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Do Early Class-Size Effects Persist? A Six-Year Follow-Up

Hana Lee

Abstract

This fictional study followed students who had been in small or regular classes in Grades 1 and 2 until the end of Grade 6. The early advantage of small classes was not observed at the end of Grade 6.

Introduction

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Previous Studies

Evidence on whether early benefits persist is mixed. In a state report, Brown (1985) found that the advantage of small classes was sustained through Grade 6 in one district, although the report gives few details of the sample and the method.

Other studies have reported that the advantage fades within a few years after students return to regular classes.

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Method

The sample consisted of 210 classes in Korea. Students were assigned to small or regular classes by lottery in Grade 1 and remained in that class type through Grade 2.

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Results

At the end of Grade 2, students who had been in small classes scored 0.24 SD higher in reading and mathematics than students in regular classes. By the end of Grade 6, the difference had shrunk to 0.03 SD and was not statistically significant.

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Discussion

The larger effects found in the early grades in previous studies may partly reflect the fact that assignment in the early grades was closer to random than in later grades.

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References

(Fictional references omitted.)

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