UO Economics Summer Camp

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Goals of UO Economics Camp

- Increasing the likelihood that participants will prepare for and attend college
- Introducing participants to economics
Elements of a Pre-college Intervention Program

• Target participant
• Types of program
  – College preparatory
  – Specific field of study or career emphasis
• Curriculum and activities
• Program evaluation
Target Participant

• Age
  – Early enough to influence high school courses
  – College decisions begin to be made early

• Socioeconomic status
  – Low SES less likely to attend college

• Math ability
  – Study showed math ability to be correlated with economics learning
Similar Programs

• Similar in content
  – Programs that focus on math, science, or economics

• Similar participants
  – Programs that target low-income students to prepare them for success in college
Curriculum

• Children’s understanding of economic concepts

• Voluntary National Content Standards

• Middle school model of “economists in the schools”
Program Evaluation

• Random assignment
  – Considered the most rigorous method
  – Many outreach programs do not use it
  – A few examples:
    • Myers and Schirm, Upward Bound
    • Gordon Hall, psych summer program
  – Pre- and post-tests
NELS Data and Model

• National Education Longitudinal Study
• Linear probability model
• 2000 – Education outcome variables:
  – some PSE, attend 4-year college, bachelor’s degree, graduate school
• 1988 - 8th grade explanatory variables:
  – race, gender, SES, math ability, self-esteem, student expectations, parent expectations, parent education level
Results

• SES strong predictor of PSE
  – Lowest SES quartile
    • less likely by .176 to attend PSE than high SES
    • less likely by .239 to get a bachelor’s degree

• Student expectations
  – expecting to attend at least some PSE
    • .25 more likely to attend PSE
  – expecting to get a bachelor’s degree
    • .11 more likely to get a bachelor’s degree
Camp Design

Applying what we know
Recruiting Target Participant

- Springfield Middle School
  - lowest SES in its district – 74.6% students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch
- Market simulation with 7th and 8th grade math classes
- Nominations from math teachers of high ability, disadvantaged students
Camp Curriculum

• Example of a typical day
  – Theme: Globalization
  – Economics lessons: Trade, Comparative Advantage
  – Activity: Inspect where everyday goods are made
  – University activity: Panel of international students
Program Evaluation

• Survey
  – Student PSE expectations, parent education, preferred career and education required, etc.
  – Springfield expectations comparable to NELS, but both are over-confident

• Random assignment of 20 participants, 15 control

• Follow-up data collection
  – Post-survey
  – H.S. course choices
  – Post-secondary education outcomes
NELS outcomes

- No college: 3.91%
- Attend some PSE: 21.06%
- Associate's or bachelor's degree: 37.18%
- Graduate school: 37.86%

Springfield expectations

- No college: 8.62%
- Attend some PSE: 10.34%
- Associate's or bachelor's degree: 46.55%
- Graduate school: 34.48%

NELS expectations

- No college: 10.27%
- Attend some PSE: 25.23%
- Associate's or bachelor's degree: 21.59%
- Graduate school: 42.91%
Conclusion

• Measure effectiveness of camp:
  – Raising enrollment in college prep courses
  – Increasing college enrollment

• Continuing and modifying program