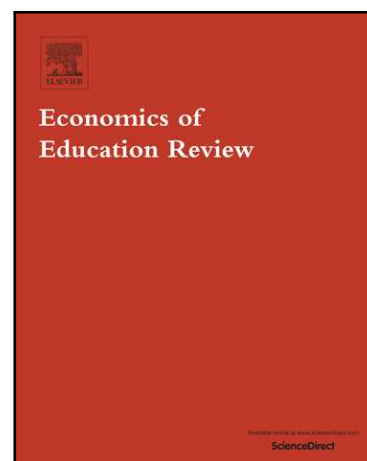


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Lorenzo Cappellari , Antonio Di Paolo

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Bilingual Schooling and Earnings: Evidence from a Language-in-Education Reform*

Lorenzo Cappellari

Università Cattolica Milano

Antonio Di Paolo

AQR-IREA, University of Barcelona

February 2018

Abstract

We estimate the wage effects of bilingual education for the first time using a reform that introduced bilingualism in Catalan schools. Variation across years of schooling and birth cohorts provides identification. We find substantial effects of bilingual education, which increase baseline returns to education by about 20 percent. Robustness checks show that effects stem from exposure to the language-in-education reform and are neither a consequence of unobservable determinants of educational attainment nor an artefact of education-cohort specific trends in wages. The reform was mostly beneficial for individuals of non-Catalan background from low parental background, thus achieving its goal of levelling the playing field in a bilingual society.

Keywords: Bilingual education, returns to schooling, language-in-education reform, Catalonia

JEL classifications: J24, J31, I28

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