

Seminar in Economics of Education

-Syllabus-

INSTRUCTORS

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GENERAL INFORMATION

- Course level: Master students in economics
- Credits: 6 ECTS
- Prerequisites: Good knowledge of microeconomics and econometric methods
- Number of students: max. 16

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The seminar gives students a platform to discuss recent academic contributions in the field of economics of education (see topics below). The learning content is based on a range of high-quality research papers published in leading journals in the field of economics.

Students are expected to investigate one of the research topics based on their own reading of one of the research papers and present the acquired knowledge to the other seminar participants. This includes individual presentations of the research work as well as a short group presentation of the jointly gathered knowledge on the topic. In addition, students are expected to write a seminar paper. As a seminar paper, each student writes an essay of about 10-12 pages containing either (a) a research proposal in one of the seminar topics or (b) a thorough critical evaluation of the research paper.

The goal of the seminar is to carefully guide students toward the frontiers of research in the field of economics of education. After the seminar, participants should be able to think more independently about (potential) scientific contributions in the field of economics of education. Moreover, the seminar aims to motivate participants to develop their own research idea, which they may want to pursue in their Master's thesis.

The final grade of the course results from the following evaluated contributions: Presentation (40 %), essay/research proposal (35 %), participation during the seminar (25 %).

COURSE OUTLINE

- **Kick-off event** (September 22, 2022, 14:15-16:00)

Course instructors introduce the topics of the seminar, state what they expect from seminar participants, address open questions, and assign research papers.

*Please read the abstracts/introductions of the papers from the reading list below **before** the meeting so that you can state at least 4 research papers that you are willing to study in detail.*

- **Preparation phase I**

Time to read the research paper in detail, have one-to-one meetings with the course instructors, and prepare your presentation.

- **Seminar days** (October, 27-28, 2022, 14:15-18:00, and November, 03-04, 2022, 14:15-18:00)

Seminar presentations (30-35 min presentation, 10-15 min discussion), participation is obligatory for all seminar participants.

- **Preparation phase II**

Time to work on your essay/research proposal (10-12 pages), and to have one-to-one meetings with course instructors.

- **Deadline for seminar paper submission** (December, 31, 2022, 23:59)

READING LIST

1. Education and COVID-19

Especially in the first months of the COVID-19 pandemic the daily life of youth changed radically. Governments around the world took unprecedented actions including restrictions on gatherings, distance and hygiene regulations and closure of stores and public facilities. A life of closed schools and distance learning or home schooling required significant sacrifice and acclimatisation for students and parents. In this very recent and developing topic, we are interested in the consequences of the pandemic for young adults in compulsory schooling, including learning losses and increasing social inequality.

Literature

- [1] AGOSTINELLI, F., M. DOEPKE, G. SORRENTI, AND F. ZILIBOTTI (2022): "When the great equalizer shuts down: Schools, peers, and parents in pandemic times," *Journal of Public Economics* 206, 10457.
- [2] ANGRIST, N., P. BERGMAN, AND M. MATSHENG (2021): "School's out: Experimental evidence on limiting learning loss using 'low-tech' in a pandemic," *NBER Working Paper*, 28205.
- [3] GREWENIG, E., P. LERGETPORER, K. WERNER, L. WOESSMANN, AND L. ZIEROW (2021): "COVID-19 and educational inequality: How school closures affect low-and high-achieving students," *European Economic Review*, 140, 103920.

- [4] HALLORAN, C., R. JACK, J. C. OKUN, AND E. OSTER (2021). “Pandemic schooling mode and student test scores: Evidence from US states,” *NBER Working Paper*, 29497.

2. Gender differences in educational choices

The gender gap in labor market participation or educational attainment has become much smaller over the last couple of decades. With respect to some measures of educational success—such as college graduation—women have even surpassed men. However, we still observe a remarkably underrepresentation of women in certain fields of study and occupations. The lack of women in math-intensive, traditionally male-dominated fields has been repeatedly linked to the observed differences in earnings between women and men. Thus, understanding gender differences in educational choices is highly relevant from a policy perspective to find ways to narrow or close the gender pay gap. In this part of the seminar, we will discuss potential causes for the observed gender difference in educational choices.

Literature

- [5] CARLANA, M. (2019): “Implicit stereotypes: Evidence from Teachers’ Gender Bias,” *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 134(3), 1163-1224.
- [6] PORTER, C. AND D. SERRA (2020): “Gender differences in the choice of major: The importance of female role models,” *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*, 12(3), 226-254.
- [7] REUBEN, E., M. WISWALL, AND B. ZAFAR (2017): “Preferences and biases in educational choices and labor market expectations: Shrinking the black box of gender,” *Economic Journal*, 127(604), 2153-2186.
- [8] WISWALL, M. AND B. ZAFAR (2018): “Preferences for the workplace, investment in human capital, and gender,” *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 133(1), 457-507.

3. Peer effects in compulsory education

Peer effects is the focus of a large and growing academic literature. The influence of specific types of individuals on their peers is a crucial determinant for the learning experience. The gathered academic knowledge contains effects of different kinds of individuals. In this topic we look into spill-over effects from low ability, gifted, special needs pupils and gender compositions in compulsory schools.

Literature

- [9] XU, D., Q. ZHANG, AND X. ZHOU (2022): “The Impact of Low-Ability Peers on Cognitive and Noncognitive Outcomes Random Assignment Evidence on the Effects and Operating Channels,” *Journal of Human Resources*, 57(2), 555-596.
- [10] BALESTRA, S., B. EUGSTER, AND H. LIEBERT (2020): “Peers with special needs: Effects and policies,” *The Review of Economics and Statistics*, 1-42.

- [11] BALESTRA, S., A. SALLIN, AND S. C. WOLTER (2021): "High ability influencers? The heterogeneous effects of gifted classmates," *Journal of Human Resources*, 0920-11170R1.
- [12] LAVY, V., AND A. SCHLOSSER (2011): "Mechanisms and Impacts of Gender Peer Effects at School," *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*, 3(2): 1-33.
- [13] LAVY, V., O. SILVA, AND F. WEINHARDT (2012). "The good, the bad, and the average: Evidence on ability peer effects in schools." *Journal of Labor Economics*, 30(2), 367-414.

4. Economically and socially disadvantaged students in the education system

Education plays an important role in the determination of various socio-economic outcomes such as lifetime income, employment, crime, or health. Yet, a vast body of research literature documents that not all students have equal opportunities to unfold their true potential in school. Consequently, educational equality has become a pressing issue for the design of future education systems. In this part of the seminar, we will talk about groups of students who have been shown to have more difficulties to perform well in school and discuss potential policy interventions that might bring us closer to a state of equality of opportunity.

Literature

- [14] AUTOR, D., D. FIGLIO, K. KARBOWNIK, J. ROTH, AND M. WASSERMAN (2019): "Family disadvantage and the gender gap in behavioral and educational outcomes," *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*, 11(3), 338-381.
- [15] AVVISATI, F., M. GURGAND, N. GUYON, AND E. MAURIN (2014): "Getting parents involved: A field experiment in deprived schools," *Review of Economic Studies*, 81(1), 57-83.
- [16] CARLANA, M., E. LA FERRARA, AND P. PINOTTI (2022): "Goals and gaps: Educational careers of immigrant children," *Econometrica*, 90(1), 1-29.
- [17] GUYON, N., AND E. HUILLERY (2022): "Biased aspirations and social inequality at school: Evidence from French teenagers," *Economic Journal*, 131(634), 745-796.