

**THE PENTAGON'S DRUG WAR**

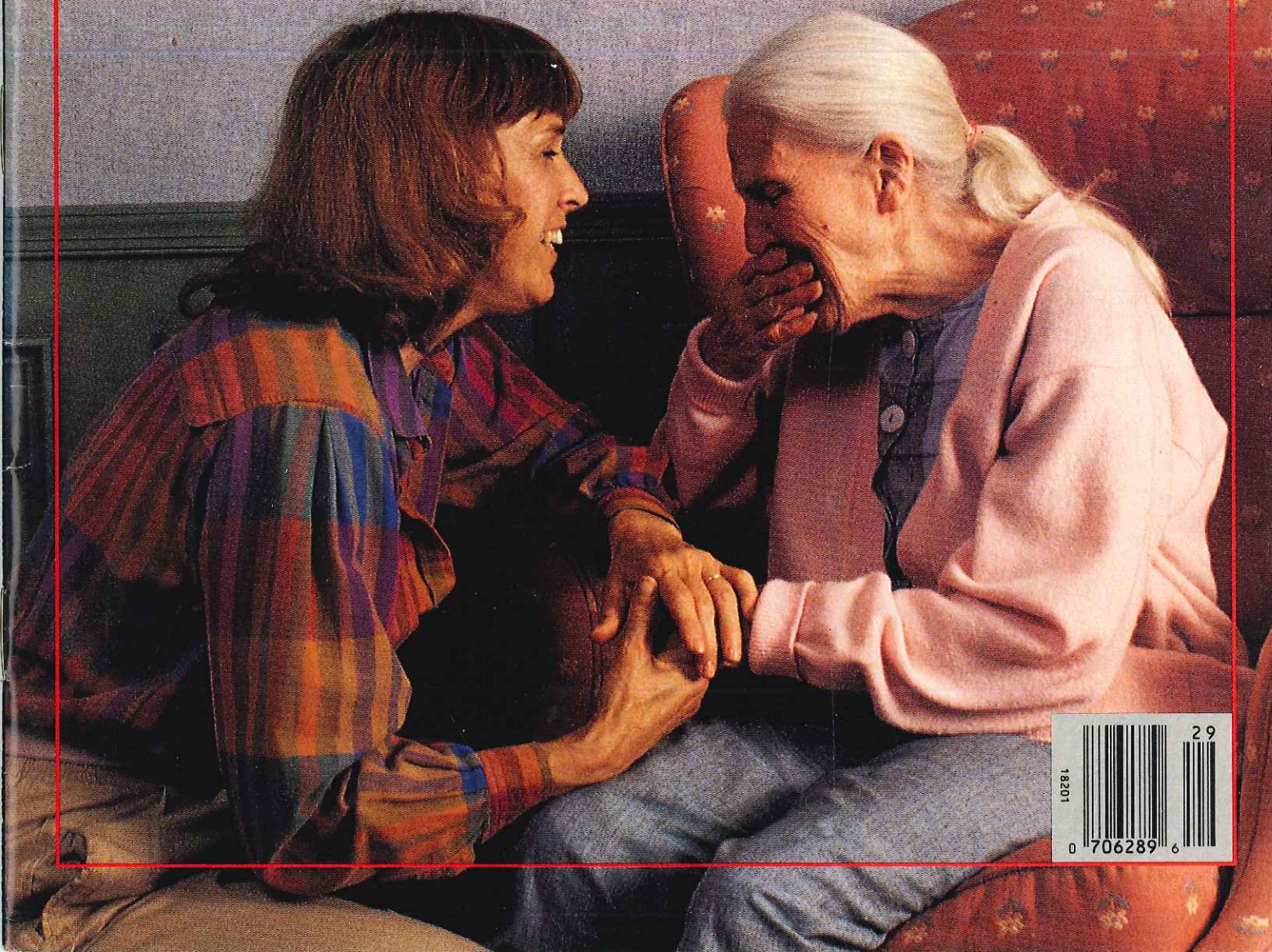
A Secret Plan to Crush the Cartel

# Newsweek

July 16, 1990 : \$2.50

## The Daughter Track

The Average American Woman  
Spends 17 Years Raising Children and  
18 Years Helping Aging Parents



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High-school and college students instruct at Summerbridge in San Francisco: Older kids get into teaching, younger kids get into learning

JAMES D. WILSON—NEWSWEEK

## EDUCATION

# The New Teacher Corps

Alternative training programs stir a revolution in the classroom

**T**he more than 500 young men and women who filed into a University of Southern California auditorium last month were not there to collect their diplomas. In fact, most of them had graduated from college weeks before. This time, as they made their way through the 112-degree heat, they had something grander in mind. "Above and beyond everything," said Dan Brooks, a 21-year-old graduate of St. Olaf College in Minnesota, "I want to teach. Put me wherever. I'll teach whatever."

Brooks and his peers are the green recruits in a revolutionary educational movement. Now in its first year, Teach For America has set out to take top college grads who did not major in education and train them to be teachers. By the time participants leave the eight-week training institute at USC they will have a range of new skills: from how to make algebra entertaining to how to communicate with kids from different ethnic backgrounds. By most

measures, this is a radical plan, considering that teachers traditionally take semester after semester of education courses and state exams before they get certification.

Just a few years ago a program that attempted to put the best and the brightest directly into classrooms would have encountered an unsympathetic bureaucracy—not to mention hostility from teachers who had taken the traditional route. But today, even the most entrenched educators have begun to admit they're losing the war of the classroom. And they realize that they can't depend solely on conventional sources for reinforcements—not with the quality and quantity of teachers on the wane, particularly in rural and inner-city districts. "We simply do not have enough people coming into teaching of the caliber we need," says Albert Shanker, president of the American Federation of Teachers. Moreover, the number of minorities entering the field does not keep pace with the number of minority students. In 1987, 20

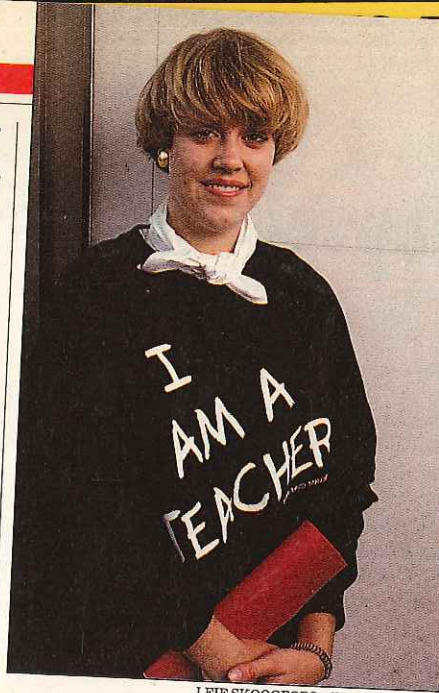
percent of school-age children were people of color, compared to 10 percent of teachers. By the year 2000, education experts predict that nonwhites will make up 5 percent of teachers, but more than 30 percent of students.

Teach For America (TFA) is one of about 40 programs nationwide designed to pump fresh blood into teaching. Some programs are merely stopgaps put in place by districts short on science or math teachers. But others are more mainstream: about 35 states have established alternative routes that place teachers-to-be in the classroom while they continue to take classes and tests for certification. A third category, like TFA and the Peace Corps's teaching fellowships, run independent of state control, are perhaps the most creative.

Appropriately, TFA began as a school project. Princeton student Wendy Kopp (class of '89) turned her senior thesis into a blueprint for revitalizing the teaching profession. Unlike many state programs that

draft teachers from other professions, her plan called for drafting energetic idealists fresh out of college. Kopp speculated that if the prestige and competitiveness of teaching were just as great as, say, lawyering, then more bright students might choose a career in the classroom. "We want to make teaching the thing to do on college campuses," Kopp says. After graduation she set out to create the organization by courting educators, private foundations and corporations for support. (TFA is funded completely by corporate donations and foundation grants.) This year 506 recruits were chosen from more than 2,500 applicants. They begin their two-year stints this fall in districts with serious teacher shortages—and without having to take the classes or exams that lead to certification.

**Difficult assignment:** For all its gumption, TFA could still learn a lot from the Peace Corps. In 1984, the Peace Corps began tapping returnees from its international program to help at home. So far the group has enrolled 60 "fellows" in Columbia University's Teachers College. Participants teach in New York schools by day and take graduate education courses at night. Current fellow Deborah Baker, 28, taught in a remote Guatemalan village for two years. She didn't realize how good she had it until she got her stateside assignment: New York City's Lincoln Junior High. "Even though I can come home and take a shower every night, it's harder because this is my country and I thought that people were better taken care of," she says. This fall the program will expand, sending participants to California, Florida and Georgia. Eventually it will include 20 universities and 4,000 student teachers.



LEIF SKOOGFORS—WOODFIN CAMP

**An innovator: Teach For America's Kopp**

Of the state-run alternative programs, New Jersey's six-year-old plan is the oldest, and the most emulated. New Jersey's schools recruit on college campuses and through newspaper ads. Only a week after Robin Herskowitz answered an ad in her local paper she was teaching drama in a New Jersey school. Herskowitz, 35, didn't have an education degree, but she had worked in the theater for years. "Because I'm from a professional background, I think I demand more of the kids," she says. And more important, "I've found a thing I truly love doing." After completing basic requirements, including a bachelor's degree and a passing grade on the National Teacher's Exam, New Jersey recruits

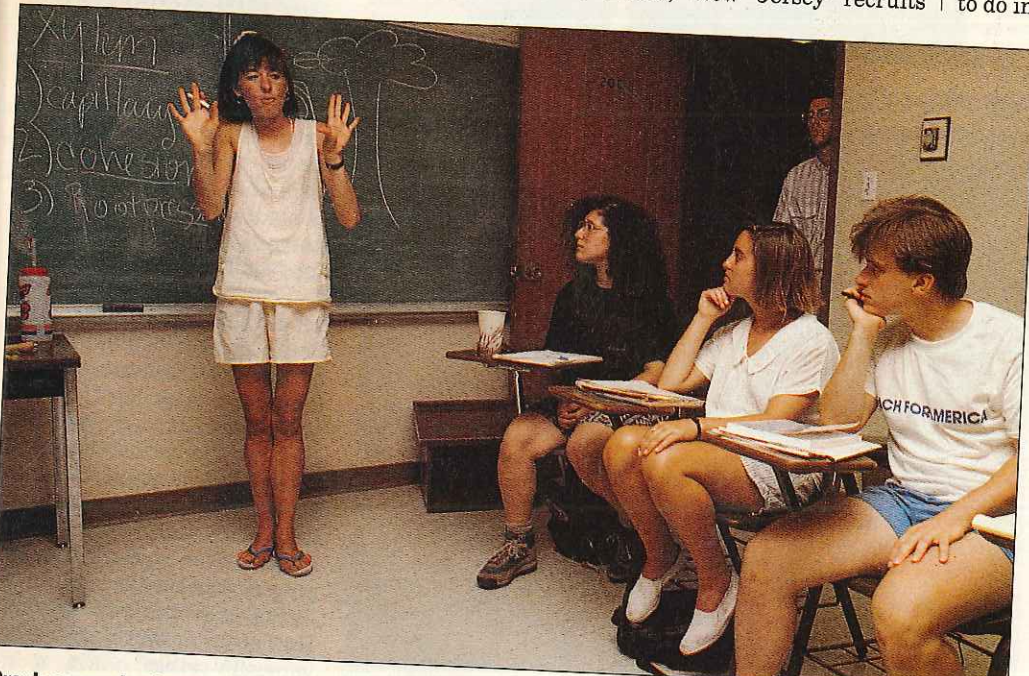
teach while completing 200 hours of coursework in one year. They also receive lots of supervision and critiques from experienced teachers. By 1989, 29 percent of the state's new teachers had come via the alternative route.

Smaller programs attack the lack of minority educators on a more local level. At San Francisco University High School's Summerbridge Program, 45 high-school and college students teach middle-school students every summer. The program is designed to get the younger kids into learning and the older kids into teaching. Codirector Thomas Malarkey says 50 percent of Summerbridge instructors, who handle every aspect of teaching from curriculum development to parent-teacher conferences, are people of color. Similarly, the summer teacher-recruitment program at Phillips Academy (Andover, Mass.) brings a small group of minority college students together to encourage them to go into teaching at the secondary or college level.

**Scab programs:** As with so many new ideas, the alternative teacher concept has its share of critics. Skeptics say the programs do not give participants enough training or supervision. "We would never say because there's a shortage of doctors or engineers, 'Take a bright person, give them a few weeks of preparation and let them build bridges or perform surgery,'" says John Palmer, dean of the school of education at the University of Wisconsin. Some teachers' unions are equally outspoken, even calling the alternative routes scab programs. "I am not interested in people who go into teaching for three or four years until they grow up and see what they want to do in life," says Keith Geiger, president of the National Education Association, the nation's largest teacher's union.

For now, support for the alternative programs far outweighs the dissent. The proof is in the numbers, advocates say. In New Jersey, for example, alternative-route teachers have higher certification-test scores than those who followed the traditional path. In Texas, minority teachers represent nearly 50 percent of those certified in some districts, thanks to alternative routes. And while these programs are not likely to ever replace existing methods of training, their effect is as contagious as it is uplifting. The enthusiasm they generate may be the best medicine for our ailing schools.

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FREDERICK BROWN

**Crash course in classroom survival: TFA corps members learn how to pique students' interest**