



Tips for Teaching Majors: When Things Do Not Go as Planned

Sometimes life takes us down a road we do not expect. For a teacher candidate, this could be either not getting a teaching job, or realizing that you don't want to teach at all. If either is the case for you, consider this advice from Career Services.

Expand your search

According to the American Association for Employment in Education, school districts have reported varying job availability ranging from having a considerable shortage to having an abundance of qualified applicants. Content area and location of the district are common variables often found in determining candidate pool size. Therefore, to increase your employment options consider expanding the geographic boundaries where you are searching and adding certifications/endorsements to be more marketable. Teacher education candidates are also advised to research what areas are in demand and would add the most value to your specific career goals.

If a classroom position still does not come to fruition consider related opportunities, although some may require additional education:

- Non-public schools (parochial, boarding, military, special needs, magnet, cyber charter, online, alternative education [i.e., corrections and high school equivalency])
- Substitute teaching, teacher assistant – a common way for districts to hire in-house for full-time positions.
Tip: Treat each assignment as a job audition.
- Homebound instruction
- International teaching, including Peace Corps
- Department of Defense Education Activity
- AmeriCorps, Teach for America
- Coaching, tutoring, before/after school programs
- Head Start programs, Montessori Schools
- Child development centers, daycare centers
- English Second Language (ESL) instructor
- Non-profit agencies where children and families are the focus of service
- Summer camp/parks and recreation
- Selling/marketing materials or products utilized by schools (i.e., textbooks, adaptive or lab equipment/supplies, gym mats)
- Community college/university (i.e., adult literacy, tutoring centers, orientation, technology centers, student services)
- Any position that conducts training (i.e., recruitment, staff development)

If you have a specific district in mind, become involved in that district. Volunteer to help in a classroom or to help with a special project or event, and attend school board meetings to remain current on district news and events. Use these opportunities to build a professional network and establish strong working relationships. Become actively involved in professional organizations as a way to develop your network. Also stay connected with your faculty, college friends who have secured teaching jobs, cooperating teachers, and others at your student teaching placement.

Alternatives to teaching

If you have decided not to pursue teaching after receiving your teaching degree, don't despair! You have gained several transferrable skills through your coursework and while student teaching, such as: human development and motivation, assessment, planning/organizing, and presenting. According to the National Association of Colleges and Employers, the top five skills employers value across all industries are: communication skills (verbal), problem solving, teamwork, planning/organizing/prioritizing, and obtaining/processing information. Due to these transferable skills, you may be qualified for positions in various industries outside of education. Visit Career Services to learn more about transferable skills and how they can transform your resume and cover letter to address the expectations of your desired industry.

Sample alternatives outside of the K-12 education industry include, although some may require additional education:

- AmeriCorps, Peace Corps
- Community college/university work (i.e., student advising, admissions, libraries)
- Non-profit and government agencies (i.e., advocacy, casework, grant writing, program management, respite care, camp director)
- Any position that conducts training, research development, assessment, program design (i.e., recruitment, staff development)
- Any position that requires researching and persuasive communication skills (i.e., advocacy, research, journalism, public relations, real estate)
- Any position that requires conflict resolution (i.e., law enforcement, property management, personnel management, counseling)
- Any position that requires a creative self-starter (i.e., web or graphic design, media, advertising)
- Publishing industry (i.e., editing/proofing)
- Insurance industry (i.e., claims adjusting, investigating)
- Hospitality industry (i.e., event/trip planning, theme parks/resorts, tourism, parks and recreation)

If you are unsure of what careers are a best fit for you, take advantage of these free Career Services resources, as well:

- FOCUS - an online career and education planning tool that can help you make more informed career decisions and identify a career plan.*
- Visit the Occupational Outlook Handbook (bls.gov/ooh) or O*Net (onetonline.org) to research supply and demand of jobs.
- Check out the Career Resource Guide.*
- Contact Career Services to meet with a career advisor to discuss these topics in more detail.

*available on the Career Services website