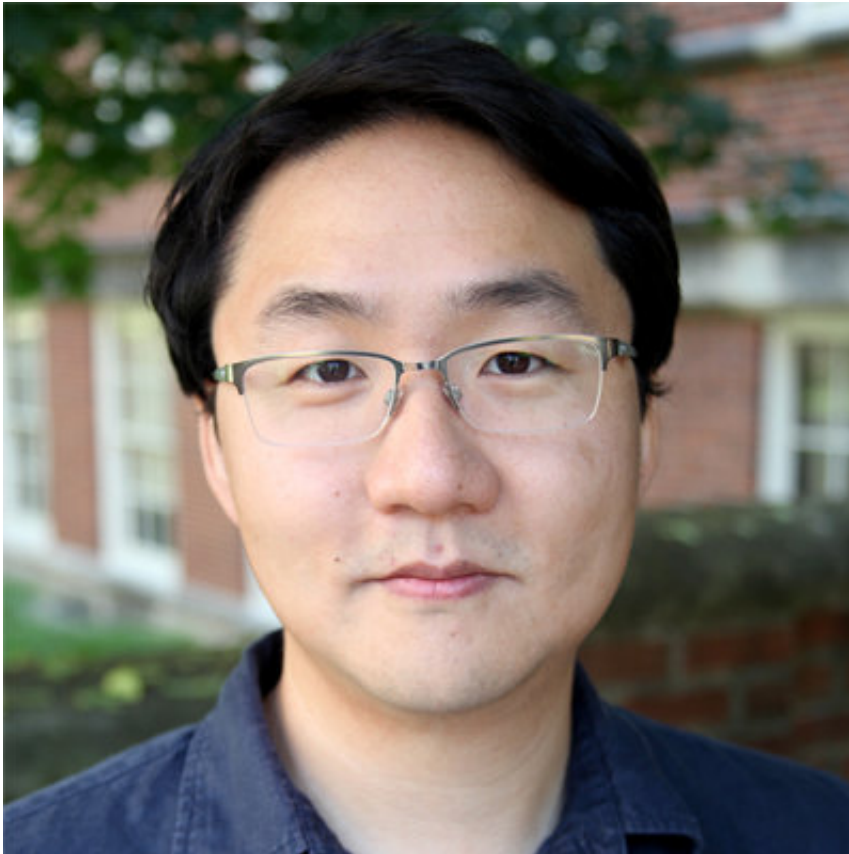


Students taught by highly qualified teachers more likely to obtain bachelor's degree

May 22 2018, by Cailin Riley



Se Woong Lee, an assistant professor in the College of Education, found that high school students taught by a string of teachers who majored in a specific teaching subject are more likely to become college graduates. Credit: MU College of Education

Previous research has shown that teachers play a pivotal role in their

students' academic success—or lack thereof. Now, a researcher at the University of Missouri has found that high school students taught by a string of teachers who majored or minored in a specific teaching subject, instead of a general teaching degree, are more likely to become college graduates. The researcher says that schools can use this new knowledge to find new ways to increase their number of highly qualified teachers and make student success a collective effort.

"Performance is a collective measure of a [school](#)," said Se Woong Lee, an assistant professor in the College of Education. "If we develop a system where the focus is on [student](#) development and learning over time, then we're helping to give equal opportunities to students within a school and being fair to our teachers at the same time."

Through an analysis of a longitudinal data set collected from more than 6,000 students and their teachers nationwide, Lee found that students who were taught by a succession of teachers who majored or minored in mathematics had better [success](#) in short-term math achievement. In the long term, the students also were more likely to graduate from college.

"Teacher quality is the most influential factor that determines [student success](#)," Lee said. "If students are taught by a string of under qualified and underperforming teachers, it limits academic potential. However, highly qualified teachers are more likely to expand students' desires to learn and succeed."

Lee suggests that schools can increase their number of highly qualified teachers by changing the hiring process to specifically seek teachers with a background or specialization in the courses they will be teaching. For example, a school seeking a literature teacher would look to prioritize applicants who majored in English in college. In addition, sharing student data and performance from teacher to teacher could be beneficial to students' long-term success, Lee said.

"Right now in schools, there's little collaboration between teachers as students move from one grade level to the next," Lee said. "However, if a student's third grade math teacher sits down with their incoming fourth grade math [teacher](#), they can share information on the student's performance and how they learn best."

More information: Se Woong Lee, Pulling Back the Curtain: Revealing the Cumulative Importance of High-Performing, Highly Qualified Teachers on Students' Educational Outcome, *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis* (2018). [DOI: 10.3102/0162373718769379](#)

Provided by University of Missouri-Columbia

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