Tennessee Student/Teacher Achievement Ratio (STAR) Experiment

Influence Index: 31

Selected Citations

- Achilles, C., & Finn, J. (2000). Should Class Size Be a Cornerstone for Educational Policy? *The CEIC Review*, 9(2), 15–23.
- Krueger, A., & Whitmore, D. (2001). The Effect of Attending a Small Class in the Early Grades on College-Test Taking and Middle School Test Results: Evidence from Project STAR. *Economic Journal*, 111(468), 1-28.
- Mosteller, F. (1995). The Tennessee Study of Class Size in the Early School Grades. *Future of Children*, 5(2), 113-127.
- Nye, B., Hedges, L. V., & Konstantopoulos, S. (2002). Do Low-Achieving Students Benefit More from Small Classes? Evidence from the Tennessee Class Size Experiment. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 24, 201-217.
- Zaharias, , J.B., Achilles, C.M., & Cain, V.A. (1995). The Effect of Random Class Assignment on Elementary Students' Reading and Mathematics Achievement. *Research in the Schools*, 2(2), 7-14.

Description

The Student/Teacher Achievement Ratio experiment, commonly referred to as Project STAR, gained prominence as a rare large-scale experimental study in the field of education. Since then, Project STAR has contributed to the current emphasis on the value of randomized field trials in experimental evaluation and research promoted by the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences and others.

Project STAR was a four-year longitudinal class-size study funded by the Tennessee General Assembly and conducted by the Tennessee State Department of Education. The focal intervention was the size of classrooms during kindergarten and the early elementary grades. In the course of the study, over 7,000 students in 79 schools were randomly assigned into one of three classroom situations: small class (13 to 17 students per teacher), regular class (22 to 25 students per teacher), or a regular class with a full time teacher's aide. Students remained in their classroom type from kindergarten through third grade.

Analysis of test performance conducted as part of the study found that smaller class sizes resulted in higher achievement than either of the regular class size situations. Follow-up research focusing on Nashville-Davidson County found that students who attended small classes earned consistently better grades by the end of the 1994-1995 school year (when Project STAR students would have been juniors in high school). The students who had been in small classes also outscored their peers in English, mathematics, and science.

Research on class size from Project STAR has appeared in a variety of journals. In addition, findings from the studies have been presented at numerous education conferences over the years. In 1999, research from Project STAR was presented at a press conference at the National Press Club. This event provided a forum for the dissemination of findings and publications using data from the Tennessee experiment. Although the class-size intervention at the heart of the STAR experiment ended years ago, an active research agenda continues to this day. Health and Education Research Operative Services (HEROS) Incorporated has received funding from the Tennessee Department of Education to pursue follow-up research. HEROS provides a public access data set to researchers with variables from Project STAR research.

For More Information

Data and reports about Project STAR are available online at www.heros-inc.org/star.htm.