



## **Seminar Economics of Education WS20/21**

General information, presentation sessions, written assignment and grading  
**Dr. Marcello Pérez-Alvarez**

### **DESCRIPTION**

A growing body of empirical work investigates education policies from an economics perspective. This so-called economics of education applies methodological and analytical tools from the economic literature to the analysis of education issues such as school management, tracking, technology use in the classroom, instruction time, teacher quality and technical education, among others.

This proseminar reviews some of the main topics within this field, covering measurement aspects, determinants and consequences of education outcomes. Analysis using data from both developed and developing countries will be discussed. The learning objectives are threefold. First, students are expected to understand the current state of the literature, reflecting on the lessons and (lack of) consensus that are relevant for their research question. Second, students will learn to apply economic concepts such as incentives, externalities and asymmetric information to education issues. Third, students will engage with experimental and quasi-experimental techniques that aim at quantifying causal effects.

Students are required to present one existing research paper and write a seminar paper that investigates a specific research question, speaking to the three objectives mentioned above and drawing upon existing research papers, using the presented one as starting point. The seminar papers should be analytical and critical, develop a coherent argument that is already presented in the introduction drawing own conclusions, and should go beyond the pure summary of existing literature. Own empirical work is not intended given the time constraints. Working language for both the presentations and seminar papers is English.

# ORGANIZATIONAL ISSUES

## General information

A registration via mein Campus from **August 10 until August 31, 2020** (and later via StudOn) is required. Attendance at the preliminary meeting and presentation sessions is mandatory.

## Preliminary meeting and presentations session

The preliminary meeting will be held in room 5.054, Kochstr. 4 or online via a Zoom-Meeting (depending on covid development) on **November 2 from 17:00-18:00, 2020**. If necessary, the corresponding Zoom-link, as well as a password for access to the StudOn group will be shared via email to students registered for the seminar in mein Campus one week prior to the meeting. The topics (see list below) will be assigned during the preliminary meeting. Two students will be assigned to each of the 10 topics provided below. Thence, please make sure to define your preferences (at least three topics) before attending the preliminary meeting. Later, you will be required to make a presentation of the research paper assigned to you. The research papers for the presentations will be provided via StudOn.

The seminar (presentations session) will take place on the **4<sup>th</sup> (15:00-18:00) and 5<sup>th</sup> of December (9:00-18:00), 2020** in room 5.054, Kochstr. 4 or online via a Zoom-Meeting, depending on the covid development. Each presentation will last 20 minutes. After the presentation, the lecturer and the students will have 10 minutes to make questions to the presenter. Please note that all participants are expected to actively participate during the presentations of other students. Students are required to send their presentation slides to [marcello.perez-alvarez@fau.de](mailto:marcello.perez-alvarez@fau.de) on latest the **3<sup>rd</sup> (12:00) of December 2020**.

## Written assignment

Each student is required to write a seminar paper independently. The deadline for handing in the seminar paper is on **19<sup>th</sup> of January, 2021**. Students are expected to write a seminar paper of 15 pages (A4, Times New Roman, 12pt, single line spacing, 2,5 cm margins at each side) that investigates a specific research question, speaking to the three objectives mentioned above and drawing upon existing research papers, using the presented one as starting point. The seminar papers should be analytical and critical, develop a coherent argument that is already presented in the introduction drawing own conclusions, and should go beyond the pure summary of existing literature. Own empirical work in the form of regression analysis is not intended given the time constraints. Students are expected to work independently on their particular research topic, engage with the academic literature and thereby strengthen their ability to critically read and assess applied work, showing an understanding of the lessons provided by the literature and of quasi-experimental techniques to estimate causal effects.

## Grading

Presentation (33%), Written assignment (67%)

# LIST OF TOPICS

## **1 Measurement**

Jacob, Brian, and Jesse Rothstein. 2016. "The Measurement of Student Ability in Modern Assessment Systems." *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 30 (3): 85-108.

## **2 School management**

Bloom, Nicholas, Renata Lemos Raffaella Sadun and John Van Reenen. 2015. "Does Management Matter in Schools?" *Economic Journal*, 125 (584), 647-674.

## **3 School tracking**

Sari Pekkala Kerr, Tuomas Pekkarinen and Roope Uusitalo. 2013. "School Tracking and Development of Cognitive Skills." *Journal of Labor Economics*, Vol. 31 (3), 577-602.

## **4 Technology**

Muralidharan, Karthik, Abhijeet Singh, and Alejandro J. Ganimian. 2019. "Disrupting Education? Experimental Evidence on Technology-Aided Instruction in India." *American Economic Review*, 109 (4): 1426-60.

## **5 Inputs: Instruction time**

Lavy, Victor. 2015. "Do Differences in Schools' Instruction Time Explain International Achievement Gaps? Evidence from Developed and Developing Countries." *Economic Journal*, 125 (588): F397-F424.

## **6 The role of teachers I**

Bau, Natalie, and Jishnu Das. 2020. "Teacher Value Added in a Low-Income Country." *American Economic Journal: Economic Policy*, 12 (1): 62-96.

## **7 The role of teachers II**

Bietenbeck, Jan, Marc Piopiunik and Simon Wiederhold. 2018. "Africa's Skill Tragedy: Does Teachers' Lack of Knowledge Lead to Low Student Performance?" *Journal of Human Resources*, 53(3), 553-578.

## **8 Parents**

Islam, Asad, 2019. "Parent-Teacher Meetings and Student Outcomes: Evidence from a Developing Country" *European Economic Review*, 111(C), pages 273-304.

## **9 Career and technical education**

Bonilla, Sade. 2020. "The dropout effects of career pathways: Evidence from California." *Economics of Education Review*, 75: 101972.

## **10 Non-pecuniary returns to schooling**

Oreopoulos, Philip, and Kjell G. Salvanes. 2011. "Priceless: The Nonpecuniary Benefits of Schooling." *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 25 (1): 159-84.