



**Dragana Ž. Gundogan<sup>1</sup>,**  
**Dušica M. Malinić, Mladen B. Radulović**  
Institute for Educational Research, Belgrade, Republic of Serbia

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## ***Can Different Teaching Practices Influence the Connection between Social Status and Student Achievement?<sup>2</sup>***

### **Extended summary**

Sociology of education, among other topics, is trying to understand how social factors are affecting learning process in schools and how parents' social position is affecting children's educational achievement. On the other hand, pedagogical science is trying to explain how different teaching practices can affect learning process, educational outcomes and educational achievement. Nevertheless, there are very few interdisciplinary studies that are dealing with the interrelation between family (social) factors and school factors, even though those studies are necessary for a thorough understanding of school achievement. Starting from the fact that there is no consensus on the way in which school factors mediate the influence of social status on achievement, we wanted to examine how teaching practices affect the relationship between social status and student achievement. More precisely, we tried to determine whether the intensity of the correlation between social position and student achievement on the TIMSS test differs among students whose teachers use different teaching practices (activities that are more in line with transmissive teaching or practices more in line with engaging teaching). To answer this question, we used the data collected within the TIMSS 2015 research conducted in Serbia, which included 160 schools, 192 primary school teachers and 4036 students. Social position of students was measured as a latent variable, inferred from both parents' educational level and occupation ("social position factor" explained 40.2% of variance of four observed variables). The teaching practices were ana-

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1 stokanicdragana@gmail.com

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lysed using teacher answers on six Likert type questions measuring how often they ask students to do the following while teaching Science: (1) to listen to a teacher explaining a new science content; (2) to design or plan experiments or investigations; (3) to interpret data from experiments or investigations; (4) to use evidence from experiments or investigations to support conclusions; (5) to read their textbooks or other resource materials; (6) to memorize facts and principles. Factor analysis (principal components method of extraction, quartimax rotation) detected two factors in teachers' answers (explaining 69.9% of variance) and these factors were labelled as "transmissive teaching" and "engaging teaching". For the data examination we used correlation analysis. The results showed that (1) there is a moderate positive correlation between social status and student achievement, (2) there is no correlation between teaching practices and student achievement, and (3) teaching practices mediate the relationship between social status and achievement. The mediating role of teaching practice is observed in the way that the intensity of the correlation between social status and achievement is stronger in the situation when teaching tends to be more transmissive and less engaging. The obtained findings suggest that teaching practices in the classroom can alleviate social inequality. More precisely, based on our results, it could be argued that the way to achieve this goal is to support teachers to act in accordance with the principles of engaging teaching. Additionally, bearing in mind the growing social inequalities in Serbia and different students' needs from different social positions it would be beneficial to increase teachers' sensitivity to social inequalities and to encourage them to analyse the effects of their teaching on the persistence of social inequalities.

**Keywords:** social status, TIMSS, achievement, primary school teacher, teaching.

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