



Human Capital

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Efforts to prepare teachers through “residencies,” modeled after medical education, offer promise as a way districts can develop a teaching corps that meets their needs.

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In 2002, Boston’s then-superintendent Tom Payzant knew he had to find a new way to tackle the city’s growing teacher crisis. The district needed more math, science, and special education teachers, and – crucially – Boston’s highest-poverty schools needed teachers committed to teaching in challenging classrooms for more than just a few years.

Payzant also recognized that the teaching workforce was changing. Boston was seeing fewer talented young teachers wanting to make teaching a lifelong career and more wanting to teach for a few years and then move on. He needed a strategy that would secure a cadre of skilled, diverse teachers who would commit to Boston schools for at least three to six years. And, Payzant understood that the teacher preparation programs operating in Boston at the time were not going to be able to respond to these new challenges. The district would have to develop its own approach. In 2003, Payzant turned to the Boston Plan for Excellence (BPE) and worked in partnership with BPE to create the Boston Teacher Residency (BTR) program.

In Chicago, a parallel story was unfolding. Mike Koldyke, a retired venture capitalist, realized that universities could not prepare enough qualified teachers for Chicago’s 408,000 students. In 2001, Koldyke was able to inspire and engage a group of business and community leaders to design a program, the Academy for Urban School Leadership (AUSL), that could significantly advance and reform the teaching profession.

Understanding that producing the most effective graduates would require sound school leadership and similarly skilled colleagues, AUSL partnered with Chicago Public Schools (CPS) to become a school management organization in addition to a teacher preparation program. This arrangement allows AUSL to manage low-performing CPS schools and, importantly, to staff these schools with a critical mass of AUSL teachers and hire principals and administrative teams who support the AUSL model. AUSL is now considered a crucial part of the district’s strategy to change Chicago’s lowest-performing schools.

The programs in Boston and Chicago are known as *urban teacher residencies* (UTRs) because they are based on the medical residency model

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that pairs professional course work with embedded clinical experience. UTRs are a nascent approach, but they have gained significant attention recently. The recognition is growing that the UTR design incorporates elements that research indicates are important for preparing and supporting beginning teachers – from a rigorous recruiting and admissions process to an intense three-year induction period.

Although these programs are too new to yield data on whether they are improving student learning in Boston and Chicago, promising early results indicate, among other impacts, that teachers trained in UTRs are far more likely to stay in high-needs schools. As a result, there is interest at the federal level in expanding these programs. The Higher Education Act includes millions of dollars in funding to start up or expand current UTR programs. And Democratic presidential hopeful Barack Obama has given the idea very public support. He sponsored the Teacher Residency Act in the Senate and, in a recent speech, promised to “create more teacher residency programs to train 30,000 high-quality teachers a year.”¹

Clearly, UTRs will be receiving more attention in the near future; it is, therefore, worthwhile to dig into these programs and unearth their key elements and evidence of effectiveness, as well as draw out lessons learned and policy implications for urban education leaders interested in developing their own UTR models.

How They Work

UTRs start by selecting candidates selectively and strategically. Candidates have strong academic records; many have math and science backgrounds.

¹ May 27, 2008, Thorton, Colorado.

Recruitment efforts are focused on recent college graduates from top universities, mid-career professionals, and people who have demonstrated a commitment to the districts. Like most urban districts, BPS and CPS have a high percentage of Black and Latino students, so the programs focus on recruiting candidates who will reflect their student populations.

In UTRs, prospective teachers (residents) integrate their master's level course work with an intensive full-year residency alongside an experienced mentor teacher in an urban classroom before becoming teachers of record in their own classrooms in their second year. Residents work closely with their mentors as the mentor writes lesson plans, manages classroom behavior, grades papers, and assesses student progress. The mentor and resident meet one-on-one to discuss these elements of teaching and, with the mentor teacher acting as a guide, the resident begins independently writing lesson plans and leading classroom discussions. Over the course of a school year, the resident gradually takes on the full responsibilities of a classroom teacher.

As a resident tackles each new aspect of teaching, the resident and mentor continually meet to discuss, review, and assess progress. At the same time, residents are taking master's courses in teaching aligned with their clinical experiences. BTR works with faculty from a variety of institutions, while AUSL has developed a partnership with National-Louis University.

After a year, residents who successfully complete the program and pass required tests receive a master's degree and teaching credential and begin teaching in their own classrooms – most in high-needs areas such as special education and secondary math



and science. In Boston, because of the district's large population of special needs students, every resident in BTR is also prepared to receive certification in special education. Both CPS and BTR also provide intensive induction support into residency graduates' third and fourth years of teaching.

The UTRs offer financial incentives to residents to select their programs and to fulfill their teaching commitment. Upfront investments are made to attract, prepare, and support UTR candidates. During their residency year, residents receive a living stipend of \$11,100. Costs to the residents include \$3,700 for the master's degree tuition (which is financed by an AmeriCorps loan) and \$10,000 tuition for the residency program, which is loaned to residents and forgiven as they fulfill their three-year commitment to teach in high-needs district schools. The cost

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to BTR for providing these incentives and running the residency – including continued support to graduates – averages about \$37,500 per candidate.

UTRs have not solved the teacher-quality challenge in either city. As of 2008, for example, BTR prepared about 15 percent of all teachers hired by the district (or 84 teachers out of the 539 that were placed in BPS in school year 2007–2008). But they have fundamentally changed the traditional consumer-producer relationship between school systems and teacher preparation programs by giving each city an alternative source of new teachers who are explicitly prepared to meet the district’s – and students’ – most pressing needs and by giving the district a much greater role in ensuring teacher quality.

In addition, because UTRs often demonstrate best practices, from recruitment to induction, they have the potential to vastly improve systems for teacher development – or, in the more recent vernacular, human capital – in urban school districts. As such, UTRs can be a key element of urban districts’ portfolio of pathways into teaching and a linchpin of a larger strategy to strengthen their human capital systems.

Urban Teacher Residencies Up Close

UTRs are based on seven core design principles (see CUTR n.d.).

1. *UTRs tightly weave education theory and classroom practice together.*

Residents practice what is taught in courses and continuously test, reflect on, and improve their skills. They demonstrate their proficiency not through course grades, but through performance-based assessments and authentic projects that are informed by research and theory but grounded in actual classroom experiences. For example, a resident teacher in Chicago or Boston would study lesson plan development in her university classes and then work with her mentor to create a lesson plan for class that week. After the lesson plan is implemented, the mentor reviews the plan’s execution and possible improvements with the resident.

2. *UTRs focus on learning alongside an experienced, trained mentor.*

Working with a mentor teacher allows residents to experience a full-year school “life cycle,” from setting up classrooms to the closing of the school year. They learn firsthand how to build culture and community, organize long-term instructional goals, create formative assessments, and use data to reflect on teaching practices. There is evidence

that the relationship helps improve the mentors' practice as well. As one mentor explained, "I didn't realize how much thought I put into my practice until I had to verbalize it. . . . Mentoring has definitely improved my practice."

3. *UTRs organize teacher candidates in cohorts to cultivate professional learning communities and foster collaboration among new and experienced teachers.*

Learning to teach is no longer a solo activity. Cohorts of residents engage in a tightly prescribed sequence of coursework and clinical experiences as a group. The cohorts meet regularly and form an intellectual community and also function to help connect their practice with course work, as residents work together in the same school. The cohort model extends beyond the residency year – an effort is made to place residency graduates together as they assume teaching positions.

4. *UTRs build effective partnerships.*

Building effective partnerships is as important as it is challenging – universities and school districts are not traditionally known for their ability to partner. Recognizing that no single district, university, or nonprofit organization alone can solve the problem of preparation and retention of high-quality teachers for urban schools, UTRs bring together diverse organizations for the common goal of improving student achievement and can be critical to supporting teacher learning over the lifespan of a teacher's career and impacting long-lasting reform in urban schools. Leadership and support at the highest levels was key to making these partnerships work in Boston and Chicago.

5. *UTRs serve school districts.*

Admissions goals and priorities for UTRs are driven by the needs of the districts' students. As noted above, AUSL and BTR place a priority on recruiting in the districts' high-needs areas like science and mathematics, and BTR residents are prepared to receive an additional licensure in special education because of Boston's large population of students with special needs. Additionally, residents learn the district's instructional initiatives and curriculum while they come to understand the history and context of the community in which they will teach. UTRs can also serve districts by pushing them to improve their practices. For example, BTR's high-quality work on new teacher screening and induction has spurred BPS to revamp the way it screens candidates and supports all of its novices.

6. *UTRs support residents once they are hired as teachers of record.*

UTRs are designed to provide more sophisticated induction programs. In Chicago, after graduating from the residency program, residents continue to receive individualized coaching and induction support through year two of



teaching and additional professional development support in years three and four. An induction coach works with the new teacher once or twice a week; new teachers are assigned a grade partner and cluster leader; there is common preparation time with grade-level partners and other preparation time is used for observations. Because these teacher supports are all rooted in a common definition of quality teaching, they are beginning to pay dividends for the schools and the students served. As one university faculty member noted:

AUSL is okay with putting teachers into low-performing schools, because AUSL believes teachers have to learn...what it's like to teach in those environments....But AUSL [also] provides strong support for teacher candidates in those low-performing schools. And you can't have one without the other.

7. *UTRs establish and support differentiated career roles for veteran teachers.*

The UTRs have begun to create opportunities for excellent veteran teachers to take on roles as mentors, supervisors, and instructors while still holding positions as K–12 classroom teachers.

After three years, 90 percent of BTR graduates and 95 percent of AUSL graduates are still teaching. (In comparison, nationally, between 30 percent and 50 percent of urban teachers leave within the first five years.)

AUSL mentors earn a 20 percent salary supplement and they can be offered meaningful leadership opportunities, such as opportunities to create benchmark assessments and curriculum used in network schools, without becoming administrators. Both BTR and AUSL are beginning to see their most successful residents develop to become mentors.

The Effectiveness of UTRs

While UTRs appear to be a promising innovation, the critical question is whether UTRs have measurable impact. There are a few areas of UTR outcomes worth considering.

Student Learning

Only a few years in operation, UTRs do not yet have sufficient data to determine the impact of their graduates based on multiple measures of student achievement. However, both BTR and AUSL have commissioned outside research to determine their effectiveness, and data should be forthcoming.

Skills and Competencies

In ratings of BTR graduates, principals considered 88 percent of BTR teachers to be as effective or more effective than other first-year teachers in their schools and over 94 percent indicated their desire to hire additional BTR graduates. And anecdotal evidence suggests students agree. As one fifth-grader from Harvard Elementary School in Chicago said:

I think the difference [after AUSL took over the school] is that these teachers care. Last year teachers didn't care. They use to just sit and watch.... There was no learning. They taught only when they see the principal walk in. But this year teachers care a lot. They teach...like, every second. They teach whatever needs to be learned.

Diversity, Hard-to-Staff Classes, and Retention

Both AUSL and BTR have been successful in recruiting high-caliber candidates of color – in 2007, 57 percent of AUSL residents and 55 percent of BTR residents were people of color. (In comparison, about 28 percent of Teach for America members in Chicago in 2007 were people of color.) In Boston, 57 percent of BTR’s middle and high school residents teach mathematics, science, or English Language Learners (ELLs).

UTRs have extremely high retention rates; after three years, 90 percent of BTR graduates and 95 percent of AUSL graduates are still teaching. (In comparison, nationally, between 30 percent and 50 percent of urban teachers leave within the first five years.)

Mentor Skill and Retention

New roles for experienced teachers have led to renewed enthusiasm and motivation and contributed to the retention of veteran teachers. And the leadership skills that mentors develop are serving as a potential pipeline to other leadership positions. Each program has created positions, often filled by mentors, to manage and/or continue developing school-based or cross-school groups of mentors.

Impact on the Human Capital System

While the UTRs are still relatively young programs, there are examples of ways in which they have begun to impact their districts’ human capital systems. BTR has forged important changes in how teachers are recruited and screened in the district. BTR and BPS staff members now coordinate to direct potential teachers to appropriate preparation pathways based on individuals’ strengths and needs. BTR and BPS



have also adopted one set of standards for teaching, and those standards are becoming an increasingly integral part of the professional development and teacher assessment systems throughout the district.

Chicago Public Schools is a far more decentralized system than the smaller Boston district, yet the impacts of AUSL are clear. AUSL is a significant part of the CPS plan for improving low-performing schools. In addition, the close link between AUSL and National-Louis University (NLU) resulted in changes in the university’s preparation program. As part of the partnership, NLU modified its traditional two-year teacher education program to integrate its course work with the year-long AUSL teacher residency. Among other changes, the university changed its

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format for lesson plans based on input of AUSL staff and mentors, worked with NLU faculty and school-based mentors to collaboratively evaluate residents' work, and modified course content and sequence to better meet the needs of teachers in an urban context. Faculty reported that the success of residents in the AUSL training academies and high-needs CPS schools has prompted exploration of new kinds of clinical placements in other NLU preparation programs.

Cost-Effectiveness

UTRs are distinct from other teacher preparation programs not so much in *how much* they cost, but in *when* the costs are incurred. UTRs make more upfront investments than other pathways to certification, and financial data suggest that successful UTRs can be quite cost effective. The upfront expense of requiring a full-time, paid internship can be offset by both the retention of novice teachers, their teaching effectiveness over time, and the wider positive impacts UTR can have the district's human capital system.

Building for Success

The Chicago and Boston experiences suggest some valuable lessons for other districts. Based on our study of these two districts, we describe in this section a number of factors important to consider when districts and their partners begin to explore the design and implementation of a UTR program. These action steps can guide an analysis of a district's readiness to implement a successful program and direct attention toward important features for initiating and sustaining a successful UTR.

1. *Assess the readiness of a school system, institution of higher education, and/or community-based organization to undertake the work of developing a UTR.*

Districts must have a sustained, well-developed teaching and learning infrastructure, where good teaching and learning are clearly defined and consistently supported. Higher-education institutions should develop an organization-wide commitment to investing in teacher education. There must be institutional support of faculty who work with UTRs – most commonly indicated through providing time to teach the courses and valuing their contributions in the university tenure decision-making process. Finally,

participating nonprofit organizations must have the expertise to lead teacher education efforts, including staff who have the necessary content knowledge to help build teaching and learning programs. Nonprofit leaders need to understand the values, culture, and interests of each partner.

2. *Identify high-quality schools and classrooms in which to prepare residents.*

Districts must have a sufficient number of schools at all levels in which the culture is collaborative and collegial for adults; that are encouraging and supportive of all students' learning; and in which there is a constant focus on learning and continuous improvement. Setting high expectations is a critical component to ensure a quality UTR.

3. *Define clear standards for high-quality teaching and support teachers' progress toward meeting those standards.*

An effective and sustainable UTR depends on having in place clear standards for high-quality teaching that are consistent with or identical to the district's standards for all teachers. A centerpiece of both BTR's and AUSL's programs is a set of standards for teachers and common expectations for what high-quality teaching looks like. These standards, drawn from emerging research on teacher effectiveness, should drive the curriculum design of the UTR and the recruitment, selection, support, and evaluation of residents, mentors, and school-based program staff.

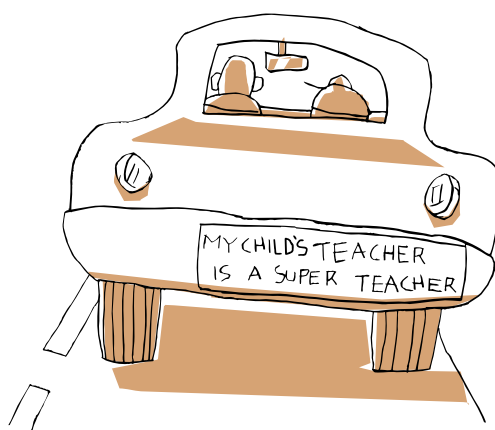
4. *Develop teacher leaders and expand career options.*

UTRs, by design, introduce a variety of teacher leadership roles: mentoring residents, coordinating the work of school-based clusters of mentors and residents, and teaching UTR

coursework. Developing teacher leaders allows districts to spread teaching expertise and keep its best educators. In doing so, UTRs can strengthen teacher preparation for universities and school districts. However, districts and universities face significant challenges as well as opportunities. For example, UTRs must press districts to cluster cohorts of new teachers, and recruitment and placement efforts should focus more on teams of teachers with key teacher leaders rather than on individuals.

5. *Collect evidence to improve programs and build political will.*

UTRs, like a number of other higher-education-based and alternative programs, are beginning to assemble evidence on the effects of their programs on teacher retention and student achievement. These data will be critical for improving their efforts and attracting the support of policy-makers, practitioners, and the public. UTRs must be able to clearly define whom they attract, how residents are prepared, where they teach, and how effective they are in helping students learn. UTRs also



need to demonstrate more clearly the cost-effectiveness of their programs – in terms of both student learning and teacher retention.

6. *Determine how UTRs can play a broader role in strengthening a district's human capital system.*

In Chicago, AUSL has begun to manage turnaround schools and create the conditions where their residents can effectively learn and thrive. As one of many organizations that partners with this large and fairly decentralized district to manage turnaround schools, AUSL has deep involvement in and impact on this subset of schools but limited impact on districtwide strategy. In Boston, on the other hand, BTR partnered with the central office to inform and shape district policies and practices, identifying system barriers and bringing to scale some of BTR's most promising practices. The choice of how the UTR can best engage with and impact the district depends, of course, on district context and needs and the capacities within the UTR.

Urban districts have a portfolio of pathways into teaching. Districts should take steps to actively manage the portfolio to gain the mix of talent that best meets district needs in the most cost-effective way possible.

Policy Implications

Ensuring that UTRs succeed will require some changes in district, state, and federal policy.

Demanding High Standards

State and local policy-makers should hold all preparation pathways to the same quality assurance standards. Investments in new-teacher performance assessments would allow recruits – regardless of the pathway they choose – to demonstrate, upon completion, that they are prepared to teach. At the same time, policy-makers should be willing to pay them more than other recruits – and even *substantially* more if they are effective and continue teaching for more than five years.

Creating Financial Incentives

Policy-makers should target available teacher preparation funding to providers who are best able to respond to high-needs school districts. At the federal level, the Teaching Residency Act, recently authorized as part of the Higher Education Act, is a step in this direction. State policy-makers should work to ensure that state investments in teacher education are producing teachers prepared and committed to teach in the state's high-needs schools. States may take different routes to this policy goal, but creating competition, accountability, and incentives to prepare teachers for specific state and district needs is essential. Local policy-makers can allocate more salary dollars to high-needs schools with high proportions of new teachers. These schools would then have funds to pay residents' stipends and mentors to support them.

Managing a Portfolio of Pathways

Increasingly, urban districts have a portfolio of pathways into teaching, and UTRs are a potentially valuable addi-

tion to this portfolio. Districts should take steps to actively manage the portfolio to gain the mix of talent that best meets district needs in the most cost-effective way possible. To accomplish this, district administrators should develop metrics to assess new teachers' performance and retention, report data by preparation source and cost to the district, forecast teacher workforce needs, and use this information to guide decisions about which programs to support. Districts and preparing institutions should communicate findings to policy-makers, teaching candidates, and the public that ultimately funds their human capital systems.

In Closing

The power and potential of UTRs lies in their commitment to address the real teacher supply and quality needs of school districts; leverage the best K–12 educators as mentors and teacher educators in preparing the next generation of teachers; and promote redesigned schools organized for students and teachers to learn. These commitments are simultaneously basic and revolutionary. They are not proprietary to UTRs; they are not new. But UTRs offer a model that can expand the vision for recruiting, preparing, and retaining quality teachers for urban schools.

Reference

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