# Discussion on Mankeekar and Jackson

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HCEO Measuring and Assessing Skills

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1 Summary and Relevance

2 Comments and Questions

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# Summary

- Great ambition:
    - Go **beyond** standard measures of **"intelligence"**
    - Take into account not only **multiple skills**, but also the **context** in which they are measured
- Relevant to Economics and Social Science
    - Measurement is **not** commonly the **focus or priority**
    - Allows for much **better assessment** and **better design** of social policy
- Relevant to Science
    - Obtain measures of **human development**

▶ Follow Heckman and Cunha (2007) and write:

$$\underbrace{\boldsymbol{\theta}_{a+1}}_{\text{skills}} = \underbrace{\Psi_a}_{\text{technology}} \left( \underbrace{\boldsymbol{\theta}_a}_{\text{stock}}, \underbrace{\boldsymbol{\theta}_a^p}_{\text{parental skills}}, \underbrace{\boldsymbol{I_a}}_{\text{investment}}, \underbrace{e_a}_{\text{effort}}, \underbrace{\boldsymbol{\eta}_a}_{\text{unobserved}} \right) \quad (1)$$

▶ $e_a$: effort at measurement, usually in $\boldsymbol{\eta}_a$
  ▶ Intending to measure $e$ is already a lot of progress

- ▶ We can do a lot with what we currently measure

Life-cycle Benefits of an Influential Early Childhood Program



Per–annum Rate of Return: Males and Females 13.7% (s.e. 3%).
Benefit–cost Ratio: Males and Females 7.3 (s.e. 1.8).
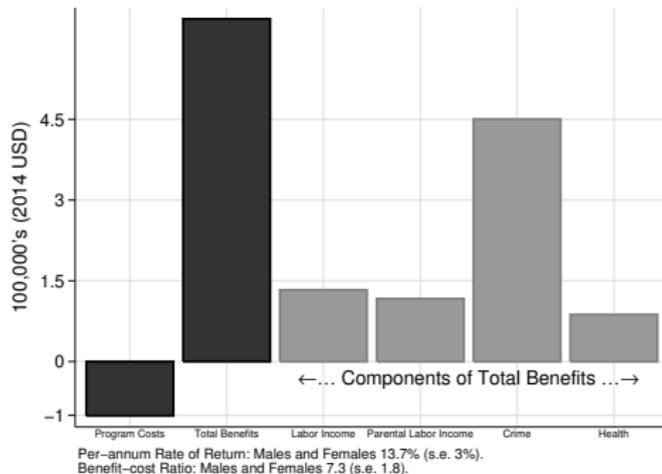
Source: García, Heckman, et al. (2017)

- ▶ But of course miss a lot: no value to skills (only inputs)

► But we can also do very little

Missing the Whole Point



"We reviewed data from 67 high-quality interventions—all of which included some degree of pre-literacy and early math skill-building and most of which targeted economically disadvantaged children—and we found that the effects [on IQ tests] faded startlingly fast: falling by half within a year and by half again two years later." Source: Washington Post (February 17, 2017)—both figure and text.

► . . . and miss the whole point

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2 Comments and Questions

- How **predictive** are game scores?
- Is it possible to **anchor game scores** to monetary measures?
- How to **separate** the game score from the "gamer advantage"?
    - . . . which current tests do not generally do