuable. Though he even considered teaching medical students, he credits the interviews as part of this study as reason enough not to embark on any path involving formal teaching of others. He attributes his TFA experience to encouraging him to "advocate for [himself]" in his current field, as well as establishing a sense of respect for and value in teachers as professionals worthy of the same esteem he presently possesses in his work.

Jane: 2012-2014

Education Background

Jane participated in Teach for America from 2012-2014. Born to immigrants, Jane's parents instilled not only a strong work ethic, but also an appreciation for school, for education, and a desire to succeed academically. "I never remember them taking off work," she explained.

Her parents arrived in the United States and settled in a highly diverse community. As the oldest child, Jane felt a certain sense of independence in pursuing interests, academic pathways, and careers. She remains extremely close with her family and often sought ways in which to maintain some proximity to her hometown and to her family and friends. Her parents instilled a strong, "academically competitive" attitude in Jane that enabled her to take advantage of multiple academic and social opportunities throughout her initial and later educational experiences.

Jane felt fortunate enough to attend school with a diverse demographic of students. Early on, Jane had been admitted to a gifted elementary program housed in one of the elementary schools in her home community. Thus, as she was bussed to this particular school, she quickly developed a strong network of friends. Most of her friends also funneled into her high school as part of the International Baccalaureate (IB) program, of which Jane was a part as well. As a result, she developed a value in a close network of friends and family, for rigorous academic experiences, and for high-quality teachers that taught her program's classes.

Jane's family and friends valued education: there was not a question of whether Jane would attend college, but rather where. She attended university on an academic scholarship. This was the first time "[she] felt like a minority." Many of her classmates came from affluent backgrounds, and showcasing their wealth was normalized. As a result, Jane felt like an "outsider". Though her college experience enabled her to earn her degree in accounting and to study abroad, she felt somewhat removed from the predominantly affluent student population and the "Greek scene" that existed on campus. At the advice of her family, she pursued a "hard business" major, though she detested the material. Jane did not consider teaching until well into her accounting career.

The TFA Placement and post-TFA teaching

Jane spent her first five years out of undergrad as an accountant, but realized she "wasn't good at [it]," and was not passionate about it. "I think I had a relationship at the time where my boyfriend was *really* into what he did like he worked for a nonprofit… and he was like, 'why are you not passionate about what you do?' And I was like, I don't know; I never thought about it!" His enthusiasm for his work motivated her to explore other careers, and she found a friend's Facebook post about a volunteer opportunity that involved working with teenagers. Jane left her accounting position to pursue volunteering with a nonprofit for a year. This exposed her to the joy of working with teenagers, which ultimately led to her decision to enter teaching. After her yearlong volunteer experience, she returned to her position—which her accounting firm kept open for her—while she researched pathways into teaching. This research led her to TFA.

Jane envisioned herself as a teacher upon entering TFA, thus initially taking requirements for the program and for her alternative certification pathway seriously. Jane found interest in TFA for two reasons: she sought a career in education and "Teach for America seemed to me like a way that would explain [the certification process] to me;" and she viewed the organization as prestigious. "They had the name… the network… and could help me get certified." In this way, though she valued TFA's prestige and reputation, Jane approached TFA as a means-to-an-end. She ultimately desired a teaching certification to embark on a career that she believed was purposeful and she was passionate about. On reflection, she suggests that her experience was not negative, but rather "a bunch of work," which at times lacked a rationale. Despite Jane's initial passion for working with teenagers, Jane's overall approach to TFA was, as she describes, "neutral."

Jane had originally hoped to be placed in English, thinking back to her 8th grade English teacher's "passion and purpose" for his work, and executed a grammar-focused lesson for her TFA interview. However, because of her accounting background, was placed in Math. However, Jane had not taken any Math classes in college, as accounting largely requires business classes and courses with statistical emphases. Jane was placed in a classroom with one other corps member; so, in comparison to the other participants, she received more time to teach, as most institute teaching teams were comprised of three to four corps members. Nevertheless, the classes were small and she felt "unrealistic" as these summer school teaching settings did not illustrate the extent of classroom management required of a teacher-of-record. Her CMA—corps member advisor—during the summer, in addition, was "a little scattered;" and she found it difficult to understand his explanations on how to craft a lesson plan. Jane also struggled with the direction that corps members in Math placements were encouraged to craft their own lesson materials, power points, and assessments without a textbook. These directives also lacked a formal rationale. Jane recalls spending extensive time in the library, finding individual math problems to cut and paste into activities or power points. "There were definitely no slackers [at institute]," she remembers.

Jane taught high school Geometry. She grew up near her teaching placement, so she was relatively familiar with the area and was still near her family and friends. Thus, she did not get particularly close to anyone in the organization, and opted to hang out with "non-TFA" friends, as these "friendships were already established." She spent her two years teaching a predominantly Latinx population at a public high school as one of three corps members in the school. She described her placement school as having a "healthy culture," and found it to be a positive experience. Her TFA colleagues were placed in Science. In order to obtain certification,

Jane enrolled in the one-year certification program through the school district, which illustrated the means in which TFA corps members in her region obtained certification. Thus, she took classes in evenings and on some weekends. District coordinators taught her classes and observed her teaching practices throughout her certification process. She found her classes somewhat helpful, and remembered learning particular teaching strategies that were "hands-on" and enjoyable to incorporate into her classes.

Jane viewed herself as a teacher, but as one "with three bosses:" her school administration, the district coordinator under which she was taking her certification classes, and TFA. "TFA always fell to the bottom," she explained. "I'm just trying to teach!" When seeking advice regarding student behavior, teaching strategies, or anything else related to her position, she preferred to ask her administration or her colleagues. Jane found it best to communicate with those "familiar with a situation," instead of seeking out advice from her TFA MTLD—Manager of Teacher Leadership Development—who might not have been familiar with the situation or context in which it occurred. Jane maintained that TFA "was just one part of [my] identity," and preferred to rely on her school-based colleagues, as her school placement housed multiple veteran teachers. In addition, the principal at Jane's school during her first year had been there for a number of years, establishing himself as a member of the community and was quite familiar with the student population, the school community, and the functioning of the school. During her second year, a new principal took the helm and hired a Math department instructional coach. Despite initial resistance the coach and her strong personality, Jane and her colleagues negotiated the feedback she gave and began to embrace the coach's increasingly hands-off approach.

Arguably the most formative teaching experience for Jane involves the year she spent as a teacher in a city right after TFA finished. When selecting potential TFA placement sites, she

shied away from urban cities due to their reputation as "dangerous" and that teaching in these areas was "harder," she had heard. Nevertheless, she found herself as a Geometry teacher in an underserved community in a city. Though Jane made the decision to move to where her husband lived after pursuing a long-distance relationship, she found the adjustment to her new teaching setting to be difficult, facing multiple obstacles. Because her certification did not transfer between states, and, because spending more money on an additional teaching degree was not feasible, she took a position at a charter school, a new teaching setting for her. In addition, students at her new school were mostly African American, a student demographic she had not previously taught. Finally, the impactful presence of poverty and violence began to take shape in her teaching community as well.

Jane was quick to notice and to criticize the difference between being poor in her home state—where one could still provide for one's family—and being poor in he new city, where poverty was paired with community violence. She noted these factors as influential in her teaching community, and forced a shift in her teaching style she had difficulty addressing. Jane's previously strict teaching approach that worked in her TFA placement was met with resistance from her new students, to the point where she felt as though gaining respect was a far-reaching goal, and establishing relationships with students was inconsistent at best. Jane described it as a "culture shock," noting the difference in teacher respect between the student populations with whom she had worked. To make matters more difficult, her administration instituted punitive discipline policies for both students *and* teachers, diminishing any sense of autonomy and agency for those in the building.

Three months into the school year, Jane knew she had had enough. Though she stayed for the remainder of the school year, she acknowledged the emotional toll of feeling like "a first year

teacher three years in a row" due to either changes in administration at her first school, or the change in teaching environment her third year. Similarly, Jane acknowledged the difficulty in approaching the student population her third year, noting students had more "attitude," and she was "yelling" often while attempting to navigate evident trust issues she recognized in her students. She briefly considered teaching in another environment, but her hesitation at being perceived as an "outsider" and the amount of effort possibly required in establishing relationships, all while trying to maintain a functioning classroom, got the better of her. Though she worked with an in-class co-teacher during her third year, Jane admits she was "scared of having to do that all over again…maybe it would be just me" in the classroom. Though she remains in education and misses "parts of" teaching, her experience during her third year, and the significant adjustments that it necessitated, weakened her desire to continue teaching.

Impact on Her Current Career and Conception of Teaching

Though Jane moved in light of her husband's family and does miss her own, she has not expressed moving anywhere else. She currently runs a tutoring center. She briefly worked for an education start-up, but realized she was not suited for sales work. She hoped to remain in education, and found a full-time role in her current company after they opened a new location and she assumed the role as the site's director. Jane draws similarities between her current position and teaching: she is still managing others, working in education, sometimes tutoring students, and juggling demands and personalities of colleagues, parents, and students, but without the resistance and responsibility of being the only adult in the room. She enjoys her role, and has moved away from considering classroom teaching as a result. She acknowledges the liveliness of the tutoring center as it opens and students enter after a full day of school.

As someone who has always valued relationships with others, Jane attributes the relationships with others as the foremost factor that shaped her teaching identity, whether those relationships were positive or negative. In her view, TFA was the avenue by which to obtain her certification. Jane acknowledged that some of her fellow corps members approached their assignments as a "higher cause" and exhibited a know-it-all aura. However, Jane opted to learn from her school-based colleagues and considered herself a part of the school staff more than a part of TFA. Her disconnect from TFA enabled her to forge her own teaching and career paths, as she found it best not to emulate even her best teachers as a beginning practitioner, in favor of creating and maintaining her own style.

Jennifer: 2010-2012

Education Background

Jennifer completed TFA from 2010-2012. However, she grew up in a number of places; therefore, she had difficulty establishing roots anywhere. Jennifer often moved from school to school, as she lived in three different states before graduating high school. Thus, she felt a desire to be welcomed into each of her educational environments; but sometimes, this desire was not always met. Education always held a high priority in her family, and Jennifer's initial approach to school reflected her value in doing well. However, she recalls her fourth grade teacher, Mr. Jacobs, as a figure who zeroed in on her struggling at reading, signaling a potential reading disability (though this is something Jennifer only suggests she may have had). She not only remembered his ability and willingness to help struggling students like herself, but she also remembered he was "teaching against the grain," recalling more cooperative learning instead of the "stand and deliver" style of teaching that was seemingly "en vogue" during her time in

elementary school. Jennifer alluded to the importance of getting that academic help, and what might have happened if this did not occur. She even credits this formative learning experience, and the teacher associated with it, as a catalyst in pursuing a career in teaching. Jennifer recalls positive memories and supportive relationships that emerged from elementary school.

However, Jennifer's family migrated to another part of the country, where she finished her last three years of high school. Feeling as though her high school lacked effort in properly testing and assessing her learning abilities, Jennifer was placed in predominantly remedial classes. She admitted she often "felt stupid" in high school, acknowledging that her low academic tracking diminished her academic self-esteem. In addition, Jennifer suggested her teachers rarely "tapped into [her] passions," often feeling little to no connection to her classes or her teachers. She felt as though she "never got her footing" in high school until joining the dance team. With dance, she learned "soft skills" that enabled her to feel a sense of community among her peers and to sustain this sense of community as a dance captain later in her high school career. Though she found her high school classes to be "blow-off classes," Jennifer found a sense of belonging, community, and self-esteem through her dance team. Recreating that sense of belonging served as a cornerstone of her teaching philosophy. Jennifer studied elementary education in college, thus completing a university-based teacher education program. She spent two years teaching general education in an elementary school before TFA.

The TFA Placement

Jennifer's primary objective was moving out of her current environment. She spent high school, college, and two years of teaching there and was ready for a place in which she could be better understood. After she and her family had moved years ago, she visited her cousin a few times in a bustling city. Since those frequent visits, Jennifer was committed to moving there.

After teaching two years out of college, she sought out Google to provide potential teaching

pathways toward her goal of moving back to her preferred geographic region. The city's district

website was tough to navigate for applicants not familiar with the city's schools. But, in

Jennifer's Google searches, she came across TFA. She decided to apply with the hopes she

would land a position in her preferred location, but was unsure she would be accepted since she

was already teaching, something she suggested TFA tends not to desire in corps members.

Jennifer was originally placed in different city, so she declined TFA's offer. Citing the numerous

surveys that TFA sends, Jennifer received one asking why she declined. After learning of her

preferred location, TFA contacted Jennifer and coordinated a placement with her in her preferred

location, which she later learned was quite uncommon. Jennifer accepted TFA's second offer, as

it guaranteed her a teaching position in her desired location.

Jennifer's Special Education cohort through TFA experienced some initial growing pains.

Jennifer spent eight weeks in institute as a result of TFA's oversight in certification

requirements. Though she spent most of her institute time "reading *The Hunger Games*"—as

lesson planning was now "second nature" after her years in undergrad and as a teacher—Jennifer

found her surprise last two weeks of institute to be challenging. At one point, a fellow corps

member alerted TFA staff that they had received no instruction on what an IEP was, or how to

write one. In addition, TFA had failed to acknowledge that in order to gain Special Education

certification, pre-service candidates were required to complete observation hours in Special

Education classrooms. As a result, Jennifer and her fellow Special Education corps members

spent two weeks observing high school Special Education classrooms, and TFA sponsored a

"makeshift" IEP session. Corps members were given packets with information that was

suggested would be helpful to corps members. "I don't think I even held an IEP" during institute,

Jennifer recalled. As a result, Jennifer and her corps members found themselves quite unprepared for the legalities that were part of their roles as Special Education teachers, and relied heavily on the case managers at their respective schools.

Jennifer taught elementary Special Education at a turnaround school, the only corps member at her placement. This however, was not entirely an accident. As TFA worked to schedule interviews between corps members and prospective school placement sites, Jennifer sought placements on her own, often skipping TFA interview days: "I didn't want to teach at a charter," she said. Jennifer's reluctance toward a charter placement stemmed from her desire to work in elementary grades—and most Special Education positions at charters were in high school—in addition to the low pay of charter teachers. Therefore, Jennifer sent her resume out to individual schools, or relied on word-of-mouth suggestions from TFA staff that highlighted public schools in need of Special Education teachers. Jennifer suggested her resume "must have been passed down" in order to receive her placement; though her administration was unaware she was a TFA corps member until her principal signed off on her AmeriCorps paperwork. Jennifer did not overtly highlight her status as a TFA corps member, but instead suggested her previous teaching experience served in her favor when it came to hiring.

Jennifer's placement as a turnaround school was experiencing some of their own growing pains as well. The organization that managed the school was just beginning the school's turnaround. In addition, this organization also employed its own alternatively certified teacher residents after their completion of the one-year residency program. Jennifer suggested a "combative, competing" relationship between the organization and TFA, but realized that each organization had "similar visions" and were both championing alternative teacher certification. Because an outside organization managed her placement school, Jennifer received two coaches:

one from the school affiliated with the organization, and one from TFA. She asserted that her coaches "coached [her] very differently," highlighting the level of experience and practicality of her school coach. Jennifer's interest was in the advice and strategies she "could use the next day," often writing off the more generalized feedback, "hounding [her] for data" or her data tracker, or "vision-setting" conversations she experienced from her TFA MTLDs. She more readily trusted her school coach's years of experience in the classroom, noting her position as a vital agent in helping Jennifer to "grow her practice." Jennifer's MTLD changed her second year, who she argued was "even *less* helpful," as her MTLD had fewer years of experience, and no familiarity with Special Education. Her second year MTLD frequently asked Jennifer to teach other first-year corps members how to write and navigate IEPs. Because of Jennifer's lack of coaching support from TFA, she tended to gravitate toward her school coach's mentorship and feedback while keeping a healthy distance from TFA staff and the organization's practices.

Impact on Her Current Career and Conception of Teaching

Despite encouragement from her MTLD to transition into leadership, Jennifer spent two more years in the classroom after her TFA placement before moving into an instructional coaching role. She is currently a graduate student studying Special Education. Jennifer had always held onto the idea that she may transition out of the classroom, but felt she had "more to learn" even after her two years teaching out of college, and her two years teaching under TFA. Coincidentally, her school coach became her mentor and trained her for the same role. Jennifer moved around to multiple schools within the turnaround organization's network, coaching teaching residents and TFA corps members. She admitted she was surprised to encounter such a learning curve between residents and corps members, noting corps members' glaring gaps in lesson planning and classroom management experience. In addition, she noted the "pattern of

ineffective coaching" that still existed under TFA, suggesting there were "some very green coaches" appearing in corps members' classrooms, who sometimes even usurped the authority of the corps member teaching in front of their students. Jennifer spent more time coaching corps members on management and planning strategies. She acknowledged that when corps members learned she too had gone through TFA, they were relieved, relishing in a shared experience that exhibited difficulties for both parties. Jennifer endeavored to adopt a similar coaching style to her school coach in an effort to better support both residents and corps members, recalling her own experience with coaches "who coached [her] very differently."

Jennifer had always been interested in "teaching teachers," and found her particular graduate program marries this interest with her commitment to growing her pedagogy in Special Education. Her research interests focus on inclusive practices with a particular engagement in emotional regulation in the classroom, including the barriers that might impede students in Special Education from acquiring these skills. Because of her background and belief in social-emotional learning, Jennifer hopes to employ her experience and interests as part of her research. Though she acknowledged that she is no longer in the classroom, Jennifer still holds the belief that in order to create educational change, we must create and invest in "a teaching force," suggesting that educational change takes place within communities. From this standpoint, teachers are not only change-agents, but are also community pillars with extensive sources of knowledge. For Jennifer, teachers must remain in the classroom to showcase their positions as knowledge sources and community agents, which often comes from more teaching experience.

Annie: 2014-2016

Education Background

Annie, currently a law student, participated in Teach for America from 2014-2016. Annie grew up in an affluent suburb known for its white-collar workers: doctors, lawyers, and financiers characterized the adult population. Her parents chose this location to raise a family because of its access to high-quality public schools. That said, education held significant value within her family; and possession of degrees, especially multiple, illustrated both success and an element of prestige. Annie acknowledges her economic privilege that rooted her educational access, and "now understands how good [she had] it." Annie attended college with aspirations to attend law school and eventually serve in government. Her pursuit of law school stemmed from her desire to impact public policy and her "interest in campaign laws." Her first encounter with failure occurred in her Economics class, where she received a D, accompanied by a low overall GPA. Though, she admits, she became "slightly overdramatic" in asserting that "no law school would ever admit [her]," Annie held steady to her desire to create real and lasting change through policy and continued to pursue her desire to attend law school.

Despite her pursuit for a law degree, Annie had always loved teaching—she remembers teacher her sister to ride a bicycle and offering external rewards for progress; but she never considered it as a career due to its lack of prestige. "Selfishly, I thought I was above it," she recounts. In addition, she had always loved History, and felt a personal connection to the content of her History classes. This was especially true in Mr. Barton's 8th grade American History class. Mr. Barton would dress as a union soldier on a Civil War battlefield, acting out an alter ego for the entire class period. He brought in artifacts for his students to examine, and consistently exhibited kindness and passion to his teaching practice. It was during this time that Annie

decided she wanted to become president of the United States. Mr. Barton fashioned American History into something both exciting and relevant, qualities Annie cited as cornerstones of her own teaching pedagogy. Annie revisited this experience whenever she "doubted her career path" as a teacher. For Annie, Mr. Barton challenged the common conception of a teacher by bringing excitement to his classroom and to the content, thus reshaping the accessibility of both History and the profession of teaching.

The TFA Placement

Though she liked interacting with children, Annie had never seriously considered teaching, but found the giveback nature—along with other factors, like the prestige—of Teach for America attractive. She selected TFA for two reasons: she was not prepared to attend law school just after college graduation, and she wanted to build her resume. TFA, from her perspective, allowed her to defer before law school, and to build a strong resume: "going through hell, having more insight than a traditional teacher" and teaching "in the trenches" exuded marketability to graduate schools and companies looking for committed and driven individuals. Both institute and her two years as a corps member exemplify teaching "in the trenches," where the working and learning conditions "are not ideal for the student or teacher," often characteristic of a Title 1 school. Because Annie viewed her teaching career as temporary, she found it easy to choose which ideological underpinnings in TFA to embrace, and which ones to dismiss.

Annie began her TFA journey attending her institute session over the summer far away from her teaching region. Annie suggested, "It's a universal truth" that institute is an "awful" experience. Often, corps members are teaching in the content area during summer school that they will be teaching for their two-year requirement. However, this was not the case for Annie. Designated a History teacher for her two years as a teacher-of-record, she was assigned to be a

summer school Math teacher in her institute placement. She "cried weekly" due to the work, fatigue, stress, and "relearning math to teach math" in five weeks. Institute forced Annie to question her decision to join TFA.

For two weeks prior to summer school teaching, institute required intensive PD sessions, many focused on cultural competency and race, as well as what Annie deemed "a lot of lofty liberal education stuff" and "morale boosters" in a crowded auditorium. It was during this time that Annie considered quitting TFA completely. During institute, Annie found herself doubting her ability to accomplish TFA-mandated requirements, and what she termed "drinking the Kool-Aid," a reference to cult-like practices that involved ideological brainwashing. Annie and those disagreeing with the TFA mission and its practices felt at risk of being exposed by the Kool-Aid drinkers, or rather, those unconditional supporters of TFA. Many of her fellow corps members felt similarly. This bonding experience, though largely negative, allowed Annie to develop deep friendships, and to see the light at the end of the tunnel: teaching History in her own classroom in a different city. Annie never doubted her own ability to teach History, but did doubt her ability to internalize and accept the requirements some of the ideological underpinnings of TFA, especially those communicated in her institute.

Annie taught high school American History, Civics, and Economics in her teaching placement. Rather than a chance or random teaching assignment, Annie voluntarily selected environments new to her, viewing this as an exploratory opportunity to take in her early 20s. Annie appreciated the existing democratic population, predominantly African American, against the rampant "white racism" within her teaching placement. Despite these ideological differences, she felt connected to her school community, meeting students' parents at the local bar in her free time. Because of Annie's preconceived notions about teachers' lowly status within the economic

and social markets (Labaree, 2004), she was awestruck by the "amount of respect" from her school community. Her teaching placement "taught her to question things," potentially about inequity and other parts of the country. Her participation in TFA—in her region specifically—allowed her to recognize the organization's capacity to "bring life" into particular areas through placing young and driven corps members in teaching positions in the area's schools.

The school in which Annie taught represented a relatively diverse population with an innovative approach to accessing post-secondary education. The school operated under what Annie characterized as an "internal choice" model: the high school was a public school, but continued past grade 12 to a fifth year, what the district termed early college. Students were able to receive their high school diploma and their associate's degree within five years. Just over 100 students attended Annie's school. This also amounted to smaller classes for Annie. TFA teachers encompassed most of the 7 full-time staff members; the principal hailed from the town. Generally, the relationship between the TFA and non-TFA teachers was amicable: TFA "didn't come in with all the answers," and relied on staff members from the community to serve as resources for better understanding the students and their community, and how to incorporate the latter into specific lessons and content.

Annie's perseverance toward establishing her own classroom in a new city paid off. Annie's MTLD had extensive experience working and teaching in the region before Annie's arrival. His "vision for [the region]" he shared with his corps members before their school year began highlighted his adherence to community-building and long-term change through long-term teaching commitments. Because of his upbringing and teaching career within this community, he had a deep commitment to establishing longevity there, and this came down to envisioning TFA's two-year requirement differently. His vision challenged people like Annie, who had

planned to enter then immediately depart from teaching, to view long-lasting and impactful change as something that required a long-term commitment from corps members. He acknowledged the systemic forces (racial, economic, and political) at play in their school community. For Annie, he served as both a role model and a source of professional support. His encouragement in envisioning teaching as a sustainable and lasting career option also encouraged Annie to find more sources of professional and personal support situated within her school community.

Unfortunately, Annie did not feel the same support from her school administration. Her "great days in class" allowed her to consider teaching long-term; but despite these times where she "was teaching for recognition," she deemed her work environment "unhealthy." She chastised her former school as only pretending "to be a good school than [actually] being one." Punitive interruptions over student dress code violations and overemphasis on testing and associate's completion amounted to what Annie characterized as exuding "no value in education" and "adding nothing to [students'] experience." In addition, the diminished teacher agency that resulted from class interruptions by administrators, curricular overreach, and "mob-like" threats to teachers' pedagogical autonomy inadvertently banded the teachers closer together, but at the administration's expense and in light of a toxic work environment. Annie disclosed she "never felt safe" sharing these thoughts, but did so with her fellow teacher colleagues—she never mentioned whether TFA got wind of these reservations. Despite Annie's perception of her school environment and administration, she still felt connected to her teaching community, and spent another year in her placement as a political organizer before moving onto law school.

Impact on Her Current Career and Conception of Teaching

Annie is in her last stretch of law school. Though she has fleeting moments of missing teaching—especially when a class spurs a great idea for a lesson—she remembers her "real passion" in attending law school to further her journey into education policy. With that, she is very much committed to content and field expertise and crafting their relevance to suit her given audience. Ultimately, her decision to leave teaching rested in her viewpoint that work in education policy would have a greater impact on low-income students, in addition to the unhealthy work environments and the increasing demands on teachers in Title 1 schools. Annie's career trajectory post-undergrad—from teacher to organizer to law student to eventually a policymaker—stems from her belief of the "impact" that can be made in the world of policy, a greater one than what results from remaining a teacher.

Nevertheless, the most important aspect of her potential career in policy rests in her experience as a teacher, recognizing the disconnect that often exists between the profession and the politicians who make decisions about the profession without the experience. Annie admires the dedication of TFA specifically, though this may include the dedication of teachers. One reason for admiring the dedication of TFA as an organization rests in the purpose of non-profits, which involves "filling legislative gaps" that are not always addressed in the political world, such as poverty, inequitable education, and access to resources like healthcare and other social services. For Annie, TFA addresses a few of these aspects. Annie's experience in her region forced her "to question" her surroundings and the policies and systematic and systemic factors that shape particular environments. Annie's experience in TFA, however, allowed her to cherish interacting with students—which she hopes becomes part of her career path as a law professor on the way to policy—and to understand her own definition of leadership as a civic duty, "serving

members of your country." For her, teaching illustrates this kind of service as one of the most difficult and valuable professions.

Summary of Participant Profiles

To reiterate, the participant profiles explore participants' education backgrounds, their TFA placement experiences, and the impact of these components on their current careers and conceptions of teaching. Giving an overview of these aspects highlights the individualized experiences of participants, in addition to demonstrating the study's interview model. As a researcher, it was important to both protect the identity of participants, but to also preserve their individual histories as these relate to their teaching and TFA experiences. Taken together, participant profiles highlighted their broad initial and current approaches to teaching, and whether these views were affirmed, enhanced, or challenged by TFA ideology, TFA staff, and school-based staff. Their profiles also illustrated the varied TFA institute and placement experiences that shaped participants' teaching identities and philosophies. Finally, participants' profiles exposed their initial and current viewpoints of TFA within the broader educational landscape. The following chapter more clearly highlights aspects of their teaching philosophies through the emergent findings generated from the document and interview data.

CHAPTER 5. FINDINGS

The findings presented in this chapter take into account the interview data that generated the participant profiles mentioned in the previous chapter, and also encompass the critical discourse analysis conducted through examining TFA-specific documents received by participants and through the TFA website. Participants affirmed or challenged the core tenets of TFA's philosophical underpinnings, both of which gave way to the findings emergent in this chapter. This chapter's findings—TFA's desire to build an educational movement beyond the classroom, framing teaching dichotomously, and the varied teacher preparation received by participants—demonstrate the themes that surfaced. TFA's endeavor to create and maintain an educational movement that begins in corps members' classrooms emerges through data exemplifying the importance of TFA's name, network, prestige, and selectivity that motivated participants to join the corps. Data highlights TFA's framing of teaching as a stepping-stone toward long-term impact in education, though TFA communicates this large-scale impact happens outside of classroom teaching. In addition, TFA's capacity to speak to idealists, change-makers, and the academically-driven illustrate its capacity to reach multiple audiences with varied career aspirations beyond the corps, which deemed especially true for this study's participant group.

Participant interviews and document data illuminated a second emergent finding—TFA's framing of teaching dichotomously. This illustrates the grandiose and technical aspects that corps members must adhere to in order to be considered a successful TFA teacher. Participants spoke to pieces from TFA literature that expose TFA's instrumental vision for student learning, which constructed an instrumental conception of teaching. Nevertheless, participants also exposed points of their teaching roles that required them to go beyond what might traditionally be

associated with teaching, something emphasized in TFA literature. These aspects highlighted the all-encompassing framing of their TFA teaching roles.

Finally, participants underscored the varied preparation they received within and between regions. TFA is a national organization with staff in multiple areas that vary in size, demographic, and local politics. As each participant completed his or her TFA placement in a different region, it might be expected that training would look differently. And, though some aspects remained the same: participation in institute, having an advisor (an MTLD or PD, depending on the corps years) as the first point of contact with TFA, and some content and pedagogical training before and during the school year, the varied preparation between participants highlighted the differences in support systems they received as part of their training. In addition, the varied teacher preparation underscored two common threads: the lack of pedagogical training and the absence of contextual preparation for participants' region-specific teaching assignments. These factors ultimately shaped their TFA teaching experiences.

An Educational Movement for the Classroom and Beyond

As an organization, TFA has experienced numerous small and large-scale changes from its support structures to its mission. Scott, Trujillo, and Rivera (2016) suggest that TFA has experienced an "organizational evolution" (p. 4), where its recruitment efforts, mission and vision, and teacher preparation structures have shifted in light of where TFA positions itself within the educational landscape. This evolution process can be framed within particular eras that coincide with changing organizational missions and values. Within each era exists a particular and evolved TFA mission and approach to recruitment efforts, teacher preparation, and support systems. The first era of TFA endeavored to address the consistent teacher shortages within urban and rural communities (Ravitch, 2013), where recruits were inspired to begin and

sustain careers in teaching. The second era of TFA marks a shift toward a mission that endeavored to "close the achievement gap" (Document #32, 2010) through recruiting corps members to "eliminate educational inequity" (Document #73, 2009 p. 1). Participants also suggested that recruitment during the first two eras focused more heavily within highly selective colleges and universities (see Ravitch, 2013; Straubhaar & Gottfried, 2014). Finally, the third era of TFA illustrates a more decentralized and region-focused approach to teacher preparation (Sawchuck, 2016); with a mission to address an "opportunity gap" that signifies disenfranchisement on multiple levels (Document #78, 2019 para. 9), and recruitment reflects an effort to diversify the TFA corps (see Figure 1). A common thread between the second and third eras involves TFA's desire to build an educational movement through "sustained leadership in and outside the classroom" (Document #78, 2019 para. 1).

Despite the varied time frames in which participants completed their time in TFA, their testimonies most heavily reflect teacher preparation around TFA's second-era mission, language, and program structure. Three of the five participants completed their TFA participation during the second era; one participant's completion span the second and third eras, and one participant—Annie—participated within the third, more contemporary TFA era. In addition, despite the time at which Annie completed her corps years, her interviews highlight elements of *both* the second and third eras, especially as it relates to her MTLD—Manager of Teacher Leadership Development—who adopted a community-focused approach to teacher-corps member mentorship and guidance. However, her recollection of TFA's mission-driven work more closely aligns with the second era TFA mission: "to build the movement to eliminate educational inequity by enlisting the nation's most promising future leaders in the effort" (Document #73, 2009 p. 1), as she did not mention other formalized efforts by TFA to engage

her teaching community outside of her MTLD's individual endeavors. Participants highlighted aspects of TFA's messaging, network, and prestige that encompass the organization's marketing efforts to demonstrate a particular view of what educational change means to the organization. Data highlight TFA's view of educational change that strives to create and sustain an educational movement beginning in the classroom.

Building Leadership and a "Movement"

To quote Annie, "teachers are in a position to impact," and the majority of participants shared in this sentiment even after their time in TFA and the classroom. Though participants did not explicitly state TFA's desire to build a broader educational movement beyond the classroom, each participant did cite TFA's desire to seek out candidates with evidence of previous leadership experience, with hopes of developing this quality in the classroom, and possibly in an effort to sustain their movement. The origin of TFA's educational movement begins with its teacher-corps members in their classrooms as part of their two-year teaching requirement, referring to their emerging corps members as "instructional leaders" and teaching as "instructional leadership" (Document #7, n.d. pp. 1-2). However, for some participants, staying in teaching or even in education was somewhat discouraged by TFA. Their corps preparation highlighted pathways toward leadership that sometimes excluded classroom teaching. Catherine and Jennifer recall Saturday professional development sessions—a requirement of the two-year teaching experience with TFA—where regional TFA alumni would come and speak or lead a particular session. Neither participant recalled any current classroom teachers among those visitors, though some at Catherine's sessions were still "involved" in education.

When Jennifer finished her two-year requirement, she felt compelled by her MTLD to transition out of the classroom, getting suggestions for leading a charter school, becoming a

coach, or working for TFA in a more formal capacity. She shared a similar experience highlighting the idea that leadership outside the classroom was more heavily prioritized. For Jennifer "teaching *was* the thing," though her decision to stay in the classroom felt "not good enough" to her MTLD. She states one of TFA's possible objectives might be to attempt to "create better or more active citizens" who "support education causes." Participants cited options after TFA as attractive in joining the corps, in addition to being able to create impact in education broadly. TFA's desire to build a movement or "coalition" (Document #78, 2019 para. 1) to address educational inequity may begin, but does not necessarily end, in the teacher's classroom.

Dominic remembers many of his fellow corps members having "jobs lined up" for the end of their two-year requirement with some of TFA's employment partners. He felt many approached their teaching experience as something before "join[ing] the real world." To echo participants' anecdotes, language in TFA's documents illuminates those desires for far-reaching educational change in building a "broader collective movement" (Document #73, 2009 p. 1; Document #48, 2014 p. 6) that emerges beyond the classroom. In 2010, TFA published a seminal text of two decades worth of anecdotes, strategies, and instructional components titled "Teaching as Leadership" (Document #73, 2009), though the original framework was developed earlier (Document #76, 2019). One of these rubrics, the Teaching as Leadership Comprehensive rubric (Document #34, n.d.), anchors six facets that TFA had determined to be those indicative of what the organization believes successful teachers in the program demonstrate: Set Big Goals, Invest Students and Families, Plan Purposefully, Execute Effectively, Continuously Increase Effectiveness, and Work Relentlessly. Rubric components under each of the six principles embody language that illustrates TFA's work to build a movement in education. Movement-

focused language within the rubric's components such as "mobilize," "beyond the school year," "within the classroom and beyond," and "broaden[ing] impact" ignite the belief that educational change can and should span beyond one's classroom (Document #34, n.d. pp. 2-16). As this language appears under the six principles employed to evaluate teachers, TFA teachers are thus encouraged to conceptualize and approach educational change as something greater than one's classroom. Contemporarily, Teach for America asserts that its "impact" stems from "change-makers" and "coalition-builders" in industries beyond classroom teaching (Document #77, 2019 para. 1).

Similarly, TFA taps into the emerging leadership of its corps members in an effort to motivate school and community impact from their corps members. However, the majority of participants did not frame their teaching efforts in this way, but rather, as their own desires to get to know their students and their school communities. TFA's efforts become evident in TFA's evaluative rubric for its teacher-corps members (Document #34, n.d.). Nevertheless, TFA also encourages its corps members to enact change outside of teaching, and frames broader impact as something that occurs outside of teaching (Document #78, 2019). TFA has shifted from classifying itself as a teacher preparation pathway toward characterizing itself as a "leadership development organization" (Document #48, 2014 p. 3), where teaching serves as a springboard on which to begin corps members' leadership development, a skill that would seemingly transcend context (Document #32, 2010 p. 4). As TFA frames itself as a leadership development organization, this would signify that teaching is the beginning point of this leadership development, though not the place or career through which this leadership is expected. Transitioning away from exclusively teacher preparation toward framing its endeavors through leadership development illustrates that teaching is the catalyst to the creation and maintenance of

their educational movement, but this process of leadership development should continue beyond the classroom.

The Brand of TFA

Messaging

Participants cited TFA's mission and name—evolving into an organizational brand—as motivators in pursuing teaching through TFA. The brand of TFA signifies particular facets that are attractive today, as they were to those who participated in this study. TFA's mission to eradicate "educational inequity," though seemingly lofty, communicates an endeavor that appeals to those like Jane and Dominic, who consider themselves to be "idealists." Like Jane, who believes that "education is something that quote-end quote, 'works,'" participants felt motivated by TFA's mission, one seemingly grounded in progressive roots, reflecting the organization's efforts toward educational change. In addition, TFA's name has helped garner significant "positive media coverage" and a sense of prestige also appealing to not just the participants in this study, but a significant number of college graduates.

As mentioned, for participants, one attraction to the organization rested in its mission. TFA's second-era mission reads: "Our mission is to build the movement to eliminate educational inequity by enlisting the nation's most promising future leaders in the effort" (Document #73, 2009 p. 1). Though TFA's mission appealed to Dominic initially, he found himself questioning the extent to which it could feasibly exist on a large scale. As a beginning corps member, Dominic hoped to gain "skills to effect certain changes," an effort he fostered through his school newspaper as a high school student. However, Dominic asserts that the "haves" in society have the capacity to execute giveback work to the "have-nots," creating "some semblance of equality" that is not always genuine. It is suggested that those who have benefitted from education and

educational settings are likely to feel personally connected to TFA's mission to "end" injustices in education in the hopes of creating educational change (Document #32, 2010 p. 2)[2], and are more likely to join its movement to address this issue.

A few participants cited TFA's message to address educational inequity as a motivator in their decision to join TFA. TFA's evolving language exploring the gaps that hinder students of disenfranchised communities from educational achievement continues to resonate with idealists looking to enact educational and social change. TFA's framing of education inequity as a social justice crusade assists in its efforts to hook potential recruits to join their movement. Most recently, TFA has pivoted toward addressing an "opportunity gap," which acknowledges systemic inequities that hinder students from accessing social and educational opportunities (Document #78, 2019 para. 8-9). This concept endeavors to acknowledge the historic disinvestment in urban and rural communities where corps members teach; for the participants in this study, the push to "close the achievement gap" anchored their experiences as teachers (Document #32, 2010 p. 1). In addition, this phrase also appeared in a few of TFA's documents circulated during some regional institutes and was the topic of numerous breakout sessions for participants.

Participants recall multiple occasions on which the achievement gap was discussed in the midst of their preparation for the classroom. For the second era of TFA and for the participants in this study, "closing the achievement gap" served as a cornerstone objective for the organization and its corps member preparation in "ending" educational inequity (Document #32, 2010 p. xiii). The achievement gap operates under the assumption that students of low socioeconomic status in

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[2] Steven Farr's *Teaching as Leadership: The Highly Effective Teacher's Guide to Closing the Achievement Gap* is a TFA-sponsored text that encompasses corps member anecdotes, teaching and pedagogical strategies, rationales, and a "Teaching as Leadership" framework that still grounds some TFA teaching practices, and is often given to corps members during their institute experiences (see Brewer, 2014).

urban and rural communities can achieve at similar or even greater levels of academic performance in comparison to their affluent counterparts, but a gap exists that is preventing this from happening. These levels of learning compared and contrasted between student populations originate from measuring student achievement data (Kumashiro, 2012). TFA grounded its conception of the achievement gap in numerical student data, and held their teacher-corps members on the front lines of this "fight" against educational inequity (Document #73, 2009 p. 1) by tasking their teachers with addressing and eventually closing the achievement gap (Stern & Johnston, 2013).

Participants however, did not mention whether TFA specifically communicated to them the origin of this gap, though Jane suggested "family income" among other factors might contribute to its origin and perpetuation. When discussing the achievement gap, participants on reflection found the capacity to address it to be "too large" or couched within an "unwinnable fight." However, per documents, TFA approaches the achievement gap as something that can be closed, as educational inequity is framed as a "problem that can be solved" (Document #32, 2010 p. 8). TFA extends this assertion by framing the teacher's best effort toward closing the gap as something both noble and urgent (Document #34, n.d.). The solvability of the achievement gap did not become apparent for participants until their time in the corps. Nevertheless, TFA couching their mission within a broader "fight" against educational injustice still motivated a few participants to think about joining the corps (Document #32, 2010 p. 12; Document #73, 2009 p. 1).

"A Degree of Distinction"

The majority of participants discussed the prestige associated with TFA, or as Dominic phrased it: TFA's "degree of distinction." Annie highlighted that TFA teaching, "means

something different" from teacher preparation outside of TFA. These phrases illustrate that teaching—under TFA specifically—signifies something more important and impactful than teaching within another context or not part of TFA. The majority of participants found TFA's prestige to be an attractive factor in selecting this post-graduate career opportunity. For Annie, Jane, and Dominic, teaching initially held a lower status in the employment market. Asked explicitly whether prestige rested with TFA, teaching, or both, these participants unequivocally equated the prestige with TFA only. However, teaching under TFA would not only satiate their desires to enter teaching and to create impact, but would also carry more weight beyond their two-year requirement *because* they taught under TFA. TFA's "degree of distinction" may have originated from its highly selective recruitment efforts. Jane's recollection that TFA's origin and recruitment "started with the Ivy Leagues" may have sparked the prestige that participants found to be synonymous with the organization until the present day. For Annie in particular, teaching's low status gave way to hesitation toward entering the profession, even through TFA. Despite this hesitation, TFA's prestige and distinction illustrated a marker significant enough to compel each of the participants to enter the program. Through this organizational prestige, teaching under TFA, as Annie believes, "means something different" than learning to teach within a university-based teacher education program, as TFA's reputation continues to carry its esteemed distinction.

TFA's pivoting toward a "leadership development organization" also highlights what participants cited as the prioritizing of leadership candidates to teach under TFA (Document #48, 2014 p. 3). Participants asserted TFA's efforts to recruit leaders assist in sustaining its esteem in the education world. However, TFA does not classify itself—nor did participants characterize it—as a leadership development organization in every context. Because this terminology is not employed in every document—and participants did not cite this framing as commonplace in their

preparation—it is unclear then to what extent TFA frames teaching as an impactful career long-term, as corps members are not consistently referred to as "instructional leaders". However, the transition from calling the first points of corps member contact "program directors" to "MTLDs"—or, Managers of Teacher Leadership Development—may signal TFA's evolution into a "leadership development organization" (Document #48, 2014 p. 3), in addition to its framing of teaching as a stepping stone toward expanded opportunities for corps member leadership. As a brand and organization, TFA appeals to and is appealing to those who have demonstrated leadership experience and who envision themselves as leaders in a "fight for educational equity" (Document #32, 2010 p. 12).

The Name and the Network

Among TFA's marketing of and toward emerging leaders and idealists, in addition to its "degree of distinction" through its selectivity, participants saw TFA as a challenge suited for a select few, and for the academically driven. For Catherine, doing something "easy" after college would mean she was "weak." TFA provided the opportunity at which she could "be successful." Like Catherine, Jane classified herself as "academically competitive" both in high school and in college. As a career changer, Jane liked the challenge of applying ("let me see if I can get in") and the challenge of embarking on a different career toward something she had developed a strong passion. Her belief that TFA's pursuit and acceptance of the "best and brightest" applicants also contributed to its reputation as a highly selective and challenging program. This "degree of distinction" Dominic associated with TFA stemmed from its exclusivity, a label and idea he often chastises, but attributed to the "good media coverage" TFA had been receiving around his senior year of college. Those accepted fell into what Dominic characterized as a "special class of people" desired by TFA to lead their efforts in education.

Finally, participants cited TFA's extensive network that spanned beyond their two-year teaching requirement as a motivator in applying to and teaching under TFA. For them, TFA held an extensive alumni network, also an indicator of its desire to build a broader movement against injustice in education. Participants cited the organization's alumni network as a powerful factor in their decisions to join TFA because of the available options beyond the classroom. Jennifer initially felt motivated to pursue TFA's networking opportunities that might allow her to begin coaching teachers. Though she pursued this avenue after six years in the classroom, Jennifer did not rely on TFA's network for connections toward this professional opportunity. Annie mentioned LEE, or Leadership for Educational Equity, a TFA-affiliated non-profit that prepares corps members for careers in politics. Though these opportunities were available, no participants pursued any network connections through TFA following their programmatic obligations for reasons that included TFA as part of "the past," choosing to remain in the classroom, or a desire to "take a break" from teaching and education.

Appeals to Various Aspirations

Each participant sought to engage in what Straubhaar and Gottfried (2014) consider "give-back work," which they found to be both valuable and attractive about TFA's mission and vision as an organization. A few participants envisioned work beyond their two years in the classroom, framing teaching as a "noble" calling worth pursuing. In addition, many of them found teaching to fulfill the endeavor of giving back and TFA to be the most prestigious and most feasible vehicle through which to gain this experience. However, the reasons through which participants selected to teach through TFA, rather than through a university-based teacher education program, or another alternative pathway, were varied. Thus as an organization, TFA had the capacity to appeal to multiple professional aspirations, whether participants envisioned

teaching as a short-term or long-term career. As mentioned, the majority of participants felt that teaching with TFA elevated the teaching profession and the role they would assume as a classroom teacher. Reflecting on their time in the classroom, each participant acknowledged the difficulty, nobility, and importance of teaching as a profession, with or without TFA. However, for some, teaching under TFA added extra layers of obligations to their teaching roles.

Though none are currently classroom teachers for various reasons, the majority of participants had hoped to teach long-term. Three participants were looking for clear pathways into teaching in a particular location, or into the profession itself. For these participants, TFA was "a means to an end," which would allow for the easiest entry into the profession or to teach in a preferred location. Jennifer had been teaching in for two years before making her move to her preferred location. She found her desired city's district application website to be confusing and cumbersome to navigate. A Google search led her to Teach for America. For her "the best part of TFA" was the paperwork assistance she received regarding how to apply for the state's certification, what teaching exams to take, and how to gain a pathway to her preferred location for living. Jennifer planned to remain in the classroom and employed TFA as a vehicle toward her ideal destination.

As a career changer, Jane wanted "someone to explain" to her how to become a teacher. The thought of spending more money to gain a second undergraduate degree proved daunting. Not only did Jane believe TFA held "the name and…the network," she judged the pathway toward certification through TFA would be relatively seamless. She asserted that TFA "had their stuff together" to a point where she trusted the organization's ability in helping her navigate how to obtain her teaching certification. Reflecting on her previous non-profit work, Jane sought a career path she was passionate about, something lost in her previous accounting role. Her desires

for meaningful work and a clear pathway to a teaching certificate grounded her decision to apply to TFA.

Relying on their prior educational experiences, both Catherine and Dominic desired a pathway into and a long-term role in teaching, a career that both found to be impactful and honorable. Dominic "had known" of TFA "since high school," and had always considered it a potential post-graduate opportunity. He recalled a period in which he struggled as a student, and classified this as a catalyst for pursuing TFA. His hope, apart from serving as an "intellectual mentor" and "community pillar," involved "helping other struggling students" in his teaching role. He tapped into his educational experiences and the "noble" endeavor of "spreading [knowledge] around" as reasons for applying to and entering TFA. In addition to seeking a challenge, Catherine "wanted to teach forever" after entering TFA. Previous opportunities for leadership for her were both "innate" and happened "by accident." However, teaching encompassed her previous and emerging leadership skills, as well as her desire to build student relationships investment in education, something she recalled to be significant in her educational experiences. Her pursuit of leadership and "missionary-type work" led her to TFA, though she was initially unsure how long she would remain in the classroom. However, after her first year of teaching, Catherine hoped to remain in the profession long-term.

Annie was the only participant who viewed their time in teaching as something temporary. The largest and most significant goal for Annie involves serving in Congress. Thus, law school had always been part of that plan. She sought impactful work that would enable her to "still do policy." Annie was initially concerned not about her ability to teach, but whether her students would like her, instead viewing her as "young, attractive, and transient." Acknowledged here is the common conception of the TFA corps member that many participants raised: young,

idealistic, and in teaching temporarily, a stereotype echoed by other participants in the study. However, this temporary teaching timeline created a sense of security for Annie. She felt that she would not be held accountable for student growth data until year three of teaching, when she would have already departed. Though she considered continuing teaching beyond her two-year requirement, the desire to make "bigger impact," an "unhealthy work environment," and the minimal respect and financial stability teachers receive drove her out of the classroom. Despite different objectives for entering the profession, TFA had the capacity to unite and to address various, individualized aspirations to bring recruits into its fold. The power of TFA's messaging, selectivity, prestige, and network have assisted in its creation and maintenance of an alumni-based movement that begins in corps members' classrooms. In addition, the command of these elements continues to shape prospective corps members' decisions in entering teaching through TFA.

A Dichotomous Conception of Teaching

For the majority of participants, teaching philosophies erred toward ones of developing community-focused, care-centered classrooms bent on addressing educational inequity through relationship development beginning in the classroom. Nevertheless, both TFA-generated documents and participant interviews highlighted what could be considered a dichotomous understanding of teaching within TFA. The organization illustrates a dual conception of teaching, one that is both all-encompassing and technical. Straddling these extremes proved difficult and sometimes contradictory for participants. Though participants consistently thought of and described themselves as teachers—sometimes explicitly separating themselves from TFA—in some places, TFA explicitly refers to those joining and within the corps as "future leaders," or "instructional leaders" (Document #73, 2009 p. 1; Document #7, n.d. pp. 1-2).

Framing corps members as "leaders" speaks to the grandiose, all-encompassing nature of teaching, where the TFA teacher's educational change spans beyond their classroom. However, the amount of structure placed on participants during their preparation and throughout their two-year requirement illustrates a formulaic and technical conception of teaching. While teaching in and of itself begets significant responsibilities as part of the work, data in the interviews and in the documents continually emphasized two opposing points of the spectrum from which to understand both teaching and teachers. Therefore, both sections (the all-encompassing and the technical) appear underneath this umbrella of TFA's "dichotomous" teaching framework in order to illuminate the opposing spectrums that participants were expected to negotiate in their roles.

The All-Encompassing: Going "Above and Beyond"

Though the six principles were familiar to a few participants, Catherine remembers using TFA's Teaching as Leadership rubric throughout her summer institute for evaluative purposes. As mentioned, participants made efforts to "make students feel welcome," to take an interest in students' outside activities, and to "learn from [their students]," and viewed these measures as integral to developing relationships with their students and their school community. Participants highlighted these features as necessary in developing their student-centered teaching philosophies, and only framed their work as grandiose when coupled with the highly technical and structured aspects of their teaching that often seemed to lack a rationale, or negated these foundational pieces of their work as teachers in high-needs settings. In addition, participants couched these qualitative efforts within their current teaching placements and with their current students, rarely conceptualizing creating educational change for their students "beyond the school year" (Document #34, n.d. pp. 2-15).

Participants found it difficult to meet some of the all-encompassing aspects of their roles, especially as this related to better understanding the difficulties their students faced. These difficulties emerged through conflict between participants' own teaching philosophies and the realities faced in their teaching placements. Participants argued they were "not responsible" for students' "disparities," as Dominic stated. In addition, Annie asserted that her role did not involve serving as a "miracle worker." Other difficulties rationalizing the all-encompassing aspects of TFA teaching emerged through participants' lack of background knowledge regarding their schools and school communities. Catherine's original placement school was comprised almost exclusively of students who were immigrants; and certain cultural practices of this group called into question the safety of some students, particularly around the issue of child marriage. Though she and her colleagues "were reporting [legal issues] to the county," the school's administration got wind and released many of those teachers at the start of the following year, including Catherine. As mandated reporters, teachers in such situations are legally required to report issues of suspected abuse. However, Catherine's perception revealed that she and her colleagues and TFA staff were just "asking too many questions," posing a greater threat to the school's existence. Her attempts to address issues that spanned beyond her classroom in an effort to develop the all-encompassing pieces of her TFA teaching role were met with resistance as it related to school-based politics and cultural practices of the school-community population.

Because of participants' difficulties in conceptualizing students' needs and difficulties outside of school, their teaching experiences came into direct conflict with TFA's grandiose framing of teaching. TFA's Teaching as Leadership Rubric (Document #34, n.d.) illustrates this all-encompassing framing. Reiterations of going beyond particular limits in multiple rubric components in the "exemplary" category speak to this understanding of teaching. Examples

include beckoning corps members to think about "shap[ing] the larger school context," spanning influence "beyond the school year," and performing teacher actions "continuously" (Document #34, n.d. pp. 2-12). The "exemplary" rating illustrates a teacher willing and able to go beyond what is traditionally associated with classroom teaching (Document #32, 2010; Document #34, n.d.), as a means to create educational change visible within and beyond the individual teacher's classroom. The following language illustrates this all-encompassing conception of teaching:

> Initiates effective efforts to shape the larger school context…Ensures that students' **influencers are equipped** to invest and advocate for students **beyond this school year**…**performs action continuously**…Ensures that the time and/or resources acquired have a **sustained** impact **beyond the teacher's classroom, students and tenure** (emphasis in original) (Document #34, n.d. pp. 2-15).

Per the exemplary category of the rubric, TFA teachers are evaluated on their capacity to create lasting change "beyond" their time with their students *and* their students' guardians. In addition, TFA teachers are evaluated on their continuous performance of actions that range from student data analysis, to isolating and monitoring their own actions and practices, to identifying student behaviors—the "extent and root" of these behaviors—inhibiting students' achievement (Document #34, n.d. p.10). The degree of impact to which TFA teachers must aspire reflects a conception of teaching that reaches beyond the teacher's own classroom. It could be suggested that their efforts must go above and beyond a common conception of teaching in order to reach this level of educational impact.

Far-Reaching Responsibilities

All participants agreed that the demands placed on teachers are significant and numerous. In addition, they asserted that working in high-needs placements—especially under TFA—augments those responsibilities. Whether such a belief stemmed from TFA or from their direct experiences, participants' work in TFA-designated areas gave rise to such assertions. Depending

on participants' conception of teaching—whether it was bound to particular responsibilities—participants either embraced or challenged the all-encompassing notion. Participants listed the numerous roles they took on as not just teachers, but also as social workers, guardians, disciplinarians, and mentors. However, these responsibilities were not always embraced, but rather acknowledged as just part of the work. Dominic acknowledged his responsibility to "figure out kids' difficult lives" as a teacher/ mentor/ community pillar; he did not feel that addressing students' "disparities" was part of that responsibility. The differences in participants' approaches to their far-reaching responsibilities as teachers originated from their developing conceptions of teaching. Moreover, participants' approaches to these extensive responsibilities reflected their attitudes about what they felt was feasibly in their control as teachers.

Amidst these extensive responsibilities, only one participant discussed preserving opportunities for self-care as part of their two-year teaching experience. A few participants cited the lack of time for anything other than work, whether it be teaching, grading, planning, or an obligation related to their out-of-classroom responsibilities. Few if any discussions occurred during their institute or two-year teaching requirement around what the Teaching as Leadership rubric classifies as "sustain[ing] energy" (Document #34, n.d. p. 16) or around preserving and addressing self-care. The rubric encourages corps members to both "anticipate" when one may be "losing energy," in addition to "**consistently maintain the right balance…**to avoid losing energy required to reach goals" (emphasis in original) (p. 16). Moreover, participants did not recall discussions around strategies to address TFA's encouragement at "maintain[ing] the right balance" of energy to execute their work. The rubric suggests that it becomes the responsibility of the teacher to not only achieve learning goals "relentlessly" as the rubric principle exemplifies (p. 15), but to also not lose energy while working to increase student achievement.

Catherine, an avid athlete, sought both physical and performative outlets "in order not to lose it" while in TFA. Though this partially contributed to a sense of isolation for her, the "social pressure system" of "always doing TFA" threatened her ability to see herself as a "regular" person. Through improv and fitness, she gained a space from the "forced community" of TFA. Despite her efforts at preserving her physical, mental, and emotional stability, Catherine witnessed the physical effects that came with teaching in a stressful environment during her third year of teaching. She remembers her "suicidal thoughts, extreme jaw clenching," "… my hair was falling out." She contacted her very first program director for advice: "my PD said 'you need to figure out a way to work through it,' but I disagreed." Catherine admits her strong and committed work ethic "is not good for my boundaries." Her experience illustrates the pressure to meet such extensive responsibilities and the toll it can take on one's physical and mental states. However, Catherine's pursuit of social outlets outside of TFA as a means of self-care represents the only participant anecdote that illustrates this effort toward work-life balance, in light of the extensive responsibilities of teaching under TFA.

The "Locus of Control"

In addressing the all-encompassing responsibilities of a TFA teacher, participants were also encouraged to expand their conception of what they were able to influence, or to expand their "locus of control." Despite this encouragement, participants rarely exhibited concerns outside developing their own practice and sustaining a functioning classroom. Expanding one's locus of control involves a shift in perspective around what participants believed they could control as teachers, whether these factors existed within our outside their classrooms. It allowed for participants to conceive of their impact beyond their own classrooms, encouraging participants' efforts beyond traditional duties associated with teaching. However, participants

and TFA-related documents did not explicitly convey what "traditional duties" are associated with teaching. Per the Teaching as Leadership rubric: the exemplary corps member "**widens circle of what is in his/her control to target** challenges that hold students back from meeting classroom goals" (emphasis in original) (Document #34, n.d. p. 15). Jennifer's conception of one's locus of control suggests the following:

> …It was just like what's in your control, like things out of your control and things in your control. Maybe they used it, I can't remember exactly, but maybe they used it in like, you can't solve poverty but like, what can I do, to help my kids? (Jennifer, 2010-2012).

It was unclear whether any other participants apart from Jennifer received the same distinction between issues one could control, and issues one could not. Despite Jennifer's belief around TFA's locus of control, TFA literature suggests a contradictory conceptualization of one's locus of control. TFA also encourages corps members to "relentlessly attack" challenges that arise in an effort to control their outcomes, but also to "avoid obsessing" over those outside one's control (Document #29, n.d. p. 2). However, the challenges to attack and to avoid obsessing about are open to interpretation. Documented instances showcasing the expansion of one's control involve corps members driving students home, or instituting home visit practices (Document #32, 2010 p. 65), potentially in an effort to encourage families' investment in their student's education and expand their control to targeting social factors outside the classroom (Document #34, n.d.). The encouragement in framing teaching as encompassing far-reaching responsibilities that require an expanded locus of control may suggest an effort to better address the achievement gap.

Closing the "Achievement Gap" and Addressing "Soft Bigotry…"

Upon entering their classrooms, the majority of participants allowed the concept of the achievement gap to initially ground their understanding of successful teaching. However, some

participants later found the idea of closing the achievement gap to be both "unrealistic" and an "unwinnable fight" requiring "shifting reality" toward more small-scale, classroom-focused educational change. The achievement gap exposes the difference in achievement between affluent and non-affluent students measured through student test data (Document #32, 2010). In addition, the achievement gap endeavors to equate the gap in educational achievement with social and economic gaps, framing rigorous education as the principle vehicle by which to address the achievement gap, as a means to increase students' social mobility (Document #32, 2010). It is suggested that education has the capacity to eradicate poverty, advocating that teachers and schools are on the front lines of this fight, responsible for students' upward social mobility. This belief is evidenced in the Teaching as Leadership rubric specifically, where teachers are to equate high marks in the exemplary rubric category with the capacity to "open doors" for students or "change the course of [students'] life paths" through their teaching practices (Document #34, n.d. pp. 1-16), a caveat described as "essential to the ultimate success of our movement" (Document #36, n.d. p. 3). From here, TFA establishes a connection between education and economic prosperity, with education framed as a force toward students' upward mobility. Teacher-corps members serve as the figures tasked with ensuring this social mobility to close the achievement gap that stems from consistently high learning expectations.

Jane remembers seeing a power point presentation at the beginning of her corps years that explained to her the achievement gap and its implications on urban and rural students across the country. When asked whether TFA—or the power point presentation—gave a specific reason as to why the gap existed, she could not recall one exact reason but rather "a number of factors." TFA also encouraged Jane and her fellow corps members to show their students the power point presentation at the beginning of the school year, which Jane did for her first and second years of

teaching. The objective in showing the power point to students was to be "motivational." She remembers her students were "upset" that "their numbers [for graduation] were the lowest," but nonetheless like her, found it to be a "powerful" presentation. Jane deemed it necessary and worthwhile to expose her students to what she believed was a real issue existing in education and student achievement.

Dominic remembers a few conversations during his summer institute around what corps members must guard against in order to close the achievement gap: the "soft bigotry of low expectations" (Document #36, n.d. p. 4). This phrase originated from one of George W. Bush's speeches on education policy in the late 1990s, in an effort to boost confidence in what would become the No Child Left Behind law (Bush, 1999 September 03). The "bigotry" stems from a lower set of learning and teaching expectations for non-affluent populations. In TFA's view, low expectations have helped to perpetuate the achievement gap (Document #32, 2010, p. 22), though this is not listed as the initial cause. Thus, it became especially important for emerging TFA teachers to consistently demonstrate high expectations, even in the face of school-based policies or national narratives that might denote low achievement of non-affluent populations (Document #32, 2010). Framing low expectations within the context of social bigotry beckons idealists to reject these notions and exercise their continued efforts in establishing high learning expectations in order to address the achievement gap.

"Closing the achievement gap" had become a trademark phrase of TFA's in order to better illustrate its mission and to speak to those who found educational inequity a cause worth addressing (Document #32, 2010 p. 5). Nevertheless, most participants found the mission, most poignantly the idea of the achievement gap, to be unrealistic. Jennifer describes her stance as being a "realist" about the mission, arguing that teaching is "failing every day," where making

the kind of radical change that TFA desires seems out of reach. In the same way, both Dominic and Catherine had to shift their "reality" around what it meant to offer and create educational change. "I can't change them in a year," Catherine stated, "I was a drop in the bucket" for students. Dominic and Annie echoed this sentiment, describing endeavors to close the achievement gap as an "unwinnable fight" or "too large" of a fight to achieve. "My job is not to be a miracle worker," Annie argued. Despite the mission's ability to originally resonate with participants upon their entrance into TFA, most quickly realized that such a "fight" to "end educational inequity" did not square with their experiences as classroom teachers, negating the capacity to create impact "far beyond" their classrooms (Document #32, 2010 pp. 5-197).

The Technical: Data, Structured Teaching, and Efficiency

In addition to an all-encompassing conception of teaching, TFA's understanding of teaching is also formulaic. Participants noted—and sometimes criticized—the lengths to which their duties or teaching practices were controlled during their two-year teaching experience. The extent to which participants adopted practices set forth by TFA varied. Participants cited aspects of TFA's understanding of student learning, incorporating and tracking student achievement data, prescribed classroom and teaching structures, and messaging regarding a teacher's role as evidence of a structured, technical conception of teaching.

80% Mastery and Extrinsic Rewards

Participants cited TFA's "80% mastery" of skills as a benchmark to which they should aim when assessing students' learning (Document #72, n.d.). TFA's methodical understanding of teaching involves a technical and extrinsically-motivated vision for student learning. TFA defines teachers' success "in terms of how much their students learn" where student learning is something that is "measurable" (Document #32, 2010 p. 2). Those who cited TFA's 80%

mastery benchmark were unsure as to its origin, speculating that TFA may have crafted the figure on their own. Jane conceptualized the 80% rule as "students [understanding] 80% of the material." Catherine recalls even receiving "a bonus" for reaching this benchmark, something she believed to be "pretty common" among her corps. Reaching this threshold for student learning designated the teacher-corps member as a successful or effective teacher by TFA's standards.

In addition to the 80% benchmark, Jane and Dominic also instituted a rewards system as a means to motivate students, both academically and behaviorally, in an effort to reach the 80% mastery mark. Both Dominic and Jane struggled with classroom management at the beginning of their first year, and both sought the support of their program directors or MTLDs, who encouraged taking these steps toward instituting an extrinsic rewards system. Dominic noted that the general belief maintained that students lacked buy-in and toward and value in school. "Making progress transparent" (Document #32, 2010 p. 89) establishes what TFA values as a "culture of achievement" and efforts to create incentives to perform academically. Each participant received advice on how to implement a "ticket system" in their classrooms that each culminated in rewards. For Jane, the ticket system was "like magic," and turned her classroom around to where students "looked forward to the weekly drawing" for which they had compiled their tickets. She relied on this ticketing system as a means to establish student buy-in, but also to maintain a sense of order in her classroom.

However, Dominic's experience starkly contrasted Jane's. At the encouragement of his program director, Dominic attempted to implement a "rather complicated" rewards system as a means to curtail behavior issues in his classroom: "…I guess [it] had worked in his classroom uh like sorta to track behavior and put kids on teams or something to sort of incentivize them."

Ultimately, Dominic found the system to be "cumbersome," but also not aligned with his teaching practice. "I walked around with a clipboard all class," he stated. Seen through two participants' experiences, the efforts to "incentivize" students as a means to create a "culture of achievement" also endeavors to control student behavior through extrinsic motivators. TFA's 80% mastery benchmark and extrinsic motivators for students illustrate a technical conception of student learning. This technical approach to learning gave way to factors that exemplified a technical approach to measuring student learning and curtailing student behavior.

Data-Driven Teaching Pedagogy

A clear responsibility of TFA teachers involved measuring and tracking student achievement data as a means to evaluate student learning and one's own teaching practice. Reactions to data tracking ranged from Dominic's view of "increasingly cynical," to Jane's feeling of a "cumbersome" process. Like Jennifer, most participants felt they were being "hounded" for data in their first year especially. According to TFA, "administering, tracking and analyzing formative assessment data is a vital part of excellent instruction (Document #5, n.d. p. 1). In most sessions between participants and their advisors, during which program directors or MTLDs came to observe participants, the conversations seemed to often shift toward updating and uploading data "trackers." Facing pushback from her administration and her MTLD, Annie took a stance and refused to incorporate it into her classroom, citing time constraints of her role to craft, plan, and execute curricula on a quarterly basis, rather than a semester-long calendar. Jane found the manual tracking and uploading to be a "cumbersome" process and "a lot of work." Though in her experience, she was unsure sure whether "[corps members] could be anti-data," and connected this necessity for corps members' student achievement data to TFA's own goals as an organization:

> I think it was a way for them to kind of oversee how effective TFA was in the region, because they're all, TFA has to fundraise…so in order to present like a grant for somebody I think you have to have data to back it up with so that's why it was so crucial that in the field, the teachers were able to provide them data to use to um, you know, get more funding in the future (Jane, 2012-2014).

Jane's assertion illustrates an important potential reason for why first-year corps members felt "hounded" with requests for student achievement data. She suggests that the desire for corps members' data rested in TFA's need for fundraising power in individual regions. This assertion may also speak to the extensive literature around comparisons between first-year TFA teachers and university-educated first-year teachers (see Cochran-Smith & Villegas, 2016; Heilig, Cole, & Springel, 2011). However, most participants noted that TFA "backed off" their second year in regards to these requests for data, potentially endeavoring to showcase student achievement gains of first-year corps members in comparison to other first-year teachers not affiliated with TFA.

Participants revealed that TFA's dependence on data driven teaching pedagogy also emerged in their Saturday professional development sessions. Portions of these sessions became data "displays," where corps members offering what were suggested to be exemplary examples of data trackers presented these to fellow corps members. The data "displays" that would occur during the required Saturday professional development sessions augmented participants' negative reactions to using data in their classrooms and encouraged feelings of inter-corps competition. What Catherine referred to as "pissing contests," these sessions provided a platform from which to showcase a particular teacher-corps member who had implemented student data tracking, where the attractiveness of the data tracker or the success of the corps member in this context became the focus:

> We'd do check ins, people were always sharing these amazing things or that you felt really good about, but never talked about how we were all battling physical and

emotional problems, or the issues of being overworked and over tired, never talked about growth areas or personal failures…" (Catherine, 2009-2011).

As Catherine states, the professional development sessions' data displays were times in which corps members were to celebrate others' gains in student achievement, rather than to troubleshoot or address issues within their individual classrooms. Concealing failures in favor of presenting a positive façade of classroom success also characterized Dominic's experience with Saturday data displays part of the Saturday professional development sessions. For Dominic and his housemates, they questioned whether the data such model corps members revealed at their sessions was genuine or fudged. "Data became a story to be shaped," he said. Though the majority of participants made efforts to incorporate data into their practice, it was met with a predominantly negative outlook as a result of its time-consuming nature and the corps member competition it produced.

Few participants gave indication that a teacher's role involved the *numeric* measurement of student learning first and foremost. Unless designated as a required facet of their role in their school or within TFA specifically, most participants opted to discuss learning activities that were more school community-centered than ones measured quantitatively. Though some participants spoke of their use of data in the classroom—some more than others—no participant argued for a teacher's execution of data in the classroom unless specifically directed by either their school or by TFA. Most participants acknowledged that they were required to keep and track student achievement data, but most did so somewhat begrudgingly. Most participants—like Annie, who made an effort to meet students and parents at events *outside* of school—gave data a secondary role in grounding their teaching. When asked about a teacher's role in student learning, all participants suggested that student learning was something that should be practical and relevant and grounded in students' realities.

Formulaic Teaching

Some participants felt challenged in their initial conceptions of teaching, expecting

preparation for teaching in their individual teaching communities. This was particularly true for

Dominic. In keeping with technical conceptions of student learning, and the dependence upon

student data as a means to evaluate both students and teacher-corps members, these facets added

to what some participants found to be "one-size-fits-all," formulaic framework for teaching.

Dominic chastised what felt like a prescribed teaching formula they encountered upon arriving at

his summer institutes. He specifically noted the language presented at institute as indicative of

both a "corporate" and highly specific vision for teaching:

> … Uh sort of showing up and being like wow! So much of the language is… just very
> corporate and, and, and being sort of like being taken aback… there was a lot of talk
> about results there was a lot of making, making nouns verbs like "tasking" people with
> things and uh just sort of like "results-gathering" and there was all this talk about um, I
> don't know it just seemed sort of like one-size-fits-all I guess which was kind of, which
> was sort of a warning shot for me I guess (Dominic, 2009-2010).

Dominic later argued that not only was a "one-size-fits-all" conception of teaching and learning

communicated to him, but he also found such language to be indicative of a "corporate,

disarming" view of the teaching profession more broadly. It was at this point Dominic felt a

"warning shot" to indicate his philosophy of teaching, "did not square" with that of TFA's.

Though Jane suggested that one's PD or MTLD might dictate how an emerging teacher

might understand good teaching, where "feedback… was tied to what they think a good

classroom should look like," she also highlighted a specified structure to teaching under TFA.

Jane compared what she learned from TFA to "a cooking class," where TFA provided a specific

structure for classroom setup, how to collect student data, and how to assess students. Similarly,

Catherine highlighted TFA's prioritization of "results and results-based learning," where "a set

of models" champions a right way to teach. However, over time, this no longer aligned with her

understanding of teaching. "At the time I thought there was [one right way]… But in my 3rd year when I was struggling and there were teachers that weren't, I was like there's 100 ways to skin a cat." Though some participants acknowledged that one's coach throughout the year might influence teaching practices, testimonies also exposed the particular structure for teachers and their classrooms.

The Importance of "Efficiency"

A few participants discussed classroom and teaching structures, such as TFA's required classroom setup as a means to establish classroom order and purpose. These structures included a board setup and a posted display of student data tracking. Jane recalled a particular room setup asked for by TFA including a board setup with a classroom objective and publicly posting student achievement data. TFA's adherence to an easily replicated teaching formula illustrates both a technical understanding of teaching and a value in teaching, learning, and classroom efficiency. Jane suggested that TFA encourages "all minutes to be purposeful" in a class, where transitions between activities matter in the grand scheme of learning time throughout the day. Within these transitions are procedures and highly structured routines that might ensure that all moments have a purpose toward learning (Document #34, n.d.).

However, no participant discussed structures that TFA placed on the teacher as a classroom figure, only Catherine noting that her preparation put "too much" emphasis on the teacher as the central figure in the class. Many of the TFA documents push corps members to anticipate potential conflicts that may arise in their classrooms and to seek out subsequent solutions to those potential problems. Anticipating hypothetical solution stems from a sense of "urgency" that TFA asks its corps members to embody when planning and executing their lessons, and taking responsibility for their roles in their classrooms (Document #4, n.d. p. 7). It is

suggested that this sense of urgency would increase the efficiency and effectiveness of a classroom and its teacher's pedagogy (Document #34, n.d.). TFA advocates for an increased teacher control of their classroom in order to increase classroom efficiency. For example, teachers are asked to "address most foreseeable needs…likely to deter most students from misbehavior" in order to "maximize" the amount of instructional time (Document #6, n.d. p. 2). By addressing a "core" set of "inefficiencies" (p. 2) in the functioning order of the classroom, teacher-corps members are to assume that students will not only comply with this order, but learning and student achievement will grow and be "maximized." Corps members are encouraged to embody a sense of urgency in increasing student achievement through deterring misbehavior and creating efficiently running classrooms.

Jane took matters into her own hands in terms of controlling classroom and teacher variables to increase class efficiency by scripting some her lessons. She adopted this practice so as not to lose track and make all moments in a class period "purposeful" (see Document #9, n.d. p. 3). Other participants did not discuss scripting their lessons. In TFA's documents, controlling "teacher actions" and "isolate[ing]" their own behaviors assists in controlling all possible variables that might inhibit an efficient, orderly classroom (Document #34, n.d. p. 13). Documents frame teacher actions as precursors to student actions; where words such as "ensure" and the use of adverbs to dictate how and the degree to which a teacher-corps member must perform an action in order to maintain an orderly classroom and increase student achievement (Document #15, n.d. p. 1). Some documents illustrated possible opportunities to practice and rehearse lessons during sessions with other corps members in order to gain feedback on where to "improve execution" (Document #51, n.d. p. 1). However, participants did not specify whether they were given these opportunities outside of their institute teaching in corps member teams.

These structures encourage teacher-corps members to not only be reflective of their practice, but to reflect on what must be controlled and changed about their practice in order to increase student achievement.

However, these overarching, teacher-focused structures were not always met with embrace. Catherine took particular issue with TFA's dependence upon teacher-led change and the amount of responsibility and need for control placed upon one figure. For her, the teacher is just "one piece of the puzzle." TFA's message that teachers were the change-makers "didn't resonate after a while. There was too much focus on the teacher and not enough on students being independent of the teacher. A lot of TFA teaching is very focused: the teacher is the leader of the room." Catherine acknowledged her skills as a facilitator, working to encompass multiple perspectives to create the "best possible solution." She recalled her TFA in-person interview, where she took on the facilitator role when interacting with other applicants as a hypothetical school team. Jennifer argued that she "was moldable" as an emerging teacher, citing her school coach's applicable feedback. In addition, she prioritized "making every student feel welcome" in her classroom, adhering to a student-centered pedagogy she had developed in her first few years of teaching before TFA. Though no participant recalled specific, TFA-communicated teacher structures, TFA documents exhibit a particular way for teachers to envision their role within their classrooms.

Participants found it difficult to rationalize the extensive demands and responsibilities that were part of their teaching roles with TFA, especially in conjunction with the measurement and highly structured evaluations of themselves and their students' learning. TFA's conception of both an all-encompassing and technical teaching vision was often at odds with participants' initial and developing teaching visions. Though some adhered to particular structures TFA put in

place, some of these efforts were done with distaste or underlying questions of the action's purpose or meaning. Despite TFA's presence as a national organization, participants also found themselves—at times with difficulty—attempting to address their school communities in light of their varied teacher preparation.

Varied Levels of Preparation

The extent to which participants felt they were prepared for their teaching experiences was region-specific and highly varied. It became apparent that participants' experiences, though structured similarly through TFA, were quite different in relationship to contexts, support systems, and content and pedagogical training. These pieces illuminated factors that significantly contributed to how participants approached their roles as teachers, and whether they felt successful and supported in those roles and in their developing teaching philosophies and practices. Participants' institute experiences, the level of contextual knowledge regarding regions and student demographics, and the levels of support received from TFA staff and school-based staff all contributed to participants' successes—or setbacks—in their teaching roles.

The Institute Experience

Each participant relayed the details of their institute experience. Institute, or what many participants referred to as "boot camp," is a trademark of the TFA corps member preparation experience. TFA institutes are held regionally, where particular regions from across the country meet in a specified, central location for five to eight weeks. However, before arriving at institute, corps members circulate through TFA-sponsored interviews with schools in their regions. For participants in this study, these interviews were on the phone, while others were in person. Those interviews conducted in person were similar to "speed-dating," and determined where corps members will be placed when they arrive in regions after their institute. Most corps members—

and this was the case for all participants in this study—receive their assigned school placement during institute, while other corps members could sometimes go until days before the year starts—or later—without knowing where they will be teaching.

During institute, corps members stay on contracted college campuses in the college dorm rooms. The length of institutes varied between participants in this study. Most participants spent five weeks at institute: one week of preparation, and four weeks of teaching. These weeks did not include a one-week "induction" period in one's placement region. This weeklong period preceded institute. Upon arriving at institute, most participants taught in either a pair or in a team of teachers as part of their summer school teaching requirement, where an individual corps member's teaching time lasted anywhere from one to two hours per day. Participants' teaching teammates, in addition to their CMAs—or corps member advisors—were also in the room as each corps member taught their portion of the day. CMAs were not participants' regional MTLDs or program directors, but rather other TFA staff members meant to oversee participants during institute exclusively. Finally, FAs, or faculty advisors—the teachers-of-record in charge of the summer school classroom—were in the classrooms as well, while participants were teaching. Participants acknowledged that the FAs held a relatively minimal presence and rarely offered coaching. Whether FAs were instructed or chose not to offer coaching was unclear, suggesting a muted veteran teacher presence as part of TFA's preparation model.

Participants found the "brief student teaching" experience of institute to be helpful, but unrealistic in terms of what they would face as teachers-of-record. The classes in which participants taught consisted of less than ten students, with most classrooms hovering around 5-7 students. Thus, there were just as many adults as students in institute classrooms as students, if not more in some cases. Participants criticized the "unrealistic" teaching experience at institute,

where the small class sizes served as one glaring piece in this experience. In addition, participants criticized the brevity of their daily teaching assignments. Despite these criticisms, the majority of participants struggled with the demands of institute coupled with the minimal coaching and preparation they received.

Though Jennifer found institute relatively easy, citing her previous teaching experience and lesson planning experience from four years of undergraduate studies and from two years of formal classroom teaching, the majority of participants found institute quite difficult. Catherine, Annie, and Jane noted the long days required of corps members during institute. Catherine argued institute was "harder than teaching," where corps members are "isolated so [they're] so focused" on teaching and TFA. Jane admits, "There were definitely no slackers" at institute, noting the degree to which fellow corps members were working and planning their lessons. She recalls the workroom at her dorm room open at all hours of the day and evening, and always occupied with corps members. Participants spent little if any time doing anything other than either sleeping or working, whether the latter meant lesson planning, teaching (most summer school happened in the morning), or attending TFA-led sessions in the afternoons. Evenings were spent planning for the next day, which often required creating new materials, activities, or power points from scratch. The general consensus was that institute was an overall difficult, and for some, a negative experience. The majority of participants felt ill prepared for the amount of work that characterized institute, and had to learn quickly how to negotiate condensed instruction around pedagogy, and for some, content as well.

Content and Pedagogy at Institute

Participants were hazy on what documentation they received during institute as part of their teacher preparation. Thus, despite the plethora of documents I had received to gain a better

sense of participants' second-era training, I can only speculate from the interview data what documents and document data were circulated among participants at their individual institute and regional placement sites. Some received "excerpts" of Doug Lemov's *Teach Like a Champion*, which contains classroom management and teacher strategies that highlight order and efficiency in teacher pedagogy and classrooms, or *Assertive Discipline* by Lee Canter, a pre-Lemov education text with similar undertones and strategies. Both texts advocate for highly structured classrooms grounded in teacher authority and student compliance (see Documents #42, n.d. and #46, 2010). Others, like Dominic, remember some lesson plan templates and content-focused teaching strategies. The latter was especially problematic for Dominic, who had been placed in middle school Social Studies during his institute, but would be teaching high school Math in the fall, and for Annie, who experienced the reverse scenario.

A philosophy major in college, Dominic hoped to gain a placement as a high school English teacher. However, because he'd studied "the philosophy of Math and logic" in college, he decided to execute a Math lesson for his TFA interview. As a result, Dominic was placed in high school Math. "I wasn't sure I even had enough math on my college transcripts" to teach the subject, he mentioned. However, when he arrived at institute, he was assigned a middle school Social Studies. After pressing the staff that he "needed specific skills" to teach high school Math, the staff insisted that "no, no you do!" have the right placement. He realized that "the institute staff didn't really care" about what he deemed was an "incorrect" summer teaching placement, which he found to be problematic:

> I kind of look back on that statement like 'oh yeah, if you, you know, if you've like, that you can sort of just walk into a classroom if you're the cream of the crop or whatever' uh I kinda look back at that and I think it's sort of arrogant in a way, I think that um, teachers work hard and train hard cause their JOB is hard… like a few teaching skills, a few basic principles, but like you're the cream of the crop you'll figure it out, and I don't

think that that's true and I don't think that's particularly respectful to the teaching profession (Dominic, 2009-2010).

His argument that such an idea is "arrogant" stems from his belief that because teaching is an "intense" job, the training should thus match the intensity of the work. He suggests that within that intensity of training are "specific skills" required to teach a particular subject. As a result, he found the premise that "a few basic skills" would produce successful teachers to be "disrespectful," as it negates the difficulty of teaching and the training required to be successful in the profession. He felt minimally prepared for his role as a high school Math teacher, where his institute teaching experience contributed to that feeling.

Annie had always "loved History more than humans." To her dismay, she received an institute teaching placement teaching high school Math. "It's a universal truth that institute is awful," she stated. Annie admitted to almost "quitting TFA completely" during her institute experience. Math was not a subject she had previously enjoyed, so she admitted she coped with "wine and crying," and through her fellow corps members' encouragement that they would eventually be teaching what they loved in their respective regions. Looking back on her institute experience, Annie also wished she had received "literacy pedagogy" to teach a student how to read. She felt unprepared to address students' reading levels amidst the difficult historical texts she was teaching in her placement. However, with the help of her MTLD, she learned a few strategies that allowed for a more guided approach to teaching these texts and enhancing student understanding of difficult material.

Jennifer received an extra week of institute as a result of TFA's oversight in planning for her region's first Special Education cohort. A fellow corps member alerted TFA staff that none of them, listed to teach Special Education in the fall, knew anything about IEPs, or Individualized Education Plans, for Special Education students. From here, TFA threw together a

"makeshift IEP session," where corps members were given large packets that feasibly contained the required information on how to write and execute IEPs and their subsequent meetings. However, Jennifer remembers she never "actually held an IEP" during institute; and most corps members found themselves relying on the case managers at their individual schools to help them write IEPs for students. In addition, TFA had also forgotten to plan for extra observation hours required for corps members placed in Special Education in order to obtain their certifications. During this extra institute period, Jennifer and others were required to observe high school Special Education classrooms in order to remain in compliance and on track to receive their teaching licenses, yet they did not. Though she and her fellow corps members participated in the required pieces for their extra institute week, from Jennifer's standpoint, all felt unprepared to tackle the responsibilities of teaching Special Education. Most participants found it difficult to negotiate content and pedagogical strategies during institute, with some receiving no teaching preparation experience in their content areas before becoming teachers-of-record. The lack of contextual knowledge the majority of participants received added to their preparation difficulties.

The Absence of Contextual Knowledge

By and large, corps members felt unprepared for what Dominic characterized as the "sociopolitical" aspects of teaching. Challenges ranged from bureaucratic structures to changes in student demographics, the latter that a few participants acknowledged had required a shift in teaching style and strategy. In some way, each participant acknowledged that context directly impacts one's teaching style, and what "good" teaching might look like. Jennifer acknowledged that TFA did provide some contextual details that allowed her to better understand her highly transient student population, a stark difference from her previous teaching experience. However, some participants criticized TFA's approach to formulaic teaching that takes context out of the

equation, missing an integral piece of the fluidity of successful teaching relative to communities and their diverse needs. The majority of participants' program directors and MTLDs held minimal knowledge of participants' regional placements. This included minimal knowledge of the demographic of students that participants would be teaching. As a result, most participants faced challenges either during or immediately after their TFA placements where such cultural, pedagogical, or bureaucratic adjustments would need to be made in order to sustain their careers in teaching.

Though both Catherine and Jane finished their two-year requirements, it was their third year of teaching that tested their preparation for the profession and their understanding of pedagogical adjustments to fit teaching contexts. Both participants found it difficult to adjust their teaching to fit different student populations, as their preparation through TFA exemplified a teaching framework meant to be spread around the country, with the intent on applying it to multiple locales. Catherine's teaching experiences had been in immigrant and highly diverse placements, respectively. "Trust[ing] the white teacher" enabled her to feel less like an outsider and to establish herself within her school placements with a sense of ownership and authority. However, her second year position was temporary, and she "wanted her own classroom" again. She had been hired her third year at what was the "last ditch effort for kids," and a school that was almost exclusively comprised of African American students. She quickly noted the racial dynamics present in her school: "everyone in positions of power was white," the administration and teachers were white, while security guards and aides were African American. As her administration took to establishing friendships with students, Catherine felt her influence and her authority start to diminish within her school and acknowledged the lack of discipline policies and structures. The lack of structure disabled her from feeling supported and successful. The physical

toll this took on her forced her to question her role as a teacher, ultimately resulting in her leaving the profession. Catherine felt neither prepared for the "bureaucracy" of teaching, nor prepared to understand how to adjust her teaching style for different student populations.

Jane taught in a predominantly Latinx environment for her TFA teaching experience, but moved to a city and began her third year of teaching in a school comprised of predominantly students who were African American. She experienced what she considered a "culture shock," faced with overwhelming poverty and complicated racial dynamics that spanned across the city. These dynamics took hold in her school and impacted her teaching, where she realized that her "authoritative" teaching style developed during TFA did not work with the students in her new school. She felt she was unable to make connections with students that allowed for what she perceived to be a functioning classroom. Jane noted the meaning of "being poor" in her new city shifted with its addition of violence, where "being poor" meant one could count on neither safety, nor the capacity to "provide for one's family." These local elements weighed on her ability to teach, as she acknowledged that poverty and environmental instability had a significant impact on classroom learning. Moreover, her "militant" administration and their similar discipline policies for both students and teachers forced her to question her original passion for teaching. Though she remained for her entire third year, she knew within the first few months that she would not stay beyond the year. Jane did not feel prepared to address a different student demographic through her existing teaching style, and struggled with the school politics set forth by her new administration. Her prior preparation did not prepare her to understand how to make these adjustments.

Dominic was one of a few other corps members new to his county. In addition, TFA had never partnered with Dominic's school before, so the corps member presence in his school was

new as well. At the suggestion of TFA, he and his fellow corps members took it upon themselves to meet with the local rotary club, as their director indicated those in the town may be "curious about what we're doing." Apparently though, they were not supposed to have done this, which Dominic phrased as "some local politics that we weren't aware of." To his belief, the rotary club, comprised mostly of white men, may have been "more involved with the academy" in the area. The academy was a private, mostly white school that illustrated the evident de facto segregation in Dominic's teaching community. "You don't go where you're not wanted," as one of Dominic's students stated. When asked whether TFA discussed the issue of segregation in his placement area, Dominic recalled that most information given around the area's historical context were "sidebar conversations," where the more apparent focus rested in just preparing teachers to get into their classrooms and teach. In Dominic's view, despite hopes of serving as TFA-community ambassadors, neither the corps members, nor TFA, seemed to be aware of "local politics" of the county. The minimal contextual information participants received— coupled with the varied support systems in place—also came to shape participants' TFA placements.

The TFA Placement Experience

Individual participants' placements and the support systems within them varied. Both TFA staff and school administration played roles in the extent to which participants felt prepared for and supported in their teaching roles. However, the ongoing Saturday professional development sessions led by TFA were non-factors in the development of participants' teaching practices, viewed instead as blocks of time better spent planning or engaging in other activities. For the majority of participants, these sessions encouraged "drinking the [TFA] Kool-Aid," and were not significant sources of pedagogical instruction geared toward developing teaching

practices. Instead, participants found these sessions to be inapplicable to their teaching practice, amounting to little support in growing participants' teaching practices and identities. In addition, some participants felt varying degrees of connection to their schools, to TFA and TFA staff, and to other corps members as a result of the amount of support they received in their growth as teachers.

Saturday Professional Development Sessions

By and large, participants found the required Saturday professional development sessions to be ranging from "helpful-ish" to wasted time. Though Saturday professional development sessions were required, Annie "skipped most PD sessions," arguing she was a district employee, and that she lived too far from where TFA's professional development sessions were held. She also desired more content-focused professional development sessions that may have been offered by her district, instead of "a new way to talk about race" that often happened at TFA professional development sessions. The majority of participants found these sessions grounded in forced TFA ideologies, where TFA implicitly beckoned corps members to "drink the Kool-Aid" as some participants characterized. The "lofty liberal ed. stuff and morale boosters" for Annie were not enough for her to attend any other sessions than two explicitly-required Saturday professional development sessions. Catherine pointed to the inter-corps competition emergent from these sessions, characterizing these as "pissing contests" that encouraged "suppressing failures" and devoid of open dialogue regarding points of growth.

Jennifer, Dominic, and Jane held similar feelings to the Saturday professional development sessions. Jennifer attended most sessions "to show my face," she said. She "half paid attention" but did not recall learning anything "earth-shattering" that would readily contribute to her practice. She does, like Annie, remember the morale boosters that also were

part of the institute experience. Jane attended the professional development sessions, but felt as though she could have spent her time grading, lesson planning, or having just a few hours to herself, which she noted were few and far between. In addition, she reflected on the minimal opportunities to self-select particular sessions, which she felt would have more effectively contributed to her individual practice and could have freed up more of her time.

Similar to Annie's region, Dominic's placement region was also "pretty spread out." Therefore, in order to attend the professional development sessions as a contracted-out university space, he had to drive a few hours. In making the trek with his TFA housemates, they found themselves feeling "disconnected" from TFA and more a "part of the county" in which they worked. In addition, Dominic cited the "very diverse teaching experiences" for those in his region that were not addressed in their professional development sessions, which instead reflected a more generalized scope of teacher preparation. He found some content sessions "helpful-ish;" but these did not readily contribute to his teaching practice and instead enhanced the disconnect he and his housemates felt between themselves and TFA. For most participants, establishing a connection between themselves and their school and school staff seemed more accessible and applicable. The mixed support from program directors and MTLDs augmented this effort toward maintaining school connections over TFA connections.

The Role of MTLDs/PDs

Participants had mixed experiences with their PDs and MTLDs. For Jennifer, Catherine, Jane, their PDs or MTLDs changed from their first year to their second. This either created an enhanced support system, allowing for more alignment in teaching practices and improved coaching, or a more negative experience in which the second MTLD or PD was less helpful or experienced than the first, causing the participant to challenge or reject the coaching and

feedback—sometimes distancing themselves from TFA more broadly. For the majority of participants, the coaching experience between them and their TFA advisor either positively or negatively shaped the extent to which they were coached and prepared for their teaching experiences at their schools.

Jennifer received two coaches during her time in TFA: one from TFA, and one that was from the organization that managed her placement school. She acknowledges, "they coached me very differently," criticizing the more "generalized" feedback she received from her MTLD, and celebrating the more "realistic" feedback she received from the school coach. She noted that her school's coach consistently gave feedback to "grow her practice" including strategies she could "use the next day." She appreciated her school coach's extensive teaching experience in the classroom as well. However, her MTLDs—both first and second year MTLDs—had minimal teaching experience and thus offered little help in coaching. Most conversations with her first MTLD revolved around data or "vision" related questions and rarely pertained to her teaching practice. Jennifer remembers that her second MTLD had no experience with Special Education, and often would use Jennifer to teach other corps members how to write IEPs. Jennifer admits she might not have been "the most agreeable corps member," but criticized her TFA coaches for what she believed was an assumption that she was not "moldable." In fact, she argues, her school coach helped mold her into a better teacher, and eventually into a teacher coach at that very school after transitioning out of the classroom. As a result of what she perceived to be ineffective coaching and experience from TFA, Jennifer made a more conscious effort in establishing connections with her school and her school-based coach.

Catherine had difficult experiences with both her first and second year PDs. Neither offered consistent support. Upon learning she had missed a piece of paperwork at her first school

resulting in her release, her PD encouraged her to "move on" and worked to find a different placement for her. She recalled that her PD had actually known she would be released in advance, but did not tell her. To make the situation more difficult, Catherine asserts she and a few of her colleagues, who had also been released, were dismissed for "asking too many questions," suggesting the decision to fire her was personally rather than professionally-motivated. She admits only having "some say" in her second job that TFA found as a replacement. Her "cocky" PD she received during her second year was "so unsupportive" that she felt increasingly isolated and distrustful of TFA's once strong investment in her as a corps member and teacher. "They got a job to shut me up," she remembers, "and stopped caring about what I was doing." Though she did reach out to her first PD during difficulties in her third year of teaching, her first and second year experiences soured her trust for the organization more generally.

Dominic's relationship with his program director mirrored Catherine's experiences. However, Dominic did not finish out his TFA teaching experience. He remembers his PD to be "relatively encouraging" at first, and offering "vague pointers" around classroom management and teaching strategies. In addition, he recalls some "criticisms around authority and owning the room." However, after reaching out to his PD to admit he was struggling somewhere at the half-way mark of his first year, Dominic received the same vague feedback and coaching around a "complicated rewards system" that did not work for his classroom or teaching style. In total, Dominic's PD observed him three times during his only year in TFA. When Dominic learned from his principal that they would not renew his contract, Dominic contacted his PD about securing another placement because he was still hoping to sustain a career in teaching. However, his PD maintained that "[Dominic] had made friends" in his placement city, which would

warrant him wanting to stay. "I didn't come here to make friends," Dominic remembered, and assumed that PDs had minimal "bargaining power" that would have allowed him to keep his placement. Despite Dominic's desire to remain in teaching and to find a better placement fit, his PD was not supportive in keeping Dominic in the program or the profession. As a result of Dominic's experience, he felt little connection and support from TFA.

Despite Annie's administration creating an "unhealthy work environment," she found support in both her school colleagues and through her MTLD. Annie's experience was different from other participants. Annie's MTLD had originally been a lawyer, but grew up in the area where she taught during her TFA years. In addition, after leaving law, her MTLD joined Teach for America and had taught in her region within his home state, for a few years before becoming an MTLD. He provided his own education vision for her teaching community to the corps before their arrival, which explicitly stated the importance of a long-term presence in the area as a means to truly create educational change. As a result, Annie witnessed the "visible investment" her MTLD had in her as a growing teacher. She trusted his advice and his expertise because he encouraged her to think of pedagogy from her students' perspectives. Annie and her corps member colleagues also spent time outside of school with their MTLD at the local bar with students' parents, enhancing the "fun and free culture" of her teaching community, "He was a part of our friend group," she added. This camaraderie also enhanced Annie's trust in her MTLD's coaching, as he had lived in and taught in the community where she was teaching. His direct experience with her student population grounded that sense of trust and established a support network for her to grow in her teaching practice. For some participants, TFA staff served as anchors and mentors in participants' developing teaching practices. However, for others, the adverse relationship and coaching feedback also mapped onto the varied support structures

offered by school administration. For some participants, the school administration more definitively shaped participants' placement experiences.

The Role of Administration

Jane found the feedback from both of her MTLDs to be "useful," but found it to be too general and not always applicable to her teaching practice or teaching environment. Therefore, she found herself seeking out her colleagues and her administration for support more often than TFA staff. Jane's approach to seeking advice involved learning from her colleagues, in addition to relying on her administration, which she believed were better contextual resources than TFA staff that was not based at the school. In her view, Jane's administration worked directly with and understood the students, whereas her TFA MTLD would have to rely on Jane explaining a scenario without adequate contextual knowledge or experience of working directly in the school and with the students. In addition, Jane found that much of the feedback she received from TFA staff was "in the clouds" and generalized and rarely addressed on-the-ground facets of her practice. Jane welcomed the feedback from TFA staff, but found most of it to be less applicable to her day-to-day teaching experiences. As a result, she found her support systems at her placement school instead.

Annie emphasized a lack of administrative support over her two-year teaching requirement. Annie cited her administration's role in creating an "unhealthy work environment," helping to solidify her decision to leave teaching after two years. Annie cited the diminishing teacher autonomy, punitive policies against students, and lack of trust emerging in her teaching placement "I got tired of being screwed by admin," she recalled, noting "time taken away" from her and her colleagues over issues of dress code and increased test prep. She criticized her administration's central focus of "looking like a good school [rather] than just being one." Annie

also remembered the significant accountability from her administration and the district leadership, suggesting "typical politics" and a "mob-like" hierarchical structure that seeped into her teaching environment. These forces contributed to lack of teacher autonomy and what Annie felt was a lack of appreciation for her and her colleagues.

Like Annie, Dominic argues that his principal was the most influential—though negatively—figure in his teaching experience. "Fear shaped [my] teaching," he lamented. He remembers the first day of in-service before the start of the school year, in which his principal urged him to "start doing pushups," implying he needed to be physically intimidating to gain control of his prospective students. He recalls receiving "encouraging" feedback at the beginning of his teaching experience from both his principal and program director, but recalled an "abrupt" change in the nature of that feedback toward the halfway mark of his first year. After attending an off-site training for classroom management at his principal's request, he asked for her support in implementing new classroom strategies, which involved sending students to the principal's office. The principal obliged. However, it became clear that "she didn't have my back," despite the conversation, and despite not observing his classroom since his workshop attendance. Dominic perceived the lack of investment his principal had in his practice. She informed him in the spring that his contract would not be renewed, but asked if he would still be willing to finish out the last eight weeks of the school year, which Dominic finished reluctantly. For some participants, administrators served as the catalysts that motivated them to leave the profession. These minimal support systems ultimately shaped participants' views of themselves as teachers, and views of teaching more broadly.

Summary of Findings

The findings represented in this chapter reflect the varied experiences of the participants in this study. Findings encompass the following themes: TFA seeks to build a collective movement beginning in the classroom, teaching under TFA is both technical and all-encompassing, and the extent to which participants were prepared for this teaching role was varied. In light of these themes and their sub-themes, participants and TFA-generated documents assisted in the formation of conceptions of teaching and learning, the TFA teaching experience, and the ideological messaging that shaped participants' experiences within and even after their time in TFA. One common thread exposed in the findings rests in the minimal preparation participants received and the difficulties they experienced as a result of this preparation, regardless of their objective in retaining a position in TFA's collective educational movement. The subsequent chapter draws on these findings in addressing the research questions listed at the beginning of this research study to better encompass these experiences in light of literature reviewed and the educational landscape in which this study exists.

CHAPTER 6. DISCUSSION

The purpose of this qualitative study is to explore the philosophy-shaping and preparation for long-term teaching of former TFA corps members, and the extent to which their teaching philosophies aligned with the philosophies of both TFA and of neoliberalism. This study endeavored to better understand the shaping of former corps members' teaching philosophies with respect to not only their participation in TFA, but also with respect to their educational experiences that informed their initial conceptions of teaching, education, and the decision to embark on a teaching career—and whether they remained in teaching.

This research study employed semi-structured, phenomenological interviewing techniques in order to collect participant interview data. In addition, this research study employed critical discourse analysis of participant-specific, and TFA-generated documents in order to better understand the philosophies of both participants and of TFA. Participants in this study included five former TFA corps members from various regions. The interview data were coded through three cycles: a combination of initial, in vivo, and versus coding, a second cycle of values coding, and a combination of pattern and focused coding. The document data were coded through two cycles of coding: the first cycle employed initial coding, while the second cycle themed the data into sub-categories utilized for codes that combined the interview and document data. These cycles led to data themes that anchored the analysis process and subsequent findings in chapter 5. The research questions were as follows:

1. How, if at all, does TFA prepare its corps members for long-term careers in teaching?

2. In what ways do TFA alumni articulate educational philosophies that are consistent with, or divergent from, the stated philosophies of TFA?

3. In what ways do TFA and TFA alumni articulate educational philosophies that are consistent with, or divergent from, neoliberalism?

The analytic categories or conceptual points were built upon the findings presented in chapter 5. In addition, these analytic categories encompass and expand on each of the findings presented in the previous chapter. The process in developing these conceptual categories involved revisiting the relevant literature and couching the findings within the broader discussions around neoliberalism, teacher education and preparation, and TFA's role within the broader education landscape. Taking the literature and findings into account, I revisit the research questions that ground this qualitative study.

Long-Term Teacher Preparation

One emergent finding focused on the varied preparation that corps members received relative to their regions. The majority of participants found their preparation to be inadequate on one or multiple fronts. In addition, the support systems through TFA and their schools shaped the extent to which corps members were prepared for short and long-term careers in teaching. In light of the data from participant interviews, it seems as if TFA prepares its corps members for a teaching sprint—or rather, a short-term career in teaching—rather than for long-term careers. Teaching is considered a temporary, stepping-stone career (Ravitch, 2013). One possible reason for this rests in TFA's desire to build an educational, alumni-focused movement that only begins in the classroom, where less preparation and focus would be on the teaching end of movement-building, and more efforts geared toward establishing and sustaining an alumni network. The objective of this movement is for TFA corps members to eventually transition out of their classroom roles into what are purported to be more impactful roles beyond teaching (see Scott, Trujillo, & Rivera, 2016; Stern & Johnston, 2013). In addition, the haphazard support systems,

most notably those stemming from TFA staff, reflect a disjointed preparation experience that did

not set participants up for success as teachers in the long-term. From here, in thinking about

TFA's original mission to address teacher shortages in high-needs communities, it is important to

question to what extent TFA attempts to currently address its original mission and the shortages

that plague the very communities where corps members teach.

Divergent Teaching Philosophies

Despite the organization's desires to shape participants' teaching philosophies, most

participants remained anchored into the idea of developing student relationships, creating and

sustaining their own classroom culture, and demonstrating appreciation for their subject matter.

These three pieces anchored what most participants viewed as classroom "mastery." The

organization demonstrates a dual conception of the teacher: one who adopts a technical

approach, in addition to going beyond duties traditionally associated with teaching as a means to

widen their influence within their classroom, school, and school community. However, it is not

clarified through documents or interviews what these allegedly traditional duties are. Such a

conception of teaching illustrates what Labaree (2004) calls the natural teacher. The natural

teacher exemplifies a common belief in teaching, where teachers are capable and tasked with

closing the achievement gap and spearheading an effort toward students' upward social mobility,

regardless of social factors potentially impeding their practice. Kumashiro (2012) argues that

neoliberalism reinforces the concept of the natural teacher through the extensive responsibilities

placed upon individual teachers to eradicate students' social and economic ills. However,

neoliberalism in teacher education argues for the narrow evaluation of teacher performance with

respect to numerical student achievement (Saltman, 2007; Stern, 2014).

From here, it seems that TFA champions and perpetuates a neoliberal conception of teaching, where teachers are responsible for eradicating social ills—or going beyond duties traditionally associated with teaching—while being narrowly evaluated on the basis of numerical student achievement. These frames exist amidst broader neoliberal education policy that diminishes teacher agency and autonomy through formulaic, on-the-job training (Zeichner, 2003; 2006), portraying teachers as replaceable sources of labor where deep pedagogical knowledge is deemed unnecessary (Weiner, 2015). The majority of participants found it difficult to rationalize both sides of their teaching roles under TFA, where most opted to dismiss some or all of TFA's teaching ideology in favor of their own, or as a means to preserve their sense of autonomy and sense of self within their classrooms. The majority of participants envisioned teaching as primarily grounded in relationships and relevant content and pedagogy, rather than on advancing student achievement.

Neoliberalism, the Market, and TFA's Movement

Despite its earlier presence in economic and political theory (Harvey, 2005), neoliberalism established its subsequent presence in education as a result of shifting political agendas that have impacted contemporary public education and teacher education (Giroux, 2004). Neoliberal education discourse fashions public education in a perpetual state of crisis (Taubman, 2009), stemming from decades of perceived mediocrity in education. Crisis language transcends the broader education landscape into teacher education, beckoning multiple agendas and their supporting figures to voice critiques and concerns over the current and future states of teacher quality and teacher education (Zeichner & Peña-Sandoval, 2015). Neoliberal ideology reflects opposing ideas around the purpose of education. Neoliberal education policy frames education's purpose as both an economic equalizer, and as something grounded in

instrumentalities (Zeichner, 2010), posing a threat to the democratic underpinning of public education (Dewey, 1916/2012).

As mentioned previously, TFA arguably conveys a neoliberal conception of the teacher, and attempts to shape corps members' conceptions of teaching toward this frame of reference. In addition, it appears that TFA also perpetuates a neoliberal conception of student learning. It seems TFA also frames education through a neoliberal understanding: where education functions as an equalizer and guaranteed path toward social mobility (Duncan, 2009), as well as being grounded in quantitative learning benchmarks and extrinsic motivators to encourage student control and investment in school. Participants acknowledged data as part of TFA's ideology, where Jane described it as one of their "pillars;" participants also acknowledged the "unrealistic" and "unwinnable fight" against educational inequity, arguing that "schools can't do it alone" in combating social and economic inequities.

In light of participants' testimonies and the document data reviewed, it appears that TFA perpetuates a neoliberal conception of teaching and learning, a conception that participants often challenged or rejected. However, a larger question emerges around the position of TFA within this neoliberal movement in teacher education and public education. As TFA attempts to shape corps members' understanding of teaching, while building a larger movement more focused on the maintenance of an alumni network beyond education instead of preparing classroom teachers, it is worthwhile to consider whether TFA has spawned a neoliberal movement in teacher education, or whether TFA has addressed the marketization of teacher education and public education, and has thus shifted its agenda toward something aligned to the education market.

Taking these conceptual points together, the remainder of this chapter will unite the findings and relevant literature to craft a deeper, conceptual analysis. In light of the research questions that examine teacher socialization and preparation, as well as the philosophy-shaping processes and ideologies present within TFA, the following chapter investigates TFA's original mission as it relates to the teacher preparation detailed in this study, TFA's attempts to shape participants' understandings of teaching, as well as TFA's status within the broader educational landscape and its pursuit of progressive neoliberal niches.

TFA's Original Mission and Teacher Preparation

Initially, Teach for America began with some 500 corps members looking to teach in high-needs urban or rural schools, and held a passion for the work (Stern & Johnston, 2013). In addition, the organization's mission revolved around addressing teaching shortages in these areas to eradicate education inequality (Scott, Trujillo, & Rivera, 2016 p. 5). However, shortages still exist in these areas (Straubhaar & Gottfried, 2014 p. 3), and in some subject areas more than others, even as TFA's popularity and recruitment has ballooned (Heilig, Cole, & Springel, 2011), which seemed true around the time participants were TFA corps members. The desire to eradicate this inequality still exists, but TFA's mission now revolves more closely around prepping corps members for leadership roles beyond the classroom, where leadership experience serves as one of the principle markers of the "ideal" corps member (Stern & Johnston, 2013).

As TFA has experienced an "organizational evolution" (Scott, Trujillo, & Rivera, 2016 p. 4), so too has their mission. And, though TFA's original intention was to address the persistent teachers' shortages, especially in low-income communities, little change in their teacher preparation structure exists, in addition to their efforts to combat teacher retention (Straubhaar & Gottfried, 2014 p. 3). Though broader structures to TFA's preparation model have changed

minimally, its core values and mission continue to evolve, as the data demonstrate a shift in focus toward addressing an achievement gap. Some sources argue that TFA has actually exacerbated the issue of teachers' shortages in low-income communities (Heineke, Mazza & Tichnor-Wagner, 2014) as a result of framing teaching as a temporary career, coupled with the minimal preparation for the extensive responsibilities characteristic of teaching in high-needs areas. These conditions often result in teacher burnout (see Brewer, 2014). Therefore, it is important to question the status of TFA's original mission, and how their teacher preparation ties not only into their efforts to address perpetual teacher shortages, but also where building a teaching force fits into their broader vision of educational change, if at all.

The Issue of Attrition

Reports sponsored by the Learning Policy Institute (2016; 2017) detail the perpetual issue of attrition, even amidst a slowing economy, teacher layoffs, and increases in alternative teacher preparation pathways. For example, the state of the 2009 economy dictated employment decisions, and not just for teaching. Those considering careers in teaching weighed whether to pursue avenues with seemingly laborious and time-consuming preparation, or avenues that housed quicker induction processes with a higher employment guarantee (Podolsky et. al., 2016). As a result, teacher education enrollment in university-based settings hit a major decline (p. 1), while applications to programs like Teach for America soared (Heilig, Cole, & Springel, 2011; Teach for America, 2019a). A few participants cited the Recession as a factor when searching for more secure roles in teaching, and the pathway about which to gain these positions. It was during this time that TFA pivoted from its mission of addressing a teacher shortage, in favor of endeavoring to "close the achievement gap" (Document #32, 2010 p. xiii). Still true to one of its original goals, TFA continues to send its corps members into high-needs communities; but,

whether these are the neediest schools within those communities in an effort to address the area's teacher attrition is negligible (Scott, Trujillo, & Rivera, 2016).

A third of teachers nationally leave the profession within their first five years (Podolsky et al., 2016 p. 1), with attrition 70% higher at schools serving low-income students (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond 2017 p. v). Schools that are low-income are also more likely to employ teachers who received certification through an alternative pathway, where these teachers account for less than 10% of the staff within schools that serve mostly white and affluent students (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017 p. 19). Recurrent teachers' shortages stem from fewer entrants into the profession, and persistently high rates of attrition in low-income schools, which is especially the case for the subjects Math, Science, and Special Education (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Podolsky et al., 2016). And, though attrition fluctuates across states and regions, teacher preparation is a key factor in determining whether a teacher is prepared for and thus will stay in the profession. Both reports cite dissatisfaction with either leadership or the profession as a whole as the principle reason teachers voluntarily depart from the classroom. Knowing that dissatisfaction can pose the greatest threat to teacher retention, and that those who are less prepared for the classroom are 25% more likely to leave (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017 p. vi), it is important to investigate what measures, if any, TFA is taking to ensure corps members are prepared and supported for the classroom for the long-term, considering their original mission to address teacher shortages in high-needs areas.

Minimal Preparation

Though TFA has made an attempt to address the lack of contextual preparation corps members receive by placing more emphasis and control within individual regions (Sawchuck, 2016), minimal pedagogical and contextual preparation still exists as part of the TFA framework.

TFA's minimal preparation also calls into question whether the program is even designed to address teacher retention by successfully placing and preparing corps members for the profession for the long-term, as the program's design negates the extensive knowledge bases necessary to sustain a career in teaching. TFA's two-year requirement and abbreviated induction (institute) illustrate two of the clearest policies that call its preparation efforts into question (Ravitch, 2013). Wilson et al. (2004) points out that "induction" programs attempt to merge "preparation and practice" (p. 157) in an effort to prepare teachers for the classroom practically and theoretically. However, inductions are loosely defined, where considerable variation exists around what one must learn as part of a teacher induction process (p. 161). Therefore, it is at the discretion of the sponsoring institution to define what is most salient for teachers to know before entering the classroom. TFA tends to define these requirements through highly structured teaching formulas, what some participants described to be a "one-size-fits-all" framework. It is possible that TFA opts for highly structured teaching formulas in order to compensate for the minimal pedagogical training corps members receive during their institute. Navigating the minimal preparation by championing highly structured, formulaic and technical teaching frameworks resulted in some participants' pushback or rejection of what "felt fake" or out-of-alignment from their emerging teaching philosophies.

Evans (2010) asserts that teaching is not only "purposeful" work, but is also contextually informed (p. 185). Therefore, contextual preparation and support is necessary for emerging teachers to be successful in their teaching communities. It is vital for teachers to be aware of the forces that govern their profession, and the ways in which these can influence their practice (p. 202). Unfortunately, teachers who enter the profession alternatively are often less prepared to address students' needs, to be able to plan effective instruction and are less prepared for

implementation (Darling-Hammond et al., 1995 p. 210), making it that much more difficult to address the contextual factors associated with their teaching assignment. The majority of participants felt that TFA did not prepare them for neither the "bureaucracy" of teaching nor the contextual or "socio-political component" of teaching in high-needs communities. This highlights a flaw in the program structure that markets specifically to high-needs areas in bringing the allegedly "best and brightest" to these areas to create educational change. Moreover—and consistent with the literature—the majority of participants found the idea of "closing the achievement gap" to be unrealistic (Straubhaar & Gottfried, 2014 p. 14), augmented by their own conceptions of the systemic change required to address educational inequity and the stark realities they faced upon arriving in their placements. Minimal contextual preparation negated a portion of participants' purposeful work as teachers.

The abbreviated preparation participants received meant condensed—sometimes, nonexistent—content and/or pedagogical training. In Evans's (2010) study examining "traditional" and "alternatively" prepared teachers, she found that alternatively-prepared recruits were "exhausted" and had "no time for fluff" of for theory or social issues in their preparation, which opted for "just the facts" (p. 195). As a result, recruits experienced classroom management difficulties and adapting pedagogical strategies for their teaching placements. This was especially true for Dominic, who was placed in an incorrect grade level and subject area for institute, mismatching with his fall placement; and for Annie, who received mismatched subject area institute and teaching placements. "A few basic skills" in teaching, as well as skills that are conceived as transferrable ones: leadership, academic achievement, and a relentless work ethic, allegedly make a successful teacher in any context. However, most participants were quick to

realize this was not the case when faced with necessary pedagogical or social adjustments that needed to be made to their practice.

Because TFA endeavors to circulate its teaching structure nationally in an effort to maintain organizational consistency, it is then the responsibility of regions to build in information that is specific to the region, student demographics, and schools for its corps members. This can prove difficult with hundreds of corps members in a single place, many at different placements. As a result, the bureaucratic understanding of teaching that is relative to particular school contexts and administrations had often been neglected. Catherine found it both "isolating and liberating" to be the only corps member at her school, a chance to relish in some separation from TFA; however, she felt unprepared for the "bureaucracy of teaching." For Runté (1995), teachers will always be subject to the bureaucratic structures of school administrations, school boards, and districts. They argue that the issue rests not in teachers' capacity to assert their profession as a professional one, but rather, in their efforts to resist the deskilling of their profession in light of the existing bureaucratic structures that house their positions. However, without proper contextual and arguably sociopolitical preparation for understanding teaching on these planes, pre-service candidates, whether alternatively certified or otherwise, will not be prepared for understanding the structures that impact their work.

Lack of "Experts"

Corps members lacked "experts" on TFA staff that they could go to for sound advice (Stern & Johnston, 2013 p. 18) and specific strategies tailored to their individual teaching practice and context. Brewer (2014) cited similar findings, noting that a lack of experts on TFA staff forced some corps members to navigate the "hyper-accountability" from TFA on their own, with minimal coaching through pedagogy (p. 259). His findings align with the "generalized" or

"vague" feedback most participants received from their MTLDs, offering minimal coaching around classroom strategies. Against a backdrop that conceptualizes the teacher-corps member as entirely responsible for "overcoming ailments of poverty" that their students face begets not only disillusionment, but also an unrealistic teaching scenario and potential teacher burnout (Brewer, 2014 p. 259). Though some MTLDs proved helpful in a few respects, these were instances that were by and large, outliers. Though some participants received at least one generally helpful MTLD or PD during one of their two years with TFA, the advice and coaching was largely inconsistent. Annie presented the sole case for which the MTLD served as a consistently sound source of advice and expertise, which was in a large part due to his experience living in and working in the community before her arrival.

In addition, when participants did seek out advice from their PDs or MTLDs, the advice rarely addressed their specific teaching contexts or aligned with their individual teaching styles. This seemed to be the case with Dominic, who attempted to reach out to his PD for assistance with classroom management with minimal support. And, though Jane felt her MTLDs were "generally helpful," she noted that many of the discussions during institute and throughout the year were more generalized and "in the clouds," encouraging her to seek out the advice of her administration and other veteran colleagues at her school. Mockler and Thomas (2018) exposed the finding that corps members who desired a career in teaching often relied on the veteran teachers at their respective schools—though admonished by TFA—to gain better insight into pedagogical growth (p. 12).

Consistent with the findings in this study, Podolsky et al. (2016) noted that newer teachers in low-income schools were less likely to have even three conversations with their mentors (p. 35), though this finding does not specify whether these mentors were housed in the

individual schools or within sponsoring teacher education institutions. Jennifer was quick to notice her corps contained "no master MTLDs" who had been in the classroom for longer than a few years. She faced particular difficulty with her MTLDs who had the same or even fewer years of teaching experience than she did, beckoning her to gravitate toward her more-experienced school coach for advice and coaching. Without the proper experience from TFA staff, especially those who serve as MTLDs—who are the first contact-points for corps members—it is important to consider whether TFA is structurally committed to preparing corps members for long-term careers in teaching.

Teaching and TFA's View of Educational Change

Finally, in light of their minimal classroom preparation, most participants felt it necessary to adjust *their* beliefs of where TFA teachers fell into the organization's vision of educational change. Upon reflecting, many participants noted they became "realists" about the mission to address educational inequity, or disagreed with it entirely after their time in the classroom. TFA views educational change as something that occurs beyond the classroom (Ravitch, 2013; Scott, Trujillo, & Rivera, 2016). Nevertheless, corps members are encouraged to believe that they are the gatekeepers of educational change (Stern & Johnston, 2013), despite teaching serving as a springboard career to arguably more substantial educational impact (Ravitch, 2013). Morale boosters at institute convince corps members they will face the most "difficult challenge" but at the same time are the "best and brightest" for the job (Stern & Johnston, 2013 p. 9). Nevertheless, TFA's view that the responsibility of teachers in the classroom is to address economic poverty encourages hyper-accountability on the part of the teacher (Brewer, 2014), despite framing teaching as only the beginning piece of TFA's vision of educational change.

This is unrealistic; as it is "impossible" for education to act as the sole factor in producing change (Stern & Johnston, 2013 p. 7).

The majority of corps members stay beyond their two years; and this study included three of five participants who did. Nevertheless, fewer than 20% have remained in the classroom beyond five years (Donaldson & Johnson, 2011 p. 4), potentially speaking to TFA's desire to transition its corps members out of teaching. Coincidentally, corps members are often discouraged from staying in teaching. Jennifer noted that her decision to stay in the classroom was almost "not good enough," as she was pushed by her MTLD to consider other options after the corps. Mockler and Thomas (2018) argue that TFA does not "definitively expect" that corps members stay in teaching after the required two years (p. 17). In fact, veteran teachers are often presented in stark contrast to the young and energetic teachers, where stereotypes like the "lifer mindset," as one participant phrased, emerge as the stagnant ineffective teacher motif that often perpetuates the very issue that organizations like TFA are attempting to solve (Kumashiro, 2012; Mockler & Thomas, 2018 p. 16). Catherine recalled upon entering TFA, she assumed there were two ways to teach: the old way, and the new, young way. After her time in the classroom, she admits there's "definitely a wrong way," but that there are really "100 ways to skin a cat." Coupled with the encouragement to transition out of the classroom in light of how TFA conceptualizes veteran teachers, corps members might begin to internalize TFA's belief that allegedly real and important educational change takes place after teaching, where a career in teaching serves as a stepping-stone to more impactful, lasting change.

Attempts to Shape Conceptions of Teaching

TFA attempted to shape participants' conceptions of teaching toward not only the conception of the natural teacher (Labaree, 2004), but rather a natural, temporary teacher. TFA's

conception of a natural and replaceable teacher reflects neoliberal visions of teachers (Kumashiro, 2012; Ravitch, 2013). One pathway toward shaping corps members' visions of teaching explores TFA's role as the sponsoring institution for preparation. For Evans (2010), institutions ground the "ideological basis" for how employees understand their work roles (p. 184). From here, it seems that TFA attempted to ideologically shape corps members' conceptions of teaching and of teachers. These aspects either enhanced parts of participants' practice, where they found common ground with some aspects of TFA philosophy; or participants largely found themselves challenging the TFA status quo in favor of their own conception of teaching. These initial ideas of teaching were grounded in participants' academic experiences and conceptions of a teacher's role, which proved to be significant factors in their approaches to the classroom. In many instances, these formative educational experiences were more important and more informative than TFA's philosophical underpinnings communicated to them.

Gramsci (1971) and Harvey (2005) highlight the power of neoliberal discourse in shaping one's common sense around a particular topic. From here, it appears TFA desired to shape corps members' sense around what it means to teach under TFA. Stern and Johnston (2013) demonstrate the difference between the desire to "do TFA" and to "become" a teacher (p. 3), and how these differences in framing undergird initial conceptions of TFA's role in teacher preparation, in addition to perpetuating the concept of a temporary teacher. "Doing" involves a passive "going-through-the-motions" mentality, which is often finite (p. 5). However, "becoming" involves a transition, a period of growth, and a sense of commitment to work (p. 16). TFA makes the attempt to shape corps members' conceptions of good teaching as it relates to the areas in which corps members teach. However, this is not always successful, as a few

participants wrestled with the ideas communicated through TFA presentations, literature, and coaching. One particular shortcoming in TFA's conception of the teacher focuses on its premise that teacher identity is finite. Mockler and Thomas (2018) argue that not only is teacher preparation influential in shaping teacher identity, but that teacher identity in itself is never stagnant (p. 2-3). In Catherine's view, "good teachers are always learning" (see Stern & Johnston, 2013 p. 21), encouraging this constant growth of one's practice that does not end at or with a highly structured teaching formula and instrumental evaluation of practice participants found to be the norm at their institute and throughout their two years.

Professional, Labor Source, or a Calling?

Wilson et al. (2004) highlights the often "conflicting messages" that teachers receive in regards to how to teach, as various and sometimes oppositional actors insert their own views and policies into the teacher quality debate (p. 145). Researchers note three ways in which to conceptualize the role of a teacher: as a professional, as a source of labor, and as one serving a vocation (Wilson et al., 2004). Professional work encompasses specialized knowledge, training, and certification, in addition to community obligations (p. 166). Envisioning teaching as labor deemphasizes the need for professional knowledge, asserting one's work on-the-job develops the knowledge required to complete the work, framing teaching as task-oriented. Teaching as labor adheres to the mandates and sources of control over the profession. Finally, framing teaching as a vocation conceptualizes the profession as a personal activity that ignites a transformation in others, adhering to the identity formation of the teacher and those who teacher impacts (p. 168). Runté (1995) argues that the argument toward professionalizing teaching is not as clear-cut as many professionalization advocates would like, as teaching continues to be controlled through bureaucratic structures. Nevertheless, relying too heavily on these structures can quicken and

deepen the deskilling of teaching toward merely disposable labor (Giroux, 2004). When sponsoring institutions develop a particular vision of teachers and teaching, these visions have the capacity to shape emerging teachers' philosophies and identities.

According to Mockler and Thomas (2018), though not stagnant, teachers conceptualize their identities through their perceived expertise in content, pedagogy, and content-pedagogical strategies. The ways in which practitioners conceptualize teachers more broadly can impact the value they place on each of these knowledge sources. From here, it can be said that teacher knowledge and teacher identity is multifaceted, beckoning practitioners to rationalize each of these three components in their work. Evans (2010) argues that definitions of teacher and professional are fluid ones, denoting teaching as a "semi-profession" (p. 184; Ingersoll, 2004), as teaching encompasses specialized knowledge and certification processes, but is "other-controlled" by schools, districts, and education policy. Relative to the literature and this study's findings, participants conceptions of teaching tended to conflict with that of TFA's.

Participants in this study resembled the "traditionally" educated teachers in Evans's study (2010) in their views of teaching. The majority of participants, as did those in Evans's study, view teaching as "a craft," priding their former teachers as having "real" knowledge about the profession and serving as personal examples for their own visions of teaching (p. 193). For all participants, though not all initially, teaching served as a calling toward something greater than themselves, illustrating a vocational framing of teaching. However, the majority of participants cited particular teachers (formal and informal) educative moments, and a passion for their content area that grounded their conceptions of good teaching, where the teacher fused content with building relationships. Upon reflecting on their time in the classroom, many of these

vocational conceptions evolved into ones that also included the idea that teachers are—or should be treated as—professionals.

Dominic and Annie reflected on their time in the classroom to eventually argue for the elevated nature of teaching as a professional and highly specialized career. Fusing the community obligation with the specialized knowledge participants realized to be highly important to the work, in addition to their wish to fulfill a service to others, demonstrated a mixture of professional and vocational work (Wilson, et al., 2004). Those deeply personal experiences for corps members illustrated a common conception of teaching, and a common vision for what teaching could be. These participants entered teaching with the intention of staying in the profession, hoping to "take their education and spread it around," citing the noble act of being a teacher—and thus a pillar of the school community—as illustrated in their formative educational experiences. Or, some participants highlighted the value in working with humans, teenagers specifically, on a platform from which to develop and nurture relationships through academics.

These desires and conceptions of teaching diverged from corps members often citing professional opportunities or "the network," as the primary reasons for pursuing teaching with TFA (Straubhaar & Gottfried, 2014). However, the majority did cite TFA's prestige as an important factor in pursuing teaching with the organization. The majority of participants, like those in Evans's (2010) study, were concerned with making material relevant for students, illustrating the fusion of content and pedagogical knowledge relative to their teaching contexts, and establishing their place within their school communities. The extent to which participants felt they were successful in these endeavor varied. Nevertheless, the majority of participants found themselves in situations that demanded cultural knowledge absent from their preparation,

or a lack of support from school-based personnel, at a time in their careers where teacher support is desperately needed (Podolsky et al., 2016). In light of their own educational experiences and their individualized understandings of teaching and a teacher's role, participants often felt challenged by TFA's communicated vision of teaching.

TFA's "Hidden Curriculum"

According to Giroux (1977) an organization's "hidden curriculum" encompasses its methods of pedagogy, management, and approaches to content, and how these norms, values, and beliefs are implicitly transmitted to its members (in Stern & Johnston, 2013 p. 10). Presenting a hidden curriculum illustrates the attempt to socialize employees into their work roles and ground how employees conceptualize their roles within a particular organizational framework. Evans (2010) defines socialization as a "construct that explains the development of a social self" (p. 185). Van Maanen and Schein (1977) argue that an employee's preliminary induction into their occupation can shape their work identity and their conceptualization of their role. An organization's hidden curriculum emergent through preliminary induction processes, can attempt to shape emerging employees' understanding of their role, their work, and position within the sponsoring institution.

As a result, teacher-corps members within TFA must be socialized into their roles not just as teachers, but also as *TFA teachers* relative to TFA's hidden curriculum. Corps members and study participants remember the refrains that not only were they the "best and brightest" for this endeavor (Stern & Johnston, 2013), but also that those already in the teaching profession illustrated the bottom tier of college graduates, a claim Jane and Catherine acknowledged TFA communicated to them during their preparation. However, this rhetoric assists in the "bad teacher" motif while boosting the egos of the impressionable, emergent corps member-teachers

(Kumashiro, 2012), despite this claim no longer being the case (see Podolsky et al., 2016 p. 4).

Induction, or institute in the case of participants in this study, is thus the first socialized

experience for corps members to better understand their roles relative to TFA's hidden

curriculum. However, other formal, socialized experiences illuminated TFA's hidden curriculum

in their framing of teachers and teaching more broadly.

The Academic Impact Model

Communicating to corps members the idea that they can impart radical change in their

classrooms is a cornerstone of TFA's initial socialization of corps members and part of their

organizational mission. TFA's Academic Impact Model (AIM) illustrates TFA's desired corps

member prototype for carrying out their mission (Brewer, 2014 p. 248). This prototype

consistently works hard, goes beyond the traditional conceptions of teachers' duties (Document

#32, 2010), but also "sustains energy" (Document #34, n.d. p. 16) in order to perform all duties

part of their work. However, Brewer (2014) criticizes the AIM below:

> TFA and its AIM posit that good teachers can cause effective learning despite the
> physiological, safety, belonging, and self-esteem issues students' face. Farr argues, "The
> teachers featured in this book demonstrate that a teacher can control enough factors in
> students' lives to close the achievement gap" (Farr 2010, p. 200 in Brewer, 2014 p. 250).

TFA's AIM implicitly communicates that teachers are responsible for student successes

and failures (p. 247). It illustrates an all-encompassing model of teaching meant to influence

corps members' conceptions of teaching. Dominic recalled that examining student data fostered

cynicism for him, leading to some feelings of self-blame over student scores (see Brewer, 2014

p. 250). Though not every participant experienced this same sense of self-blame, TFA

encouraged corps members to adopt a particular teaching practice that spanned the all-

encompassing and the technical, sometimes fostering negative conceptions of their teaching or of

themselves. The degree to which participants hoped to adopt what TFA defined as "good

teaching" techniques also impacted to what extent they felt discouraged over alleged successes or failures in the classroom.

One Way to Teach

TFA's pedagogical framework treats corps members not as "knowers" of experience, but rather as passive doers and novices (Stern & Johnston, 2013 p. 10), demonstrating a particular, preferred way to teach that emergent TFA teachers should adopt. However, this also exposes an opportunity to socialize impressionable corps members into one particular vision of teaching. Stern & Johnston (2013) argue that "causal thinking" equating test scores with teacher effectiveness is especially impressionable on those who do not have backgrounds in education, allowing corps members to readily adopt TFA's "recipe" for teaching by connecting instrumental teaching and student learning (p. 12-13). Corps members are then encouraged to "think like corps members," instead of like "teachers" (p. 11). This approach to teaching leaves little room for variance in teaching style, student population, and school-community context, something the majority of participants felt to be lacking in their preparation experience. In addition, participants' definition of "typical" or "ideal" corps members as those who adhere to TFA's mission and vision and heavily incorporate data into their practice echo TFA's own highly structured and preferred way to teach.

Dominic took particular issue with TFA's approach to a "one-size-fits-all" teaching approach, undergirded by the assumption that good teaching is "good teaching anywhere." Teachers have the capacity to educate and influence thousands of people that come through their classrooms (Ladson-Billings, 2001). However, equating numerical, instrumental academic performance with altering one's life course, without regard for social and political systemic suppression plaguing the very communities in which corps members teach, illustrates not only a

2010 p. 184). It could be suggested that TFA's conception of the teacher most closely aligns with the conception of teachers as labor sources, as evidenced in the minimal pedagogical training corps members receive and the instrumental evaluations of both students and teachers. Heineke, Mazza, and Tichnor-Wagner (2014) argue that the temporary nature of TFA's two-year requirement communicates that teaching is a service, rather than a profession (p. 751). Therefore, those participants who were initially hesitant to enter teaching due to its low pay and low status within the job market are not as reluctant to teach under TFA, as the position is temporary and TFA carries the prestige that the teaching profession lacks (Podolsky et al., 2016 p. 3).

In addition to framing teaching as a source of labor, TFA tends to champion the neoliberal idea of the "natural" teacher (Labaree, 2004), which rationalizes the instrumental, technical role of teaching situated within a social justice mission and an endeavor of fighting educational inequity. Labaree (2004) exposes the conception of the natural teacher: limitlessly and effortlessly illustrating one who can instruct despite social factors, pressures, and irrespective of pre-service training. As Annie mentioned, "teachers are in a position to impact" (see Ladson-Billings, 2001), tapping into their roles that Dominic characterized as "community pillars." This also aligns with TFA's framing of teachers as responsible for factors beyond their classrooms. TFA upholds this dichotomous conception of teaching through its request of corps members to go "far beyond" the traditional duties of a teacher in order to grow students, albeit instrumentally (Document #32, 2010 p. 197). However, teachers are also portrayed within broad discourse as less-than-experts, lazy, and greedy (Kumashiro, 2012). As a result, TFA adheres to hyper-accountability measures in order to evaluate not only student learning, but also teacher practice (Brewer, 2014). Despite framing teaching through a neoliberal lens, TFA also conceptualizes the ever-growing achievement gap as a solvable feat through education.

The data in this study exposed TFA literature framing the achievement gap as something that requires an urgent solution, but arguing that a concrete solution does exist through education (Farr, 2010). Brewer (2014) cites his interviews with a CMA or corps member advisor, who communicated the idea that "everything is fixable" in the classroom (p. 258), a sentiment that corps members in his study also echoed, asserting that teachers are fully responsible for student failures. However, in the same preparation model, corps members are asked to "invest" their students in learning, illustrating an all-encompassing conception of teaching that mutes structural factors that can impact students' accessibility and approaches to school (p. 257). Catherine and Dominic held the belief that "schools can't do it alone," where "disparities [were] not my problem" as teachers, attempting to rationalize what they believed to be in their control as teachers. Though no participant in this study felt only accountable "when they messed up" (Mockler & Thomas, 2018 p. 9), each participant reiterated TFA's dependence upon student data and data tracking in an effort to measure and conceptualize their success as teachers relative to instrumental measures of student learning.

Neoliberal education policy exacerbates this dichotomous role for teachers, suppressing teacher agency and identity formation, while expecting the near impossible of eradicating poverty as under-valued, allegedly ill-experienced practitioners (Evans, 2010; Kumashiro, 2012). These facets illustrate an emergent characteristic of TFA teacher preparation. TFA corps members were part of multiple bureaucratic structures: their schools, districts, states, and TFA as an organization. Situating control above the teacher decreases their autonomy and encourages the conception of the "natural" teacher (Evans, 2010 p. 187-188; Labaree, 2004). The natural teacher idea conceptualizes teacher growth only in relation to what exists in their classroom, which, for corps members, involved growth in student achievement. Instrumentally measuring student

learning and framing teacher growth as an emergent factor from student learning, negates the teacher's individual efforts to grow their pedagogical knowledge outside of the classroom. TFA's conception of the teacher often came into conflict with those visions of participants in this study.

Shifting Agendas and Finding Their Niche

Finally, this study illuminates the idea that TFA seeks to build a movement that begins in the classroom. This educational movement seeks to not only impact classrooms, but also schools, districts, and policies throughout the country, couched within a social justice endeavor (Document #48, 2014 p. 6). Nevertheless, TFA began as an organization working to address teacher shortages in low-income communities (Stern & Johnston, 2013). As education policy has continued to evolve to highlight and perpetuate instrumental conceptions of learning and increased teacher accountability—aspects of the neoliberal education framework (Giroux, 2004; Ravitch, 2013; Zeichner, 2010)—it is important to question whether TFA shifted its mission to address the education market, or whether the organization assisted in the movement toward instrumental, structured conceptions of learning and teaching.

One participant suggested that TFA has evolved into seeking particular niches in which to situate itself within the teacher education and public education landscapes. Lahann and Reagan (2011) characterize TFA as a "progressive neoliberal" organization (p. 11). Figures adopting this framework view education in crisis worthy of a social justice resolution. Nevertheless, the neoliberal aspect employs privatized options and venture philanthropy in order to address the issue rooted and framed through social justice (Scott, Trujillo, & Rivera, 2016 p. 21). By their classification, TFA's mission and vision illustrates a progressive neoliberal framework. Despite TFA's organizational evolution (Scott, Trujillo, Rivera, 2016 p. 4), it still

adopts the idea that educational inequity is an urgent problem that is worth addressing, where teaching serves as the starting point of this endeavor (Document #78, 2019). In addition, program critics label TFA as "one of 'if not the major engine' of the neoliberal education agenda" (Stern & Johnston, 2013 p. 15; see Lipman, 2011), despite TFA's stance that it functions as an apolitical organization (Scott, Trujillo, & Rivera 2016). In light of the study's findings and the literature, it is important to investigate the niches in which TFA situates itself relative to the broader education landscape.

The "Progressive" Niche

TFA continues to hold a high prestige in the education world among idealists and education reformers. Therefore, the organization continues to market toward these populations via messaging and recruitment efforts that might resonate with idealists and reformers. The organization operates under the belief that bringing in those from other fields who would not normally consider teaching would be "revolutionary" (Stern & Johnston, 2013 p. 8), and specifically seeks out those with high academic performance and previous leadership experience to fulfill this task. Despite desiring candidates with prior leadership experience, literature suggests that few prospective TFA applicants had considered teaching prior to acceptance into TFA (Veltri, 2010 in Stern & Johnston, 2013 p. 19). In this particular study, some participants had considered teaching prior to any research on TFA, in the cases of Jennifer and Dominic. In addition, leadership opportunities for Catherine also led her toward considering roles that could continue developing these skills, though interest in applying to TFA was different for each participant.

TFA continues to find its niche among idealists, those seeking a challenge, and a sense of purpose (Straubhaar & Gottfried, 2014). And, though teachers of color oftentimes seek out

alternative pathways to enter the profession (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017 p. 20), the majority of TFA corps members continue to be upper-middle class and white (Scott, Trujillo, & Rivera, 2016 p. 6). However, TFA has made efforts to diversify its corps by expanding recruiting efforts (Teach for America, 2019b). With the exclusion of race, these "typical" recruits fall in line with the "ideal" corps members they believed TFA sought: an idealist with leadership experience with a go-getter attitude (Straubhaar & Gottfried, 2014). The question of whether most prospective corps members only seek a temporary career in teaching is variable, especially given the participants in this study—for the most part—sought a career in teaching for the long-term. Nevertheless, the majority of corps members do not stay in their placements, or in teaching, beyond their first few years (Donaldson & Johnson, 2011).

Regardless of participants' aims after their two years, each participant found the capital of TFA beyond his or her two years to be highly enticing (Stern & Johnston, 2013 pp. 8-9), citing TFA's network to be a valuable asset. Stern & Johnston (2013) cited that some corps members found TFA's network desirable for when they pursued what they believed to be their real career after their temporary stop in teaching. TFA still operates under the assumption that—as Jane put it—"catching" those from outside education to teach in high-needs environments is "revolutionary" in furthering their movement to end educational inequity (Stern & Johnston, 2013 p. 8). However, the question remains of whether these "revolutionary" corps members would plan to stay in teaching long-term. Kumashiro (2012) and Ravitch (2013) argue that teaching has become a temporary, stopover career, where teachers are portrayed as easily replaceable. In an effort to increase the viability of their movement, TFA has maintained their two-year commitment for corps members, demonstrating not only that teaching is meant to be a temporary career, but also that lasting and greater educational change happens afterward. As a

result, those who would not consider teaching as a career are comforted, in a sense, in the temporary nature of their requirement; corps members can still enact what is framed as small-scale change in the classroom, and be enveloped into a vast network for greater change beyond their classroom time.

For Heineke, Mazza, and Tichnor-Wagner (2014), the large majority of corps members left after two years to further their own education; while those who wished to stay in teaching, made this decision based on their supportive school environments, irrespective of TFA's structure or preparation (p. 773). Their findings align with the participants' conceptions of TFA within this study, where TFA served as a "loophole" through which to gain certification (Mockler & Thomas, 2018 p. 12), where participants placed little dependence on the ideological structuring of TFA as a means to prepare them for the classroom. In these cases, participants were more interested in finding ways into teaching in high-needs communities and remaining there for the long-term, whether this became the reality later or not. One participant, Annie, used this time to think about her later career in politics (see Straubhaar & Gottfried, 2014). Nevertheless, TFA continues to strike a chord with young idealists looking to address educational inequity, whether for the short or long-term.

The "Neoliberal" Niche

Scott, Trujillo, and Rivera (2016) highlight TFA's recent 20-year summit in 2010 as evidence of its shift in mission, organizational goals, and emphasis on expanding their network for social and political impact. Though TFA marked a leadership change in 2013 that ushered in a more region-specific approach to TFA (see Sawchuck, 2016), the majority of participants in this study reflect the ideology and practices of pre-2013 TFA. The 20th anniversary summit illustrated a shift in TFA eras toward one of marketization and education reform (p. 2). In

shifting their mission and vision, TFA began surrounding itself with likeminded reformers as a means to increase both influence and funding, compounding their efforts to champion particular conceptions of learning, teaching, and education (Stern & Johnston, 2013 p. 3). However, Scott, Trujillo, & Rivera (2016) caution us from situating TFA squarely between pro-and anti-reformers, instead advocating for the examination of TFA's status within the educational-political landscape by way of their desire to expand their alumni network into sectors beyond education, while furthering their conceptions of instrumental teaching and learning in the process (pp. 9-10).

At his institute, Dominic recalled the "corporatized language" as his first "warning shot" about the organization. He, like others in this study, found the dependence upon data and formulaic teaching to be surprising and sometimes difficult to navigate in their classrooms. The neoliberal conception of education mutes structural inequalities as influences on student learning in favor of the measurable, instrumental data of high-stakes testing (Giroux, 2004; Zeichner, 2010). In addition, the presence of audit culture (Taubman, 2009) increases the amount of financial actors in the education landscape in an effort to increasingly privatize public education. Finally, the neoliberal conception of the teacher frames the teacher as a source of labor, learning the most pertinent skills for the profession on the job, deferring to bureaucratic structures that endeavor to control the profession (Evans, 2010). For participants in this study, TFA promoted approaches that mute structural inequalities contributing to difficulties in corps members' classrooms. And, despite TFA's shift toward an "opportunity gap" existing in low-income communities (Document #78, 2019 para. 9), the dependence upon instrumental measurements of teaching and learning negate efforts to address community-focused issues that spill into schools and classrooms (Scott, Trujillo, & Rivera, 2016 p. 22).

TFA as a "Political Organization"

TFA endeavors to effect political change through their vision of education, and finds particular reformist and school-based niches in which to situate to execute that change. Jane suggested that TFA is "a political organization," adding, "They would definitely lobby if it were in their interest." These political efforts became apparent at their 20th anniversary summit. Scott, Trujillo, and Rivera (2016) constructed a framework through which to understand TFA's nuanced influence in social, educational, and political spheres. Their research highlighted a network of policy entrepreneurs meant to insert private strategies into public spheres, developing power networks through special interest groups, venture philanthropists and policy planning, candidate selection that supports their education and policy agendas, and the opinion-shaping process of public attitudes around their notions of teaching and learning. In addition, their research found no evidence of TFA alumni resisting privatization or marketization schemes in education after completing their two-year TFA requirements. It can be suggested that TFA's efforts toward political influence reflect its desires as an organization to maintain a position within neoliberal niches.

For example, their research illustrates TFA's efforts to increase privatizing strategies into public sectors, poignantly evident in the summit panels that advocated for destabilizing teachers' unions and alternative pathways to district leadership positions (p. 20). One participant referenced a "leaked memo" from her region detailing shifting a "pipeline" of corps members to charter schools, also suggested in the literature (Scott, Trujillo, & Rivera, 2016 p. 22). CMOs, or charter management organizations, often have their roots in TFA—such as YES Prep, KIPP, or Uncommon Schools (Ravitch, 2013; Scott, Trujillo, & Rivera, 2016). Providing this is the case, funneling corps members to charter schools calls into question TFA's original intent of placing

their corps members in high-needs schools, as charters are privately managed by outside organizations or operators and often adopt more stringent student codes of conduct. However, it exemplifies TFA's place within neoliberal niches in the education world. From here, TFA has gained a niche in through the neoliberal underpinnings of school choice not only by way of placing corps members in charter schools, but also by way of establishing leadership pipelines for alumni to run schools within their affiliated charter networks.

TFA's Decentralization and Instrumental Teaching

Most recently, TFA has increasingly shifted toward a more decentralized, region-centered approach (Sawchuck, 2016 p. 2) in an effort to place more emphasis on regions to prepare corps members for their teaching placements. Though this seems to illustrate an effort to address the minimal contextual preparation corps members received before this shift, its decentralization efforts still place significant emphasis on corps members' increases in student test scores, and ties this to teacher-corps member evaluations. Higher student test scores aid in securing regional funding. Dependence upon instrumental learning measurements to frame teacher efficacy mutes teacher autonomy and agency, reflecting a neoliberal framing of teaching (Giroux, 2004; Zeichner, Payne, & Brayko, 2015). TFA's decentralization has also moved away from prioritizing and isolating "teacher actions" in favor of coaching around how students respond to the teacher's instruction (Document #34, n.d. pp. 2-16; Sawchuck, 2016 p. 4). With that, each region's ability to gain funding is now tied to outcomes, those of which are directly related to corps members' performance in raising student achievement data (p. 7). Interestingly, in the Dallas region for example, TFA staff has prepared "700 ready-made lessons" for corps members in an order to focus and develop lesson execution (p. 2). These ready-made lessons closely

mirror scripts of work handed down from previous CMs, discouraging teacher autonomy in the process.

And, though this change reflects a more decentralized, region-specific approach to teacher preparation, the dependence upon "ready-made" lessons for corps members highlight TFA's dependence on outcomes to secure funding, or what Dominic called their "bottom line." Scott, Trujillo, and Rivera (2016) highlight TFA's exposure of non-peer reviewed studies that demonstrate corps members' increase in student achievement data as a means to gain organizational funding, a detail Jane associated with the heavy data push her first year as a corps member. This approach perpetuates the adherence to an instrumental and formulaic vision of teaching, asserting the devaluing of "teacher actions" (Sawchuck, 2016 p. 4), yet still coaching corps members around lesson implementation that zeroes in on how students respond to *teacher actions*. In sum, despite TFA's decentralization, narrow outcomes of corps members and their students still drive TFA's organizational practices and visions for teaching and learning.

Summary of Interpretation of Findings

This chapter encompassed TFA's shift in mission relative to the preparation of the participants in this study and its efforts to shape participants' conceptions of teaching. In addition, this chapter highlights TFA's commitment to build an alumni-driven educational movement contingent upon their organizational practices, mission, and values. In revisiting the original research questions driving this study, it seems that TFA does not prepare its corps members for long-term careers in teaching, but rather, for a teaching sprint or temporary teaching experience. The degree to which participants were prepared for roles in the classroom also speaks to TFA's teaching ideology in addition to its semblance of efforts to adhere to its original mission.

The question of whether participants adopted and affirmed aspects of TFA philosophies is best explored through participants' approach to joining TFA in the first place. Despite TFA's ability to appeal to a number of aspirations within and beyond the two-year teaching requirement, the majority of participants framed TFA as a vehicle though which to gain a teaching credential. That being said, participants' own educational experiences and their desires to build relationships with students proved more formative in their teaching philosophies than the stated philosophical approaches of TFA. However, some participants did rely on structure and some semblance of classroom order to sustain a functioning classroom, participants' teaching philosophies were more heavily grounded in contextual learning and relationship development.

Finally, despite a leadership change and organizational shift (Scott, Trujillo, & Rivera, 2016), TFA continues to champion a particular conception of the teacher and of teaching more broadly that reflects a neoliberal framing, which participants either adopted or challenged to varying degrees. In addition, TFA's highly structured, "one-size-fits-all" teaching framework and broader teacher preparation structure illustrates a narrow and instrumental approach to teacher preparation and to the overall learning process. TFA continues to envision education as an equalizer, where its corps members serve as those first in line to fight against educational injustice. The latter illustrated the most enticing aspect of TFA for participants, serving as one neoliberal tenet participants adopted. However, upon arriving in their classrooms, envisioning radical educational change from this vantage point was deemed "unwinnable" and "unrealistic." Some participants expressed the belief in education's capacity to address inequity, but within a larger social context taking historical disenfranchisement into account. Nevertheless, the majority of participants adhered to contextually-grounded, relationship-driven aspects of

teaching, often challenging the neoliberal conceptions of teaching and education brought forth by TFA.

The focus of this study revolved around participants trained during the second era of TFA before its move to decentralize regions and address the "opportunity gap" (Document #78, 2019 para. 9). Though one participant fell outside this category, the preparation structure for her training reflects the second wave of TFA preparation (Sawchuck, 2016; Scott, Trujillo, & Rivera, 2016). Therefore, TFA corps members before or after this second wave may have experienced a different preparation and socialization experience, especially in light of shifting educational policy. The conclusions, implications, and recommendations are thus specific to this participant population.

Finally, as a researcher, I engaged in ongoing critical reflection of the data collection and analysis process, especially in light of my education through a university-based teacher education program and my positionality as a qualitative researcher. Though researcher-as-instrument can pose as a bias in this research method, the critical reflection I adopted endeavored to rationalize this experience. Once again, this chapter represents the story this participant population assisted in constructing. However, it is important to keep in mind other researchers and other participants could have constructed another analysis of the pre, during, and post-TFA experience.

CHAPTER 7. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine the philosophy-shaping of former TFA corps members, and whether their teaching and education philosophies aligned with the philosophical underpinnings of TFA and of neoliberalism. In addition, this study endeavored to examine the socialization efforts of TFA to shape former corps members' understanding of teaching as a temporary or long-term career under a neoliberal framework. Findings illuminated the gaps in teacher preparation that still exist within TFA, in addition to the organization's efforts to build a movement in favor of growing long-term leaders outside the classroom, calling into question whether the organization attempts to address its original mission in combating teacher shortages' in the country's most disenfranchised environments. The latter is evident in TFA's conception of the teacher as the natural teacher: one who possesses far-reaching responsibilities under instrumental pedagogies (see Labaree, 2004; Evans, 2010), a framing that often conflicted with participants' conceptions of teachers and of teaching, while contributing to exhaustion, cynicism, and defeat upon not reaching such grandiose objectives of closing the achievement gap and instituting radical educational change (see Brewer, 2014).

Arguably, we still struggle to conceive of what it means to be a "good" teacher relative to recruitment and induction processes (Darling-Hammond et al., 1995 p. 219). Furthermore, the variance within and between teacher education programs continues to reflect the conflict and fluidity of what "good" teaching means and to whom. Therefore, it is best to focus not just on teacher quality or recruitment, but rather, on better understanding attrition and turnover patterns in order to develop strategies and policies that address teacher preparation, education, and the profession's sustainability on multiple levels (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017 p. 1; Podolsky et al., 2016). Many factors and figures contributed to participants' teaching

experiences, their preparation for this work, and their approach to teaching and education more broadly. In light of these findings and the subsequent analysis, this chapter discusses the conclusions and possible recommendations for those involved in teacher education and preparation—especially those involved in alternative teacher education programs—and for those in education policy, when considering methods to address questions around teacher education, turnover, and attrition. In addition, the subsequent recommendations speak to hopes of investing in teaching as a learning profession (Darling-Hammond & McLaughlin, 1995), and investing in teachers as both professionals and change-agents (Wilson et al., 2016). Finally, recommendations for further research beckon scholars to more deeply investigate TFA's role as a social and political entity within and beyond education (Scott, Trujillo, & Rivera, 2016).

The Importance of Teacher Preparation

From this study and in examining relevant literature, it is my conclusion that TFA does not sufficiently prepare its corps members for even short-term careers in teaching, let alone long-term teaching careers. TFA frames teaching as a temporary, stopover career before something seemingly more esteemed or something that can elicit allegedly more impactful change exacerbates the already existing shortages in the very communities that TFA attempts to address. In addition, TFA does not help to esteem teaching as a valuable career by marketing the profession as a stepping-stone, thereby decreasing corps members' desires to remain in the classroom as a result of its assumed low status within the job market (Labaree, 2004). And, though TFA maintains its prestige within the educational landscape through name and network alone, it hinders the ability for the teaching profession to not only gain esteem, but it also hinders the profession from filling high-need vacancies long-term.

As participants readily agreed, teaching is noble, and that it is a career "above" all others. However, participants arrived at these conclusions after time in the classroom; whereas much of the struggle now rests in motivating students toward the first step of just considering teaching as a career. Upon making the decision to enter the profession, it is important that pre-service teachers be prepared for the sociopolitical and pedagogical demands of their work, and thus supported through their first few years in the profession, thereby lessening the revolving door within teaching and creating long-term sustainability in high-needs areas.

Shaping Attitudes around Teaching

TFA promotes a progressive neoliberal conception of teaching, most notably to its corps members. However, because of TFA's enormous influence in spheres beyond education, their preparation that includes this conception of teaching has gained traction in some education discourse circles that champion increased teacher accountability and high-stakes testing to examine student growth. TFA's progressive neoliberal conception of teaching is grounded in its social justice framework, beckoning impressionable young idealists to "fight" against educational inequity (Document #32, 2010 p. 12), proclaiming these individuals the "best and brightest" for this endeavor (see Stern & Johnston, 2013). This messaging appeals to the idealism of those endeavoring to address social inequity and who find themselves championing progressive causes. However, upon entering institute and one's placement classroom, TFA prescribes a technical, structured, neoliberal conception of teaching, with a teacher's worth contingent upon student outcomes, even as the organization attempts to pivot toward a more decentralized approach (Sawchuck, 2016). Nevertheless, as participants evidenced in this particular study, it is to the discretion of the individual corps member how much, if at all, they choose to adopt TFA's teaching ideology for their own classrooms. In some cases, prior

educational experiences were far more influential and formative in shaping teaching philosophies than TFA's frameworks and preparation.

The Movement's Progressive Neoliberal Agenda

Finally, through this study's data and in examining related literature, TFA is considered a political organization with an objective of creating and sustaining a movement to influence sectors beyond education. TFA frames teaching as not only a stepping-stone career, but also as an entry point into a socially and politically lucrative network that illustrates one of TFA's most attractive points as an organization for college graduates. In building its movement, TFA has situated itself within educational and political circles that work to further its organizational mission, its recruitment and preparation of corps members, and the creation and sustaining of pipelines for alumni after their two-year requirement. From here, it is important to question the extent to which TFA is contributing to the marketization of public education and the continued deskilling of the teaching profession on a broader scale. Creating public-private partnerships to build these alumni pipelines are key to maintaining their status within educational and political reform circles, in addition to sustaining and expanding their educational movement among alumni in private and public sectors. The following recommendations take into account the conclusions of this study, the relevant literature that grounds this study's findings and analysis, and a vision for the future of teacher education.

Supporting Teacher Education, Development, and Retention

For a few participants, their relationships with administrators directly impacted their emerging teaching philosophies, interpretation of their teaching placements, and decisions of whether to remain in the profession beyond their two-year requirement. Because teaching assignments are entirely specific to the state, region, and community in which one practices,

policies should invest in principal induction and preparation to assist in contextual support for newer teachers (Podolsky et al., 2016). School-based and sponsoring institution personnel must be ready and willing to support new teachers and demonstrate effective coaching and communication with them, especially through their first couple of years in the classroom. These measures aid in teacher development, teacher retention, and overall job satisfaction. Therefore, developing accredited principal induction programs illustrates a necessary step in providing school leaders with the preparation to support newer teachers in their school assignments (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). School leaders should exercise the inclusiveness and growth mindset in supporting their staff through creating supportive working conditions, surveying teachers about their work environment, incentivizing professional development, and building in colleague collaboration opportunities (Podolsky et al., 2016 p. vii-ix). Both Jane and Annie spoke to the importance of administration in helping to create positive school culture, in addition to framing and celebrating teachers as leaders. Their suggestions highlight the importance of administration's capacity to create teacher-leadership opportunities and creating supportive working conditions for such opportunities to exist.

Policymakers can implement numerous efforts to support teacher education, preparation, and retention. States and local districts can increase their timeliness in hiring decisions (Darling-Hammond et al., 1995 p. 223). However, this might not address the "speed dating" method of interviewing adopted by TFA. Nevertheless, as late budgets can hamper schools' hiring processes, adopting a timely allocation of funds to individual schools can ensure that institutions are adequately prepared in advance to address their vacancies, even allowing schools to adopt a multi-step interview process to ensure good-fit teacher candidates (Podolsky et al., 2016). As states and districts can loosely define out-of-field practitioners in order to quickly fill vacancies

with underprepared teachers, it is best to adopt research-based definitions of out-of-field or inexperienced in an effort to bring in teachers who are highly-qualified in content and pedagogy (Podolsky et al., 2016 p. 52).

In addition, it is important to enact measures that combat the discursive framing of teaching as an unattractive or lowly career choice. Local, state, and federal policies can invest in teacher induction and retention through making the profession an attractive career. Reports state one of the primary hesitations at entering teaching focuses on its low status and pay (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Podolsky et al., 2016), which most participants from this study echoed. Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond (2017) and Podolsky et al. (2016) acknowledge the importance of increasing teacher salaries in order to frame teaching as a specialized, professional career, in addition to giving teachers a living wage. Their research also advocates for teacher compensation packages that include loan forgiveness, incentives for professional development, and subsidized housing. Retaining teachers in high-needs communities sparks the concerted, collective effort toward changing how the greater public values teaching and teachers, especially those not from the communities in which they teach. Teachers and teaching more generally must be understood as valuable and integral to school-community and district development through the recognition for their work and commitment to a lifelong and personal career.

Expanding Teacher Preparation and Contextual Knowledge

The majority of participants acknowledged that five-eight weeks is not enough teacher preparation. In principle, effective induction programs are gradual ones that allow novices to develop their skills in a safe environment (Evans, 2010 p. 197). Though TFA's decision to add one-two weeks of region-specific induction attempts to alleviate the minimal contextual

knowledge corps members originally received, corps members are still limited in their exposure to lesson demonstrations outside of former corps members with just a few years of experience (Stern & Johnston 2013 p. 21). Therefore, it might behoove TFA to "consider expanding its two-year commitment to three years," allowing first-year corps members to function as aides or paraprofessionals (Brewer, 2014 p. 260). Such models mirror teacher residencies that encourage budding teachers to learn under the mentorship of a master teacher and adopt a gradual release of newer teachers into the teaching profession. Literature supports teacher residencies as an effort to address teacher preparation and retention through their explicit structures for coaching and feedback from a mentor teacher (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017; Podolsky et al., 2016).

According to Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin (1995) and Evans (2010), teaching and teacher learning are contextually situated. As a result, it is the responsibility of TFA and of school leadership to prepare and properly induct teachers into their educational communities on a "macro" level (Evans, 2010). One participant illuminated TFA's recruitment strategies in order to diversify their corps, in addition to its efforts toward addressing the lack of contextual knowledge corps members had received in previous years. These changes are welcomed and necessary given the feedback and anecdotes shared with me as a researcher from the second-wave TFA corps members. The region-specific insight these participants so desperately craved (with the exception of Annie who was fortunate enough to have an MTLD highly familiar with the area and with the educational landscape in her region) seems to have been one piece of feedback that TFA has addressed nationally (see Sawchuck, 2016). One method in which the organization has addressed this is evident in their placement of particular regions at institutes that more closely mirror the regions where corps members are placed and where they will be teaching

in the fall. This, to an extent, gives corps members a better idea of the kinds of issues they may experience in their placement region, especially in terms of the sociopolitical factors that shape the position of teacher in particular districts, cities, and regions of the country.

In keeping with the expansion of contextual knowledge, it is important to envision educational change as something that occurs in multiple forms. However, instrumental teaching and learning measurements stifle educational change (Stern & Johnston, 2013 p. 13). Not recognizing that change can and should occur within individual schools, especially through retaining and developing teachers to be pillars of those communities for years and decades to come, is to approach the question of teacher quality with a narrow conception of the multiple systems at play in sustaining this educational change. Sawchuck (2016) notes the Dallas-Fort Worth strategy of preparing corps members with pre-made lessons to focus on and coach around lesson execution. Scripting of lessons or working too heavily with templates diminishes both teacher autonomy and the role of the students and school community in the educational process. Though this strategy assists regions in garnering funding for TFA in particular areas—as regional funding depends heavily on how much corps members grow student data—it negates the community-centered, region-specific approach TFA is attempting to take in light of previous criticisms.

Recommendations for Further Research

Finally, Scott, Trujillo, and Rivera (2016) note that more literature generated around TFA, and the platforms on which to support or challenge TFA's policies also create opportunities through which TFA has the capacity to address criticisms in policy and practice (p. 23). Nevertheless, it remains to be seen whether TFA's recent efforts to address issues of contextual preparation, diversifying recruitment, and decentralizing leadership shape corps

members' desires—and whether they feel prepared enough—to stay in teaching long-term. With

the level of teacher dissatisfaction over the increased accountability now part of their work, we

must recognize the existing technical structures that impede teachers' growth and autonomy in

their profession (Podolsky et al., 2016). However, literature suggests that TFA still falls short of

acknowledging and addressing systemic inequities that impact widespread educational and social

change (Scott, Trujillo, & Rivera, 2016).

As much as TFA's efforts illustrate an organization progressing in the right direction, the

detriment through lack of corps member support, the absence of community connections, and

framing teaching as a temporary and stepping-stone career has indelibly shaped the second-era

TFA corps members. In addition, as these corps members move into school, district, state, and

federal leadership roles, it is pertinent we investigate how former corps members make meaning

of their time in TFA, coupled with the organization's ability to influence and shape public

discourse around teachers and around education (Scott, Trujillo, & Rivera, 2016 p. 15). Not

enough literature exists around the ways that TFA represents a social and political agent in not

only the education space, but also the nonprofit sector at large, and how this position can impact

the local, state, and federal education policies coming forward. From here, as this era of TFA

corps members venture into leadership roles, some bring with them technical models that focus

on outcomes instead of contextualized understandings of communities; and it is important to

expand our understanding of these evolving leadership styles. In addition, it does no favors that

those in leadership roles—whether TFA-prepared or not—are still left to address the educational

and social inequities that neoliberal policies continue to neglect (p. 18). And, though TFA has

made strides in moving toward a community-centered, decentralized approach to teaching and

leadership, it is important to wait and see, and later investigate, the impact of such decisions on students, corps members, and educational policy.

Research Study Reflection

I do want—and have always intended, from the beginning of this study—to highlight the significance and the gravity of the decision to embark on a deeply personal career that is teaching, and how all those involved in educating and preparing teachers should recognize this decision as something deeply rooted in the budding teacher's own educational experiences, both positive and negative. Furthermore, it is integral that teacher educators, coaches, and school leadership utilize these unique, individualized experiences in the training, preparation, and education of *individual* teachers, rather than developing formulas or scripts that speak to an alleged general population of practitioners and how they allegedly should teach. Harnessing these philosophy-shaping educational experiences as informative snapshots into teacher practice grounds superiors' understanding of those pre-service teachers and their developing pedagogies.

Moreover, and probably most importantly, it is integral that current and former practitioners be included in the decision-making processes that impact the profession, not limited to nonprofits that may advocate for particular education agendas (see Scott, Trujillo, & Rivera, 2016). Arguably, that is one example of how we've arrived at a culture of teacher-scapegoating in the first place (Kumashiro, 2012). As mentioned, life histories of teachers are often not included in academic literature, though this is especially true of policy-drafting circles and conversations (Zeichner & Tabachnick, 1985). I found it both empowering and heartbreaking that I could speak a common language with my participants around teaching because I understood the responsibilities—both all-encompassing and technical—placed upon them, the

deeply personal and impactful work they had chosen—whether for the short or long-term—and the integral role support systems play in the development of emerging teachers.

As much as Runté (1995) argues that the argument of professionalizing teaching is not as clear-cut, I believe it is important to move in the direction of professionalization on both discursive and legislative levels. In order to make strides in professionalizing the teaching profession, highlighting and celebrating the extensive knowledge, skills, and expertise that teachers must develop over time, teachers' voices must be elevated to platforms that allow them to contribute to decisions that benefit public schools, communities, students, and their fellow practitioners. As teachers continue to develop their content and pedagogical knowledge, it is vital they view this developmental process within the classroom as a worthy decision to make, and one for which they feel prepared. However, the "bad teacher" motif pervasive in circles of discourse does no favors for efforts toward elevation and increasing the esteem and attractiveness of the teaching profession (Kumashiro, 2012). As evidenced in the last six years, collective teacher organization is not only powerful, but also infectious, and with good reason. However, from these points of resistance, we must begin to think of teaching differently: as a highly skilled, deeply personal, and valuable profession worthy of its members, their stories, and the support necessary to thrive in their school communities for decades to come.

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Appendix A. Interview Guide

Three-segment interview guide: Focused Life History, Details of Experience, and Reflection on Meaning

Basics (part of 1st interview-Focused Life History):
1. Name, occupation, hometown, TFA placement and year in the program. (If TFA teachers chose to teach completely removed from or back in their hometowns, this would open up a line of questioning such as…)
2. If returning to hometown:
   a. Why'd you return for TFA? What was significant about your educational experience that motivated you to not only return to your hometown, but to be a teacher here? Would you have returned in any other work capacity?
   b. Why or why not?
3. If teaching in a completely different area:
   a. Why did you choose to work in a completely different area from where you grew up? Would you have chosen this path with or without TFA? Why or why not?
   b. What is significant or important to you about teaching in an area unlike where you grew up?

Education (Focused Life History):
1. Talk to me about your educational experience as a student.
   a. Where were these schools? What kind were they? How were they selected?
2. What place does education hold in your upbringing?
   a. How might this have come about?
   b. What do your parents do? How might their careers have shaped your value in education?
3. Fondest memories of your teachers?
   a. What was special about these? Their classrooms? Attitudes? Practices?
4. Least pleasant memories?
5. Most vivid/important memory as a student.
   a. Why this memory?
   b. Do you ever revisit this? If so, when? Under what circumstances?
6. How would you evaluate your educational experience?
   a. What have you gained? What seems to be missing?
   b. If anything missing, how do you feel you remedied this as a teacher, or attempted to?
   c. What was your biggest challenge as a student? How'd you respond to this?

TFA (Details of Experience):
1. Why TFA?
2. What was most captivating about TFA; what resonated with you and what didn't?
3. Before TFA, what was your conception of teaching?
   a. How did that change after you began with TFA? (Were any of your assumptions challenged or changed? Which ones? How so? Were any confirmed or deepened?)

4. Describe your summer institute.
   a. What kind of people did you meet there? What were their educational experiences like in comparison to your own?
   b. Did these people embrace the TFA philosophy? How so?
   c. What were your days/evenings like? How much time did you spend planning, sleeping, taking time to yourself? How much time was spent for TFA-specific PDs, readings, etc.?
5. How did these experiences develop you as a teacher? What were the main things you learned?
   a. Were there things you bristled at, or questioned, or felt a little uncomfortable with? What? Why?
6. What was your relationship like with your MTLD/Program Supervisor (depending on corps year)? How'd their position in coaching you challenge or enhance the one with your school principal (s)?
7. What are TFA teachers' opinions of TFA? What is your opinion?
8. What do you find most admirable about the organization? The least admirable? Explain.
   a. What do they do well? What might they improve on?
   b. What would you do differently (if you were to decide their approach)? Why?
9. Why do you think these kinds of organizations, like TFA, exist?

Teaching and Beyond (Reflection on Meaning):
1. What grades and subjects did you teach? Where, when, and for how long?
2. Why teaching?
   a. What does it mean to be a teacher?
   b. What surprised you the most about being a teacher?
3. Walk me through your most rewarding teaching moment.
   a. Sometimes, teachers talk about having "wins" over the course of the day. Do you consider this your biggest "victory" or "win" as a teacher? Or were these other things?
   b. How'd you respond to these wins? How did your supervisor (s) interpret these wins?
4. Do you miss teaching?
   a. This may lead to particular description of school, district, staff, policies.
5. Walk me through your most difficult teaching moment.
   a. This may lead to particular description of school, district, staff, policies.
   b. Was this indicative of your biggest challenge as a teacher, or was it something else?
6. How'd you respond to this? How'd your supervisor (s) interpret these challenges?
7. Talk to me about the school system(s) in which you have taught.
8. What kind of responsibility did you have when you were a teacher?
   a. What kinds of responsibilities were absent? How'd that shape your understanding of teaching?
   b. What did that responsibility look like?
9. Talk to me about your former/current students.

     a. What did you want them to walk away with? How was that similar to what you wanted out of school?

10. What do you think has shaped the teacher you became? What were the main influences… in the school? In the district? In the organizational context (i.e., TFA, or other)? In the community? In your background?
11. What did you want to take away from teaching? From TFA?
12. Talk to me about your career now. Why this career? Any similarities or stark differences between this and teaching?
     a. Did teaching prepare you for that? If so, how?
     b. Did TFA prepare you for your career now? If so, how?
     c. Were there strengths or shortcomings in that preparation? If so, what were they?

Appendix B: Documents List

1. Teach for America former corps member (n.d.). Sample CM agenda for 1st day of school. Retrieved October 18, 2018, from research participant.
2. Teach for America (n.d.). Appendix C: Examples of resources for Reaching out and Communicating with Families. Retrieved October 18, 2018, from research participant.
3. Teach for America (n.d.). Appendix B: Examples of resources to help in Leveraging your Student Tracking information (customize as needed). Retrieved October 18, 2018, from research participant.
4. Teach for America (n.d.). Assisting Struggling Readers with Decoding and Fluency/Be the Teacher: How to Begin your School Year With Calm, Confidence and a Clear Plan. Retrieved October 18, 2018, from research participant.
5. Teach for America (n.d.). Handout 1: Guidelines for Collecting and Tracking Formative Assessment Data
6. Teach for America (n.d.). ECE Differentiated CMA Session: Classroom Management. Retrieved October 18, 2018, from research participant.
7. Teach for America (n.d.). Core CMA 1 Handout 1: The Purposes of the Rubric—What it is and What it is Not
8. Teach for America (n.d.). Using a DRA-Linked ISC Week-by-Week. Retrieved October 18, 2018, from research participant.
9. Teach for America (n.d.). National Geographic Lesson Plan (part of CMA4—Curriculum: Using your Curriculum to Plan with Your ISC). Retrieved October 18, 2018, from research participant.
10. Teach for America (n.d.). Menu of Options (from CMA 7: Adjusting Instruction Based on Mid-Institute Analysis). Retrieved October 18, 2018, from research participant.
11. Teach for America (n.d.). Guidelines for CM Work Time: Reflection on Mid-Institute Course Adjustment and Classroom Culture. Retrieved October 18, 2018, from research participant.
12. Teach for America (n.d.). Collaborative Management Plan—Grades 6-12. Retrieved October 18, 2018, from research participant.
13. Teach for America (n.d.). Corps Member Action Plan. Retrieved October 18, 2018, from research participant.
14. Teach for America (n.d.). Investment Plan. Retrieved October 18, 2018, from research participant.
15. Teach for America (n.d.). Pre-Observation Reflective Guide. Retrieved October 18, 2018, from research participant.
16. Teach for America (n.d.). Early Childhood Observation Note-Taking Template. Retrieved October 18, 2018, from research participant.
17. Teach for America (n.d.). Pre-K ISC Assessment & Tracking Workshop (Handouts 1-5). Retrieved October 18, 2018, from research participant.
18. Teach for America (n.d.). Collaborative Investment Calendar. Retrieved October 18, 2018, from research participant.
19. Teach for America (n.d.). Co-Investigation Worksheet. Retrieved October 18, 2018, from research participant.
20. Teach for America (n.d.). Diversity, Community, & Achievement 1. Retrieved October 18, 2018, from research participant.

21. Teach for America (n.d.). DCA 1: How Biases, Archetypes, and the Diversity Competencies Affect Teachers' Actions and Student Achievement. Retrieved October 18, 2018, from research participant.
22. Teach for America (n.d.). Diversity, Community, & Achievement 2. Retrieved October 18, 2018, from research participant.
23. Teach for America (n.d.). DCA 2: Working with Families. Retrieved October 18, 2018, from research participant.
24. Teach for America (n.d.). Diversity, Community, & Achievement 3. Retrieved October 18, 2018, from research participant.
25. Teach for America (n.d.). DCA 3: Behavioral Expectations, Classroom Culture, and Diversity. Retrieved October 18, 2018, from research participant.
26. Teach for America (n.d.). Diversity, Community, & Achievement 4. Retrieved October 18, 2018, from research participant.
27. Teach for America (n.d.). DCA 4: The Power and Challenge of Holding High Academic Expectations. Retrieved October 18, 2018, from research participant.
28. Teach for America (n.d.). Diversity, Community and Achievement 5. Retrieved October 18, 2018, from research participant.
29. Teach for America (n.d.). DCA 5: Working with Colleagues and Administrators. Retrieved October 18, 2018, from research participant.
30. Teach for America (n.d.). Diversity, Community, and Achievement 6. Retrieved October 18, 2018, from research participant.
31. Teach for America (n.d.). DCA 6: Thinking Back, Looking Forward II. Retrieved October 18, 2018, from research participant.
32. Farr, S., Teach for America (2010). *Teaching as leadership: the highly effective teacher's guide to closing the achievement gap*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
33. Teach for America (n.d.). Teaching as Leadership Institute Rubric. Retrieved October 18, 2018, from research participant.
34. Teach for America (n.d.). Teaching as Leadership Comprehensive Rubric. Retrieved October 18, 2018, from research participant.
35. Teach for America (n.d.). SD1: Expectations and Partnerships. Retrieved October 18, 2018, from research participant.[3]
36. Teach for America (n.d.). INV1: Getting Invested in Student Investment. Retrieved October 18, 2018, from research participant.[4]
37. Teach for America (n.d.). PLAN3: Building a Lesson Plan. Retrieved October 18, 2018, from research participant.
38. Teach for America (n.d.). PLAN5: Analyzing and Responding to Data. Retrieved October 18, 2018, from research participant.[5]
39. Teach for America (n.d.). PLAN9: Understanding Disability and the Continuum of Services—Special Education. Retrieved October 18, 2018, from research participant.[6]

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[3] Doc. 35 contains the following handouts: TFA Core Values, Professional Expectations, CM Guide to the Improvement Plan Process.

[4] Doc. 36 contains the following handouts: Investment Video & Plan Note-Taking Template; Handout 2: Investment is Challenging!

[5] Doc. 38 contains the following handouts: Effective Data Analysis; Instructional Strategies; Student Data Analysis.

40. Teach for America (n.d.). MGMT5: Planning a Response to Chronic Misbehavior. Retrieved October 18, 2018, from research participant.[7]
41. Teach for America (n.d.). EXEC2: Presenting Academic Content. Retrieved October 18, 2018, from research participant.[8]
42. Teach for America (n.d.). EXEC Review: Asserting Authority II. Retrieved October 18, 2018, from research participant.[9]
43. Teach for America (n.d.). SD2: Introduction to Institute and Summer School Instruction. Retrieved October 18, 2018, from research participant.[10]
44. Teach for America (n.d.). MGMT1: Developing a Mindset, Voice & Plan for Strong Management. Retrieved October 18, 2018, from research participant.[11]
45. Duncan-Andrade (2009). Note to Educators: Hope Required when Growing Roses in Concrete. *Harvard Educational Review, 79*(2) pp.181-194. Received on October 17, 2017 from research participant.
46. Teach for America (Comp., n.d.), *Assertive Discipline: A Quick Guide for Corps Members*. (Excerpted from Canter, L. *Assertive Discipline*, 4th ed., 2010, Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree Press.
47. Teach for America Regional MTLD (n.d.). [Region] Vision. Retrieved on October 17, 2017 from research participant.
48. Teach for America (2014). Corps Member Handbook. Retrieved on October 17, 2017 from research participant.
49. Teach for America (2010). Formative Assessment Guide. Retrieved October 18, 2018, from research participant.
50. Teach for America (n.d.). Faculty Advisor Meeting Agenda-High School. Retrieved October 18, 2018, from research participant.
51. Teach for America (n.d.). Rehearsing Instructional Delivery: The Components of an Effective Lesson. Retrieved October 18, 2018, from research participant.[12]

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[6] Doc. 39 contains the following handouts: The Process for Special Education Services; Special Education Scenarios; Reflective Output.

[7] Doc. 40 contains the following handouts: Chronic Misbehavior: Identifying Solutions; Chronic Misbehavior: Case Study; Responding to Chronic Misbehavior: Reflection/Planning Your Response.

[8] Doc. 41 contains the following handouts: Handout 1: Executing Effective Introductions to Content; Handout 2/3: Option A/B Elementary/Secondary Video: Emphasize Key Points; Handout 3/: Supporting Documents for Elementary/Secondary Snappy Practice; Handout 5: Command Student Attention.

[9] Doc. 42 contains the following handouts: Handout 1: Concrete, Specific, Replicable Techniques; Handout 2: Video Clip Transcripts; Handout 3: Video Clip Transcripts; Handout 4: Partner Practice.

[10] Doc. 43 contains the following handouts: Handout 1: Corps Member Reflections; Handout 2: Tips for Success at Institute; Handout 3: Institute Staff & Structure Descriptions; Handout 4: Scenarios.

[11] Doc. 44 contains the following handouts: Handout 1: Management Note-Taking Template; Handout 2: Collaborative Management Plan.

[12] Doc. 51 contains the following handouts: Detailed Protocol; Presenter Preparation Template—5 Step Lesson Plan; Presenter Preparation Template—Read Aloud/Shared Reading Lesson

52. Teach for America (n.d.). Reflecting on Data: Using Video Footage or Observation Notes. Retrieved October 18, 2018, from research participant.[13]

53. Teach for America (n.d.). Protocol: Rehearsing an Upcoming Lesson. Retrieved October 18, 2018, from research participant.[14]

54. Teach for America (n.d.). Rehearsing Classroom Management: Asserting Authority—Role Plays. Retrieved October 18, 2018, from research participant.[15]

55. Teach for America (n.d.). Reflecting on Data: Looking at Student Work. Retrieved October 18, 2018, from research participant.[16]

56. Teach for America (n.d.). Thinking about Dilemmas: Teachers are Decision Makers. Decisions are Hard to Make. Retrieved October 18, 2018, from research participant.[17]

57. Teach for America (n.d.). Pre-K ISC Lesson Plan Templates. Retrieved October 18, 2018, from research participant.[18]

58. Teach for America (n.d.). Writing Lesson Planning Clinic Worksheet. Retrieved October 18, 2018, from research participant.

59. Teach for America (n.d.). Writing Lesson Plan Template. Retrieved October 18, 2018, from research participant.

60. Teach for America (n.d.). Shared Reading Lesson Planning Clinic Worksheet. Retrieved October 18, 2018, from research participant.

61. Teach for America (n.d.). Shared Reading Lesson Plan Template. Retrieved October 18, 2018, from research participant.

62. Teach for America (n.d.). Read Aloud & Shared Reading Lesson Planning Clinic Worksheet. Retrieved October 18, 2018, from research participant.

Plans; " "—Word Study Lesson Plans; Reflection Questions for Observers—5 Step Lesson Plan; Reflection Questions for Observers—Read Aloud/Shared Reading Lesson Plan; Reflection Questions for Observers—Word Study Lesson Plans; Next Steps Template—Presenter; Next Step Template—Observers.

[13] Doc. 52 contains the following handouts: Guidelines for Reflection; Next Steps Template.

[14] Doc. 53 contains the following handouts: Detailed Protocol; Preparation Template—Instructional Delivery; Note-Taking Template for Observers—Instructional Delivery; Preparation Template—Procedures; Note-Taking Template for Observers—Procedures; Next Steps Template—Presenter/Observer.

[15] Doc. 54 contains the following handouts: Detailed Protocol; Set One—Asserting Authority Preemptively; Set Two—Asserting Authority in Response to Minor Misbehavior; Set Three—Asserting Authority in Response to Major Misbehavior; Set Four—Asserting Authority in Various Situations; Note-Taking Template for Observers; Protocol Reflection.

[16] Doc. 55 contains the following handouts: Detailed Protocol; Guidelines for Learning from Student Work; Next Steps Template—Presenter; Next Steps Template—Participants.

[17] Doc. 56 contains the following handouts: Detailed Protocol: Dilemma Brainstorm; Presenter Preparation Template; Protocol Reflection—Presenter; Protocol Reflection—Participants.

[18] Doc. 57 contains the following handouts: Opening Circle Lesson Plan, Reading Comprehension Lesson Plan (standards 1, 2, and 3; small group read-aloud; small group writing #1), Outdoor Time Lesson Plan, Math Lesson Plans (whole group, independent practice, math center #1, #2, #3, and #4), Afternoon Circle Lesson Plan, Word Study Phonics Lesson Plans (lit. center #1, #2, #3, and #4), Shared Reading Lesson Plan, Closing Circle Lesson Plan.

63. Teach for America (n.d.). Read Aloud Lesson Planning Clinic Worksheet. Retrieved October 18, 2018, from research participant.

64. Teach for America (n.d.). Read Aloud Lesson Plan. Retrieved October 18, 2018, from research participant.

65. Teach for America (n.d.). Word Study Lesson Planning Clinic Worksheet. Retrieved October 18, 2018, from research participant.

66. Teach for America (n.d.). Word Study Lesson Plan. Retrieved October 18, 2018, from research participant.

67. Teach for America (n.d.). Five-Step Lesson Planning Clinic Worksheet. Retrieved October 18, 2018, from research participant.

68. Teach for America (n.d.). Five-Step Lesson Plan Template. Retrieved October 18, 2018, from research participant.

69. Teach for America (n.d.). Crafting a Transformational Vision & Identifying What it Will Take to Get There. Retrieved on September 17, 2018 from research participant.

70. Jane (n.d.). *Big Goal and Vision: [Region] 2013-2014*. Unpublished raw data. Retrieved on November 12, 2018 from research participant.

71. Teach for America (Presenter). (n.d.). *RRR Strategies Secondary* [Lecture]. Retrieved on November 12, 2018 from research participant.

72. Teach for America (Presenter). (n.d.). *Proof Point Community #1: High School Math "Say What?"* [Lecture]. Retrieved on November 12, 2018 from research participant.

73. Teach for America (Ed.). (2009). Teaching as Leadership. Retrieved February 23, 2019, from Teaching as Leadership website: http://www.teachingasleadership.org

74. Teach for America Inc. (2017a). Our Impact: Teach for America. Retrieved September 6, 2017, from Teach for America website: https://www.teachforamerica.org/about-us/our-mission/our-impact

75. Teach for America Inc. (2017b). Our Mission. Retrieved September 25, 2017, from Teach for America website: https://www.teachforamerica.org/about-us/our-mission

76. Teach for America Inc. (2019). Our History. Retrieved February 1, 2019 from Teach for America website: https://www.teachforamerica.org/what-we-do/history

77. Teach for America Inc. (2019). Our Impact. Retrieved February 1, 2019 from Teach for America website: https://www.teachforamerica.org/what-we-do/impact

78. Teach for America Inc. (2019). The Challenge. Retrieved February 1, 2019 from Teach for America website: https://www.teachforamerica.org/what-we-do/the-challenge

Appendix C. IRB Approval and Amendment Approval Forms

DEPAUL UNIVERSITY

Research Involving Human Subjects
NOTICE OF INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD ACTION

To: Angela Kraemer-Holland, Graduate Student, College of Education

Date: August 1, 2018

Re: Research Protocol # AK062018EDU
           "The Shaping of Teacher Identity and Teaching Philosophies"

Please review the following important information about the review of your proposed research activity.

Review Details
This submission is an initial submission. Your research project meets the criteria for Expedited review under 45 CFR 45 CFR 46.110 under the following categories:

"(5) Research involving materials (data, documents, records, or specimens) that have been collected, or will be collected solely for nonresearch purposes (such as medical treatment or diagnosis)."

"(6) Collection of data from voice, video, digital, or image recordings made for research purposes."

"(7) Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies."

Approval Details
Your research was originally reviewed on July 16, 2018 and revisions were requested. The revisions you submitted on July 17, 2018 were reviewed and approved on August 1, 2018.

Approval Period: August 1, 2018- July 31, 2019

Approved Consent, Parent/Guardian Permission, or Assent Materials:
1) Adult Consent, version August 1,2 018 (attached)

Other approved study documents:
1) Recruitment flyer, version 8/1/2018 (attached)
2) Recruitment email, version 7/17/2018 (attached)

Number of approved participants: 14 Total
You should not exceed this total number of subjects without prospectively submitting an amendment to the IRB requesting an increase in subject number.

Funding Source: 1) None

Approved Performance sites: 1) DePaul University

<u>*Reminders*</u>
- Only the most recent IRB-approved versions of consent, parent/legal guardian permission, or assent forms may be used in association with this project.

- Any changes to the funding source or funding status must be sent to the IRB as an amendment.

- Prior to implementing revisions to project materials or procedures, you must submit an amendment application detailing the changes to the IRB for review and receive notification of approval.

- You must promptly report any problems that have occurred involving research participants to the IRB in writing.

- If your project will continue beyond the approval period indicated above, you are responsible for submitting a continuing review report at least 3 weeks prior to the expiration date. The continuing review form can be downloaded from the IRB web page.

- **Once the research is completed, you must send a final closure report for the research to the IRB.**

The Board would like to thank you for your efforts and cooperation and wishes you the best of luck on your research. If you have any questions, please contact me by telephone at (312) 362-7593 or by email at sloesspe@depaul.edu.

For the Board,

Susan Loess-Perez, MS, CIP, CCRC
Director of Research Compliance
Office of Research Services

Cc: Karen Monkman, PhD, Faculty Sponsor, College of Education

DEPAUL UNIVERSITY

Research Involving Human Subjects
NOTICE OF INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD ACTION

To: Angela Kraemer-Holland, Graduate Student, College of Education

Date: August 17, 2018

Re: Research Protocol # AK062018EDU-R1
"The Shaping of Teacher Identity and Teaching Philosophies"

Please review the following important information about the review of your proposed research activity.

Review Details

This submission is an Amendment. Amendment R1 involves: 1) expanding recruitment methods to include reaching out to professors and alumni coordinators to forward the recruitment flyer, posting the recruitment flyer in additional schools and coffee shops or bookstores, and reaching out to the PI's personal network, 2) revising the recruitment flyer, 3) adding three recruitment email scripts.

Your research project continues to meet the criteria for Expedited review under 45 CFR 45 CFR 46.110 under the following categories:

"(5) Research involving materials (data, documents, records, or specimens) that have been collected, or will be collected solely for nonresearch purposes (such as medical treatment or diagnosis)."

"(6) Collection of data from voice, video, digital, or image recordings made for research purposes."

"(7) Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies."

Approval Details

Your research Amendment was originally reviewed on August 15, 2018 and revisions were requested. The revisions you submitted on August 16, 2018 were reviewed and further revisions were requested on August 17, 2018. The revisions you submitted on August 17, 2018 were reviewed and approved on August 17, 2018.

Amendment Approval Period: August 17, 2018 – July 31, 2019

Approved Consent, Parent/Guardian Permission, or Assent Materials:
1) Adult Consent, version August 1, 2018 (unchanged)

Other approved study documents:
1) Recruitment flyer, version 8/17/2018 (attached)
2) Recruitment email, version 7/17/2018 (unchanged)
3) Email Script for Acquaintances, version 08/17/2018 (attached)

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4) Email Script for Professor/Alumni Coordinator for whom I did not receive contact information from someone affiliated with the university, version 08/17/2018 (attached)
5) Email Script for Professor/Alumni Coordinator for whom I received contact information from someone affiliated with the university, version 08/17/2018 (attached)

Number of approved participants: 14 Total
You should not exceed this total number of subjects without prospectively submitting an amendment to the IRB requesting an increase in subject number.
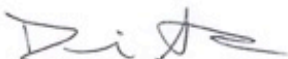
Funding Source: 1) None

Approved Performance sites: 1) DePaul University

Reminders
- Only the most recent IRB-approved versions of consent, parent/legal guardian permission, or assent forms may be used in association with this project.
- Any changes to the funding source or funding status must be sent to the IRB as an amendment.
- Prior to implementing revisions to project materials or procedures, you must submit an amendment application detailing the changes to the IRB for review and receive notification of approval.
- You must promptly report any problems that have occurred involving research participants to the IRB in writing.
- If your project will continue beyond the approval period indicated above, you are responsible for submitting a continuing review report at least 3 weeks prior to the expiration date. The continuing review form can be downloaded from the IRB web page.
- **Once the research is completed, you must send a final closure report for the research to the IRB.**

The Board would like to thank you for your efforts and cooperation and wishes you the best of luck on your research. If you have any questions, please contact me by telephone at (312) 362-7592 or by email at dalfaro@depaul.edu.

For the Board,

Diana Alfaro, MS
Assistant Director of Research Compliance
Office of Research Services

Cc: Karen Monkman, PhD, Faculty Sponsor, College of Education

DEPAUL UNIVERSITY

Research Involving Human Subjects
NOTICE OF INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD ACTION

To: Angela Kraemer-Holland, Graduate Student, College of Education

Date: October 10, 2018

Re: Research Protocol # AK062018EDU-R2
"The Shaping of Teacher Identity and Teaching Philosophies"

Please review the following important information about the review of your proposed research activity.

Review Details
This submission is an Amendment. Amendment R2 involves: 1) the addition of new recruitment strategies within the Chicagoland area; and 2) the addition of previously collected data from pilot study participants.

Your research project continues to meet the criteria for Expedited review under 45 CFR 45 CFR 46.110 under the following categories:

> *"(5) Research involving materials (data, documents, records, or specimens) that have been collected, or will be collected solely for nonresearch purposes (such as medical treatment or diagnosis)."*

> *"(6) Collection of data from voice, video, digital, or image recordings made for research purposes."*

> *"(7) Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies."*

Approval Details
Your amendment was reviewed and approved on October 10, 2018.

Amendment Approval Period: October 10, 2018 – July 31, 2019

Approved Consent, Parent/Guardian Permission, or Assent Materials:
1) Adult Consent, version August 1, 2018 (unchanged)
2) *Adult Consent for Pilot Study Participants, version October 10, 2018 (attached)*
   a. *Waiver of documentation of consent granted under 45 CFR 46.117(c)2.*

Other approved study documents:
1) Recruitment flyer, version 8/17/2018 (unchanged)
2) Recruitment email, version 7/17/2018 (unchanged)
3) Email Script for Acquaintances, version 08/17/2018 (unchanged)
4) Email Script for Professor/Alumni Coordinator for whom I did not receive contact information from someone affiliated with the university, version 08/17/2018 (unchanged)

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5) Email Script for Professor/Alumni Coordinator for whom I received contact information from someone affiliated with the university, version 08/17/2018 (unchanged)
6) *Recruitment Script for Facebook, personal and groups, version 9/28/2018 (attached)*
7) *Recruitment Script for Facebook, friends' groups, version 9/28/2018 (attached)*
8) *Email Script for Employers, version 9/28/2018 (attached)*
9) *Email Script for Pilot Study Participants to be Re-contacted, version 10/10/2018 (attached)*

Number of approved participants: 14 Total
You should not exceed this total number of subjects without prospectively submitting an amendment to the IRB requesting an increase in subject number.

Funding Source: 1) None

Approved Performance sites: 1) DePaul University

Reminders
- Only the most recent IRB-approved versions of consent, parent/legal guardian permission, or assent forms may be used in association with this project.
- Any changes to the funding source or funding status must be sent to the IRB as an amendment.
- Prior to implementing revisions to project materials or procedures, you must submit an amendment application detailing the changes to the IRB for review and receive notification of approval.
- You must promptly report any problems that have occurred involving research participants to the IRB in writing.
- If your project will continue beyond the approval period indicated above, you are responsible for submitting a continuing review report at least 3 weeks prior to the expiration date. The continuing review form can be downloaded from the IRB web page.
- **Once the research is completed, you must send a final closure report for the research to the IRB.**

The Board would like to thank you for your efforts and cooperation and wishes you the best of luck on your research. If you have any questions, please contact me by telephone at (312) 362-6168 or via email at jbloom8@depaul.edu.

For the Board,

Jessica Bloom

Jessica Bloom, MPH
Research Protections Coordinator
Office of Research Services

Cc: Karen Monkman, PhD, Faculty Sponsor, College of Education