

Common Mistakes Teach For America Corps Members and Alumni Make Professionally (and how to avoid them!)



Dos and Don'ts

Regardless of your post-corps career path, putting your best foot forward professionally is critical to your success. Many of us Teach For America alumni struggle with capturing and maximizing our corps experience, but you can avoid some all-too-common professional pitfalls with OneTeacher's practical advice and resources.



DO: Include your full corps experience on your resume

It can be really challenging to figure out how to include both your experience as a teacher and a Teach For America corps member on your resume. The most important thing you can do is to include your entire corps experience on your resume—not just institute. While it can be tempting to list only your time at institute for your corps experience and then your teaching experience separately, doing so could indicate to potential employers that you quit Teach For America before your two year commitment was over—eek.

If you're not sure how to include your "dual commitment" on your resume, take a look at [these examples](#) for some ideas.

DON'T: Underutilize your TFA network (or ignore it entirely!)

One of the many great personal benefits of being part of the TFA community is the supportive and expansive network to which you belong. Before contemplating a career change, cultivate a robust network of other professionals so that when you *are* ready to switch things up professionally, you have access to more information and opportunities. Meet with the alumni team in your current region and/or region closest to where you anticipate wanting to live. Attend events at which you'll meet people outside of your typical group. Be bold about asking for influencer meetings with people you don't know to learn more about the work they do.

You can find an email template to use when requesting influencer meetings and a sample meeting agenda [here](#).



DO: Frame your teaching experience in terms of accomplishments

This isn't necessarily TFA specific, but phrasing all of your professional experience and especially your teaching experience as accomplishments rather than merely listing job functions will set you apart and make you more attractive to employers. Your resume should be less about what you *did* and more about *to what end* you did them. Including concrete numbers and specific achievements or outcomes is what will make you stand out from applicants and will make your teaching experience more relevant to other fields if that's the direction in which you're going.

Check out our "say this, not that" suggestions for your resume [here!](#)



Navigating Your "Dual Commitment" on a Resume

Example One

Include both corps membership and school employment in one section, spanning your entire corps commitment

Teacher and Teach For America Corps Member | July 2007-May 2009
Bicentennial North School, Glendale Elementary School District
Glendale, AZ

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-
-

Example Two

Include separate sections for corps membership and school employment-- best if you have specific accomplishments related to your corps experience

Corps Member | July 2007-May 2009
Teach For America
Phoenix, AZ

-
-
-

Teacher | July 2007-May 2009
Bicentennial North School, Glendale Elementary School District
Glendale, AZ

-
-
-

Example Three

Include your corps experience as part of your teaching experience

Teacher | July 2007-May 2009
Bicentennial North School, Glendale Elementary School District
Glendale, AZ

- Taught and led as a member of the Teach For America corps
-
-



Working Your Network

When setting up your Influencer Meetings, remember that their purpose is multi-fold:

- To learn about the influencer's industry
- To learn more about the influencer's work and experience
- To share your own interests and strengths and ask for influencer's insight
- To build the foundation for a future relationship with the influencer
- To tap into the influencer's network

Modify the templates below to meet your needs or use them as-is! Good luck! You'll be comfortable in no time.

Email Template

Hi [name],

I got your name from [name/role], and I would love a chance to connect with you in the next few weeks. [Insert a few biographical details to share why you're reaching out.] I'm hoping to learn a bit more about [influencer's field of work or experience] and [person who connected you] said you would be a great person to talk to!

Do you have any time on [date/time/location]?

I look forward to speaking with you,
[your name]

Sample Email

Hi Mr. Seinfeld,

I got your name from Rebecca at Teach For America Phoenix, and I would love a chance to connect with you in the next few weeks. I was a 2007 Phoenix Corps Member, and I have been working at OneTeacher, an alum-founded organization for the past three years helping Title I schools hire amazing teachers and administrators. I've always considered a career in school counseling, and I'm hoping to learn a bit more about your experience as a Dean of Students!

Do you have any time on Wednesday, January 9th to meet up for 45 minutes or so? I'm free all day!

I look forward to speaking with you,
Nina Glatt Tinsley

Sample Meeting Agenda

1. Opening

- Thank influencer for meeting
- Briefly frame your time together by providing general context about why you asked for the meeting
- Briefly share a little about yourself

2. Learn about influencer

- What has been their path to this role?
- What's their favorite aspect of their work?
- What's their least favorite?
- What is a typical day like for them?
- What misconceptions do they think people hold about their work?

3. Share about your professional goals and questions

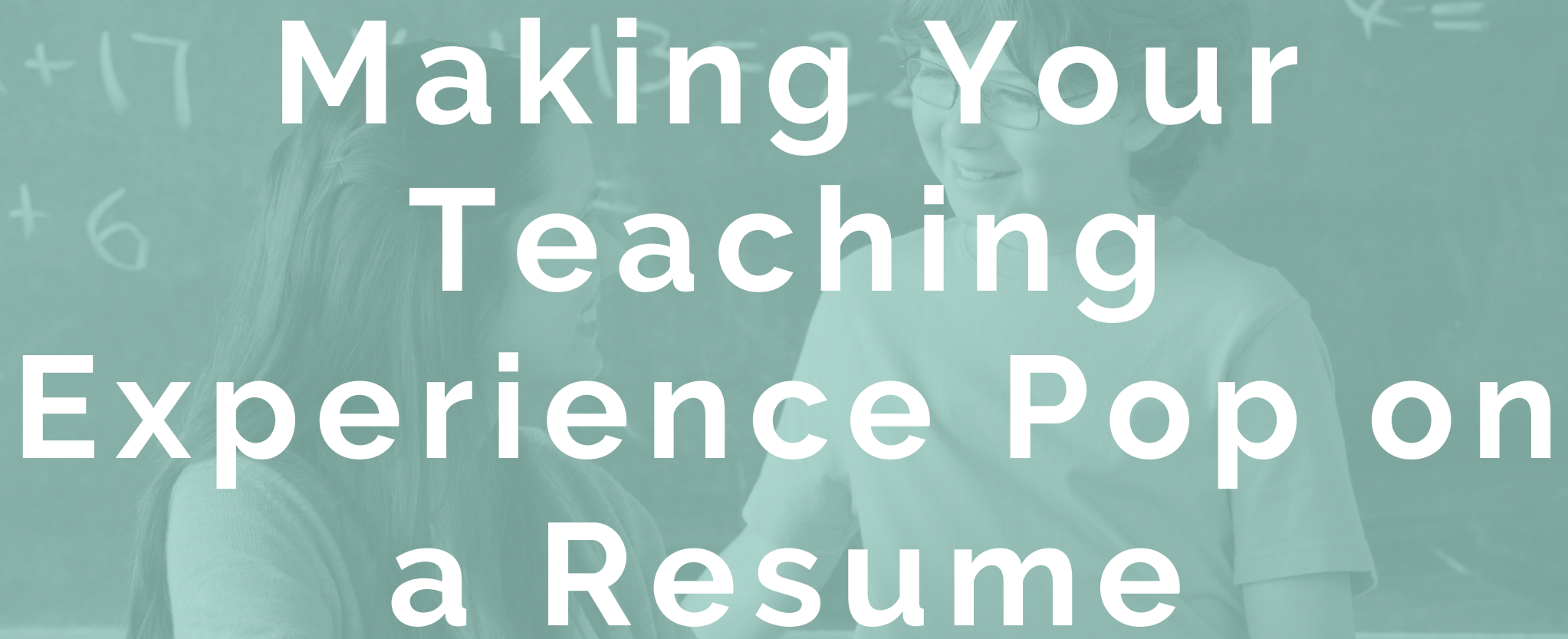
- What you're looking for (doesn't need to be concrete, but could be aspects of your ideal role/work environment)
- What you're not looking for
- What things you're not sure about
- Areas of strength
- Areas of development
- Ask for advice

4. Closing

- Thank influencer for meeting
- Ask who influencer knows who you should be talking to
- Follow up post-meeting with a thank you email or note

Other Resources

[Reach out to the OneTeacher team](#) if you'd like to do a sample influencer meeting for a little extra practice!



Making Your Teaching Experience Pop on a Resume

Example One

Say This

- Designed and executed on rigorous curriculum for 150 eighth grade students

Not

- Taught eighth grade

Example Two

Say This

- Led students to 85% overall mastery in first year of teaching

Not

- Helped students improve test scores

Example Three

Say This

- Identified gaps in student understanding to design personalized learning opportunities for 15 lower-achieving students

Not

- Ensured success of all students

Example Four

Say This

- Earned ratings of Proficient Plus and Exemplary on 95% of teacher evaluation standards

Not

- Well-liked by administration, families, and students

Example Five

Say This

- Secured \$500 donation for students to attend STEM-focused learning program at Arizona Science Center

Not

- Planned the 8th grade field trip



★ OneTeacher is Hiring! ★

Do you thrive in a virtual workspace? Do you want to continue your commitment to educational equity in a non-teaching position? Do you have a desire to work in an innovative, start-up environment? Join the OneTeacher team as our full-time or part-time (25-30 hrs/wk) Manager of Talent Initiatives! Apply no later than Dec. 27th by sending your resume and cover letter to Erin.Tobin@oneteacheraz.com. For a full job description, click [here](#).

★ Seeking Teachers and Administrators ★

If you or someone you know is looking for their "perfect match" school and role, [contact us](#) today! We're hiring K-12th grade educators including teachers and administrators at our Title I partner schools in Arizona, many of which are TFA alumni-led. Find a complete list of our open positions and to apply, visit www.oneteacheraz.com/open-roles!

About Us

OneTeacher's mission is to make that "perfect match" between amazing teachers and inspiring Title I schools in Arizona in order to transform lives and change history.

Erin Tobin (Founder & CEO)



Erin Tobin (Phoenix, '03) grew up in a working-class village of Detroit, Michigan where she struggled with the reality that some lives were forever altered by the opportunity to have a great education while others were held back because of circumstance. Through her work as a teacher in Title I schools, Teach For America corps member, a student in ASU's College of Public Service & Community Solutions, and her training alongside teachers, school leaders, and community members, Erin resolved that what matters most for our students in Title I schools is not programs or policy, but people, the dedicated adults in their lives supporting them every single day. With this belief, she founded OneTeacher, an organization that partners with achievement-focused Title I schools to support their "perfect match" with amazing and aspiring teachers. Her goal, every day, is to ensure that amazing teachers are the ones teaching our students, so all students can have an excellent education that will set them on a path to opportunity and options for their future.

Nina Glatt Tinsley (Senior Director of Marketing & Development)



Nina Glatt Tinsley (Phoenix, '07) grew up in Vermont where she had an extensive string of life-changing teachers. These educators were willing to go above and beyond for their students and in many cases were like family to Nina. Upon graduating, she joined Teach For America in hopes of paying forward the warmth, compassion, and tough love that so many of her teachers showed her. Nina taught middle school math and English in West Phoenix while earning her Master's degree in secondary education from Arizona State University. She then taught high school English at an all-girls charter school where she took over for a teacher who resigned mid-year, further strengthening her understanding of both the positive and negative impact that teachers can have. After teaching, Nina earned her certification as a Real Time Teacher Coach. Now, as the Senior Director of Marketing & Development at OneTeacher, Nina works to ensure that students in Arizona have their own life-changing teachers so that education opens doors for all students, not just some.