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Remote but Influential: Peer Effects in Online Higher Education Classrooms

Authors: Bettinger, E., Loeb, S., & Taylor, E

Year of Publication: 2013

Publication Venue: Center for Economic Studies; Information and Forschung (CESifo)

Link or URL:

http://www.cesifo-group.de/de/dms/ifodoc/docs/Akad_Conf/CFP_CONF/CFP_CONF_2013/C...

The decisions and productivity of individual workers often are influenced by peers—colleagues whom the individual works with or among, and who are similarly situated with respect to the stakes of production (e.g. Guryan, Kroft, and Notowidigdo, 2009; Battu, Belfield, and Sloane, 2003; Bruegmann and Jackson, 2009). This peer influence can arise in settings where production is explicitly collaborative, such as decisions by a corporate board or a performance by an orchestra; or settings where social norms and observed peer behavior pressure the individual toward expected choices, such as when productivity is openly comparable across individuals (Kandel and Lazear 1992, Mas and Morretti 2009).

Bettinger, E., Loeb, S., & Taylor, E. (2013). Remote but Influential: Peer Effects in Online Higher Education Classrooms.



LC Authors



Eric Bettinger

Stanford University | Graduate School of Education
Lemann Center
520 Galvez Mall, CERAS Building, Room 107
Stanford, CA 94305

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