

U6016: Cost-benefit analysis
School of International and Public Affairs, Columbia University
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Lecture outline

V. EVALUATION OF HUMAN INVESTMENT PROGRAMS

A. Introduction

1. Examples of human investment/social sector programs
2. Ex-ante cost-benefit analysis vs. ex-post evaluation
3. Clarifying the evaluation objectives
4. Generic notation

B. Delineation of benefits and costs: a simple example

C. Empirically estimating net benefits: statistical methods

1. Comparison of outcomes
2. Controlling for observed characteristics
3. Defining the parameter of interest
4. Selection bias: some examples

D. Biases in evaluation: a more detailed look

1. Types and sources: some examples
2. Possible solutions: before-after comparisons
3. Possible solutions: differences-in-differences comparisons
4. Possible solutions: randomization

E. Evaluation design

1. Non-experimental designs
2. Experimental designs

F. Other issues

1. Heterogeneous treatment effects
2. Treatment of uncertainty
3. Clarifying the range of alternatives
4. Ethical issues
5. Cost-benefit analyses of social experiments