ABSTRACT: We investigate teachers’ comparative advantage (CA). Teachers’ impacts on student test scores that vary by student type (i.e., “multivariate” teacher effects) imply that teachers have CA. First, we test whether teacher effects are type specific by using teacher switching quasi-experiment and a supplementary holdout-sample strategy. By defining student type by race and using 1.7 million test scores from Chicago Public Schools, we find that teacher value-added (VA) is race specific: when a teacher with low black VA is replaced by another with a higher black VA, this change causes a corresponding change in test scores of black students but not on non-black students. Next, we characterize teachers’ CA and relate it to teacher mobility, student-teacher racial-match effects, and student’s educational mobility. We also discuss the implications of deselecting teachers based on a univariate measure of teacher performance when teacher effects are multivariate, and schools are highly segregated.

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