This mini-course is a set of 6 lectures and discussions investigating productivity in education. The course will cover three broad topics that have been the focus of the recent economics literature and public policy. First, we will explore variation in productivity across schools and teachers: how do you measure it, how big is it, and what are the determinants? Second we will look at how accountability and incentives influence productivity. Finally, we will investigate the role of school choice on students and schools.

The course readings are idiosyncratic to my current interests and tastes, and focus on recent contributions. I will talk about the broader literature in class when it is relevant, and the papers on the reading list provide fairly comprehensive reviews of related work. The goal of the classroom time will be to understand the essence of each paper, and to leave sufficient time for discussion. I will not be assigning a grade in the course, but expect that you will keep up with the readings. Office hours are whenever you see my door open (or by appointment).

All the readings are on my Harvard website:
http://www.economics.harvard.edu/faculty/staiger
I have marked the readings I expect we will focus on with a “*” below.

The course will meet MW starting Monday, April 5 and ending Wednesday, April 21, 6-7:30 pm in Littauer M16.
1) Education production

a) Class size, peers & other inputs


b) Teacher effects


2) Accountability & incentives
3) Choice
   a) Demand
   b) Partial equilibrium impact of choice
   c) General equilibrium impact of choice