Capital University

Never Too Late: Helping a Diverse Population Fulfill their Passion For Teaching

October

2025

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Agenda

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Purpose

Investigating innovative approaches to educator preparation through the Capital City Teacher Residency (CCTR) program - a promising solution for recruiting and retaining diverse teacher candidates.

The Scoop

50%

Decline in teaching interest since the 1990s

33%

Reduction in new teachers in 2014

Challenges

Persistent
recruitment
challenges across
urban, rural, and
suburban districts

Diversity

Diversity in candidates continues to be a challenge

The Paradox

Despite declining traditional interest, many individuals from diverse backgrounds maintain a **strong desire to pursue education careers** but face significant barriers:

- 1. **Financial** High tuition costs and living expenses during unpaid student teaching
- 2. **Logistical** Inflexible program schedules conflicting with work and family responsibilities
- Traditional pathways not designed for working adults and career changers

Research Questions

1.What is the portrait of a teacher candidate in today's EPP?

2. How does developing an innovative approach to education preparation remove barriers for students?

3. What are innovative best practices for the recruitment and retention of teacher candidates in today's EPP?

Mixed Methods Research Design

Survey Data

Focused Interviews **Capital City Teacher** Residency **Program Entry** Requirements: Bachelor's degree, associate's degree, or approximately 60 college credits

Program Structure 2 years, Fully online. asynchronous

Program Structure

Targeted for

need flexibility

Innovative Features

In partnership with working adults who hard-to-staff districts

Program Structure

Innovative Features

Healthcare

Integrated clinical

experience

Innovative Features

Earning income while you work benefits during the program

Snapshot of the Candidates

- Ages ranging from early 20s to mid-50s
- Career switchers from various fields (criminal justice, business, etc.)
- Working adults balancing multiple jobs and family responsibilities
- Some with 124+ credit hours but no completed degree
- Many had searched for suitable programs for decades

"I don't feel like I'm looking right being fifty something in the college classroom... This is what I wanted to do for my second career, so it is like this or nothing." 4.28 (out of 5)

Preparedness to work with diverse populations

4.11 (out of 5)

Preparedness to classroom teach

3.42 (out of 4)

Professor quality and communication

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94.8%

Overall satisfaction with the program

High Internal Consistency: Cronbach's alpha of 0.987 across all scales

indicates reliable measurement of program satisfaction.

Innovation Removes Barriers

"I knew if I attended college one more time, two years would be my maximum that I can afford financially." "You shave off all the fat with a direct path to the program, to the teaching license and to the degree."

"It was a little disorienting at first but now I got the hang of it... this is what I have to do to stay organized."

Length & Cost

- Two-year timeline fits financial aid eligibility
- Ability to work while studying
- More affordable than traditional options

& Authentic Curriculum

- Streamlined, focused coursework
- Science of reading emphasis
- Practical, job-relevant content

Flexible Delivery Method

- Fully online format
- Asynchronous learning
- Accommodates

 work/life balance

Best Practices for Recruitment & Retention

Clear Communication & Pathways

- Transparent expectations
- Open financial aid communication
- Streamlined course progression

"The staff designed their program to make sure you are successful, not to make you struggle."

Peer Collaboration & Support

- Group chat networks
- Workplace mentoring
- Community building

Strong University Supports

- Understanding of adult
- Responsive faculty communication
- Strong advisor relationships

"We have a group chat. We talk in it frequently. If we have a problem, there's usually someone able to help."

"The understanding of us being adults... you guys understand and ensure we get what we need."

Participant Experiences

Career Switching

"I was really unhappy in how my current job was going and I really wanted a purpose. I didn't really feel like I had a purpose in life... I got into criminal justice because I grew up with kids in the system, and I was like, well, maybe I could help them there. Once I got here, I was like, oh, I can help them before it gets to any of that point."

Overcoming Obstacles

"I had already attended the university for almost 10 years and now I am coming back to start college after sitting out for maybe 20 odd years... For some, the idea of completing their bachelor's seemed impossible until they found this opportunity."

Discovering a Passion

"At first, I was kind of uncomfortable because I never really thought that I liked kids... But the more years that I kept going in and doing it, it became more comfortable. It was really inspiring working with students and to see the things they were picking up on."

Implications

Tap Unconventional Populations

Target working adults, career switchers, and those who've faced traditional barriers - they maintain strong desire to teach despite obstacles.

Remove Systematic Barriers

Address financial, logistical, and institutional obstacles through innovative program design and flexible delivery methods.

Provide Strategic Supports

Implement comprehensive support systems including peer networks, responsive faculty, and clear communication pathways.

Current challenges include funding cuts, political climate pressures, and ongoing deprofessionalization of teaching - making innovative approaches more critical than ever.

Conclusions & Future Directions

Accessibility Matters

Removing financial, temporal, and logistical barriers opens teaching to passionate candidates

Diversity is a Benefit

Non-traditional candidates bring valuable perspectives and deep commitment to education

Support Systems Work

Strong institutional support and peer networks significantly improve retention

Innovation is Essential

Traditional models alone cannot address current teacher shortage crisis

In Summation

"Even though it has been tough, in the end, I know it's going to be worth it... You know, I've had that thought [about quitting]. But I am not a quitter, and I just had to get over the hurdle and give it a real shot."

Educational preparation providers and policymakers should build upon these proven models to create more inclusive, supportive pathways that increase teacher diversity and prepare educators to provide high-quality, culturally responsive instruction.

What are you doing to innovate?