

# “Uniform Mixed-seating Classroom with Incentives of Tutoring: Evidence from a Randomized Experiment in Elementary Schools”

*(in English)*



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## **Abstract**

This paper analyzes experimental data from a carefully designed seating arrangement in elementary schools in China to determine the effects of a uniform mixed-seating classroom and incentivized study help. We randomly set up two thirds of classes as uniform mixed-seating classrooms in which low- and high-ability students are divided into two tracks according to the median score of a previous examination. Students in the lower and upper tracks are randomly paired as deskmates and sat together for 20 weeks. Half of the mixed-seating classes are selected randomly, and a tournament-type incentive based on the improved score of lower-track students is set among upper-track students. We find that lower-track students assigned with incentivized upper-track students benefit the most. These students gain 0.24 standard deviations in their mathematics scores relative to the students in the classroom with traditional seating (control group). Upper-track students are almost unaffected in the incentivized uniform mixed-seating classes. In comparison, students in the uniform mixed-seating classroom without incentives show little change in their scores relative to the control group. We provide evidence that the deskmate-level peer effects can be an underlying mechanism of the positive treatment effect. Furthermore, we find the separation of lower-track students in their friendship networks in the incentivized uniform mixed-seating classes: their between-track friends clearly increased and crowded out within-track friends.

## **Biography**

Jia Wu is an associate professor in Department of Economics, Jinan University. He received his Ph.D. at the Southwestern University of Finance and Economics in 2012. Prior to joining Jinan he worked as a postdoctoral researcher in the Chinese University of Hong Kong. His current research focuses on child development, such as peer effects in schools, student network and the left-behind children. He has published in various journals, such as Asian Economic Policy Review, Pacific Economic Review, Emerging Markets Review and China Economic Review.

**All Are Welcome**

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