

Spieß, C. Katharina; Wittenberg, Erich

Article

"Adolescents from low-income households use private tutoring the least frequently": Eight questions to C. Katharina Spiess

DIW Economic Bulletin

Provided in Cooperation with:

German Institute for Economic Research (DIW Berlin)

Suggested Citation: Spieß, C. Katharina; Wittenberg, Erich (2016) : "Adolescents from low-income households use private tutoring the least frequently": Eight questions to C. Katharina Spiess, DIW Economic Bulletin, ISSN 2192-7219, Deutsches Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung (DIW), Berlin, Vol. 6, Iss. 6, pp. 72-

This Version is available at:

<https://hdl.handle.net/10419/127433>

Standard-Nutzungsbedingungen:

Die Dokumente auf EconStor dürfen zu eigenen wissenschaftlichen Zwecken und zum Privatgebrauch gespeichert und kopiert werden.

Sie dürfen die Dokumente nicht für öffentliche oder kommerzielle Zwecke vervielfältigen, öffentlich ausstellen, öffentlich zugänglich machen, vertreiben oder anderweitig nutzen.

Sofern die Verfasser die Dokumente unter Open-Content-Lizenzen (insbesondere CC-Lizenzen) zur Verfügung gestellt haben sollten, gelten abweichend von diesen Nutzungsbedingungen die in der dort genannten Lizenz gewährten Nutzungsrechte.

Terms of use:

Documents in EconStor may be saved and copied for your personal and scholarly purposes.

You are not to copy documents for public or commercial purposes, to exhibit the documents publicly, to make them publicly available on the internet, or to distribute or otherwise use the documents in public.

If the documents have been made available under an Open Content Licence (especially Creative Commons Licences), you may exercise further usage rights as specified in the indicated licence.



Prof. Dr. C. Katharina Spieß, Head of the Department Education and Family at DIW Berlin

EIGHT QUESTIONS TO C. KATHARINA SPIESS

»Adolescents from low-income households use private tutoring the least frequently«

1. How much are German schoolchildren being tutored? The usage of tutoring in Germany is noteworthy. Among secondary school students, 18 percent reported having been tutored in the past 6 months. Among primary school students, it's clearly much lower, at 6 percent. However, it's remarkable that even first-graders report that they have received tutoring.
2. How has the use of tutoring developed over the past few years? Among the children who were 17 years old in the year 2013, 47 percent report that they made use of tutoring at least once over the course of their school careers. In 2000, this figure amounted to 27 percent—that is, much less.
3. What's caused this growth? Our study is more geared toward trends and less toward causes. Our analysis does show, however, that certain groups remain underrepresented among those students who are receiving tutoring, and that tutoring among middle-class students in particular has increased strongly and disproportionately over the past few years.
4. What role does the parents' level of education play here? The parents' level of education certainly has some influence, but it isn't major. Children of parents with lower levels of education take advantage of tutoring to a lesser extent, and children from better-educated parents are more likely to receive tutoring. Although an overall increase has taken place and usage among all groups has changed over time, the gap in usage between the children of better-educated and less highly educated parents—and this is quite remarkable—has not changed much.
5. Are students who cannot afford tutoring in danger of falling behind their classmates? That's definitely an important issue. In our study we examine only paid tutoring—we do not know, for example, how often students use unpaid tutoring. If children from poorer families were receiving unpaid tutoring much more frequently, then there wouldn't be as big of a difference, per se. But if we focus solely on paid tutoring, then it is indeed the case that these children continue to have a lower likelihood of receiving help from a tutor. However, it is important to note that an increase in paid tutoring usage can also be observed among lower-income children, and that children from households receiving transfer benefits are being tutored significantly more often than they were in the year 2000.
6. Has tutoring become an important business sector? Tutoring is actually a relatively huge market, and is now recording substantial revenue. There are commercial tutoring businesses, but paid tutoring is also available from within the non-profit sector. As we are unable to distinguish which kinds of providers are being used, we have primarily explored things from the demand side.
7. Does tutoring bring about the desired academic success? Finding an answer to this question was not part of this investigation. There are other studies, however, that provide some hints that tutoring actually improves academic performance.
8. What do these results mean for educational policy? Our results are interesting from an educational-policy standpoint, because we still have major educational inequalities in Germany. Children from educationally disadvantaged family backgrounds often perform worse in school. If tutoring can contribute to improved school performance, and children from lower-income and less-educated families continue to use it only to a limited extent, then educational inequalities might continue to exist.

Interview by Erich Wittenberg



DIW Berlin – Deutsches Institut
für Wirtschaftsforschung e.V.
Mohrenstraße 58, 10117 Berlin
T +49 30 897 89 -0
F +49 30 897 89 -200

Publishers

Prof. Dr. Pio Baake
Prof. Dr. Tomaso Duso
Dr. Ferdinand Fichtner
Prof. Marcel Fratzscher, Ph.D.
Prof. Dr. Peter Haan
Prof. Dr. Claudia Kemfert
Dr. Kati Krähnert
Prof. Dr. Lukas Menkhoff
Prof. Karsten Neuhoff, Ph.D.
Prof. Dr. Jürgen Schupp
Prof. Dr. C. Katharina Spieß
Prof. Dr. Gert G. Wagner

Reviewer

Dr. Katharina Wrohlich

Editors in chief

Sylvie Ahrens-Urbaneck
Dr. Kurt Geppert

Editorial staff

Renate Bogdanovic
Dr. Franziska Bremus
Sebastian Kollmann
Dr. Peter Krause
Marie Kristin Marten
Ilka Müller
Dr. Wolf-Peter Schill

Translation

Miranda Siegel

Layout and Composition

eScriptum GmbH & Co KG, Berlin

Press office

Renate Bogdanovic
Tel. +49-30-89789-249
presse@diw.de

Sale and distribution

DIW Berlin

Reprint and further distribution – including extracts – with complete reference and consignment of a specimen copy to DIW Berlin's Communication Department (kundenservice@diw.berlin) only.
Printed on 100 % recycled paper.