Andrea Salvati

https://andreasalvati.netlify.app
andrea.salvati@rice.edu

Department of Economics
Rice University
Kraft Hall, Room 438
6100 Main St.
Houston, TX 77005

Education

Ph.D. in Economics, Rice University	(Expected) 2022
M.Sc in Economics (*Summa cum Laude*), University of Bologna	2014
B.Sc. Economics and Finance, University of Cagliari	2011

References

Prof. Flávio Cunha (**Chair**)
Department of Economics
Rice University
(713)-348-3312
flavio.cunha@rice.edu

Prof. Rossella Calvi
Department of Economics
Rice University
(713)-348-3270
rossella.calvi@rice.edu

Prof. Kenneth I. Wolpin
Texas Policy Lab (TPL)
Rice University
kenneth.i.wolpin@rice.edu

Prof. Ruth N. López Turley
Department of Sociology
Rice University
(713)-348-5713
turley@rice.edu

Research Fields

Primary: Economics of Education
Secondary: Labor Economics, Applied Microeconomics, Public Economics.

Working Papers

"Teaching to the Middle or to the Edges: Classroom Composition, Instructional Choices, and Their Impact on Student Achievement" **(Job Market Paper)**

"An Evaluation of the Alief Independent School District Jump Start Program: Using a Model to Recover Mechanisms from an RCT", with Flávio Cunha and Kenneth I. Wolpin. (R&R at *Quantitative Economics*)

Work in Progress

"An Evaluation of a Food Scholarship Program", with Flávio Cunha and Kenneth I. Wolpin.

"Peer Pressure, Aggressive Behavior, and Skill Development: Estimating a Model of Bullying in the Classroom", with Qinyou Hu.

"The Role of Parental Investments and Child Care in Early Childhood Development: Evidence from the Head Start Impact Study", with Qinyou Hu.

Publications (Pre-PhD)

"Incentives to Local Public Service Provision: An Evaluation of Italy's *Obiettivi di Servizio*", with G. Barone, G. de Blasio, and A. D'Ignazio, *Papers in Regional Science*, 98, 1195-1213, 2019

Research Experience

Research Intern, Bank of Italy 2014-2015

Research Assistant

Prof. Kenneth I. Wolpin, Rice University 2016-2020
Prof. G. Bellettini, Prof. C. Monfardini, and Prof. C. Berti Ceroni, University of Bologna 2014-2015
Prof. Giorgio Bellettini and Enrico Cantoni, University of Bologna 2013

Teaching Experience

Teaching Assistant, Rice University Fall 2016–Present

Graduate: Computational Economics (2017), Macroeconomics I (2016)
Undergraduate: Economics of Human Capital (2017), Mathematical Economics (2020-2021), Political Economy (2018), International Economics (2016-2018,2021), Principles of Economics (2015).

Teaching Assistant, University of Bologna 2015

Economics Statistics (Spring 2015)

Other Experience

Summer School in Dynamic Structural Econometrics, University of Chicago 2019
Project Assistant, Gene Campaign NGO (New Delhi, India) 2014
Summer School in Advanced Econometrics, London School of Economics 2013
Erasmus Exchange Program, Bogazici University (Istanbul, Turkey) 2013

Scholarships, Honors, and Awards

Rice Fellowship, Rice University 2015-2021
Bonaldo Stringer Particularly Deserving Award, Bank of Italy 2015
Erasmus Scholarship, Bogazici University 2013

Conferences and Seminars

2021: SSES Annual Congress, ESPE Annual Conference, EEA-ESEM Conference, Labor Econometrics Workshop (Monash University), EALE Annual Conference (scheduled), SEA Annual meeting (scheduled), GEEZ seminar (scheduled)
2020: Rice Economics Department Seminar

Skills

Languages: Italian (native), English
Programming skills: R, Fortran, Stata, Julia, MATLAB, LaTeX, C (beginner), C++ (beginner)

Abstracts

"Teaching to the Middle or to the Edges: Classroom Composition, Instructional Choices, and Their Impact on Student Achievement" (Job Market Paper)

A growing body of research documents the importance of tailoring instruction to students' prior knowledge in fostering pupil achievement. Yet, few studies have tried to explore whether and how teachers adjust instruction in response to the composition of the classroom. This paper empirically investigates the relationship between instruction, classroom composition, and student achievement by developing and estimating

a model of endogenous teaching decisions. Teachers choose how to allocate class time among topics that differentially impact the performance of students with heterogeneous levels of preparation. The model also allows teachers to choose effort, to vary in teaching ability, to value the achievement of students differently depending on their level of prior knowledge, and to have preferences over the alignment of instruction with state-level curriculum standards. I estimate the model using a unique dataset that combines school administrative data from five US school districts with a large set of instructional and teacher effectiveness measures. The results suggest that teachers attach a higher value to the achievement of students in the lower quantiles of the knowledge distribution. Moreover, I find that tailoring instruction to each student's level of initial knowledge would increase average achievement by 0.04SD. I further explore the policy implications of the estimated model by simulating the reassignment of students to classrooms based on their prior test scores performance (i.e., ability tracking). The results suggest that: (*i*) teachers respond to tracking by better tailoring instruction to students' initial knowledge; (*ii*) teachers assigned to lower tracks exert higher effort; (*iii*) the effect of tracking on achievement is heterogeneous across students, and its distribution depends on the way teachers are assigned to classrooms. Finally, additional simulation results suggest that existing educational standards are most suited to the level of preparation of students in the middle range of the knowledge distribution.

"An Evaluation of the Alief Independent School District Jump Start Program: Using a Model to Recover Mechanisms from an RCT", with Flávio Cunha and Kenneth I. Wolpin. (Revise and Resubmit at *Quantitative Economics*)

Recent research shows that the substantial differences in school readiness observed at the beginning of Kindergarten across socio-economic groups are partly due to disparities in the quality of childrenâĂŹs early environment. Theory, consistent with a wide range of data, suggests that early interventions that target malleable, fundamental skills during sensitive periods of development in early childhood could help close these gaps. Indeed, empirical evidence shows that small-scale parenting interventions implemented by high-quality staff can lead to an improvement in parental investments and a boost in child development. Evidence about the impact of large-scale parenting interventions is more mixed. This paper reports the results of the evaluation of a parenting intervention developed and implemented by the Alief Independent School District in Texas. The goal of the intervention is to encourage and train parents to teach their children foundational skills for Pre-K. The results of a randomized controlled trial based on three yearly cohorts show that the program impacted parental investments and child development as measured by two different tests of school readiness. We go beyond reporting program impacts by building and estimating a model of parental choice of input levels. Our model allows for a production function of knowledge that features individual-specific coefficients that capture the marginal productivity of parental inputs. We find that the mechanism we posit for the programâĂŹs impact is validated by the model estimates.