teacher quality and student achievement

Linda Darling-Hammond

Abstract

Using data from a 50-state survey of policies, state case study analyses, the 1993-94 Schools and Staffing Surveys (SASS), and the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), this study examines the ways in which teacher qualifications and other school inputs are related to student achievement across states. The findings of both the qualitative and quantitative analyses suggest that policy investments in the quality of teachers may be related to improvements in student performance. Quantitative analyses indicate that measures of teacher preparation and certification are by far the strongest correlates of student achievement in reading and mathematics, both before and after controlling for student poverty and language status. State policy surveys and case study data are used to evaluate policies that influence the overall level of teacher qualifications within and across states. This analysis suggests that policies adopted by states regarding teacher education, licensing, hiring, and professional development may make an important difference in the qualifications and capacities that teachers bring to their work. The implications for state efforts to enhance quality and equity in public education are discussed.

Keywords

Academic Achievement; Educational Policy; Elementary Secondary Education; State Programs; Teacher Effectiveness

Full Text:

PDF

DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.14507/epaa.v8n1.2000

Article Metrics

PDF Views.

89,077

This journal

Metrics powered by PLOS ALM

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Linda Darling-Hammond is Charles E. Ducommun Professor of Education at Stanford University and executive director of the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future. Her research, policy, and teaching focus on teacher education and teaching quality, school restructuring, and educational equity. Among other writings, she is author of The Right to Learn, which received the Outstanding Book Award from the American Educational Research...
The relationship between teachers' training in science and student achievement was greater in higher level science courses, a result similar to that found by Hawk, Coble, and Swanson (1985) in mathematics. It may also be that the measure of subject matter knowledge makes a difference in the findings. Measures of course-taking in a subject area have more frequently been found to be related to teacher performance than have scores on tests of subject matter knowledge. The kind and quality of in-service professional development as well as pre-service education may make a difference in developing this knowledge. In practice, teacher turnover appears to have negative effects on school quality as measured by student performance. However, some simulations suggest that turnover can instead have large, positive effects under a policy regime in which low-performing teachers can be accurately identified and replaced with more effective teachers. This study examines this question by evaluating the effects of teacher turnover on student achievement under IMPACT, the unique performance-assessment and incentive system in the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS). Achievement of Students with Disabilities. Policy Relevance 14 percent of public school students have... Growing Consensus that Teacher Quality is the Most Important School-based Determinant of Student Achievement. Rockoff (2004). Rivkin, Hanushek and Kain (2005). If One Wants to Improve Educational Outcomes for Students with Disabilities, Teacher Quality is the Obvious Place to Start. Prior Related Literature. Teacher Training and Student Achievement in the General Student Population. Pre-service Training. College Major/Coursework of Teachers.