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Author
Stoneburner, John

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Understanding Teacher Stress and Wellbeing at Teach For America's Summer Institute

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education

by

John Dalton Stoneburner

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Understanding Teacher Stress and Wellbeing

at Teach For America's Summer Institute

by

John Dalton Stoneburner

Doctor of Education

University of California, Los Angeles, 2018

Professor Rashmita S. Mistry, Co-Chair

Professor Linda P. Rose, Co-Chair

Teach For America is the largest supplier of novice educators in the United States as well as the largest postgraduate employment provider in the country. It is renowned for its unorthodox approach to teacher education, with the Summer Institute at the heart of its training model. The five-week, accelerated program is designed to prepare new recruits for their full-time teaching positions in the fall. Prevailing research on new teacher experiences, adult transitions, and teacher occupational stressors shows that teaching, especially in its early stages, is stressful. This empirical study explored self-perceptions of participant stress at Summer Institute, the coping responses employed by participants at Summer Institute, and the variation of experience by sociodemographic group.

The mixed-method design included pre-and post assessments to understand stress and coping responses at Summer Institute. To establish a baseline of perceived stress and

occupational stress factors, I administered the 10-item Perceived Stress Inventory (PSS10) and a modified teacher occupational stress inventory to 98 participants from Teach For America Los Angeles prior to their engagement with Summer Institute. Upon completion of Summer Institute, participants completed the PSS10, the occupational stress inventory, and the Coping Responses Inventory (CRI). I used socioeconomic background, race, and graduation year as variables for analysis. Based on participants' responses, I categorized them into subgroups by stress level and coping ability. Qualitative reflections from 16 participants with high/low stress and coping combinations provided further insight into trends from the quantitative data.

Data from the pre-and post assessments revealed that perceived stress significantly increased during Summer Institute. Before the institute, participants anticipated that the workload and their relationships with students and other teachers would be the most stressful aspects of Summer Institute. Following the institute, they reported that workload and financial security were actually the most stressful factors. Participants from low-income backgrounds reported significantly higher levels of both anticipated and experienced occupational stressors. People of color and individuals from low-income backgrounds reported significantly higher levels of stress related to working with Summer Institute staff than their White peers and peers who did not identify as coming from low-income backgrounds, respectively. Additionally, participants from low-income backgrounds reported significantly higher levels of stress about working with students and about their financial security when compared to their White peers. Qualitative data confirmed the influence of task overload on stress and revealed that interpersonal conflicts seemed to be the most challenging and lasting form of stress for participants. Clashes in ideology and worldview were reported to be at the root of the most stressful moments at Summer Institute, typically materializing along racial lines.

The findings from this dissertation can inform all teacher preparation programs but especially Teach For America about ways to improve new teacher training and development and bolster teacher wellbeing. Specifically, steps can be taken to better support new teachers in understanding how to anticipate and respond to stressors that may impede their ability to engage meaningfully in professional development. Investing time and energy in wellbeing for new teachers at the start of their careers could help ameliorate current challenges with teacher retention and job satisfaction.

The dissertation of John Dalton Stoneburner is approved.

Robert Cooper

Todd M. Franke

Karen Quartz

Rashmita S. Mistry, Committee Co-Chair

Linda P. Rose, Committee Co-Chair

University of California, Los Angeles

2018

To Amanda, Ann, Barb, Dottie, Gary, Grammie, Laura, Lee, Natalie, and Sarah

for their dedication to the field of education and our family.

To Mom and Dad

for their unconditional support and love.

To Jayson

for seeing me and loving me.

To the Partylanders

for being my chosen family.

To Leora

for planting the seed that became this dissertation.

To the staff, corps members, and alumni of Teach For America

for their belief in each other, in children, and a

vision for a more equitable world.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Vita

John is a learner at heart, always seeking to know more about the universe he inhabits and the beings who live alongside him. John initially became involved with education in Los Angeles in 2006 when he joined Teach For America as a resource specialist teacher at El Sereno Middle School in Eastern Los Angeles. During his years at El Sereno, John worked to influence mindsets and expectations for students with exceptionalities. It was through his work at El Sereno that John fell in love with Los Angeles and the individuals who work tirelessly to advance educational equity for all Angelenos.

John earned his master's in special education from Loyola Marymount University and a bachelor of science degree in psychology with a minor in Spanish languages and literature from Fordham University in New York City. At Fordham, John worked with the U.S. Department of Education and New York University to research the link between classroom climates in urban environments and social-emotional and academic outcomes, specifically altruistic behaviors. This work spurred John's interest in the social-emotional experience of students and teachers, and it continues to guide his research and practice. Recently, John has become an advocate for educator wellness. His primary interest is in creating experiences for educators that simultaneously foster an inclusive community of wellness and advance their practice as culturally responsive educators.

John has worked full time at Teach For America since 2009. In his role as the Managing Director of the Experience Design Team, John is charged with creating experiences for Teach For America corps members, alumni, and staff that fuel the movement towards educational equity in Los Angeles. Specifically, the Experience Design Team plans experiences for the full program continuum (incoming corps members, corps members, and alumni) to ensure that

teachers are qualified to teach in California, prepared for their classroom experiences and roles as instructional leaders, and engaged as long-term contributors in the movement for educational equity. Prior to his Managing Director role, John served as the director of teaching and learning and as a leadership coach for Los Angeles corps members. John is also a part-time faculty member at Loyola Marymount University's School of Education.

John is a Midwestern transplant, but believes Los Angeles is his true and long-term home. He has lived in Silver Lake since 2006, and continues to love the diverse and queer history that fuels the neighborhood's culture today. As a former college athlete, John has rekindled his affinity for physical wellness, enjoying early-morning workouts and teaching cycle classes in his free time. When John is not in Los Angeles, you can find him poolside in Palm Springs!

Chapter 1:

Introduction

> I'd always been a relatively composed person, but my first year of Teach For America broke me. I cried at school, sometimes in front of my students. I got deeply, deeply angry, which I'd channel in ways both constructive and destructive: sometimes by going on long runs or writing in my journal or praying; sometimes by drinking to excess; once, on one particularly long and desperate day, by hurling a curse word at a classroom full of students. (Barkhorn, 2013)

Teaching is tough. For some, teaching as a Teach For America corps member is tougher. The excerpt above is a common account of the Teach For America experience, a journey accompanied by stress, attempts to cope, and sometimes even departure from teaching altogether. Critics of the nonprofit often refer to it in jest as "Teach For a While," but the reality is that teacher retention and teacher quality as a result of stress in the Teach For America program are serious challenges that must be addressed by the organization ("Is it Teach For America or Teach For A While?," 2017). No organizational structure is riper for analysis of participant stress than Teach For America's Summer Institute.

The Problem

Summer Institute is an intensive five-week training program designed to rapidly build instructional skills for new teachers in the Teach For America program ("Training & Development," 2015). The amount of knowledge and skills presented to teachers in five weeks over the summer is quite large, and anecdotal participant reflections indicate that the experience is challenging and stressful ("Tips For Getting Through Institute," 2007). Brain research shows that acquisition and retention of new knowledge and skills is difficult, if not impossible, under stressful conditions (McEwen, Gray, & Nasca, 2015; Shonkoff et al., 2012; Siegel, 2015). Without a clear understanding of how stress influences the Summer Institute experience, the

program is at risk of inadequately preparing teachers for their roles as instructional leaders and lifelong educational advocates.

An Overview of Teach For America

Teach For America was conceived as part of Wendy Kopp's 1989 undergraduate thesis at Princeton University, and was aimed at ending educational injustice for students and communities (Kopp, 2003). At the time, Kopp envisioned Teach For America as a pathway to supplement the teaching pipeline with recent college graduates who embodied leadership and embraced an orientation towards justice. Over time, Teach For America shifted from its initial role as a supplementary teaching pipeline to an organization committed to ending educational inequity through a cadre of teachers (called corps members) and a vast alumni community (Kopp, 2012). Teach For America, now in its 25th year of operation, serves as the leading provider of new teachers in the country, and its alumni have risen to prominent leadership and policy positions at local, state, and federal levels (Mead, Chuong, & Goodson, 2015). Regardless of where Teach For America corps members ultimately land with their careers—whether inside or outside of education—they share the common experience of working in schools that serve marginalized communities (both urban and rural) at the start of their Teach For America journeys.

Teach For America is clear about its two-pronged mission. First, the organization seeks to "recruit remarkable and diverse individuals to become teachers in low-income communities" and have a dramatic impact in the classroom as instructional leaders ("Our Mission | Teach For America," 2015). Second, the organization believes that "at the end of two years, they use those lessons to choose their path forward. Many stay in the classroom. Others move into politics,

school leadership, nonprofit work, advocacy, and more" ("Our Mission | Teach For America," 2015).

Teach For America corps members are often falsely characterized as a homogenous group of elite college graduates who teach for two years and then leave to pursue goals outside of schools. In actuality, Teach For America is more diverse than any other large teacher provider in the country ("Student Diversity, TFA, and the Teaching Workforce," 2016). This diversity is represented in the Los Angeles region, where 51% of Teach For America teachers join the program directly after their undergraduate experience, 3% join after graduate school, and 46% join as mid-career professionals (Teach For America, 2016). Seventy-eight percent identify as people of color, 60% were the first in their families to attend college, 60% identify as coming from low-income backgrounds, 8% are working in the United States under the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, and 70% identify as women (Teach For America, 2016). The advances in diversity have not been matched with teacher retention, however. While retention of Teach For America teachers remains higher than retention of other new teachers in the field, it drops precipitously after three to five years (M. L. Donaldson, 2012; Ingersoll & Perda, 2010). Critics and researchers believe that challenges with retention may be fueled by the organization's accelerated approach to teacher development at Summer Institute (Heilig & Jez, 2014; Heineke, Mazza, & Tichnor-Wagner, 2014a; Thomas & Lefebvre, 2017).

Teach For America's Summer Institute

Teach For America's Summer Institute is an infamous structure within the education community. An initial part of Wendy Kopp's conceptualization for Teach For America, it is designed to serve as an alternative to traditional teacher preparation programs (Kopp, 2014; see Appendix A). For five weeks, teachers from five to 10 different Teach For America regions

convene at one site to engage in a "boot camp" version of teacher training and student teaching (see Appendix B). The first week is devoted to knowledge and skill building with general lesson planning instruction and classroom management strategies. In Weeks 2 through 5, participants teach students enrolled in summer school in the mornings and attend additional courses in the evening. In total, there are five core components at the summer training: summer school teaching, observations and feedback from experienced teachers, lesson rehearsal and reflections, lesson planning clinics, and curriculum sessions (Teach For America, 2017). The curriculum sessions include Teach For America's central philosophy for teaching (Teaching As Leadership), instructional planning and delivery, classroom management and culture, cultural responsive pedagogy, and literacy development.

Summer Institute has been the primary method for preparing teachers in the Teacher For America program for the past 25 years, and there are some indicators that the program works to create strong, desirable instructional leaders in the classroom (Teach For America, 2017). Teach For America is one of the most researched teacher preparation programs in the country, and there are several peer-reviewed studies that show its teachers promote student achievement in measures equal to or greater than other teachers in the same schools (Clark et al., 2013; Mathematica, 2015). Additionally, 81% of school leaders with Teach For America teachers at their school sites said they are satisfied with the program's teachers, and 86% said they would hire Teach For America teachers again if given the opportunity (RAND, 2015).

As the largest teacher preparation program in the country, the strength of Teach For America's training program is paramount to the success of thousands of teachers in classrooms and, ultimately, to the learning of nearly half a million students annually ("Teach For America Welcomes 25th-Anniversary Corps" 2015). While no peer-reviewed studies to date have

specifically examined Teach For America's Summer Institute success, credible education scholars have criticized the training model (Brewer, 2015; Matsui, 2015). Additionally, the same research that highlights the achievements of Teach For America's teachers has also uncovered serious concerns about the support and ongoing development that teachers in the program receive (Mathematica, 2015). The inconsistent data regarding Teach For America's Summer Institute encourage a closer inspection of the program and of the organization itself.

The Amplification of Stress at Teach For America's Summer Institute

Teach For America's Summer Institute is highly susceptible to increased levels of participant stress as a result of its design. Research shows that moments of transition are potentially stressful for adults and children alike (Baltes & Baltes, 1990; Chiriboga, 1989, 1997; Elder, George, & Shanahan, 1996). It is therefore likely that participants experience increased levels of stress while they attend Summer Institute, which is the primary transition experience for Teach For America teachers. Studies have also identified that accelerated programs can increase levels of stress, especially for high-achieving individuals (Suldo & Shaunessy-Dedrick, 2016). Lastly, it is well documented that the first months and years of teaching are likely to be stressful (Petko, Egger, & Cantieni, 2017). The confluence of transition, an accelerated program, and the new teacher experience creates the "perfect storm" of conditions for stress at Summer Institute.

Stress is a complicated experience for humans, and there are multiple frameworks and theories available in the literature to explain the related physiological and psychological processes. There is, however, general consensus within the scientific community with regard to the biological influences of stress, especially on the brain (Bressert, 2016). The presence of stressors, both acute and chronic, increases levels of stress hormones, like cortisol, within the body. While normal levels of stress hormones are healthy for humans, in excess they can cause

serious challenges (Shonkoff et al., 2012). Surplus levels of cortisol have consistently been linked to mood swings, poor sleep and exhaustion, shortened attention spans, and memory issues (Segerstrom & Miller, 2004). If stress levels are unhealthily high for participants in Teach For America's Summer Institute, it is important to understand what exacerbates the stress and how participants manage stress.

Research Questions and Methods

In order to understand stress and coping responses at Teach For America's Summer Institute, this study addressed the following research questions:

1. Does participants' stress increase during Summer Institute?
2. What sources of stress do Teach For America participants self-report before Summer Institute?
    a. Do self-reports of anticipated stress vary by participant demographics?
3. What sources of stress do Teach For America participants self-report after completing Summer Institute?
    a. Do self-reports of experienced stress vary by participant demographics?
4. What coping approaches do Teach For America participants utilize during Summer Institute?
    a. Do self-reports of coping approaches vary by participant demographics?
5. What differentiates successful copers from those who struggle to cope at Summer Institute?
    a. How do "high copers" describe their Summer Institute challenges and how they employ coping strategies? How do they acquire stress management skills?

b. How do "low copers" describe their Summer Institute challenges and how they employ coping strategies? How do they acquire stress management skills?

This mixed-methods study (Creswell, 2014) sampled participants of Teach For America's Summer Institute to understand stress and related coping responses. The target population for this research was participants in the first year of the Teach For America Los Angeles program, and the focus site was their assigned institute location in Phoenix, Arizona. Los Angeles is one of 53 regions in the nationwide Teach For America network; the organization has been partnering with schools in Los Angeles since its inception in 1990. The selection of this site was largely out of convenience given my role on staff at Teach For America. As managing director of experience design, my work involves creating, implementing, and studying the programmatic elements and supports for 200 teachers participating in the two-year Teach For America program.

Prior to the start of Summer Institute, all participants in the Teach For America Los Angeles program completed inventories for perceived stress and workplace stress. These provided a baseline measure of stress before the start of Summer Institute and insight into their anticipated occupational stress factors. Participants then engaged in the Summer Institute program as designed for five weeks. At the conclusion, they again completed the inventories for perceived stress and occupational stress, as well as a coping responses inventory. I used scores from the perceived stress inventories to categorize participants as high, moderate, or low stress; I used scores from the coping responses inventory to identify participants as high, medium, or low copers. Stress and coping identifier combinations yielded four participant subgroups: High Stress/Low Cope; High Stress/High Cope; Low Stress/Low Cope; and Low Stress/High Cope. Participants with moderate identifiers for stress or coping were not included in the subgroups.

I used statistical tests to determine the significance of change in perceived stress and to identify variance in Summer Institute experience based on sociodemographic data. Participants in subgroups were invited to attend focus groups and interviews where they discussed stress during their Summer Institute experience and expanded on how they responded to this stress. I analyzed transcripts deductively for the constructs used in appraisal theory and the occupational stress literature. This design fills a major gap in the literature regarding stress and coping for participants in Teach For America's Summer Institute. No formal studies have been conducted with Teach For America to systematically understand the causes of stress within the organization's teacher induction program, and no research is available on how Teach For America teachers cope with those stressors.

Significance of the Research and Public Engagement

While the challenges of teacher burnout and stress are increasing, more energy has been spent on replacing teachers who leave than on understanding how to reduce the perceived and actual costs of teaching (Boe, Bobbitt, & Cook, 1997; Brown & Wynn, 2007; Donaldson, 2012). Since Teach For America does not directly operate schools, it is limited in the moderating factors it can affect to help reduce those costs. Where Teach For America does have leverage is with teacher onboarding and teacher training. Organizationally, there are limited efforts to understand or combat stress and burnout. As such, there is a great opportunity to focus on teacher coping capacity and resilience. Resilience with teachers has been defined as "the process of, capacity for, or outcome of successful adaptation despite challenging or threatening circumstances" (Masten, Best & Garmezy, 1990, p. 425).

As Teach For America Los Angeles seeks to relaunch its local Summer Institute in 2018, it is imperative that the organization understand causes and effects of stress for its teachers.

Additionally, it will be beneficial to understand what coping strategies successfully mitigate the harmful effects of stress experienced during Summer Institute. Ultimately, this research will be able to inform interventions that build the coping skills of new teachers during Summer Institute, bolster their resilience, reduce levels of attrition, and move Teach For America to a more proactive space concerning stress management.

Findings from the study have the potential to dramatically influence how Teach For America and other preservice programs support new teachers with stress. Just as preventative medical and mental health services have repeatedly shown cost-saving benefits for employers and medical providers, it is hoped that early investment in stress management for teachers can result in increased teacher development and decreased teacher attrition rates in the nation's hardest-to-staff schools. The results of this study will specifically be shared with Teach For America Los Angeles and other regional partners in a formal presentation and catalogued by the institution for future reference.

Chapter 2:

Literature Review

This research study focused on participant stress and coping responses at Teach For America's Summer Institute. This literature review provides an overview of Summer Institute, with a focus on the design elements and participant experiences. Using existing literature on workplace stress, I present an adapted conceptual model to explain stress processes and pathways for coping. This model informed the research design and analysis of results.

I begin with a brief overview of the Teach For America Summer Institute program, describing the intended outcomes for the summer and shed light on participant experience. I then provide details on participants in the Teach For America program, contextualized through the scholarship on broader teacher retention issues and the role of stress specifically. Third, I take a deeper look at stress in the workplace with a focus on the teaching profession. I highlight the previous research on occupational stressors and describe the effects of stress on teachers. Lastly, I detail three key theories for understanding stress and introduce the seminal researchers of stress and coping frameworks. The survey of scholarship on stress leads to an overview of a conceptual model for stress and coping used in my study. As part of the conceptual model, I explain the role of stress appraisal and coping approaches within the context of teaching and Teach For America's Summer Institute.

Teach For America's Summer Institute

Summer Institute has been a foundational experience of Teach For America since the program's inception in 1990. As one of the first alternative pathways to licensure, Summer Institute was designed to leverage the leadership skills of new recruits, called corps members, so they could begin teaching almost immediately (Kopp, 2014). The accelerated nature of the

program means that corps members are busy throughout the day, teaching in the morning, attending professional development sessions in the afternoon, and preparing for the next day's lessons in the evening (Wilgoren, 2000). In a review of the first Summer Institute in 1990, consultants noted that corps members "are never idle" and that "stress is almost a planned design element" (Wilgoren, 2000).

However, much has changed with Teach For America's Summer Institute over the past 25 years. In an effort to document this change, Jack Schneider (2014) created a historic map of Summer Institute using 396 primary source documents and participant interviews. He concluded that Summer Institute had evolved from a loosely-connected patchwork of instructional materials in its early years to a structure that largely resembled university credential courses in an effort to increase program quality and respond to the growing number of critical reviews of the organization's approach (Schneider, 2014). As requirements for licensure increased, the overall structure for the institute remained largely unchanged. This resulted in adding more structures to an already bloated experience. As one 2012 participant noted, "Institute was tough. I rarely got more than 5 hours of sleep a night because the workload—lesson planning, writing and revising visions and behavior management plans, grading and tracking grades, meeting with my co-teachers and my advisor, etc.—was so intense" (Leece, 2012).

The daily schedule is packed (see Appendix B). And while the claim of working more than 15 hours seems egregious, several claims from participants and external studies show that corps members are in fact busy ("Coming Home from Teach For America's Summer Institute," 2010; Leece, 2012). In a personal blog post, a corps member from the 2010 cohort recounted a typical day at Summer Institute:

6:20 AM: Wake up. I'm one of the latest wakers on campus; I skip breakfast, and just grab coffee at the school site. Many of my friends got up at 5:30 or earlier to get a shower, breakfast, and even a run in.

6:55 AM: On the big yellow buses to our school sites. Our backpacks and lunchboxes make the whole thing feel very grade-school.

8:00 AM: First bell. Our day kicks off with a 30-minute "Academic Intervention Time (AIT)," where we get to borrow two other teachers from different periods, split our class into four small groups and work on trouble spots with students. With a rowdy class of 37 crammed into a fairly small classroom, we have to teach one group in the hallway.

8:30 AM: My class starts. I taught fourteen 45-minute Geometry lessons over the course of institute, covering area, volume, the Pythagorean Theorem, and beginning Trigonometry.

9:15 AM: My co-teacher takes over for his class. We each teach one lesson a day, so the students get a 90-minute block of instruction (two hours if you're counting Academic Intervention Time).

10:00 AM: "Nutrition," which is apparently what they're calling recess these days. We spend 15 minutes milling about the schoolyard, striking up conversations with students with varying degrees of awkwardness. Some kids love talking to us; others are weirded out.

10:20 AM: Now we're the borrowed teachers, helping out with another co-teaching team's AIT. If teaching is like parenting, working during AIT is kind of like being a grandparent or uncle—you get to spoil the kids with presents of knowledge, but don't have to deal with discipline or lesson plans.

10:55 AM–4:30 PM: Our school schedule changes every day, but we have combinations of work time and classes, either as a whole school or with our Teacher Education Advisor (TEAs). TEAs are second-year corps members or alumni who run about eight corps members each. I hear that it's a competitive process to get the job, so TEAs tend to be some of the top performers in what's already a pretty intense organization. Behind my TEA Andrea's tiny Asian figure and quiet public demeanor is a straight-talking ass-kicker with a wonderful, dry sense of humor, a fierce intensity about her kids and our work, and a nurturing side that comes out just when you think she's going to rip you apart.

5:00 PM: We're back on the campus. Sometimes I try to crank out some work before dinner; there's also a group that likes to do Insanity workouts out on the lawn. Dinner is the exact same every night: a standard college cafeteria grill and a station that rotates through stir-fry, pasta, and Mexican. My Paleo diet went on a bit of a hiatus.

> 6:30–late: Work time. We have 1–3 lesson plans due a night, in varying draft stages. There are also parents to call, reflections to write, and other random work. I never made it to bed before midnight, and probably averaged 5–6 hours of sleep a night.

Teach For America Participants and Retention

Teach For America's initial vision was to recruit top talent from the nation's most prestigious universities to commit to two years to teaching. Similar to other service programs like the Peace Corps, Teach For America sought to stimulate historically oppressed communities with skill and passion. However, enrollment in the nation's top universities was not representative of the U.S. population and certainly was not representative of the communities where corps members were placed (Digest of Education Statistics, 2013). As a result, corps members—nationally and in Los Angeles—were predominately White, were largely from the middle class, and did not have previous lived experiences in communities similar to placement communities. In Los Angeles specifically, the historical average for corps members who shared the ethnic background of students was below 40% (Jennings, 2016). The recruitment model of "outsiders," once hailed as beneficial by Wendy Kopp, was increasingly criticized by community advocates and academic institutions as colonialist and oppressive.

In response, Teach For America shifted its recruitment efforts to focus on applicants who shared the background of students traditionally served by the organization. By 2015, the national organization was able to shift from a predominately White and affluent corps to one where 49% of teachers identified as people of color and 47% identified as Pell Grant recipients, which is widely used as an indicator of low-income background ("Annual Report," 2015). The shift was more pronounced in Los Angeles, with more than 80% of corps members identifying as people of color and 65% identifying as Los Angeles natives (Jennings, 2016). As demographic patterns changed nationally and in Los Angeles, so too did retention patterns for corps members.

Retention patterns. The problem of low teacher retention plagues nearly all school communities but it is especially pronounced in historically oppressed communities (Borman & Dowling, 2008; K. M. Brown & Wynn, 2007; Ingersoll & Perda, 2010). Donaldson and Johnson (2010) found that while Teach For America teachers outpaced national retention averages during their first two years in the classroom, retention rates plummeted in later years. Compared to 54% of teachers who remain in the classroom after five years, only 35% of Teach For America teachers remain in the classroom after five years (Donaldson & Johnson, 2010; Ingersoll & Smith, 2003). The trend for placement school departure is much more distinct, with only 44% of corps members remaining at their initial placement site a year beyond their commitment and fewer than 15% remaining beyond five years (M. L. Donaldson & Johnson, 2010). Although no large-scale studies have been conducted to understand why Teach For America teachers leave, a smaller-scale mixed-methods study found that fewer than a third of teachers who leave Teach For America after their two-year commitment originally intended to leave (Heineke, Mazza, & Tichnor-Wagner, 2014).

Determining factors for departure. The challenge is in understanding why some teachers leave and others stay. Economic theorists believe that teachers, as with most employed individuals, make employment decisions based on perceived utility and satisfaction within their own context, often referred to as a cost–benefit analysis (Boskin, 1974; Fleisher, 1970). Borman and Dowling (2008) conducted a meta-analysis of teacher attrition and identified five key moderating factors that influence the cost–benefit process: demographics of teachers; teacher qualifications; school organization characteristics; school resources; and student demographics at the school.

Some researchers believe the compounded accumulations of costs can lead to exhaustion, cynicism, and inefficacy, otherwise known as burnout (Schaufeli, Leiter, & Maslach, 2009). Teacher burnout and stress have been recognized throughout the educational landscape, and are seen in both low-income and high-income schools (Dibara, 2007; Hoglund, Klingle, & Hosan, 2015; O'Donnell, Lambert, & McCarthy, 2008). That being said, teachers in low-income schools often have fewer favorable moderating factors: They are more likely to be young and single, to have fewer qualifications, to work in schools with dysfunctional organizational structures, to have limited school resources, and to teach students who live in poverty (Dibara, 2007; O'Donnell et al., 2008).

The impact of stress on teachers. A primary assumption of the American educational system is that the majority of children who enter schools will be "on grade level" and progress through the year acquiring the outlined set of knowledge and skills. Teacher preparation is designed to meet this assumption, equipping teachers with the tools to support a cohort of students who mostly fall within normal ranges of cognitive ability and performance while also supporting smaller sets of students who struggle or excel. Challenges arise when teachers and schools serve cohorts of students who are significantly behind academically, socio-emotionally, and behaviorally. The manifestations of poverty in the classroom—excessive absences, cognitive delays, emotional trauma, acting out behaviors—create immense challenges for teachers and schools. When compared to their counterparts in more affluent schools, teachers in low-income schools have much higher levels of stress and burnout (Dibara, 2007; O'Donnell et al., 2008).

Increased levels of stress and burnout can be attributed to a variety of factors. Research has shown that stress for teachers in low-income schools is intensified due to the overall lack of

experienced mentor teachers at school sites who are available to support novice teachers with instructional and behavioral challenges (Dibara, 2007; O'Donnell et al., 2008). Other studies point to the aggregate impact of stressed teachers and trauma-exposed students on school climate and feelings of safety as well as the increased workload required to support students who struggle with emotional, mental, and social delays (Dibara, 2007; Hoglund, Klingle, & Hosan, 2015; O'Donnell, Lambert, & McCarthy, 2008). For these reasons, it is important to understand the role of the workplace in contributing to teacher stress. The next section outlines workplace stress in general and describes how it manifests for teachers.

Workplace Stress

Workplace stress is a critical concern for any organization, especially those like Teach For America that primarily enlist recent colleague graduates for their first experience with full-time employment in public institutions (Cherniss, Egnatios, & Wacker, 1980; Johnstone & Feeney, 2015). The World Health Organization defines workplace stress as "the response people may have when presented with work demands and pressures that are not matched to their knowledge and abilities and which challenge their ability to cope" (Leka, Griffiths, Cox, & OMS, 2004, p. 3). Workplace stress is also complex; it is influenced by numerous factors like workload, working conditions, and managerial expectations (Beehr & Glazer, 2001).

Workplace stress is most frequently caused by the content of the work and the social and organizational context of the work (Michie, 2002). Michie's (2002) systematic review of data revealed several main factors that lead to workplace stress: long hours; the effects of long hours on personal lives; lack of autonomy and control; limited social support; and poor management. Acute exposure to occupational stress factors can lead to changes in work productivity, loss of sleep, mood instability, and fatigue (Beswick et al., 2006; Chandola, 2010). Exposure over

longer periods of time can lead to anxiety, depression, absenteeism, presentism (working while unwell), and a variety of physiological changes like back pain and chronic fatigue (Belkic et al., 2000; Beswick et al., 2006; Bosa et al., 1998; Cohen, 2012; Guglielmi & Tatrow, 1998; Sobeih et al., 2006; Stansfeld & Candy, 2006; Stansfeld et al., 2000).

Variability in workplace stress exists throughout the professional world and within each field, but teaching is consistently represented as one of the most stressful careers. The Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index (2013) found that only physicians experience more workplace stress than teachers, while another national survey found that 51% of teachers experience significant stress at least once per week throughout the school year (ERIC, 2012). Similar to workplace stress, occupational stress for teachers is defined as the misalignment between the demands of teaching and the teacher's ability to cope with those demands (Hakanen, Bakker, & Schaufeli, 2006; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017). Several contextual factors, such as workload, student diversity, classroom management, and conflicts with colleagues and parents, have historically increased the demands placed upon teachers (Fernet, Guay, Senécal, & Austin, 2012; Friedman, 1995; Hakanen et al., 2006; Klassen & Chiu, 2011; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017).

The ability to manage the demands of the job are critical to mitigating burnout and attrition, especially for teachers who work in low-income schools where additional challenges are often present. With clear evidence that stress is abundantly present within the field of K–12 education and that stress has been imbedded in Teach For America's Summer Institute since its inception, understanding the mechanisms of stress and how they affect teachers is imperative for this research. The next section outlines the prevailing definitions of stress and presents an adapted conceptual model to highlight stress and coping responses.

The Development of Stress Theory

Three primary ways to understand and define stress have been presented in the literature, each more complex than the other. The first and earliest understanding of stress is the stimulus-based definition, which suggests that when an external stimulus or pressure becomes too great, internal failure is inevitable (Holmes & Rahe, 1967). The second understanding, a response-based definition, focuses on stimuli that are unwanted or unpleasant. Selye (1976), a seminal researcher of response-based stress, observed what he called the general adaptation syndrome (GAS). He believed that the physiological response to stress happens in three phases: The body is alerted to a stressor; the body prepares for and produces a response to the stressor; continued exposure to the stressor causes fatigue and eventual exhaustion. In this model, individual characteristics and environmental context greatly influence the second phase, where individuals respond, adapt, and cope with the stressor.

The third understanding is a dynamic process definition that asserts that stress is the result of both internal and external factors. Lazarus and Folkman's (1984) early definition of the dynamic process describes stress at "a particular relationship between the person and the environment that is appraised by the person as taxing or exceeding his or her resources and endangering his or her wellbeing" (p. 19). This approach accounts for the variations in both the perception of the environment and the internal processes leveraged to respond to the stressor. In this model, when an individual encounters a stressor, they first interpret the stressor as positive, threatening, or irrelevant. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) referred to this as primary appraisal. If the stimulus is processed as threatening, whether consciously or unconsciously, the individual engages in secondary appraisal—the evaluation of resources available to respond to the stressor. If available resources are insufficient (or perceived as such), stress and coping processes are

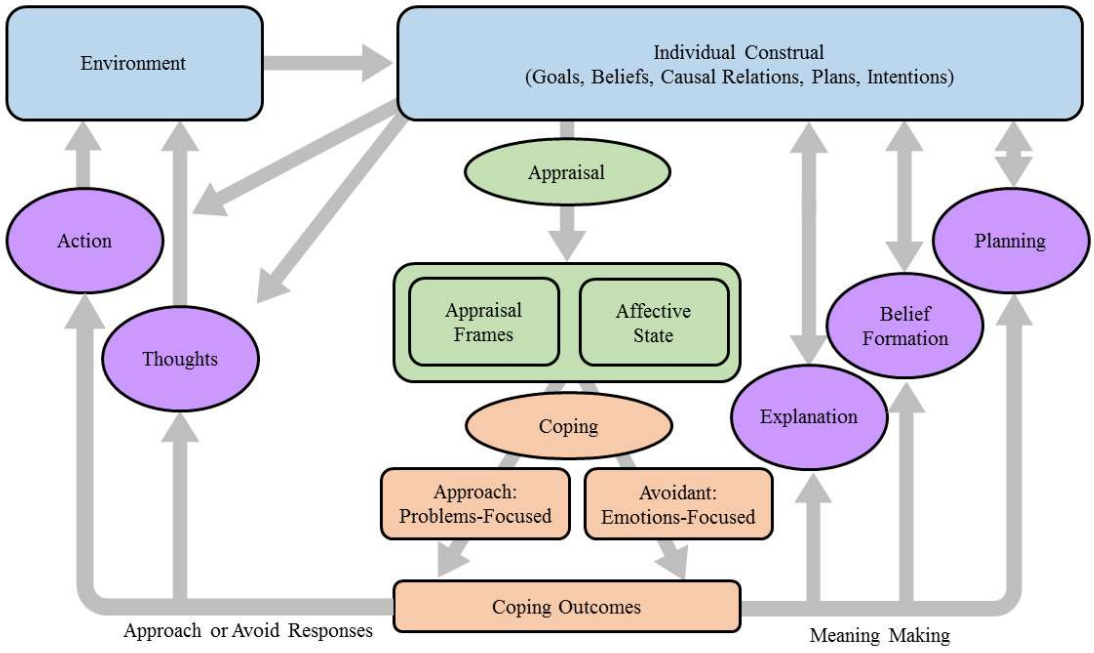
initiated. This understanding of stress evolved into the transactional model of stress and coping, which is widely used in research and efforts to understand and manage stress (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

Conceptual Model: The Transactional Model of Stress and Coping

The transactional model of stress and coping has evolved over time and has been reinterpreted by researchers and theorists. Gratch and Marsella (2004) developed a conceptual framework grounded in the model to support computational models for human-like responses in artificial intelligence. Although designed for computer engineers, theirs is one of the most comprehensive and digestible conceptualizations of the model available in the literature. I adapted a version of it—the cognitive–motivational–emotive system—and it serves as the theoretical underpinnings of the research (Figure 1). This adapted model seeks to clarify how humans respond to and shape their own environments. In the model, environmental stimuli are directed towards an individual who has a complex and unique mental state (Pollack, 1990). The individual's mental state is influenced by a myriad of factors such as their previous lived experiences, personal beliefs, and goals.

Figure 1

Adapted Conceptual Model of Stress



Individual construals and attachment theory. The interaction between environment and individual in the model shown in Figure 1 is referred to in social psychology as a construal. Construals are "constellations" of thoughts, feelings, and beliefs that inform how individuals perceive the world around them, especially the actions of others (Singelis, 1994). These constellations are formed over time and are highly influenced by social context and identity markers (Gardner, Gabriel, & Lee, 1999; Rauthmann, Sherman, Nave, & Funder, 2015). As a result, individuals are likely to experience similar stimuli with vastly different orientations and responses. As Allport (1963) mentioned in his seminal work on personality, "for some the world is a hostile place where men are evil and dangerous; for others it is a stage for fun and frolic [and] it may appear as a place to do one's duty grimly; or a pasture for cultivating friendship and love" (p. 266).

Attachment theory, pioneered by Bowlby (1973), helps to explain how individuals develop a positive, relational orientation to others and their work—what is known as secure attachment. Through strong emotional and physical relationships with others (attachment figures), individuals are able establish a sense of stability and safety that allows them to explore, take risks, and develop into and live out their authentic selves. It is through these relationships that individuals begin to develop a personalized belief about how the world works, how organizations work, and how relationships work, as well as how they see themselves existing in all three (Johnson et al., 2010). Not all individuals are securely attached, however.

In a meta-analysis of attachment styles worldwide, 54% of individuals were believed to be securely attached and the remainder were believed to be insecurely attached (Konrath, Chopik, Hsing, & O'Brien, 2014). There are three major types of insecure attachment: (a) anxious, in which individuals have more negative views of themselves and seek personal fulfillment through close relationships with others; (b) avoidant, in which individuals have an increased sense of self-sufficiency, suppression of emotions, and withdrawl from others when experiencing failure or rejection; and (c) disorganized, in which individuals view themselves as unworthy of closeness and remain skeptical of the intentions of others who attempt to develop close relationships (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2010). Therefore, an individual's construal, as informed by attachment style, directly affects how they appraise and cope with stressors.

Appraisal. Appraisal theory concludes that no experiences have significance on their own; meaning and evaluation of experiences are only created when an individual interprets the experience through the lens of their construal (Gratch & Marsella, 2004). In the adapted model, individuals appraise a situation based on their interpretation of variables and their current affect state. Table 1 outlines appraisal variables proposed by theorists (Gratch & Marsella, 2004;

Perrez & Reicherts, 1992). Responses to these variables by the individual determine whether an event is considered a threat. Additionally, the affect state of the individual moderates the responses to the variables. Affective states are influenced by the valence (subjective, positive/negative evaluation of an event), arousal (objective, activation of sympathetic nervous system), and motivational intensity (strength of the urge to respond to stimuli) of an event (Harmon-Jones, Gable, & Price, 2013). If the individual perceives an event to be a threat and the resources available are insufficient to alleviate the stimuli, stress is likely to be the result. This model posits that, when confronted with stress, individuals transition into the coping phase, where they work to overcome the stress.

Table 1

Types of Appraisal Variables

Variable	Qualifier	Definition
Relevance		Extent to which the event requires attention or adaptive reaction
Desirability		Extent to which the event facilitates or impedes what the person wants
Causal Attribution	Agency	What was responsible for the event
	Blame/Credit	Whether the cause deserves blame or credit
Likelihood		Likelihood of the event; Likelihood of an outcome
Unexpectedness		Whether the event was predicted from past knowledge
Urgency		Whether delaying a response makes matters worse
Ego Involvement		Extent to which the event impacts sense of self
Coping Potential	Controllability	Extent to which the event can be influenced
	Changeability	Extent to which the event will change
	Power	Power to directly or indirectly control the event
	Adaptability	Whether the person can live with the consequences of the event

Coping. Coping is the process of leveraging emotions and actions to manage available resources to respond to stressful stimuli (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). In the adapted model, coping is either problem-focused or emotion-focused (Folkman & Lazarus, 1988). Problem-focused coping strategies are utilized to help alleviate or solve the problem, whereas emotion-

focused strategies are leveraged to help deal with the emotion resulting from the stress. While emotion-focused strategies were initially described as maladaptive, research has shown they are not inherently maladaptive, just as problem-focused strategies are not always adaptive (Baker & Berenbaum, 2007). When used disproportionately to problem-solving strategies, however, emotion-focused strategies can lead to increased stress and long-term physiological and psychological problems (Ben-Zur, 2017; Carver, Scheier, & Weintraub, 1989; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Penley, Tomaka, & Wiebe, 2002).

Moos (1993) codified problem-focused and emotion-focused coping strategies into approach and avoidant categories, each with four coping responses. As shown in Table 2, approach responses include both cognitive and behavioral attempts to understand or resolve a problem; avoidant responses also include cognitive and behavioral responses, but with an emphasis on avoiding the stressor or managing its emotional effect. An individual's selection of a coping response is influenced by responses to appraisal variables and the individual's affective states, creating the conditions for a highly contextualized and personal response.

Table 2

Approach and Avoidant Coping Responses

Coping Strategy	Effort	Definition
Approach Responses		
Logical Analysis	Cognitive	Attempts to understand and prepare mentally for a stressor and its consequences
Positive Reappraisal	Cognitive	Attempts to construe and restructure a problem in a positive way while still accepting the reality of the situation
Seeking Guidance & Support	Behavioral	Attempts to seek information, guidance, or support.
Problem Solving	Behavioral	Attempts to take action to deal directly with the problem
Avoidant Responses		
Cognitive Avoidance	Cognitive	Attempts to avoid thinking realistically about a problem
Acceptance or Resignation	Cognitive	Attempts to react to the problem by accepting it
Seeking Alternative Rewards	Behavioral	Attempts to get involved in substitute activities and create new sources of satisfaction
Emotional Discharge	Behavioral	Attempts to reduce tension by expressing negative feelings

Outcomes, meaning making, and future implications. The appraisal and coping process occurs quickly and is multifaceted and cyclical; individuals are always assessing their environments as new information becomes available and making meaning of how they should engage (Marsella & Gratch, 2009). In the outcomes and meaning making phases of the model, individuals are either addressing the problem or working to manage the effects of the problem. If an individual employs problem-focused strategies, they will take actions to remove the stressor and/or engage in dialogue with others to understand the problem. The specific tactics selected to change the environment and schema for dialogue are influenced by the individual's construal. If an individual selects an emotion-focused strategy, they will take actions to manage the resulting emotions of stress and take steps to avoid the stressor. Their actions and cognitive processes will not remove the stressor nor are they likely to change the environment.

Regardless of approach or outcome, individuals will also make meaning of the process consciously and unconsciously. In this meaning-making phase, the individual is working to understand what happened (explanation), why it happened (belief formation), and how they should approach similar stimuli in the future (planning). During this process, the individual is working to validate or overturn the appraisal and coping response selection. The meaning-making process is informed by and informs the individual's construal and is likely to influence future appraisals and coping responses. Individuals who utilize problem-solving approaches are more likely to engage in challenges in the future, are more likely to have a favorable view of their coping potential, and experience lower levels of stress.

The outcome of coping strategy selection has ripple effects for the individual. Those who employ problem-focused outcomes are more likely to experience positive relationships with others, acquire skills more easily, and be happier and motivated in the work environment (Feldman & Thomas, 1992; Herman & Tetrick, 2009; Sonnentag & Frese, 2003). Problem-focused strategies have also been found to have a negative relationship with physiological and psychological stress. Individuals who leverage emotion-focused strategies are less likely to have positive relationships with others, learn new skills, or be satisfied and remain in their workplace setting (Feldman & Thomas, 1992; Herman & Tetrick, 2009; Sonnentag & Frese, 2003). Emotion-focused responses are also positively related to higher levels of stress.

Application of Model. The model is helpful in my study because it provides a digestible understanding of stress processes that are rooted in stress scholarship without being overwhelmingly complicated. Additionally, the model can be divided into four segments (color-coded in the Figure 1) based on the phase of stress process. The blue sections highlight the contextual factors in which the stressors occur: the environment and the individual's dispositions

and abilities. The green sections detail the appraisal process while the orange section describes the coping responses. The purple phases in the model represent the effects of the coping responses on the environment and the individual. This conceptualization and categorization help to understand how and why stress occurs for Summer Institute participants and provides an anchor for the results and discussion sections of my research.

Research Questions

Given the analysis of previous research and through adopting a conceptual framework, this study addressed the following research questions:

1. Does participants' stress increase during Summer Institute?
2. What sources of stress do Teach For America participants self-report before Summer Institute?
    a. Do self-reports of anticipated stress vary by participant demographics?
3. What sources of stress do Teach For America participants self-report after completing Summer Institute?
    a. Do self-reports of experienced stress vary by participant demographics?
4. What coping approaches do Teach For America participants utilize during Summer Institute?
    a. Do self-reports of coping approaches vary by participant demographics?
5. What differentiates successful copers from those who struggle to cope at Summer Institute?
    a. How do "high copers" describe their Summer Institute challenges and how they employ coping strategies? How do they acquire stress management skills?

b. How do “low copers” describe their Summer Institute challenges and how they employ coping strategies? How do they acquire stress management skills?

Chapter 3:

Research Methods

Research Design

Study participants engaged in Teach For America's Summer Institute without intervention or alteration to their overall experience. Before participants arrived, they completed the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS10) and the Summer Institute Anticipated Stress Survey (SIASS) as part of program's requirements (Appendix C and Appendix D). These measures established a baseline of stress levels and catalogued participant demographic information. Participants then engaged in the five-week Summer Institute program as designed. At the conclusion of Summer Institute, they again completed the PSS10 as well as the Summer Institute Experienced Stress Survey (SIESS; see Appendix E). Participants also completed the Coping Response Inventory (CRI) to identify their dominant coping styles (see Appendix F).

Through pre/post inventory analysis, each participant was categorized into one of four groups: High Stress/Low Cope; High Stress/High Cope; Low Stress/Low Cope; and Low Stress/High Cope. Participants were invited to participate in a focus groups designated by their stress and coping membership category (see Appendix G). Participants who were unavailable for a focus group were given the option to take part in an individual interview or submit a written or audio reflection. The same protocol was used in focus groups and interviews; it was designed to provide insight into the Summer Institute experience and how participants managed stress (see Appendix H).

This was a quasi-experimental study since the research did not utilize a control group or leverage randomized sampling of participants (Creswell, 2014; Mertens, 2010). Instead, pre and post data were gathered from participants attending Teach For America's Summer Institute to

understand their experiences of stress before and during the institute and how they responded to that stress. To better understand nuanced changes in stress levels and the sources of stress at Summer Institute, I employed a mixed-methods approach (Creswell, 2014). Specifically, the stress and coping inventories provided quantitative data; administration of the general stress inventory (PSS10) before and after the institute allowed me to determine changes in participants' perceived stress levels. Interviews, focus groups, and written reflections provided the qualitative data necessary to understand the complexity of the Summer Institute experience and allowed participants to clarify their experiences with stress. I included a qualitative feedback mechanism because the complexities of the participant experience were not easily captured in the selected quantitative measures (Creswell, 2014). Additionally, data collection methods needed to be responsive to the scheduling demands of novice teachers, so varied methods for data collections were necessary (Merriam, 2009).

Participants

The sole target population for the study was Los Angeles teachers participating in Teach For America's five-week Summer Institute in Phoenix, Arizona, in 2017. The Phoenix Summer Institute hosts corps members from eight Teach For America regions; Hawaii, Las Vegas, Los Angeles, New Mexico, Phoenix, San Diego, South Dakota, and Washington. While the selection of this site was largely out of convenience—given my role on staff as the managing director of experience design—there are several reasons why this sample was valuable to my study and to the broader organizational work of Teach For America. First, there is an opportunity to apply findings to the design and execution of the Teach For America Summer Institute in Los Angeles in 2018. Second, there is an opportunity to utilize data from my study to understand the experience of current teachers and alumni who participated in the Teach For America Los

Angeles program. This information will be especially valuable for the organization because it will provide insight into programs and supports for these teachers and alumni. Third, findings from my study can be shared with the national organization to provide additional insights into participant experiences and potentially spur program refinement.

All teachers attending the Summer Institute in Phoenix from the Los Angeles region participated in the current study (N = 98). Participants were very diverse in terms of sociodemographic background including race/ethnicity, age, and previous work experience (see Table 3).

Table 3

Summer Institute Participant Demographics as Reported by Teach For America

Demographic Variable	Phoenix Site N = 424		Los Angeles Corps N = 98[a]	
	n	%	n	%
Age Grouping				
Under 25	293	69.1%	54	56.3%
25–29	76	17.9%	23	24.0%
30–39	36	8.5%	12	12.5%
40 or older	19	4.5%	7	7.3%
Ethnicity				
African American, Black	31	7.3%	11	11.5%
American Indian	7	1.7%	0	0.0%
Asian American or Pacific Islander	36	8.5%	9	9.4%
Latino or Hispanic	83	19.7%	34	35.4%
Multi-ethnic/Multi-racial	42	10.0%	7	7.3%
Native Hawaiian	10	2.4%	0	0.0%
Other (not person of color)	12	2.8%	0	0.0%
Other (person of color)	14	3.3%	3	3.1%
White	187	44.3%	32	33.3%
Person of Color				
Not Person of Color	199	47.2%	32	33.3%
Person of Color	223	52.8%	64	66.7%
Economic Background				
Low-Income Background	203	47.9%	66	66.7%
Previous Background				
Applied as College Senior	230	54.2%	55	56.1%
Post-College Work Experience	194	45.8%	43	43.9%

[a] Demographic information was not available for all participants.

Subgroups. The experiences of teachers in the Teach For America program are not homogenous. Internal data from the program show that satisfaction is often mediated by ethnicity, age, and socioeconomic background (Jennings, 2016). Because of this previously reported disparity, I closely examined trends for subgroups based on these demographic characteristics. In this research, ethnicity, race, and socio-economic class are regarded as social constructs that help emphasize shared social and cultural heritage. While these variables can serve as proxies for experiences rooted in discrimination and oppression that exist within the United States, this study does not explicitly examine these processes. Instead, I use these sociodemographic variables as proxies for the racialized, sexist, and classist experiences in the United States to understand if there are differences among participants. Due to restrictions in sample size for some of the more specific sociodemographic groups, and consequently power, I collapsed race/ethnicity and socioeconomic status into binary categories (people of color versus White; low-income versus non-low-income) for analysis purposes.

Procedure

Inventory and survey sample recruitment. Four weeks prior to the start of Summer Institute, participants from Los Angeles received an email from Teach For America outlining the goals of the study, participation expectations, and an overview of the research design (see Appendix C). The goals and overview were also made available through a webinar. Teachers were asked to complete the PSS10 and the SIASS using Typeform, an online survey administration tool. Three follow-up emails were sent to participants to remind them to complete the survey—one email per week until the start of Summer Institute. The window to complete the PSS10 and the SIASS closed the day before the start of Summer Institute. All 98 participants then engaged in Summer Institute as designed.

At the end of the fifth week of Summer Institute, participants received an email inviting them to complete three inventories: the PSS10, the SIESS, and the CRI. Once again, participants completed the surveys using Typeform. Reminders to complete the surveys were sent through email and text messages twice after the initial email. The sample size for full completion of all three pre and post inventories was 72.

Interview and focus group recruitment. Quantitative results for the study were calculated and analyzed two weeks following Summer Institute. Participants were identified as high or low stress using the average of their raw scores on the PSS10 administered at the start and end of the institute. As shown in Table 4, four distinct participant subgroups were created by combining results from the stress and coping measures: High Stress/Low Cope; High Stress/High Cope; Low Stress/Low Cope; Low Stress/High Cope. Participants who had moderate levels of stress or who were identified as moderate copers were not included in these groups.

Table 4

Focus Group, Interview, and Written Reflection Eligibility by Stress and Coping Category

Group Category	Total Eligible n = 40	Total Participants n = 17
High Stress/Low Cope	12	6
High Stress/High Cope	6	1
Low Stress/Low Cope	9	7
Low Stress/High Cope	13	3

Eligible participants—that is, those who fell into one of the four categories—were invited to attend a focus group, take part in an individual interview, or submit a written or audio reflection. Participants were notified of their eligibility through an email. Non-responders were sent a text message three days after the initial recruitment email. Submitted reflections were categorized using a rubric, and only those scored as moderate quality and higher were used for

analysis (see Appendix J). A total of 17 participants provided qualitative data (see Table 5). Six participants provided written reflections, five provided audio reflections, five participated in a focus group, and two took part in one-on-one interviews. One written reflection was excluded because of poor data quality, yielding a total of 16 useable responses.

Table 5

Qualitative Data Type, Quality, and Eligibility for Use

Pseudonym	Category[a]	Reflection Type	Quality[b]	Duration	Used for Analysis
Gary	HSHC	Audio Reflection	Substantial	14 minutes	Yes
Bethanie	HSLC	Interview Written	Minimal		No
Ingrid	HSLC	Audio Reflection	Moderate	7 Minutes	Yes
Bernice	HSLC	Audio Reflection	Substantial		Yes
Graciela	HSLC	Interview	Substantial	33 Minutes	Yes
Zach	HSLC	Interview	Substantial	33 Minutes	Yes
Brandy	HSLC	Interview Written	Substantial		Yes
Tracie	HSLC	Interview Written	Substantial		Yes
Lourdes	LSHC	Interview Written	Moderate		Yes
Patrice	LSHC	Interview Written	Moderate		Yes
Keyvan	LSHC	Audio Reflection	Substantial	7 Minutes	Yes
Marlena	LSLC	Audio Reflection	Substantial	15 Minutes	Yes
Dorian	LSLC	Focus Group	Substantial	53 Minutes	Yes
Jasmine	LSLC	Focus Group	Substantial	53 Minutes	Yes
Ulahnee	LSLC	Focus Group	Substantial	53 Minutes	Yes
Juliette	LSLC	Focus Group	Substantial	53 Minutes	Yes
Sandy	LSLC	Focus Group	Substantial	53 Minutes	Yes

[a] HSLC = High Stress/Low Cope; HSHC = High Stress/High Cope; LSLC = Low Stress/Low Cope; LSHC = Low Stress/High Cope.
[b] Quality rubric is located in Appendix J.

Measures

Perceived Stress Scale 10 (PSS10). To understand levels of stress before and after the Summer Institute experience, participants completed the PSS10. The PSS10 is the most prevalent psychological assessment of perceived stress (Cohen, 2005). It was selected instead of other stress measures that use occurrence of life events to determine stress because stress responses are influenced by the intensity of an experience and dependent on personal and

contextual factors (Cohen, 1983). The PSS10 consists of 10 questions designed to understand the perception of stress within the last month (e.g., "In the last month, how often have you been upset because of something that happened unexpectedly?"). Each statement is assessed on a five-point Likert scale (0 = Never; 1 = Almost Never; 2 = Sometimes; 3 = Fairly Often; 4 = Very Often). Each administration of the PSS10 yielded an overall score between 0 and 40. Scores were calculated by summing the coded scores. Items 4, 5, 7, and 8 are positively stated and were reverse scored before being added to the sum of the negatively stated items. The PSS is not a diagnostic instrument and no predetermined cut-points qualify different levels of perceived stress. Therefore, scores of the PSS10 are designed to be compared within the sample and not with a nationally normalized sample.

I used the PSS10 instead of the PSS4 or the PSS14 (measures with four and 14 items, respectively) because of its stronger performance historically as a measure (Lee, 2012). The PSS10 has been validated in numerous studies for reliability and has been proven to be a satisfactory measure for understanding stress levels in various adult populations (Roberti, 2006; Taylor, 2015). The 10 items of the PSS10 were found to be highly reliable during the current study's pre and post administrations ($\alpha = .89$ and $\alpha = .87$, respectively).

Coping Responses Inventory (CRI). The CRI determines how participants responded to stress during Summer Institute. Participants completed the CRI in their final week of the summer program. The CRI contains 48 statements designed to understand positive coping responses (approach) and less healthy coping responses (avoidant) (see Appendix I). Each category consists of four subdomains with six statements in each subdomain (e.g., "I try to anticipate how things will turn out" or "I think that the outcome will be decided by fate"). Each statement is assessed on an eight-point Likert scale (1 = not at all; 8 = fairly often). The sums of

the values for each statement create the raw score. Raw scores were then standardized to a distribution with a mean of 50 and a standard deviation of 10 (Moos, 2004). Used for over 40 years, there is a considerable body of research supporting the CRI's reliability and validity across diverse contexts (Moos, 2004).

Summer Institute Anticipated/Experienced Stress Surveys (SIASS and SIESS). The Summer Institute Anticipated Stress Survey (SIASS) and the Summer Institute Experienced Stress Survey (SIESS) determine anticipated and experienced factors of stress for teachers participating in Summer Institute, respectively. Both are modified versions of the Modified Teacher Occupational Stress Factor Questionnaire (TOSFQ; Clark, 1980). The Modified TOSFQ consists of 30 items that measure teachers' perceptions of stress using five subscales: administrative support, working with students, financial security, relationships with teachers, and task overload. Language in the Modified TOSFQ was adjusted for each administration to reflect anticipated stressors and experienced stressors. Additionally, school titles were changed to reflect actual titles at Summer Institute (e.g., principal was changed to instructional coach). Each statement is assessed on a five-point Likert scale (1 = not stressful; 5 = extremely). The sums of the values for each statement created the raw score for each subscale and the sum of all statements created a raw score for the entire measure.

The Modified TOSFQ was selected over other teacher stress measures because of the applicability of subscales to the Summer Institute experience. Several studies have confirmed the validity and reliability of the measure (Clark, 1980; Harries et al., 1985; Karnes & Leonard, 1984) and have been used in many current studies to understand the occupational stress factors for teachers in a variety of settings. The overall score and subscales of the Modified TOSFQ

were found to be highly reliable in both the pre and post administration of the SIASS and the SIESS (see Table 6).

Table 6

Modified TOSFQ Subscales and Reliability for Administration Windows

		Administration Window	
Subscale	Items	SIASS α	SIESS α
Administrative Support	7	.86	.87
Working with Students	8	.80	.87
Financial Security	3	.82	.90
Relationships with Teachers	7	.82	.86
Task Overload	5	.69	.79
Overall Score	30	.92	.92

Three short answer questions were added to the beginning of the Modified TOSFQ to understand the three leading anticipated and experienced causes of stress (e.g., "In a few words, what do you imagine will be the most stressful part of Summer Institute for you?" and "What do you imagine will be the second most stressful part of Summer Institute for you?"). The SIASS and SIESS contained the same set of short-answer and multiple-choice items.

Qualitative reflections. Interviews and focus groups were held between August and September of 2017. While the duration of each format varied, participants were asked the same set of questions. For example, participants were asked about their overall institute experience, the most stressful moments of Summer Institute, and how they responded to those stressors. In person responses were recorded with an audio device and transcribed. Written reflections were submitted through email.

Overview of Data Analysis Plan

Survey data were collected using Typeform, organized and transformed in Excel, and analyzed using SPSS 10.0. Raw data for the PSS10, SIASS, SIESS, and CRI were exported to Excel for scoring and coding before using SPSS10 for analysis. Individual items from the PSS10

were converted from worded responses into corresponding numerical values. After adjusting for reverse-scored items, the sum of the individual scores was calculated for each participant using Excel. This process was repeated for both administrations of the PSS10. Multiple-choice items from the SIASS and SIESS were converted from worded responses into corresponding numerical values. A raw score for each construct was calculated using Excel. Short answer responses from the SIASS and the SIESS were sorted into similar groups and then labeled to identify the most prevalent stressors according to the subscales in the Modified TOSFQ (e.g., Working with Teachers, Work Load). Individual items from the CRI were converted from worded responses into corresponding numerical values. A raw score for each construct was calculated using Excel and these were converted by hand into standard scores using the conversion chart in the CRI manual (Moos, 2004).

Qualitative data were coded in three cycles. First, data from each membership category were reviewed to create an initial narrative and, in cases of multiple participant perspectives, a metanarrative (Creswell, 2014). Second, each data set was coded according to coping categories from the CRI (see Appendix I). Third, coding and excerpts were refined to create coherent themes and storylines (Creswell, 2014). Data analysis was done by hand, with themes and coding captured using Excel.

Access and Role Management

There is limited concern for coercion related to my role at Teach For America since this study utilized data collected as part of an internal program evaluation. I was granted permission to access data and corps member information from the executive director and the senior managing director of Phoenix Summer Institute. To ensure that our participants felt confident in

engaging openly and honestly, full-time staff were not present at the interviews, nor did they have access to identifying information.

The steps necessary to ensure emotional availability dovetail with the management of my role in the research design. While I did not directly manage participants in a supervisory capacity, I did have power and authority in my role as a senior leader on staff. Therefore, while I managed analysis of data and facilitated the interviews, no identifying information from any part of my study was shared with full-time Teach For America staff. Additionally, disaggregated data with potentially identifying information were not given to any Teach For America employees. It was my hope that through a buffer between the organization and the research execution, participants would be able to engage authentically and without fear that any actions (real or perceived) would be taken against them as a result of participating in my study. All participants were made of aware of the study in program emails regarding the PSS10 and SIASS and the Study Information Sheet was available to participants upon request (see Appendix K).

Ensuring Credibility, Trustworthiness, and Ethical Behavior

It is my hope that the findings from this research will assist the larger Teach For America organization and other teacher preparation and support programs. As such, ensuring that our methods and findings are credible, trustworthy, and ethical was paramount. All quantitative measures have been tested with multiple populations for reliability and validity. Given the use of externally validated measures, I am confident that the quantitative measures do not raise any bias or credibility concerns.

The qualitative aspects required more attention. First, the protocol for the focus groups, interviews, and written or audio reflections was field-tested for readability and clarity with teachers not in the study. Interview selection and identifying information for participants were

not made accessible to Teach For America staff. Data from focus groups and interviews were submitted to an online translation company and, once the transcripts were delivered, all personally identifying information was replaced with participant codes and pseudonyms. Additionally, the interview recordings were destroyed. Finally, participation in the study and reflections was entirely confidential. Teach For America staff members do not and will not have access to information that personally identifies teachers as participants. I alone controlled recruitment of participants and interview management, and all transcripts and instruments were maintained securely away from the Teach For America site.

Chapter 4:

Results

Research Question 1

Research Question 1 asked if participants' stress increased during Summer Institute. A paired samples t-test was conducted to compare perceived stress levels before (M = 14.04; SD = 5.90) and after (M = 15.78; SD = 5.90) the institute. The results suggest that attendance at Summer Institute led to an increase in participants' perceived stress level, t (71) = -2.495, p. = .015. To determine the practical significance of this difference, Cohen's d was computed as a measure of effect size. The resulting effect size of (d=) -.30, reflects a medium effect for attendance at Summer Institute.

Research Question 2

Research Question 2 asked what sources of stress Teach For America teachers anticipated they would experience during Summer Institute and whether any of these anticipated sources of stress varied by teacher demographics. Means for each item on the Modified TOSFQ were rank ordered to assess the most prevalent sources of anticipated stress for Summer Institute participants (see Table 7).

As displayed in Table 7, the top three ranked items were: "having insufficient opportunity for rest and preparation during the school day" (M = 2.26), "working in a school where there is an atmosphere of conflict among teachers" (M = 2.26), and "feeling I never catch up with my work" (M = 2.24).

Table 7

Descriptive Statistics for Participants' Anticipated Stressors Prior to Start of Summer Institute

TOSFQ Item	n	Min	Max	Mean	SD	Subscale Category
Having insufficient opportunity for rest and preparation during the school day.	88	0	4	2.28	1.082	Task Overload
Working in a school where there is an atmosphere of conflict among teachers.	88	0	4	2.25	1.243	Relationships with Teachers
Feeling I never catch up with my work.	88	0	4	2.24	1.114	Task Overload
Feeling my students do not adequately respond to my teaching.	88	0	4	2.20	1.030	Working with Students
Feeling I do not have adequate control of my students.	88	0	4	2.18	1.045	Working with Students
Working for an inadequate salary (having enough money).	88	0	4	1.97	1.308	Financial Security
Feeling there is a lack of administrative support for teachers in my school.	88	0	4	1.95	1.183	Working with Institute Staff
Having to do Institute work after the work day to meet what is expected of me.	88	0	4	1.89	1.217	Task Overload
Feeling my opinions are not valued by my instructional coach (TEA).	88	0	4	1.80	1.136	Working with Institute Staff
Feeling that a few-difficult-to discipline students take too much of my time away from the other students.	88	0	4	1.73	0.968	Working with Students
Feeling my job does not provide the financial security I need.	88	0	4	1.72	1.184	Financial Security
Feeling my instructional coach (TEA) gives me too little authority to carry out the responsibilities assigned to me.	88	0	4	1.68	1.160	Working with Institute Staff
Feeling there is a lack of parental involvement in solving school discipline problems.	88	0	4	1.67	1.047	Working with Students
Having a few teachers in my school who do not carry their share of the load.	88	0	4	1.61	0.988	Relationships with Teachers
Feeling too many parents are indifferent about school problems.	88	0	4	1.60	1.170	Working with Students
Feeling there is competition among teachers in my school rather than a team spirit of cooperation.	88	0	4	1.59	1.068	Relationships with Teachers
Feeling that poor communications exist among teachers in my school.	88	0	4	1.59	1.151	Relationships with Teachers
Planning and organizing learning activities for wide ability ranges.	88	0	4	1.59	0.978	Task Overload
Feeling my instructional coach (TEA) lacks insight into classroom problems.	88	0	4	1.57	1.081	Working with Institute Staff
Trying to motivate students who do not want to learn.	88	0	4	1.51	1.006	Working with Students
Feeling I cannot tell my instructional coach (TEA) in an open way how I feel about many school related matters.	88	0	4	1.50	0.884	Working with Institute Staff
Feeling my instructional coach (TEA) is too aloof and detached from the classroom.	88	0	4	1.47	1.093	Working with Institute Staff
Feeling some teachers in my school are incompetent.	88	0	4	1.45	1.183	Relationships with Teachers

Feeling poor teacher–teacher relationships exist in my school.	88	0	4	1.44	0.993	Relationships with Teachers
Having students in my class/classes who talk constantly.	88	0	4	1.42	0.919	Working with Students
Feeling my salary is not equal to my duties and responsibilities.	88	0	4	1.42	1.220	Financial Security
Having too little clerical help.	88	0	4	1.20	0.860	Task Overload
Feeling there is a lack of recognition for good teaching in my school.	88	0	4	1.10	1.006	Working with Institute Staff
Feeling that cliques exist among teachers in my school.	88	0	4	1.08	1.074	Relationships with Teachers
Having to tell my students the same things over and over.	88	0	4	0.98	1.028	Working with Students

Based on individual means, it appears that Task Overload and Working with Students were the primary categories of stress reported by participants, based on the top 10 rank-ordered most stressful items. In addition to examining individual items, I also computed subscale composite scores based on the Modified TOSFQ. A mean for each subscale was calculated for comparison (see Table 8). A repeated measures analysis of variance (ANOVA) analysis examining differences across scores on each of the subscales did not yield significant variation among stress factors, $F(4, 435) = 1.49$, $p = .206$.

Table 8

Means of Participants' Anticipated Stressors from Modified TOSFQ Subscales

TOSFQ Item	N	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Task Overload	88	0	3	1.84	.722
Financial Security	88	0	4	1.70	1.062
Working with Students	88	0	3	1.66	.644
Working with Institute Staff	88	0	3	1.59	.813
Relationships with Teachers	88	0	3	1.57	.759

In addition, I assessed whether participants' reports of sources of stress prior to Summer Institute varied by socioeconomic background, race and ethnicity, or proximity to undergraduate experience (i.e., years since graduation). Independent samples t-tests were conducted to compare participants' overall Modified TOSFQ scores and subscale scores separately, based on each

sociodemographic variable. Results indicated that whether or not participants were from a low-income background was the only demographic variable that significantly differentiated participants' anticipated stress (see Table 9). Specifically, participants who were from low-income backgrounds anticipated being less stressed about working with students during Summer Institute as compared with their non-low-income peers. Additionally, participants from low-income backgrounds reported lower levels of anticipated stress in working with institute staff and relationships with other teachers than did their non-low-income peers. Finally, participants from low-income backgrounds reported lower overall levels of anticipated occupational stress for Summer Institute as compared with their non-low-income peers. The data does not suggest any differences in participants' anticipated stress as a function of racial and ethnic background or proximity to undergraduate experience (see Tables 10 and 11).

Results from participants' open-ended responses to the SIASS supported these findings. These responses were coded using categories from the TOSFQ subscales, with additional categories added for items that did not align to the subscales (e.g., location of institute). The most prevalent self-reported stressors were task overload (55.6%), working with students (16.7%), and the transition to and living in Phoenix (12.5%).

Table 9

Results of t-tests and Descriptive Statistics from Modified TOSFQ Subscales by Socioeconomic Status

	Demographic Group								
	Low-Income Background			Non-Low-Income Background			95% CI for Mean		
Subscale	M	SD	n	M	SD	n	Difference	t	df
Working with Institute Staff	10.39	5.49	66	14.70	5.36	10	-8.004, -.608	-2.32*	74
Working with Students	12.14	4.78	66	18.20	5.07	10	-9.317, -2.810	-3.71***	74
Financial Security	5.05	3.164	66	6.10	2.73	10	-3.160, 1.051	-.998	74
Relationships with Teachers	10.20	5.13	66	15.20	5.55	10	-8.509, -1.497	-2.843*	74
Task Overload	8.89	3.83	66	11.20	2.78	10	-4.819, .207	-1.829	74
Overall Score	46.67	17.95	66	65.40	14.75	10	-30.628, -6.839	-3.14**	74

* p<.05 ** p<.005 *** p<.001

Table 10

Results of t-tests and Descriptive Statistics from Modified TOSFQ Subscales by Race

	Demographic Group								
	Person of Color			Not a Person of Color			95% CI for Mean		
Subscale	M	SD	n	M	SD	n	Difference	t	df
Working with Institute Staff	10.54	5.70	54	11.56	5.45	32	-3.514, 1.463	-.819	84
Working with Students	12.54	4.86	54	14.00	5.29	32	-3.689,.783	-1.307	84
Financial Security	5.44	3.31	54	4.72	2.97	32	-.689, 2.140	1.020	84
Relationships with Teachers	10.93	5.51	54	10.75	4.88	32	-2.170, 2.522	.149	84
Task Overload	8.83	3.71	54	9.63	3.49	32	-2.402, .819	-.978	84
Overall Score	48.28	50.66	54	50.66	16.77	32	-10.335, 5.578	-.594	84

Table 11

Results of t-tests and Descriptive Statistics from Modified TOSFQ Subscales by Proximity to Undergraduate Experience

	Demographic Group								
	College Seniors			2+ Years out of Undergrad			95% CI for Mean		
Subscale	M	SD	n	M	SD	n	Difference	t	df
Working with Institute Staff	10.18	5.60	34	11.56	5.62	36	-4.057, 1.299	-1.028	68
Working with Students	13.24	5.25	34	13.50	4.99	36	-2.708, 2.179	-.216	68
Financial Security	5.18	3.00	34	5.22	3.35	36	-1.565, 1.473	-.060	68
Relationships with Teachers	10.75	5.55	34	11.56	5.60	36	-3.363, 1.958	-.527	68
Task Overload	9.18	3.94	34	9.28	3.78	36	-1.944, 1.742	-.110	68
Overall Score	48.62	18.73	34	51.11	18.28	36	-11.321, 6.334	-564	68

Research Question 3

Research Question 3 asked what sources of stress Teach For America teachers experienced during Summer Institute and whether any of these sources varied by teacher demographics. Identical to the analysis above for anticipated stress, means for items on the Modified TOSFQ were rank ordered to assess the most prevalent sources of experienced stress for Summer Institute participants (see Table 12). The top three ranked items were "having to do Institute work after the work day to meet what is expected of me" (M=2.44), "having insufficient opportunity for rest and preparation during the school day" (M=2.37), and "working for an inadequate salary (having enough money)" (M=1.85). Four of the five factors from the Task Overload subscale and all three of the factors from the Financial Security subscale were reported among the top 10 most stressful factors.

Table 12

Descriptive Statistics for Participants' Reports of Experienced Stressors After Summer Institute

TOSFQ Item	n	Min	Max	M	SD	Subscale Category
Having to do Institute work after the work day to meet what is expected of me.	89	0	4	2.44	1.261	Task Overload
Having insufficient opportunity for rest and preparation during the school day.	89	0	4	2.37	1.433	Relationships with Teachers
Working for an inadequate salary (having enough money).	89	0	4	1.85	1.458	Task Overload
Feeling I never catch up with my work.	89	0	4	1.65	1.431	Working with Students
Feeling my salary is not equal to my duties and responsibilities.	89	0	4	1.65	1.298	Working with Students
Planning and organizing learning activities for wide ability ranges.	89	0	4	1.60	1.213	Financial Security
Feeling my job does not provide the financial security I need.	89	0	4	1.52	1.383	Working with Institute Staff
Feeling there is a lack of administrative support for teachers in my school.	89	0	4	1.34	1.224	Task Overload
Working in a school where there is an atmosphere of conflict among teachers.	89	0	4	1.26	1.183	Working with Institute Staff
Having a few teachers in my school who do not carry their share of the load.	89	0	4	1.26	1.163	Working with Students
Feeling that poor communications exist among teachers in my school.	89	0	4	1.26	1.230	Financial Security
Feeling my students do not adequately respond to my teaching.	89	0	4	1.21	1.143	Working with Institute Staff
Feeling that cliques exist among teachers in my school.	89	0	4	1.19	1.269	Working with Students
Trying to motivate students who do not want to learn.	89	0	4	1.18	0.972	Relationships with Teachers
Feeling that a few difficult-to-discipline students take too much of my time away from the other students.	89	0	4	1.13	1.179	Working with Students
Feeling some teachers in my school are incompetent.	89	0	4	1.13	1.057	Relationships with Teachers
Having students in my class/classes who talk constantly.	89	0	4	1.09	0.984	Relationships with Teachers
Feeling I do not have adequate control of my students.	89	0	4	1.01	1.113	Task Overload
Having too little clerical help.	89	0	4	0.99	1.092	Working with Institute Staff
Feeling poor teacher–teacher relationships exist in my school.	89	0	4	0.91	1.114	Working with Students
Feeling my instructional coach (TEA) lacks insight into classroom problems.	89	0	4	0.85	1.293	Working with Institute Staff
Feeling there is a lack of parental involvement in solving school discipline problems.	89	0	4	0.82	1.051	Working with Institute Staff
Feeling there is competition among teachers in my school rather than a team spirit of cooperation.	89	0	4	0.81	1.010	Relationships with Teachers
Having to tell my students the same things over and over.	89	0	4	0.80	0.932	Relationships with Teachers
Feeling there is a lack of recognition for good teaching in my school.	89	0	4	0.76	1.012	Working with Students

Feeling my instructional coach (TEA) is too aloof and detached from the classroom.	89	0	4	0.71	1.140	Financial Security
Feeling too many parents are indifferent about school problems.	89	0	4	0.69	0.961	Task Overload
Feeling I cannot tell my instructional coach (TEA) in an open way how I feel about many school related matters.	89	0	4	0.64	1.131	Working with Institute Staff
Feeling my opinions are not valued by my instructional coach (TEA).	89	0	4	0.60	1.052	Relationships with Teachers
Feeling my instructional coach (TEA) gives me too little authority to carry out the responsibilities assigned to me.	89	0	4	0.56	1.076	Working with Students

Similar to the approach for anticipated stressors, I computed subscale composite scores based on the Modified TOSFQ. I calculated a mean for each subscale for comparison (Table 13). A repeated measures analysis of variance (ANOVA) examining mean-level differences across these subscales yielded significant variation among conditions, $F(4, 440) = 19.406$, $p = .000$. A post hoc Bonferroni test showed that means of the Task Overload and Financial Security subscales differed significantly at $p < .01$ from the other subscales. Again, I assessed whether participants' reports of sources of stress after Summer Institute varied by socioeconomic background, race and ethnicity, or proximity to undergraduate experience (i.e., years since graduation). Independent samples t-tests allowed me to compare participants' overall Modified TOSFQ scores and subscale scores separately, based on each sociodemographic variable.

Table 13

Means of Participants' Experienced Stressors from Modified TOSFQ Subscales

TOSFQ Item	n	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Task Overload	89	0	4	1.81	.920
Financial Security	89	0	4	1.67	1.299
Relationships with Teachers	89	0	4	1.12	.870
Working with Students	89	0	4	0.99	.739
Working with Institute Staff	89	0	4	0.78	.849

Results indicate that coming from a low-income background and identifying as a person of color significantly differentiated participants' experienced stress (see Tables 14 and 15). Specifically, participants from low-income backgrounds reported being more

stressed about working with institute staff when compared with their non-low-income peers. Additionally, participants from low-income backgrounds reported being more stressed about working with students and with financial security when compared with their non-low-income peers. I did not observe any differences in low-income participants' overall experienced stress scores or the subscales for Relationships with Teachers or Task Overload when compared to their non-low-income peers.

Table 14

Results of t-tests and Descriptive Statistics from Modified TOSFQ Subscales by Socioeconomic Status

	Demographic Group								
	Low-Income Background			Non-Low-Income Background			95% CI for Mean		
Subscale	M	SD	n	M	SD	n	Difference	t	df
Working with Institute Staff	6.28	6.18	67	2.40	1.96	10	1.915, 5.825	3.98***	75
Working with Students	8.51	6.29	67	4.40	3.27	10	.053, 8.162	2.09*	75
Financial Security	5.67	3.37	67	2.60	3.53	10	.484, 5.659	2.635*	75
Relationships with Teachers	8.42	6.34	67	7.80	6.00	10	-3.639, 4.875	.289	75
Task Overload	8.99	4.76	67	8.60	4.09	10	-2.776, 3.546	.243	75
Overall Score	37.87	20.66	67	25.80	14.06	10	-1.431, 25.562	2.360	75

* p<.05 *** p<.001

Table 15

Results of t-tests and Descriptive Statistics from Modified TOSFQ Subscales by Race

	Demographic Group						95% CI for Mean		
	Person of Color			Not a Person of Color					
Subscale	M	SD	n	M	SD	n	Difference	t	df
Working with Institute Staff	6.74	6.67	57	3.26	3.42	31	1.340, 5.617	3.234*	86
Working with Students	8.47	6.27	57	6.90	5.24	31	-1.060, 4.201	1.187	86
Financial Security	5.42	3.78	57	4.45	4.06	31	-.750, 2.689	1.121	86
Relationships with Teachers	8.56	6.92	57	6.61	4.01	31	-3.68, 4.265	1.673	86
Task Overload	9.60	4.67	57	7.84	4.25	31	-.251, 3.767	1.739	86
Overall Score	38.79	21.64	57	29.06	14.4	31	2.113, 17.337	2.542*	82

* p<.05

Participants who identified as people of color were more stressed about working with institute staff than their peers who did not identify as such. People of color also reported being more stressed by overall institute stress factors when compared with their peers. No significant differences in stress factor responses based on race were identified for the categories of Working with Students, Financial Security, Relationships with Teachers, or Task Overload. I did not observe any differences in participants' reports of experienced stress as a function of their proximity to undergraduate experience (see Table 16). Participants' responses on open-ended questions support the findings from the Modified TOSFQ. The most prevalent self-reported stressors were task overload (34.7%), relationships with teachers (23.6%), and working with students (16.7%).

Table 16

Results of Independent Sample t-tests and Descriptive Statistics from Modified TOSFQ Subscales by Proximity to Undergraduate Experience

	Demographic Group								
	College Senior			2+ Years out of Undergrad			95% CI for Mean		
Subscale	M	SD	n	M	SD	n	Difference	t	df
Working with Institute Staff	5.40	5.53	35	4.77	5.82	39	-2.009, 3.271	.476	72
Working with Students	8.09	7.69	35	7.69	6.57	39	-2.506, 3.293	.271	72
Financial Security	5.20	3.76	35	4.69	4.23	39	-1.354, 2.369	.544	72
Relationships with Teachers	8.17	5.92	35	7.49	6.70	39	-2.262, 3.630	.463	72
Task Overload	7.91	4.51	35	9.38	4.95	39	-3.676, .735	-1.329	72
Overall Score	34.77	17.87	35	34..03	22.97	39	-8.871, 10.632	.155	72

Research Question 4

Research Question 4 focused on the various coping strategies that Summer Institute participants self-reported, and whether these coping strategies varied by target demographics. General coping strategies were assessed through the administration of the CRI (see Table 17).

The CRI helps to understand participants' appraisals of a self-identified event and their preferred coping strategies. Thirty-three percent of participants (n = 26) identified a Teach For America program experience (including Summer Institute) as the most important problem or stressor they had experienced over the past 12 months; the remaining participants used an event unrelated to Teach For America. For Summer Institute participants, the two most prevalent reported coping categories were Emotional Discharge and Seeking Alternative Rewards (see Table 17). Independent samples t-tests were conducted to compare participants' coping responses and subscale scores separately, based on each sociodemographic variable (see Tables 18, 19, and 20). I did not observe any differences in participants' reports of coping responses as a function of their sociodemographics.

Table 17

Means and Categories of CRI Subscales

CRI Subscale	Category	N	Mean	SD
Emotional Discharge	Avoidant	69	58.78	11.694
Seeking Alternative Rewards	Avoidant	68	58.18	10.096
Problem Solving	Approach	69	57.93	7.856
Logical Analysis	Approach	73	55.69	7.707
Positive Reappraisal	Approach	74	55.28	8.371
Cognitive Avoidance	Avoidant	75	54.61	9.579
Seeking Guidance	Approach	75	53.53	7.342
Acceptance	Avoidant	68	52.63	9.83

Table 18

Results of Independent Sample t-tests and Descriptive Statistics from CRI Subscales by Socioeconomic Status

	Demographic Group								
	Low-Income Background			Non-Low-Income Background			95% CI for Mean		
Subscale	M	SD	n	M	SD	n	Difference	t	df
Approach	55.42	6.59	55	54.39	4.64	10	-3.329, 5.390	.472	63
Avoid	56.19	7.45	54	55.19	4.65	10	-3.896, 5.899	.409	62
Logical Analysis	55.63	8.373	52	53.96	7.20	9	-4.272, 7.611	.562	59
Positive Reappraisal	55.06	9.08	52	55.60	6.80	10	-6.604, 5.519	-.179	60
Seeking Guidance	54.13	7.96	54	52.00	5.16	10	-3.114, 7.374	.812	62
Problem Solving	57.30	8.48	50	57.33	6.91	9	-6.034, 5.968	-.011	57
Cognitive Avoidance	54.72	10.27	53	54.30	3.65	10	-3.268, 4.102	.229	40
Acceptance	52.72	9.34	46	50.70	12.29	10	-4.901, 8.935	.585	54
Seeking Alt. Rewards	58.46	10.10	48	59.11	8.68	9	-7.865, 6.559	-.181	55
Emotional Discharge	58.82	12.43	49	57.00	6.87	9	-6.754, 10.387	.425	56

Table 19

Results of Independent Sample t-tests and Descriptive Statistics from CRI Subscales by Race

	Demographic Group								
	Person of Color			Not a Person of Color			95% CI for Mean		
Subscale	M	SD	n	M	SD	n	Difference	t	df
Approach	55.45	5.90	47	55.44	6.22	29	-2.827, 2.838	.004	74
Avoid	56.56	8.07	46	56.57	8.07	29	-1.649, 4.377	.902	73
Logical Analysis	55.06	7.34	43	56.56	8.39	29	-5.228, 2.227	-.803	70
Positive Reappraisal	55.82	8.58	44	54.76	8.15	29	-2.953, 5.072	.527	71
Seeking Guidance	53.02	7.24	44	54.31	7.69	29	-4.808, 2.32	-.729	72
Problem Solving	57.78	8.54	41	57.81	6.78	27	-3.941, 3.872	-.018	66
Cognitive Avoidance	54.51	10.87	45	55.31	6.89	29	-4.916, 3.318	-.387	72
Acceptance	54.50	10.10	40	50.26	8.97	27	-.566, 9.047	1.762	65
Seeking Alt. Rewards	59.25	9.73	40	56.19	10.50	27	-1.932, 8.062	1.225	65
Emotional Discharge	59.00	11.59	39	58.45	12.23	29	5.257, 6.361	.190	66

Table 20

Results of Independent Sample t-tests and Descriptive Statistics from CRI Subscales by Proximity to Undergraduate Experience

	Demographic Group								
	College Senior			2+ Years out of Undergrad			95% CI for Mean		
Subscale	M	SD	n	M	SD	n	Difference	t	df
Approach	55.43	5.95	26	56.14	5.84	23	-2.226, 3.660	.487	63
Avoid	56.00	7.63	25	56.53	5.73	29	-2.897, 3.965	.311	62
Logical Analysis	54.75	7.83	34	57.06	7.31	28	-1.560, 6.195	1.195	60
Positive Reappraisal	54.97	8.62	34	55.89	8.12	28	-3.365, 5.209	.430	60
Seeking Guidance	54.08	6.78	36	54.04	8.04	28	-3.751, 3.656	-.026	62
Problem Solving	57.00	8.86	34	58.69	7.04	26	-2.385, 5.770	.831	58
Cognitive Avoidance	55.57	10.05	35	54.28	8.82	29	-6.070, 3.479	-.542	62
Acceptance	51.97	10.41	32	53.19	8.68	27	-4.059, 6.492	.462	57
Seeking Alt. Rewards	59.16	8.62	32	59.32	10.49	25	-4.907, 5.234	.065	55
Emotional Discharge	57.06	10.97	31	60.56	11.29	27	-2.371, 9.353	1.193	56

In interviews and focus groups, participants were asked specifically about Summer Institute and how they responded to stressors (i.e., "Describe a specific moment at Institute that caused you stress. What specific actions did you take to manage that stress?"). While they shared multiple coping strategies for each event, the most common categories of response were Cognitive Avoidance (n = 11), Emotional Discharge (n = 8), and Seeking Alternative Rewards (n = 6). One participant shared that she "would just drive" outside of the Phoenix area so she could feel in a control and get away from Summer Institute. Such responses highlight that individual strategies can actually be an amalgam of multiple coping strategies. This particular example reflects both Cognitive Avoidance and Seeking Alternative Rewards. It should be noted that the over-representation of avoidant strategies was likely influenced by the high percentage of low copers (n = 14; 87.5%) in the focus groups and interviews. However, when participants were

asked about how they saw others responding to stress at Summer Institute, the categories of Cognitive Avoidance, Emotional Discharge, and Seeking Alternative Rewards were also mentioned frequently.

Research Question 5

Research Question 5 asked what differentiated successful copers from those who struggled with stress at Summer Institute. Specifically, it asked how participants in the two categories (high and low copers) described their challenges, the coping strategies they employed, and how they acquired their stress management skills (see Table 4, Chapter 3).

Shared challenges. High copers and low copers found the workload and time demands of the institute to be stressful. All but one of the 17 focus group and interview participants mentioned the stress of the schedule and intensity of the work. The sentiment that "it was difficult to handle the long days with no breaks and sit through sessions" was repeated frequently in interviews. Several participants (n = 4) mentioned that the "5:00am–5:00pm" daily routine itself created a constant feeling of exhaustion. Some (n = 3) shared that the intense schedule led them to feel like they did not have control over how they spent any of their time each day. One participant even named the schedule as the most stressful part of the institute experience and identified the lack of autonomy as the most stressful thing:

> For me, it was the lack of autonomy that was really the most stressful thing. Most of our time was already scheduled. Like I said, I didn't really think it was scheduled in the best way and [as a result] I got really stressed out just not being able to have control.

Navigating interpersonal conflict regarding race was also a source of stress for both high and low copers. Both groups noted that the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusiveness (DEI) training sessions were stressful, as were interactions with others regarding issues of race. DEI professional developments are designed to engender knowledge, skills, mindsets, and

convictions that result in stronger outcomes for students. These sessions are a mix of direct instruction, inquiry, and dialogue spaces that focus on identity development, socio-political consciousness, and cultural competence. One participant shared her experience:

> I think the most stressful thing about the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusive[ness] training sessions was that they were something that the majority of the population in the room had never even thought that they were going to be in these situations where they would have to speak up about their opinions and their values and their experiences and witness others trying to process the same information. Everyone was coming into that room with different levels of experience and knowledge and comfort. There was, I don't think, enough foundation for how we can interact with one another productively. I just don't think anybody really knew the best approach. The energy in the room was always very contentious. You didn't know if what you were going to say was going offend or go off the right way.

These experiences seemed to fracture participants into subgroups based on racial background. Ideas shared by a limited group of "dominant voices" were often projected by participants to represent all members of a group, typically either White participants or participants of color. One participant of color shared that the situation at Summer Institute felt like "a cartoon or TV show after a certain point."

The racialized division between participants was most notable during dinner in the dining hall, when participants, self-segregated by race, would talk about what happened in the last Diversity, Equity, and Inclusiveness session. For example, a participant commented, "Back in the dining hall after a long day…you could see where everybody was sitting with the same groups talking about, clearly, what had happened that day." Some stated that they stopped participating in sessions because they did not want to be attacked or misunderstood. One Latina participant shared that she felt "shut down" in these sessions because [the] point [she] was trying to make did not come across the way [she] wanted."

Staff capacity to support learning and dialogue also appeared to have an effect on stress for some participants. Two participants explicitly mentioned their frustration with the inaction of

Summer Institute staff, with one noting that the lack of response by staff considerably increased her stress:

> The part that caused the most stress was the [Teach For America] staff's lack of response to the issue until days after it had passed, causing room for rumors to spread. The environment was very uncomfortable and many corps members felt unwelcome and/or unable to express their thoughts. Radical love turned more into harsh critiques and, honestly, bullying.

Participants who shared that racial tension was not an issue during their experience did not mention the role staff played in responding to conflict or facilitating dialogue.

Participants also shared that racial tensions were exacerbated by others' actions that were perceived to be ignorant or rooted in oppression. These incidents, identified by Burciaga, Huber, and Solorzano (2010) as microaggressions, are "everyday verbal and non-verbal, layered, and cumulative assaults directed towards People of Color that are committed automatically and unconsciously" (p. 2). As an example, multiple participants teaching at a high school site referred to what they called the "baby shower incident." The event occurred when a White female participant decided to host a baby shower for a summer school student. As one participant noted, "many participants felt like [it] was an example of white-saviorship [*sic*]." In this instance, like others shared by participants, the absence of skilled staff facilitation prevented dialogue from happening. One participant noted:

> People were not looking at the child, or the student, and the baby that was coming into the world. But, they were looking at race, and who was doing what, and for what reason, and people were not listening to each other, they just were stuck on their own ideas. And I thought that was not conducive to what we were doing for Teach For America, which is trying to create change and understanding of all people.

The absence of dialogue in situations like this led participants to "sort" each other based on levels of social awareness, which was usually determined by race. These groups often processed

racialized conflict in homogenous groups that were likely absent of divergent viewpoints. A White male participant shared:

> After a really intense session, [participants with high social awareness] would all hang out with each other, and then the people who really were in the dark would hang out with each other, and the people who were in between would hang out with each other. So the cliquey-ness kind of arose from people trying to unpack the stress that they were feeling, I think, and they had only a certain way to have these conversations. Because if someone feels that they're really woke, so to speak, they're going to have a hard time unpacking that stress from that conversation with somebody who doesn't really know how to speak this language and who is having a hard time with it.

Challenges for low copers. Unique to low copers who had both high and low levels of stress were frequent mentions of institute support structures and the misalignment of received support and perceived needs. One of the biggest challenges, especially for special education teachers, was the misalignment of summer school roles and fall teaching placements. One participant shared that she "felt that there was nothing useful for [her] at Institute to bring for special education…and those that were there were very last-minute planned." Low copers with concerns for placement misalignment often cited other experiences that had the potential to help, such as classroom management sessions, but that were instead "redundant" or "unhelpful." These generalized supports were frustrating for low copers who wanted tailored support for their individual challenges.

Low copers with low stress at institute were typically buffered from higher levels of stress by one of three variables: supportive staff members who provided individualized support, an absence of acute challenges, or a less demanding lead teaching schedule. Many of those with low stress (five of the 12 who provided qualitative feedback) had the same instructional coach, and they all mentioned her support as key to managing the challenges of Summer Institute. It is important to note that participants with this instructional coach worked at the site where the baby shower incident took place, and yet none of these participants explicitly mentioned it in

interviews or focus groups. One participant commented on her experience with her instructional coach in reference to other coaches at Summer Institute:

> I also had an amazing instructional coach. She made the entire experience just absolutely wonderful. I've spoken to people who had both an amazing instructional coach and a terrible instructional coach, and having someone who is supportive and inspiring and positive through the experience definitely can turn the course of what Institute was, I think.

Other low copers with low stress noted that they did not experience tensions at their school sites with Diversity, Equity, and Inclusiveness sessions. In response to racial tensions at her site, one participant shared, "We did not really have this issue. I think it was pretty peaceful on both sides." And other low copers with low stress (n = 2) had teaching assignments with less frequent lead teach time and more planning time. Ulhanee, a participant with a science assignment, shared:

> I was lucky in terms of the way my schedule was set up because I was teaching science. Science was the last subject of the day. I had a lot of flextime in the morning to do my lesson plan. I really tried to get all my work done so that I wouldn't have that much to do when I got back to the dorms after our sessions were done.

Strategies for high copers. The four high copers who provided qualitative feedback were distinct in that they said that stress was not only a normal part of life but part of Summer Institute, and that it was something to learn from as new teachers. One high coper noted:

> There's always going to be long hours, you're going to have to wake up at 5 AM to eat breakfast and make the bus. That's never going to change and that's something that I don't think Teach For America should focus on changing because having a full day of work, like, whatever. That's part of it. And we're working really hard now [in our permanent classrooms], so you have to at some point introduce that [stress] into participants' lives.

Another high coper shared that "stress in life is inevitable" and understood that successfully "managing stress is my job." With this lens, high copers were able to view the stressors of Summer Institute as a way to prepare for full-time classroom positions in the fall.

This helped to increase the perception of utility for participants, as all high copers named Summer Institute as a beneficial experience. As one participant shared, "in order to be best prepared to step into the class in the fall, all elements of Institute's demands are necessary."

High copers also strategically leveraged relationships with others at Summer Institute to help them solve problems. All four identified challenges that were similar to those described by other participants, but their appraisal of the challenges was distinct from low copers. High copers viewed the challenges as problems that they could solve with the support of others; they leveraged their school site administration, Summer Institute staff, family members, and each other to resolve stressors. In relation to challenges with employment problems at his full-time school site, one high coper shared that "uncertainty surrounding the hiring process was really, really tough," yet he still "stayed in regular email contact with [his] charter system" and "talked with his mentors" at Teach For America. Like other high copers, he was able to clearly articulate his needs and work with others to resolve his challenges.

Strategies for low copers. Low copers spoke in more general terms when reporting their responses to stressful events. Whereas high copers named one to two strategies to manage stress, low copers, on average, named more than three—and they were often a mix of both approach and avoidant strategies. Of the strategies they named, the most frequent were related to seeking alternative rewards, emotional discharge, and seeking guidance. These strategies were typically employed to remove the stressor or the symptoms of the stressor without expressed intent to address the stressor itself.

Ten of the 12 low copers sought alternative rewards to escape the challenges of Summer Institute. Some (n = 3) were able to identify their challenges, such as lack of autonomy, and name how their strategies, like driving to school in the morning, helped them achieve a sense of

control and seemingly solve their problems. Others (n = 7) were only able to name the strategies they used to deal with the stress, like drinking, going to the gym, or praying. Some (n = 3) even specifically named leaving the institute for brief moments or over entire weekends to escape and find other rewards.

Low copers frequently responded to stressors with emotional discharge. Many (n = 8) used venting as an emotional discharge strategy with other participants as well as family and friends. One participant shared that her venting at Summer Institute was nuanced, noting that "some of it was productive, but there was a lot of unproductive venting." She also recognized that much of the venting "increased the stress…a lot of complaining that ended up making everything worse." Other low copers (n = 2) shared that they verbally fought more with their partners or significant others during the institute as a result of the stress. One participant indicated that she "had a lot of arguments with her husband, unnecessary arguments, but it was all the build up, the stress." Others resorted to crying and "letting it all out" as a way to "get back on track."

Like high copers, low copers also sought guidance from others as a way to manage stress. Distinct to low copers, however, was their appraisal of the challenges and the ways they leveraged others to support them with their problems. Many (n = 5) externalized their stressors, so their quests for guidance were often rooted in finding someone to fix their problems or affirm their current approaches or beliefs. As an example, when one low coper, Bethanie, was struggling with working with other participants, she approached her instructional coach to endorse her own "philosophy" instead of working through the issue. The lack of clearly defined problems and the pursuit of others to solve their problems often left low copers feeling

disappointed and unsupported. Some even shared that they felt lied to by Teach For America and that the program "painted a picture [of support] that wasn't met."

Coping skill acquisition. Twelve of the 16 participants who took part in focus groups and interviews or shared reflections noted that they leveraged previous experiences to manage stress from Summer Institute. Most spoke to their familiarity with managing stress related to workload. One participant said that she "definitely faced similar challenges in having a lot to do and not enough hours in the day to complete it." In relation to previous experiences managing interpersonal stress, only one participant, a high coper, shared that she had experience navigating challenges with colleagues. She clarified that she learned to "listen and participate" in collegial dialogue, especially when she disagreed with an approach or point of view, and that when it comes to navigating challenges with colleagues, even if it risks potential discomfort, "the risk is well worth it."

Several other participants (n = 4) shared that they had never experienced situations where interpersonal conflict was present in a sustained working relationship. One participant noted that she had "never had a toxic relationship with a supervisor before," and that she did not know how to respond to the challenges she faced when working with him. Two participants shared that they had no previous experiences like Summer Institute and therefore no experiences to leverage to help manage the stress. One said, "I've never really experienced anything quite like the summer that I've had with institute and everything else. And I would say that a lot of the stress that I experienced really did come from the fact that this was the first time doing a lot of this stuff."

While there were no clear trends between high copers and low copers when reflecting on their previous experiences managing stress, most believed that their approaches to managing

stress were effective. Venting and drinking were the only two responses that seemed to be shared with reluctance, as participants qualified statements with phrases like "to be completely honest." Only one participant said that she struggled with managing stress and that her strategies were not effective. She stated, "I'm still struggling to find ways to not stress because I believe personally I am very soft, and I do have trouble with handling a lot of things. I'm just being completely honest. I guess I'm hurt easily, and I get stressed out easily."

In summary, there are several key differences between high copers and low copers. High copers anticipated stress more frequently than low copers and also reported approaching stressful situations with a problem-solving lens. Low copers reported using more maladaptive strategies (e.g., drinking, venting, etc.) to avoid the effects of stressful situations. Lastly, low copers reported leveraging colleagues, peers, and family members for conflict avoidance, whereas high copers reported leveraging others to solve problems.

Chapter 5:
Discussion

Results from my study highlight that stress plays a role in the participant experience at Summer Institute. In this section, I detail key findings from my study and link those findings to previous research. I begin with the findings from my first research question and address the increase in stress at Summer Institute. I then described the way workload increases stress and how the influence of stressors becomes more acute during Summer Institute. Next, I transition to the role stress plays in the experience of participants from a low-income background and how stress intensified in moments of ideological and racial conflict. I close my key findings with an explanation of how participants made meaning of stressors and their coping responses.

Findings Highlights

Stress increases at Summer Institute. There is lore surrounding Teach For America's Summer Institute—it is often referred to as "bootcamp" or recounted with wide eyes and deep sighs. So, in many ways, it was not surprising to see that participants showed significantly higher levels of stress stepping out of the institute than when they began. The high level of stress for some participants during the transitional period before the start of Summer Institute is supported by the literature on stress and life transitions for adults (Lane, 2015, 2015; Weiss, Freund, & Wiese, 2012). Research also shows that levels of stress are particularly higher for emerging adults (ages 18–29)—an important finding considering more than 75% of participants in the current study were in this age range (Lane, Leibert, & Goka-Dubose, 2017).

Intense workloads are expected and experienced. Summer Institute was described by a former participant as "trying to drink water from a fire hydrant." Participants in this study had a similar take: They anticipated that the workload would be the most stressful part of Summer

Institute, and they reported that workload was, indeed, the most stressful part. Prior to Summer Institute, their concerns were related to the fatigue resulting from the intense workload, naming insufficient opportunity for rest and preparation during the school day as their leading anticipated stressor. After Summer Institute, they reported that the work itself and the resulting crunch for time were actually the most stressful experiences.

Interestingly, workload is one of the most stable variables at Summer Institute. Running five institute sites that collectively support nearly 4,000 participants requires systemization ("2017 Institute Schedule," 2017). Therefore, most participants have the same workload throughout Summer Institute; they have lesson plans due at the same time, regardless of school site; they attend the same learning sessions; and they lead-teach equal amounts of time each day. While there are some exceptions to this, like Ulahnee and her science placement, by and large, workload is evenly distributed across participants.

The experience of participants from low-income backgrounds. It is not that surprising that finances—and, as a larger category, socioeconomic status—were not mentioned often in interviews or focus groups. As Idenberg (2016) noted, "Americans lack any deeper appreciation of class." (p. xiv). The lack of a common language regarding class and Americans' socialization to avoid conversations about class may help to explain why participants did not raise these issues (Fussell, 1992; Leondar-Wright, 2014). And yet, the stress of Summer Institute is most acutely felt by participants from low-income backgrounds.

Participants from low-income background experienced significantly more stress than their non-low-income peers when working with institute staff and students as well as in regards to financial security. It is important to note that the current findings are supported by stress research in other workplace environments ("Work, Stress and Health & Socioeconomic Status,"

2010). Research has found that employees from lower economic backgrounds enter the workplace with higher levels of stress hormones (Cohen, Doyle, & Baum, 2006). This may help to explain why participants from low-income backgrounds had significantly higher levels of stress for anticipated contextual factors than their non-low-income peers.

Conflict, ideology, and race. Identity markers also influenced the ways participants engaged with each other and institute staff. While working with colleagues and Summer Institute staff was not reported as a major stressor for participants on the SIESS, it was significantly higher for people of color than for their White peers, and it was a major trend in focus groups and interviews. This is likely related to the racial tension noted by participants in interviews and focus groups. Relational stress appeared to arise from situations where participants' beliefs were challenged or perspectives from a different worldview were shared. Some of these incidents, like the baby shower, were clearly connected to issues of race. Others, like when Bethanie met with her instructional advisor to affirm her philosophical approach to teaching, were less connected to race.

For educators, incongruence in beliefs and worldviews among peers can lead to stress and isolation (Yilmaz, Tuzun, & Topcu, 2008). While both high copers and low copers reported increased levels of stress for situations where their personal worldviews or beliefs were challenged, low copers reported using coping strategies that prioritized emotional and cognitive safety over work to address the problem. The return to safety is human nature; humans constantly seek and create spaces where they feel a sense of belonging and their ideas and beliefs will be accepted (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). This was most evident at Summer Institute during dinner, when participants, segregated largely by race, processed and made meaning of their experiences.

Attempts to make meaning. This study exposed evidence of participants creating spaces to make meaning of their Summer Institute experiences. Some appeared to be conscious decisions, like talking things through with roommates, and others were unconscious, like driving home on weekends or stepping away for a brief trip to the store. These self-created spaces may actually reinforce the fragmentation noted by participants. Research shows that when humans are faced with dissociative experiences and given space to make meaning, they work to reaffirm, not challenge, their beliefs (Klein, Moon, & Hoffman, 2006). This phenomenon, in conjunction with confirmation bias, may encourage participants to reject facts and reason in order to solidify their held beliefs and opinions (Klein et al., 2006; Motyl, Iyer, Oishi, Trawalter, & Nosek, 2014).

Facilitating this meaning-making process is also challenging. Participants explicitly noted that staff members' inability to hold dialogue space for contentious issues, like the baby shower incident, left them to process the experiences on their own, typically in segregated spaces. This reoccurring pattern is likely attributed to Teach For America's aggressive efforts to recruit participants from diverse backgrounds and the simultaneous increase in institutional and geographic segregation of Americans by race, class, and ideology (Motyl et al., 2014; GAO, 2016; "Student Diversity, TFA, and the Teaching Workforce," 2016). For many participants, Summer Institute functioned as a five-week dissociative experience, especially if it served as the first experience of sustained exposure to diverse perspectives or previous lived experiences.

Unchallenged, the past informs the present. As noted in the literature on coping, participants leveraged their previous experiences with stress to guide them in how to manage it at Summer Institute (Alexander, Feeney, Hohaus, & Noller, 2001; Folkman, 2013; Neupert, Ennis, Ramsey, & Gall, 2016). High copers leveraged previous experiences where they were able to successfully solve problems or reduce stress. They tended to approach stressful situations with a

positive outlook and the understanding that stress was an inherent part of life and teaching. Their coping strategies were more adaptive in nature. As a result, these participants referred to Summer Institute as a positive experience that facilitated their development as instructional leaders and helped connect them to a network of colleagues and mentors who were positioned to support their growth.

Low copers, on the other hand, seemed to leverage previous experiences where they were able to get through stressful situations instead of solving them. This protection-based approach helps to explain the presence of both adaptive and maladaptive coping strategies in what seemed to be scattered, reactive attempts to manage the stress (Doney, 2013). And while the SIASS showed that most participants anticipated substantial levels of stress during Summer Institute, low copers tended to view stressful events through a negative lens and with negative emotions. This orientation understandably led them to use emotional discharge and the pursuit of alternative rewards as coping strategies.

No evidence of skill building for adaptive coping strategies was found in Summer Institute curricula or was mentioned by participants in interviews or focus groups. Some participants noted that staff frequently mentioned self-care and framed it as a priority. However, the lack of dedicated attention to learning how to practice self-care or effective ways to manage stress at Summer Institute created a sense of skepticism among participants that wellness was really a priority. For some participants, it ultimately created a sense of frustration. In the absence of time and space to build capacity for managing stress, participants were left to rely on each other and their previous experiences with coping to complete Summer Institute. In many ways, this is one of the biggest takeaways from the study: Participants largely made it through

Summer Institute by managing stress with the tools they had when they walked onto campus on Day 1.

Revisiting the Purpose of Summer Institute

I began this study in earnest pursuit of understanding how stress influences the experience of participants at Teach For America's Summer Institute. Before clarifying recommendations for future iterations of the institute, it is imperative to revisit the function of Summer Institute as a cornerstone of the Teach For America program and to describe how stress is a direct threat to its success.

At its core, Summer Institute has always been devoted to the accelerated development of its participants. While the organization claims that a fundamental element of its theory of change is the demonstrated leadership capacity of its recruits, it is undeniable that it also relies on Summer Institute to build instructional knowledge and skills (Kopp, 2003). For the majority of participants who have limited or no previous teaching experience, there is a lot to learn in a short amount of time. More recently, as the organization has moved to embrace a collective impact model, Summer Institute has begun to serve as a space to build capacity for working collectively towards a goal with other leaders (See Appendix A). It is the place where participants from diverse backgrounds learn how to work side by side as teachers to grow in their instructional leadership and foster relationships that enable long-term collaboration and action.

Information regarding instructional growth and connectedness among Summer Institute participants is largely missing, but there is research dedicated to understanding the impact of stress on learning and social connection (Siegel, 2015). We know that unhealthy levels of stress impede learning and the ability to retain information; we know that new social connections are more challenging to create under stressful conditions; and we now know, as a result of the

current research, that Summer Institute increases stress for participants. Therefore, given the main functions of Summer Institute and the findings of this study, the following set of recommendations is imperative for the future success of Summer Institute.

Recommendations for Practice

Stronger Staff Training and Support. At the core, my study revealed that the experience of participants is largely influenced by the planning and actions of Summer Institute staff. Therefore, the leading recommendations for practice focus on supporting staff at the Summer Institute. These recommendations are rooted in the Teach For America ecosystem, but can and should be applied to teacher education programs more broadly.

Prioritize Stress & Coping Management Capacity in Hiring. Currently, Summer Institute utilizes instructional coaches, academic deans, and deans of culture to steward the experience of participants ("Teach For America Careers & Jobs," 2017). An examination of these job descriptions reveals no mention of ability to support participants with stress or with navigating professional relationships (although the job description for dean of culture does include participant culture as a sweeping term). Without an emphasis on understanding and responding to stress in the staffing and hiring processes, the support of participants who experience stress is likely to be reactive and reserved for the most severe cases—for example, the potential resignation of a participant or a physical illness (Kompier, Geurts, Gründemann, Vink, & Smulders, 1998).

To take a proactive approach, Teach For America should consider stress management skills in hiring and training staff. To ensure that staff are capable of serving as models of secure attachment figures for participants, screening in the interview process for full- and part-time staff should include processes that help the interviewer understand attachment type. With secure

attachment as their base, staff will be more likely to support participants in moments of conflict and engage with conflict themselves in more adaptive ways (Alexander et al., 2001). Staff should also be explicitly responsible for understanding the physiological and psychological impacts of stress so they can better support the management of stress with participants. When staff are proactively aware of the challenges of stress and how to respond, they are more likely to offer support for stress management and to provide recommendations for adaptive coping strategies (Kompier et al., 1998). Support for individualized interactions will not be sufficient for stress reduction; staff members also must be equipped to navigate group dynamics, especially in moments of conflict.

Training for Conflict Management & Group Facilitation. Many of the stressful experiences at Summer Institute occurred in group settings. In interviews, participants explicitly shared their disappointment with the staff's ability to respond to breaches in culture, especially when they involved issues of ideology and identity. Therefore, in addition to building awareness and skills of stress and coping strategies, staff should be hired for and trained in their ability to manage interpersonal conflict in group settings. Scholars of group dynamics understand that conflict is inevitable and necessary for a group's ability to develop problem solving skills and strengthen connections (Camacho, 2002). As the participants noted, if conflict is handled poorly by a facilitator, it can result in polarization and participant resignation (Camacho, 2002). Camacho identified six key areas for developing staff capacity for navigating conflict in diverse settings: conflict resolution; cultural competency; reinforcement of purpose and process; maintenance of their role and responsibility; self-disclosure; and setting limits. Teach For America should explore a similar framework for hiring and developing its staff.

Implications for Teacher Education Programs. Teacher Education Programs more broadly would benefit from reexamining their hiring practices through the lens of stress, stress management, and ability to manage group conflict and processes. As Cochran-Smith (2003) shared in his review on teacher education programs, "more attention to what teachers of teachers themselves need to know, and institutional supports need to be in place in order to meet the complex demands of preparing teachers for the 21st century" (p. 6). At present, many teacher education programs focus on the instructional capacity of faculty with little, if any mention of ability to support candidates' psychological wellbeing or manage group processes. I recommend that teacher education programs include similar hiring recommendations and include ongoing professional development for current faculty as prescribed to Teach For America.

While teacher educator programs can and should reevaluate their guidelines for faculty quality and ongoing development, a revision of teacher educator standards could also support teacher education programs in this effort and increase accountability. While organizations like the Association of Teacher Educators (ATE) publish professional standards for teacher educators, a review of those standards reveal no mention of ability to manage stress, support students' psychological wellbeing, or support group processes and conflict. The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE), the nation's largest teacher education accreditation organization, has an entire standard dedicated to faculty qualifications and development (Standard 5), but again no mention of faculty's ability to support student psychological wellbeing or group processes.

Stronger Programmatic Design. Summer Institute staff are limited by the structures and experience within the Summer Institute. Therefore, it is also appropriate for Summer Institute programmatic designers to reconsider elements of the summer training to account for and

support participant stress. Again, these recommendations are directed to the Teach For America program but can and should be expanded to teacher education programs.

Address stress and coping sooner. As participants head into the transition period before Summer Institute, stress is already high. Therefore, an emphasis on building coping strategies should be present in programming and support as soon as participants accept their offer to join Teach For America, typically months before the start of Summer Institute. There is promise in explicitly teaching adults adaptive coping skills to reduce stress, but research shows that their awareness of adaptive coping strategies does not always lead them to consistently use these strategies when faced with stressful situations (Neupert et al., 2016). However, research shows that awareness of coping strategies coupled with a secure attachment style increases the likelihood that individuals will use adaptive coping strategies when confronted with stressful situations (Alexander et al., 2001). Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) asserted that adults with secure attachment have adopted a positive model of self and others, as they fear neither abandonment nor emotional intimacy. For this reason, the Teach For America program should invest resources in building participants' repertoires of adaptive coping strategies and in increasing secure attachment styles for their participants months before they arrive. Specifically, the program should focus on building earned-secure attachment through long-term exposure to other participants, alumni, or staff with secure attachment (Pearson, Cohn, Cowan, & Cowan, 1994). The literature refers to earned-security as individual who recount challenging previous lived experiences, "but do so in a thoughtful, reflective manner and neither discount the potential negative impact of such experiences nor remain entangled in those experiences" (Paley, Cox, Burchinal, & Payne, 1999, p. 583). Additionally, Teach For America can help participants create their coherent narratives—a process that helps adults understand how their previous lived

experiences, especially their childhoods, influence their daily actions and shape their foundational beliefs.

Teach For America should also consider utilizing stress screeners and coping inventories at the onset of the participant experience. Diagnostic tools for stress have been found to be reliable for identifying stress and anxiety in the early stages, which could open the door for early supports and interventions (Kroenke, Spitzer, Williams, & Löwe, 2009; Spitzer, Kroenke, Williams, & Group, 1999). These tools could also prompt ongoing monitoring by staff to ensure participant wellbeing. Coping inventories, like the CRI, should be shared directly with participants to help them understand their dominant coping styles and build a vision for how they want to cope with stress.

Decrease workload and increase meaning making. The findings of my research clearly show that participants are stressed by the intensity of Summer Institute daily routines and the work required for instructional growth and classroom readiness each day. The growing body of research on the neurobiology of learning sets forth that a healthy level of stress is necessary for spurring learning and growth, but toxic levels of stress severely inhibit learning (McEwen et al., 2015; Shonkoff et al., 2012).

As the scope and sequence for Summer Institute outlines, participants gain exposure to a myriad of foundational instructional practices throughout the five-week program. Yet content coverage should not be confused with content comprehension. As a result of high levels of stress and the volume of content being delivered, retention of material is likely very low for many participants. Seminal studies of information overload support this finding. Specifically, once learners reach a saturation point of learning, the introduction of any new material radically decreases performance, diminishes the ability to set priorities, and makes it much harder for

learners to recall previously learned material (Chewning & Harrell, 1990; O'Reilly, 1980; Schick, Gordon, & Haka, 1990). Through a "less is more" approach, Summer Institute could better position participants to retain critical pedagogical knowledge for the start of their full-time placements in the fall. Designers of the Summer Institute experience should narrow the focus of pedagogical skills and provide resources for differentiated skill development based on participant need (Davies, Dean, & Ball, 2013). Additionally, all whole-group direct instruction experiences should be reconsidered, as they are likely to be relevant (or perceived as such) to only a fraction of the participants in the room (Lage, Platt, & Treglia, 2000).

Reducing workload in high-stakes environments does not necessarily reduce stress; it is also important to account for the stress that might exist for participants with a "less is more" approach. Seminal researchers have demonstrated that when adult learners are aware of what they do know and of information they should have but do not, anxiety increases (Belkin, 1980; Dervin, 1999; Kuhlthau, 1991). At Summer Institute, this anxiety could be reduced through repeated exposure to a clearly articulated scope and sequence of participant development before, during, and after the program. If participants better understand where they are in their instructional journeys, where they are going next, and why those choices were made, anxiety should lessen (Knowles, III, & Swanson, 2011). Stress could further be reduced by giving participants time and space to make meaning of their learning processes (Mezirow, 1991).

A review of the daily Summer Institute schedule shows that there is very little, if any, opportunity for participants to make meaning of what they are learning. Adult learning theory asserts that devoting time and space for adults to make meaning of new experiences and retain knowledge is critical (Mezirow, 1991). Summer Institute participants would benefit from the creation of frequent facilitated spaces to make meaning of experiences and new material. This

recommendation is aligned to Schon's (1990) concept of the reflective practitioner—that is, a professional who is consistently building capacity to reflect on what happened, why it happened, and how personal beliefs, context, and other variables influenced the outcome. Without the reduction of workload and increase of processing space, stress is likely to remain high while the capacity for learning will continue to be stunted.

Provide support in navigating interpersonal conflict. Summer Institute is a perfect breeding ground for interpersonal conflict; diverse participants are gathered with limited time to build relationships and they are tasked with collaboratively teaching students and building their capacity as educators in an accelerated setting. While financial concerns and workload certainly created additional stress for participants, interpersonal conflict was the most complex and lasting form. The high percentage of Summer Institute participants who are in early adulthood contributes to this finding, as research shows that younger adults struggle more with the effects of interpersonal conflict than older adults do (Lane et al., 2017). While years of experience with adversity might help older adults avoid interpersonal challenges, it does not necessarily help restore relationships damaged by conflict (Blanchard-Fields, 2007). With an orientation towards collective action, Teach For America's Summer Institute should help all participants, regardless of age, utilize adaptive strategies to navigate challenges and restore ruptured relationships. Empathetic connection and communication could be useful in supporting participants to build these adaptive strategies.

Empathy is understood by many researchers to be the root of healthy relationships (Batson, Duncan, Ackerman, Buckley, & Birch, 1981; Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Specifically, the empathetic skill of understanding someone else's perspective, especially in moments of conflict, is linked to more positive outcomes and experiences (Krauss & Fussell, 1991; Lamm,

Batson, & Decety, 2007). Therefore, in order for Teach For America to successfully help participants navigate conflict together, efforts must be made to increase empathetic connections between them. Since these connections are built and sustained more easily in moments of reduced stress, the transition before Summer Institute and the institute itself are not the ideal time to develop them (Davis & Oathout, 1992). Rather, the early stages of onboarding should focus on building relationships and the capacity to seek the perspectives of others in challenging situations. These experiences should be experiential and authentic in order to help increase learning; they should be rooted in critical pedagogy to ensure that diverse perspectives and previous lived experiences are represented in conflict management (Kincheloe, 2008; Kolb & Kolb, 2017; Vella, 2002); they should be sustained over time to help participants work collectively through moments of challenge and celebration.

A Note Regarding the Socio-Political Climate During Research

It is important to note that this study was conducted in the aftermath of the 2016 presidential election. During this time, hostile attitudes towards racial and ethnic minorities, immigrants, and Muslims became elevated in American discourse and throughout the media (Williams & Medlock, 2017). This study was not designed to, nor does it capture the complexities of the socio-political climate nationally, in Los Angeles, or in Phoenix. Therefore, the findings and the recommendations of this study should be considered with this additional context.

Limitations and Recommendations for Research

A limitation of my study was with the usage of the Modified TOSFQ as part of the SIASS and SIESS. The Modified TOSFQ was designed to understand workplace conditions that lead to stress for practicing teachers, not teachers in preservice contexts like Summer Institute.

While I took measures to adjust the language for application at Summer Institute, there are concerns with construct reliability in this context. Indeed, interviews and focus groups highlighted that some stressors during Summer Institute occurred during training sessions, and this is not accounted for in the Modified TOSFQ. Though I believe the Modified TOSFQ provided useful information regarding participants' experiences, other metrics should be explored or created to better understand the stressors at Summer Institute.

Additionally, another limitation of the study was the timing of the qualitative reflections. First, recruitment for participation in focus groups was challenging, as participants were in their first month of teaching. This may have led to a skewed sample, as some participants may have been too overwhelmed to participate (Barbour & Kitzinger, 1999). Second, the time between the Summer Institute experience and the focus groups, interviews, and reflections, although relatively short, could have affected the quality and nuance of participant reflections. Grand tour questions were used to help focus participants on the Summer Institute experience, but the prevailing, somewhat negative group narrative surrounding Summer Institute and the current stressors of participants' full-time jobs likely influenced responses (Brenner, 2006). To combat both of these challenges, further research should seek to capture participant reflections during Summer Institute. This process could facilitate more detailed accounts of stressors and specificity of coping response selection.

It is also important to note the disparity in representation of low copers and high copers. While 72% of eligible low copers participated in qualitative reflections, only 21% of eligible high copers participated. While it is unclear why high copers abstained from qualitative reflections, previous research suggests that high copers are more likely to know their limits and set clear boundaries (Alexander et al., 2001; Baker & Berenbaum, 2007; Neupert et al., 2016).

Further research should establish differentiated recruitment efforts for copers to ensure equal representation within analysis.

Further research should also seek to specifically understand the experiences of participants from low-income backgrounds. This study, along with others, found significant differences in the appraisal of stressful situations and the employment of coping strategies for participants from low-income backgrounds (Cohen et al., 2006; "Work, Stress and Health & Socioeconomic Status," 2013). Given the statistically higher levels of stress for participants from low-income backgrounds connected to working with others, supporting students, and financial security, additional studies should focus on why these factors affect participants from low-income backgrounds more acutely.

The causes of group polarization should also be explored in future research. Evidence from interviews and focus groups suggests that the fragmentation that occurred at Summer Institute persists for participants when they begin their full-time roles at their placement schools. An inherent consequence of intentional communities is the fragmentation and schismogenesis of its members (Bateson, 1935; S. L. Brown, 2002), and further studies are necessary to understand what dispositional and contextual factors exacerbate the polarization of the Teach For America community at Summer Institute. A particular focus should be the role of identity markers and previous lived experiences in the fragmentation of participants in the midst of stress and conflict.

Efforts should also be made to understand the impact of stress on learning and interpersonal connections. As the foundational experience for participant learning and community building, Summer Institute does not currently assess progress towards these two crucial outcomes. Further research could help Teach For America design reliable measures that shed light on participant learning and connectivity with their peers. Methods similar to those

used in the current study could then be used to understand participant stress and coping responses. Lastly, a longitudinal approach should be taken with research designs to understand the short and long term effects of Summer Institute and stress.

Summary and Conclusion

Teach For America has established a bold vision for fundamentally shifting the context of education in the United States. It is a vision that inspires thousands of leaders to enlist in the program each year, and all begin their journeys at Summer Institute. It is undeniable that Teach For America has worked to deliver on this vision. Today, more than 53,000 alumni of the program have helped to accelerate the promise of education equity. In a recent article, CEO Elisa Villanueva Beard (2017) reflected:

> Most days, I think we're poised to accelerate this progress and see a meaningfully different reality for all children in my lifetime: they will have social mobility, economic security, and the skills, knowledge, and influence to lead their communities and our country. But some days, I question whether the individuals and institutions who share this vision are truly capable of working across lines of difference to create enduring change.

My study underscores the important role Teach For America plays in examining its own individuals and institutions. My findings suggest that several adjustments to the design and structure of Summer Institute could dramatically change the experience for participants, and ultimately outcomes for students. As a cornerstone institution of the Teach For America program, Summer Institute is likely to endure for the foreseeable future; it can carry on as an organizational milestone that participants must simply "survive," or it can transform into a structure that launches participants into an experience the organization rightfully wants for its members. Equipped with the findings from my study, further research, and the dedication of Teach For America's people, change for Summer Institute is certainly possible.

Appendix A:
Overview of Summer Institute

National Summer Institute 2017
October 27, 2016
Teach For America Internal Memo to Teacher Leadership Development Staff

HEADLINE: National institutes chart a new course
Since the conclusion of the summer 2016 institute cycle, our team has reflected on our vision, shared charge, results, and lessons learned. To accelerate our progress toward the breakthrough results over the next three years and to operate at the vanguard of teacher preparation, we've decided to set a new course for our reimagined program efforts. This year, our team will work collectively and in close partnership with TLD [Teacher Leadership and Development] to launch a new approach to CM [corps members] development at all national institutes, one that grows out of past pilots and internal and external learning. This approach involves alignment across all national institutes on anchoring frameworks, curriculum materials, adult learning methods, and structures that support implementation of these components. We believe that this will enable us to channel the collective power of our team and partner teams to design, plan, and implement a holistic approach; expand our opportunity for impact and learning across multiple institute/regional environments; and hasten our ability to learn, evolve, and improve our work over the next three years.

WHAT: Key Tenets of the Approach
"This approach involves alignment across all national institutes on anchoring frameworks, curriculum materials, adult learning methods, and structures that support implementation of these components…"

We're making changes to the substance and methods of our program at all national institutes this summer, and working together differently to position ourselves for success. These key tenets will guide our planning choices:

Frameworks

> **TAL: Vision for Students.** As with our approach this past summer, we will ground CMs in the holistic vision for students represented by the student outcomes wheel's four broader outcomes (academic achievement, personal growth, sociopolitical consciousness, and access), explicitly introducing the full wheel and prioritizing indicators within, as well as content-specific core components of instruction to further augment understanding of the academic outcomes.
>
> **Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CRP)** undergirds and is central to our reimagined approach. CRP presumes that the teacher holds high and transparent academic expectations; meets students where they are and scaffolds their knowledge by building on their cultural and linguistic practices; understands her/his own cultural background and

actively learns about those of her/his students; and views education as one pathway to liberation by actively developing her/his own sociopolitical consciousness and those of her/her students.

The Anti-Oppression & Liberatory Consciousness Lens, a tool that represents our organizational approach to Diversity, Equity & Inclusiveness work, will be used both with staff and CMs/alumni across the continuum.

Curriculum

Core instructional practices function as a set of teacher actions that cross content areas, though they can be enacted in content-specific ways. These are both planned and in-the-moment actions that teachers take to advance student learning. We will introduce CMs to all nine core practices to varying degrees of focus—some to engage with deeply and some with lighter touch at institute. These are "front and center" in our curriculum; they are actions we'll prepare CMs to take in pursuit of TAL [Teaching as Leadership] orientations and outcomes.

Orientation to content. We commit to training teachers through their content and helping them incorporate cross-cutting and content-specific knowledge and pedagogy.

Revised approach to classroom management. We'll use an approach that is not compliance-focused, but instead grounded in CRP and the learning environment core practice. This approach will focus on developing CM mindsets about students' potential and the role of the classroom environment and in promoting access, equity, voice, and joy as well as developing CMs' technical skill to create and maintain this environment.

DEI [Diversity, Equity, and Inclusiveness] programming. After a year of testing with national and regional institute partners, the DEI programming in FY17 narrowly focuses on the overlap between novice teacher pedagogical development and broader DEI development—Cultural Competence, Sociopolitical Consciousness, and Identity Development. Taking advantage of our Program Continuum orientation, we are frontloading context building in pre-corps & regional collaboration spaces, to prioritize experiential and practice-based exploration during institute.

Andragogy (Adult Learning Methods)

Public practice. We will radically dial up the amount of practice CMs experience at institute so that, between learning and teaching on their own, CMs have the opportunity to "approximate" teaching via public practice, which enables novice teachers to experience "instructive failure" in an environment that supports them to make meaning and improve before enactment with students. Ideally, this is done in a manner that supports CMs to focus on key aspects of their work while deprioritizing others for the sake of targeted improvement. Specifically, we'll utilize a learning cycle and associated adult learning methods that focus on supporting novice teachers to: 1) acquire

knowledge; 2) immediately apply that knowledge for skill building through supported practice; 3) apply knowledge/skill in the classroom context; and 4) analyze their execution of that knowledge.

Execution first with gradual increase of responsibility to independent planning. CMs will be provided with complete lessons plans (that are aligned to our vision for students as represented by the TAL student outcomes wheel and core components of instruction) for about half of institute, and will be strategically supported to increase their planning responsibility such that they have the opportunity to plan for the second half of institute and receive feedback on those plans.

1:1 and small group coaching will enable CMs to translate development in teacher education spaces to action and refinement in their practice.

Self-guided virtual learning modules as supplemental tools will provide an element of differentiation in bolstering CM understanding of specialized curriculum components, e.g., subject matter knowledge.

WHY: Background and Aims

"To accelerate our progress toward the breakthrough results over the next three years and to operate at the vanguard of teacher preparation…"

Background

In coming to this decision, we gave careful thought to both our external and internal environment. We face a few sources of healthy pressure to improve our national institutes, from outside and from within. Externally, the college- and career-readiness standards across all of our states require our teachers to teach differently than they've been required to teach in the past. Additionally, there is a broadening and deepening accountability culture given the recent passage of ESSA [Every Student Succeeds Act] in the majority of our states and districts, both for our teachers and increasingly for teacher preparation programs, including our own.

Within our own walls, we're constantly refining our understanding of what classrooms that will dismantle inequality look like. As our definition of transformational change evolves, and as we better understand what will be required for students to access expanded opportunities and act as change-agents in their communities and our nation at large, we more clearly see the ways in which our institute model, built for different aims at a different time in our organizational history, is not sufficient. At the same time, we have learned promising lessons about what a more sufficient institute might look like from experiments and innovations tried in small- and large-scale pilots over the past few years. We believe the time is now: to harness the lessons learned, take advantage of promising partnerships, and commit to an earnest, concerted endeavor to evolve our national institutes.

Aims

In reimagining our program, we aim to increase our impact across many stakeholders, from summer school students to CMs to alumni on our summer staff. We are currently in the process of articulating a robust vision and firming up our goals, outcomes, and targets—both for this summer and across the next three years—but we're clear about these aims:

- Summer School Students: provide a holistic summer learning experience aligned to the vision of student outcomes as represented by the TAL wheel
- Corps Members: orient CMs to a vision of teaching as leadership that is grounded in culturally relevant pedagogy while deepening teacher judgment and skill through practice; create and nurture, in partnership with CMs and regions, a thriving community that supports their development
- Summer Staff: engage and develop our alumni in ways that will better equip them to live out the second part of our mission through Institute staffing opportunities

Our program redesign efforts aim to bring our teacher preparation approach in line with our best thinking about teacher leadership development and research from the field. We must:

- Align our Institute training with a vision of teaching and approach to teacher development that is grounded in culturally relevant pedagogy
- Align our Institute training with rigorous content standards which represent the content-specific demands of college and career readiness standards for students
- Train and support our CMs to understand these demands and develop the requisite pedagogical habits and skills associated with these standards
- Significantly increase the "uptake" of practices CMs learn by applying tried and true adult learning practices

It is important to name that we believe that there are some core intentions of our current model that are vital to hold on to, even as we change our model or programming to live out the aims listed above. Those include:

- First and foremost, provide a meaningful learning experience for students that addresses the unique needs and contexts of the summer school community
- Provide a teaching experience for CMs that is as authentic as possible to their fall experience—taking into consideration both the limitations and needs of the Institute partner sites as well as the available regional information (e.g., content area, grade-level, class size, student population, teaching structures)
- Engage CMs in development experiences such as coaching, reflection, and support that are rooted in our Theory of Change and Teaching as Leadership, with emphasis in the following areas:
    - Planning at the daily level
    - Fundamentals of strong classroom management, including a beginning understanding of how to build a strong classroom culture

- Basic execution strategies
- Investment in data and tracking student progress
- Understanding the historical and systemic causes of educational inequity, the role that personal identity plays in our work, and how to effectively navigate and engage in issues related to diversity and inclusiveness

Appendix B:
Sample Institute Schedules

Week 1

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
6:30-6:45	TRAVEL TO SCHOOL	TRAVEL TO SCHOOL	TRAVEL TO SCHOOL	TRAVEL TO SCHOOL	TRAVEL TO SCHOOL
6:45-7:00					
7:00-7:30	Arrival	Arrival	Arrival	Arrival	Arrival
7:30-7:45	Welcome to Institute (120 min)	Linguistically Responsive Teaching: An Introduction (90 min)	Understanding the Core Practices (60 min)	Effective Daily Procedures/Starting 7 (90 min) / DEI Core 2: The Connection Between DEI and CRP (90 min)	DEI Extension 1: Deepening Our CRP Orientations (90 min)
7:45-8:00					
8:00-8:15					
8:15-8:30					
8:30-8:45			Transition		
8:45-9:00					
9:00-9:15		Transition	Learning Cycle 1(Q1 and Q2) (240 min)	Transition	Break
9:15-9:30					
9:30-9:45	Break	Vision for Content (150 min)		DEI Core 2: The Connection Between DEI and CRP (90 min) / Effective Daily Procedures/Starting 7 (90 min)	Learning Environment: Authentic and Responsive Relationship Building (90 min)
9:45-10:00	LUNCH (60 min) TEA Small Groups				
10:00-10:15					
10:15-10:30					
10:30-10:45					
10:45-11:00	School Team Time TEA Small Groups (120 min.)			Transition	Transition
11:00-11:15					
11:15-11:30				Effective Daily Procedures/Starting 7 Work Time (60 min)	Preparing for Day 1 (135 min) LUNCH
11:30-11:45					
11:45-12:00		LUNCH (60 min)		LUNCH (60 min)	
12:00-12:15					
12:15-12:30					
12:30-12:45					
12:45-1:00	Introduction to Teaching as Leadership & Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (90 min)	Understanding Your Curriculum: Week 1 (90 min) / DEI Core 1: Building Our Learning Community (90 min)		Learning Cycle 2: Q1 and Q2 (240 min)	
1:00-1:15					
1:15-1:30					
1:30-1:45					
1:45-2:00			Transition		
2:00-2:15					
2:15-2:30	Transition	Transition	Introduction to Learning Environment: Classroom Plan (150 min)		Setting Up Your Classroom (90 min)
2:30-2:45	School and University Emergencies (60 min)	DEI Core 1: Building Our Learning Community (90 min) / Understanding Your Curriculum: Week 1 (90 min)			
2:45-3:00					
3:00-3:15					
3:15-3:30					
3:30-3:45	School Team Close Out (60 min)				Transition
3:45-4:00					
4:00-4:15					School Team Close Out
4:15-4:30		Transition			
4:30-445	BUS TRAVEL TO ARENA	School Team Close Out	School Team Close Out		
4:45-5:00					
5:00 - 5:15		TRAVEL TO UNIVERSITY	TRAVEL TO UNIVERSITY	TRAVEL TO UNIVERSITY	TRAVEL TO UNIVERSITY
5:15 - 5:30	KICK OFF CEREMONIES				
5:30 - 5:45		Dinner	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner
5:45 - 6:00					
6:00-6:15	Dinner				
6:15-6:30					
6:30-6:45					
6:45-7:00					
7:00-7:15	Write Lesson Plans, Prepare for Tomorrow, Free Time	Write Lesson Plans, Prepare for Tomorrow, Free Time	Write Lesson Plans, Prepare for Tomorrow, Free Time	Write Lesson Plans, Prepare for Tomorrow, Free Time	Free Time
7:15-7:30					
7:30-7:45					
7:45-8:00					
8:00-8:15					
8:15-8:30					
8:30-8:45					
8:45-9:00					
9:00-9:15					
9:15-9:30					
9:30-9:45					
9:45-10:00					

Weekly Template for Weeks 2–5

	MONDAY		TUESDAY		WEDNESDAY		THURSDAY		FRIDAY	
	Lesson 1/Day 1		Lesson 2/Day 2		Lesson 3/Day 3		Lesson 4/Day 4		Lesson 5/Day 5	
6:30-7:00	TRAVEL TO SCHOOL		TRAVEL TO SCHOOL		TRAVEL TO SCHOOL		TRAVEL TO SCHOOL		TRAVEL TO SCHOOL	
7:00-7:30										
7:30-7:45	Arrival		Arrival		Arrival		Arrival		Arrival	
7:45-8:00	Morning Meeting		Morning Meeting		Morning Meeting		Morning Meeting		Morning Meeting	
8:00-8:15										
8:15-8:30	*Transition*		*Transition*		*Transition*		*Transition*		*Transition*	
8:30-8:45	Teach	Student Data: Setting up Systems (90 min)	Teach	DEI Core 3: My Role in the Classroom/ Self as Teacher Part 1	Teach	*FA Collaboration Observe/Flex*	Teach	DEI Core 4: My Role in the Classroom/ Self as Teacher Part 2	Teach	*FA Collaboration Observe/Flex*
8:45-9:00										
9:00-9:15										
9:15-9:30										
9:30-9:45										
9:45-10:00										
10:00-10:15		Flex		Flex				Flex		
10:15-10:30										
10:30-10:45	Student Data: Setting up Systems (90 min)	Teach	DEI Core 3: My Role in the Classroom/ Self as Teacher Part 1	Teach	*FA Collaboration Observe/Flex*	Teach	DEI Core 4: My Role in the Classroom/ Self as Teacher Part 2	Teach	*FA Collaboration Observe/Flex*	Teach
10:45-11:00										
11:00-11:15										
11:15-11:30										
11:30-11:45										
11:45-12:00										
12:00-12:15	Flex		Flex				Flex			
12:15-12:30										
12:30-12:45	TRAVEL TO UNIVERSITY		TRAVEL TO UNIVERSITY		TRAVEL TO UNIVERSITY		TRAVEL TO UNIVERSITY		TRAVEL TO UNIVERSITY	
12:45-1:00										
1:00-1:15	Lunch		Lunch		Lunch		Lunch		Lunch	
1:15-1:30										
1:30-1:45										
1:45-2:00										
2:00-2:15	Learning Cycle 3 (210 min)		Learning Cycle 4 (210 min)		Introduction to Universal Design for Learning (90 min)		Learning Cycle 5 (205 min)		Learning Cycle 6 (90 min)	
2:15-2:30										
2:30-2:45										
2:45-3:00										
3:00-3:15										
3:15-3:30										
3:30-3:45					*Transition*				*Transition*	
3:45-4:00									TAL Weekly Stepback (60 min)	
4:00-4:15					Affinity Groups (90 min)					
4:15-4:30										
4:30-445										
4:45-5:00									*Transition*	
5:00-5:15									School Team: Weekly Close Out	
5:15-5:30							Complete Mid-Institute Survey			
5:30-5:45	Dinner		Dinner		Dinner		Dinner		Dinner	
5:45-6:00										
6:00-6:15										
6:15-6:30										
6:30-6:45	Write Lesson Plans, Prepare for Tomorrow, Free Time		Write Lesson Plans, Prepare for Tomorrow, Free Time		Write Lesson Plans, Prepare for Tomorrow, Free Time		Write Lesson Plans, Prepare for Tomorrow, Free Time		Free Time	
6:45-7:00										
7:00-7:15										
7:15-7:30										
7:30-7:45										
7:45-8:00										
8:00-8:15										
8:15-8:30										
8:30-8:45										
8:45-9:00										
9:00-9:15										
9:15-9:30										
9:30-9:45										
9:45-10:00										

Appendix C:
Stress Survey Email

From: Teach For America Los Angeles
Sent: Saturday, May, 2017 9:29 AM
To: XXXX
Subject: <action by 5/30> TFA Stress Survey

Happy Weekend 2017 Los Angeles Corps!

As some of you have heard, Teach For America Los Angeles is working to launch a regional Summer Institute in the near future. As part of our efforts to host a Summer Institute, we hope to better understand the sources of stress during Summer Institute and how corps members manage stress.

Over the course of the spring and summer, you will be asked to complete a brief questionnaires designed to understand perceived, anticipated, and experienced stress during the summer Institute. Questionnaires will be administered before and after Institute and should take less than 25 minutes to complete.

Completion of all questionnaires is an expectation of the Teach For America Program.

Complete the questionnaire before May 30th

Additionally, given the unique opportunity to understand stress at Institute, Teach For America is partnering with the University of California Los Angeles to host a formal research study. The research study will utilize data from the administered questionnaires. The researcher will also host focus groups for select participants. You have the option to enter the focus group pool.

There is no penalty for opting out of the research study.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to email me directly.

Enjoy your weekend!

Link to questionnaires: <<Survey Link>>

Appendix D:
Pre Survey (PSS10 & SIASS)

Teach For America Los Angeles is working to launch a regional Summer Institute in the near future. As part of our efforts to host a Summer Institute, we hope to better understand the sources of stress during Summer Institute and how corps members manage stress.

Completion of all questionnaires is an expectation of the Teach For America program.

Given the unique opportunity to understand stress at Institute, Teach For America is partnering with the University of California, Los Angeles, to host a formal research study. The research study will utilize data from the administered questionnaires. The researcher will also host focus groups for select participants. You also have the option to enter the focus group pool.

1. Your First Name
2. Your Last Name

We'll start by asking you 10 questions about how you're doing. The questions in this scale ask you about your feelings and thoughts ***during the last month.*** In each case, you will be asked to select how often you felt or thought a certain way (Never, Almost Never, Sometimes, Fairly Often, Very Often).

3. In the last month, how often have you been upset because of something that happened unexpectedly?
4. In the last month, how often have you felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life?
5. In the last month, how often have you felt nervous and "stressed"?
6. In the last month, how often have you felt confident about your ability to handle your personal problems?
7. In the last month, how often have you felt that things were going your way?
8. In the last month, how often have you found that you could not cope with all the things that you had to do?
9. In the last month, how often have you been able to control irritations in your life?
10. In the last month, how often have you felt that you were on top of things?
11. In the last month, how often have you been angered because of things that were outside of your control?
12. In the last month, how often have you felt difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them?

All of us occasionally feel bothered or stressed by certain kinds of things in our work.
In the next set of questions, you will be asked to ***predict*** the conditions or experiences that will be stressful for you at Summer Institute.

13. In a few words, what do you imagine will be the most stressful part of Summer Institute for you?
14. What do you imagine will be the second most stressful part of Summer Institute for you?
15. What do you imagine will be the third most stressful part of Summer Institute for you?

In the final set of questions, indicate the extent to which you predict each of the items will be stressful to you this summer at Institute. Select the most fitting response (Not Stressful, Somewhat Stressful, Considerably Stressful, Decidedly Stressful, Extremely Stressful).

16. Trying to motivate students who do not want to learn.
17. Feeling my salary is not equal to my duties and responsibilities.
18. Feeling there is a lack of administrative support for teachers in my school.
19. Working in a school where there is an atmosphere of conflict among teachers.
20. Having students in my class/classes who talk constantly.
21. Having to do Institute work after the work day to meet what is expected of me.
22. Feeling my instructional coach (TEA) lacks insight into classroom problems.
23. Feeling some teachers in my school are incompetent.
24. Feeling too many parents are indifferent about school problems.
25. Feeling my opinions are not valued by my instructional coach (TEA).
26. Feeling there is competition among teachers in my school rather than a team spirit of cooperation.
27. Having to tell my students the same things over and over.
28. Having insufficient opportunity for rest and preparation during the school day.
29. Working for an inadequate salary (having enough money).
30. Feeling my instructional coach (TEA) gives me too little authority to carry out the responsibilities assigned to me.
31. Planning and organizing learning activities for wide ability ranges.
32. Feeling there is a lack of recognition for good teaching in my school.
33. Feeling poor teacher–teacher relationships exist in my school.
34. Feeling that a few difficult to discipline students take too much of my time away from the other students.
35. Feeling I cannot tell my instructional coach (TEA) in an open way how I feel about many school-related matters.
36. Feeling my students do not adequately respond to my teaching.
37. Having too little clerical help.
38. Having a few teachers in my school who do not carry their share of the load.
39. Feeling I do not have adequate control of my students.
40. Feeling there is a lack of parental involvement in solving school discipline problems.
41. Feeling my instructional coach (TEA) is too aloof and detached from the classroom.
42. Feeling that cliques exist among teachers in my school.
43. Feeling my job does not provide the financial security I need.
44. Feeling I never catch up with my work.

Appendix E:
Post Survey (PSS10 & SIESS)

Teach For America Los Angeles is working to launch a regional Summer Institute in the near future. As part of our efforts to host a Summer Institute, we hope to better understand the sources of stress during Summer Institute and how corps members manage stress.

Completion of all questionnaires is an expectation of the Teach For America program.

Given the unique opportunity to understand stress at Institute, Teach For America is partnering with the University of California, Los Angeles, to host a formal research study. The research study will utilize data from the administered questionnaires. The researcher will also host focus groups for select participants. You also have the option to enter the focus group pool.

1. Your First Name
2. Your Last Name

We'll start by asking you 10 questions about how you're doing. The questions in this scale ask you about your feelings and thoughts ***during the last month***. In each case, you will be asked to select how often you felt or thought a certain way (Never, Almost Never, Sometimes, Fairly Often, Very Often).

3. In the last month, how often have you been upset because of something that happened unexpectedly?
4. In the last month, how often have you felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life?
5. In the last month, how often have you felt nervous and "stressed"?
6. In the last month, how often have you felt confident about your ability to handle your personal problems?
7. In the last month, how often have you felt that things were going your way?
8. In the last month, how often have you found that you could not cope with all the things that you had to do?
9. In the last month, how often have you been able to control irritations in your life?
10. In the last month, how often have you felt that you were on top of things?
11. In the last month, how often have you been angered because of things that were outside of your control?
12. In the last month, how often have you felt difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them?

All of us occasionally feel bothered or stressed by certain kinds of things in our work.
In the next set of questions, you will be asked to share the conditions or ***experiences that were the most stressful*** for you at Summer Institute.

13. In a few words, what was the most stressful part of Summer Institute for you?

14. What was the second most stressful part of Summer Institute for you?
15. What was the third most stressful part of Summer Institute for you?

In the final set of questions, indicate the extent to which each of the items was stressful to you this summer at Institute. Select the most fitting response (Not Stressful, Somewhat Stressful, Considerably Stressful, Decidedly Stressful, Extremely Stressful).

16. Trying to motivate students who do not want to learn.
17. Feeling my salary is not equal to my duties and responsibilities.
18. Feeling there is a lack of administrative support for teachers in my school.
19. Working in a school where there is an atmosphere of conflict among teachers.
20. Having students in my class/classes who talk constantly.
21. Having to do Institute work after the work day to meet what is expected of me.
22. Feeling my instructional coach (TEA) lacks insight into classroom problems.
23. Feeling some teachers in my school are incompetent.
24. Feeling too many parents are indifferent about school problems.
25. Feeling my opinions are not valued by my instructional coach (TEA).
26. Feeling there is competition among teachers in my school rather than a team spirit of cooperation.
27. Having to tell my students the same things over and over.
28. Having insufficient opportunity for rest and preparation during the school day.
29. Working for an inadequate salary (having enough money).
30. Feeling my instructional coach (TEA) gives me too little authority to carry out the responsibilities assigned to me.
31. Planning and organizing learning activities for wide ability ranges.
32. Feeling there is a lack of recognition for good teaching in my school.
33. Feeling poor teacher–teacher relationships exist in my school.
34. Feeling that a few difficult to discipline students take too much of my time away from the other students.
35. Feeling I cannot tell my instructional coach (TEA) in an open way how I feel about many school-related matters.
36. Feeling my students do not adequately respond to my teaching.
37. Having too little clerical help.
38. Having a few teachers in my school who do not carry their share of the load.
39. Feeling I do not have adequate control of my students.
40. Feeling there is a lack of parental involvement in solving school discipline problems.
41. Feeling my instructional coach (TEA) is too aloof and detached from the classroom.
42. Feeling that cliques exist among teachers in my school.
43. Feeling my job does not provide the financial security I need.
44. Feeling I never catch up with my work.

Appendix F:
Coping Responses Inventory

This inventory contains questions about how you manage important problems that come up in your life.

There are two parts in this inventory.

Part 1 should take five minutes, and includes one short answer question and 10 multiple-choice questions.

Part 2 should take 10 minutes, and includes 48 multiple-choice questions.

All responses are confidential.

Please think about the most important problem or stressful situation you have experienced in the last 12 months (for example, troubles with a relative or friend, the illness or death of a relative or friend, an accident or illness, financial or work problems).

PART ONE:

1. Briefly describe the problem in the space below. If you have not experienced a major problem, list a minor problem that you have had to deal with.

Now answer each of the following 10 questions about the problem or situation by selecting the appropriate response (Definitely No, Mainly No, Mainly Yes, Definitely Yes).

2. Have you ever faced a problem like this before?
3. Did you know this problem was going to occur?
4. Did you have enough time to get ready to handle this problem?
5. When this problem occurred, did you think of it as a threat?
6. When this problem occurred, did you think of it as a challenge?
7. Was this problem caused by something you did?
8. Was this problem caused by something someone else did?
9. Did anything good come out of dealing with this problem?
10. Has this problem or situation been resolved?
11. If the problem has been worked out, did it turn out all right for you?

PART TWO:

Read each item carefully and indicate how often you engaged in that behavior in connection with the problem you described in Part 1. Select the appropriate response for each question (Not at all, Once or Twice, Sometimes, Fairly Often, Skip This Item, Not Applicable).

12. Did you think of different ways to deal with the problem?
13. Did you tell yourself things to make yourself feel better?
14. Did you talk with your spouse or other relative about the problem?
15. Did you make a plan of action and follow it?
16. Did you try to forget the whole thing?
17. Did you feel that time would make a difference—that the only thing to do was wait?
18. Did you try to help others deal with a similar problem?
19. Did you take it out on other people when you felt angry or depressed?
20. Did you try to step back from the situation and be more objective?
21. Did you remind yourself how much worse things could be?
22. Did you talk with a friend about the problem?
23. Did you know what had to be done and try hard to make things work?
24. Did you try not to think about the problem?
25. Did you realize that you had no control over the problem?
26. Did you get involved in new activities?
27. Did you take a chance and do something risky?
28. Did you go over in your mind what you would say or do?
29. Did you try to see the good side of the situation?
30. Did you talk with a professional person (e.g., doctor, lawyer, clergy)?
31. Did you decide what you wanted and try hard to get it?
32. Did you daydream or imagine a better time or place than the one you were in?
33. Did you think that the outcome would be decided by fate?
34. Did you try to make new friends?
35. Did you keep away from people in general?
36. Did you try to anticipate how things would turn out?
37. Did you think about how you were much better off than other people with similar problems?
38. Did you seek help from persons or groups with the same type of problem?
39. Did you try at least two different ways to solve the problem?
40. Did you try to put off thinking about the situation, even though you knew you would have to at some point?
41. Did you accept it; nothing could be done?
42. Did you read more often as a source of enjoyment?
43. Did you yell or shout to let off steam?
44. Did you try to find some personal meaning in the situation?
45. Did you try to tell yourself that things would get better?
46. Did you try to find out more about the situation?
47. Did you try to learn to do more things on your own?

48. Did you wish the problem would go away or somehow be over with?
49. Did you expect the worst possible outcome?
50. Did you spend more time in recreational activities?
51. Did you cry to let your feelings out?
52. Did you try to anticipate the new demands that would be placed on you?
53. Did you think about how this event could change your life in a positive way?
54. Did you pray for guidance and/or strength?
55. Did you take things a day at a time, one step at a time?
56. Did you try to deny how serious the problem really was?
57. Did you lose hope that things would ever be the same?
58. Did you turn to work or other activities to help you manage things?
59. Did you do something that you didn't think would work, but at least you were doing something?

The following questions will be used for demographic purposes. Reponses to these questions are optional.

60. Do you identify as a person of color?
61. Do you identify as a person from a low-income background?
62. What year did you complete your undergraduate education?

Appendix G:
Focus Group Recruitment Email

From: Stoneburner, John
Sent: Saturday, September 2, 2017 12:37 PM
To: XXXX
Subject: <request> Join Focus Group Next Sunday?

Hey XXX,

I have finally wrapped up some of my data analysis for stress at Institute, and I would love, love, love to talk to you about your experience with a few other folks who went to Institute with you in PHX.

I know schedules are tight, especially at the start of the school year, so I am hoping that by hosting a Virtual Focus Group it won't be too much trouble to join. The details of the focus group are below.

Please let me know if you can or cannot join us next Sunday via email by Wednesday, September 6th.

Hope you have a brilliant weekend, XXX, and I look forward to "seeing" you next Sunday for the focus group!!

-*Johnny*

Virtual Focus Group:

Date & Time:
Sunday, September 10th
4:00pm
60–75 Minutes

Process:
- There will be 3–5 other folks joining for the focus group.
- I'll ask a few questions about Institute structures and how you experienced them. We will specifically zoom into situations/structures that were stressful for you and others.

Research Information:
- This focus group is part of my research for my doctoral studies at UCLA.
- Participation is highly encouraged, but totally optional.
- There are no consequences for declining participation.
- Focus group participants will be mentioned by pseudonym in my final submission.

    - You get to choose your pseudonym!
- All commentary that is included in the final dissertation submission will be shared with the participant for approval before publication.

Appendix H:
Focus Group and Interview Protocol

Question

1. Name
2. Institute placement site
3. Most memorable Institute experience
4. How would you describe your Teach For America Summer Institute training?
5. What events/conditions caused the most stress for you at Summer Institute?
6. Can you describe a specific moment at Institute that caused you stress? What specific actions did you take to manage that stress?
7. Have you experienced similar challenges in previous experiences? What were they? What lessons did you learn from those stresses?
8. What events/conditions do you believe cause the most stress for others at Summer Institute?
9. How did you see others responding to that stress?
10. Is there anything further you would like to add about stress and the Summer Institute experience?

Appendix I:
CRI Coping Scales & Item Alignment

Approach Coping Scales		
Scale	Item	
Logical Analysis	1.	Think of different ways to deal with the problem.
	9.	Try to step back from the situation and be more objective.
	17.	Go over in your mind what you would say or do.
	25.	Try to anticipate how things will turn out.
	33.	Try to find some personal meaning in the situation.
	41.	Try to anticipate the new demands that will be placed on you.
Positive Reappraisal	2.	Tell yourself things to make yourself feel better.
	10.	Remind yourself how much worse things could be.
	18.	Try to see the good side of the situation.
	26.	Think about how you are much better off than other people with similar problems.
	34.	Try to tell yourself that things will get better.
	42.	Think about how this event could change your life in a positive way.
Seeking Guidance and Support	3.	Talk with your spouse or other relative about the problem.
	11.	Talk with a friend about the problem.
	19.	Talk with a professional person (e.g., doctor, lawyer, clergy).
	27.	Seek help from persons or groups with the same type of problem.
	35.	Try to find out more about the situation.
	43.	Pray for guidance and/or strength.
Problem Solving	4.	Make a plan of action and follow it.
	12.	Know what has to be done and try hard to make things work.
	20.	Decide what you want and try hard to get it.
	28.	Try at least two different ways to solve the problem.
	36.	Try to learn to do more things on your own.
	44.	Take things a day at a time, one step at a time.
Avoidant Coping Scales		
Cognitive Avoidance	5.	Try to forget the whole thing.
	13.	Try not to think about the problem.
	21.	Daydream or imagine a better time or place than the one you are in.
	29.	Try to put off thinking about the situation, even though you know you will have to
	37.	Wish the problem would go away or somehow be over with.
	45.	Try to deny how serious the problem really is.
Acceptance or Resignation	6.	Feel that time will make a difference, that the only thing to do is wait.
	14.	Realize that you have no control over the problem.
	22.	Think that the outcome will be decided by fate.
	30.	Accept it; nothing can be done.
	38.	Expect the worst possible outcome.

	46.	Lose hope that things will ever be the same.
Seeking Alternative Rewards	7.	Try to help others deal with a similar problem.
	15.	Get involved in new activities.
	23.	Try to make new friends.
	31.	Read more often as a source of enjoyment.
	39.	Spend more time in recreational activities.
	47.	Turn to work or other activities to help you manage things.
Emotional Discharge	8.	Take it out on other people when you feel angry or depressed.
	16.	Take a chance and do something risky.
	24.	Keep away from people in general.
	32.	Yell or shout to let off steam.
	40.	Cry to let your feelings out.
	48.	Do something that you don't think will work, but at least you are doing something.

Appendix J:
Participant Reflection Quality Rubric

	Substantial **3**	**Moderate** **2**	**Minimal** **1**
Reflection of Experience	References events from Summer Institute and provides specific examples and/or anecdotes.	References events from Summer Institute.	Does not reference specific events at Summer Institute
Explanation of Evidence	Provides clear and insightful explanation/ analysis of events at Summer Institute.	Provides some explanation/ analysis of events at Summer Institute	Provides no or incorrect explanation/ analysis of events at Summer Institute
Quantity/ Quality of Evidence	Provides more than enough & the strongest evidence to support reflection. .	Provides enough related evidence to support reflection.	Provides very little and/or unrelated or incorrect evidence to support reflection.

Overall Score Ranges & Rating

Substantial: 8-9

Moderate: 5-7

Minimal: 3-4

Appendix K:
Study Information Sheet for Participants

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LOS ANGELES
STUDY INFORMATION SHEET

Understanding Stress with Accelerated Teacher Residency Programs

John Stoneburner from the Graduate School of Education at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) is conducting a research study.

You were selected as a possible participant in this study because you are member of the Teach For America Los Angeles program who is scheduled to attend the Summer Institute in Phoenix, Arizona. Your participation in this research study is voluntary.

Why is this study being done?
Accelerated Teacher Residency Programs, like Teach For America, provide an alternative pathway toward a teaching credential. Given the accelerated nature of the program and the structural design of the experience (summer resident model), participants are susceptible to experiencing increased levels of stress. This study is designed to understand the major sources of stress during the Summer Institute.

What will happen if I take part in this research study?
If you volunteer to participate in this study, the researcher will ask you to do the following:

- Allow access to responses from the Perceived Stress Scale, the Summer Institute Anticpated Stress Survey, the Summer Institute Experienced Stress Survey, and the Coping Responses Inventory administered by Teach For America Los Angeles.
- Participate in a Focus Group if eligible.
    - Participants will be asked questions about Summer Institute and the sources of stress at Summer Institute
    - Focus Groups will take place virtually
- Sign a consent form

How long will I be in the research study?
Participation with the study will take a total of about 90 minutes. Completion of survey instruments and Summer Institute are not considered to be part of the research study timeline.

Are there any potential risks or discomforts that I can expect from this study?

- Some of the questions we will ask you as part of this study may make you feel uncomfortable. You may refuse to answer any of the questions, take a break, or stop your participation in this study at any time.

- Any time information is collected, there is a potential risk of loss of confidentiality. Every effort will be made to keep your information confidential; however, this cannot be guaranteed.
- There may possibly be other side effects that are unknown at this time. If you are concerned about other, unknown side effects, please discuss this with the researcher.

Are there any potential benefits if I participate?
You may benefit from the study through gaining additional insight into the ways stress personally impacts your work as a teacher. There may, however, be minimal personal benefits to participating in this study.

The results of the research may help create interventions for new teachers that build coping skills during Summer Institute, reduce levels of attrition through, and move the organization to a more proactive space in regards to stress management.

Will information about me and my participation will be kept confidential?
Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can identify you will remain confidential. It will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of replacing names with research identification numbers.

What are my rights if I take part in this study?
- You can choose whether or not you want to be in this study, and you may withdraw your consent and discontinue participation at any time.
- Whatever decision you make, there will be no penalty to you, and no loss of benefits to which you were otherwise entitled.
- You may refuse to answer any questions that you do not want to answer and still remain in the study.

Who can I contact if I have questions about this study?
- **The research team:**
  If you have any questions, comments, or concerns about the research, you can talk to the one of the researchers. Please contact:
  John Stoneburner
  Stoneburner@gmail.com

- **UCLA Office of the Human Research Protection Program (OHRPP):**
  If you have questions about your rights while taking part in this study, or you have concerns or suggestions and you want to talk to someone other than the researchers about the study, please call the OHRPP at (310) 825-7122 or write to:

  UCLA Office of the Human Research Protection Program
  11000 Kinross Avenue, Suite 211, Box 951694
  Los Angeles, CA 90095-1694

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