



NEW REPORT: Teacher Effectiveness Has A Dramatic Effect On Student Outcomes

A new [IZA World of Labor report](#) publishing today finds teacher effectiveness to have a strong effect on pupil attainment. It goes on to look at ways to increase it, including reforming hiring practices and teacher training.

Teacher effectiveness is the most important component of the education process within schools for pupil attainment. According to economist Simon Burgess of the University of Bristol, one estimate suggests that, in the US, replacing the least effective 8% of teachers with average teachers would have a present value of \$100 trillion. While there is a good understanding on how teachers' effectiveness can be measured in this new report, Burgess stresses the importance for politicians to look at ways to raise teacher efficiency.

Burgess cites a number of studies from different countries which produced similar estimates of the impact of teacher effectiveness. These estimates have been shown to be robust and are supported by studies using experimental assignment of teachers to classes. The results show that variations in teacher effectiveness are extremely important in understanding pupils' attainment. In fact, it seems that no other attribute of schools comes close to having this much influence on student achievement. One of the most striking results is that replacing the lowest performing 5–10% of teachers with average teachers would deliver extremely large net present value calculations. One study estimates that replacing the 5% least effective teachers with average teachers would yield around \$9,000 per classroom per year in future pupil earnings due to better education. These studies show students that are taught by highly effective teachers earn more, are more likely to go to university, and to live in richer neighborhoods.

If teacher effectiveness is that important, we need to look at methods to improve it. Burgess summarizes a number of studies looking at teacher selection processes, teacher training methods, and teacher evaluation and how these can be used to improve teacher performance. Though more research needs to be done it seems that three areas in particular seem to hold the greatest promise when it comes to improving teachers' effectiveness: (i) improving teacher selection and hiring procedures (by for example replacing ineffective teachers at an early point in their career), (ii) reforming teacher contracts and the tenure/retention decision (currently highly effective teachers are more likely to leave their job), and (iii) re-thinking teacher professional development (through for example personalized teacher coaching).

Burgess concludes: *"Teacher effectiveness should be a central concern for education policymakers ... The potential size of the impact of improving teacher effectiveness represents a truly grand prize for the countries, cities, and schools which manage to crack the code of how to raise teacher effectiveness."*

Please credit IZA World of Labor should you refer to or cite from the report.

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Notes for editors:

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The site offers relevant and succinct information on topics including diversity, migration, minimum wage, youth unemployment, employment protection, development, education, gender balance, labor mobility and flexibility among others.

Established in 1998, the Institute of Labor Economics (www.iza.org) is an independent economic research institute focused on the analysis of global labor markets. Based in Bonn, it operates an international network of about 1,500 economists and researchers spanning more than 45 countries.