MATH for AMERICA

A program and some questions

John Ewing
Math for America
• What is Math for America?
• What is the problem?
• What is the solution?
  ◦ (And what’s any of this have to do with
  ◦ professional development?)
The MfA Program

- Three programs
  - New Teaching Fellows
  - Early Career (yrs 1-4)
  - Master Teachers (yrs 5+)

- Goal: Put “great” math and science teachers in secondary classrooms (inspiring teachers)
Common Features

- 4 year teaching commitment
- Lots of (prof) support
  - Advisors, mentors, staff support …
- **Community building
  - online and personal
- *Meaningful* stipends (20-25% of salary)

**New Fellows:** plus initial training year --

**master’s** (NYU, TC, Bard, USC, Claremont, UCSD, Berkeley, BU, American, UofUtah, …)
MfA Sites

- New York (>300 teachers)
- Los Angeles
- San Diego
- Washington, DC
- Boston
- Berkeley*
- Utah* (~450)

*includes science
What’s the problem?
Grading the Teachers: Value-Added Analysis

High School Graduation Rates Plummet Below 50 Percent in Some U.S. Cities

"National Leaders Speak Up About Education Crisis" May 26, 2010

WAITING FOR "SUPERMAN"

Los Angeles Times

Grading the Teachers: Value-Added Analysis
Not in Crisis!

- Crisis = “a turning point”
- Long-term structural problem:
  - We need to improve to compete!
  - To solve fundamental, long-term problems...
- We need to make fundamental, long-term changes over decades…
Focus … on people who can affect students for decades and who themselves will be improving things for decades

Teachers
What’s the solution?
Approach #1: Focus on Incompetent
Get rid of them!
REMEMBER

Ewing
Approach #2

Inspiring Teachers
Principles of MfA

i. *To teach mathematics, one should know mathematics* (Polya)

ii. *To teach mathematics, one should know how to teach* (clinical experience)
iii. Experience counts (retention is key!)

(“to attract the best we have to keep the best”)

- “When we ask, ‘How can we find and prepare more teachers,’ we are focusing on the symptom instead of the problem.”
- NCTAF 2002 Report
Everything we do is focused on retention:

Prestige,
  support,
working conditions
And professional development too!

- NOT REMEDIAL!
- Tailor appropriately (new/intermediate/experienced)
- Four principles:
  ◦ Sustained
  ◦ Practice feedback and reflection
  ◦ Value the teacher’s expertise
  ◦ Model on good teaching practice
Good News

- Already *are* many inspiring secondary teachers!
- Focus on them…
- Treat them like professionals
- VALUE them; HONOR them
- … and more will come!