
Who Will Speak For the Children?

How 'Teach for America' Hurts Urban Schools and Students

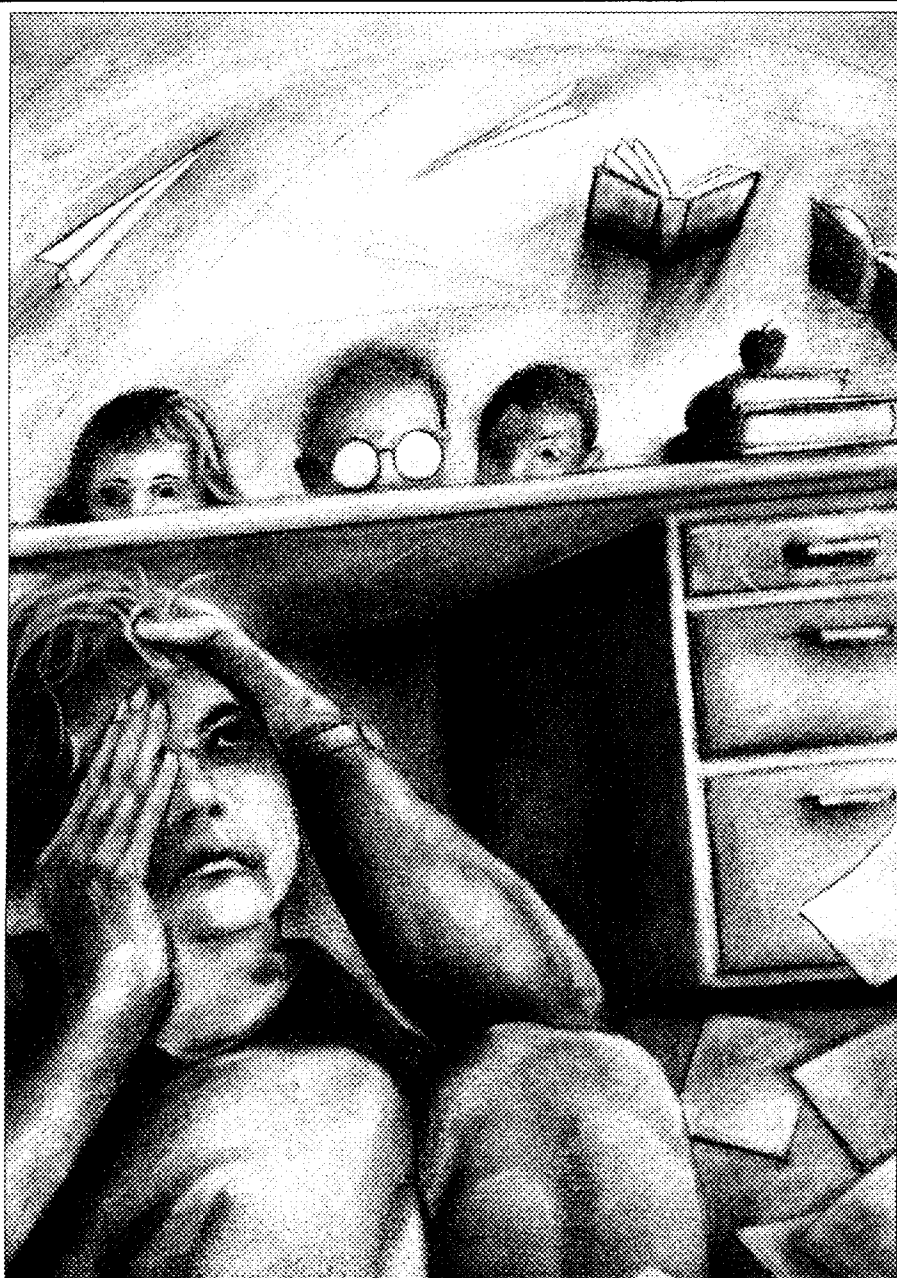
With its inadequate training of recruits — many of whom will teach in urban schools — and its disregard for the knowledge base on teaching and learning, 'Teach for America' continues a long tradition of devaluing urban students and deprofessionalizing teaching, Ms. Darling-Hammond charges.

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By Linda Darling-Hammond

IN THE MAY 1994 *Kappan*, Wendy Kopp, founder of Teach for America (TFA), responded to a critique of her program by Jonathan Schorr, one of TFA's former corps members.¹ Schorr's article had recounted his experience as one of the eager young recruits into TFA — fresh out of Yale University, with no preparation (but great interest) in teaching, trained in an eight-week summer institute, and plopped into a classroom in Los Angeles. He admits:

I — perhaps like most TFAers — harbored dreams of liberating my stu-

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dents from public school mediocrity and offering them as good an education as I had received.

But I was not ready. . . . As bad as it was for me, it was worse for the students. . . . Many of mine . . . took long steps on the path toward dropping out. . . . I was not a successful teacher and the loss to the students was real and large.²

Addressing the prospect that TFA-trained teachers might become part of President Clinton's new national service program, Schorr observes that "just eight weeks of training . . . may be long enough to train neighborhood clean-up workers or even police auxiliaries but [it isn't] enough for teachers." He concludes that "a quick course and a year in the classroom without the support to make that year successful is a waste of the enormous potential of a young, energetic teaching force."³

Kopp claims that, while TFA had problems initially, improvements and new plans laid out in her application to the President's Commission on National and Community Service promise "an approach to teacher development that . . . could make a real contribution to the field as a whole."⁴ Yet Schorr's concerns about the training he received in 1990 have been reiterated in a recent evaluation of the 1993 TFA summer institute and by many faculty members and recruits who have participated in the training over the past several years.⁵

The "new" program being launched this fall is no better. Conducted through an offspring organization called TEACH!, which was created when TFA began to fall under increasing criticism and into debt,⁶ the new approach offers no systematic curriculum, no continuous faculty, no guaranteed resources for student learning, and no quality control over school placements, mentoring, or assessment. The proposed "outcome-based" assessment system for TEACH! continues the TFA tradition of fostering simplistic approaches to teaching that have little or no grounding in knowledge about how students learn or what teaching strategies may be effective

and that offer no prospect of helping recruits meet professional standards of practice. What TEACH! does offer, however, is to relieve states and districts of the burden of quality control. TEACH! promises to recruit, prepare, select, assess, and license teachers. As Kopp explains, "The states in which TEACH! operates will recognize it as an approved route to teacher certification."⁷

This sweeping promise — issued by an organization that has produced recruits so poorly prepared that they have been removed from classrooms even where shortages of teachers exist and that has refused to allow a full and independent evaluation — presents a direct challenge to those who are seeking to raise standards for teaching. It is especially disturbing to those who are concerned about the well-being of children in the poor rural and urban districts that TFA has targeted. Thus far, the debates over TFA and similar programs have scarcely considered the impact on the children in these schools. It is time for us to focus on them. In this article I examine TFA's track record, training, assessments, and operations in terms of their capacity to ensure that TFA-trained candidates are adequately prepared to meet the needs of their students. On each of these dimensions, TFA's shortcomings are serious, and they ultimately hurt many schools and the children in them.

When TFA first began, the brash idealism of its founders sold funders on what is actually a very old approach to recruiting teachers during times of shortage. Though similar initiatives failed to prepare and retain teachers in previous decades, the recent political climate persuaded many funders to take a gamble on TFA, in the hope that it would prove different. However, the evidence now shows that TFA has fared no better than past emergency routes to teaching and much worse than many of today's alternatives. Extremely costly, plagued by questionable fiscal practices, exhibiting continuing problems with training and management, and unable to prepare most of its recruits to succeed in the classroom, TFA

demonstrates once again why quick fixes don't change systems.

A former TFA board member states that it may never be possible to subject the program to a rigorous analysis because Kopp will not allow scrutiny and pushes out those who raise questions.⁸ He notes that, during his association with the organization, staff turnover was extremely high, the "financial numbers never added up" — the books were not audited despite the board's queries and continue to be unaudited — and "the retention numbers [for recruits] were totally unreliable."⁹

Worse than TFA's organizational shortcomings, however, is the trail of failure with their young students that so many TFA recruits have left behind them. While TFA has some success stories, which it touts widely, these are far outnumbered by the problems. Such failures are especially pronounced among recruits who are placed in elementary and middle schools but have had no training in child development, learning theory, or such essential skills as how to teach reading. Schorr's concern about the effects of TFA recruits on the students they serve is a credit to his teaching sensibilities. He is one of the few who went on to earn a teaching certificate, and he was still in the classroom after three years. This places him in the minority of those who entered TFA with him: of the 489 original corps members who entered classrooms in the fall of 1990, only 206 (42%) were still teaching after two years — an attrition rate nearly twice that of other new teachers.⁹

Furthermore, Schorr's concern for the children is absent in the work and thinking of TFA as an organization. However, it is increasingly prevalent in the schools and districts where TFA candidates have so predictably encountered — and too often failed — their trials by fire. In many places, parents, other teachers, and district administrators are angry about the chaos TFA recruits have left behind when they couldn't handle the job. These feelings run deep in minority communities, where good intentions that fail to pro-

duce good teaching for African American and Latino children look like a thin veil for arrogance, condescension, and continuing neglect.

The Assumptions

Embedded in the questions now being raised about Teach for America's success as a recruitment and preparation program for young teachers are other questions about its mission, purpose, and effects. Who in fact is TFA for? A frankly missionary program, TFA has recruiters and advocates who have focused much of their attention on the advantaged college graduates for whom TFA serves as something useful to do on their way to their "real jobs" in law, medicine, or business, rather than on the young people who will be the students of those advantaged college graduates in urban and rural classrooms.

The TFAers are told that they are "the best and the brightest," that they will save the cities and their poor students with their youthful idealism. Because of their innate superiority, they don't need — or can't be bothered with — extensive

preparation for teaching. Kopp argues that such bright young people couldn't be recruited into the classroom if they had to take much time to get prepared.¹⁰ In her view there are no good preparation programs for teachers — and, even if there were, it would not matter, because "we really believe teachers are made through experience."¹¹

Thus the argument is framed, and it is not a new one. During the last era of teacher shortages, in the 1960s, programs like Teach for America proliferated, and they were defended on similar grounds. Glitz and public relations aside, the TFA idea has been revisited during every era of teacher shortage, and the programs have always proved inadequate.¹²

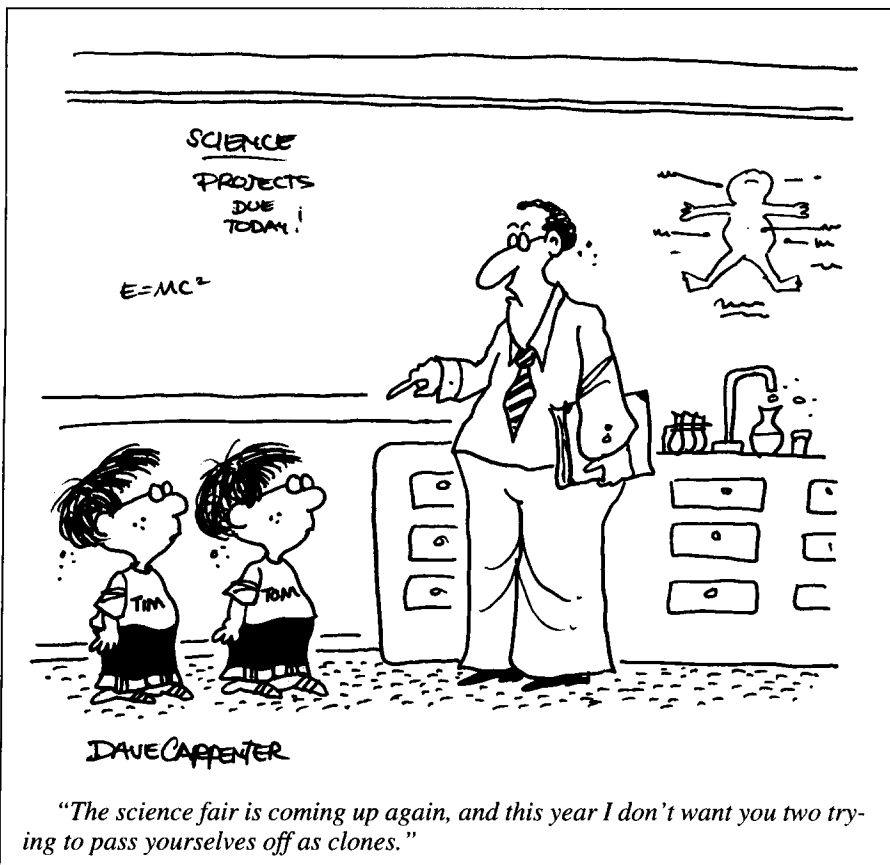
I described these problems for Kopp when she came to talk to me in 1990. I know of these shortcomings not only from the results of dozens of studies, but also from firsthand experience that bears many similarities to Jonathan Schorr's. When I graduated from Yale University in 1973, I was lured into an alternative-route program much like Teach for America. I learned little from a slapdash

summer institute (better than TFA's, but not very good). And though I was viewed as successful by colleagues and administrators, I knew that what I didn't know limited my capacity to help struggling students who most needed expert teaching. When I later encountered the learning theory and teaching strategies that I had missed in my initial training, I wondered how society could sanction programs that deliberately deny teachers access to the knowledge they need to be successful.

So I took great care describing to Kopp the knowledge teachers need. I told her what kind of preparation and mentoring supports would be required to ensure that these recruits would be able to serve children well. Kopp maintained that she was sure she could do in a few weeks whatever it was that universities took much longer to do (though she had never examined a teacher preparation program) and that providing mentors would be the problem of participating districts, not of TFA. If the candidates didn't succeed, she explained to me, it would not really be a problem, because most of them would not stay in teaching anyway. And they would have had an important experience that would affect their future lives. She never mentioned the children's lives.

The absence of concern for the children is coupled with an apparent disdain for the effort it takes to become knowledgeable about how to teach children well. Perhaps this disdain is reinforced by the unequal social status of TFA recruits and their students. Cameron McCarthy characterizes TFA's appeal as a "selfish idealism, a wish to tour the authentic, a sense of service [that is] deeply racialized." McCarthy continues,

While in the 1960s the target of this idealism was the dispossessed in the Third World, the newfound idealism of the 90s targets the black and Hispanic minority poor of the inner city, who are seen as the tragic ballast weighing down the productive reserves of this country. . . . There is a complex of discourses that informs the TFA project as illustrated in . . . its media produced images of the sense of threat and danger that the inner city represents, and further, the projection . . . of the Corps member as a special species of green beret educator elite. The latter, given



his/her intellectual capacity and social pedigree, is armed . . . with the antidote for minority underachievement in the urban and the rural classroom.¹³

In the TFA view of the world, these communities are desperate. Thus they have nothing to lose and everything to gain by hiring these young missionaries, however long they stay and however much or little they know about teaching. In the "best case" scenario, TFAers believe that they will surpass the accomplishments of those obviously incompetent teachers already in the classroom. In the worst case, they see their efforts as "better than nothing," which is what the alternative is viewed as being.

Ann Cook, an extraordinary teacher and co-director of the Urban Academy — a New York City public school that succeeds with students who have been failed by other schools — strongly disagrees. She argues that privileged and underprepared TFA recruits may be the *least* likely to succeed with students whose experiences they cannot easily understand and who need the teaching skills of well-prepared veteran teachers. Cook argues that their "well-intentioned but often ineffective efforts" will leave TFAers "disillusioned [and] less than sympathetic toward those youngsters who [seem] to reject their best efforts."¹⁴ Instead, she suggests, TFA should send its recruits to privileged suburbs and private schools, where their chances of success will be greater, and their failures will do less harm. In turn, these privileged schools could lend highly qualified teachers to urban schools, where their expertise would be of more use. This challenge to TFA's assumptions is confirmed by the experiences of its recruits, described below.

The chain of assumptions undergirding TFA includes at least four that are unwarranted. First, Kopp argues that teacher preparation does not work, that it makes little or no difference to teacher effectiveness.¹⁵ In fact, dozens of studies indicate that teachers who have completed pre-service preparation are more successful with students than are teachers who lack such preparation. This is true in fields ranging from high school mathematics and science to early childhood and elementary education.¹⁶

Second, Kopp argues that teacher education students are among the least ac-

ademically able and that talented recruits cannot be persuaded to enter schools of education. In fact, the same zeal that TFA has tapped is being tapped by preparation programs across the country. Undergraduate and MAT programs at Stanford, Harvard, Columbia, Michigan, Vanderbilt, Southern Maine, and many other schools are training thousands of talented students from selective colleges across the country, and these programs have more top-flight applicants than they can accept. Both interest in and standards for teacher education have been steadily rising for more than a decade. In 1990 graduates of teacher education programs had higher levels of academic achievement than the average college graduate.¹⁷ The alternatives to smart, untrained TFA recruits are smart, well-trained recruits from an array of top colleges.

Third, TFA assumes that, beyond subject-matter knowledge and general intelligence, no serious preparation is needed to teach effectively. Here the evidence is extremely clear. Beyond a threshold level, subject-matter knowledge makes less difference to teachers' effectiveness than does their preparation in child development, learning theory, curriculum development, and teaching methods.¹⁸ In fact, people who learn effortlessly and have had no training in how to deliberately create learning strategies often find themselves at a loss as teachers. They can't remember how they learned, and so they cannot construct a process for teaching others.

Finally, Kopp assumes that school districts have the will and the capacity to train and mentor teachers effectively on their own. This idea has been tested repeatedly, and it has never succeeded. In fact, the literature of the late 1960s and early 1970s is replete with such proposals, and the schools were filled with pilots very much like TFA and today's alternative routes. The reasons that school districts are unable to prepare new teachers are simple: the districts where most of them are hired are poor urban and rural districts with high turnover rates and few pedagogical or fiscal resources. Moreover, they do not have a strong interest in investing thousands of dollars in the preparation of beginners, most of whom will leave for other occupations or suburban schools as soon as they are able. Over and over again, reviews of such dis-

trict-based efforts find that they leave their candidates underprepared, under-supported, and less effective than candidates who received systematic university-based preparation for teaching.¹⁹

Nonetheless, in an article published in the *Yale Law and Policy Review*, Kopp proposes that "schools and school districts assume *full* responsibility for the recruitment, selection, preparation, and development" of teachers. Schools of education would be avoided, and states would "abolish licensure laws altogether." Kopp sees her project not only as helping to develop "the innovative school models promised by Chris Whittle," but also as replacing all existing quality controls and strategies for arming teachers with serious knowledge. "This article is not a call for the reform of schools of education," she continues. "It is a call for states to get out of the way."²⁰ This call to eliminate all professional standards for teaching makes what TFA is doing not only inept but also morally and ethically irresponsible. In the world Kopp wants to invent, who will look out for the children?

The Track Record

These concerns run deep in New York City, where many of the first TFA recruits were placed. In September 1990 *Newsday* ran a story about the initial experiences of TFA recruits.²¹ Of the several recruits the article covered, a number of them were in "extreme doubt" and three quit before the first week of school was over, leaving their students with no teachers at all and their schools scrambling to find substitutes. This scenario repeats itself each year. In 1992 eight new TFA recruits had quit their jobs in Baltimore by mid-October.²² From the vantage point of the children, being abandoned by a teacher creates not only a sense of loss, but also a hiatus in learning.

While children who experience a string of emergency hires and short-termers may never have a real chance to build a foundation of learning, those who are taught by green recruits with no teaching knowledge are little better off. A district-level supervisor in New York City recalls her experiences with some of the recruits placed in elementary schools, many of whom ultimately had to be asked to leave because they were so poorly prepared.

In one visit, she saw a young man assigned to teach first grade who had set up

learning centers that featured only labeled exhibits with no learning tasks and who was delivering an hourlong lecture to the whole class. Unaware of the inappropriateness of this approach to teaching first-graders, he paid no attention to the children as they began to talk to one another and crawl about on the floor. He simply talked louder as their attention flagged. When the children did not answer his questions, he continued doing what he recalled his teachers' having done. No other strategies were available to him.

A visit to a second recruit, assigned to teach second grade, was even more harrowing. When the supervisor entered, the teacher was crying, and the room was in utter chaos. The teacher ran out of the room, leaving the supervisor and a colleague with the children.

A third recruit, who was not a native speaker of English, was assigned to teach third grade, but the children could not understand his speech. He was then reassigned to junior high school to teach one subject. None of the recruits had any apparent knowledge of how children learn, how to create a learning environment, or how to assess a classroom situation to make decisions about what to do. None of them stayed in teaching. Although that might ultimately be fortunate for the children and the schools involved, the children had already experienced substantial disruption before their teachers left.

Beverly Hall, the current deputy chancellor of the New York City school system, reports similar experiences with TFAers when she was a district superintendent. She recalls that the candidates were so poorly prepared that a number had to be let go — but not before they had undermined the education of the children they were assigned to teach.²³ Ironically, because of the hype about TFA and the political deals made to secure slots for TFA recruits months before school began, a number of them prevented fully qualified teachers from assuming positions when they were placed in the fall. Most of these better-prepared new teachers departed for the suburbs, leaving both the school system and the students with an even more depleted pool of capable new recruits.

Margaret Bradley, principal of P.S. 223, an elementary school in New York City, describes in vivid detail the disappointing record of three TFA recruits as-

signed to her school. "I thought that these were really bright students who wanted to make a difference," she recalls. "But I found it to be just the opposite in terms of their commitment. I got the idea that many of them could not find jobs, and that that's why they came into this program."²⁴

A first-grade teacher at Bradley's school "had absolutely no clue. He had

In TFA training, distinctions were drawn between the normal child who succeeded in schooling and the child of color — who became the "other."

absolutely no concept of how to teach reading." Intensive support from other teachers helped only marginally. A second-grade teacher had so much difficulty that Bradley moved him to fifth grade, "because we could not lose those children. These were children who, I knew from prekindergarten, are very bright kids, and I could not do that to them. When you go into the class and you see that there is no real learning going on, you have to act." Even in the fifth grade, the teacher was unsuccessful. "It wasn't just the fact that he didn't have the teaching strategies," Bradley says. "It was also that the expectations were not there. He didn't . . . understand the fact that we want our children to be self-directed learners."

Bradley found the recruits not only "lacking in methods and skills of teaching." More important, she felt that "they were not really dedicated. They really didn't understand what the needs of the children were. They didn't see why they needed to be here to engage themselves with the parents. . . . I don't think that they really identified with the community and the culture of the students." One

recruit, for example, refused to attend parent/teacher conference night, deciding that his own plans that evening were more important than meeting with his students and their parents.

The issues of commitment and of high expectations for children of color are critical ones. Bradley notes that the TFAers "could not understand that the expectations were so high and that we are consistent. The staff began to complain that [the TFAers] didn't have high expectations of the children. At the end of the year, when the faculty found out they weren't coming back, they were pleased because they did not see them as making a contribution."

These attitudes and limitations appear to derive from TFA's philosophy and training. Thomas Popkewitz, who studied the first year of the program in 1990-91, notes the troubling messages about "multiculturalism" that are conveyed to TFA recruits. Based on interviews, classroom observations, and observations of the TFA training, Popkewitz reports that distinctions were drawn between "the normal child who succeeded in schooling and the child of color who was in opposition to the normalities. The child of color became the 'other': the one who lacked the motivational attributes, behavioral characteristics, and self-esteem to achieve."²⁵

In TFA's work with its recruits, it provided a view of the parents and communities of children of color as "pathological." In TFA training, Popkewitz charges, "children of color are classified as optimally taught by using prescribed procedures and strategies." They are said to learn best when "psychologically managed" and are "positioned as deviant and pathological in relation to the norms that are privileged in schooling."

These ideas about children and their capabilities translate into pedagogical decisions. Seeing children as needing to be "psychologically managed by prescribed procedures and strategies" is related to such choices as TFA's decision to offer training in mechanistic, punitive forms of classroom management, such as Lee Canter's Assertive Discipline. Widely criticized by many educators as damaging and ultimately ineffective and classified as "psychological maltreatment" by the American Psychological Association,²⁶ Assertive Discipline deflects all respon-

The aim was to be sure that any failures were attributed to the kids, not the TFA corps.

sibility for classroom management from the teacher to the child, relies heavily on punishments for “infractions” (ranging from moving to talking), and is most attractive to those who see “teacher-proof” solutions as the answer to incompetent teaching.²⁷

Bradley noted that one of the problems of TFA recruits was their use of Assertive Discipline: “They had a new rule every day [and] they were using the background of the children as an excuse, which is unacceptable in our school.”

TFA recruits exhibit the same shortcomings as other unprepared teachers, who, studies find, tend to blame the students if their teaching is not successful. Untrained beginners are less sensitive to students’ needs and differences, less able to plan and redirect instruction, and less skilled in implementing instruction than are those who are prepared. They are less able to anticipate students’ knowledge and potential difficulties and less likely to see it as their job to do so.²⁸ These recruits’ failings are especially noted in such school subjects as reading, mathematics, and science and in work with low-income and special needs students. Evaluations of new teachers who have taken other alternative routes often show them to have problems like those of the TFA recruits. In a study of Dallas teachers, those with alternative certification were judged to be deficient in every category of teaching skill much more frequently than those with backgrounds in teacher education, and their students ultimately learned less in reading and language arts.²⁹

None of TFA’s recruits, including those hoping to teach in elementary school, take courses before they enter the classroom in such things as how to teach reading, even though they will be teaching students for whom literacy development under the guidance of a skilled teacher is absolutely essential for survival. One earnest young recruit, who taught initially in New Orleans, finally sought out reading courses at a local college during her second year of teaching. She reported that what she learned in

these courses “changed her life.”³⁰ Most recruits don’t ever get this training, and their students suffer accordingly.

Pamela Grossman’s study of smart, alternative-route candidates describes problems that recur in accounts of TFA candidates’ teaching. Relying on their prior experience and never having had difficulty learning themselves, they cannot figure out how children actually learn or what to do when a lesson does not succeed.

Without formal systems for induction into teaching, learning to teach is left largely to chance. Although much pedagogical knowledge has been characterized as common sense, knowledge is not hanging, ripe and fully formed, in the classroom, waiting to be plucked by inexperienced teachers.³¹

Kisha Brown, a writing teacher at P.S. 11 in New York and a former support director for TFA, left the organization when she came to believe that TFA did not really want its recruits to become better prepared and was unconcerned about the plight of the minority children who were badly served by its recruits.

I could not allow myself to continue to participate in a farce, as I saw it. The organization was not receptive to my ideas as a professional. . . . When I worked as a New York City support director, I supervised 54 teachers in their classrooms — meaning I visited them once every nine weeks or thereabouts, to observe them, troubleshoot with them, listen to their problems on the phone when they cried at night, because they were ill-prepared to be in the classroom. So I saw it as a disaster about to happen, and I went to Wendy and said to her, “These are some things I see you need now.” She did not respond positively to those ideas, and therefore I decided I needed to get out.

By the time I got to [Wendy], I was saying, “I’ve got five teachers who have now walked out of their classrooms, and I need help today.” I saw teachers strangling out there. They were out on a limb with no place to go, and Teach for America did nothing. When the red flag went up, it was often the school calling us to say, “Come

get this person out; they’re incompetent, they have no idea what they’re doing.” Good intentions, perhaps, but the kids are the ones who suffer.³²

The nature of the problems Brown dealt with ranged from lack of teaching skills, particularly in elementary and middle grades classrooms, to a meeting called by parents to air their complaints about TFA recruits’ racial insensitivity. Brown’s perception was that many of the recruits were both substantively unprepared and unable to understand and identify with communities and children they perceived as so far removed from their own experience. Brown also reports that, while a great many children were placed at risk by the lack of preparation of the untrained candidates, TFA blamed the children rather than its own inadequate preparation.

Like Jonathan Schorr, many recruits realized they weren’t prepared. However, if a recruit criticized TFA, Brown reports, “a note would come from Wendy saying, ‘Check this out; this person needs to be watched.’” The aim was to be sure that any failures were attributed to the kids, not the corps.

But the recruits themselves often saw things differently from TFA’s official position. Margaret Carmody and Tim Bucciarelli, TFA recruits in Washington, D.C., worried about their students. “I know *we’re* learning a lot,” Carmody noted midway through her very difficult first year. “But I wonder how much good *we’re* doing the children. Are they suffering because they have inexperienced teachers? I worry about that.” Bucciarelli concurred: “I don’t think I’m what they need. Every classroom in schools like these needs an experienced teacher.”³³

Such concerns are obvious in every description of the teaching of TFA recruits. In his sympathetic account of Teach for America, Michael Shapiro’s descriptions of seven well-meaning TFA candidates unwittingly reveal the kinds of teaching that derive not from the shortcomings of the recruits or their students, but from the shortcomings of the training the recruits received. One teacher, who finds herself

handing out detentions every few moments (illustrating the Assertive Discipline training she had received), senses that lecturing to students and having them copy notes off the board might not be the most effective teaching strategies. However, Shapiro observes, "her hasty preparation never gave her the chance to experiment in her method and approach before she stepped into a classroom. Now, the necessary trial and error happens before the impatient audience of her students. . . . She knows that they hate copying information off the board almost as much as she hates writing it. But she knows too how much of a struggle the simplest instructions can be."³⁴

Her experience illustrates why unprepared teachers are less effective in developing students' higher-order thinking skills. Because less-skilled teachers cannot manage the complex tasks required for problem solving, they reduce curriculum demands to simple routines in order to control student work more easily.³⁵ By contrast, professionally prepared teachers learn to use methods that support students' development and their independent and critical thinking.³⁶

Like other teachers admitted through quick-entry alternative routes, TFA candidates often have difficulty with curriculum development, pedagogical content knowledge, students' differing learning styles, classroom management, and student motivation.³⁷ Unprepared teachers usually try to teach in the way they were taught, but with little awareness of the thinking processes undergirding their former teachers' actions and decisions. Without a powerful process of teacher education, new knowledge does not have an opportunity to transform teaching across generations, for prospective teachers cannot profit from advances in knowledge if they are never exposed to them.

One comes to sympathize with the earnestness and sincerity of the TFA candidates Shapiro describes. Yet any conscientious educator must be troubled by the young man who explains his use of fear as a primary motivator for students (which is what he himself learned as a child). He appears to have no awareness that there is a substantial knowledge base on motivation and development that could have helped him come up with more effective strategies. It is hard not to cringe when reading about his telling an

eager student who repeatedly asks him questions about a scientific curiosity, "We have no time for explanations."³⁸ Had he been given an opportunity to learn about teaching, he might have made choices that supported his students' desires to learn, and he could have relied more on their resulting engagement with the subject matter to maintain their interest and effort.

It is difficult to read the story of another young recruit who was fired after several weeks of teaching. The descriptions of obviously inappropriate curriculum and teaching methods (rote-oriented and worksheet-driven) are painful to read. These problems, coupled with his inept and heavy-handed attempts at enforcing discipline, lost the class. At the end he concluded, "I don't think [the students] hated me. I do think they thought I hated them."³⁹ Still more painful is reading his

account of what he thought he learned from his first experience. He started off a new assignment in a new school by taking away the children's recess, so that they would know who was boss. As Shapiro describes it:

And that is how it begins. Or how it begins to end. You come to your first class and they eat you up and you vow that it will not happen again. And you learn what you have to learn to make sure it doesn't. You learn the value of workbooks because even if they're numbingly dull they keep the kids busy and if the kids are busy they are not making trouble for you.⁴⁰

What he had learned from his unmediated experience were all the wrong things about teaching and learning and about children and their development. This confirms another repeated research



A complete, public accounting may never be made; TFA will not authorize a full and independent evaluation.

finding: while people do learn from their experience, they do not always learn the right things. Without guidance in interpreting practice and relating it to a knowledge base that can inform decisions, teachers can draw the wrong inferences about why things went wrong and what to do about it. As Shapiro notes and as other evaluations confirm, "The one comment I heard repeatedly from Teach for America's pioneer corps was that in the course of their eight weeks of preparation no one had explained to them what to expect in the classroom."⁴¹

The other stories reveal their own variations on this theme. A young elementary teacher recounts her guilt for leaving before the school year is over. A high school math teacher who cares intensely about his charges clearly lacks an understanding of how people learn mathematics. Without a repertoire of techniques beyond rote teaching, he finds himself unsuccessful. Like other recruits, he starts off by blaming the students for his lack of skill, but he questions himself, too:

One day you'll teach and the next day they'll forget. I tried doing it by rote learning and that doesn't work. I give them problems and they like it but most can't do them. . . . I keep asking, "What am I doing wrong here?" I'm seeing students who I began with, going from being interested in school to failing. . . . I'm losing them.⁴²

After two years, five of the seven TFAers in Shapiro's study had left teaching. Of the two who remained in teaching, one is the young man who was originally fired and found another spot where his undeveloped ideas about pedagogy could be masked by his newly found dictatorial disciplinary style. He had learned to keep the children quiet, if not productively engaged in meaningful learning. The other was a young woman who received many supports from the teachers in her school and looks as though she may be growing into a thoughtful, caring, and reasonably skillful teacher. So, with regard to a long-term contribution of good teaching to the schools, the success rate

for this group of high-potential recruits might be estimated at about 14%. Were this the outcome of a teacher preparation program — one held in such disdain by Wendy Kopp and her supporters — the program would rightfully be put out of business.

The Costs

The costs of TFA to city schools and children are clearly large in human terms. They are also large in monetary terms. If there is a difference between TFA and other alternative certification programs, it is that TFA repeats the mistakes of the other programs at greater cost. At about \$12,000 per candidate in 1993, TFA spends virtually as much for its meager training as it would cost to fully subsidize a recruit to a full-year, high-quality MAT program at one of the top graduate education programs in the country.⁴³ There the recruit would encounter rigorous coursework in learning theory, teaching strategies, and child development and would experience an intensively supervised internship.

TFA's sizable costs for public relations, fund raising, and administration come at the expense of preparation for its recruits. In this respect, TFA disadvantages its own recruits, who, given their promise, could have been prepared to become leaders in the profession, armed with knowledge and skill, rather than bumbling examples of the system's failure.

The Training

A careful review of TFA's past training and its plans for the newly founded TEACH! program reveals them to be lower in quality than the worst examples of the teacher education system they claim to replace. TFA is built on a set of assumptions and practices that will prevent it from ever being an adequate or responsible method of preparing teachers: TFA provides almost no time for learning, has no continuing faculty or planned curriculum, exhibits no familiarity with knowledge about teaching, exerts little control over the quality of cooperating teachers,

provides no sustained and intensive mentoring, and has developed no meaningful quality controls over entry or continuation in teaching. Far from being a bold new way to prepare teachers, it repeats all the failings and problems of the quick-fix routes into teaching that have been around for decades.

TFA is nothing like structured teacher preparation. It is also nothing like the Teacher Corps of the 1960s, with which it often compares itself. The Teacher Corps included intensive university-based and school-based training and seminars, closely mentored internships, and both district- and university-sponsored supports for learning. By contrast, TFA recruits get an eight-week summer institute — roughly half of it spent in a jumble of disconnected one-hour workshops from which they can choose at random, and the other half (about 19 days) in a "student teaching" experience in summer school classrooms. In the new model of TFA, recruits are also slated to get together on four weekends during the school year, during which time they can reflect together on their teaching. Though there is no curriculum or shared body of knowledge for them to reflect on and no continuing faculty members to guide them, this is what Kopp calls the "Professional Teaching Residency" and characterizes as "extensive professional development."⁴⁴

How successful will TFA's "new model" of training be? A complete, public accounting may never be made, since TFA will not authorize a full and independent evaluation. As mentioned above, a first evaluation was discontinued. A second, covering the 1993 summer institute, was conducted only under the unusual conditions that its author, Robert Roth, not publish his findings and that he negotiate the wording of his report with the TFA staff.⁴⁵ Both evaluators separately characterized TFA's approach to preparation as lacking:

TFA ended up giving very little attention to educating teachers. Where they did, it was because of state mandates they had to fulfill, and much of it was technical and instrumental. There was much concern with issues of dis-

cipline and very little concern or understanding of issues of curriculum.⁴⁶

* * *

Quite frankly, their public documents reveal no conceptual framework or structured organization for the curriculum. There is no sequence; there is no scope; there is no sense of what a teacher needs to know about the teaching/learning process. The outcomes-based standards are not translated into criteria that delineate what to look for.⁴⁷

The evaluation of the TFA summer institute, a document being reviewed by states and districts considering licensing TFA recruits, paints an extremely troubling picture of what TFA considers appropriate preparation for teaching. It is a picture of a program even less connected to knowledge about teaching and learning than many other alternative routes.

According to Roth's evaluation, the 1993 summer institute consisted of a collection of one-hour workshops conducted in the lounge areas of dormitories, from which recruits could choose any or none, along with "resource rooms" run by former TFAers with up to three years of teaching experience. The workshops were not cumulative or connected; each one-hour block stood alone. Consequently, there was no opportunity to study anything in depth, and what was offered was necessarily superficial and disconnected. There was no required reading, no homework, and no follow-up. The program looked more like a design for a poorly thought-out adolescent summer camp than a rigorous intellectual experience.

Roth's evaluation gives the following description of what Kopp calls her "learner-driven" model: "There is no required set of experiences or workshops or particular content categories. Each learner selects the content he/she wishes to pursue."⁴⁸ Thus there is no conception of important and essential knowledge for teaching. Reflective journals and portfolios are suggested but not required, nor are they reviewed by the faculty or made part of the assessment process. Recruits complete self-designed projects, which are not explicitly rated or evaluated. On average, corps members each spend just under 30 hours in workshops.

Despite the rhetoric about progression toward "outcome-based standards," the evaluation notes that the training is not organized around the outcomes or con-

nected to a program of study that might lead to them. The curriculum of the summer institute was not developed around objectives, included no sequenced set of experiences or systematic way of pursuing outcomes, used almost no professional literature, and identified no knowledge base for curriculum design.⁴⁹ The descriptions of workshops offered in the cat-

Much of what TFA promotes are teacher-proof approaches that directly oppose current reforms in teaching and learning.

alog show that many focus on cookbook techniques, rote approaches to teaching, or brief descriptions of more complex ideas without much elaboration. Lacking access to more powerful approaches to teaching, it should not be surprising that TFAers end up seeing teaching as an endeavor focused primarily on simplistic activities and routines.

Support directors and cooperating teachers interviewed for the evaluation of the summer institute voiced their own concerns that the recruits needed more time in the classroom, more guidance in selecting and designing lessons, and more work on subject matter and pedagogy, on child and adolescent development, and on theories of teaching.⁵⁰

At a time when school reform is demanding much more sophisticated knowledge from teachers, when standards for teaching and teacher education are being raised, and when criticisms of professional development are pushing schools to abandon one-shot workshops and the idea of teacher-proof curriculum packages, TFA's training represents the worst of what the rest of the profession is moving away from. Contrary to Kopp's assertions, what TFA does is not at all typical of

teacher education programs. Unfortunately, TFA's approach does reinforce the historic image of teaching as anti-intellectual and the view of teachers as unable to cope with complex knowledge.

The ignorance about teaching, learning, and children — as well as teacher preparation — that characterizes TFA's program and its purported assessments is remarkable, though easily explained when the operations of TFA are examined. TFA administrators and the designers of its new TEACH! program are former TFA recruits. With no training and only a year or two of teaching under their belts, they are now developing what TFA calls its "curriculum," along with assessments that TFA hopes to substitute for state licensing requirements.

The new director of program design for TEACH!, a young TFA recruit who had no preparation to teach and who last asked me, "Where is this knowledge base that you keep talking about?" Because TFA program designers are unaware of knowledge about learning, development, curriculum, and instruction, much of what TFA promotes are teacher-proof approaches that directly oppose current reforms in teaching and learning.

The majority of staff members at TFA summer institutes are also former TFA recruits: most peer facilitators and resource room coordinators have had one or two years of teaching experience, according to Roth's evaluation. Support directors and cooperating teachers are more experienced but are not subject to a rigorous selection process. In Los Angeles, cooperating teachers are chosen by local school principals. Support directors are hired on the basis of a résumé and a phone interview; there is no application process or set of standard criteria.⁵¹ No doubt, some of these TFA staffers are themselves quite competent professionals, even if they are unable to transfer their knowledge in one-hour workshops. However, with no knowledge base undergirding the development of TFA's training, there can be no guarantee that students encounter appropriate knowledge in an effective way, which is the point of the system of quality control that professions create through the processes of program approval and accreditation.

Roth's evaluation also noted serious shortcomings in the three-week practice

The states are expected to collude in keeping teachers insulated from serious assessment.

teaching component of the institute. While teacher education programs strive to maintain an integrated structure, TFA draws almost no connections between the candidates' fieldwork and their other institute work. "The cooperating teachers indicated they were not aware of what corps members study at the institute."⁵² Final evaluations by the cooperating teachers were not shared with the other faculty members. Meanwhile, support directors observed the corps members only twice during practice teaching and for a single lesson each time. This observation was preceded by a pre-observation conference of 10 minutes and followed by a 20-minute post-observation conference. Formal lesson plans were not usually required, and "no particular observation criteria were used as part of an observation form."⁵³

The level of performance exhibited by the recruits in this process might be inferred from the following dialogue between a peer facilitator (PF) and a corps member (CM):

Pre-observation

PF: What will I see?

CM: The cooperating teacher didn't like my two-hour math activity.

PF: How did you like it?

CM: Okay. The reluctant students participated. I will have them march around [a reference to a workshop on using kinesthetic activities to teach mathematics].

PF: What's your plan for marching around?

CM: I haven't had time to plan.

PF: How will you teach your math lesson?

CM: I'm not sure.

PF: What part is guided practice?

CM: I will have that in the lesson.

Post-observation

PF: What happened?

CM: It wasn't the greatest connection.

PF: Why?

CM: It's math: abstract. I didn't have enough time to be creative.

PF: What other ideas do you have?⁵⁴

As this excerpt suggests and as the evaluation points out, the path to developing teaching knowledge is unclear, and the criteria for assessing performance are even more mysterious.

Quality Control?

Remarkably, TFA has argued that its recruits should be hired and licensed based on its own internal evaluation of them. In the summer institute this evaluation was accomplished through an exhibition portfolio. Recruits were supposed to select whatever entries they believed would demonstrate progress toward 11 outcomes. The evaluation of the institute notes that the required content of the portfolio was unclear, the nature of evidence or documentation was inconsistent and confusing, the TFA staff could not tell the faculty how to use or evaluate the portfolios, no criteria or benchmarks existed, and the data presented were often inadequate for making a judgment about whether the corps member was ready to teach. Members of the review board — all of whom are institute staff members — questioned the consistency, adequacy, subjectivity, and clarity surrounding the process.⁵⁵

Some of the portfolios showed little evidence of learning. For example, one corps member showed evidence of having attended only a single workshop; another presented a single lesson plan as a major project; another showed evidence of having taught only four lessons all summer; still another did not include any folders at all. A preponderance of candidates (44% to 55%) failed in four of the outcome areas. Nonetheless, 98% of the recruits were recommended to teach, some having passed as few as three of the 11 outcome standards.⁵⁶

Clearly, the problems besetting TFA from its inception have not been solved. What is more remarkable is that TFA intends for its new "portfolio assessment" process to replace all state licensing requirements and district hiring standards, as well as teacher education. To be started in the summer institute and completed during the first two years of teaching, the

portfolio process offers no guidance in learning to teach and provides no standards for evaluating teaching. The "performance-based assessment" plan is a reflection of the jargon-ridden, content-free gobbledygook for which education is often criticized.⁵⁷ TFA ingénues are quick to latch on to the buzz words of the times — their proposals are replete with references to "outcomes," "professional judgment," "portfolios," and the like. However, a close reading reveals that no conception of high-quality teaching underlies the jargon, and no system or process exists that could make recruits into high-quality teachers. The TFA process bears no relationship to the serious work in portfolio assessment of such researchers as Lee Shulman and Thomas Bird of the Stanford Teacher Assessment Project, the more recent work of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, or the work in progress in Connecticut, Maine, and Kentucky.

This pretense at performance evaluation might be merely comical were it not intended to replace state and local standards. The stated TFA plan is to use this internal evaluation process, beginning in the fall of 1994, in the regions where TFA has gained approval as a route to certification. The states are expected to collude in keeping teachers ignorant of the knowledge they need to serve their students well and insulated from serious assessment according to professional teaching standards.

The "portfolio" has several required components (a videotape, "self-analyses," a lesson plan, and evaluations from principal, supervisor, colleague, students, and parents). These may be satisfied in whatever way the recruit decides, with no standards or criteria against which these unstandardized components should be evaluated. The process is devoid of substance about teaching and learning and reveals no understanding of the ways in which serious portfolio assessments for such purposes as licensing or certification are constructed or evaluated. The TFA document spelling out the details of the process of portfolio assess-

ment is filled with instructions that offer no substantive guidance, as when the proposed assessor (who, like the members of the review panel, is to be a TEACH! employee rather than an independent judge) is asked to "assess the significance" of the components of the teacher's self-developed portfolio with these illuminating directions: "Components that give lots of information and evidence about a new teacher's ability have high significance; components that give little or misleading information about a teacher's capabilities have a low significance."

Aside from the question of why misleading evidence would be included or how it would be identified, the clues that are given to assessors are silly. For example, videotapes with good sound and picture quality should be given high significance. (Apparently, we should not be concerned that they show something significant about teaching and learning.) On the other hand, "The ratings of kindergarten students about their teachers should be given low significance," although the assessment system calls for such ratings by students. One of the components of the portfolio includes a paper for students to fill out, featuring smiling-face and frowning-face responses to such prompts as "My teacher makes me feel. . . ."

While there are references to "overall and holistic measurement of the portfolio" using "professional judgment," there is no indication of what kinds of knowledge and skills are to be exhibited or what criteria are to be used for evaluation. As someone who has participated in the grueling process of establishing standards and scoring systems for the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, I find it shocking to read instructions like the following:

To determine the level of performance, the assessor reviews the component and the accompanying self-analysis, writing down all the salient, interesting, important, significant, noteworthy, problematic and/or useful bits of information in the Notes section of the Component Assessment Form. Once these notes are taken, the assessor uses their [sic] professional judgment to make a rating of the level of performance for each performance area.

The rating form doesn't help us iden-

tify a standard of practice. Ratings are described only as ranging from "++ very positive," described as "a high level of performance in this performance area," to "-- very negative," described as "a very low level of performance." Assessors are encouraged to change their ratings whenever they feel like it.⁵⁸

While the "performance-based assessment" document from TFA contains frequent references to "TEACH's definition of an excellent new teacher," what such a teacher knows and can do is never spelled out. A page of definitions tells us that "TEACH! defines an excellent new teacher as one who has demonstrated a competent level of performance in all eleven performance areas." The performance areas themselves are listed in undefined two- or three-word phrases, such as "readiness for school," but they are never described or linked to standards of performance. Assessors fill in blank spaces in each category, but they are not asked to look for anything specific. Candidates provide their own "self-analysis" in each category in response to instructions such as "Please explain how the Plans [or student work, etc.] included in your portfolio demonstrate that you are an excellent new teacher."

As elsewhere, there is no invitation here to provide a balanced analysis of strengths and weaknesses. Indeed, whatever it is that the assessors themselves might decide to base their judgments on, the TEACH! instructions make it clear that questions about competence should be resolved in favor of the recruit, not with reference to the welfare of the children he or she is teaching:

If the level of performance ratings on the Assessment Synthesis Form contains an even mix of positive and negative ratings, the assessors will have difficulty synthesizing a judgment. A mixed set of evidence suggests not that the resident teacher is an awful teacher but one who is not well portrayed by their [sic] portfolio.⁵⁹

In the event that a teacher with substantial negative ratings is "not well portrayed" by his or her portfolio, the plan suggests that the teacher should be allowed to continue to teach for yet another year, while working on his or her shortcomings. The plan goes on to describe how candidates who have taught for a full year before experiencing even this vague,

ungrounded evaluation would be allowed to continue for a full three years before they would be dismissed. During this time, no one has the responsibility for safeguarding the children, since state and local evaluation standards have been replaced by the TFA process.

Moreover, the worth of the data in the portfolio is doubted even by its creators. While the assessment plan acknowledges that the candidates' self-assessments offer "maximum subjectivity," it accords no greater weight to the views of others who evaluate the candidate. The evaluations of supervisors and principals are discounted, with the note that many supervisors and principals "have an inadequate basis for making a judgment" and often tend "to rely on noninstructional or irrelevant criteria." Similarly, the evaluations of colleagues are not to be trusted since "much knowledge of the peer will be based on hearsay, as actual observations are limited," and "there is a high potential for cronyism and/or envy."⁶⁰ Presuming that colleagues' knowledge will be based on hearsay is a telling comment on TFA's failure to offer sustained and serious mentoring to its recruits.

Especially in the light of current efforts to raise standards for students and teachers, this kind of half-baked thinking contributes nothing to the cause of systemic change and restructuring. However, it continues a long tradition of devaluing urban students and deprofessionalizing teaching. TFA offers no solution to the fundamental problems of teaching or the educational needs of urban children. It merely exacerbates the unequal access to qualified teachers that minority and low-income children already experience, and it does so in a way that is totally unaccountable for their welfare. Isn't it time for a better idea?

The Alternatives

There are ways to recruit and prepare highly qualified teachers for urban and rural schools. Federally funded recruitment programs that provided scholarships and forgivable loans to talented college students willing to prepare for careers in teaching were successful in the 1960s and 1970s, just as they were for medicine when Congress passed similar incentives for preparing doctors. Though eliminated by President Reagan in 1980, programs such as the Urban Teacher

Corps and the National Defense Education Act should be reinstated as a critical part of the Goals 2000 effort and as a responsible means of encouraging national service for young college graduates.

States, school districts, and foundations can also play a role. Connecticut's Educational Excellence Act of 1986 provides one of the most useful models for upgrading teaching and eliminating shortages. Using school funding reforms to help equalize beginning teacher salaries across the state, Connecticut was able to eliminate shortages in the cities while simultaneously raising standards for teacher education and licensing and implementing a beginning teacher mentoring and evaluation program. Some large districts — such as Hillsborough County, Florida, and Montgomery County, Maryland — have been able to streamline hiring so as to entice and hire well-prepared teachers early and effectively. Such programs as Recruiting New Teachers and Teachers for Tomorrow have worked effectively to bring talented recruits to urban school systems by expanding and greasing the pipeline for preparation and entry. Other districts, such as Rochester, Toledo, and Cincinnati, have created intensive mentoring programs for beginning teachers that enhance effectiveness, reduce traditionally high levels of turnover, and heighten accountability for tenure. After all, keeping new teachers who are well-prepared is as important as recruiting them.

Professional development schools — school/university collaboratives that function like teaching hospitals in preparing candidates for state-of-the-art teaching — are springing up across the country. In partnership with universities that are redefining teacher preparation, professional development schools in Cambridge, Boston, New York, Miami, Indianapolis, Louisville, San Diego, San Francisco, and many other cities are addressing the need for well-prepared teachers by providing top-flight preparation for high-quality urban teaching.⁶¹ Foundations can join forces with cities and states to promote this kind of leading-edge practice.

Contrary to conventional wisdom, there are many very good teacher education programs that are structured to ensure the kind of high-quality coursework and clinical experiences that fly-by-night operations like TFA cannot provide. In

fact, many graduates of Ivy League universities do enroll in these programs, do learn to teach well, and do go on to provide leadership in the profession. I offer just one example, chosen because I happen to know it well, but there are many others. At Teachers College, Columbia University, more than 200 preservice education students come from top colleges all across the country. Their grades and test scores place them in the top percentiles nationally, and they come with a passion and commitment to teaching.

In contrast to the slapdash training that TFA recruits receive, students at Teachers College who are preparing to become elementary and middle school teachers take courses in the teaching of mathematics, science, social studies, and reading. Their two semester-length courses in reading are coordinated with their year-long student teaching experiences so that they can apply what they learn directly in practice. They study educational foundations and child development as part of a structured seminar that is also connected to their student teaching. This integrated block of coursework is a rigorous program of readings, activities, and projects that includes curriculum theory and curriculum development, models of teaching and teaching methods, and theory and practice related to learning principles, diverse learning styles, multiple intelligences, multicultural education, and assessment. As part of a structured portfolio and supervision process, candidates complete two guided child studies, a school study, documentation of their students' work and literacy development, and a number of other carefully developed projects aimed at specific demonstrations of competence. All of this is in addition to their classroom work as student teachers.

Schools and cooperating teachers for student teaching placements are carefully selected to ensure that students encounter and learn good practice. Many cooperating teachers are in professional development schools launched in collaboration with local schools. Others teach in restructured schools associated with such nationwide initiatives as the Coalition of Essential Schools. Much of the program is constructed and taught as a collaboration between school-based faculty members and university-based faculty members. Trained supervisors —

themselves carefully selected to be expert veteran teachers — visit each candidate at least every other week. They participate in their own ongoing seminar, have taken courses and an internship in supervision, and meet as a group every other week to discuss the candidates' progress, to share advice, and to enlist resources as needed. All faculty members and supervisors engage in assessment of all candidates, using common standards and a collective process of presenting and defending their judgments.

In contrast to the experiences of TFA recruits, graduates of this program report that they are intellectually challenged and stimulated by the study of teaching and that, when they start teaching, they feel well-prepared. This comment, from a student now returning to the doctoral program, is typical.

My graduate work at Teachers College prepared me well for these upcoming changes (interdisciplinary team teaching and alternative forms of assessment). I was exposed to collaborative learning techniques, assessment through portfolio, and curriculum design. I did my student teaching at an alternative school, working as part of an interdisciplinary team. I am now a member of both the Curriculum and Assessment Committees within my own district, examining the New York Compact for Learning to design meaningful and challenging standards for our students.⁶²

A graduate of Morehouse College was originally recruited by TFA but decided instead to come to Teachers College to better prepare for his work. Having watched friends struggle through the TFA debacle and having just finished his third year of teaching in the Atlanta Public Schools, Chris Ashford is sure that he made the right decision:

Had I not had preparation, I would have been a lot more frustrated and a lot less effective as a teacher. I think my biggest problem with TFA is that [the program] didn't look at teaching as a profession. Who would go to Surgeons for America — "you give us your enthusiasm and youth and we'll train you to do a heart bypass during the summer"? Who would go to Lawyers for America, where you learn to practice law in six weeks? Who's going to send

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their children to a teacher who's trained in six weeks? It's like putting a Band-Aid on a gunshot wound. This is not an answer to the problems of urban education. If anything, it cheapens education. It gives you the idea that anyone can teach.

I'm not surprised that [TFA recruits] found that they couldn't do what was expected of them. You cannot teach anybody to acquire the kinds of things [they need] in a summer program. It is absolutely impossible. If anything it has produced a sense of frustration and a sense of hopelessness [in the recruits]. If TFA [officials] were serious they would offer a much more extensive preparation experience.

They think that youth and enthusiasm will outweigh experience and knowledge. If you can foster both of these in someone, then you'll have a good teacher. Young people need good teachers now more than they ever did before. If you're serious about your profession, then you're going to have to make that extra effort.⁶³

It is clear from the evidence that TFA is bad policy and bad education. It is bad for the recruits because they are ill-pre-

pared. They are denied the knowledge and skills they need, and many who might have become good teachers are instead discouraged from staying in the profession. It is bad for the schools in which they teach, because the recruits often create staffing disruptions and drains on school resources. The schools don't get the help they need, and more lasting solutions are not pursued. It is bad for the children because they are often poorly taught. With their teachers foundering, they are denied opportunities to fully develop the skills they need. They often lack continuity in instruction and are frequently exposed to counterproductive teaching techniques that can destroy their inherent desire to learn. Finally, TFA is bad for teaching. By clinging to faulty assumptions about what teachers need to know and by producing so many teaching failures, it undermines the profession's efforts to raise standards and create accountability. In TFA, no one is accountable for what prospective teachers experience and what they learn — and no one is accountable for ensuring that children get teachers who are prepared to help them learn. As

Jonathan Kozol has observed, "Charity is no substitute for justice."

There are alternatives to putting ill-prepared recruits in classrooms for a revolving-door trip into and out of teaching. These alternatives are what the children need. And we must all speak for them.

1. Jonathan Schorr, "Class Action: What Clinton's National Service Program Could Learn from 'Teach for America,'" *Phi Delta Kappan*, December 1993, pp. 315-18.
2. *Ibid.*, pp. 317, 318.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 316.
4. Wendy Kopp, "TFA Revisions Under Way," Backtalk letter, *Phi Delta Kappan*, May 1994, p. 734.
5. Robert Roth, *Teach for America 1993 Pre-Service Institute Program Review*, Summer 1993. See also Deborah Appleman, "Is Idealism Enough? A Case Study Analysis of Teach for America," paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, San Francisco, April 1992; and Katherine Young, "Graduates Criticize Teach for America," *Brown Daily Herald*, 23 January 1993, pp. 1, 13.
6. TFA's 1993 annual report notes that TFA's "grants from national corporations and foundations decreased by one-third," leaving the organization \$636,000 in debt. TEACH! was formed to "absorb some of Teach for America's costs into a new ef-

fort." See *Charting a New Course: Annual Report — Fiscal Year 1993* (New York: Teach for America, 1993), pp. 1, 13.

7. Wendy Kopp, "Proposal for a Strategic Alliance Between TFA, Inc., and Columbia University," 1 December 1993. See also *Charting a New Course*, p. 12.

8. Personal communication with Rick Belding, 1 June 1994.

9. Michael Shapiro, *Who Will Teach for America?* (Washington, D.C.: Farragut, 1993), p. 187; and National Center for Education Statistics, *Characteristics of Stayers, Movers, and Leavers: Results from the Teacher Follow-up Survey, 1988-89* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education, 1991).

10. Shapiro, p. 79.

11. Quoted in Appleman, p. 1.

12. For a review of these programs, see Linda Darling-Hammond, "Teaching and Knowledge: Policy Issues Posed by Alternate Certification for Teachers," *Peabody Journal of Education*, vol. 67, 1992, pp. 123-54. See also *Findings on Learning to Teach* (East Lansing, Mich.: National Center for Research on Teacher Learning, 1992); and Patricia Ashton and Linda Crocker, "Does Teacher Certification Make a Difference?," *Florida Journal of Teacher Education*, vol. 3, 1986, pp. 73-83.

13. Cameron McCarthy, "The Devil Finds Work: Notes on Identity, Ressentiment, Popular Culture, and Education," paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, April 1994, pp. 26, 27-28.

14. Ann Cook, "Disillusionment and Noblesse Oblige," *Education Week*, 8 April 1992, p. 29.

15. Quoted in Shapiro, p. 83.

16. For reviews, see Darling-Hammond, op. cit.; Carolyn Everson, Willis Hawley, and Marilyn Zlotnick, "Making a Difference in Educational Quality Through Teacher Education," *Journal of Teacher Education*, May/June 1985, pp. 2-12; and Ashton and Crocker, op. cit.

17. In 1990, 50% of newly qualified teachers earned a grade-point average of 3.25 or better, as compared to 40% of all graduates. See Lynn Gray et al., *New Teachers in the Job Market: 1991 Update* (Wash-

ington, D.C.: Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education, 1993).

18. For a review of the research, see Darling-Hammond, op. cit. See also Edith Guyton and Elizabeth Farokhi, "Relationships Among Academic Performance, Basic Skills, Subject Matter Knowledge, and Teaching Skills of Teacher Education Graduates," *Journal of Teacher Education*, September/October 1987, pp. 37-42; and Patricia Ashton and Linda Cocker, "Systematic Study of Planned Variations: The Essential Focus of Teacher Education Reform," *Journal of Teacher Education*, May/June 1987, pp. 2-8.

19. For a review, see Darling-Hammond, op. cit. See also Joseph M. Smith, "School Districts as Teacher Training Institutions in the New Jersey Alternate Route Program," paper presented at the annual meeting of the Eastern Educational Research Association, Clearwater, Florida, February 1990; Deborah Gomez and Robert P. Grobe, "Three Years of Alternative Certification in Dallas: Where Are We?," paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Boston, April 1990; and *Findings on Learning to Teach*.

20. Wendy Kopp, "Reforming Schools of Education Will Not Be Enough," *Yale Law and Policy Review*, vol. 10, 1992, pp. 58-68.

21. Susan Brenna, "Classroom Experiment," *Newsday*, 26 September 1990, Part II, p. 8.

22. Tim Larimer, "High Hopes and Hard Knocks," *Washington Post Magazine*, 14 February 1993, pp. 9-13, 24-27.

23. Personal communication with Beverly Hall, 1 June 1994.

24. Interview with Margaret Bradley, 8 June 1994.

25. Thomas S. Popkewitz, "Policy, Knowledge, and Power: Some Issues for the Study of Educational Reform," in Peter Cookson and Barbara Schneider, eds., *Transforming Schools: Trends, Dilemmas, and Prospects* (New York: Garland, forthcoming).

26. See, for example, "School — Cause or Cure for Abuse?," *American Psychological Association Monitor*, January 1988; Gary F. Render, JeNell M. Padilla, and H. Mark Krank, "Assertive Discipline: A Critical Review and Analysis," *Teachers College Record*, Summer 1989, pp. 607-30; Dan Gartrell, "Assertive Discipline: Unhealthy for Children and Other Living Things," *Young Children*, January 1987, pp. 10-11; Randy Hitz, "Assertive Discipline: A Response to Lee Canter," *Young Children*, January 1988, pp. 25-26; and Edmund Emmer and Amy Aussiker, "School and Classroom Discipline Programs: How Well Do They Work?," paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, Washington, D.C., April 1987.

27. In a personal communication with me, Lee Canter explained that, while he agrees that more diagnostic and less punitive approaches to behavior management are preferable, most teachers cannot handle them. Assertive Discipline is based on the presumption that teachers can handle only simple rules for interacting with students.

28. For a review, see Darling-Hammond, op. cit.

29. Gomez and Grobe, op. cit.

30. Personal communication with Lisa Peterson.

31. Pamela L. Grossman, "Learning to Teach Without Teacher Education," *Teachers College Record*, vol. 91, 1989, p. 205.

32. Interview with Kisha Brown, 8 June 1994.

33. Larimer, p. 27.

34. Shapiro, pp. 61, 65.

35. Kathy Carter and Walter Doyle, "Teachers' Knowledge Structures and Comprehension Processes," in J. Calderhead, ed., *Exploring Teacher Thinking* (London: Cassell, 1987), pp. 147-60; Walter Doyle, "Content Representation in Teachers' Definitions of Academic Work," *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, vol. 18, 1986, pp. 365-79; and Jan Berquist Hansen, "The Relationship of Skills and Classroom Climate of Trained and Untrained Teachers of Gifted Students" (Doctoral dissertation, Purdue University, 1988).

36. Charles E. Skipper and Richard Quantz, "Changes in Educational Attitudes of Education and Arts and Science Students During Four Years of College," *Journal of Teacher Education*, May/June 1987, pp. 39-44.

37. Darling-Hammond, op. cit.; Grossman, op. cit.; *Findings on Learning to Teach*; Sharon Feiman-Nemser and Michelle B. Parker, *Making Subject Matter Part of the Conversation or Helping Beginning Teachers Learn to Teach* (East Lansing, Mich.: National Center for Research on Teacher Education 1990); and N. Mitchell, *Interim Evaluation Report of the Alternative Certification Program* (Dallas: Department of Planning, Evaluation, and Testing, Dallas Independent School District, REA87-027-2, 1987).

38. Shapiro, p. 38.

39. *Ibid.*, p. 74.

40. *Ibid.*, p. 89.

41. *Ibid.*, p. 74.

42. *Ibid.*, p. 152.

43. TFA's annual report for 1993 shows revenues of \$6,388,773 spent to place 537 recruits. See *Charting a New Course*.

44. "TFA Revisions Under Way," p. 734.

45. Personal communication with Robert Roth, TFA summer institute evaluator.

46. Personal communication with Thomas Popkewitz, 30 June 1994.

47. Personal communication with Robert Roth, 29 June 1994.

48. Roth, op. cit., p. 34.

49. *Ibid.*, pp. 22, 31.

50. *Ibid.*, pp. 34, 56.

51. *Ibid.*, p. 19.

52. *Ibid.*, p. 45.

53. *Ibid.*, pp. 40, 46.

54. *Ibid.*, pp. 41-42.

55. *Ibid.*, pp. 63-68.

56. *Ibid.*, p. 11.

57. "Performance-Based Assessment," mimeographed manuscript, Teach for America, 9 March 1994.

58. *Ibid.*, pp. 5, 12.

59. *Ibid.*, p. 12.

60. *Ibid.*, pp. 25-26.

61. For an overview of these programs, see Linda Darling-Hammond, *Professional Development Schools: Schools for Developing a Profession* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1993).

62. Personal communication with Julie Cara Medow.

63. Personal communication with Chris Ashford, 6 July 1994. **KK**

