

Teacher and Classroom Context Effects on Student Achievement: Implications for Teacher Evaluation

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Overview

Research has been done for years to determine the different factors that contribute to student learning. It has been determined that teachers are the biggest component in learning. Among the debate of factors that influence learning, are the similarities and differences of students within a classroom.

Methods

The Tennessee Value-Added Assessment System (TVAAS) was used to conduct this longitudinal study on student achievement. Results were taken from scores on standardized tests for five subject areas (math, reading, language, social studies, and science) and three grades (third, fourth, and fifth). Classrooms were divided into three groups based on low, moderate, and high differences based on their achievement.

Results

- Two biggest factors challenging student learning are the teacher and the previous year's achievement level for the student.
- A non-significant factor in student achievement was class size.
- Intraclassroom differences do not have a main effect or interact with other factors on academic achievement.

Conclusion

Teacher effectiveness was found to be the main factor affecting student achievement. Students in classrooms with effective teachers, following ineffective teachers will make academic gains, but will not catch up enough to make up for the lost time. Student data should be used to evaluate teachers in a reliable and valid measure. To improve student learning, improvement of ineffective teachers in schools must begin.

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