

Andy Brownback

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DATE OF BIRTH: March 5, 1988 SEX: M CITIZENSHIP: USA

LANGUAGES: English (native); Spanish (professionally proficient)

UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES: Kansas State University

B.A. Mathematics and Economics, 2010, Summa cum laude, Phi Beta Kappa

GRADUATE STUDIES: University of California, San Diego

DATES: August 2010 - June 2015 (expected)

EXPECTED COMPLETION DATE: June 2015

THESIS COMMITTEE AND REFERENCES:

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DESIRED TEACHING AND RESEARCH:

Primary Fields: Experimental & Behavioral Economics, Game Theory

Secondary Fields: Industrial Organization, Microeconomics

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TEACHING EXPERIENCE:

2010-2014: **Teaching Assistant**-UC San Diego Economics
 Game Theory (3 quarters)
 Intermediate Microeconomics (6 quarters)
2013: **Teaching Assistant**-UC San Diego Rady School of Management
 Strategy for MBA Students (1 quarter)

RELEVANT POSITIONS HELD:

2013-2014: **Lab Manager**-UC San Diego EconLab
2014: **Research Assistant**-Joel Watson, Innovative Learning Technology
 Initiative grant
2012-2014: **Chair and Organizer**-Graduate Student Research Seminar

HONORS, SCHOLARSHIPS, AND FELLOWSHIPS:

2011: Graduate student research grant
2012: Graduate student research grant

RESEARCH IN PROGRESS:

"A Classroom Experiment on Effort Allocation under Relative Grading" (Job Market Paper)

Grading on the curve is one of the most commonly used grading schemes in education, assigning grades based on the percentile rank of a student. As the size of a class grows, the law of large numbers implies that the percentile ranks of its students draw closer to their percentile ranks in the population, which changes the students' incentives. I model this environment in order to predict how changes in the class size heterogeneously affect students with different abilities. I use a field experiment in an intermediate economics course to test this model by measuring effort in terms of time spent on online quizzes. My results show that the lower variance of larger classes elicits greater mean effort and greater effort from all but the lowest-ability students. The greater variance of smaller classes elicits more effort from only the lowest-ability students. Many low-ability students fail to take advantage of the randomness of the smaller class size, an allocation failure consistent with "cursed" beliefs about their classmates and other behavioral biases.

"Grading on a Curve, and other Effects of Group Size on All-Pay Auctions" (*with James Andreoni*) *NBER Paper 20184*

We model contests with a fixed proportion of prizes, such as a grading curve, as all-pay auctions where higher effort weakly increases the likelihood of a prize. We find theoretical predictions for the effect of contest size on effort and test our predictions in a laboratory experiment that compares two-bidder auctions with one prize and 20-bidder auctions with ten prizes. Our results

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demonstrate that larger contests elicit lower effort by low-skilled students, but higher effort by high-skilled. Large contests also generate more accurate rankings of students and more accurate assignment of high grades to the high-skilled.

"The Effect of Classroom Size on Study Habits: Evidence From UC San Diego Course Evaluations"

In the final two weeks of each quarter, UC San Diego administers surveys in all undergraduate courses. Students report their expected grade and the average number of hours they studied for the course each week. Using fixed effects for all teacher-course combinations, I show that increasing enrollment has a significant and negative impact on the study hours of low-ability (D or F) students. Additionally, the variance of study hours within a given expected grade significantly increases with the enrollment. Both results are consistent with a model of the classroom as a rank-order tournament where larger classes reduce uncertainty about a student's outcome at a given level of academic output. As enrollment grows, equilibrium output draws closer to a staircase function, expanding the range of students pursuing similar output. High-ability students pool at higher output, while low-ability students pool at lower output, and the variance of effort required to achieve each output level increases.

"Over-Confidence, Updating, and Student Enrollment Decisions"

Overconfidence and biased updating have been observed in many different domains of self-assessment. Preliminary evidence from incentivized surveys of undergraduates shows that these phenomena are prevalent in students' forecasts of their performance on exams and quizzes. Students also fail to accurately update their beliefs as results from quizzes are realized. If these inflated self-forecasts lead students to choose classes that are too difficult or to misallocate effort between assignments, they may exacerbate negative outcomes for low-ability students. Feedback may not be able to solve this problem, as belief updating does not follow a Bayesian process.

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS:

- 2014:** Kansas State University (Planned for Dec. 2014)
North American Economic Science Association Meeting
Stanford Institute for Theoretical Economics
Russell Sage Summer Institute in Behavioral Economics
Bay Area Behavioral and Experimental Economics Workshop
- 2013:** North American Economic Science Association Meeting
Bay Area Behavioral and Experimental Economics Workshop