TEACHERS GROW BEST BY. . .

ACTING READING DISCOVERING REFLECTING SHARING
IMITATING MEDITATING COMPETING IMAGINING CONNECTING
HEARING FEELING WATCHING PLAYING
DRAWING EXPLORING EXPERIENCING WALKING SYNTHESIZING
FAILING WRITING COLLABORATING NEGOTIATING
PRETENDING TEACHING LISTENING EVALUATING
PRACTICING ANALYZING TESTING REMEMBERING
MODELING

Growing Transformational Learners & Leaders

HOW CAN WE MAKE MORE CLEAR, INTENTIONAL & EXPLICIT "LEARNING BETS" WITH OUR TEACHERS?

Version 2.2—Sept '16

learn·ing bet \ˈlər-niŋ ˈbet\ **noun** an assumption or choice we make about how our teachers best grow (*e.g., through practice, reading, reflection, watching, discovering, etc.*)

The Global Learning Lab
@ Teach For All

Why I Am Feeling Obsessed with Learning Theory . . . and Why I Hope You Are Too

For many years, I have worked with teams of people studying *what's* happening in *transformational classrooms*—classrooms where we see students who are facing formidable challenges and injustices nevertheless on an enduring path to self-determined opportunity and leadership. We are learning a ton about the visions of student success, student outcomes, and teacher actions and mindsets that enable students' leadership in their own lives and communities.

And yet, we are not seeing wide-spread, at-scale improvements in student learning that correlate with how much we are learning about what it takes to lead transformational classrooms. Why, if we are learning so much about what is required to lead transformational classrooms, are we not seeing many more teachers leading more student progress?

This "provocation paper" explores one possible answer to that question: we are inhibiting the progress of our students by perpetuating lack of clarity and purpose in *how we grow* our teachers. When and how should our teachers be reading, watching, practicing, reflecting, analyzing, discovering, imagining, writing, or questioning? How do we choose among the infinitely varied ways that we can support our teachers to grow?

The Global Learning & Leadership Lab at Teach For All brought together a collection of thoughtful experts and practitioners for a "Roundtable" to explore the question "How Do We Best Grow Great Teachers?" Many, many thanks to those critical friends who have helped inspire much of what is in this resource. [You will "meet" those critical friends throughout this document.]

In the following screens or pages you will find *experiences* and *insights* informed and inspired by those experts and practitioners. You'll be asked to "take a stand" on different assumptions we are all making (often without thinking about them) about how we grow teachers. You'll reflect on what factors are influencing your current "learning bets." You'll be asked to consider your organization's identity, some of the field's best practices, and your own practical realities to help make your learning bets with teachers more intentional, clear and explicit. You'll be asked to explore ways some other organizations are considering those questions.

> This "provocation paper" is a series of disorienting experiences and emerging insights that we hope will help teacher developers make more intentional choices as they work to support and grow transformational teachers.

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Leaders from across the Teach For All network on the second day of the Roundtable.

We—and the broader education landscape—share a problem. Our assumptions about how our teachers grow are often implicit, unclear, contradictory, and unexamined. At the same time, we in the Teach For All network have have an unparalleled opportunity. Teach For All and its network of innovative, entrepreneurial, learning organizations is well positioned to be a catalyst and clearinghouse for learning how we can best grow transformational learners and leaders.

with *ganas*,
Steven Farr

Our Students Will Be Better Served If We Make More Intentional, Clear, and Explicit "Learning Bets" With Our Teachers—Informing Those Choices with Our Organization's Identity, the Field's Best Insights & Practices, and Our Practical Realities

Our growing clarity and alignment about *what it takes* for a classroom to put children on an enduring path to broader self-determined opportunities in life is outpacing our clarity and alignment about *how to grow* people to act on that understanding. And, across the Teach For All network (and the education landscape more broadly) lack of understanding, clarity, alignment, and explicitness about how to grow our teachers is inhibiting progress toward a day when all children attain an excellent education.

> We must move from less-thoughtfully acting on an array of divergent "learning bets" for reasons of convenience and inertia toward more-thoughtfully prioritizing among learning bets that align with our organization's identity, the field's emerging insights and best practices, and the practical considerations of our different contexts.

Many teacher development models are built on implicit and unexamined assumptions about how teachers best grow and we perpetuate the problem by conflating the "what" of great teaching with the "how" of becoming great teachers. In the absence of clarity, some teacher preparation models do "a little bit of everything" half-well instead of prioritizing implementation of well-chosen learning bets. Meanwhile, unfortunately, the academic research on how teachers best grow is limited, weak, and contradictory.

We can drive learning and innovation if we bring hidden assumptions about how our teachers learn into the critical light of metacognitive awareness. Do we "bet" that teachers best grow starting with mindsets or skills, with generic tactics or content-specific methods, with reading and watching or with doing and coaching? Are we working on the assumption that our teacher-learners grow best individually or collectively, through more or less explicit collective engagement with issues of power and privilege, via more systematized or individualized learning experiences?

We are unlikely to come to one, universal set of "learning bets" that is right for every effort to grow teachers, we can move from less-thoughtfully embracing an array of different learning bets for reasons of convenience toward more-thoughtfully prioritizing among learning bets by focusing on three families of factors:

- **ORGANIZATIONAL IDENTITY.** Our learning bets should be informed by the purpose of our organization (the why), our teacher candidates (the who), and the knowledge, skills and mindsets in our definition of excellent teaching (the what).

- **BEST PRACTICES.** We will best prioritize among learning bets when we also consider some fundamentals of adult learning theory, some of the learning bets that consistently appear in the strongest teacher development models, and some organizational systems and culture elements that enable our teachers' learning.

- **PRACTICAL REALITIES.** While they are important to consider, the practical realities of when and where we are supporting teachers should be a final consideration so we do not get blinded by logistical challenges of time, pace and resources.

By being more intentional and explicit about how each of our organizations is growing teachers, we will be able to better learn from each other for the sake of the children we serve.

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LEARNER DRIVEN

GROWTH — ACHIEVE-MENT

IND LEARNING — GROUP LEARNING

SKILLS — MINDSETS

CONTEXT-UALIZED — GENERIC

THINKING — DOING

THE WHOLE EXPERIENCE IN TWO PAGES

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A MORE TRADITIONAL TABLE OF CONTENTS

1 The "How" Is Holding Us Back

Across our Teach For All network, we see in each partner organization a small number of teachers having a transformational impact in the lives of their students, but we are not yet seeing the wide-spread, at-scale breakthroughs in teacher performance and student outcomes to ensure all children are on an enduring path to self-determined leadership and opportunity. Despite significant investments, innovations, and learning in teacher training and support, we are finding elusive a dramatic shift in the percentage of teachers who are embodying transformational learning and leadership.

Like most teacher development organizations across the globe, our partner organizations are producing a relatively wide and standard distribution of teachers. While our partner organizations' teachers are often outperforming other first and second year teachers in terms of student growth, that gap is small and has not increased much over time.

Across our network *and* the education landscape more broadly, lack of understanding, clarity, alignment, and explicitness about how to grow our teachers is inhibiting progress toward a day when all children attain an excellent education.

> Our growing clarity about WHAT IT TAKES for a classroom to put children on an path to self-determined leadership and opportunities is outpacing our clarity and alignment about HOW TO GROW people to act on that understanding.

A professional development day for teachers in the United States, in 1893.

ILLUSTRATING THE "PROBLEM OF HOW" —IN THE KITCHEN

Imagine for a moment that you want to become a chef. Not just any chef, but a great chef. . .dare we say, a transformational chef. :)

You know that what makes a transformational chef is a difficult question, but there seem to be real patterns in kitchens that have profound influence on diners, from the very simple (the food is served hot and fresh) to more complex (the food combines familiar tastes to make new ones) to more personal (transformational chefs share a common drive to make people happy). In fact, you have a whole list of qualities of transformational kitchens and chefs. Excellent.

Does that make you a transformational chef?
It's doubtful.

So, with your list of qualities in hand, what is going to help you grow to become a transformational chef? Let's say you have limited time before people are going to show up hungry. What's your best "bet" for growing as a chef? You could read about great cooking. You could watch great cooking. You could practice small elements of great cooking and gradually put them together. You could spend time with a transformational chef, picking up skills, knowledge and mindsets with increasing responsibility. You could fuel your desire to learn by tasting excellent food and seeing first-hand the influence of great cooking on diners. You could get a cooking coach who would watch you work and give constructive criticism as you work. You could get a different cooking coach who helps you analyze your own cooking and discover ways you want to improve it. You could develop relationships with others who are trying to learn to cook and draw from their strengths and share yours.

ALL of those are legitimate "bets" to grow your culinary skills. But it might not be the best choice to pursue ALL of these bets at once. Would you learn faster if you focused on a few, strategically chosen "bets" and invested heavily in them? How would you decide which "bets" to make? Perhaps it matters whether you want to cook many things or just a few things. Perhaps you should consider what you know about how you have best learned in other contexts. Perhaps it matters what your diners are going to be hungry for.

WHAT performing an endeavor requires does not answer the question of HOW to improve one's performance in that endeavor. The "problem of the how" is the topic of this document and is what we face when are not purposeful in considering which learning bets will best grow our teachers ~~chefs~~.

2 Yes, We Have a Problem: Five Foundational Realizations

As Teach For All convened world-class experts with leaders from Teach For All organizations to explore the question "How Do We Best Grow Great Teachers, "a handful of concerning realities surfaced that serve as helpful, if concerning, starting place for this inquiry:
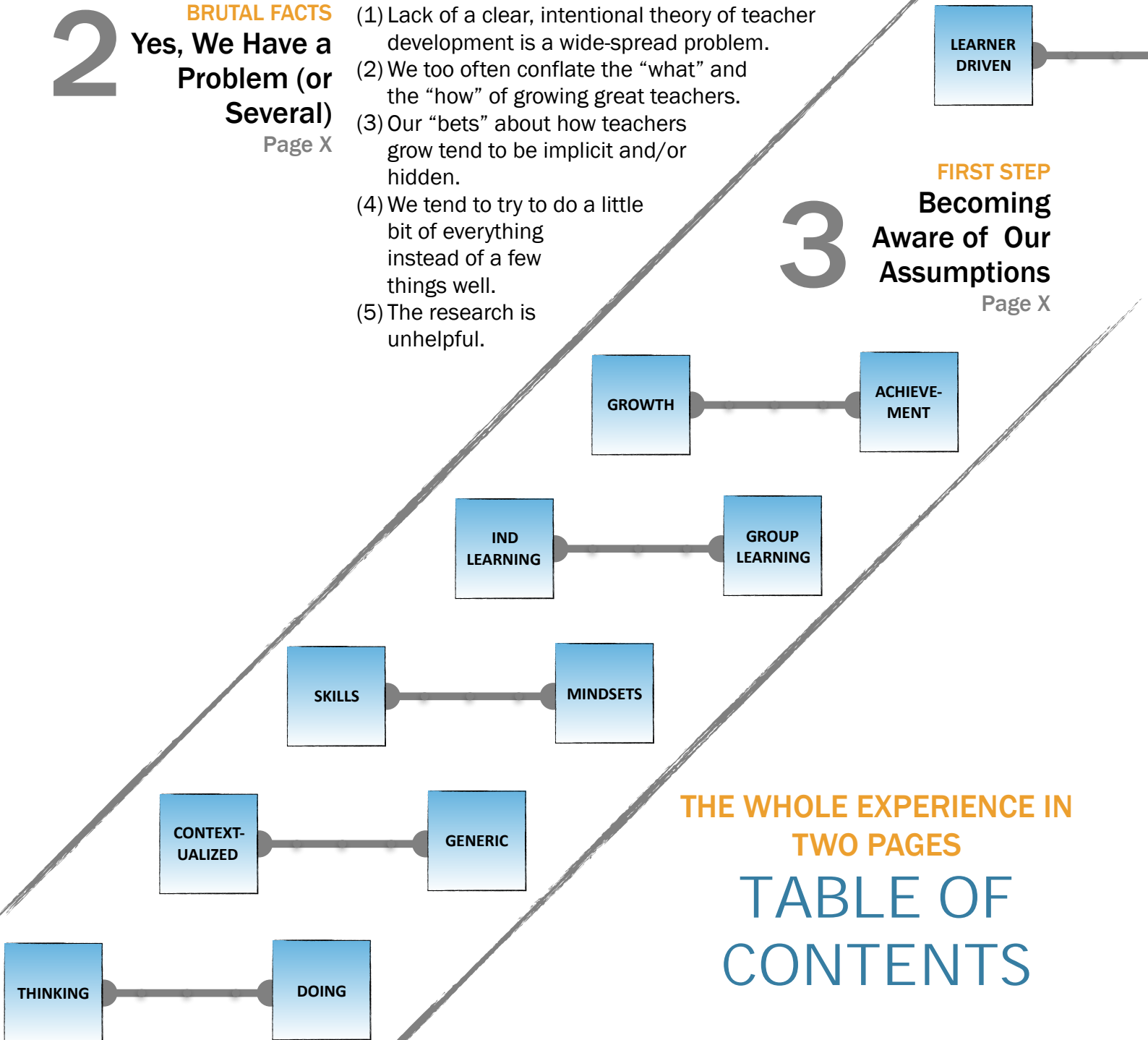
(1) Lack of a clear, intentional theory of teacher development is a wide-spread problem.

(2) We too often conflate the "what" and the "how" of growing great teachers.

(3) Our "bets" about how teachers grow tend to be implicit and/or hidden, making learning from each other difficult.

(4) We tend to try to do a little bit of everything instead of a few things well.

(5) The research is unhelpful.

Lack Of Clear, Intentional Theory Of Teacher Development Is A Wide-Spread Problem.

We are not the only ones struggling with finding breakthrough strategies for training and supporting teachers. Teacher preparation efforts across the global education landscape—from university-based training models to school-based professional development—are straining to see even small aggregate changes in the performance of their teachers.

So while we might acknowledge that we are not alone in this challenge, we also have to recognize that we have few models to draw from for solving it.

Tim Daly, former head of an influential organization in the U.S. called the New Teacher Project (TNTP), reflected on what he sees across the entire education landscape:

> *This is deeply humbling work. It is so painful to see how much we are struggling and that the challenge of supporting teachers to better practices is so brutally slow and difficult, and is more about the failures we're reflecting on and learning from than the shining successes we can build on. We see this landscape where info is constantly bent or obscured and it leads to bad decisions.*

At the Roundtable, we heard similarly pained descriptions of the teacher-growth landscape from countries around the world, from Australia and Peru and the UK and China.

Tim went on to give us a review of the just released TNTP report The Mirage: Confronting the Hard Truth About Our Quest For Teacher Development. This report is must-read provocation for all of us who think we might have some idea about how to grow teachers.

By studying and interviewing 10,000 teachers, 500 school leaders, and 100 teacher developers, and by trying to link investments in professional development with actual outcomes for children, TNTP revealed that almost everything we think we know about teacher development is. . .a *mirage*.

Consider some of TNTP's concerning findings from its research in the U.S.:

From TNTP's *The Mirage.*

- In the U.S., the studied districts are spending approximately $18,000 and 10% of teachers' work days on professional development per year, in perpetuity. And yet, in terms of actual student outcomes, most teachers in those districts are not actually improving year to year, and in fact some are getting worse.
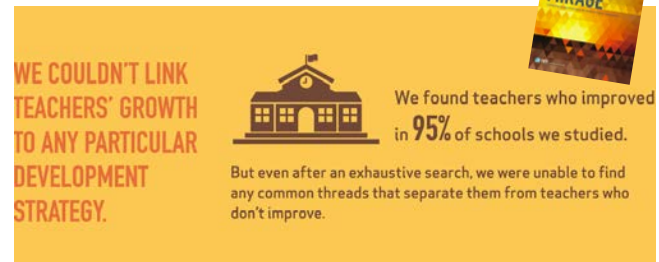
- Teachers' own assessment of their strengths and weaknesses rarely align to their actual skill levels, often because the systems they work in have suggested they are all great, and have little room to improve. More than 60% of low-rated teachers gave themselves high performance ratings. As Tim Daly explained, this gap between reality and perception undermines the heart of professional development:

    It's consequential because it impedes this idea of disconfirmation — when I know that my actions are not getting me the results that I want, which is one of the most powerful thing that starts learning. When do I decide I should learn something different? We see most info that teachers receive and most of the things they believe impede that process from happening rather than facilitating it in a healthy way.

- Studying the few teachers who *are* improving reveals no actionable patterns—in terms of the type, amount, substance—of professional development that led to their improvement. Most of us insist that we know what works, and that if we just put that in an intense enough form and with an intense enough dosage, we will see teacher grow. Tim described this study's findings bluntly:

    Form and dosage have basically no relationship at all to teacher learning. This is enormously dispiriting and important."

Tim brings the findings of The Mirage home with a stunning data-point:

    In one of our sites, if you were to play forward [the teacher growth seen in these studies], at what point will the average teacher in this site be highly effective in developing students' critical thinking skills? It would be 172 years.

We too often conflate the "what" and the "how" of growing great teachers.

As we engaged with experts on the question "how do we best grow great teachers," we repeatedly found that our conversations slipped into *what* knowledge, skills, and mindsets teachers need to have. Our partner organization representatives did that. Our experts did that. We did that.

When the "how we grow teachers" question is hard to answer, we have a tendency to retreat to the question "what we want teachers to know and do." This tendency contributes to our lack of clarity, understanding and

What "bets" different organizations make about what works to improve teacher performance are hidden and implicit, making it hard to learn from each other. And in many cases those learning bets seem to be unexamined and unclear, inhibiting success.

explicitness of our theory of development.

At one point, one of the experts at the Roundtable caught this tendency and called it out:

> *[One contributor] said we should be careful about understating what we know – for instance, we know a lot about how to teach reading. It felt to me like [that contributor] was conflating what we know about good teaching, which is quite a bit, with how we help teachers become effective at those things. Knowing and helping aren't the same things. It felt like [we] might be making the leap to say if we know/understand something, we can get teachers to do it. That's exactly where I worry that we know less than we think!*

While the "what" and "how" of transformational learning and leadership must be closely related to each other, they are in fact different questions. We could, for example, purport to build a particular skill in many ways. Should we:
- have learners read about the skills?
- have learners watch the skills?
- have learners practice the skill?
- have learners breakdown and practice small parts of the skills?
- have learners watch themselves attempt the skill and reflect on its difference from an exemplary model?
- have learners try a skill with a coach's guidance?

Which "bet" about how our teachers are going to best learn is our best bet?

That question only gets more complex when, in our context of transformational learning and leadership, we know that mindsets, values, vision and orientation to our work is critical to the short and long-term impact we aspire to. Challenging and growing mindsets raises a similarly long and complex set of choices to be made about how we intend to influence our learners' growth.

Our collection of experts at the Roundtable both demonstrated this unhelpful tendency to conflate "what" with "how" and regretted it in themselves and others.

There is not a sound consistent learning theory that governs how we approach our work. I think we had one at one point—even though it was flawed. I think we've become much more fractured and diffuse in our theoretically grounding. While individuals on our team have theories (me included), we are working to synthesize it into a coherent and scaled approach . . .
Andrew Mandel, Teach For America

Our almost exclusive focus on *what* teachers need to do, know, be and believe, leaves many programs without a strong, clear, guiding strategy of development.

Morva MacDonald from University of Washington did not mince words:

Most places are completely absent, actually, of a theory of learning. And as a result, they do a set of activities that . . . . very often have little to do with how we actually support people to do the work of teaching.

And, as Morva reminds us, while we must not hide from the "how" in the "what," the question of how we grow teachers does need to be inextricably linked to what we aspire for them to know, do, and be:

We deeply believe in a very integrated approach about what somebody is learning and how they are going about learning it. In separating them, you lose a lot of the potential of developing somebody's capacity. . . .The challenge is that once you are actually within the moment of teaching there is drift right? Because you are faced with kids' questions, you're faced with the limitations of what you understand the content to be which you don't see, you

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don't really get a handle on in a planning moment. . . .We are equally concerned with [what they are learning and] how they are going about learning it because we understand that the biggest challenge of teaching is actually being able to enact what it is you understand.

Our "bets" about how teachers grow tend to be implicit and/or hidden, making learning from each other difficult.

Our collection of experts at the Roundtable shared a concern that most teacher preparation organizations lack even minimal transparency—and many lack fundamental clarity and purposefulness—in their choices and assumptions about how they grow teachers.

What "bets" different organizations make about what works to improve teacher performance are hidden and implicit, making it hard to learn from each other. And in many cases those learning bets seem to be unexamined and unclear, inhibiting success.

Michael Goldstein, founder of MATCH and now working with Bridge Academies in Kenya, said:

We don't know who is best. We just don't. By best I mean teachers who are creating the largest gains for kids. Programs' "value add" is still so shrouded that even the well-intentioned reformers do not copy the best, nor feel that improvement is an urgent must rather than a nice-to have.

We tend to try to do a little bit of everything instead of a few things well.

Our quick audit of a range of teacher preparation organizations (inside and outside of Teach For All) reveals that many of us have responded to the frustrating lack of aggregate improvement in teacher performance and student outcomes by adding another, and yet another, and yet another, learning initiative until each of our programs is doing a little bit of a lot of different "bets."

We have heard and seen that same pattern from university partners, from non-profit teacher support organizations, and from partner organizations including Teach For America.

Tim Daly described this problem as one of the catalysts for TNTP's overhaul of its teacher training model (called Fast Start). TNTP now focuses in on fewer skills, more practice, and a meaningful "deselection" for those teacher candidates who are not growing and performing at a pace that will have them minimally ready for the first day.

Tim was careful not to defend those narrowed choices as "right," but was hopeful that the narrower focus would improve teacher quality:

> Once participants are in schools it's less clear to me what our theory of learning is. We have . . .a fairly long list of "what we want participants to know and be able to do but we don't necessarily have a clear sense of "how" these things are going to be learnt.
> **Sam Freedman, Teach First UK**
>
> TeachFirst

I think some of it is just kind of saying "let's just lay a bet." It may not be the right bet, but let's just commit, rather than try to do a bunch of different things in a kind of low-intensity or not very deliberate way. Then it is quite possible that if we explored all the pathways, we might find out that the one we bet on is not the best, but I think what we felt like what we had been doing before was trying to do a bit of everything

For many of our programs, just like at TNTP, fixing the muddled "how" problem is actually going to mean doing LESS not more. It will mean undoing previous layers of less-than-purposeful teacher development "bets" rather than choosing and focusing on new ones.

The research on how teachers grow is abysmally unhelpful.

Faced with the realization that our underlying assumptions about teacher growth might be wrong, a natural instinct is to look for the "research" that will help us choose the right assumptions.

Once again, we come face to face with a painful realization. As Ben Jensen (an expert in teacher learning from Australia) put it:

> *The evidence is disgustingly poor.*

Ben described how little we actually know about what sorts of experiences and content most contribute to teacher improvement. He emphasized that this problem stretches around the world.

Consider this, from highly respected think tank at Brookings Institute on the question "What Do We Know About Professional Development?"

> . . . a study conducted by Instructional Research Group and released last week reviewed the research on professional development in K-12 mathematics. Good research reviews whittle down an initial pool of studies based on quality of design. This review found that of 910 PD studies identified in a search of the relevant literature, only thirty-two employed a research design for assessing the effectiveness of PD programs. Of those, only five met the evidence standards set by What Works Clearinghouse. Of the five studies, two had positive results, one showed limited effects, and two detected no discernible effects. Such dismal findings aren't confined to PD in math.

All of our experts agreed that the research landscape is problematic. They call out a number of factors that contribute to the "desperate" nature of the research, including education's history of emphasis on inputs over outcomes.

Mike Goldstein, the founder of MATCH Education (a combination charter school and grad school of teacher training) who is now working in Kenya with Bridge International Academies, challenged us to recognize the need for a smart, objective, say-it-like-it-is "casino" that watches and monitors the teacher growth "bets" that different groups are making, and plays forward that learning, from both what *is* and *is not* working. ("There are lots of unpublished failed efforts out there too, which makes our learning as a group much harder," Mike said).

Several of our guest experts called out the way that medical research goes through a process that moves the field forward, and how that system, culture, and institutional learning is missing across education.

Again, Tim Daly's experience exploring the landscape of teacher development has given him clear-eyed concern about the state of teacher development:

> *The measures that we traditionally use to assess teacher professional learning, which are largely teacher satisfaction with it and whether they think they are growing across this data set have virtually zero relationship to actual improvement. Repeat: the things that we generally make our decisions on are almost completely unrelated across these settings to whether teachers are showing improvement on the "objective" measures.*

Tim sums it all up:

> *There's no way to overstate this: the research base on teacher improvement is just disturbingly bad and not instructive.*

3 A CRITICAL FIRST STEP
Becoming Aware of the Implicit Assumptions We Are Acting On

The widespread and shared nature of this *how* problem, our conflation of the *how* and the *what* of transformational learning and leadership, our tendencies to respond to pressure by "adding on" instead of by "focusing down," and the poor research base about how teachers best grow all combine together like a fog around the choices we are making about how to grow classroom leaders.

The first step toward making more purposeful and informed choices about our learning bets is to see clearly the implicit assumptions we are currently making about how our people will grow. In some cases, we are acting on assumptions about our teachers' learning without even realizing it.

The teacher educators we convened before and during the roundtable had divergent, and often conflicting, theories about what forms of engagement best grow teacher candidates into exceptional teachers.

Some, like Ellen Moir from the New Teacher Center and Franco Mosso from Enseña Peru, for example, are betting on well-facilitated reflection on classroom experience to nurture and grow foundational mindsets and *dispositions.*

In contrast, others like Morva MacDonald from the University of Washington and Doug Lemov (who developed *Teach Like a Champion*) are instead placing their bets on *practicing skills* as the critical foundation for growing as teacher. And yet, while Morva and Doug share an emphasis on practice, they are each betting on practice in very different ways: Morva on *deep, contextualized subject matter engagement* and Doug on a core set of *"generic" teaching tactics that a teacher may use in any context.*

In fact, each of the dozens of teacher preparation gurus we have studied is actually making a different set of "learning bets."

To force those experts (and ourselves) to surface the assumptions they (and we) are making about how teachers best learn, we created a series of spectra, each representing an "axis of choice" that is made—explicitly or implicitly—by any teacher preparation program. These spectra are artificial provocations, but by asking "where is your program?" and "where do you want your program to be?" on these spectra, we are learning a lot about what makes intentional and more successful learning theory.

Here are some of the spectra we are going to ask you to think about:

Reading/Watching *versus* Practicing/Doing

Contextualized *versus* Generic

Skills *versus* Mindsets

Explicit Engagement With Identity & Privilege *versus* Implicit

> The first step toward making more purposeful and informed choices about our learning bets is to see clearly the implicit assumptions we are currently making about how our teachers will grow.

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Individualized Learning *versus* Uniform Learning

Collective Learning *versus* Individual Learning

Learner-Driven Learning *versus* Organization-Driven Learning

These spectra are distilled from looking across all the divergent bets we saw from highly regarded teacher preparation programs. That is, when we look at all the different perspectives about how to grow great classroom leaders, we see those differences actually represent choice points on a bunch of different axes. Even when the leaders of those teacher preparation models disagreed with each other about the specific learning bets they prioritized, all of them are acting on choices on these (and probably other) spectra.

As one CEO of a Teach For All partner organization put it,

I suddenly realized that we haven't really had the conversation of why we stand where we stand [on how we will grow our teachers]. We just did it. We have to go back and be clear on the choice we are making.

READING/WATCHING *versus* PRACTICING/DOING
Do Aspiring/New Teachers Best Grow By Reading/Watching or by Practicing/Doing?

READING/WATCHING *In my model, we are betting that teachers best grow through reading and watching.*					PRACTICING/DOING *In my model, we are betting that teachers best grow through their practicing and doing.*			
100/0	90/10	80/20	70/30	even	30/70	20/80	10/90	0/100

We have been asking experts and innovators inside and outside our Teach For All network this question and then pushing to understand *why* they are taking that stand. Before you look at what we are learning, take a moment to ask yourself where your program is on the spectrum above. And also ask your self where on the spectrum you *want* your program to be. Why? On what basis are you making those judgments? What assumptions are you making about how your teachers best learn? What factors are influencing those choices?

In the table below blue dots represent where program leaders have stood on the question "where IS my program/approach right now?" and the green dots represent where program leaders have stood on the question "where do you WANT your program to be?"

READING/WATCHING *In my model, we are betting that teachers best grow through reading and watching.*							PRACTICING/DOING *In my model, we are betting that teachers best grow through their practicing and doing.*	
100/0	90/10	80/20	70/30	even	30/70	20/80	10/90	0/100
			●●	●●● ●	●● ●	●●● ●	●● ●	

Some Comments and Questions:

- What you see above represents the most alignment we had among ALL of the axes we explored. Partner organizations in the Teach For All network, and many of their closest external partners, are strongly oriented to the power of learning through doing. Virtually all of our partner organizations are betting that classrooms where students are learning are the greatest place for teacher learning as well.

- A number of participants have noted that traditional teacher preparation systems around the world largely expect teachers to learn by reading and watching (even if, in reality, so much of the real learning happens by "doing.")

- With the experts at the Roundtable, and the dozens of subsequent explorations of these ideas with partner organizations, we see lots of wrestling with what it means to "learn by doing." How do we incorporate PRACTICE into our preparation and development of teachers? How do we make the practice of teaching PUBLIC so that we define teaching as continuous learning and growing with and from others?

OK, let's get into some harder questions.

CONTEXTUALIZED *versus* GENERIC
Do New Teachers Best Grow Through Emphasis On Grade- And Content-Specific Learning, Or Through Emphasis On Generic, Cross-Context Learning?

LEARNING IN CONTEXT *In my model, we are betting that our teachers best learn to teach within grade and/or subject context*							APPLICATION OF GENERIC LEARNING TO CONTEXT *In my model, we are betting that our teachers best learn to teach by mastering generic principles that they then apply to their particular context.*	
100/0	90/10	80/20	70/30	even	30/70	20/80	10/90	0/100

Where do you think your program "stands" on this spectrum? Why? Where do you WANT it to stand on this spectrum? Why?

While we are seeing across our network general alignment in the "doing" direction in that first spectrum above, we are seeing significantly divergent perspectives on this choice between *generic* teacher learning and *content-centered* teacher learning.

With the blue dots representing where programs *are*, and the green dots representing where they *want to be*, the array of programs (indicated by where our experts and Teach For All partners "took at stand") looked more like this:

LEARNING IN CONTEXT *In my model, we are betting that our teachers best learn to teach within grade and/or subject context*						APPLICATION OF GENERIC LEARNING TO CONTEXT *In my model, we are betting that our teachers best learn to teach by mastering generic principles that they then apply to their particular context.*			
100/0	90/10	80/20	70/30	even		30/70	20/80	10/90	0/100
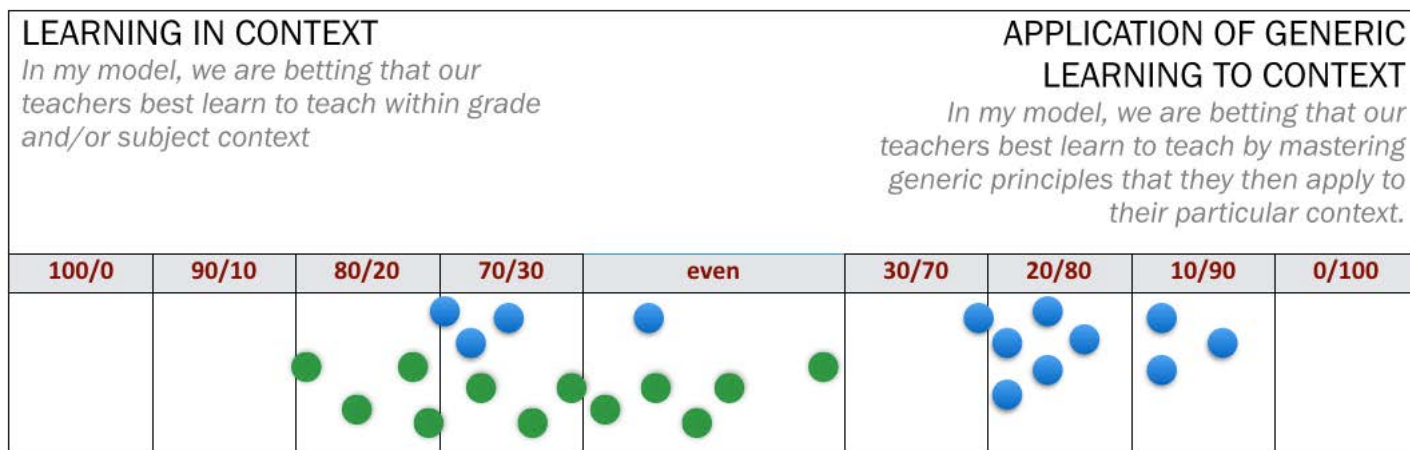
The Debate About Contextualized *versus* Generic Learning

All the experts and innovators we have engaged argue that both content-specific and generic teaching skills (in terms of the "what" of great teaching) are important. Some experts believe, however, that it is better for teachers to first learn through basic non-contextualized skills so that new teachers have a generic foundation from which to build. Others, like Morva McDonald (representing University of Washington's approach), believe deeply in the power of learning to teach through the contextualized pedagogical puzzles of specific content:

> *Teachers' capacity to facilitate organized discussion in productive ways is a practice that cuts across content and context. But the way to actually learn that is inside of an actual content or context.*

Context matters to Morva and many others we have spoken with because (a) they believe that the essence of great teaching is the difficult, internal, pedagogical judgments of interacting with students and learning and (b) they argue that adult minds best learn within the context in which they will need to act.

True mastery, they contend, is in how a teacher considers a pedagogical dilemma, including and especially in context of particular content and students. And the brain-based argument for contextualizing learning is that difficult concepts "stick" better and are more actionable when they are built in the same context they will be used.

So Morva and many others argue that how we grow teachers must reflect deep content-based practice and coaching:

> *Teaching is filled with pedagogical dilemmas, right? Do I sit these kids next each other or not? And they are equally good alternatives, so you have to, as a teacher, build the argumentation with yourself about how to make those decisions. Either one is a good choice, probably. But it depends on your context and it depends on your reasoning. So we need to think about how to reason inside those*

dilemmas. This relates to judgment: you have to make a decision. You can't just ponder the dilemma – you actually have to do something inside of teaching. And those decisions are made in moments of uncertainty. We don't have all the info we need. We actually never have all the information we need when we're making decisions, so what you want to do is help teachers practice how do you make decisions in moments of uncertainty as you're learning teach.

Australian pedagogical expert Ben Jensen also stood toward the "context" side of this spectrum and offered the observation that a distinguishing characteristic of the Asian education systems that have most improved has been an emphasis on content-specific teacher learning. He suggested that those systems have emphasized contextualized skills not just in *what* teachers need to know but *how* they learn.

This "context matters" learning bet often comes with a serious critique of the "generic teaching skills first" approach often attributed to Doug Lemov's Teach Like a Champion approach, or to Teaching As Leadership. Morva argues that "we know from research that generic practices don't help you leverage what teachers need to know in order to teach the specific context that they're teaching."

And yet, we are hearing Doug and other supporters of cross-context teaching practices also make a brain-based case for their learning bet. The human brain is a powerful tool for applying generic principles to specific contexts, and, in fact, doing so is itself a learning process. Some of the people who design training and support from a more generic-skills first angle make the argument that you must get some basics to the level of "automaticity" in order to free up your mind to consider the "judgments" that Morva is correct to value. And the best path to that automaticity is to practice foundational generic skills (e.g., lesson planning, giving instructions, facilitating conversation, etc.) so that you have the "brain space" to identify and wrestling with Morva's "pedagogical dilemmas."

We See Across the Network a Desire to Shift to More toward Contextualized Learning

Meanwhile, many of the experts and Teach For All partners we have worked with stand closer to "generic" than "contextualized."

But in many cases, our partner organizations are reporting that it has been logistical realities, more than purposeful learning theory, that has driven their inclination toward generic teaching skills. For many partners, what grade and subject teachers will be be teaching is rarely known until soon before school starts, putting a premium on building generic skills that teacher can apply across contexts. Those programs are wrestling with how to infuse more contextualized learning into their programs despite those logistical challenges.

The Value of These Spectra Exercises

As illustrated by these two spectra exercises thus far, well respected experts and innovators are making fundamentally different assumptions about how people best learn. Some experts believe that teaching is so complex that you must train and support from the context that builds that complexity. Other experts argue that breaking things down and starting with simple, generic basics is the best way to scaffold teacher learning.

We have no illusion that all partner organizations can and should come to the same answer on those questions, but we do believe that we can all be more intentional in our choices, and thereby learn from each other.

The question we are asking is WHY? Why do some experts value one learning bet and other experts another learning bet? Where is your program on these questions? How clear and intentional are these choices in how you design learning experiences for your teachers?

These spectra are meant to bring into the light assumptions your program may be making about how teachers best grow.

17

Do Our Teachers Best Grow with Early Emphasis on Skills (Through Practice) or Early Emphasis on Mindsets (Through Disorienting Experiences and Reflection)?

LEARN SKILLS FIRST (AS FOUNDATION FOR MINDSETS) *In my model, we are betting that teachers best grow through early emphasis on skills and knowledge..*				BUILD MINDSETS FIRST (AS FOUNDATION FOR SKILLS) *In my model, we are betting that teachers best grow through early emphasis on mindsets and values.*				
100/0	90/10	80/20	70/30	even	30/70	20/80	10/90	0/100

Where do you think your program "stands" on this spectrum? Why? Where do you WANT it to stand on this spectrum? Why?

While the division between the importance of skills versus mindsets is at some level artificial, the question of which (if either) of these two realms you emphasize more in your training and support model is a hotly debated topic across and beyond the Teach For All network.

We know both skills and mindsets are important to great teaching. But some experts and innovators are betting that mindsets grow from a successful foundation of skills while others are betting that skills grow from a successful foundation of mindsets.

A Divergent Array of Perspectives

At the Roundtable, the room was spread pretty widely across this spectrum when each person was asked to "take a stand" for where his or her program is on this axis. Some of the partner programs from the globe's Eastern Hemisphere seem to lean most strong toward the mindsets end of the spectrum.

Here's a representative visualization of where programs we've engaged ARE and WANT TO BE:

LEARN SKILLS FIRST (AS FOUNDATION FOR MINDSETS) *In my model, we are betting that teachers best grow through early emphasis on skills and knowledge..*				BUILD MINDSETS FIRST (AS FOUNDATION FOR SKILLS) *In my model, we are betting that teachers best grow through early emphasis on mindsets and values*				
100/0	90/10	80/20	70/30	even	30/70	20/80	10/90	0/100

The Case for Skills (Through Practice) As a Foundation for Mindsets (Through Disorienting Experiences and Reflection)

Some of the program leaders and experts (like Mike Goldstein) argue that mindsets should be built on top of (and after) a foundation of skills grown in a new teacher. Mike argues that "mindsets" progress is too fragile if a teacher is having serious challenges with basic classroom management and instruction:

> My general view is that it is easier for more people to climb the ladder of the specific and get some positive momentum with basic, foundation skills so they see real progress. That foundation of progress can then catalyze some of the large "self" work because they've experienced, in a real way, some self-driven progress. I feel like the flaw in taking on the mindset stuff at the beginning is that for at least some of the teachers, once they start to hit obstacles in the day-to-day work with kids, that mindset work can just be undone more easily. Like, "ok, you've convinced me that these kids legitimately have lots of potential. Great, I am ready to go. I'm so fired up. Boy, I just had 17 bad teaching days in a row." Ok, so maybe uncharitably I stop believing you, the person who told me that the kids have a lot of potential or I'll point the finger of blame at myself. Maybe I'm just not cut out for this. Maybe I'll point the finger at the institution or the school, that nobody can teach well in the school.

Morva (while often on different ends of various spectra from Mike) in this case agrees that mindsets should not be the lead focus of a theory of development. In her opinion, mindsets will flow *from* success with deep, content-centered practice of pedagogical dilemmas:

> I say we are going to work on your practice and we are going to give you a lot of examples and we are going to give you the experience of having some success with the kids that you never thought you could be successful with or that they themselves could never be successful. I think most of those teachers [in the Chicago institute that went through a variation of the "deep practice" model] don't see the kids as the problem. They actually ask themselves, and we have some data around this, "Oh, I'm not doing this right because I can't get that kid to participate," not "that kid is not participating." It's really different.

Morva and Mike, in different ways, both contend that success on classroom skills leads to mindsets growth.

The Case for Mindsets (Through Disorienting Experiences and Reflection) As a Foundation for Skills (Through Practice)

And yet, some of the most innovative thinkers we have around the network, including some programmatic leaders from India and Pakistan and Peru and Nepal, are making a mindsets-early "bet" in their teacher growth strategy.

They believe that by nurturing in our teachers the internal drive to want to learn, to improve, and to achieve with and for students, skill-building comes more easily. When our teacher-learners have the right mindsets, we are able to be more learner-driven and to be more aligned to our purpose of growing the leadership of both our students and our teachers. These program leaders believe that stoking our teachers' internal fire should be a leading "bet" in our training and support models.

Todd Rose from the Center for Individual Opportunity at Harvard [have we mentioned that his book *The End of Average* is a MUST READ?] also argues that true leadership in the classroom and beyond requires profound mindset shifts because we are part and product of systems that are not build to do that:

> This has been an eye-opening day . . . I would argue if you really believe that we need a dramatic shift in the way that we're going to think about individuals that is very different than what has come before and what is based into the system right now, then I don't think you can sleep on mindsets. . . .How do you think about kids,

fundamentally? If you go into a system that is all rank and order—standardized test scores, IQ, etc.—unless you have a very strong conviction and a personal mindsets around how you see kids, it's very easy to snap back [to that rank and order thinking that inhibits true learning].

Where do you fall on this spectrum between leading with skills through practice (as a foundation for growing mindsets) and leading with mindsets through disorienting experience and reflection (as a foundation for building skills)?

And most importantly, WHY? Where does that perspective come from? What do these experts' thoughts and perspectives make you think about your own? Are your choices in this regard deriving from the purpose your program is serving?

Teachers need to have deep self-awareness and need to be meta-cognitive. I believe in that meta-cognitive muscle that we want to develop in our teachers. Teacher's identity has so much to do with that—why are you choosing that student and not that student? Why didn't you interrogate that moment?
Esther Drake, Teach For America

Mindsets are a key element for learning and improving—especially when there is no clear path on how to learn or improve and there is no one to show you the way. The mindsets are the inner force and inner hope required to persevere in extreme conditions, despite loneliness, high challenge, and high uncertainty. Mindsets is the priority to help develop when we have no time to develop anything else.
Susan Claro, Co-Founder EnseñaChile

EXPLICIT ENGAGEMENT WITH CULTURE & IDENTITY *versus* IMPLICIT ENGAGEMENT WITH CULTURE & IDENTITY

Do Our New Teachers Best Grow Through *Explicit* Consideration of Culture and Identity in the Foreground of their Learning, or Through *Implicit* Consideration of Those Issues in the Background of Learning to Become Teachers?

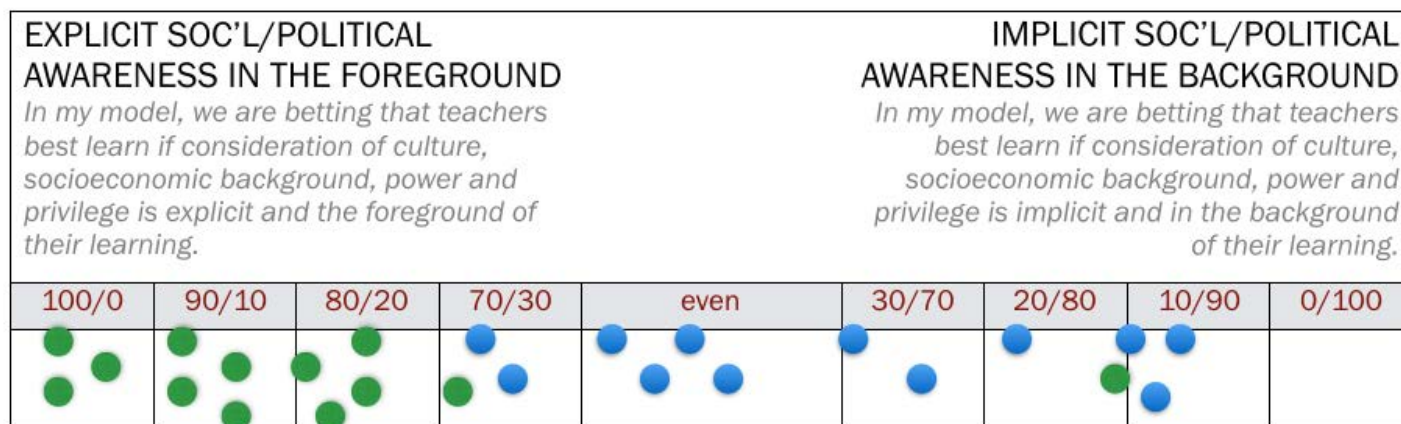| EXPLICIT SOC'L/POLITICAL AWARENESS IN THE FOREGROUND *In my model, we are betting that teachers best learn if consideration of culture, socioeconomic background, power and privilege is explicit and the foreground of their learning.*					IMPLICIT SOC'L/POLITICAL AWARENESS IN THE BACKGROUND *In my model, we are betting that teachers best learn if consideration of culture, socioeconomic background, power and privilege is implicit and in the background of their learning.*			
100/0	90/10	80/20	70/30	even	30/70	20/80	10/90	0/100

Where do you think your program "stands" on this spectrum? Why? Where do you WANT it to stand on this spectrum? Why?

This is another axis of choice that is often made implicitly, without much intentionality. And this is another another axis that revealed at the Roundtable some global divisions. Speaking generally, we saw a number of organization leaders from the US describing their programs in terms of more explicit consideration of culture, identity, power, privilege, race, socio-economic status, and social justice while representatives of many other places suggested those themes were much less explicit elements of their "learning bets."

For example, Jennifer Green of the Urban Teacher Center, described the emphasis her "residency" model program puts on identity, self and dynamics of difference and sameness that play out in the relationships among teachers, students, and families. Representatives from Teach For America described efforts the organization has made to put self-awareness in relation to those dynamics at the heart of its menu of "learning bets" with new teachers.

Interestingly, across the globe we are seeing almost all programs want to move from more implicit to more explicit about issues of culture, identity, and power and privilege in their training and support of teachers. (Reminder: the blue dots are where programs ARE, and the green dots are where program leaders say they WANT to be.)

EXPLICIT SOC'L/POLITICAL AWARENESS IN THE FOREGROUND *In my model, we are betting that teachers best learn if consideration of culture, socioeconomic background, power and privilege is explicit and the foreground of their learning.*					IMPLICIT SOC'L/POLITICAL AWARENESS IN THE BACKGROUND *In my model, we are betting that teachers best learn if consideration of culture, socioeconomic background, power and privilege is implicit and in the background of their learning.*			
100/0	90/10	80/20	70/30	even	30/70	20/80	10/90	0/100

Those of you familiar with the evolution of Teach For All's "transformational learning and leadership" model will recall that power and privilege is a recurring theme that arises when we ask "what patterns do we see in our most transformational classrooms that are not showing up very often in our teacher performance models?"

Here's what Teach For All is finding in those studies:

Often our classroom leadership models and approaches to training and support seem to be relatively quiet (if not silent) on the local histories, structures, and systemic injustices that privilege certain groups and perspectives in our communities. By contrast, in our most transformational classrooms, we often see teachers and students wrestling together with those systemic injustices, discussing difficult topics like prejudices and expectations related to gender, class, race sexual orientation, and learning differences. We see teachers provoking reflection on the local and cultural histories of oppression that students and the teacher live in every day. We see students exploring in age-appropriate ways the systemic injustices they will have to navigate to reach their vision and the cultural, collective, and individual assets they have to do so.

These teachers—especially those who do not share the background of their students—often describe growing and uncomfortable awareness of the unjust "norms" and systems around their students and share worry that their own perspectives have been deeply shaped by issues of power and privilege in ways that inhibit their connections with their students. Sometimes these teachers describe their growing conviction that silence or "neutral" passivity on issues like sexism, classism, and racism risks making them accomplices to the perpetuation of those injustices.

How do these insights and questions make you think differently about your own "learning bets" for teachers?

I am so struck by Dr. Dixson's comments. Who are you teaching? Who are you? Who are you trying to get your teachers to serve? I don't think enough was made of those comments. We're trying to get more and more of our teachers who look like our students—people who have been in education system as non traditional students. . . this is a huge liability for TFA . . . How are we changing the program to really reflect that?
Esther Drake, Teach For America

INDIVIDUALIZATION *versus* UNIFORMITY
Do Our New Teachers Best Grow When We Individualize Their Learning Experiences or When They Experience a Common Set of Learning Experiences with Their Cohort?

INDIVIDUALIZED								UNIFORM
In my model, we are betting that our teachers best grow when we individualize their learning experiences based on their profile as a learner.					*In my model, we are betting that our teachers best grow when they all experience a common set of learning experiences.*			
100/0	90/10	80/20	70/30	even	30/70	20/80	10/90	0/100

Where do you think your program "stands" on this spectrum? Why? Where do you WANT it to stand on this spectrum? Why?

Over the course of the Roundtable engagements, most of the participants—many of whom lead large-scale teacher preparation models—acknowledged that their programs do very little "individualization" of learning for teacher candidates. Some of those program leaders regret that lack of differentiation.

Repeatedly, program leaders across and beyond the Teach For All network have noted that all of our teacher preparation programs emphasize differentiation by teachers for students in the classroom but few of our partner organizations do much to differentiate support in *teacher* learning.

We see striking alignment among all the teacher programs in wanting to move more toward differentiated support for their teachers. Generally speaking, this is where program leaders ARE and WANT TO BE on this spectrum:

INDIVIDUALIZED									UNIFORM
In my model, we are betting that our teachers best grow when we individualize their learning experiences based on their profile as a learner..								*In my model, we are betting that our teachers best grow when they all experience a common set of learning experiences.*	
100/0	90/10	80/20	70/30	even		30/70	20/80	10/90	0/100
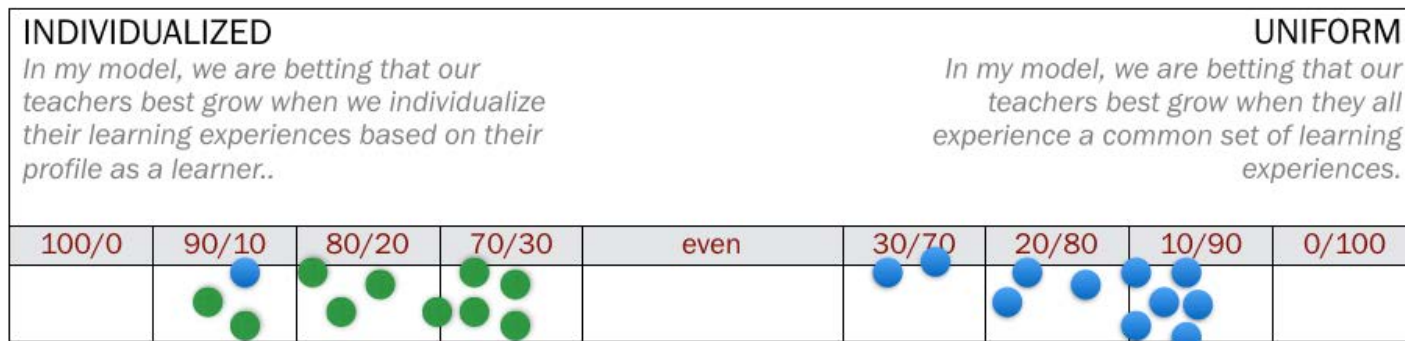
Virtually every program we have engaged with wants to be further to the left—in the direction of individualized, customized, differentiated learning bets for their teacher candidates. Why do you think this is an axis in which we are so consistently misaligned (in our actions) with where we want to be?

The Case For Greater Individualization

At the Roundtable, two of the experts in particular were powerful voices for the importance of thinking about the spectrum of individualization and systematization.

The first was Dr. Adrienne Dixson, an education professor who focuses on multicultural education and critical race studies (and is also an alumnae of Teach For America and graduate of the highly regarded University of Michigan graduate school of education). Speaking both from her personal experience and from her deep knowledge of the research on minority groups in higher education, Dr. Dixson challenged us to consider carefully who our learners are.

> *Having gone through a non-traditional program, it's a huge issue to always be invisible. I think we have to be real explicit about WHO we're training and what that model can and can't do, and if it can't do things for that population, imagine the population you are actually trying to serve.*

Those perspectives, for Dr. Dixson, are deeply personal:

> *The way we are talking about teacher ed—I wouldn't be successful. The breaking teaching down into   discrete practices doesn't resonate with my perspective on (1) the world and learning and (2) how I believe teachers develop, and (3) the traditions that teachers of color have come out of.*

Dr. Dixson identifies one of the core problems with our "theories of development" is that we are not thinking hard enough about the perspective, experiences, background, context of our learners:

> *Who do we imagine as the teacher? We have to talk about who were imagining because in may ways that shapes and informs both the structures and the what.*

DR. DIXSON
on asking who
our learners are

My career has been around what do teachers of color, particularly African-American woman, think about both the philosophy of teaching and what it looks like in practice.

Are we designing our train and support to be culturally responsive to our learners? How are paradigms and perspectives of privilege baked into our training and support models that may be making those models less accessible and comfortable for some groups and more accessible and comfortable for others?

Dr. Dixson—surrounded at the Roundtable by many teacher-trainers who do not share the background, race, ethnicity, cultural history or daily experiences of the children their teachers will work with—challenged the room think about the ways our programs are and are not built on consideration of the background, culture, perspective and learning inclinations of our teacher candidates.

From a different angle, a second guest expert at the Roundtable pushed us on this axis of individualization versus generic learning. Dr. Todd Rose is a professor at Harvard who studies neuroscience and the "science of the individual." Dr. Rose, himself someone with learning differences that profoundly influenced his experience in formal education, is a leader in a new frontier of science that is proving that each of us behaves, learns, and develops our talents in distinctive ways. And yet those individual patterns get lost in the massive systems (like teacher preparation programs) that are designed to the "average."

Dr. Rose says this starts with deeply embedded design choices in our education system for children:

Most of us say that the goal of education is to meet each kid where they are and to help them reach their potential or some variation on that. . . But that is decidedly not how the system was structured and designed. In the industrial era, it was about mass education, and about rank and sort.

How much of the problem we have right now are consequences of that system? We soldered into our system Edward Thorndyke's standardized scope and sequence – the time you get to learn and the standard by which you're assessed at that time – based on an average kid could do. Slow meant dumb. If that were true, why in the world would you give more time? Even though we KNOW fast doesn't equal smart, we still have one scope and sequence. If you just vary pacing, and we're talking about 1.6x the amount of time, you can shift 2 standard deviations of performance pretty consistently. But, we've kind of bailed on that and went towards more standardized, more test based accountability. What is the purpose? As Dr Dixson said, let's question some basic assumptions – how do we design a system that does what we want it to do?

That same "design to the average" perspective is built into teacher preparation, and Dr. Rose insists that we are losing opportunity, wasting talent and reducing human capital in education and all sectors because we are ignoring the reality that a learning system "designed to the average" is actually not welcoming to ANY particular individual, because each of us has such a "jagged profile" as a learner.

DR. ROSE
on the myth of
average

We focus on jaggedness. No one is 50th percentile on everything, no one 90th percentile on everything, and you really do need to know that jaggedness because it matters [to how you engage your learner.]

Dr. Rose challenged all of us to see our teacher preparation and support design challenges through the lens of individual opportunity, strengths, and learning. He believes that there are ways to "systematize" that individualization, but we are so blinded by the "myth of average" that we end up creating learning experiences that undermine every student's (and teacher-learner's) learning.

Dr. Rose says:

If we're serious about individual kids and teachers, there might need to be a pretty fundamental shift in education.

LEARNER DRIVEN LEARNING *versus* ORGANIZATION DRIVEN LEARNING
Do Our New Teachers Best Grow When We Build Learning Around their Autonomy, Self-Diagnosis, and Choices as the "Owners" of their Learning Experiences, or When We Shape the Scope and Sequence of their Learning for Them?

LEARNER-DRIVEN LEARNING *In my model, we are betting that our teachers best grow when they experience autonomy, responsibility for self-diagnosis, and choice as "owners"of their learning.*					ORG-DRIVEN LEARNING *In my model, we are betting that our teachers best grow when our organization takes ownership of diagnosing their needs and learning.mindsets.*			
100/0	90/10	80/20	70/30	even	30/70	20/80	10/90	0/100

Where do you think your program "stands" on this spectrum? Why? Where do you WANT it to stand on this spectrum? Why?

This spectrum focuses on the assumptions we make about whether our *learners* (our teacher candidates) are the drivers of their own learning or whether *we* are the drivers of their learning. This idea percolated under the surface of both the Roundtable discussions and our subsequent engagements with training and support leaders and coaches across the network.

Generally speaking, we heard a number of the leaders from Teach For All partner organizations express an interest in having more "learner driven" models than they currently have. They said that we are ultimately in the leadership-development business and treating our learners as the leaders we expect them to become is the only "learning bet" that aligns to our ultimate purpose. (And, on the other hand, when we treat our learners as empty vessels that we much fill, we often inhibit the leadership and self-directed entrepreneurialism that we need in our teachers and alumni).

Here's a graphic representation of what we are hearing and seeing:

LEARNER-DRIVEN LEARNING *In my model, we are betting that our teachers best grow when they experience autonomy, responsibility for self-diagnosis, and choice as "owners"of their learning.*					ORG-DRIVEN LEARNING *In my model, we are betting that our teachers best grow when our organization takes ownership of diagnosing their needs and learning.mindsets.*			
100/0	90/10	80/20	70/30	even	30/70	20/80	10/90	0/100
	●	●●	●●●	●●●	●●●	●●	●●●	

Virtually every leader, trainer, coach, and innovator we have spoken to has had the same reaction to this spectrum: we want to dial up the "learner drivenness" of learning in our program. For partner organizations in the Teach For All network, that inclination comes from a commitment to grow leaders who can and will continue their learning beyond the training and support that comes from the organization.

COLLECTIVE LEARNING *versus* INDIVIDUAL LEARNING
Do Our New Teachers Best Grow As Interdependent Members of a Learning Cohort or as Individual Self-Dependent Learners?

COLLECTIVE LEARNING *In my model, we are betting that our teachers best grow when they learn as meaningfully interdependent members of a group*					INDIVIDUAL LEARNING *In my model, we are betting that our teachers best grow when they learn as individuals.*			
100/0	90/10	80/20	70/30	even	30/70	20/80	10/90	0/100

Where do you think your program "stands" on this spectrum? Why? Where do you WANT it to stand on this spectrum? Why?

At the Roundtable, we heard lots of interest in this concept of "collective learning," and yet few organizations represented at the Roundtable had concrete examples of implementing this idea. [Teach For India is experimenting with "learning circles" that move in the direction of collective learning. We're watching and studying that innovation now.]

In the last couple of years, we have had the opportunity to work with leadership guru Jim Collins, who studies who leaders grow. He has been studying leadership growth in some particularly difficult contexts— namely military academies. His work in that realm (and his work with us in "Good to Great" teacher studies), has led him to challenge the Teach For All network (and the broader education landscape) to rethink its focus on individualized learning.

In a nutshell, Jim Collins argues that what we are aspiring to do is so hard, the only way we will get there is through collective pursuit of communal goals. And yet our teacher preparation models and schools lean heavily in the direction of individual learning and discourage interdependence among adults. From Jim Collin's perspective, this is a massive liability for our network if we truly want to create networks of alumni who are changing the education system, because we are orienting our new teachers to this work as individual actors, not as interdependent teams of learners who feel responsible for each others' success.

By far the best way to truly appreciate the magnitude and importance of this challenge is to watch Jim Collins in this video. As an alternative, here is one section of what he says in that video:

JIM COLLINS
on the power of
collective learning
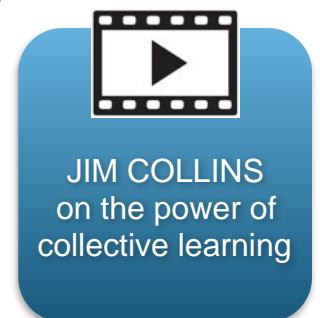
CULTURE OF GROWTH *In my model, new teachers experience a focus on their journey of change and growth.*	**CULTURE OF GROWTH/CULTURE OF ACHIEVEMENT** *Do our candidates learn most when we focus on their journey of change and growth or when we focus on the high bar of teacher mastery and student outcomes we need to see for children?*	CULTURE OF ACHIEVEMENT *In my model, new teachers experience a focus on achievement of teacher mastery and student outcomes we*

It's so difficult that in the end you need your friends to help you. And the only way that works is if you help them . . . it's this beautiful idea that when things get difficult instead of worrying about ourselves, when things get difficult, instead of thinking "can I get through this" when things get difficult, you say . . . how can I help you? Imagine if you had a culture that has an ethic of service. And imagine that culture has tremendous and audacious goals where you are going to grow and accomplish things in the name of a broader purpose. AND in that culture, the default is that this is really hard—we signed up to do something REALLY hard—so therefore the culture expectation is we watch out for each other and we help each other. That is a powerful cultural recipe.

Can this come alive in your world? Is it alive in your world? Do yo have all those pieces? So that you can not just get through it yourself but you can watch out for each other so that in the end you are watching out for the kids, because in the end that's what it is all about.

I believe that a secret to a life well led—and in the end that is the leadership of our own lives—is to answer the question "How will you change the lives of others?" And what I ask you to think about, is that as you go on this quest to change the lives of students, to change the lives of kids, how can you help each other through the great difficulties of doing that, so that you are supporting each other and working with each other to accomplish those huge [goals] and therefore change the lives of the kids.

We are seeing Jim Collins' advice resonating deeply across the network, especially as partner organizations think about the collective action they want from alumni in pursuit of systemic change.

COLLECTIVE LEARNING *In my model, we are betting that our teachers best grow when they learn as meaningfully interdependent members of a group*						INDIVIDUAL LEARNING *In my model, we are betting that our teachers best grow when they learn as individuals.*			
100/0	90/10	80/20	70/30	even	30/70	20/80	10/90	0/100

Are the learning assumptions and "bets" you are making with and for your teachers built on a paradigm of individual effort and accomplishment? Or are they built on collective pursuit of communal aims? Why? How does this challenge from Jim Collins make you think differently about your learning bets with your teachers?

4 INFLUENTIAL FACTORS
Why We Are Making the Choices We Are Making

Having "shone a light" on some of the hidden assumption we tend to make in our training and support programs, we have revealed the central question of this provocation paper: *what factors should inform our learning bets?*

In the next section, we will explore a set of questions that can help us make intentional and productive choices among all those different learning bets.

But first, it will be helpful for think about what factors are currently influencing your program's learning theory.

Below we have created a menu of the influences that are shaping "learning bet" choices in the programs we have studied. In many cases, the head of program we engaged with was also expressing regret about that influence, and aspiring to based his or her choices on different factors.

Which of these factors *are* influencing your choices of learning theories? Which of these do you *want* to influence your choices?

PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS
- Available Resources, People, And Time. *We look at the limiting realities of our resources, people, and time and choose forms and sequences of learning that fit within those.*

- Efficiency. *We choose forms and sequences of learning that minimize cost-per-unit-of-learning.*

- Scalability. *We choose forms and sequences of learning that can be applied to the most people, most easily.*

- Maturity of Organization. Our choices are influenced by whether we are scrapping to get started or evolving our on-going efforts.

LANDSCAPE CONSIDERATIONS
- Predictability Of Teacher Path. *Our choices are driven by what we know and cannot know about the grade, subject, and context our teachers will be in.*

- Demand For Teachers. *Our "bets" are driven by the education systems that employ our teachers and what they value.*

- Systems And Culture Of The Teaching/School Setting. *The degree and forms of learning support in the school setting influences our choices.*

- Oversight And Accountability. *Our choices are influenced by government or school mandates.*

INNOVATION CONSIDERATIONS
- Technology. *We are making these "bets" because cutting-edge technology makes them possible.*

o Experimentation. *We are making these "bets" because what we were doing isn't working and we need to try something different.*

o Gravitas. *Our willingness to choose and try certain "bets" is influenced by our political capital.*

DEFERENTIAL CONSIDERATIONS

o Momentum. *We employ this form or sequence of learning because we always have.*

o Borrowing. *We are using this form or sequence of learning because someone else did.*

o Personal Experience/Inclination. *Our choices of learning forms and sequence reflect how we learned.*

o Partnership With Others. *Our strategic learning choices are influenced by our shared responsibility with others (like a university partner).*

o Cultural Expectations. *Our choice of "bets" is influenced by cultural and historical expectations about how teachers learn.*

INTERNAL RIPPLE-EFFECT CONSIDERATIONS

o Concept Of Student Learning. *Our choices in how our teachers should learn flow from our conception of student learning.*

o Whom We Start With. *We select for people who may respond well to one form or sequence of learning and not others.*

o Ability To "De-Select." *We know that we can "exit" candidates before the classroom so we are liberated to make different choices about the form and sequence of learning.*

o Pressures From Teacher-Learners. *Our candidates often demand "concrete," "tomorrow" resources and support in ways that influence our choices of learning bets.*

PURPOSE CONSIDERATIONS

o Student Outcomes. *When we can draw connections between how we grow teachers and actual outcomes from students, those connections influence choices of forms and sequences of teacher learning.*

o Teacher/Leader Outcomes. *When we can draw connections between our "bets" and our teachers' mastery, fulfillment, success, those connections influence our choices of forms and sequences of teacher learning.*

o Alignment To The Who, Why, What Of Our Model. *The "bets" we choose must align clearly with whom we want to create, why we are growing teachers, and what we believe great teaching is.*

5 EMERGING INSIGHTS
Factors that Should Inform Our Choices of "Learning Bets"

When we invited all those experts, researchers and practitioners to the Roundtable on teacher development, we (naively?) imagined we would extract from them agreement on which learning bets are the best way to grow great teachers.

However, (as the spectra exercises in Section 4 illustrated) we found instead divergent perspectives among those experts. Ben Jensen from Australia emphasizes collective learning in the school context. Romana from Teach For India is leaning into teacher mindsets through experiences and reflection. Mike from MATCH starts with foundational skills that come through tactical practice. Others made a compelling case for complex-scenario, content-contextualized practice alongside meta-cognitive coaching.

We had been asking ourselves the wrong question. The right question is not "What are the best learning bets to grow teachers?" but is instead "What factors should inform an organization's choices among learning bets to grow teachers?"

Sometimes these different perspectives were compatible with each other, but in many cases they seemed flatly contradictory.

And yet, the more we reflect on all we heard and learned from these experts, the more clear it is that we had been asking ourselves the wrong question. The right question is not "What are the best learning bets to grow teachers?" but is instead "What factors should inform an organization's choices among learning bets to grow teachers?"

While these experts and practitioners are making different (and sometimes contradictory) learning bets in their training and support programs, they are all considering the same set of factors to inform those choices.

Programs that produce strong teachers are aligning their learning theory to fundamental elements of their organization's identity, to a few universal best practices of teacher development, and to the practical realities of their training and support programs. . . in that order.

Here's a visualization of the factors that seem to be informing learning bets in organizations that are producing a large number of strong teachers:

First, how we expect our teachers to learn should align with our organization's WHY (central purposes), with its WHO (the people we are bringing into the program), and with its WHAT (the knowledge, skills, and mindsets) we need our teacher to attain.

ORGANIZATIONAL IDENTITY

And finally—and it is so important that these considerations follow rather than lead the other factors—we must take serious WHERE and WHEN our teachers are learning and adjust to the practical realities of their context.

BEST PRACTICES

Second, how we expect our teachers to learn should be informed by some BEST PRACTICES, some basic concepts of ADULT LEARNING THEORY, and by culture and system LEARNING ENABLERS in our organizations.

The following pages explore each of these factors that should influence the learning theory we employ in our training and support programs.

6a

Fundamental Questions of Organizational Identity Should Influence Our Learning Bets

How we expect our teachers to learn should align with our organization's WHY (central purposes), with its WHO (the people we are bringing into the program), and with its WHAT (the knowledge, skills, and mindsets we need our teacher to attain.

In the following sections, we will explore each of these three elements of organizational identity and their implications for learning theory.

PURPOSE
Why we exist—our ultimate mission as an organization—must inform our choice of learning bets.

PEOPLE
Who our learners are when they join us must inform our choices of learning bets.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS & MINDSETS
What we need our teachers to know, do, and be in order to maximize progress toward that purpose must inform our choice of learning bets.

WHO
WHY
WHAT
HOW
WHERE
WHEN
PRAC
REAL

Our Programs' PURPOSE Can & Should Inform Our Learning Bets

Imagine a few different teacher development programs, with three different ultimate purposes. (These different purposes were represented by various attendees at the Roundtable).

	Purpose A	Purpose B	Purpose C	Purpose D
In my program, our ultimate purpose is to grow. . .	"day-one-ready" teachers who are guaranteed to succeed in a particular city's school system that uses a prescriptive curriculum	career teachers who are masters of their content pedagogy and will end up teaching in top schools across the country	vision-driven teachers who lead their students to dramatic progress and become life-long change agents, advocating for systemic change	community organizing teachers who build collective effort in their classroom and outside it for social justice

Recall the various axes of choices we explored earlier. How would aligning to these different purposes lead a program to different choices on those axes?

For example, the clearly and narrowly localized aim of Purpose A might put a premium on tactical skill-building through practicing with that school district's scripted curriculum. Meanwhile, program designers aspiring to Purpose B should probably lean toward context-grounded learning, and bet on intensive content-centered teaching practice with metacognitive coaching (that allows teacher candidates to adjust to different curricula).

Purpose C and Purpose D are closer to the aims that most programs in the Teach For All network aspire to. What are some of the implications of using those purposes to inform our learning bets?

Here are examples of the considerations we have heard from partner organizations who are committing to align how they grow their teachers to the ultimate "why" of their organizations:

- *If our purpose is to produce entrepreneurial leaders, should our training and support model be much more learner-driven (instead of so organization-directed as it is now)?*

- *If our purpose is to build a movement of alumni working collectively to effect systemic change, perhaps we need to design a much more interdependent culture and "collective" learning for our incoming teacher-learners? Is our current model imprinting on our teachers an individualistic approach to learning and leadership that is inhibiting their collective action as alumni?*

What would change in HOW you grow teachers if those choices were even more aligned to the WHY of your organization?

Our TEACHER-LEARNERS Can & Should Inform Our Learning Bets

Virtually all of the experts, practitioners, and researchers we have engaged on the question of teacher development have shared a concern that the education sector—and each of our respective programs—does a poor job of considering the unique learning profiles, cultural identities, backgrounds, and perspectives of its learners.

At the Roundtable Dr. Adrienne Dixson and Dr. Todd Rose, in different ways, challenged us to much better align our learning bets to WHO we have coming into our program.

Dr. Rose (as he explores in his must-read book *The End of Average*) revealed how often we design learning experiences to a mythical "average"—an imagined "middle" that we think is within reach of everyone but is actually not ideal for anyone.

Dr. Dixson challenged us to recognize how often that "middle" is actually a way of imposing and reinforcing privileged cultural norms and paradigms that may significantly alienate some or many of our teacher-learners.

"Whom do we imagine as the teacher? We have to talk about who we're imagining because in many ways that shapes and informs both the structure and the what," Dr. Dixson said.

For many in the room, this challenge seemed to resonate deeply, especially as programs across Teach For All are working hard to recruit and select teachers who share the background of the students the programs are working with. Among the questions we have heard program leaders asking are:

- *If we are aspiring to attract and support more teachers who share the backgrounds, experiences, and identities of the students we teach, how are assumptions we make about how people learn reflecting majority paradigms that implicitly devalue our teacher-learners?*

> Who are you teaching? Who are you? Who are you trying to get your teachers serve? We're trying to get more and more of our teachers who look like our students—people who have been in the education system as nontraditional students—this feels like a missed opportunity. . . .We have to think more about [the unique learning perspectives of our people] given we're bringing in a more diverse corps. How are we changing our program to really reflect that?
>
> **Esther Drake, Teach For America**

- *How much are we undermining our learning bets in the name of efficiency by "designing to the middle"? What if we acknowledged the variation in time, context, and learner profiles that are inhibiting the growth of many of our teachers—and that they then pass on to their students?*

- *If we are recruiting many learners who have grown up with some degree of privilege, how are our learning bets perpetuating that privilege and inhibiting student learning because they are failing to help our teachers see that not all learners learn the same way they do?*

- *Are we clear enough on the knowledge, skills and/or mindsets that our teacher-learners bring into our programs? Can/should we select for different knowledge, skills and/or mindsets in ways that could inform our learning bets*

What would change in HOW your program grows teachers if it took more seriously WHO is coming into your program?

THE WHAT
How Our Frameworks of KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS & MINDSETS Can & Should Inform Learning Bets

As we virtually toured dozens of teacher development models, we discovered that the teacher-performance frameworks for successful programs are often significantly different. Some frameworks are built only on teacher actions—some with a few actions, and some with long lists of actions. Other frameworks are more holistic, defining teacher performance in terms of thematic bundles of knowledge, skills and mindsets. Consider how aligning learning bets to these different "knowledge-skills-mindsets" models could lead to different design choices:

	Framework A	Framework B	Framework C	Framework D
In my program, our teacher performance model is built around. . .	four foundational teaching skills: delivering lessons clearly, maintaining high academic expectations, maintaining high behavioral expectations, and maximizing instructional time	holistic, content-embedded dimensions of teaching: sensemaking, rigorous instructional engagement, assessment, and differentiation of instruction	a map of actions that focuses on ways teachers build relationships and purpose; align teacher actions to that purposes in classroom culture, planning and instructions; and grow daily as teachers and leaders	teacher commitments to personal transformational, collective action, and educational equity, all in pursuit of students' academic progress, values and mindsets, and access and exposure to opportunity

Aligning learning bets to Framework A would involve lots of role-play style practice of atomized tactics that are observed, deconstructed, and re-practiced. Aligning learning bets to Framework B might also involve significant practice, but with more emphasis on debriefing what's going on in the teacher-learner's mind as she attempts to employ complex bundles of knowledge, skills and mindsets.

Meanwhile, Framework C's broad web of knowledge, skills and mindsets might call for more varied learning bets over the course of a teacher's learning experience. And Framework D's emphasis on "self" and collective action probably suggests learning bets more centered in relationships and disorienting experiences and reflection, all in a culture of interdependence among teacher-learners. (Of course, generally speaking Frameworks C and D are more like what we tend to see across the Teach For All Network.)

Here are some of the questions we are hearing program leaders explore as they think about the alignment of their learning bets to their frameworks of knowledge, skills, and mindsets?

- *If our teacher performance model emphasizes mindsets as strongly as skills, should our learning bets be more diversified? Are our learning bets too centered around skill building (practice, etc.) at the expense of mindsets (disorienting experiences, relationships, and reflection)?*

- *Should we think more about the "scope and sequence" of when and how we build the knowledge, skills, and mindsets and how our learning bets need to change from pre-service institute training through our in-service support model?*

What would change about HOW your program grows teachers if it even more fully aligned those choices to the WHAT (the framework of knowledge, skills and mindsets you want to see in teachers) of your program?

6b

Best Practices Should Influence Our Learning Bets

Next, how we expect our teachers to learn should be informed by some BEST PRACTICES, some basic concepts of ADULT LEARNING THEORY, and by cultural and systemic LEARNING ENABLERS in our organizations. The following section will explore each of these elements and their implications for our learning bets.

METACOGNITIVE EXPLICITNESS

A theory of development must be clear and explicit —and a metacognitive element of learning

PRACTICE

Practice is not only for perfecting skills but also for achieving automaticity to enable focus on difficult judgments

KNOWLEDGE

is often grown both passively (reading, watching, etc.) and actively (discovering, explaining, etc.)

SKILLS

are often grown by seeing models, breaking-down actions, practicing, putting them all together, etc.

MINDSETS

are often grown through experiences (and disorienting experiences) and reflection, etc.

PRIORITIZATION

We will make more progress with fewer "bets" done well, than all bets done poorly.

PUBLIC

Teaching and learning must be a public and collaborative act of ongoing growth.

PROFESSIONALISM

High expectations of our learners do not stop at selection.

PROGRESS

The learning "bets" we make have to evolve through rigorous learning loops processes.

BEST BETS
Metacognition & Practice

As mentioned earlier, we came into the Roundtable seeking to find the "answer" to the question "what learning bets best grow great teachers?" But we came away perplexed by the disagreements among those luminaries on that question.

While that realization led us to shift our focus from *universally "right" answers* to the f*actors that inform divergent choices*, we are also seeing at least two learning bets that are so common among high-performing teacher development models that we *can* consider them universally "right" answers.

If your program is not betting on metacognitive and on practice, you probably need to rethink your approach.

If your program is not betting on metacognition and on practice, you probably need to rethink your approach.

Metacognitive Awareness of Learning

Despite the haze of disagreements among experts about different learning bets we see consistent agreement that a program's learning bets should be clear and explicit for the sake of the program's learners. That is, the assumptions we are making about how we will grow our teachers has to be part of our conversations with those teachers.

Not surprisingly, this is also a pattern we see in the most transformational classrooms around the globe: in the strongest classrooms we have studied, teachers are having conversations with students about learning itself. These metacognitive engagements happen more often in our strongest classrooms than in other classrooms—and much more often in those strong classrooms than in our teacher development programs. Students are growing their awareness of how they best learn in different contexts, and taking ownership of their own learning.

The assumptions we are making about how we will grow our teachers has to be part of our conversations with those teachers.

For those of us who are designing a teacher development program, this means making clear to incoming teacher-learners what our learning bets are and building their awareness about how they best learn and can get the most out of the learning bets we are making. Examples of questions we are hearing program designers ask themselves in light of this "best bet" are:

• *Would our teachers be more inclined to help students grow their understanding of how they best learn if we helped our teachers grow their understanding of how they best learn?*

• *Are we not more explicit with our teacher-learners about the learning bets we are making because are not clear enough on what those bets are ourselves?*

• *Would we select (and see better self-selection) into our program if we were more clear and explicit about how we help our teacher-learners learn?*

• *Should we think more about the "scope and sequence" of when and how we build the knowledge, skills, and mindsets and how our learning bets need to change from institute through our in-service support model?*

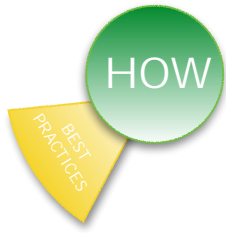In what ways would HOW you grow your teachers be different if your program engaged more explicitly with your teacher-learners about the learning bets you are making?

Practice—All the Way to Automaticity

The importance of meaningful practice is a second critical area where all these experts—despite other significant differences—seemed to be in complete agreement.

Behind all these different learning bets is a principle that intensely practicing some elements of teaching so that they become "automatic" helps create mental space to engage with the deeper more difficult judgments and mindsets of great teaching.

Here's how Doug Lemov—whose new book Practice Perfect is a great exploration of this principle—put it:

> *You are always trying to master more things than you can consciously think about while you are teaching. And so some of the things that you have to execute on have to be ingrained in habit; you have to do them without thinking about them or they won't happen or that in order for them to happen, they will drive out every other conscious thought.*
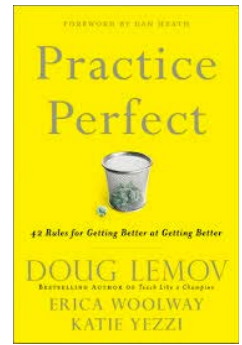
Among the questions we are seeing program designers and teachers ask themselves as they consider the implications of the "Best Bet" of practice include:

- *If we recognize that teaching is ultimately a performance task, are we depending too heavily on reading and watching as learning bets?*

- *How could we rearrange our institute to ensure that our teacher-learners are on their feet practicing much, much more?*

What changes might you make to HOW your program grows teachers if you emphasized practicing some elements of teaching to the point they are automatic, in order to create mental space to focus on the difficult judgments on real-time classroom leadership?

What has to become automatic is not just the skills to manage a classroom in isolation, but the skills do that WHILE teaching ambitious content and being human with real, live little (or big) people. Or else, what's the point? Building automaticity in those skills in isolation only is extremely limited, I believe. This is why we've put such emphasis on the concept of "infusion."
—Annie Lewis, Teach For America

I would say that providing deep experience for people in which they are approximating practice is essential if what you want to do is facilitate a couple of things, one of which is their understanding of the complexity of the work and actually supporting them in making the decisions that they are going to have to make in the moment -"is this the right question to ask? Do I make this move or the other" - its a whole set of dilemmas and its a decision-making process and you want them to have practiced that.
—Morva McDonald, U of Washington

BASICS OF LEARNING THEORY
Knowledge Is Grown Differently from Skills, Which Are Grown Differently from Mindsets

Another source of best practices that should inform learning bets is fundamental principles of learning theory. While the intricacies of different learning theories can be overwhelming, a few basic tenets are critically important to keep in mind as we design learning experiences for our teachers:

KNOWLEDGE
is often grown both passively (reading, watching, etc.) and actively (discovering, explaining, etc.)

SKILLS
are often grown by seeing models, breaking-down actions, practicing them, putting them all together, etc.

MINDSETS
are often grown through (disorienting) experiences and reflection, etc.

Too often, we (and many across the education landscape) pursue a set of objectives with the wrong underlying theory.

The following reflection from Steven Farr, who served as head of training and support for a number of years at Teach For America, captures the risks of conflating and mixing learning theories:

> *For a number of years, as the Teaching As Leadership rubric was developed at Teach For America, our focus was on skill development. We deconstructed exemplary and non-exemplary examples, we atomized complexity, we practiced, we checked for understanding with performance. For all our faults, we could definitely grow the skills of lesson planning, or management.*
> *As we employed our teacher action rubrics, we began to recognize the need to work on mindsets alongside skills. We studied strong classrooms and identified key mindsets undergirding their success: growth mindsets, locus of control, high expectations, etc.*
> *And that's where things got funky. . .*
> *Because our theory of development was not explicit and intentional, we didn't think about learning bets when we added those mindsets to the list of things we were trying to grow. We then applied the same learning bets that we used for knowledge and skills to those mindsets. . .and created a real mess. You can't have someone read about mindsets and grown them (like you can do with some forms of knowledge). And you can't have someone "practice" mindsets and grown them (like you can do with some forms of skills). Mindsets require a different set of learning bets than skills: relationships, experiences, and reflection. For a couple years we struggled through the frustration of misalignment between our objectives and our learning theory.*

Among the questions we are hearing from partner organizations as they ponder these different theories of learning are:

• *Would our institute be more effective if—in addition to the work we do to design the objectives, we asked ourselves what learning theory best applies to those objectives, which are in fact a hodge poodle of knowledge, skills, and mindsets?*

• *Do we have systems and structures in place in our program that actually inhibit mindset development, given its dependence on relationships, disorienting experiences, and reflection?*

In what ways would HOW your program grows teachers change if you better aligned your knowledge, skill, and mindset objectives to their respective learning theories?

LEARNING ENABLERS
Learning Bets Only Flourish in Organizations With Certain Cultures and Systems

As we interrogated leaders of successful teacher development programs about learning bets, a set of patterns emerged that we at first had a hard time categorizing. We certainly didn't see these coming. It seems that there are some organizational conditions—here we are calling them "learning enablers"—that while not exactly *learning bets* themselves, are *conditions* that maximize the impact of learning bets.

So far, we have identified four of these "enablers," each of which we will explore below:

PRIORITIZATION	**PUBLIC**	**PROFESSIONALISM**	**PROGRESS**
We will make more progress with fewer "bets" done well, than many bets done half-well.	*Teaching and learning must be a public and collaborative act of ongoing growth.*	*High expectations of our learners do not stop at selection.*	*The learning "bets" we make have to evolve through a rigorous learning loops processes.*

Prioritization: Fewer Bets Done Well

A number of the program leaders we have engaged described the same pattern in similar ways: "for a while we tried to do a little bit of everything, but now we are making more progress by narrowing down our learning bets. "

Tim Daly shared the experience of the New Teacher Project:

> *For years we used to cover a broad array of topics because we thought we needed to equip folks with everything. But we couldn't go in much depth. In general we found that our teachers weren't any different from their peers, and sometimes they started off worse and they caught up when we had less to do with them rather than when we were with them.*

And now, with its FastStart program, TNTP is shifting course by narrowing down to a small number of core skills, dramatically increasing practice time, and deselecting candidates who are not progressing well enough.

For Tim Daly, the power of prioritization is not only a matter of effectiveness but also of organizational learning:

> *I think we just have to say "let's just lay a bet." It may not be the right bet, but let's just commit, rather than try to do a bunch of different things in a kind of a low intensity or not very deliberate way. Then it is quite possible that if we explored all the pathways, we might find out the one we bet on is not the best, but I think we felt like what we had been doing before was trying to do a bit of everything.*

Across the board, the strongest teacher development models suggest that we will make more progress with our teachers by doing a few, purposeful things well than by trying to d a little bit of everything.

Meanwhile, Morva MacDonald, representing the University of Washington and very different learning bets, also emphasized her program's commitment to do a few things well:

> *Why four practices? It actually goes back to what to something Tim said which is you can't teach everything to people as they are beginning to teach. You don't actually have enough time so you do have to make some hard*

decisions about what you should focus on. It's helpful to have a common language. I want teachers in our programs be able to talk to each other about the work of teaching. You want the core practice to be something you can practice and teach.

Across the board, the strongest teacher development models suggest that we make more progress doing a few, purposeful things well than trying to do a little bit of everything.

And yet, we are hearing from a number of partner organizations in the Teach For All network that they are struggling with a large and unwieldy number of learning bets. Teacher are expected to learn by reading, and by watching, and by practicing, and by discovering, and through technical coaching, and through disorienting experiences—all at once.

Several program leaders have described that their programs have over several years only added new "learning bets" to their programs until the program becomes an unwieldy and sometimes internally inconsistent experience for teacher-learners.

By doing everything a little bit, you are doing nothing. This applies to both us and our teaching fellows. . . .Many of these paths can work and the question is not "are we picking the right one" but are we fully committing to aligning all of our actions with that choices (instead of making multiple, divergent bets with each of our models).
—Mi Zenhua, Teach For China

I think my top-line thought from the Roundtable is that we need to take a bet on a few things and go deep. Let's just list them and keep it big picture. We need to clearly identify what we are trying in order to get to (a) developing our students and (b) developing our Fellows' leadership as alumni and teachers. For that we need to identify just a few key mindsets and skills in Fellows and how we will get to those—no more.
—Noor Masood, Teach For Pakistan

Public-ness: A Culture of Welcomed Critical Friendship in Classrooms

Every teacher development expert that joined us—even as they often disagreed with each other about what "learning bets" are best—was aligned in their conviction that the act of teaching must be PUBLIC.

Jennifer Green of the Urban Teacher Center described her own program this way:

> *One bit of feedback I get that I appreciate is that our people are humble and they feel like their work can always improve. And that's what we work on but I don't work on it in a theoretical way, I work on it by beating you to death about it. Your practice is always public. That's notion one. Our practice is public in support of kids.*

Over and over, our guest experts and our leaders from across the network emphasized the importance of public practice—and our tendency to slide into the culture of "privacy" around teaching:

- Ben Jensen from Australia's Learning First: *If a good teacher is plateauing after two years then they have stopped improving through experience. By themselves, they are not getting better. What we're learning suggests that we need to share and process teaching together. This would be SO powerful. We are a corps of teachers publicly working on our practice, naming it, making it explicit.*

- Esther Drake, from Teach For America: *I LOVE the recurring emphasis on public practice—it's a beautiful departure from an individualistic culture. Close-the-door teaching was my experience. My own act of teaching was my individual act.*

- Morva McDonald, from University of Washington: *We want to make practice public. Why? Because we want to leverage participation because if you sit and think about it on your own you actually don't get enough perspective on the problem in front of you. So, we want to open up the practice of teaching.*

Leigh Kincaid from Teach For All brought this point home by pointing out how the "public act of teaching and learning" drives improvement at every level of our work:

> *Fear or fear of failure also seems to be massively at play so I was struck by this idea . . . around "making practice public" at every level:*
> - *At the org / program level: The value of being explicit and "making public" whatever your bet is and why. This was clearly a theme. I may not agree with all TNTP's bets but I sure as hell do respect their bravery in declaring their bets and commitment to follow them through so publicly.*
> - *And at the teacher level: Tim Daly talked about this phenomenon of teachers often not having an accurate sense of their performance or growth even if "they were told otherwise" by an administrator. It made me think of Morva's push on communities of practice that regularly see each others' work and share their own as critical friends*
> - *And at the coaching level: Ellen had a moment of saying she "sometimes wonders what coaches are actually saying when they close the doors." So I thought about the need to do more to support coaches as the ones who actually place the bets. The value of "making practice public" seems very relevant for them too.*

Unfortunately, a culture of "privacy" seems to pervade classroom teaching around the globe. In every country we have asked about, teacher development programs are working against an implicit assumption that it's personally invasive for teachers to observe each other or be observed.

[*A random aside from Steven Farr: I was introduced to that culture of privacy as a first year teacher in a funny (maybe?) way. When my university-based coach came to observe me in my first-year as a teacher, she apologized for having to watch me teach. "Teaching is the second-most personal act," she said. True story. Back then, I thought that was just pretty awkward. Today i think it is absolutely ludicrous—and damaging to the learning of teachers and students.*]

> If we take away the sheepishness in education about watching and learning from each other's practice, we can all learn and grow faster for the sake of our students--and we will be modeling exactly what we are asking of our students. Let's trust each other to see failure as an opportunity to learn and let's grow together.

As Teach For All's Leigh Kincaid paints so clearly, recognizing that teaching must be *public* is what drives teacher *learning*. If we take away the sheepishness about watching and learning from each other's practice, we can all learn and grow faster for the sake of our students--and we will be modeling exactly what we are asking of our students. Let's trust each other to see failure as an opportunity to learn, and let's grow together.

Professionalism: High Expectations of Teacher-Learners

Another "enabler" of learning bets that recurs in our conversations with leaders of strong teacher development programs is a commitment to treat their teacher-learners as professionals who are expected to work hard, perform well, and to varying degrees drive their own learning.

An element of that professionalism seems to be a focus on results more than process. That is, teacher candidates are evaluated not on how much time they spend learning but whether students are growing.

The implication is that we make different learning bets when we think of our learners as professionals with powerful assets to leverage for the sake of students, versus "empty vessels" that we need to fill with knowledge and skills and mindsets.

> We make different "learning bets" when we think of our learners as professionals with powerful assets to leverage for the sake of students, versus "empty vessels" that we need to fill with knowledge and skills and mindsets.

AN EMERGING, TRICKY CONVERSASTION ABOUT "MUTUAL DESELECTION"

An interesting sub-current of this "professionalism" principle seems to be a growing trend to "counsel out" more teacher candidates earlier, if those teacher candidates are not growing on a pace that will make them ready for their students.

The New Teacher Project, the Urban Teacher Center and some of the Teach For All partners are thinking more and more about "off ramps" right before the transition from pre-service training to classroom teaching. The The New Project removes roughly 1/4th of its teacher-learners after summer training, for example.

This is proving to be a highly charged conversation, with some of our colleagues arguing passionately that we must believe in the ability of all of our teachers to grow into the leaders we need them to be for the sake of their students—just like we ask them to do with their students. Others argue that "de-selecting" our teacher-learners does not mean that those candidates cannot learn to become great teachers but that our unique theory of development is not a good fit for them. And that "de-selecting" more teachers is the best thing we can do for our students.

If we accept that there will always be some degree of unpredictability in our selection model, who should bear the burden of that unpredictability? Children when we put teachers who are not growing quickly enough in classrooms? Or adults when we deny someone a classroom despite considerable effort in our preservice training?

Progress: Investigating What Learning Bets Are Working

Another "enabler" of intentional learning bets is a culture of learning in an organization. While some organizations are doing a good job learning about the teacher actions and mindsets that are drive student growth, few if any are *learning about learning*—investigating whether particular learning bets are having more or less impact on teacher development.

At multiple points in the discussions and debates among experts and Teach For All leaders, the "medical sector" was brought up as a model of well-curated learning. The medical field has many people performing research about what works, well-respected clearing-houses of studies and insights that help the field decide what to act on, and well-developed mechanism for sharing innovations that work.

Why don't we have a similarly robust system of learning in education?

Radha Ruparell, who works on learning and leadership development at Teach For All, shared this reflection after this discussions:

> *I think we can be more rigorous in our approach to taking bets. There are entire movements out there now around "lean experimentation" that help provide a methodology for how to make bets. I think there is so much we can learn from these. For example, being: (a) really explicit about the bet you're making (b) laying out a clear hypothesis that you're going to test (c) having an explicit timeframe in which you will test that and a bar by which you will measure if that has been successful or failed (d) process to make a decision to pivot and change course.*

While we have explored this a bit with our learning org work, I still don't think we're great at working on bets/experiments in a structured way particularly around (d) changing course when we fail. I was struck by something that Ted Quinn said about coaching experiments they ran at TFA where, even when the results suggested they should abandon their approach, no one wanted to do it. I believe it's because we need to invest in building a culture and processes around experimentation/bet-making that we don't have yet, and part of this is creating a culture where failure and pivots are accepted as important parts of the process.

• • •

The biggest tension I'm feeling is the tension between the need to radically focus on a few key "bets" (rather than spreading our resources and our management attention thin) and the uncomfortable realization that we simply don't know what works, so we don't know which "bets" to place (see above). I don't have a resolution to this dilemma other than the obvious one: pick two or three focused and coherent combinations of "bets," try them in different places separated in time and/or space, then fail fast, learn fast, switch hard, and pick new "bets." I do really believe that the center of Teach For America can play a high-impact role in sparking and facilitating this cycle of innovation and organizational learning without imposing on regional autonomy.
—Ted Quinn, Teach For America

A number of speakers pointed out that there's a lot of evidence showing metacognition—thinking about learning—is an effective pedagogical technique. Given that do we talk to participants enough about what we're doing?
—Sam Freedman, Teach First

"Learning Enablers," In Summary

Our inquiry into learning bets is revealing that certain commitments by, and cultural aspects of, organizations make learning bets work:

PRIORITIZATION
We will make more progress with fewer "bets" done well, than many bets done half-well.

PUBLIC
Teaching and learning must be a public and collaborative act of ongoing growth.

PROFESSIONALISM
High expectations of our learners do not stop at selection.

PROGRESS
The learning "bets" we make have to evolve through a rigorous learning loops processes.

Reflecting on these "learning enablers" is leading a number of program designers across the Teach For All network to pursue some difficult questions:

• *How much is our frequent addition of new learning initiatives costing us in teacher and student growth because we are "throwing everything at the wall to see what sticks" instead of building expertise in few areas?*

• *How are we challenging the prevailing culture of privacy in education that is inhibiting learning among and by teachers?*

• *How should we "counsel out" teachers who are not growing well enough to serve their students?*

• *How can we infuse systems and rituals of learning in our organization that will help us know which learning bets are working?*

In what ways would HOW your program is designed change if you it took more seriously these "learning enablers" that maximize the impact of your learning bets?

6c

Practical Realities Should, Eventually, Influence Learning Bets

In what contexts (virtual, in schools, in universities) do our engagements with learners happen?

WHERE — HOW — WHEN

How much time do we have with learners? How much time do we have for various forms of engagement with learners?
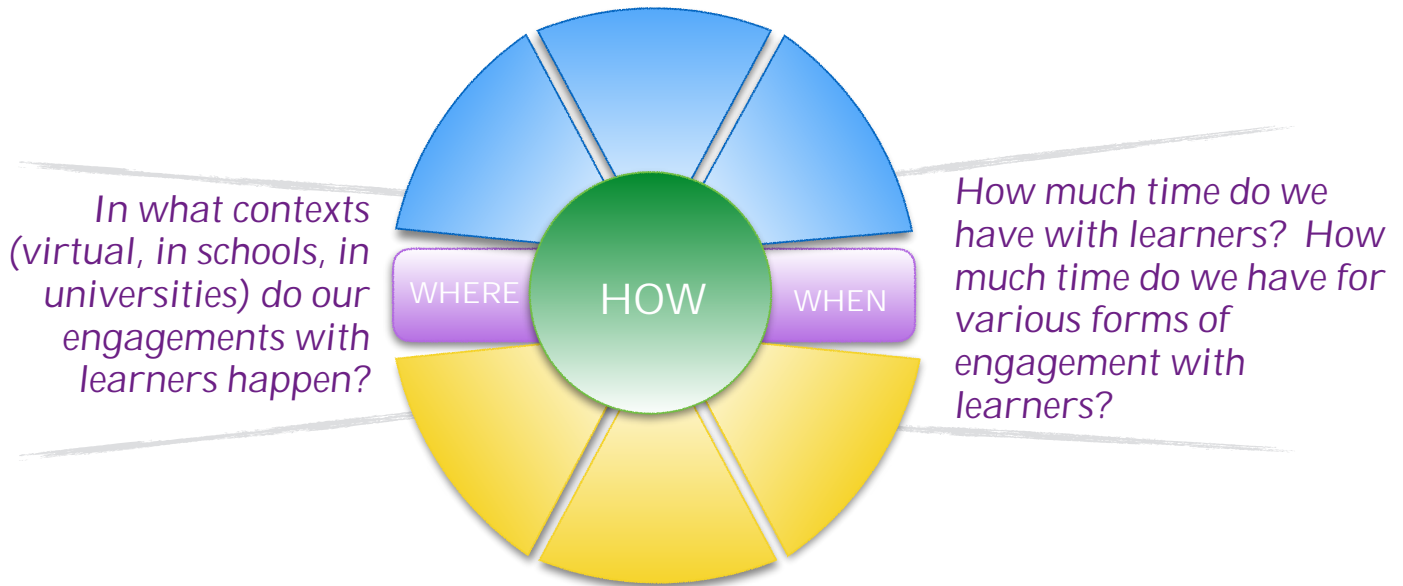
A final lesson from high performing teacher development programs is that consideration of practical realities—like how far away a program's teachers are from each other, or how many coaches a program has, or the relationships with a university partner—must be considered for their influence on a program's learning bets. AND, that we must consider those considerations *after* we use the other two families of factors. Organization Identity and Best Practices should first determine what learning bets we would ideally make, and then we consider practical realities to see what must be compromised.

We too often let the logistical constraints of time, place and resources be the primary factor determining our learning bets. We can often change those "constraints" more than we realize. So, along with elements of organization identity and best practices, practical realities must inform our learning bets, but they can't be the first and only driver of those choices.

Among the questions we are hearing partners grapple with are:

- *If we ideally would have more collective-learning to align with our organization's purpose, can we change how we place teachers to all them to work together more?*

- *With more clarity about the learning bets we want to make to align to organization identities and to the best practices, can we change the negotiations we are having with our university partners?*

What would change in HOW your program grows teachers if practical realities related to when and where learning happens were considered *after* other factors influencing learning bets, and your program determined to change some of those practical realities if necessary?

7

AN EXPERIMENTAL PROPOSAL

The Transformational Learning & Leadership Development Cycle

Given local contextual differences among programs across the Teach For All network, we know that careful consideration of the factors in the previous section will lead to different learning bets.

At the same time, given our partner organizations' common commitment to building leaders in the classroom and beyond—and given our expert advisors insights about adult learning—we see the potential for a baseline model that starts with intentional culture and relationships and then combines the adaptive and technical aspects of learning in our programs.

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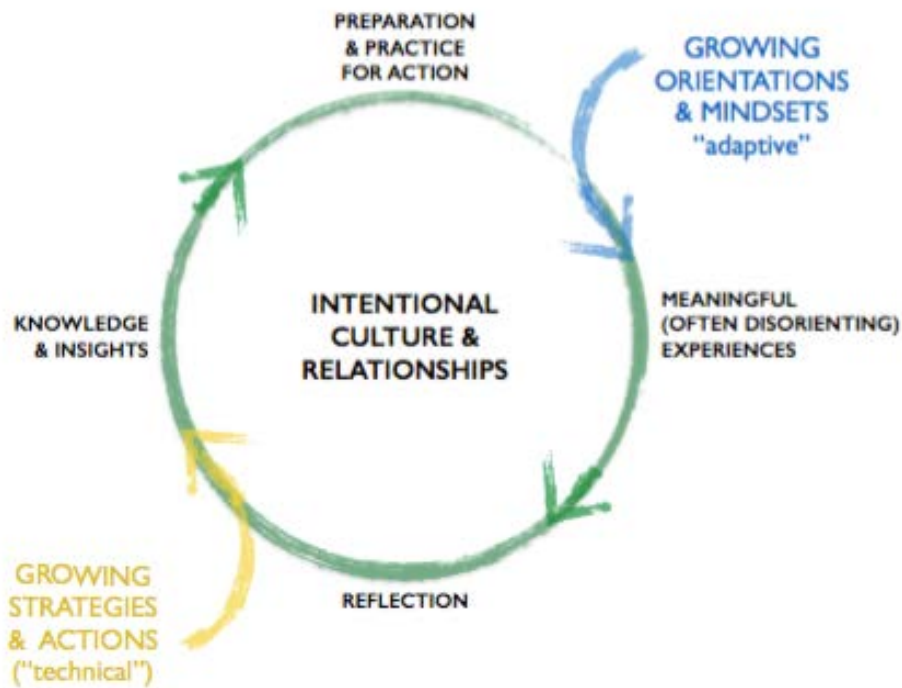
Case Studies: Exploring Learning Bets Through Implementation

URBAN **TEACHERS**

TEACH**FOR**INDIA

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

URBAN TEACHERS

This teacher preparation program is built on the idea that, like doctors and chefs and lawyers, teachers should train side-by-side with professionals before they take charge of their own classrooms. In this model, teachers go through a first year of residency followed by three years of coaching and certification. (Residents complete over 1500 clinical hours working in urban classroom). In 2015, more than 15,000 students across 93 public schools in Baltimore and Washington, DC, were taught by their new 107 residents. Last year, 70% of teachers returned for a third year of teaching.

PURPOSE
Urban Teachers's mission is developing long-term career teachers for specific urban school districts.

PEOPLE
The program attracts people interested in teaching in a specific district, and serving children facing extra challenges. Due to the practice-oriented nature of the program, openness to feedback and growth mindsets are qualities that the program selects for.

Four years commitment: First year is a residency model (with 1500 clinical hours), in following by years, teachers obtain their certification.

KNOWLEDGE, MINDSETS & SKILLS
- Expertise in content knowledge & subject matter
- Data driven instruction, diagnosing and assessing student needs.
- Openness to feedback and planning.
- Deep understanding of urban educational context.
- Reflecting on practice, the feedback stance in which teachers must be able to analyze evidence of progress

Participants spend mornings teaching and co-teaching in the classroom. During the afternoon, they have graduate classes from a university partner (John Hopkins).

Diagram center:
WHO — WHY — WHAT
neutral classroom observation & reflection practice
content-based learning
explicit learning theory
BEST BETS — LEARNING THEORY — LEARNING ENABLERS

TEACHING AS A PUBLIC ACT:
The program has an "open-doors" classroom culture that begins from year one.

PRACTICE
Because the ultimate aim is teachers who succeed in the eyes of the districts they will work in, contextualized practice is the central learning bet of this clinical program.

PROFESSIONALISM AND PROGRESS:
The program sets a high bar at every stage of the fellowship. The program determines who will advance from one stage to the next. Teachers have on-the-job data proving their teaching expertise.

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING
Participants grow skills through doing, in close contact with their assigned mentor, and constant reflection on experiences. Mindsets are grown primarily by peer to peer engagements and reflection.

INTERVIEW WITH JENNIFER GREEN

CEO & Founder, Urban Teachers

What is your program's vision of an effective teacher?
An effective teacher is a skilled diagnostician who knows exactly where each student is—especially in literacy, in math and in understanding. He knows what the instructional target is. He's a master at planning. He's a master at building a deeply respectful classroom and puts a heavy emphasis on talk in the classroom, and children's talk in particular. Those are the teachers we want to create at Urban Teacher Center.

How metacognitive is your program about learning?
I think we are very explicit with our learners on how they learn. The guiding source is our rubric (which is also not an answer for everything). What matters is that if you are working together with teachers, a rubric helps you have something organized in your feedback system. So you get into the habits of mind of 'I am reflecting on my practice against the north star' so that tool has to be pretty explicit, narrow and deep.

On the metacognitive side, participants do a regular self-reflection, they get an analysis, they do video observation, they give feedback, and they do peer to peer observation. They get a trimestral report that summarizes how they are doing. When we started we were terrible at this, and this is something we have really improved. We are to be much more explicit and clear with our teachers about how they are growing and progressing.

How does your program exit candidates who are not teaching well enough?
We lose 1 in 5 of our residents, so the way that I talk about it is that we have a high bar to enter the program, but we also have a high bar to earn the right to become a practicing teacher. We do this through with extensive support and a high degree of accountability. We ask teachers to demonstrate to us that they are ready to be a prepared and qualified teacher. We know this process does take time, so we do a five week summer institute, and they start co-teaching from day 2. It is a fact that we can't tell in five weeks who has to exit. It takes a year to see if somebody clinical practice is progressing or not.

THE PROGRAM'S EMPHASIS ON "NEUTRAL OBSERVATION"

Jennifer Green insists that her teacher-learners engage with the specific children and realities of their classroom experiences. The Urban Teachers programs uses a particular observation-feedback model with that purpose in mind:

When observing someone's work, ask for the structure: "here is what I heard, and here is the evidence."	When observing, stay purely at evidence, no judgments attached	Use it for student work analysis. It's not what you think of the student, it's about evidence	It can be done in different settings (group work, talks, written work).	Always model it with your coaches. It takes time.

Teach for India is building a movement of leaders committed to work from inside and outside the educational system to effect the long-term changes necessary to realize educational opportunity for all. The program is currently in seven cities, impacting 38,000 children through 1100 fellows, 200 staff members and 1050 alumni.

PURPOSE
TFI believes that a lack of leadership at all levels is underpinning an educational system that is failing to its children. So, the program emphasizes building leaders with the mindsets required to eliminate educational inequity in India, with the belief that teaching in impoverished, under-resourced conditions is, ultimately, an act of leadership.
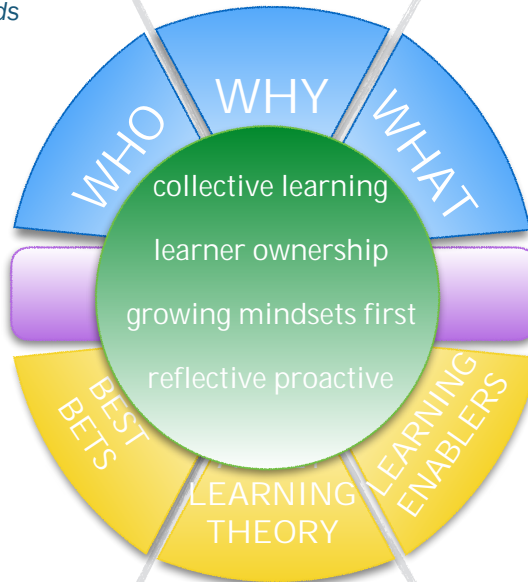
PEOPLE
TFI recruits and selects people with leadership potential who demonstrate problem-solving skills, perseverance and passion for long term goals in the face of challenges, high expectations for themselves and for others, and unwavering belief that all children can learn and that educational inequity can/needs to be solved for.

KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS & MINDSETS
TFI emphasizes skills and mindsets leading to personal and collective transformation, which participants develop by learning to manage self, time and well-being, investing stakeholders through collective action, and vision-setting and a sense of clarity about their role in educational equity in India, etc,

WHO WHY WHAT

collective learning
learner ownership
growing mindsets first
reflective proactive

BEST BETS — LEARNING ENABLERS — LEARNING THEORY

PRACTICE
TFI emphasizes learning through "reflective practice." Grounded on classroom evidence, teacher actions are "unpacked" into the ultimate mindsets leading to them.

PRIORITIZATION
TFI's learner-driven focus means that teacher-learners themselves are choosing among different learning bets, making their own prioritization.

METACOGNITIVE EXPLICTNESS
TFI is completely transparent about the learning bets it is making with its teachers, defining their experience as a "journey" through those learner-driven bets. conversation.

LEARNING THEORY
TFI is guided by the principles of adaptive and experiential learning:

SKILLS are grown mostly by observing exemplary teachers and debriefing and by evaluating and creating rigorous academic standards.

MINDSETS are primarily grown by reflective and collective learning experiences, and though disorienting experiences based on experiential learning..

AN INTERVIEW WITH ROMANA SHAIKH
Program Director, Teach For India

Why does your program lead with mindsets?
If we are in pursuit of transformational outcomes for our children, we need to start reflecting from what happens in the classroom, how does it tie in with our beliefs about our kids and how can we overcome our own barriers to help our kids see success. The recurring idea is that the more we understand our students' context the better we understand them in the classroom. We need to overcome our own limiting mindsets.
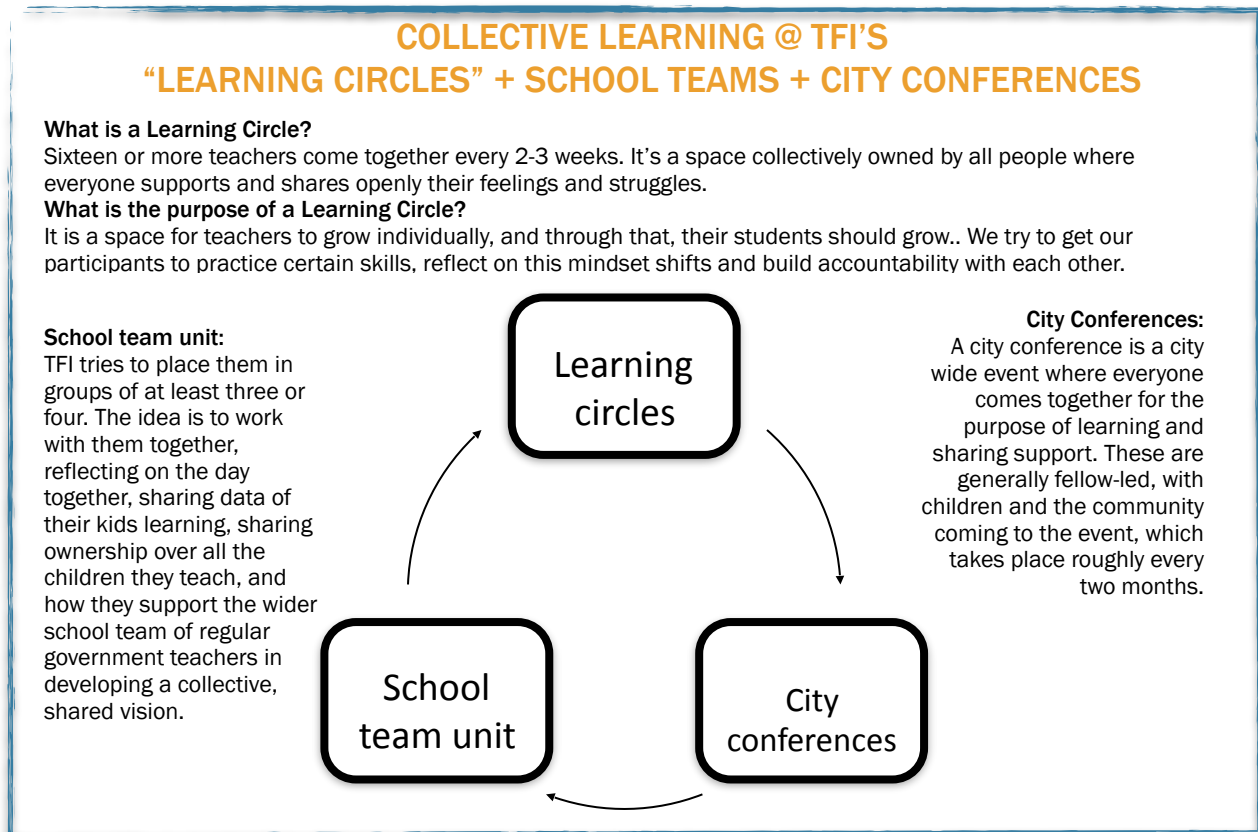
People have begun to see the long-term benefit of working on mindsets. Fellows have come back and given us the feedback that the biggest thing they take away from Teach for India is self-awareness. They have learned to be reflective, and they can actually go and learn the rest on their own. Those reports helped us keep focus on our bets and handle the discomfort.

How, exactly, to you grow mindsets?
It's by reflection, building reflective practice. That happens one-on-one or in the group setting. We try to use the classroom as the primary experience to keep reflecting on. So through the experience in the classroom there is a lot of reflection on what work what didn't and what mindsets limited you, what mindsets enabled you. And beyond that we specifically do experiential activities, games, and a lot of video observation and reflection.

Why do you focus on collective learning?
This is how we believe teachers should be operating in schools, so that is the big learning bet that we focus on—learning with and from peers. It becomes the first collective idea that this is your movement. We do a lot of work in pushing each other to discover, understand and unpack their mindsets and this can only be achieved collectively.

COLLECTIVE LEARNING @ TFI'S
"LEARNING CIRCLES" + SCHOOL TEAMS + CITY CONFERENCES

What is a Learning Circle?
Sixteen or more teachers come together every 2-3 weeks. It's a space collectively owned by all people where everyone supports and shares openly their feelings and struggles.

What is the purpose of a Learning Circle?
It is a space for teachers to grow individually, and through that, their students should grow.. We try to get our participants to practice certain skills, reflect on this mindset shifts and build accountability with each other.

School team unit:
TFI tries to place them in groups of at least three or four. The idea is to work with them together, reflecting on the day together, sharing data of their kids learning, sharing ownership over all the children they teach, and how they support the wider school team of regular government teachers in developing a collective, shared vision.

City Conferences:
A city conference is a city wide event where everyone comes together for the purpose of learning and sharing support. These are generally fellow-led, with children and the community coming to the event, which takes place roughly every two months.

Learning circles → City conferences → School team unit → Learning circles

LEAP is a mentoring program that aims to support DC public school teachers hone their practice, through a heavy emphasis in content-based learning skills. The program has been piloted this year and is ready to be launched in 2016.

PURPOSE
Despite improvements, student achievement is still too low. DCPS is aiming to build common core and content mastery for its teachers to raise student achievement.

PEOPLE
The program is designed for all district teachers, from new to experienced. The program is betting on collective learning, creating learning groups of 5-7 teachers. Each group has a diversity of tenure, but will be organized around a particular subject matter for contextualized learning.

KSMs
Skills: content-based instructional skills; practicing distilled components, etc.

Mindsets: openness to feedback, growth mindset, etc.

Knowledge: "Content is king"— subject content and content pedagogy

Weekly 90-minute LEAP Learning Seminar, which gives the chance to constantly improve practice in small, bite-sized progress.

Because learning in context is the driving force underpinning the program, it is delivered mainly in person, through school content-based teams during regular work day

Central diagram labels: WHO · WHY · WHAT · BEST BETS · LEARNING THEORY · LEARNING ENABLERS · content-based learning · metacognitive practice · learning by doing

METACOGNITIVE PRACTICE
Metacognition around practice is fostered through repeated cycles of processing time, planning time, and practicing time around subject matter content.

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING
Knowledge and skills are built from mentor-guided engagement with exemplary models, and repeated cycles of processing, planning, and practicing.

PRIORITIZATION
LEAP focuses primarily on contextualized content and grade specific learning.

PUBLIC
The seminar model emphasizes teaching and learning as a public and collaborative act. Teachers agree to observe and be observed on a frequent basis.

AN INTERVIEW WITH JASON KAMRAS
Chief of Instructional Practice, DCPS

Why are you betting on contextual and collaborative learning?
During the last years we have taken a general pedagogical knowledge approach, but we are seeing that what really makes a difference for children is having teachers digging into the content pedagogy practices you need to master to be successful in teaching your subject. The main shift is that our coaching programs were generalists, they focused on things like classroom management, good questioning skills, check for understanding, which are generically applicable to subject content. Those things are different in reading, math, science, so they cannot be generic. In math for example, it is a little bit about developing more expertise with the content and deeply understanding the content itself.

So what would this actually look like in the LEAP seminars, for math for example?
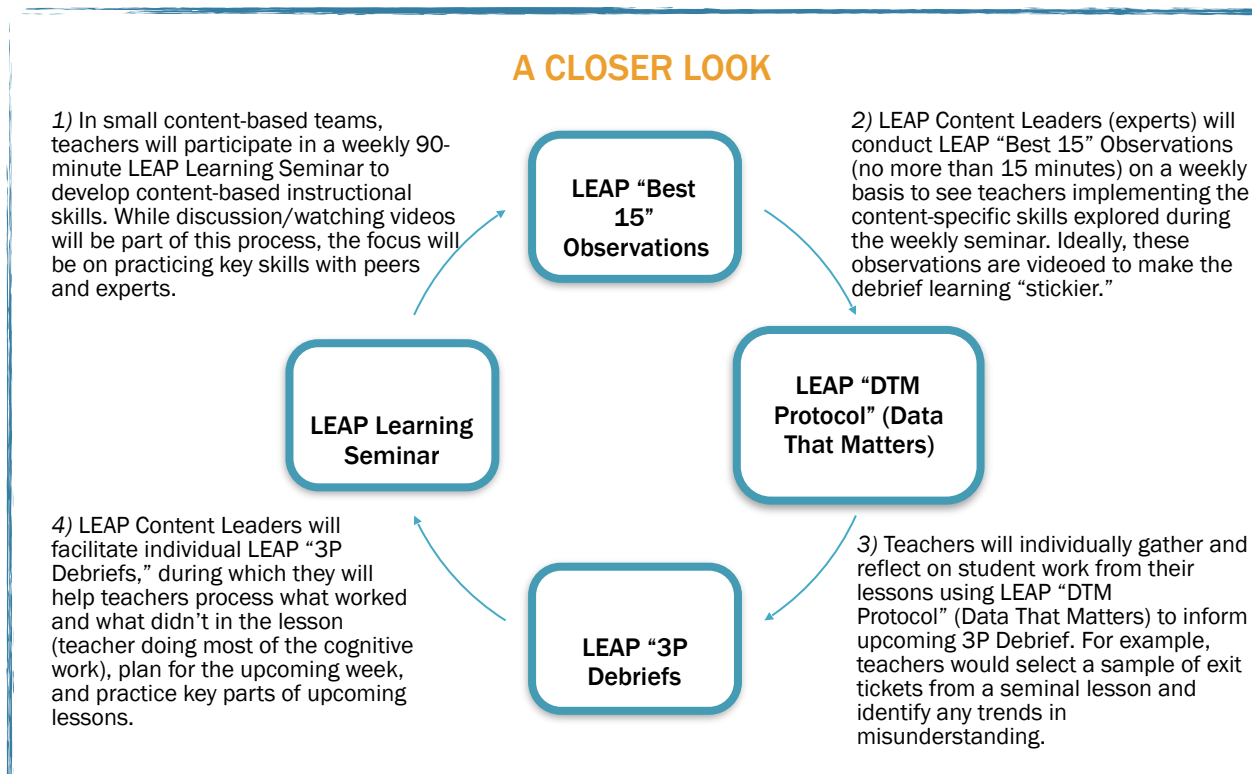Our teachers will be wrestling with their own potential content misconceptions, or practicing a particular skill in mathematical discourse around a particular misconception. They will be practicing with an expert and colleagues in the room, and then actually doing the skill in the classroom.

What are the biggest changes that your teacher-learners will experience with LEAP?
1) Shifting from general pedagogy to content-based pedagogy.
2) Shifting from largely passive learning (getting feedback) to more action-learning and practice.
3) Learning from not just looking at the instruction but also focusing on *planning and preparing* for instruction. Teacher preparation programs tend to spend most of the time just looking at what happens in the classroom, which is important, *but not a lot of time around what happens before you even get there.* This is reflected in our theory of development.

LEAP seems largely skills focused. How are you building or nurturing mindsets?
We believe that the best way to fortify mindsets is by first having the skills to be successful. The bulk of what we are going to focus on is skills-oriented. I think you can try session after session working on mindsets, but at the end of the day what you have to see is your students doing well, and I think that largely comes from having the skills to do the work.

A CLOSER LOOK

1) In small content-based teams, teachers will participate in a weekly 90-minute LEAP Learning Seminar to develop content-based instructional skills. While discussion/watching videos will be part of this process, the focus will be on practicing key skills with peers and experts.

2) LEAP Content Leaders (experts) will conduct LEAP "Best 15" Observations (no more than 15 minutes) on a weekly basis to see teachers implementing the content-specific skills explored during the weekly seminar. Ideally, these observations are videoed to make the debrief learning "stickier."

LEAP "Best 15" Observations

LEAP Learning Seminar

LEAP "DTM Protocol" (Data That Matters)

LEAP "3P Debriefs

4) LEAP Content Leaders will facilitate individual LEAP "3P Debriefs," during which they will help teachers process what worked and what didn't in the lesson (teacher doing most of the cognitive work), plan for the upcoming week, and practice key parts of upcoming lessons.

3) Teachers will individually gather and reflect on student work from their lessons using LEAP "DTM Protocol" (Data That Matters) to inform upcoming 3P Debrief. For example, teachers would select a sample of exit tickets from a seminal lesson and identify any trends in misunderstanding.

9 AN ONGOING CONVERSATION
Constructive Comments, Questions & Critiques

The purpose of this "provocation paper" is to help us be critical friends to our own and each others' assumptions and bets about how teachers best learn. The ideas and experiences in the previous sections have generated a rich set of conversations and reflections, and in some cases significant programmatic changes.

Here we are collecting some of the comments, questions, and critiques in hopes of catalyzing more of them:

Realizing the Need for More Clear Learning Bets
In our context, we have made lots of bets on how to develop our teachers, but we have never shared them with participants and coaches, and we never frame them in a theory of teacher development.
> —Pablo Prince (Enseña por Argentina

I also think that poor adult learning is part of this. We tend to plan one way for students, and a differently way for teachers. So much adult learning is just lazy.
> —Jennifer Brennamen (Teach For All)

Teachers need to have an understanding that there is a lack of clear answers about how to develop great teachers and that much of their own growth in the program depends on their constant and critical reflection on their practice and proactive work seeking out opportunities for development consistent with their personalities, contexts, and goals.
> —Nathan Marks (Enseña por Mexico)

We speak as of we are highly convinced about some things related to learning theory, but we are not so convinced when is the time and required effort of IMPLEMENTING them. (Maybe what is pushing us back is cowardice or, lack of clarity or building stamina or disorienting experiences). It makes me think about when and how we are addressing the HARD questions.
> —Ana Tejedor (Ensena por Mexico)

The lack of clear alignment in the Spectra Exercise suggests that we should spend more time aligning definitions and sharing impressions on these areas in order to determine a clear diagnosis of where we currently are as a team. This will be necessary in order to proceed with the next step of setting explicit learning bets.
> —Jeff Warner (Teach for Bulgaria)

Reflections on the Costs of a Lack of Clear Learning Theory
The lack of clarity on a theory of development leads us to focus on little things that appear in the field and we tend to solve them all, and we can't. The trial and error is exhausting and undermines the impact of our teachers.
> —Natalia Maldonado (Enseña pos Ecuador)

The process taught me that we all bring in assumptions of what works best, what's most effective, etc... and that it's easy to just continue operating under these assumptions. In order to grow as an organization, we need to, in a way, hold nothing sacred and be willing to challenge our assumptions.
　　　　　—Jeff Warner (Teach For Bulgaria)

I am taking away the importance of being explicit on the bets we are making, AND leaving space to reflect on new bets. I think our teachers would be able to learn more if they understood this process.
　　　　　—Tomas Recart (Enseña Chile)

I'm learning the importance of explicitly thinking about the impact that you want your bets to have. I think I've been so focused on helping to choose/ prioritize bets that I haven't asked enough questions about the intended impact of those bets.
　　　　　—Felicia Cuesta (Teach For All)

While I believe that we are pretty clear in the WHATs and HOWs as an organization, we still have a long way to go in terms of answering what this is going to look like in terms of the Program and the Organizational level. I have learned from Mexico and Bulgaria's model that they have been able to jump this hurdle, which gives me the juice I need to continue using our team further.
　　　　　—Nissa Gainey (Enseña Ecuador)

Connecting Learning Bets to Purpose
The WHY being at the top of the list is so important. What is your vision and mission? Teach for India is developing leaders in all fields and not specifically expert teachers (partly because of their context - it's hard to teach in India beyond the two year programme). Their bets on WHAT and HOW are totally different because they are trying to do something totally different. They are in a fundamentally different business. Controversially I don't think that teaching is leadership. They are connected but not the same thing. If they were the same thing the WHAT and HOW would be the same for both - and it isn't
　　　　　—Matthew Hood (Institute for Advanced Teaching, UK)

I think that we need to get better at purpose. If we are building a movement of leaders who are going to unleash the collective power of their communities to achieve social change and the classroom is where they learn the skills they need to do that, what would we do differently? I think that when we think of our teachers as teachers and default this to teacher training, we completely lose sight of their 50 years of leadership after the first two in the classroom.
　　　　　—Jen Brenneman (Teach For All)

Reflections on the Dialectic of Skills and Mindsets
I also worry that mindsets alone are insufficient for success. We need to provide teachers with the skills to achieve what those mindsets achieve. Many of our teachers who leave do so because they feel like they have the mindset but they can't make the reality fit it...
　　　　　—Doug Lemov (Teach Like a Champion, Relay Grad School of Education)

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　　　　　—Harry Fletcher-Wood (Teach First, UK)

We need to look at both mindsets and skills. I think lack of skill turns into a negative mindset. We also need to ensure people have the mindset to persist when times are tough, when they need to push their expectations of that child a little further.
　　　　　—Louise Preston (Teach For France)

I agree that knowledge and skill building lead to developing mindsets. As a past teacher coach, I never had a teacher ask me "how should I think about this issue?" "What value should I have about this?" "How should I feel about this?"... the questions were always: "what should I do?" "How should I approach this?" And I found that doing something different almost always lead to thinking and believing something different."
　　　　　—Tritia Samaniego (Teach For All)

Wondering if I believe this: Mindset is a condition necessary to success.... but success is defined as the development of skills and knowledge."
　　　　　—Doug Lemov (Teach Like a Champion, Relay Grade School of Education)

The Need for and Challenge of Differentiated Teacher Learning
I struggle with the pull between generic and differentiated learning. I guess this comes from my deep belief that we should do our best to meet learner needs. In order to do this, we need to make sure we differentiate our delivery of professional development. Wouldn't it be unethical to take a generic approach that does not take any learner differences into account? Wouldn't that be just reinforcing traditional one-size-fit all models?
　　　　　—Nissa Gainty (Ensena Ecuador)

How do we individualize our learning bets for teachers considering their diverse priorities, experience, skill level, and mindsets? I'm assuming it involves making the process of determining learning bets more teacher-centric, but how does that look in practice? Highly differentiated PD and participant support come to mind, but logistically I'm having a hard time wrapping my head around it.
　　　　　—Nathan Marks (Ensena por Mexico)

The Need for and Challenge of Collective Learning
I think that collective learning goes with the "science of individual", if we are truly embracing the concept that everyone is a leader of their own learning and has a unique learning profile...it is necessary for us (societally) to recognize the strengths in others and learn and appreciate diversity of thought backgrounds, etc. in a collective way.
　　　　　—Rachel Brody (Teach For All)

The Challenge of Learning and Improving
It has been reinforced for me how important prioritization is in terms of making real change. It is very hard to make lots of changes on various axes. It is much easier to have one or two driving forces, or axis on which you are going to try to make change, and to try to see that come through in lots of elements of the program.
　　　　　—Ashley Salmon-Wander (Teacher For All)

I stepped out of [the Roundtable] thinking that there was something missing: all the data that I saw (perhaps I missed some) and the thinking, seemed a bit on the technical side. I am convinced that if Tim Daly, with the powerful systems that he has, would go into issues such as motivation, conviction, and many of the variables that are difficult to measure but we know make a difference, perhaps he could find some more answers that would share actions. I value the measurement of how much coaching the teacher gets, but I would also value if that teacher has a dream about their students, and how clear that dream is. Just the fact that it is difficult to measure doesn't mean that we shouldn't try, it is worth a shot.
　　　　　—Franco Mosso (Enseña Peru)

One of the biggest challenges is that it is so hard to tell what is working and isn't that we try to do a little bit of everything or change every year. But part of the reason this is hard is that we haven't always had a set of student outcomes that we are measuring in order to know what is working.
       —Ashley Salmon-Wander (Teacher For All)

Our Network's (Unprecedented, Unparalleled) Potential to Learn Together

The core question of this provocation paper—how do we best grow great teachers?—is a question shared across the education landscape around the globe. And the problem driving this provocation paper—a lack of clear, intentional, explicit learning theory in teacher education—is also shared across the education landscape around the globe.

As frustrating as that problem is, we should be inspired by our own potential to contribute to solving it.

Teach For All is a natural laboratory of creative, innovative, try-and-fail-and-learn-fast social entrepreneurs who can commit to different contextualized learning bets, thereby demonstrating what does and does not work to grow classroom leaders for some of the most marginalized populations of students.

We in the Teach For All network have an unprecedented vantage point on (a) universal patterns of transformational learning and leadership in some of the best classrooms in low-income communities around the world and (b) creative, productively disruptive innovations being tested by mission-driven social entrepreneurs in classrooms, schools and school systems in low-income communities around the world.

If our partner organizations are choosing and acting on innovative "bets" for growing their classroom leaders, and those partners are holding themselves accountable to seeing teacher and student outcomes flowing from those "bets," we at Teach For All have an unprecedented chance to learn and to make lasting change.

Please let us know what you are learning about learning.

10

Meet Some of Your Provocateurs

In Spring of 2015, hoping to accelerate progress for students and teachers across our network, Teach For All interviewed and brought together expert-practitioners with programmatic leaders from partner organizations in the Teach For All network to explore divergent views on how we can best grow great classroom leaders. Throughout this provocation paper, you find insights from these teacher-trainers:

MICHAEL ARONSON Teach For America

VERONICA CABEZAS Enseña Chile

SUSANA CLARO Stanford University

LANEISHA COBB SANDERS Teach For America

TIM DALY The New Teacher Project
"The things that we generally make our decisions on are almost completely unrelated across these settings to whether teachers are showing improvement on the "objective" measures. . . . There's no way to overstate this: the research base on teacher improvement is just disturbingly bad and not instructive."

ADRIENNE DIXSON Assc Professor, U Of Chicago At Urbana-Champaign
"How we develop people of color and what they bring to the table is sort of missing. The way we are talking about teacher education – I wouldn't be successful."

ESTHER DRAKE Teach For America

SAM FREEDMAN TeachFirst (UK)

MIKE GOLDSTEIN Match Education & Bridge International Academies
"You try to extract permission from the teacher or future teacher to be very prescriptive. My general view is that it is easier for more people to climb the ladder of the specific and get some positive momentum with basic, foundation skills so they see real progress. That foundation of progress can then catalyze some of the large "self" work because they've experienced, in a real way, some self-driven progress."

JENNIFER GREEN The Urban Teacher Center
"Your practice is always public. That's notion one. Our practice is public in support of kids."

JENEE HENRY Teach For America

DIANA HUANG Teach For China

JULIE JACKSON Uncommon Schools
"How many people are teaching our kids and have not even walked around those neighborhoods? Have not even had the discussion about what it takes to be successful in that community? Have not even attended anything in that community?"

BEN JENSEN Learning First (Australia)
"[Teacher learning is driven by] a cycle of assessing their students, building practice to best teach those students, and then evaluating the impact of that process."

RAIMUNDO LARRAIN Impulso Docente

DOUG LEMOV Uncommon Schools & Teach Like A Champion
We are going to choose the most important things, we're going to practice them like crazy, you're going to learn the skill, and then we're going to start practicing in a way that causes you to have to think about the problem solving part of it which is when do I use it and how do I use it once I've learned the skill. Of course, you can't practice that metacognitive part of how does this get adapted to the situation and when and why would I use this until you know how to do it.

AMBIKA KAPUR Carnegie Foundation

BRENT MADDIN Relay Grad School Of Ed
"The "how" that we are betting on is that we think that people are learning best by doing"

MORVA MACDONALD University Of Washington, UACT
"Preparing people to actually teach content is the window into teaching. . . .I would say that providing deep experience for people in which they are approximating practice is essential if what you want to do is facilitate a couple things, one of which is their understanding of the complexity of the work. . ."

ANDREW MANDEL Teach for America

NOOR MASOOD Teach For Pakistan

ELLEN MOIR New Teacher Center
"A teachers' role must evolve to include being a continuous learner – someone who is curious, persistent and reflective. These are the three dispositions of highly effective teachers. When teachers evolve into continuous learners and adopt these dispositions, they are willing to ask questions about instruction and take risks to reach every student; they persevere in solving complex issues and believe all students can learn; and they are open to feedback and seek opportunities to grow professionally."

FRANCO MOSSO Enseña Peru

AMBLER OCHSTEIN Schusterman Foundation

ANNIE O'DONNELL Teach For America

TED QUINN Teach For America

TOMAS RECART Enseña Chile

PEPE JOSE REVILLA Enseña Peru

BEN RILEY Deans for Impact
"Too often, people are inclined to go with their gut when it comes to education. The more we can elevate robust and empirical education, the better."

TODD ROSE Harvard & The Center For Individual Opportunity
"[In all sciences] we went through a phase where we thought we could understand individuals by using an average, a type, a rank order. Those were bad assumptions, and the exact same ones we make in our entire education system. No we're talking about individual teacher development and growth and helping them seek individual kids, and I can't help but think that we can't get to where we want to go without changing our whole way of thinking. We won't get there.

SARA SANDS Carnegie Foundation

ROMANA SHAIKH Teach For India

TOMAS VERGERA Enseña Chile

MI ZHENHUA Teach For China

WITH GANAS AND GRATITUDE
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