

A Norwegian Curriculum Reform: Effects for 10th Graders' Academic Performance

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Abstract

The present study investigated the effects of the latest Norwegian educational reform (LK20) on academic outcomes. The reform emphasises in-depth learning through core elements, critical and algorithmic thinking, and interdisciplinarity. We analysed registry data from the 10th grade student population in Norway ($N = 347,553$ pupils) across three groups with varied implementation from 2018 to 2023. Academic performance was assessed using grade point averages (GPAs) and term scores, and multilevel mixed models were used to examine the interactions between the timepoint and intervention groups. We found no significant ($p \geq .01$) effect of the reform on GPA. For the term scores, only 3 out of 18 interactions of varying directions ($d = .01$ – $.03$) were found to be significant, indicating no substantial improvement for 10th graders. Potential reasons include insufficient systematic implementation, teaching habits, time-related aspects, and the alignment between curriculum and assessment, all of which have implications for curriculum policy, teacher professional development, and assessment design.

Keywords: School Reform Curriculum Education Natural Experiment Academic Achievement