


Beginning teachers' engagement profiles across four country settings: Implications for teacher education and early career induction

Paul W. Richardson, Monash University



FITCHOICE
Factors Influencing Teaching Choice

www.fitchoice.org

Pathways to the Teaching Profession
International Conference, 13–14 September 2018

Acknowledgments

The FIT-Choice research program is funded by the Australian Research Council.

ARC Discovery Grant DP0666253 (2006-2009)
co-Chief Investigators Richardson & Watt, Partner Investigator Jacquelynne Eccles

ARC Discovery Grant DP0987614 (2009-2012)
co-Chief Investigators Watt & Richardson

ARC Discovery Grant DP140100402 (2014-2016)
co-Chief Investigators Richardson & Watt

Professor Helen M G Watt, University of Sydney,
has been my collaborator on this work over the past 17 years.



www.fitchoice.org

Development over time

- Longitudinal trajectories of teachers across the career life span.
- We view teacher professional learning and development as taking place over a long timeframe and includes initial teacher education program experiences.

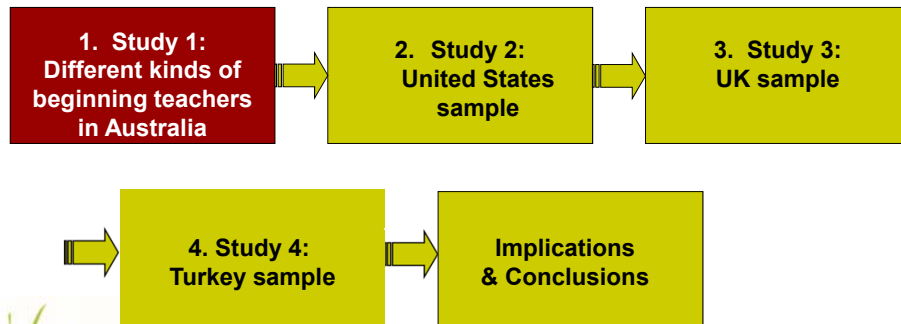


Key Questions

- What are the motivations, professional engagement and career development aspirations of beginning teachers?
- Are there identifiable “clusters” of beginning teachers already in place at exit from teacher education?
- Which demographic characteristics relate to cluster membership?
- Do levels of satisfaction with the choice of teaching as a career *change* through teacher education, and differently for each cluster?
- What do participants’ unrestricted responses tell us about reasons for their career plans?
- What does all of this imply for teacher education programs, policy makers, and employing authorities?

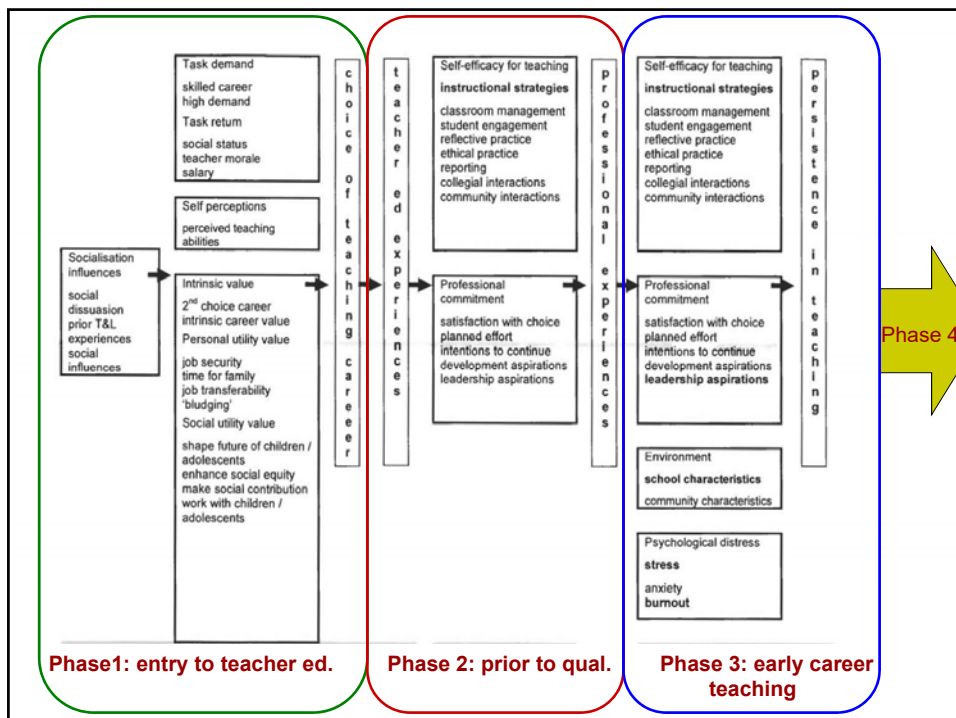


Presentation Outline

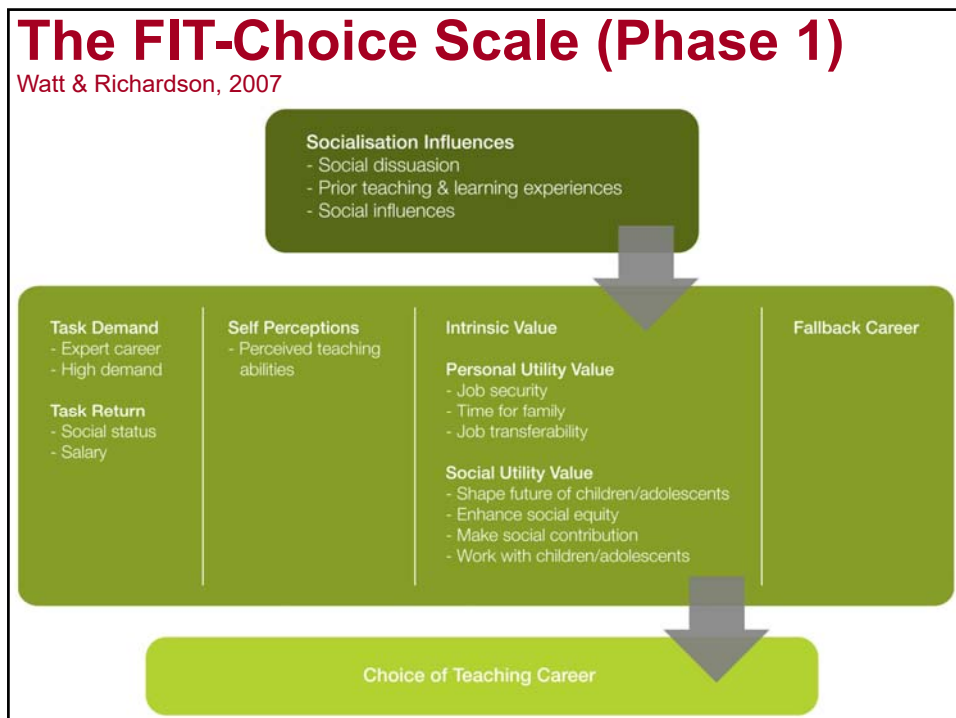
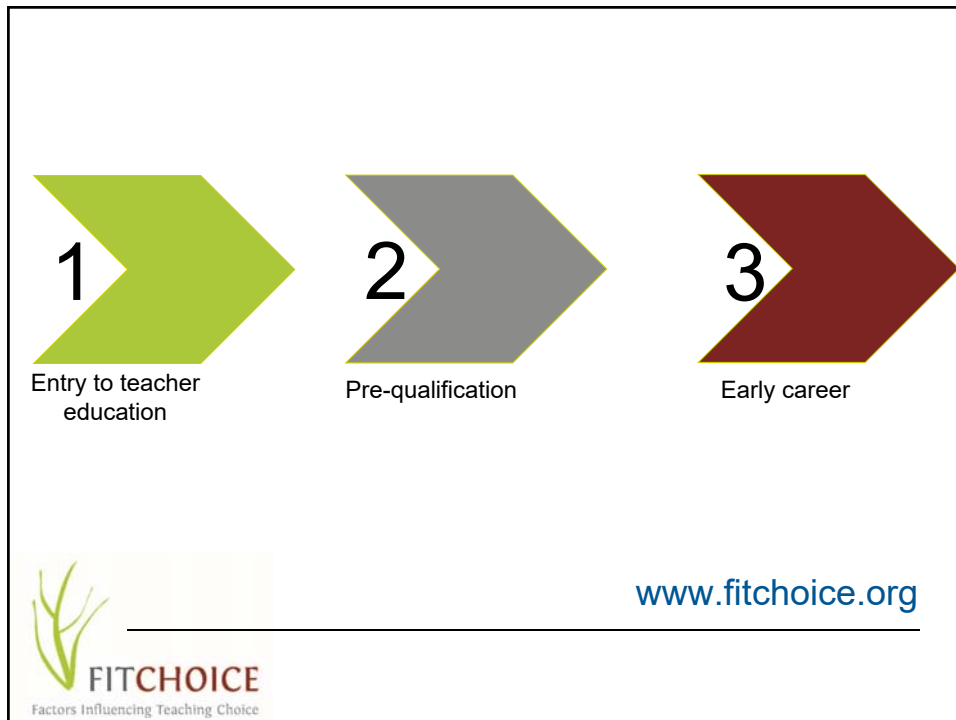


FITCHOICE

Factors Influencing Teaching Choice



Pathways to the Teaching Profession
International Conference, 13–14 September 2018



Longitudinal Participants

In a first large-scale longitudinal study of beginning teachers in Australia, our FIT-Choice project continues to track the experiences of 2,007 future teachers representative of 4 major teacher education providers (>90% response; encompassing secondary, primary/elementary, early childhood):

- Phase 1: from the time they entered into teacher education in 2002/3/6,
- Phase 2: through qualifying to teach,
- Phase 3: into early career teaching experiences,
- Phase 4: currently surveying them into mid-career.

@ Phase 3, of the 840 retained participants:

- 593 currently teaching
 - 93 on temporary break from teaching
 - 25 quit teaching
 - 72 qualified but never taught
 - 57 never qualified (of total 334 who never qualified from university records)
- } 686 teachers

Of 1,673 qualifying teachers, 783 were retained in the study (39%), of whom 711 ever taught.

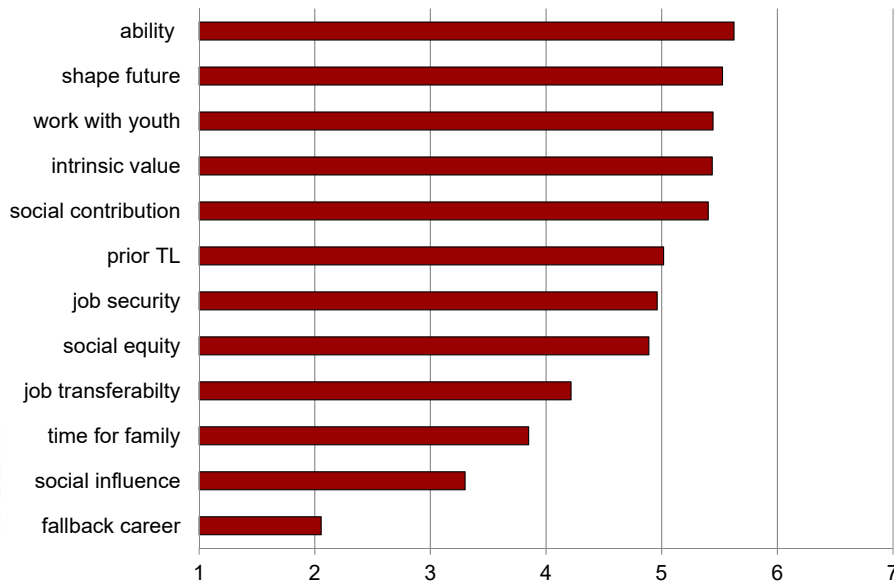


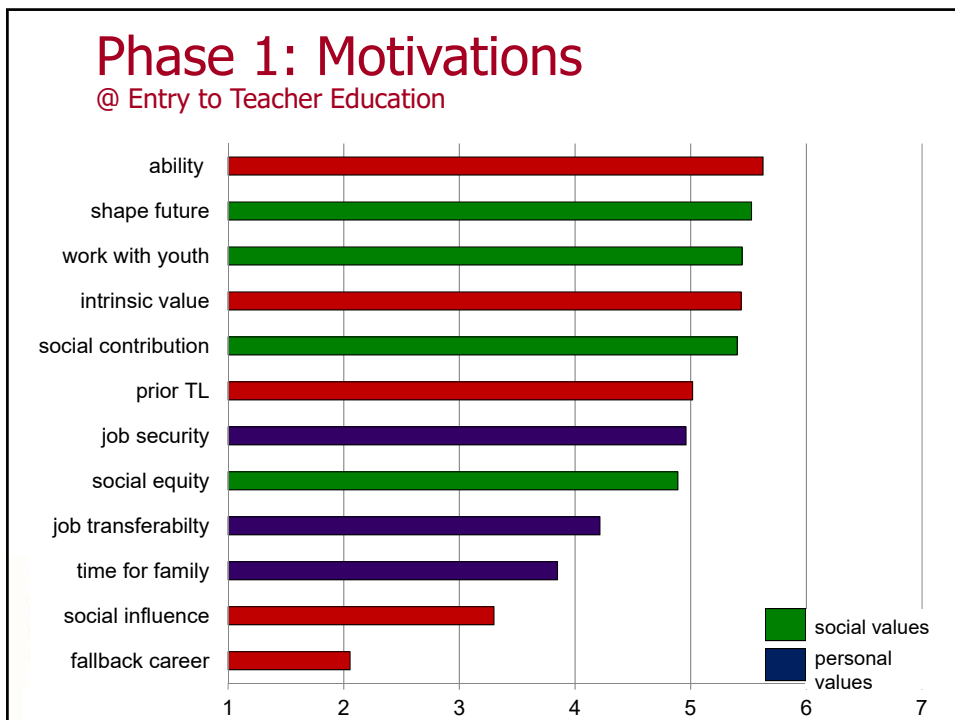
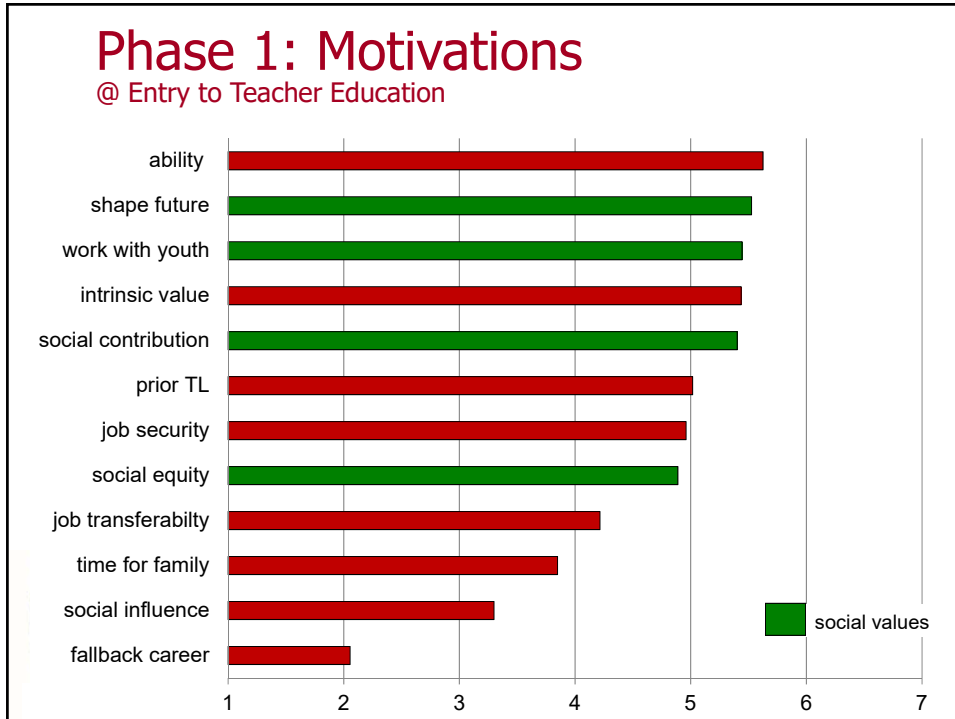
FITCHOICE

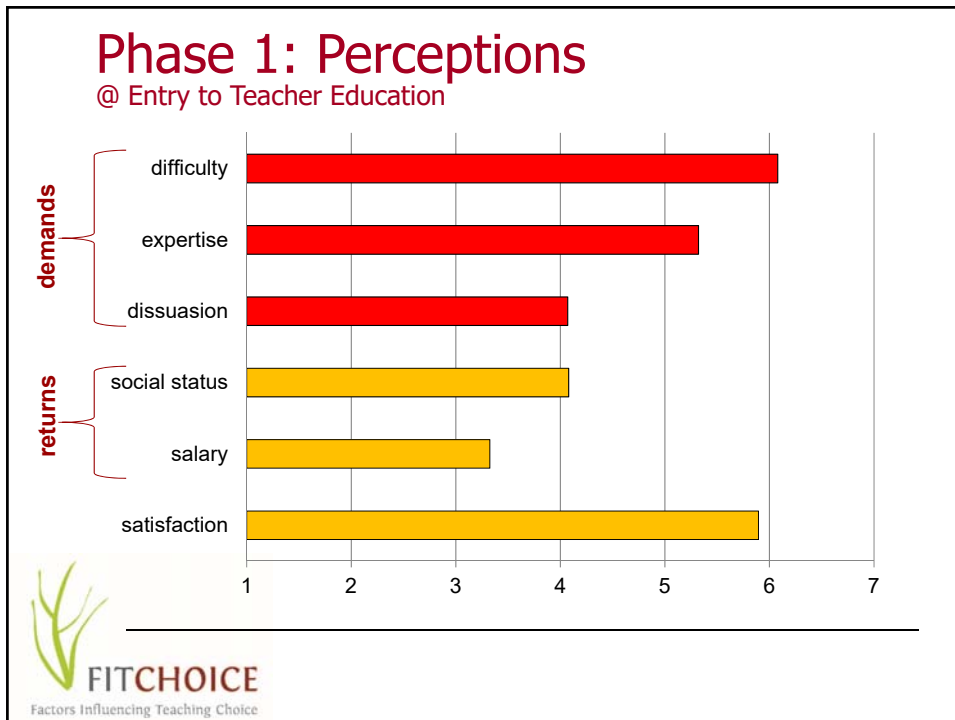
Factors Influencing Teaching Choice

Phase 1: Motivations

@ Entry to Teacher Education







Cross-Cultural Comparison

Watt, H.M.G., Richardson, P.W., Klusmann, U., Kunter, M., Beyer, B., Trautwein, U., & Baumert, J. (2012). Motivations for choosing teaching as a career: An international comparison using the FIT-Choice scale. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 28, 791-805.

Teaching and Teacher Education

Journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/tate

Motivations for choosing teaching as a career: An international comparison using the FIT-Choice scale

Helen M.G. Watt^{a,*}, Paul W. Richardson^{a,1}, Uta Klusmann^{b,1}, Mareike Kunter^c, Beate Beyer^d, Ulrich Trautwein^e, Jürgen Baumert^f

^aUniversity of Queensland, St. Leonards, Queensland, Australia; ^bUniversity of Duisburg-Essen, Essen, Germany; ^cUniversity of Bamberg, Bamberg, Germany; ^dUniversity of Bamberg, Bamberg, Germany; ^eUniversity of Bamberg, Bamberg, Germany; ^fUniversity of Bamberg, Bamberg, Germany

ARTICLE INFO

Received 5 February 2011; Received in revised form 28 February 2012; Accepted 5 March 2012

ABSTRACT

Motivations for preservice teachers' choice of teaching as a career were investigated using the Factors Influencing Teaching Choice scale (FIT-Choice scale; Watt & Richardson, 2007). This scale was initially developed and validated in the Australian context; our study applied it across international samples from Australia, the United States, Germany, and Norway. Support for strong factorial invariance implied the scale functioned similarly, and could truthfully be employed in different contexts. Sample comparisons revealed that motivations for teaching were more similar than they were different across these samples; whereas, perceptions about the teaching profession tended to reflect country differences.

© 2012 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

International research interest in what motivates people to take on a teaching career has resulted in a steady flow of studies and consequently able to offer fewer teaching positions, or laying off teachers as has begun to be reported in the media in the U.S. Over

- **Strong factorial measurement invariance.**
- Similar motivations across settings.
- Perceptions of the profession reflect objective country differences (EX.).

Factor	Australia	USA	Germany
expert	~4.5	~4.5	~4.5
diffic	~5.5	~5.5	~5.5
status	~4.0	~4.0	~4.0
salary	~3.5	~3.5	~3.5
dissuade	~4.0	~4.0	~4.0
satisfac	~5.5	~5.5	~5.5

"PISA shock?"

■ Australia ■ USA ■ Germany

FITCHOICE
Factors Influencing Teaching Choice

Are there different types of beginning teachers?



Approach

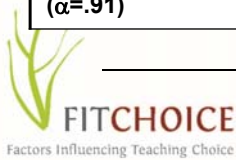
- *Exploratory Factor Analysis* to check scale structure for professional engagement and career development aspirations (image extraction, direct oblimin rotation).
- *Hierarchical Cluster Analysis* (Ward's method) to derive clusters of "types" of people with similar profiles of Professional Engagement and Career Development Aspirations ("PECDA" Scale, Watt & Richardson, 2008).
- Tested for differences between clusters on:
 - Time 2 scores for PECDA factors (effort, persistence, professional development, leadership)
 - demographic variables
 - satisfaction with the choice of a teaching career & changes through teacher education
 - FIT-Choice motivations and perceptions regarding teaching
- Thematic analysis of open-ended statements.



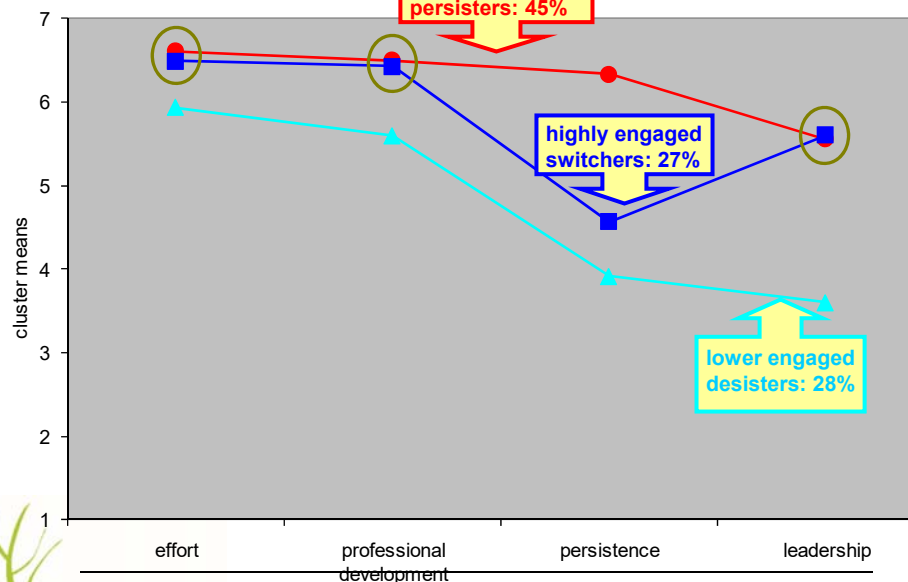
Different Types of Beginning Teachers

In Australia, 3 beginning teacher subtypes were identified via cluster analysis, based on their profiles of Professional Engagement and Career Development Aspirations (PECDA Scale; Watt & Richardson, 2008)

	PECDA Selected Constructs and Sample Items (response options 1: not at all → 7: extremely)
EFFORT ($\alpha=.92$)	How much effort will you put into your teaching?
PERSIST ($\alpha=.96$)	How sure are you that you will stay in the teaching profession?
PROFDEVT ($\alpha=.91$)	To what extent do you aim to continue learning how to improve your teaching skills?
LEADERSHIP ($\alpha=.91$)	To what extent do you aim to take up a leadership role in schools?



3-Cluster Profiles:



Reasons for Professional Plans:
CLUSTER 1 “highly engaged persisters”

(45% of sample)

- A passion for teaching as satisfying, varied, interesting.
- Teaching as a “dream ambition”, vocation or calling, something they were “supposed to do”.
- A desire to work with children and adolescents to influence their learning and make a difference in their lives.
- Fit with family life.
- Emphasis on lifestyle change, or better work-life balance.
- A morally good career.
- Aware financial rewards are not great; will less tangible rewards be sufficient?



FITCHOICE

Factors Influencing Teaching Choice

**Profiles of Motivations at Career Outset
& Consequences During Early Career**

- **Highly Engaged Persisters:** highest NESB, older, lowest SES, early decision to teach

Most motivated by intrinsic value, teaching abilities, & social utility values:

← shape future of children/adolescents, enhance social equity, make social contribution, work with children/adolescents.

Lowest on “fallback” motivation, although others were also quite low.

Appear psychologically “at risk” in coping during early career.

They maintain “positive” motivations, seemingly at expense for own self-efficacies, planned persistence, and career choice satisfaction.



FITCHOICE

Factors Influencing Teaching Choice

CLUSTER 2 “highly engaged switchers” (27% of sample)

- Already contemplating another career path.
- Many did not undertake teacher education intending to remain their whole career.
- Needed new challenges and sought to be involved in a diversity of occupations (e.g., business, public services, health promotion, entertainment, arts & crafts, design).
- Many nominated their reason for not wanting to stay in teaching, as well as when they planned to leave, with timeframes from “now” to 15 years.
- Planned to be as effortful, engaged, and to do as good a job as those who wanted their whole career in teaching (Cluster 1), but also planned to then move on to another career. There were also the “restless spirits”, those on a “5-year plan”, and those who were keeping their career options open (a stepping stone to something else).
- If they can have their desire for leadership and new challenges realised, and their engagement and effort rewarded, their time in teaching may be extended.



FITCHOICE

Factors Influencing Teaching Choice

Cluster 2: Highly Engaged Switchers

- Lowest Non-English Speaking Background,
- youngest,
- highest Socio-Economic Status,
- few had children

(In-between the others for intrinsic value, and social utility values.)

Downward motivational adjustments resulted in stable:

- self-efficacies,
- planned persistence,
- career choice satisfaction.



FITCHOICE

Factors Influencing Teaching Choice

CLUSTER 3 “lower engaged desisters” (28% of sample)

- Least likely to plan to persist ; varied sources of disaffection stemming from unpleasant university and “bad practicum” experiences. Teacher education experiences took on a negative valence in relation to their tenure in teaching.
- Some participants reported that teaching proved to be too demanding – too much work, and of the wrong sort of work, such as administration.
- Could achieve more “pay and respect”, and better “career progression” by working in other fields (e.g., IT, business management, consulting).
- Frustrations in securing full-time employment as a teacher – short term contracts, insecure relief teaching to cover for absences.
- Generally had higher qualifications and a range of previous occupations, thus may easily be attracted into other careers where their teaching qualification would be viewed as a marketable asset -- especially corporate environments where training is a feature of the workplace.



FITCHOICE

Factors Influencing Teaching Choice

Profiles of Motivations at Career Outset & Consequences During Early Career

- **Lower Engaged Desisters:**
 - older,
 - high-status previous careers & qualifications,
 - most recent decision to teach.

- More motivated by teaching as a “fallback” career than the others.
- Least motivated by intrinsic and social utility values.

Upward motivational adjustments resulted in retention through early career, and stable self-efficacies.



FITCHOICE

Factors Influencing Teaching Choice

Theoretical Predictions

- Would we identify different types of beginning teachers in a U.S. sample?
- We again predicted a high engagement, low engagement, and mixed profile.
- Clusters would differ on teaching motivations, aspirations and demographics.
- Profiles may not exactly match our Australian data:
 - similar comprehensive school system and multicultural diversity,
 - different career structures.



FITCHOICE

Factors Influencing Teaching Choice

US Sample

- 246 elementary/secondary preservice teachers from 2 universities in the U.S. midwest
- Participants provided data at 2 timepoints:
 - on their entry to teacher education, and
 - immediately prior to completion of their qualification.
- Motivations at T1, aspirations (including open-ended) at T2.
- We draw on closed-ended quantitative and open-ended qualitative data from surveys administered during regular classes at both occasions.



FITCHOICE

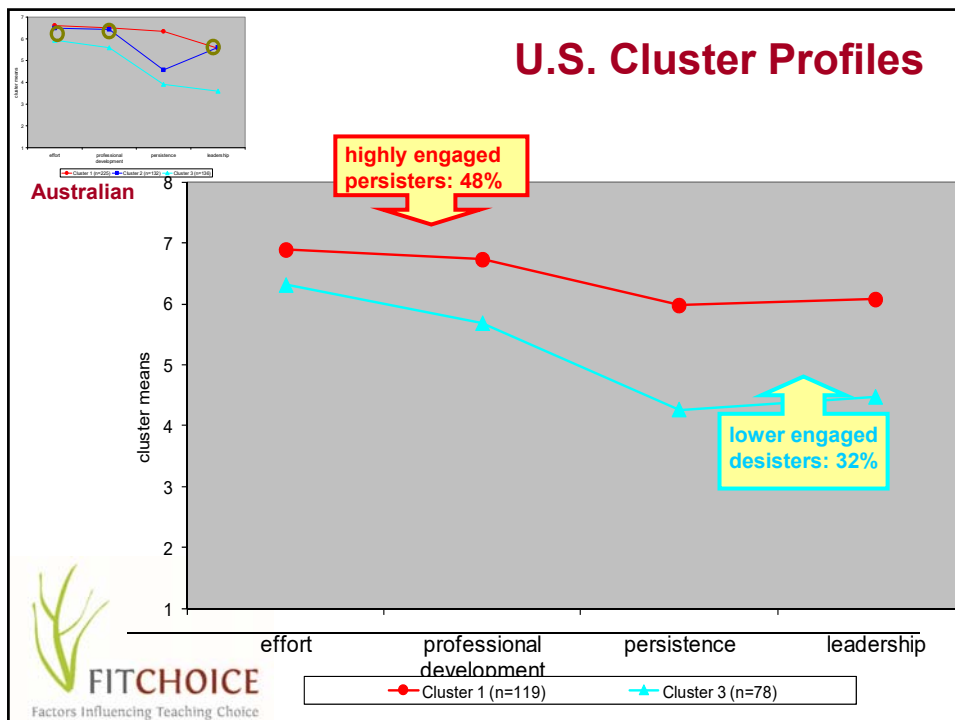
Factors Influencing Teaching Choice

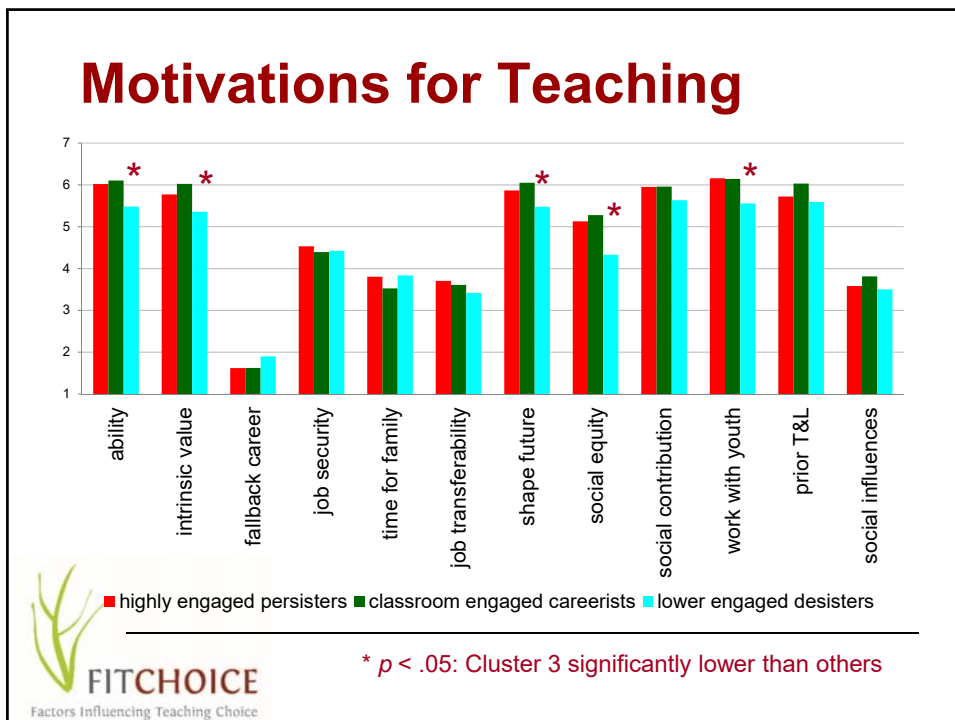
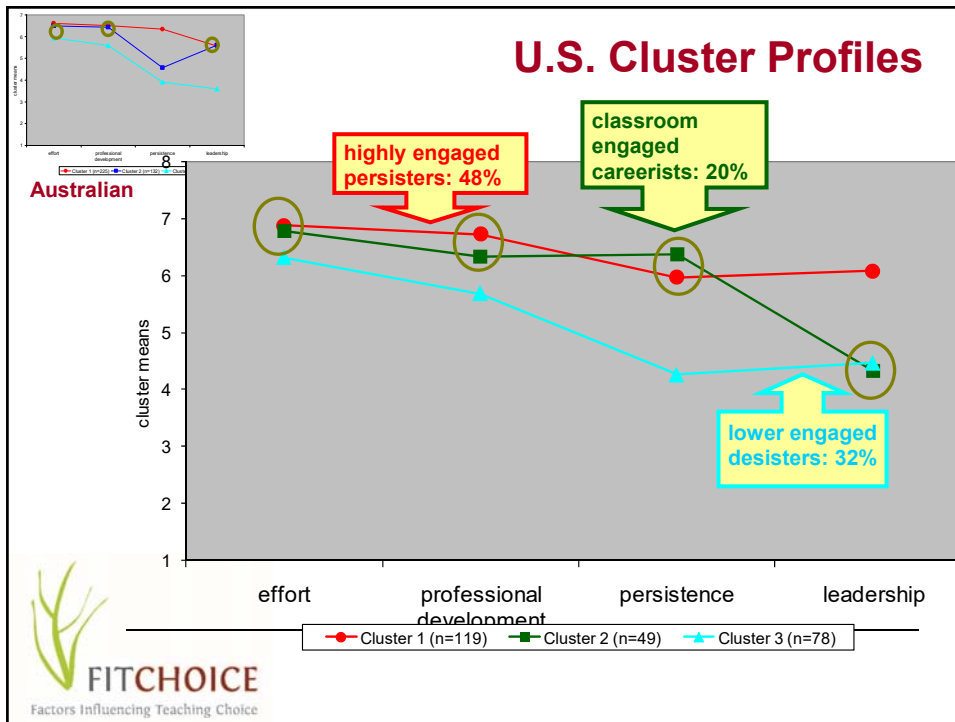
Approach as for Australian study

- Exploratory Factor Analysis
- Hierarchical Cluster Analysis (Ward's method)
- *N* clusters decided on basis of cluster dendrogram, and change in fusion coefficient relative to *n* clusters.
- Cluster differences on:
 - motivations for teaching,
 - demographics,
 - themes from open-ended responses.



FITCHOICE
Factors Influencing Teaching Choice





A Typology of Beginning Teachers?

- High, low, and mixed engagement profiles as hypothesised.
- *Highly engaged persisters* and *desisters* appeared robust clusters across the 2 culturally similar contexts.
- But, the mixed cluster: Classroom Engaged Careerists, did not resemble any type we had identified in our Australian sample.
- It may be there are less options to pursue leadership roles in U.S. schools.
- Pathway into leadership is different, requiring further specialised educational qualifications.



FITCHOICE

Factors Influencing Teaching Choice

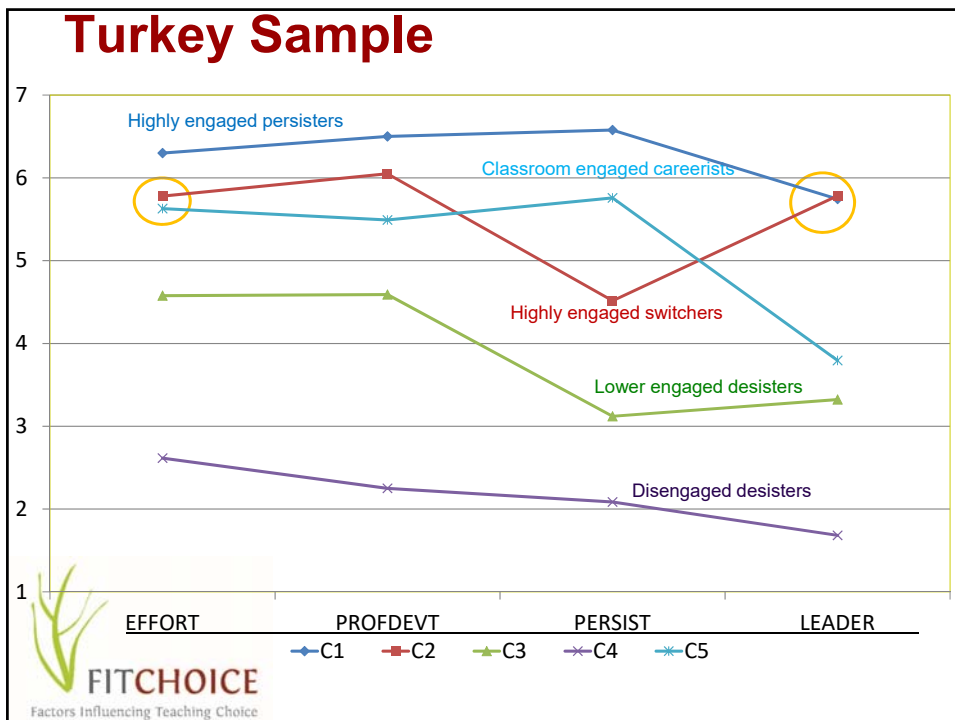
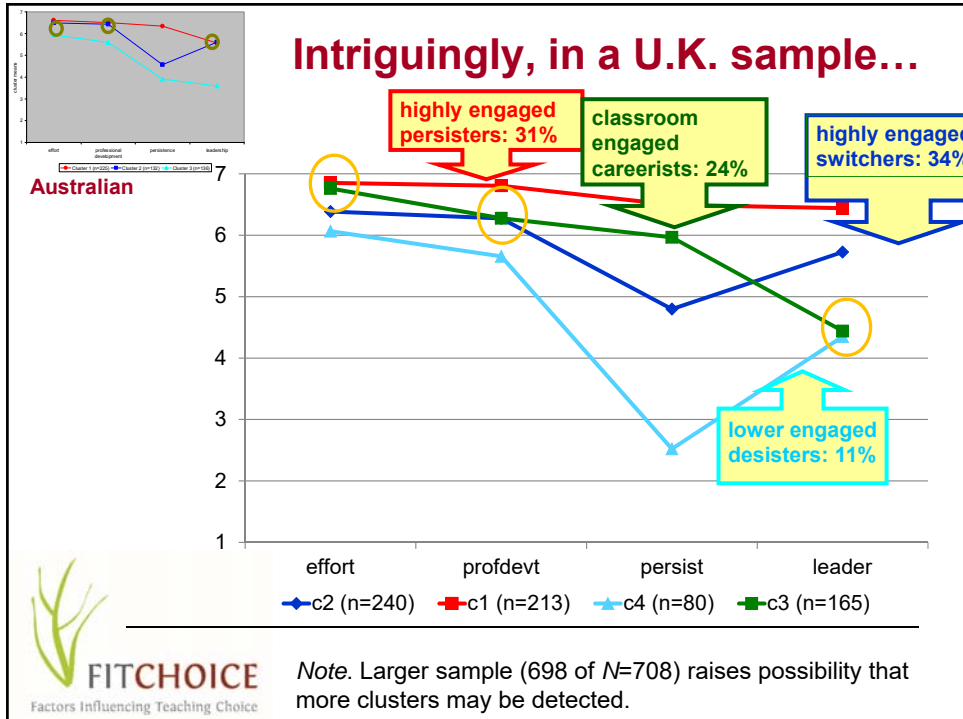
Robustness of these clusters?

A third study with a U.K. sample suggests
these clusters are robust...

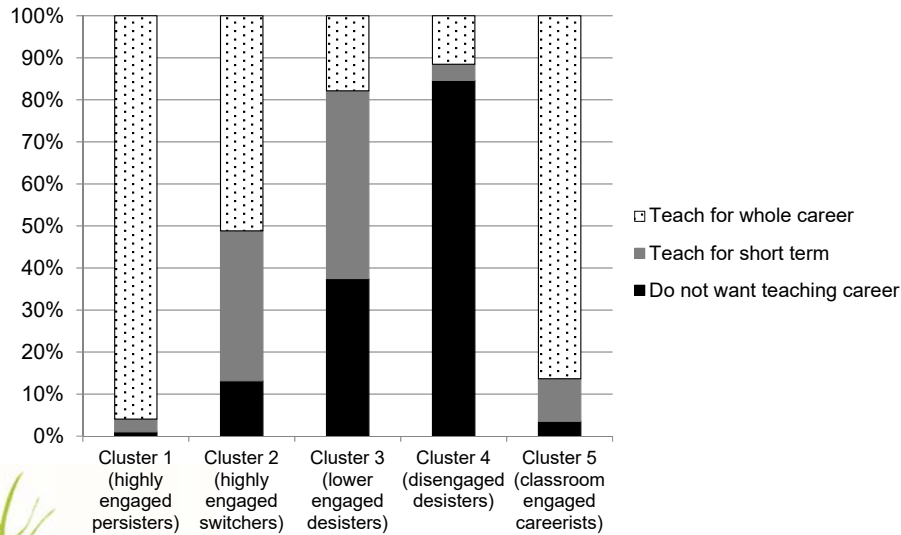


FITCHOICE

Factors Influencing Teaching Choice



Teaching Career Ambition



FITCHOICE

Factors Influencing Teaching Choice

Implications & Conclusions

- Teaching as a career has been influenced by the changing nature of work and shifts in assumptions about the nature of career structures, loyalty, and the psycho-social meaning of work.
- For beginning teachers, their different profiles of goals, commitments, plans, and aspirations will inevitably lead to different pathways of professional identity and development.
- Teacher education and teacher employing authorities need to acknowledge the different planned career trajectories of people who come into those programs.
- Educators and employers must go beyond the assumption that a person coming into teacher education and into a career in teaching may not hold with a traditional lifetime career model of job security founded on incremental age-related advancement and loyalty to the profession.



FITCHOICE

Factors Influencing Teaching Choice

www.fitchoice.org

Implications & Conclusions

- Employers and policy-makers need to attend to conditions in schools: early mentoring of teachers, school-university partnerships, structural and administrative support in schools that overburden teachers with unnecessary work.
- Teacher education should sustain supportive interactions through the practicum, and explicitly recognise teachers' multidimensional role in- and outside the classroom.
- More research is needed in more (different) contexts to discover how cultural differences in teaching career structures impact beginning teacher types across settings.



Thank you!

paul.richardson@monash.edu



www.fitchoice.org