Effects of Title I on Student Achievement

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Effects of Title I on Student Achievement

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Abstract:
This study analyzes the effects of attending a Title I funded school on student achievement by examining fall and spring test scores of kindergarten students, and achievement gains between the two evaluations. The study presents two hypotheses: students attending Title I funded schools will have lower math test scores for both fall and spring tests than students attending schools that do not receive Title I funds, and students attending Title I funded schools will have higher achievement gains between fall and spring than children attending schools that do not receive Title I funds. Using data from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study 1998-99 (ECLS-K) it was determined that students who attended Title I funded schools received lower test scores than their peers who did not receive these funds. Also, no significant differences in achievement gains were found between the two groups.

Introduction:
Not all students in the United States receive an education that leads to literacy and success in the labor market (Barnes, Hindman, 2007). This can be attributed to the gross distribution of educational resources (Murnane, 2007). Children who live in poverty tend to go to school with high levels of students in poverty. Because of the housing patterns that put these children in schools together, the schools do not have an adequate budget to afford quality teachers, computers, textbooks, or small class sizes.

The home environment can also influence a child's level of student achievement. The child rearing techniques used in a home can affect a child's talents, abilities, values, social skills, behavior, and achievement in school, and often leave the poorer children at a disadvantage. Poorer parent's tend to talk with their child less, enroll them in fewer extra curricular, and even spend less time with them (Lareau, 2002).

Title I: "Closed the achievement gap between high- and low-performing children, especially the achievement gap between minority and nonminority students, and between disadvantaged children and their more advantaged peers" (U.S. Department of Education, 2004). Title I tries to achieve this goal by providing additional funding to schools with high percentages of poor children.

Funding used to improve teacher quality, improve classroom procedure and reduce class size can have a positive influence on student achievement (Wenglinsky, 1997).

Hypothesis 1:
Students who attend schools that receive Title I funds will have lower test scores for both fall and spring tests than students who attend schools that don't receive Title I funds.

Hypothesis 2:
Students who attend Title I funded schools will have higher gains between fall and spring test that students who do not attend a Title I funded school.

Results:
Fall Test scores:
Students who attended a Title I funded school received 1.359 points less on the fall math evaluation than students who attended a school that did not receive Title I funded schools. This relationship was significant at the p < .001 level.

Spring Test scores:
Students who attended a Title I funded school received 1.757 points less on the spring math evaluation than students who attended a school that did not receive Title I funded schools. This relationship was significant at the p < .001 level.

Conclusions:
In accordance with previous literature, students who attended Title I funded schools earned significantly lower marks on test scores than their peers who attended schools that did not receive these funds. There was no significant difference found in math score gains between students attending Title I funded schools and students that attended schools that did not receive these additional funds.

Title I is a program that intends to close the achievement gap between disadvantaged children and their more advantaged peers. These results posit that Title I is not meeting its goals. Both groups of children had achievement gains, but because there was no significant difference in the size of achievement gains between the two groups the students attending Title I funded schools still had significantly lower test scores than their more advantaged peers.

Because funding has been found to have a positive influence on student achievement (Wenglinsky, 1997), it would be helpful to evaluate how Title I funds are being used, to help them reach their greatest potential. Wenglinsky (1997), also found that it is not having funding that is important but how funding is used. "Title I funding may be more beneficial if schools focused the additional funding on improving teacher quality, reducing classroom sizes, improving classroom procedures and content, and finding ways to better include parents in their children's education and lives."

References: