

Abstracts

Michela Carlana (Université d'Harvard)

Apart but connected: Online Tutoring and student outcomes during the COVID-19 pandemic (joint with Eliana La Ferrara).

The demand and supply of online tutoring has surged in response to the COVID-19 outbreak to address learning gaps. This paper evaluates the effectiveness of an Tutoring Online Program (TOP) implemented in the Spring 2020 during the COVID-19 outbreak and then replicated in the Spring 2022. University students volunteered to help disadvantaged pupil: they were randomly assigned to middle school pupils, from a list of potential beneficiaries compiled by Italian school principals. Using original survey data collected from students, parents, teachers, and tutors, as well as administrative data, we find that the program substantially increased students' academic performance (by 0.27 and 0.21 SD on average in 2020 and 2022, respectively). TOP significantly improved students' socio-emotional skills, aspirations, and psychological well-being, only when implemented during school closure. The intervention had a positive impact on tutors enhancing their measured empathy.

Claudia Hupkau (CUNEF, Madrid)

Online tutoring works: Experimental evidence from a program with vulnerable children (joint with Lucas Gortazar, Toni Roldan).

We provide evidence from a randomized controlled trial on the effectiveness of a novel, 100-percent online math tutoring program, targeted at secondary school students from highly disadvantaged neighborhoods. The intensive, eight-week-long program was delivered by qualified math teachers in groups of two students during after-school hours. The intervention significantly increased standardized test scores (+0.26 SD) and end-of-year math grades (+0.48 SD), while reducing the probability of repeating the school year. The intervention also raised aspirations, as well as self-reported effort at school.