Acing the test: Educational effects of the SaberEs test preparation program in Colombia

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Education in Colombia and Latin America is characterized by significant gaps in the quality of education as measured by standardized test scores. This paper assesses the impact of a Colombian program called *SaberEs*, which strengthens preparation for standardized cognitive tests such as the high school exit exam in Colombia (*Saber 11*) for low socioeconomic status students. The program provides competency-based training sessions to develop skills for analyzing and solving specific types of questions within school hours. Our difference-in-differences estimates show that *SaberEs* increased *Saber 11* scores by 2.22 ranks (or 0.074 standard deviations), which implies that the socioeconomic achievement gap was reduced by 23% regarding the control schools. Also, students affected by the program experienced a significant increase in access to tertiary education and merit-based scholarships in Colombia.