

Teacher Applicant Hiring and Teacher Performance: Evidence from DC Public Schools

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Purpose: This study aimed to determine the relations between applicant characteristics, hiring outcomes, and teacher performance.

Subjects: The data were derived from TeachDC, the district's centralized hiring platform, spanning 2011 to 2013, which allowed for the analysis of applications and teaching evaluations for Washington, DC Public Schools.

Research Questions:

- 1) Do applicant characteristics predict teaching performance once hired?
- 2) Do applicant characteristics predict the hiring decision?

Research Methods: Using data provided from the TeachDC database, the researchers focused on three features of the teaching applicants: 1) content knowledge, 2) interview score, and 3) audition score. These variables were then standardized. The relationship between these applicant characteristics and hiring status was analyzed with linear probability models. An additional analysis determined the relationship between applicant characteristics and teacher performance for the teachers that were hired.

Findings: Based on the application data, undergraduate grades and mock teaching lesson of the hired teachers were both correlated with the teaching effectiveness, which was based on student achievement, classroom observations, commitment to community, and professionalism. Nevertheless, such applicant characteristics were not predictive of which applicants were hired. Instead, years of experience and attachment to the DC area were important factors in the hiring decision.

Implications: This study calls for further investigation into the hiring practices of DCPS, but also other large districts. That the best potential teachers in an applicant pool weren't always the ones being brought into the classroom is worthy of deeper research and consideration. DCPS' TeachDC had a very rich application process, and this research should urge this district, as well as others, that have spent time developing strong, differentiated hiring practices to use them as effectively and efficiently as possible to optimize hiring.