

Self-regulation Training in Primary Schools Improves Academic Achievements and Long-Term Educational Career Paths

Daniel Schunk^{1*†}, Eva M. Berger^{1†}, Henning Hermes^{2†}, Kirsten Winkel^{1†}, Ernst Fehr³

¹Johannes Gutenberg University of Mainz, Department of Law and Economics

²NHH Bergen, FAIR / Department of Economics

³University of Zurich, Department of Economics

*Corresponding author. E-mail: daniel.schunk@uni-mainz.de

†These authors contributed equally to this work.

Abstract

Self-regulation abilities are known to be a key predictor of educational success and important life outcomes. We conducted a randomized-controlled trial with about 600 first graders to identify the causal effect of a targeted self-regulation training on self-regulation abilities and academic performance. We show that the self-regulation training increases performance in standardized tests for inhibition control and attention as well as reading abilities 12–13 months after treatment. In addition, the treated children also strongly improve their everyday self-regulation behavior as rated by teachers. Finally, three years after the training, treated children are considerably more likely to attend an academic track in secondary school that is known to have a decisive influence on their educational careers. We thus conclude (i) that self-regulation training in early years can substantially improve self-regulation abilities in the long run, and (ii) that these improvements transfer to academic abilities and high-stake decisions about the educational career paths.

Note:

This is a preliminary draft. Please do not cite or distribute without permission of the authors.

Interested parties can have access to the working paper by sending an email to henning.hermes@nhh.no requesting the paper. We are currently not yet making this paper publicly available because we will soon submit it to a high-impact journal that prohibits to put papers in the public domain before publication.