TEACH-NOW MOBILITY TRENDS SURVEY

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With

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TEACH-NOW Mobility Trends Survey

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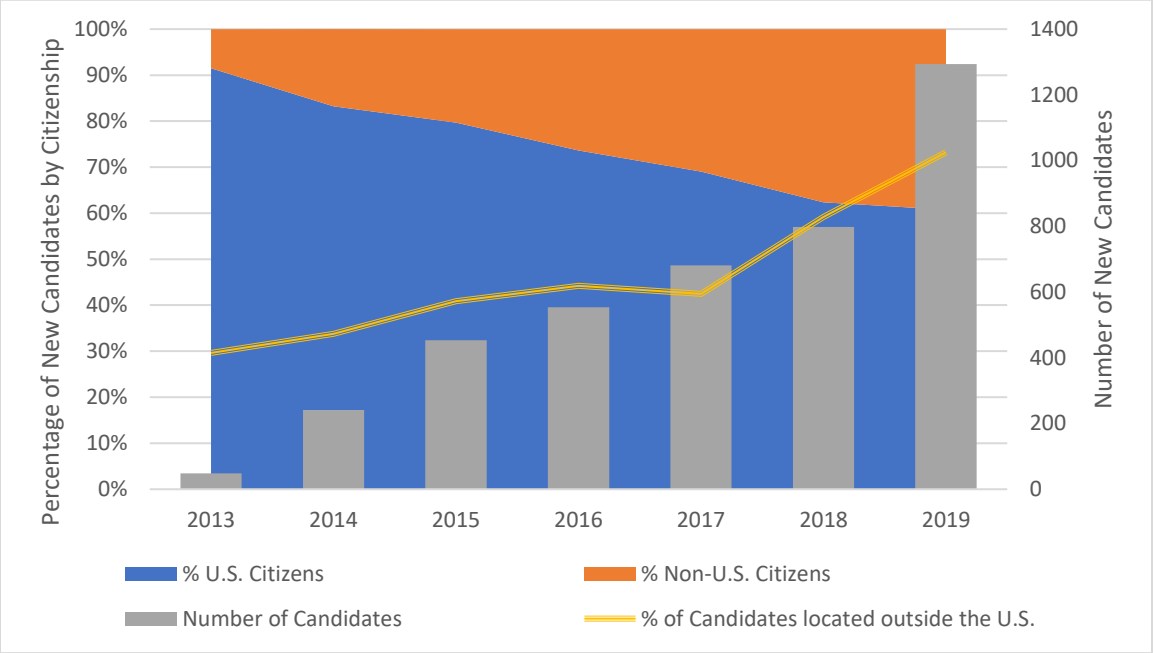
Introduction

TEACH-NOW was founded in 2011 to be a "game-changer" in teacher preparation with the goal of preparing tomorrow's teachers for tomorrow's students in tomorrow's learning world, a goal which nobody else seemed to be focused on. The program's creators, knowing research shows that actually practicing teaching and working with other teacher-colleagues is the best way for teachers to learn their craft, designed the program on these principles. The result is a custom-built, online, technology-rich, cohort-driven, collaborative learning model in which candidates learn by doing and collaborating. In addition, they benefit from a convenient, cost-effective program that is accredited and that gives completers the ability to gain a state-issued teaching credential recognized all over the world.

Since its first cohort of 10 candidates in March of 2013, TEACH-NOW has seen massive growth, with over 4,000 candidates enrolled, the creation of master's degree programs, and extensive expansion into the global market.

As of Fall 2019, these candidates were located in 130 countries around the globe and were citizens of 112 different nations.[1] The teachers and would-be teachers in TEACH-NOW's program, regardless of their citizenship or location in the world, are finding TEACH-NOW mostly through word-of-mouth[2] and are choosing it over alternatives for a variety of reasons. Dr. Cummings Carney, who completed a case study on TEACH-NOW, notes in her study's abstract that TEACH-NOW's innovative aspects allow candidates to pursue their goals "in accordance with their individual needs, circumstances, and preferences," while the fact that the program is accredited makes them confident of its legitimacy.[3]

Chart 1. Overall Growth of TEACH-NOW by Program Start Year



[1] TEACH-NOW platform data

[2] Anecdotal from orientation sessions

[3] Cummings Carney, Molly, Preparing Teachers for Tomorrow: A Case Study of TEACH-NOW Graduate School of Education. Boston University, 2019, https://dlib.bc.edu/islandora/object/bc-ir:108575. Accessed 15 Oct. 2019.

TEACH-NOW Mobility Trends Survey

To better understand the diverse group of teachers in its programs, TEACH-NOW conducted a Mobility Survey of its candidates and graduates on October 18-29, 2019. This survey sought to find out why so many bright people from all over the world who already hold at least a bachelor's degree were enrolling in TEACH-NOW in rapidly increasing numbers, during a time when enrollments in teacher preparation programs in the U.S. have been plummeting.[4]

This report analyzes the responses of 460 TEACH-NOW candidates who answered a survey sent via email to the program's candidates and graduates. Data from the survey was compared to that available on TEACH-NOW's platform and other data sources, to help test for reliability. Generally, the data sets matched up well, though it is important to note that candidates in this study were more likely to be teaching than TEACH-NOW candidates on the whole. Rather than be a weakness, this fact actually strengthens the conclusions reached here.

Candidates were asked about where they are from, as well as questions about their teaching experiences, mobility, and future career plans. The findings reveal not only highly mobile teachers all over the world, but an educated, experienced, dedicated cadre of individuals eager and available to teach wherever they are needed. These findings have significant implications for the future of teacher preparation, as well as teacher certification processes and policy.

Highlights of Findings

- TEACH-NOW candidates are highly mobile, with many living and teaching in multiple countries, while plying their craft in multiple school settings.
- Candidates are dedicated to the education profession, teaching and planning to teach in high numbers, with 97% planning to teach next year.
- Many candidates come to TEACH-NOW as experienced teachers seeking to enhance their education careers. On average, candidates in this study had nearly 5 years of teaching experience and over a quarter of them had more than 10 years of teaching experience.
- 71% of respondents have taught outside their country of citizenship.
- We also found that the issue of certification appeared to be a major factor in how U.S. TEACH-NOW candidates made decisions regarding their teaching careers, with many returning to the U.S. to teach once they had obtained a U.S. teaching license while teaching abroad.
- It appears most individuals, regardless of prior experience, citizenship, or where they are located in the world, come to TEACH-NOW to enhance their careers as teachers through our technocentric, 21st Century teacher training program, which leads to an internationally recognized state teaching license.

[4] King, Jacquelin E. and Robert Hampel. "Colleges of Education: A National Portrait, Executive Summary." *American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education*, 2018. https://secure.aacte.org/apps/rl/res_get.php?fid=4178&ref=rl. Accessed 16 Dec. 2019.

Citizenship and Where TEACH-NOW Candidates Live and Teach

Chart 2. Citizenship by Region, All Candidates

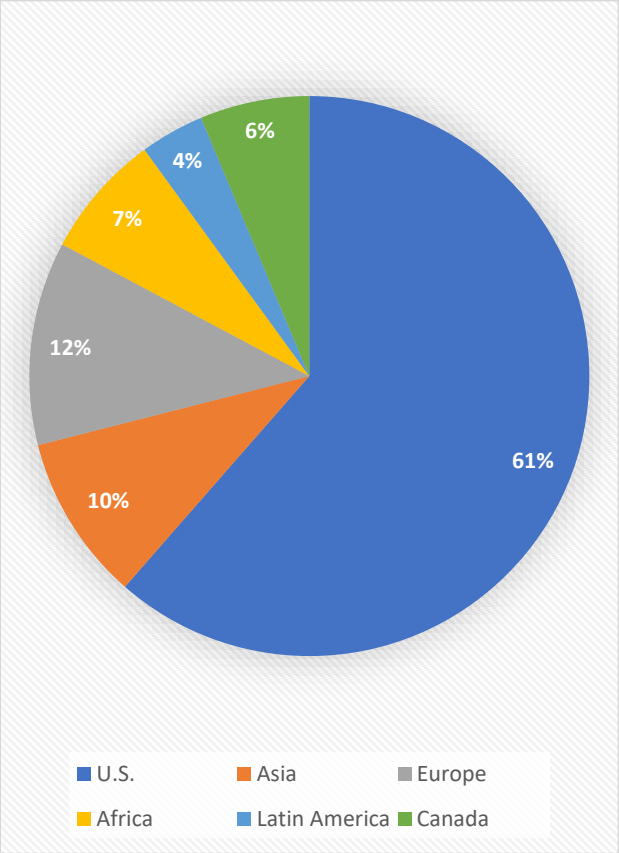
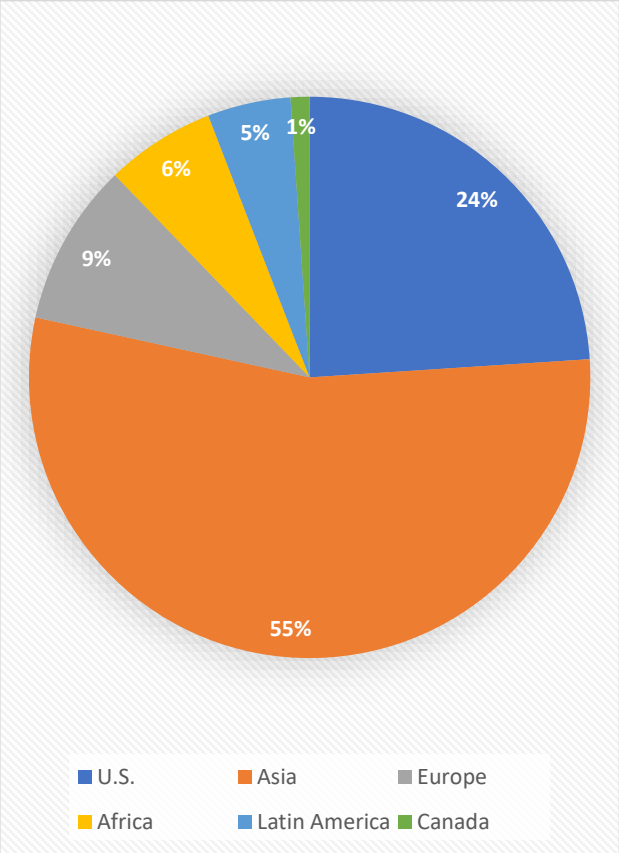


Chart 3. Start Location by Region, All Candidates

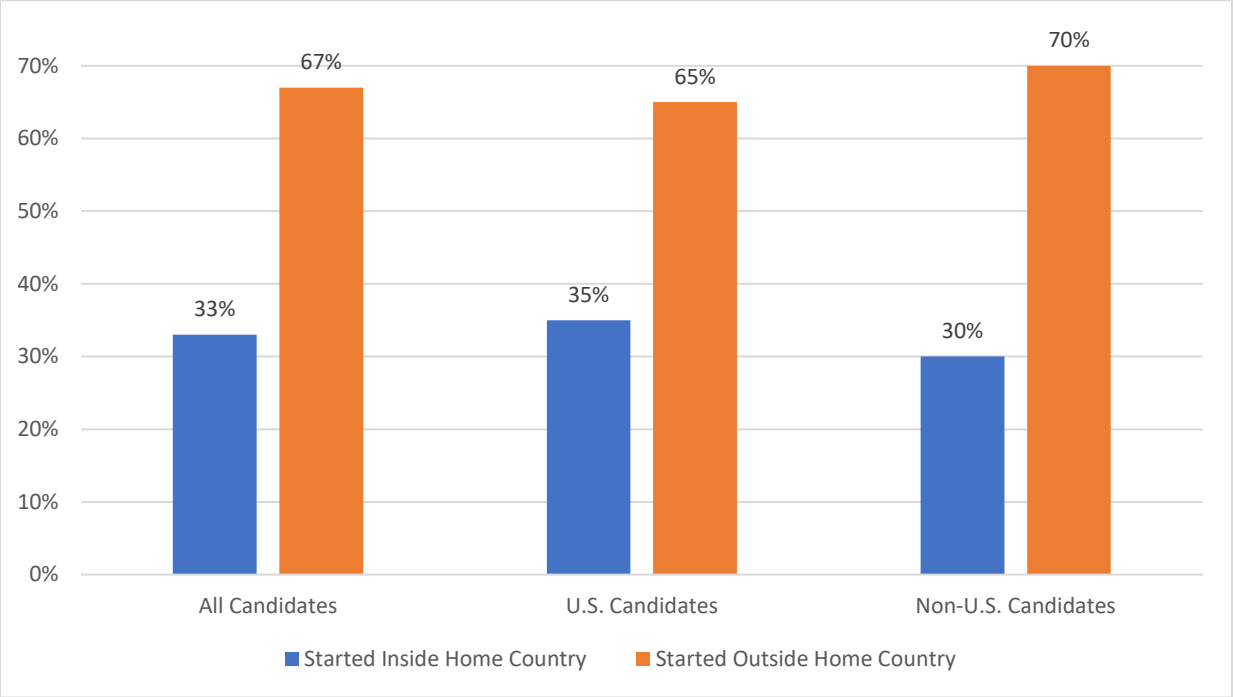


One of the most surprising findings of the survey is the large number of U.S. citizens who go abroad to teach. While 61% of TEACH-NOW enrollees are U.S. citizens, only one-third of them (35%) actually go through the program in the United States. This highlights the fact that the global market is where TEACH-NOW has seen its most significant growth, with TEACH-NOW candidates going through the program in 130 different countries and holding citizenship from 112. In this study, 39% of candidates were citizens of countries other than the U.S., and of all candidates, regardless of citizenship, 76% started the program outside the United States, the majority in Asia (55%). Indeed, regardless of what region of the world candidates were from, two-thirds (67%) began the TEACH-NOW program outside of their home country.

As shown in Chart 2, when broken down by region of citizenship, 61% of candidates in this study were citizens of the United States, 10% were citizens of countries in Asia, 12% were citizens of European countries, 7% held citizenship from nations in Africa, 4% were citizens of countries in Latin America, and 6% were Canadian.

Chart 3 shows that 24% of candidates began the TEACH-NOW program in the U.S., 55% in Asia, 9% in Europe, 6% in Africa, 5% in Latin America, and 1% in Canada.

Chart 4. Percentage of Candidates who Started the Program Inside and Outside Their Home Country

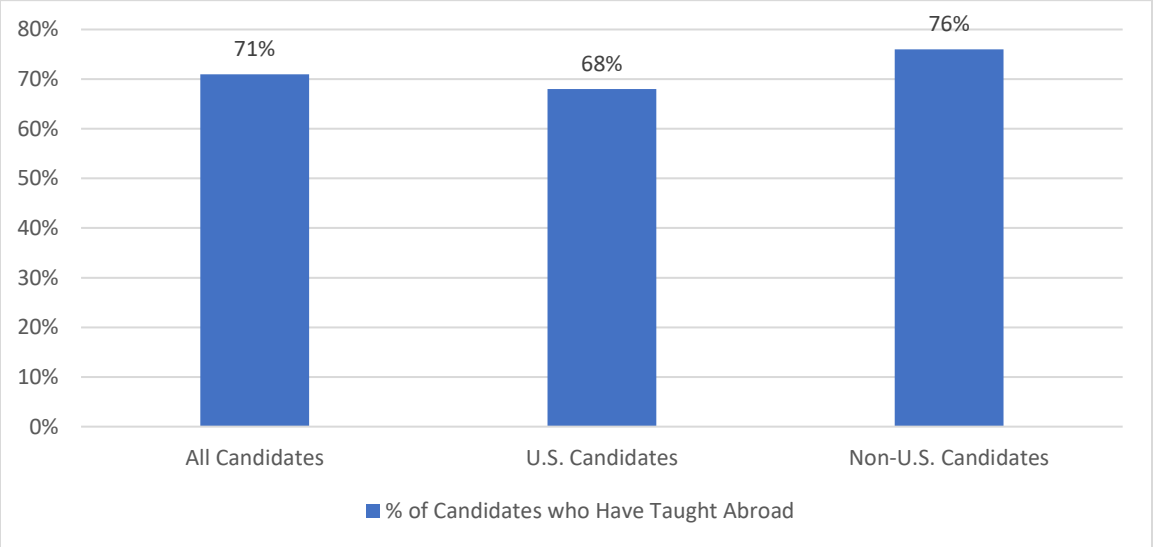


Two-thirds of all candidates started TEACH-NOW outside of their home country, with 65% of Americans beginning outside the U.S. and 70% of Non-U.S. citizens beginning outside their home countries.

Teaching Abroad

When asked if they had ever taught abroad, regardless of where they were currently located or teaching, 71% of candidates in this study indicated that they have taught outside their home country. For U.S. citizens, 68% have done so, while 76% of Non-U.S. citizens have taught abroad.

Chart 5. Percentage of Candidates who Have Taught Abroad



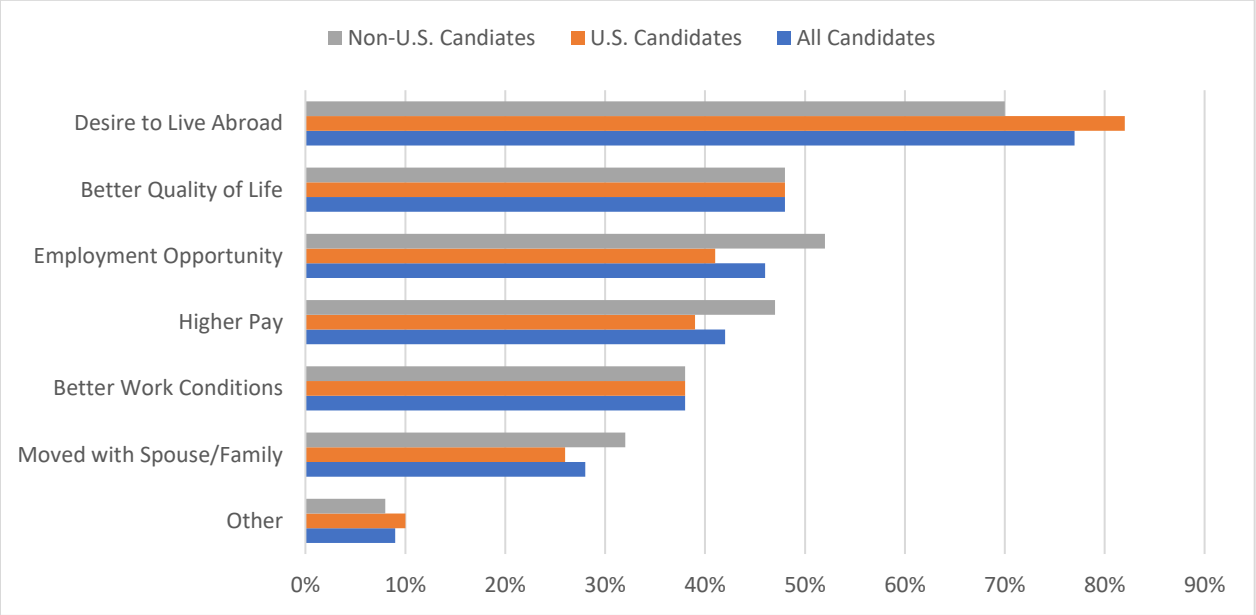
When asked why they chose to teach abroad, regardless of where they were moving from or to, about half (48%) of all candidates said, "better quality of life" with "employment opportunity" and "higher pay" close behind. However, the #1 reason *all groups* gave, with U.S. citizens leading at 82%, was "desire to live abroad." Clearly, mobility is a big factor for people attracted to TEACH-NOW, which is an online, anywhere, anytime teacher preparation program.

Table 1. Reasons for Teaching Abroad, by Region of Citizenship

	Of Candidates who are citizens of (Reg X), % who gave (Y) as Reason for Teaching Abroad							
	Region of Citizenship							
Reasons	**Asia**	**Europe**	**Africa**	**Latin America**	**Canada**	**U.S.**	**Non-U.S.**	**All Candidates**
Higher pay	33%	51%	44%	53%	55%	39%	47%	42%
Better working conditions	33%	34%	50%	33%	45%	38%	38%	38%
Better quality of life	43%	45%	50%	60%	55%	48%	48%	48%
Desire to live abroad	53%	70%	78%	67%	86%	82%	70%	77%
Moved with spouse/family	37%	34%	17%	40%	27%	26%	32%	28%
Employment opportunity	43%	45%	61%	73%	59%	41%	52%	46%
Other	10%	6%	6%	0%	18%	10%	8%	9%
Avg. # of reasons	2.53	2.85	3.06	3.27	3.45	2.84	2.95	2.89

Employment opportunity was a particularly common reason to teach abroad for candidates who were citizens of countries in Africa and Latin America, as well as for Canadians. Higher pay featured as a prominent reason for Europeans, Latin Americans, and Canadians. Africans and Canadians were more likely than others to be seeking better working conditions. Non-U.S. citizens were around 10%-points more likely to be seeking higher pay and employment opportunities compared to U.S. citizens.

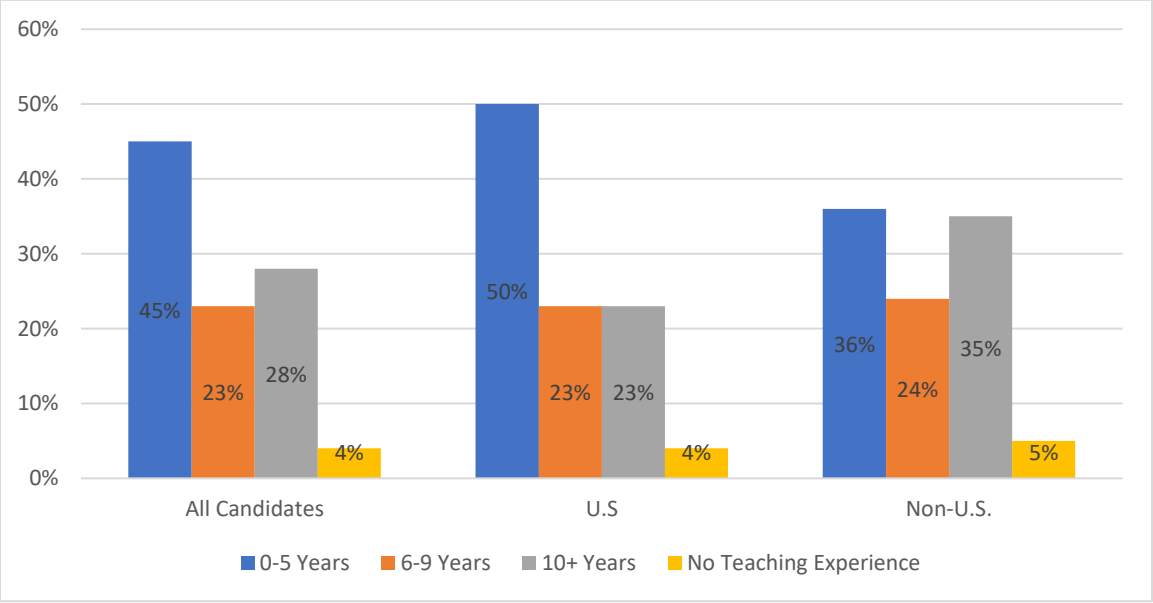
Chart 6. Reasons for teaching Abroad, U.S., Non-U.S., and All Candidates Comparison



Teaching Experience and Types of Schools Taught In

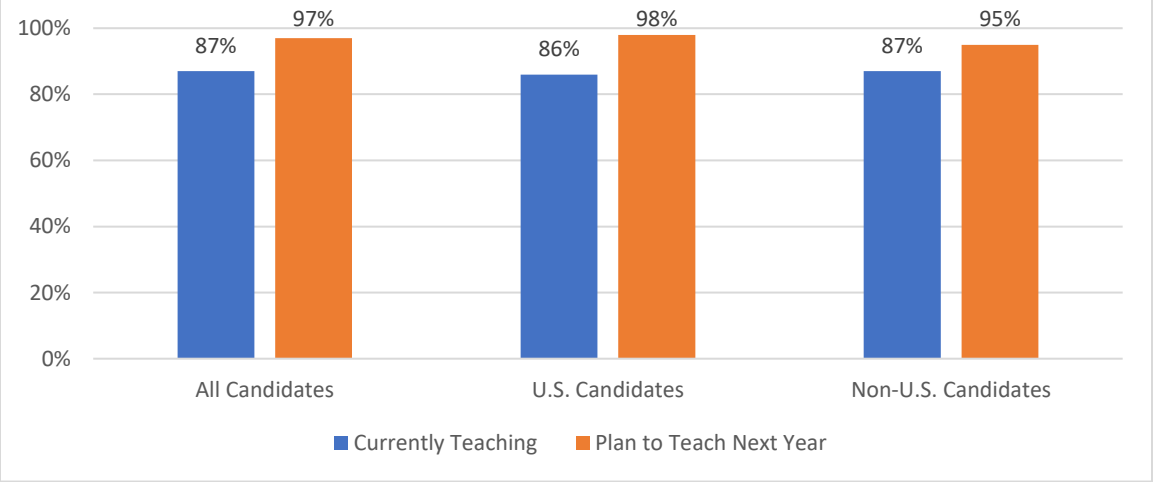
TEACH-NOW Candidates are generally quite experienced educators and mobile, having lived and taught in multiple countries and in various education settings. They are also dedicated to the profession, as evidenced by the high proportions of both those currently teaching and those who plan to teach in the future.

Chart 7. Total Years of Teaching Experience



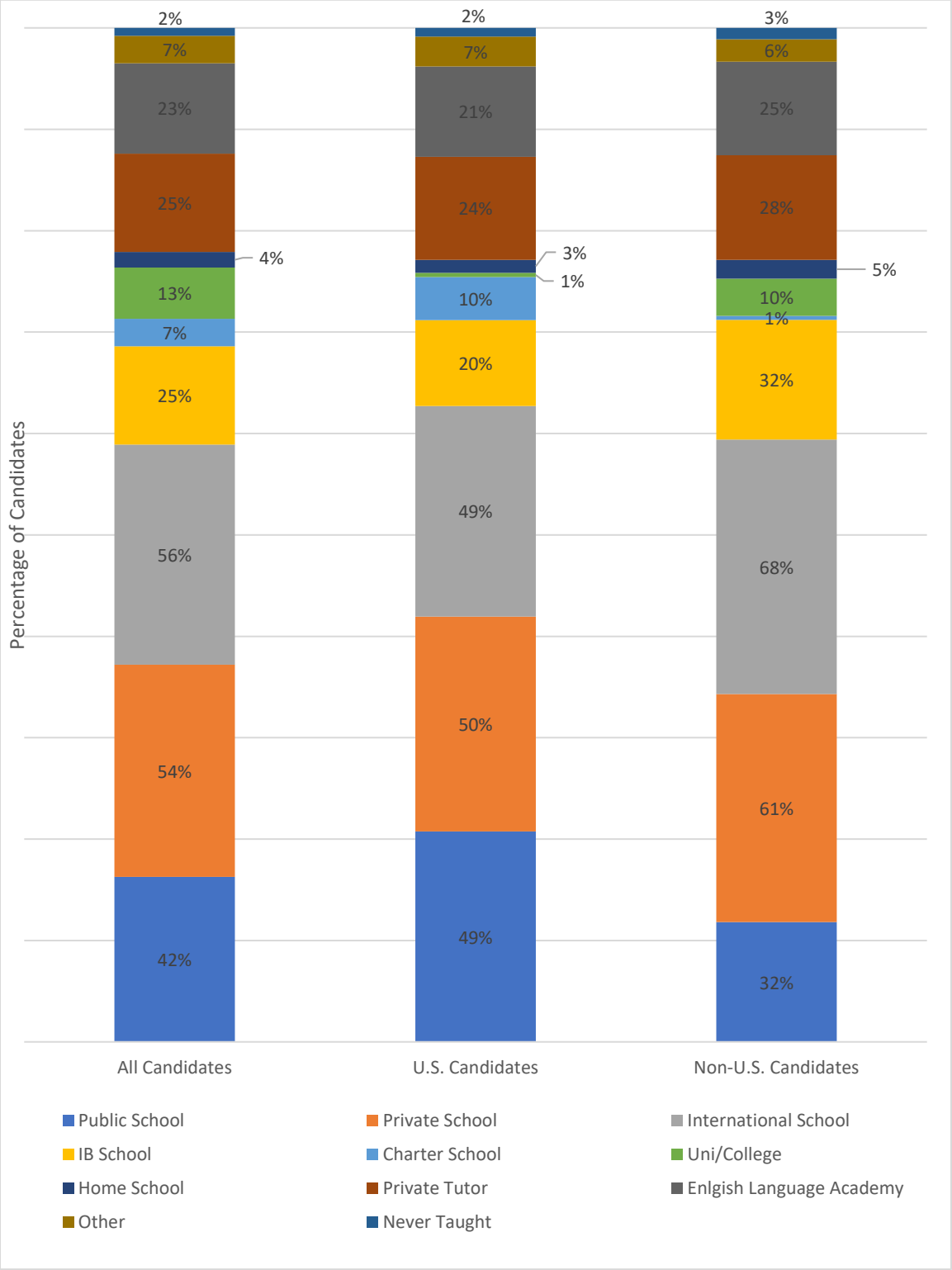
Half of TEACH-NOW candidates have six or more years of teaching experience, and over a quarter have been teaching for 10 or more years. Only 4% of all candidates have no teaching experience, with 4% of U.S. candidates having never taught and 5% of Non-U.S. candidates having no teaching experience.

Chart 8. Percentages of Candidates Currently Teaching and Those who Plan to Teach Next Year



Of candidates in this survey, 87% are currently teaching and 97% plan to teach next year.

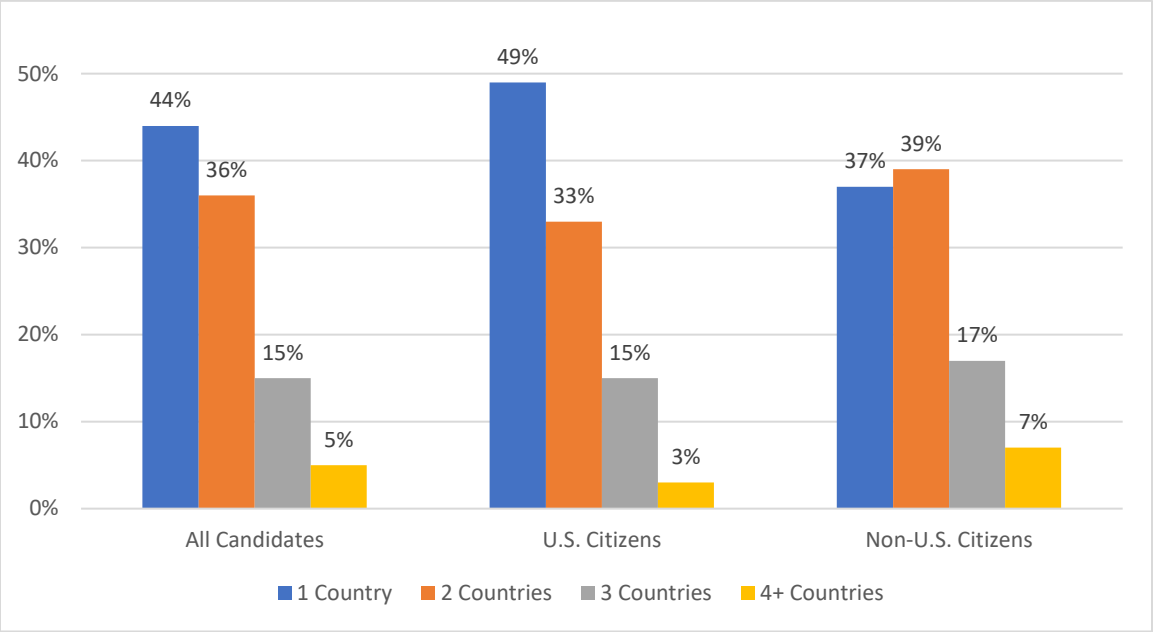
Chart 9. Percentage of Candidates who Have Taught in Each Type of School



The three most common types of schools TEACH-NOW candidates have taught in are International Schools, with 56% of candidates having done so, private schools, with 54%, and public schools at 42%.

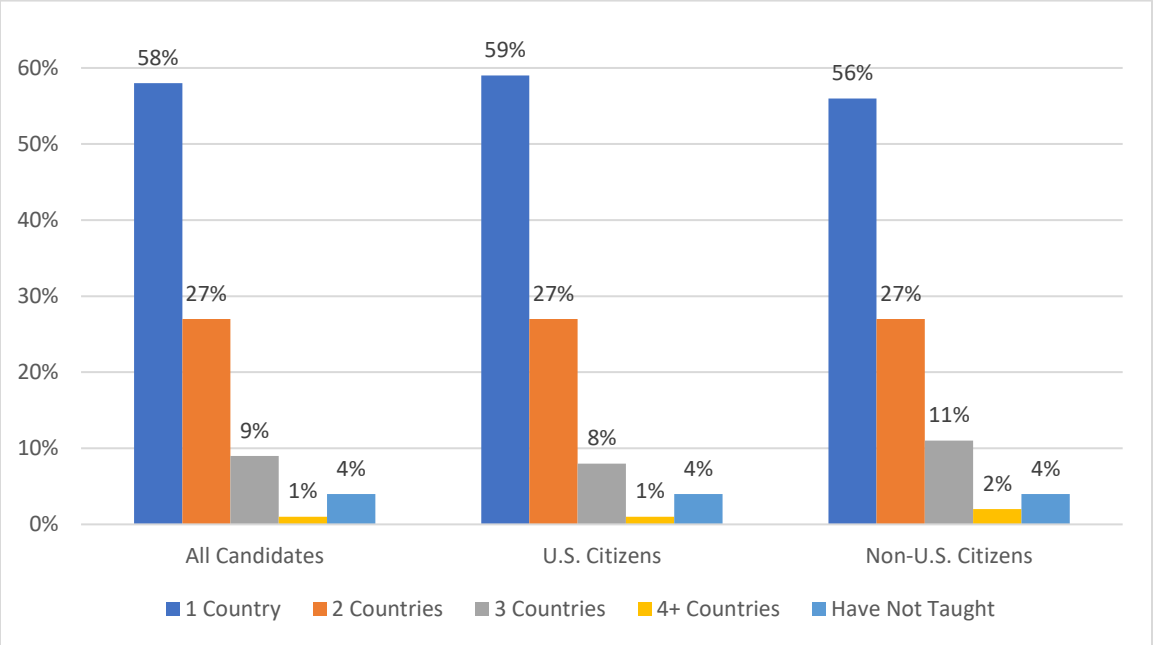
Number of Countries Lived and Taught in

Chart 10. Countries Lived in in the Past 5 Years



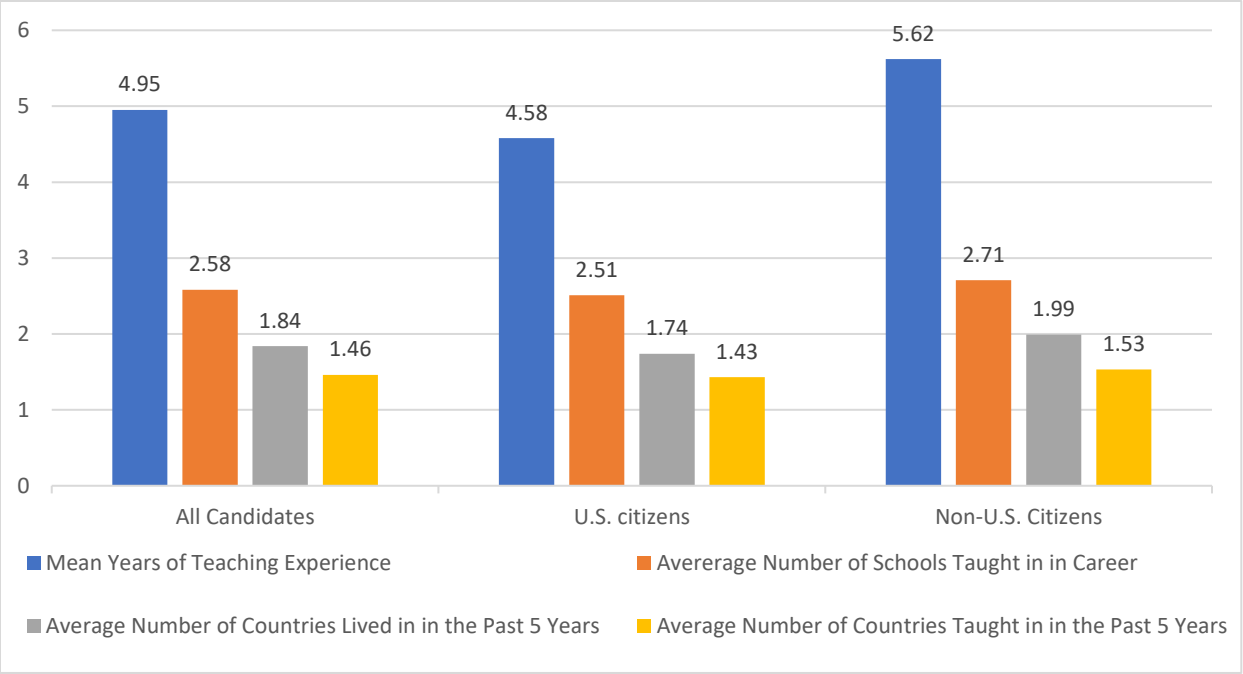
56% of TEACH-NOW candidates have lived in 2 or more countries in the past five years, with 51% of U.S. citizens having done so and 63% of Non-U.S. citizens.

Chart 11. Countries Taught in in the Past 5 Years



More than 4-out-of-10 TEACH-NOW candidates have taught in 2 or more countries in the past five years, with 41% of U.S. citizens having done so and 44% of Non-U.S. citizens.

Chart 12. Profile of a Typical TEACH-NOW Candidate



The typical TEACH-NOW candidate has 4.95 years of teaching experience, has taught in 2.58 different types of schools, has taught in 1.46 countries in the past five years, and lived in 1.84 countries in the past five years. The profiles of U.S. and Non-U.S. candidates are similar, with the typical Non-U.S. candidate having taught for a year longer than the typical U.S. candidate.

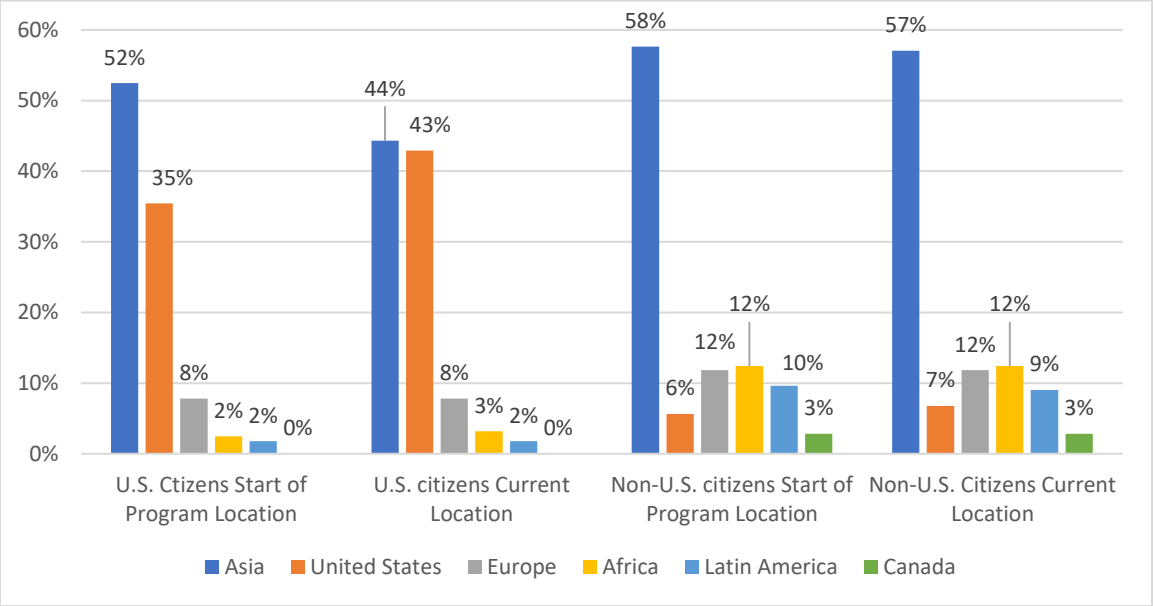
While it was assumed the survey would find candidates based all over the world, the diversity of experience many *individual* candidates had—in multiple countries and in multiple types of schools—was truly surprising. While it was also known that experienced teachers represented a fair portion of TEACH-NOW candidates, the significant percentages of candidates with six, or even 10+ years in the classroom was unexpected and exciting to find. Both cases underpin the global reality of the education market, where the future of teacher preparation is proving to be, and the demand for an education delivery system that can be adapted well to diverse circumstances.

A Unique Statistic and its Investigation

While there was variation amongst candidates in the previous data, overall there was a similar profile of experience and mobility, whether candidates were U.S. or Non-U.S. citizens. There was one set of data, however, that showed significant differences between these two groups—the movement trends of candidates. In this section we present these movement trends. The sections that follow explore the possible reasons for the differences found between the movements of U.S. and Non-U.S. citizens and the larger implications of this study.

Movement and Regional Distribution

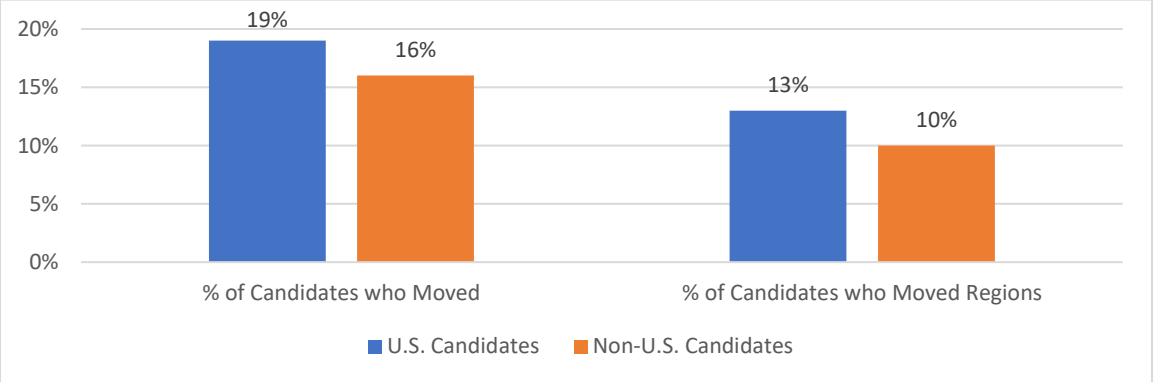
Chart 13. Comparing Start and Current Location by Region for U.S. and Non-U.S. Candidates



The start locations of U.S. and Non-U.S. citizens were very similar. As can be seen in Chart 13, for both U.S. and Non-U.S. citizens, more than half of candidates began the TEACH-NOW program in Asia (52% and 58% respectively). However, when looking at the current location of candidates, very different trends emerged for the U.S. and Non-U.S. groups. For U.S. candidates, there was a significant shift (8%) away from Asia and toward the United States. For Non-U.S. candidates, there was essentially no change in where they were located from when they started the program until now.

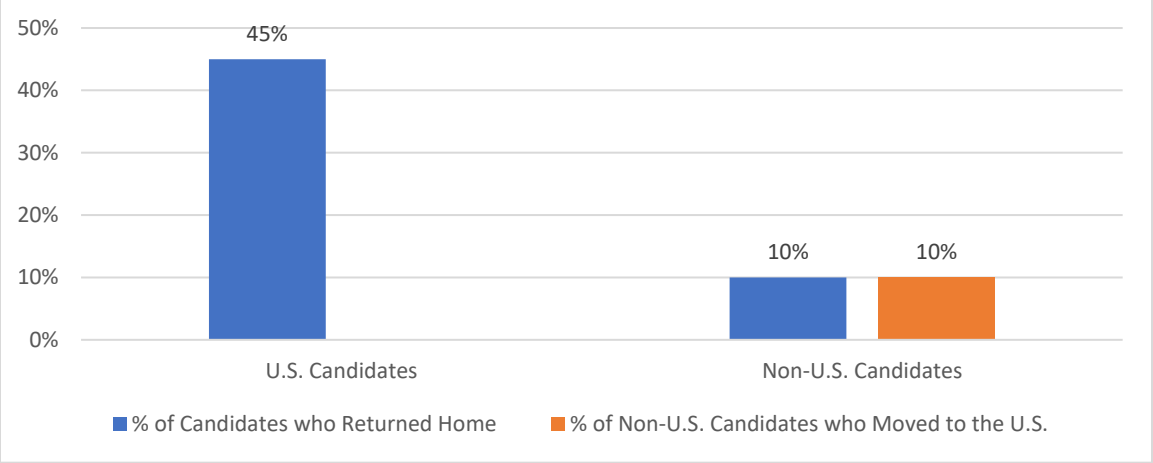
Previous data showed that both U.S. and Non-U.S. candidates had lived and taught in multiple countries. Therefore, initially, this shift in location for U.S. citizens was thought to show that they were especially mobile, moving both countries *and* regions, whereas Non-U.S. citizens might be moving countries but not to different *regions* of the world. However, when the movement of candidates was examined in detail, this was shown to not be the case. U.S. and Non-U.S. citizens moved countries at nearly the same percentages (19% and 16% respectively). Similar percentages of both groups also moved to new regions of the world (13% of U.S. candidates and 10% of Non-U.S. candidates).

Chart 14. Movement of Candidates



Once it was determined that the shift back to the United States for U.S. citizens was not a difference in the *degree* of mobility between U.S. and Non-U.S. citizens, it was hypothesized that the difference could simply be an artifact of U.S. candidates being examined as a category on their own, while Non-U.S. citizens were grouped together. Perhaps, if Non-U.S. citizens were examined in detail, they too would be seen to shift back home. Another possibility was that, since the TEACH-NOW program leads to teaching certification by a U.S. state, perhaps Non-U.S. citizens were also moving to America to teach after starting the program. However, as Chart 15 shows, neither of these possibilities proved true. Nearly half of U.S. citizens who moved, returned home to the U.S. (45%). For Non-U.S. citizens, of those who moved, only 10% returned to their home countries and only an additional 10% moved to the United States.

Chart 15. Where Candidates Moved to



Further Discussion of the Evidence

So, both U.S. and Non-U.S. citizens were moving around the word quite a lot, but this movement represented two very different scenarios for each group. A large proportion of U.S. citizens were moving home to the United States after starting the TEACH-NOW program, whereas, Non-U.S. citizens were neither retuning home nor moving to the U.S. all that much. In fact, although they moved regions nearly as much as U.S. citizens, Non-U.S. citizens switched regions with one another pretty evenly, such that there wasn't a change in their regional distribution as a group (Chart 13). To put it another way, U.S. citizens were changing their behavior after stating at TEACH-NOW, while Non-U.S. citizens were continuing an established pattern of behavior.

The question then became, what was the *reason* U.S. citizens were changing their behavior by moving back to the United States after starting the TEACH-NOW program?

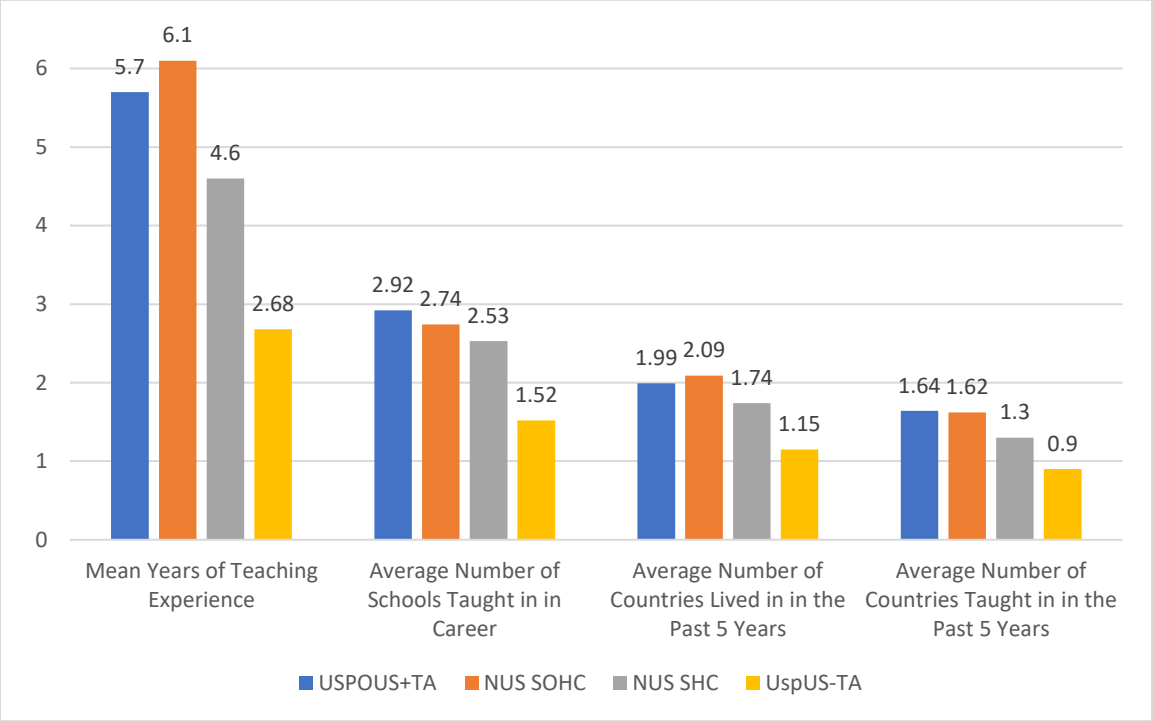
Unfortunately, not expecting to find a regional shift by U.S. citizens when the survey was designed, it did not include a question for Americans about *why* they were returning home (or for that matter, there wasn't a question asking Non-U.S. citizens why they *didn't* return home or move to the United States). However, when candidates start the TEACH-NOW program, they are asked to share their reasons for choosing TEACH-NOW during an initial orientation session with their cohort. While hard data on their responses is not collected, anecdotally, many U.S. citizens mention the desire to obtain a teaching license, often in relation to advancing their teaching careers.

Taking this anecdotal evidence, it was hypothesized that, many of the U.S. citizens in this study who moved back to the United States after starting at TEACH-NOW had been wanting to do so for a while, but without a path to licensure they had been lacking a viable way to return home to teach. Once these teachers started at TEACH-NOW, which gave them access to a U.S. teaching certificate, they were able to "correct" the difference between their behavior and intentions.

Additional survey data was analyzed in order to see how well this hypothesis stood up.

Differences in Teaching Experience Between Those Who Have and Have not Taught Abroad
Since the difference in movement behavior between U.S. and Non-U.S. citizens came from the movement of U.S. candidates who started the program abroad, U.S. candidates were broken down into the categories of those who had started the program abroad or who had formerly taught abroad, and those who had started the program at home and never taught abroad. Their teaching experience was then analyzed and compared. Non-U.S. citizens were broken down into those who had started the program inside or outside their home country, and their experience analyzed and compared.

Chart 16. Profile of a Typical TEACH-NOW Candidate by Candidate Category



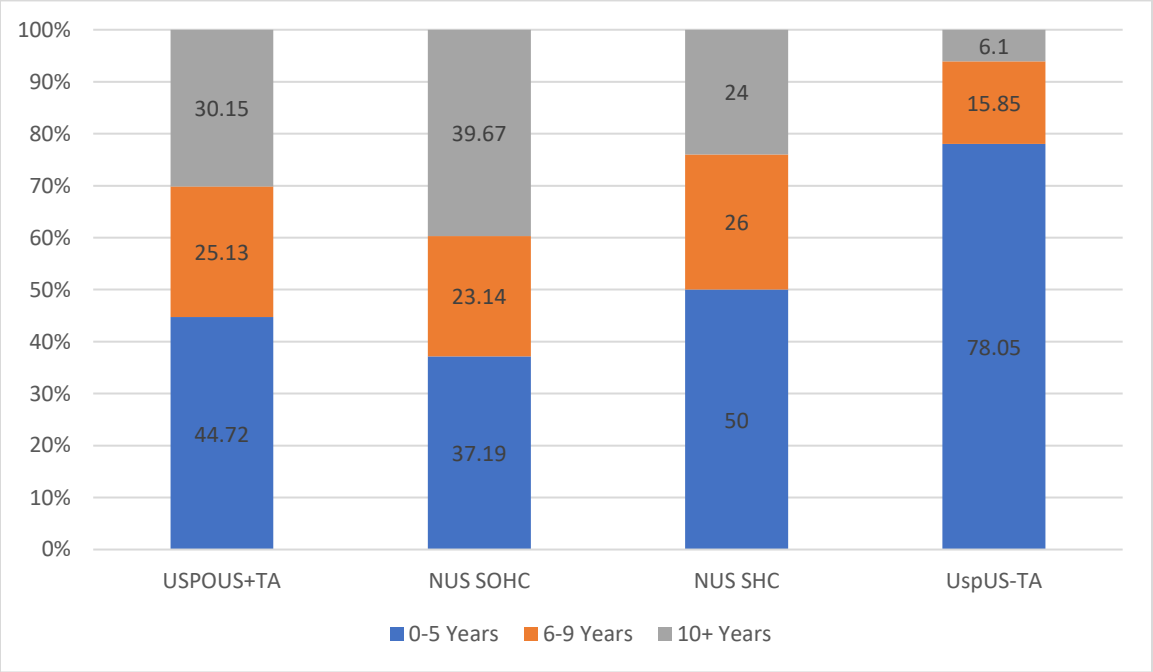
*USPOUS+TA = U.S. citizens who started the program outside the U.S. or previously taught abroad
*UspUS-TA = U.S. citizens who started the program in the U.S. and have never taught abroad
*NUS SOHC = Non-U.S. citizens who started the program outside their home country
*NUS SHC = Non-U.S. citizens who started the program inside their home country

The typical U.S. Candidate who either started the program outside the U.S. or had previously taught abroad (USPOUS+TA) had 5.7 years of teaching experience and taught in 2.92 different types of schools. This same group of candidates lived, on average, in 1.99 countries in the past five years and taught in

1.64 countries in the past five years. Over 55% of these teachers had six or more years of teaching experience and over 30% have taught for 10 or more years.

The typical U.S. Candidate who started the program in the U.S. and had never taught abroad (UspUS-TA) had 2.68 years of teaching experience and taught in 1.52 different types of schools. This same group of candidates lived, on average, in 1.15 different countries in the past five years and taught in 0.9 countries in the past five years. Nearly 4-out-of-5 (78%) of these candidates had less than six years of experience in the classroom.

Chart 17. Years of Teaching Experience

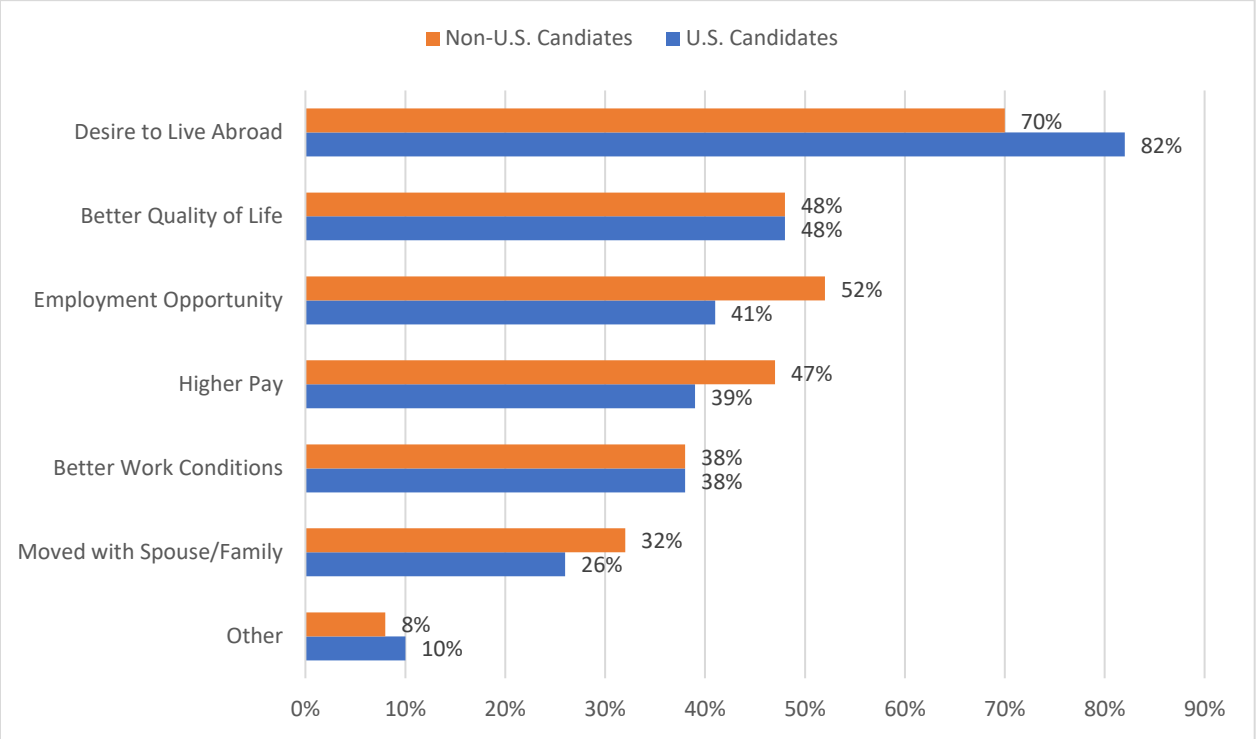


*USPOUS+TA = U.S. citizens who started the program outside the U.S. or previously taught abroad
*UspUS-TA = U.S. citizens who started the program in the U.S. and have never taught abroad
*NUS SOHC = Non-U.S. citizens who started the program outside their home country
*NUS SHC = Non-U.S. citizens who started the program inside their home country

As can be seen in charts 16 and 17, while there was some difference in experience level between the groups of Non-U.S. candidates (NUS SHC and NUS SOHC), experience was far more dichotomized amongst U.S. candidates. All Non-U.S. candidates, regardless of whether they started at home or abroad were fairly experienced. For U.S. candidates, those who started abroad were far more likely to be veteran teachers, while those who started at home were far more likely to be "new" to the profession.

Differences Between U.S. and Non-U.S. Candidates in the Desirability of Teaching Abroad
A total of 71% of candidates in this study had already taught abroad when they started at TEACH-NOW. When filling out the survey, this group of candidates was asked why they had chosen to teach abroad. Chart 18 shows the answers they gave to this question.

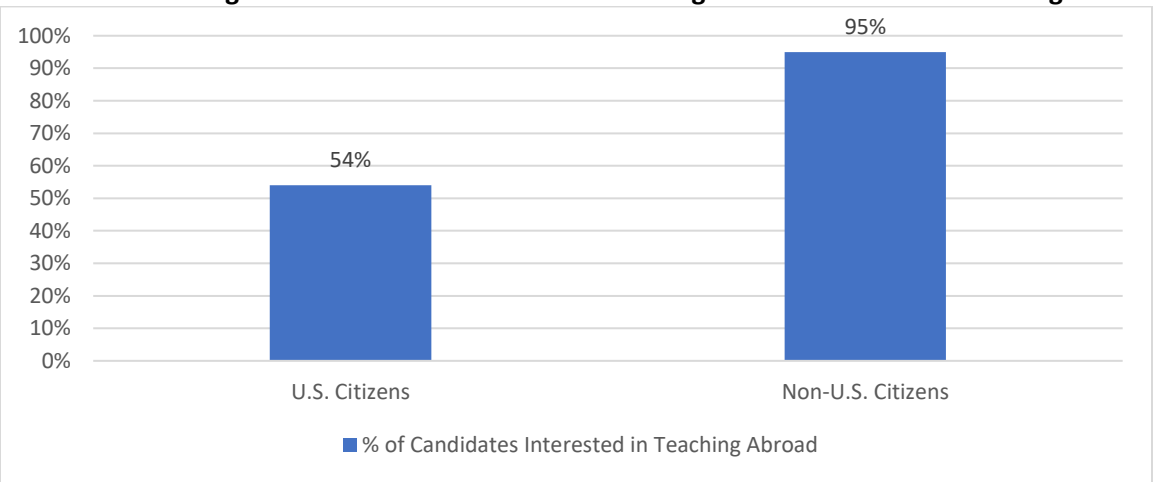
Chart 18. Reasons for teaching Abroad, U.S. and Non-U.S. Candidate Comparison



As discussed previously, the reasons both U.S. and Non-U.S. candidates gave for choosing to teach abroad were fairly similar, with job-related concerns slightly more important to Non-U.S. citizens.

A total of 29% of candidates in this study had never taught abroad when starting at TEACH-NOW. This group of candidates was asked if they had any interest in teaching abroad in the future. Chart 19 shows the breakdown of candidates who were and were not interested in teaching abroad.

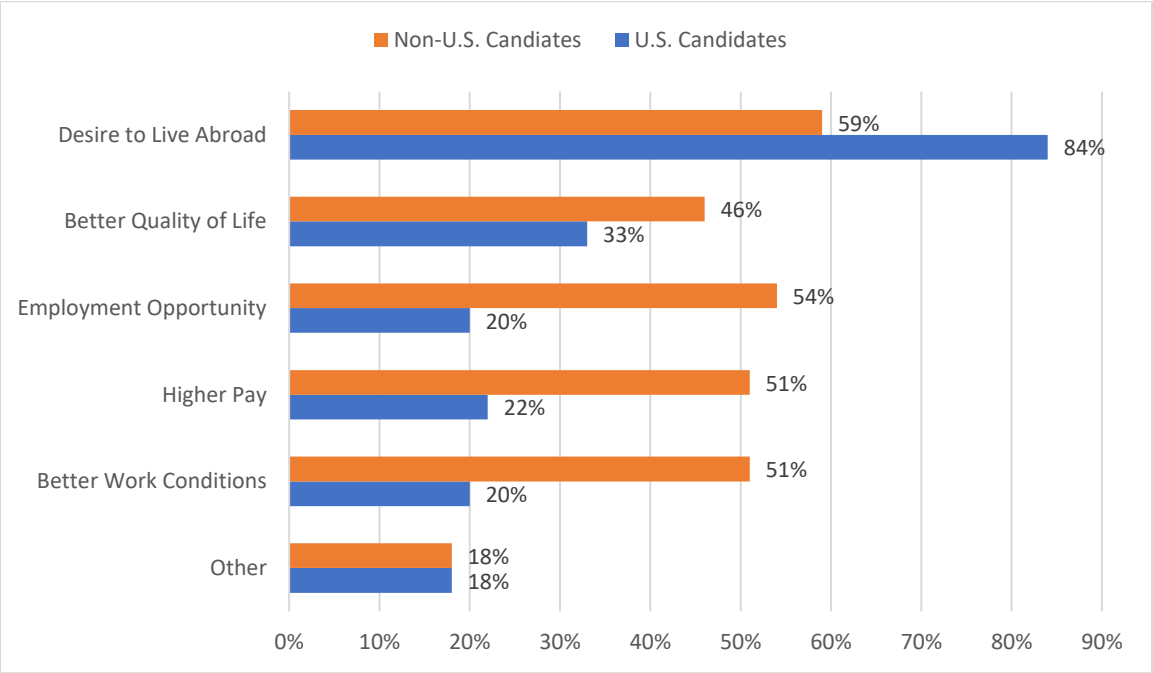
Chart 19. Percentage of Candidates Interested in Teaching Abroad who Had Never Taught Abroad



Only 54% of U.S. citizens who had not taught abroad had an interest in doing so in the future. This was very different for Non-U.S. citizens, of whom 95% were interested in teaching abroad.

For those candidates interested in teaching abroad, Chart 20 shows the reasons they gave for having that interest.

Chart 20. Reasons for Interest in Teaching Abroad, U.S. and Non-U.S. Candidate Comparison



For U.S. citizens who had not yet taught abroad but were interested in doing so, a desire to live abroad remained the biggest reason for their interest. However, for this group concerns about better quality of life, employment opportunities, higher pay, and better work conditions all dropped by 15% to 21%-points compared to those U.S. citizens who had already taught abroad (compare to Chart 18).

For Non-U.S. citizens who had not yet taught abroad but were interested in doing so, the reasons given for their interest either stayed the same or increased compared to those Non-U.S. citizens who had already taught abroad (compare to Chart 18).

So, as can be seen in Chart 18, those U.S. and Non-U.S. citizens who had already taught abroad when they came to TEACH-NOW, had similar reasons for choosing to do so. However, as seen in Charts 19 and 20, there was a significant difference in interest towards teaching abroad between U.S. and Non-U.S. candidates entering the TEACH-NOW program without ever having taught abroad. This difference centered around job-related concerns.

Inferences

Looking at this information together with the movement patterns of candidates, on the one hand you have U.S. citizens teaching abroad, who after starting the TEACH-NOW program moved back to the U.S. in high numbers, and on the other hand there are domestically-based U.S. candidates, who have never taught abroad, showing a decreased interest in teaching abroad—especially over job-related concerns. For Non-U.S. citizens, regardless of where they were or in what situation they joined the program, they didn't change their movement patterns or show a difference in their views on teaching abroad.

Adding in the data on years of teaching experience, it seems possible that the differences between U.S. citizens with and without teach-abroad experience could be attributed to when in their teaching career they found TEACH-NOW, and the effect of having access to a teaching certificate.

U.S. candidates who started the TEACH-NOW program outside the United States, or who had teach-abroad experience, were generally more experienced than other U.S. candidates and mostly found TEACH-NOW after having already begun their teaching careers. In orientation sessions, many such candidates express that when they initially entered the profession, they did not want to go through long and expensive preparation programs in order to obtain the necessary teaching certificate to teach in the United States, so they chose to teach abroad. However, many of them have been wanting to return to the U.S. to teach for a while, and by gaining access to a U.S. teaching certificate through TEACH-NOW, found a viable means to do so.

U.S. candidates who started the program in the United States and had never taught abroad were generally less experienced than other U.S. candidates, and were the group most likely to represent those entering the profession for the first time. Many of them were beginning their teaching careers by going through the TEACH-NOW program, and so from the start of their careers had viable access to a U.S. teaching certificate.

This could explain why U.S. teachers who had taught abroad were more likely to list job-related concerns as their reason for having done so. For them, without viable access to a U.S. teaching license—and the better teaching jobs that come along with it—going abroad genuinely represented better work and quality of life opportunities as they began their teaching careers. For U.S. candidates beginning their teaching career by going through the relatively new TEACH-NOW program, they already have access to a U.S. teaching license—and the better teaching jobs that are generally available with a license—so were less likely to have job related concerns that might influence them to seek work abroad.

Similarly, the differences between U.S. and Non-U.S. citizens could be attributed to U.S. candidates using the TEACH-NOW program as a way to overcome the hurdle of teacher certification, whereas the reasons Non-U.S. candidates entered the TEACH-NOW program were generally not certification related.

This could explain why the views of Non-U.S. citizens toward teaching abroad did not change depending on whether they had already taught abroad or not when they joined TEACH-NOW. What was causing them to encounter situations where they were seeking better work situations was not affected by access to a teaching certificate. What was causing U.S. citizens to encounter situations where they were seeking better work situations *was* affected by access to a teaching certificate.

Vignettes for Further Understanding

That may all be a bit confusing, so let's imagine two scenarios to help make the point clearer.

Penka, from Bulgaria, has a bachelor's degree in education and is qualified to teach secondary science. While the working conditions in the Bulgarian public-school system are quite good, the pay is not overly competitive, and career advancement is not easily obtainable, as most promotions are based on seniority and not performance.[5] Because of these conditions, Penka desires to leave Bulgaria and finds

[5] "SABER Teachers Bulgaria Country Report 2013." *SABER Systems Approach for Better Education Results*, 2013. http://wbgfiles.worldbank.org/documents/hdn/ed/saber/supporting_doc/CountryReports/TCH/SABER_Teachers_Bulgaria_CR_Final_2013.pdf. Accessed 27 Nov. 2019.

an opportunity to teach abroad in Poland at an international school that uses the American curriculum. She goes through the TEACH-NOW program to gain more confidence using English for instruction, and also bolsters her credentials to teach American curriculum by having to pass state content tests in the area she plans to be licensed in.

In Penka's case, going through the TEACH-NOW program helped her find a more desirable work situation abroad, but it did not *directly* affect the issues of pay and career advancement in the Bulgarian school system that led her to feel she did not want to work in that school system.

Jason is a recent college graduate in North Carolina, whose degree is in History. He's having trouble finding work and so is considering teaching English in Indonesia. He figures that it will be an interesting experience and that the income-to-cost-of-living ratio will allow him to live reasonably well, especially compared to a minimum wage job in Raleigh. As Jason does research on this idea, he comes across the TEACH-NOW program and immediately signs up. He figures that it will help prepare him to teach much better than a TEFL certification would and that it even opens a viable path to entering the teaching profession in the U.S., should he desire to do so. He's still interested in teaching abroad in Indonesia, but his work options at home have also improved significantly.

In Jason's case, choosing to do the TEACH-NOW program provided him an excellent path to finding a more desirable situation abroad, however, it also *directly* improved one of the main reasons he was looking to leave the U.S. in the first place—not having easy access to a decent paying job. If Jason gains his teaching certificate after going through TEACH-NOW's program, his ability to access viable work at home increases via a Raleigh classroom.

With these scenarios in mind, the fact that Non-U.S. citizens going through the TEACH-NOW program still find teaching abroad to be as attractive a prospect as their compatriots who have already done so makes sense—the program is helping them become even better educators, but it is not *directly* affecting issues that may be present in their home country's school system. For many U.S. citizens in the TEACH-NOW program, a path to licensure increases their access to teaching work at home that they either are passionate about, or at least can provide a stable living situation. Because of this, the U.S. candidates in the TEACH-NOW program who have not yet gone abroad are less concerned with work related issues than those U.S. candidates who made the decision to teach abroad in the past. For those U.S. citizens who previously moved abroad to teach, at the time they made the decision to do so they were not yet in the TEACH-NOW program, thus did not yet have a viable path to licensure, and so were more concerned about employment issues.

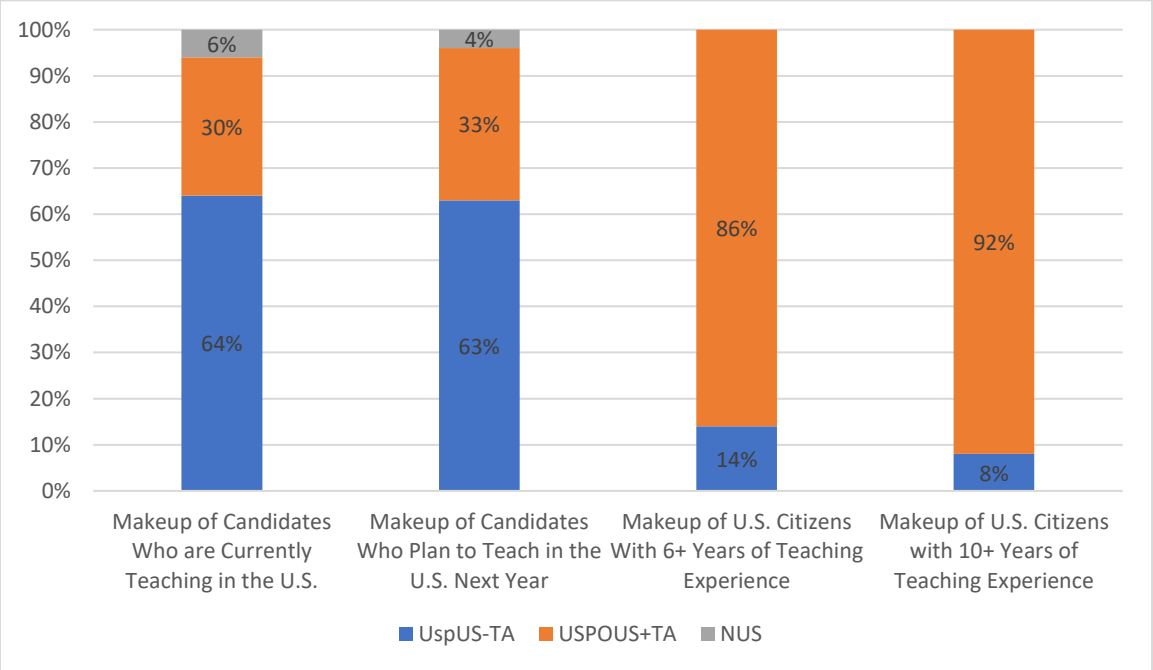
While these narrative explanations may not fit every candidate who either went abroad to teach or has interest in doing so, it serves to illustrate that there *is* a difference between U.S. and Non-U.S. candidates in how desirable they view teaching abroad, depending on whether they started the TEACH-NOW program having already gone abroad to teach or not. It can be seen that the reason this difference exists can *reasonably* be understood by the different effects access to a teaching certificate has on the career options of U.S. candidates vs. Non-U.S. candidates.

Implications

The fact that many U.S. teachers are returning to the U.S. from abroad is interesting, but that they are highly qualified is incredibly significant. According to a recent study done on teacher shortages in the

United States by the Economic Policy Institute, the issue is not just filling spots in the classroom but producing "qualified" teachers to fill those spots. "Qualified" teachers are generally considered to have six or more years of teaching experience, to hold a teaching certificate, and to have subject matter training in the area they are teaching.[6] The U.S. citizens teaching abroad in this study, including those returning home to the United States, meet these criteria exactly. Thus, especially considering how many of them are returning home, they represent a significant source of "qualified" teachers to meet shortages in U.S. classrooms. Indeed, of the candidates in this study, U.S. citizens who either began the program in the United States or had previously taught abroad (USPOUS+TA) constitute 30%% of all TEACH-NOW candidates currently teaching in the U.S. and 33% of those who plan to do so next year. They also account for 86% of all U.S. citizens who have six or more years of experience, and over 92% of those U.S. citizens who have 10 or more years of experience.

Chart 21. Makeup of TEACH-NOW Teachers Teaching in the United States



*USPOUS+TA = U.S. citizens who started the program outside the U.S. or previously taught abroad
*UspUS-TA = U.S. citizens who started the program in the U.S. and have never taught abroad
*NUS = Non-U.S. citizens

Yet, there is further implication than this alone. According to the same study just mentioned, an additional criterion of "qualified" teachers is that they attended a "traditional" teacher preparation program. These U.S. TEACH-NOW candidates with international experience are a group of individuals dedicated to teaching, with proven experience, many of whom have actually returned to teach in the United States, and yet somehow were "missed" by the U.S. education system to begin with, were

[6] García, Emma, Elaine Weiss. "The Teacher Shortage is Real, Large and Growing, and Worse than We Thought." *Economic Policy Institute*, Mar. 26, 2019, https://www.epi.org/publication/the-teacher-shortage-is-real-large-and-growing-and-worse-than-we-thought-the-first-report-in-the-perfect-storm-in-the-teacher-labor-market-series/. Accessed 11 Nov. 2019.

considered “unqualified” by that system until finding a path to certification through the TEACH-NOW program, and remain “under-qualified” in the eyes of that system because TEACH-NOW is a non-traditional program. This suggests that the issue of teacher shortages, specifically, the shortage of “qualified” teachers, may in fact be an unintended fabrication emerging from ineffective methods and perspectives on teacher preparation.

Summary and Conclusion

TEACH-NOW’s candidates are highly experienced and all of them, regardless of experience, show a dedication to the profession, as well as an intention to continue to teach in the future. These teachers are willing to go where they are needed, many of them being highly mobile.

Candidates are drawn to TEACH-NOW for many reasons. The international teacher market found TEACH-NOW organically, because it delivered the training and development that allowed this group of teachers to enhance their careers. In addition to enhancing their skills as educators, U.S. teachers found in the program a solution to the hurdle of U.S. teacher certification, whether they were new to the profession or had been teaching for many years already. Many of these experienced U.S. teachers who had been abroad have since returned to teach in the United States and constitute a major source of teachers for shortages in U.S. classrooms.

In examining the movements, demographics, and reasons for teaching abroad of the TEACH-NOW candidates in this study, there is an indication that the processes of preparation, certification, determining quality, and hiring of teachers in the U.S. are major factors in contributing to the perpetual shortage of teachers in U.S. classrooms. A more thorough analysis that examines this directly seems prudent and would be necessary to draw more definitive conclusions. It would be particularly important for this more detailed study to incorporate significant narrative reporting to understand the motivations in the decisions being made.

As Dr. Cummings Carney highlights in her case study on TEACH-NOW, the program’s growth shows that, when given the option to pursue a teacher preparation program that diverges from the traditional approach in a way that better addresses the needs and realities of what teachers are doing and facing, these teachers—of all types of categorizations and in all types of circumstances—readily choose to pursue the path that meets them where they are. This reality is increasingly globalized and interconnected. The combination of TEACH-NOW’s innovation *and* attention to credibility (via accreditation and a path to licensure) is a major part of its attraction to the global education market. Indeed, the success of TEACH-NOW’s program internationally as well as domestically is a sign of the revolutionary direction the education field is moving toward.[7]

[7] Cummings Carney, Molly, Preparing Teachers for Tomorrow: A Case Study of TEACH-NOW Graduate School of Education. Boston University, 2019, pp. 245-252. https://dlib.bc.edu/islandora/object/bc-ir:108575. Accessed 15 Oct. 2019.