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Individualized Learning Programs in Italian Primary Education: Implications for Social Equity and Educational Outcomes

İtalya'da Temel Eğitimde Bireyselleştirilmiş Öğrenme Programları: Sosyal Eşitlik ve Eğitimsel Sonuçlara Etkileri

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Abstract: The Italian education system has undergone significant reforms in recent years with a focus on improving the quality of education and addressing longstanding challenges. This study critically analyzed the introduction of individualized learning programs in Italian primary education and their implications for diverse family systems, social networks, and the potential reinforcement of existing social disparities. While these programs aim to address individual student needs more effectively, there is a risk that they may inadvertently reinforce disadvantaged societies and impact social mobility. The study also examines the role of teacher expectations in children's performance, drawing on pivotal research, such as the Rosenthal and Jacobson experiments, and explores the implications of these findings for student assessment and support within the Italian education system. Moreover, this study delves into the complex interplay among self-selection, equal opportunities, and implicit selection mechanisms within the educational system. Finally, the broader role of educational politics in shaping local school contexts, social networks, and cultural capital was considered, emphasizing the need for strategic investment in education to address systemic inequalities and promote equal opportunities for all children. The study concludes that a more holistic approach is necessary to combat educational inequalities, encompassing strategic educational investments, addressing systemic inequities, and fostering equal opportunities for children, while maintaining high educational standards.

Keywords: Individualized learning, primary education, inequality, self-selection

Özet: İtalyan eğitim sistemi, son yıllarda eğitimin kalitesini artırmaya ve uzun süredir devam eden sorunları ele almaya odaklanan önemli reformlardan geçmiştir. Bu çalışma, İtalya'daki ilkokul eğitimine bireyselleştirilmiş öğrenme programlarının dahil edilmesini ve bu programların farklı aile yapıları, sosyal ağlar ve mevcut toplumsal eşitsizliklerin pekişme olasılığı üzerindeki etkilerini eleştirel bir biçimde analiz etmiştir. Bu programlar, bireysel öğrenci ihtiyaçlarını daha etkili bir şekilde karşılamayı hedeflese de, farkında olmadan dezavantajlı toplulukların durumunu pekiştirme ve sosyal hareketliliği olumsuz etkileme riski taşımaktadır. Çalışma ayrıca, öğretmen beklentilerinin çocukların akademik başarısındaki rolünü de incelemekte; Rosenthal ve Jacobson'un deneyleri gibi kilit araştırmalardan yola çıkarak, bu bulguların İtalyan eğitim sisteminde öğrenci değerlendirme ve destek süreçleri üzerindeki etkilerini araştırmaktadır. Ayrıca bu çalışma, eğitim sistemi içerisinde özseçim, fırsat eşitliği ve örtük seçme mekanizmaları arasındaki karmaşık etkileşimi derinlemesine incelemektedir. Son olarak, eğitim politikalarının yerel okul bağlamlarını, sosyal ağları ve kültürel sermayeyi şekillendirmedeki daha geniş rolü ele alınmış; sistemik eşitsizliklerin giderilmesi ve tüm çocuklar için eşit fırsatların teşvik edilmesi adına eğitime stratejik yatırım yapılması gerekliliği vurgulanmıştır. Çalışma, eğitimdeki eşitsizliklerle mücadele edebilmek için daha bütüncül bir yaklaşımın gerekli olduğu sonucuna varmaktadır. Bu yaklaşım, stratejik eğitim yatırımlarını kapsamalı, sistemik adaletsizlikleri ele almalı ve çocuklar için eşit fırsatları teşvik ederken aynı zamanda yüksek eğitim standartlarını da korumalıdır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Bireyselleştirilmiş öğrenme, ilkokul eğitimi, eşitsizlik, özseçim

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Introduction

The Italian education system has undergone significant reforms in recent years with the aim of improving the quality of education and addressing longstanding challenges (Loupenkova, 2017). The Italian education system consists of two main cycles. The first cycle is the focus of this study and encompasses both primary and lower secondary education. Recent reforms have introduced several innovative elements including individual learning programs and increased family involvement in the educational process.

While these changes aim to improve educational outcomes, they also raise important questions regarding their potential effects on educational equity and reproduction of social inequalities (Muñoz-Carrasco, 2024). This study critically analyzes one of the most debated changes in Italian primary education–the introduction of an individualized learning program–and considers its implications for diverse family systems, the influence of social networks on educational decisions, and the potential reinforcement of existing social disparities (Pastorelli et al., 2019).

The introduction of individualized learning programmes presents both opportunities and challenges. While these programs have the potential to address individual student needs more effectively, there is a risk that they may inadvertently reinforce social disadvantages and impact social mobility (Korshunova et al., 2016). Similarly, the implementation of ad hoc learning objectives, while intended to ensure basic competencies, may unintentionally limit students' potential and create self-fulfilling prophecies.

This study also examined the role of teacher expectations in children's performance by drawing on pivotal research, such as the Rosenthal and Jacobson experiments, and explored the implications of these findings for student assessment and support within the context of the Italian education system.

Finally, this study considered the broader role of educational politics in shaping local school contexts, social networks, and cultural capital (Bonavero & Cassatella, 2022). This emphasizes the need for strategic investment in education to address systemic inequalities and promote equal opportunities for all children.

By critically examining these aspects of the primary Italian education system, this study aims to contribute to the ongoing discourse on educational policy and practice, by highlighting the potential benefits and challenges of the current approach.

Overview of the Italian Education System

The educational system comprises the following stages:

1. Early childhood education (non-compulsive) is divided into nursery school (0–3 years of age) and preschool (3–6 years of age).
2. Primary education (6–11 years of age). Compulsory education commences with primary education and extends from 6 to 16 years of age.
3. Lower secondary education (11–13 years). Upon completion of this stage, students were required to undertake an eighth-grade examination that consisted of written assessments in Italian, mathematics, and foreign languages as well as an oral examination involving the presentation of a comprehensive topic encompassing all subjects studied.
4. Upper secondary education (14–19 years). Students can complete their formal education at 16 years of age. Students may select from three categories of upper secondary education, based on their academic and career objectives. Liceo: This institution predominantly provides theoretical education oriented towards tertiary studies. Various specializations are available (classical, scientific, linguistic, technological, artistic, and musical). Upon completion of the liceo, students must undertake a baccalaureate examination (or state examination) consisting of three written components and one oral component. Successful completion results in referral of a baccalaureate diploma, which facilitates entry into higher education. Technical-professional institute: This institution combines academic studies with the acquisition of technical and practical skills, preparing students for entry into specific sectors of the workforce such as economics, tourism, technology, agriculture, and certain health professions. Vocational Education and Training: This institution focuses on the development of practical and vocational

skills. The curriculum is designed to prepare students for trades such as plumbing, electrical work, hairdressing, and cosmetology.

5. Tertiary education: Higher education is structured into three cycles: the first cycle (three-year bachelor's degree), the second cycle (two-year master's degree), and the third cycle, which encompasses advanced postgraduate studies. The third cycle includes specialized master's degrees, typically short-term programmes designed to provide an in-depth study of the specific aspects of the discipline studied during the first two cycles, and doctoral programmes suitable for those pursuing careers in academia or research. It should be noted that certain university programs (e.g., Law, Pharmacy, Construction Engineering, Architecture) have a duration of five years (six years for medicine) and are classified as 'single-cycle degree courses.' (Pattaro, 2016).

This study focuses exclusively on primary and lower secondary education.

Individualized Learning in Primary Education

Personalized education transcends conventional one-size-fits-all approaches by customizing learning experiences according to students' strengths, weaknesses, and learning styles. This methodology acknowledges that children possess diverse backgrounds, abilities, and interests and aims to establish an educational environment that accommodates these differences (Slavin, 2015). By recognizing and valuing diverse perspectives and experiences, personalized education can enhance students' confidence and engagement in their educational journey. Furthermore, it is equipped with methodologies and strategies to effectively support a heterogeneous student population and foster a dynamic and responsive educational ecosystem (Kirschner et al. 2018). While personalized education offers numerous advantages, it also presents challenges such as increased workload for educators, potential resource limitations, and the necessity for extensive training for effective implementation. Additionally, concerns may arise regarding the maintenance of consistent educational standards and ensuring equitable access to personalized learning opportunities across diverse socioeconomic and disadvantaged backgrounds (Pritchard, 2017). In Italian primary and lower secondary schools, the concept of personalized education is particularly applicable to students in 'disadvantaged situations.' (Jones & McLean, 2018). This domain of educational disadvantage encompasses diverse issues and is referred to as the field of Special Educational Needs, and, in the Italian system, it comprises three major subcategories: (1) disability, (2) specific learning disorders, and (3) socio-economic, linguistic, and cultural disadvantages. This study focuses on the third category and the potential risk of reinforcing social inequality.

Educational disadvantages extend far beyond mere performance deficits in an academic setting. It encompasses a complex network of socioeconomic, cultural, and systemic factors that create barriers to equitable learning opportunities. These disadvantages often manifest as a limited access to high-quality educational resources, inadequate support systems, and reduced exposure to enriched experiences. Furthermore, educational disadvantages can affect students' self-perception, motivation, and long-term aspirations, potentially perpetuating the inequality cycles. The effects of such disadvantages are not confined to the classroom, but permeate various aspects of a child's life, influencing career prospects, social mobility, and overall well-being (Mirowsky, 2017).

Directive 12/27/2012, CM No. 8/2013, and CM No. 2563/2013 stipulate that children experiencing difficulties owing to social or cultural disadvantages or foreign status may be subjected to customized interventions formalized in individualized learning programs (Platt, 2019). Therefore, the personalized educational plan is intended as an additional tool to adapt the methodology to the needs of students, leaving the decision regarding didactic choices, paths to follow, and assessment methods to the exclusive discretion of teachers. This personalized approach to primary education raises critical questions regarding the long-term consequences of such a stratification. By segregating the most socially and culturally disadvantaged children into different learning tracks, there may be a risk of perpetuating and exacerbating social inequalities (Platt, 2019).

Family Involvement and Educational Equity

Italian legislation also emphasizes that the support of pupils with special needs (any of the three subcategories mentioned above) must result from close collaboration between educational institutions

and families. The personalized educational plan is drafted by primary school teachers and signed by the head teacher and the child's family.

Family systems are diverse and multifaceted, and encompass a wide range of compositions, cultural practices, and religious beliefs (Chambers & Gracia, 2021). This diversity suggests that each family unit may have a unique approach to foster a child's abilities and potential (Patterson, 2002). The specific ways in which families nurture their children's development can vary greatly, and are influenced by factors such as parenting style, cultural values, educational background, and socioeconomic circumstances (Darling & Steinberg, 2017). These differences can lead to varied outcomes in children's cognitive, emotional, and social development (Bornstein, 2013).

Families and schools play a crucial role in social reproduction (Bourdieu, 1973). Families transmit not only social traits but also cultural capital, connections, and economic resources to their offspring (Kraaykamp & Van Eijck, 2010). Schools, while ostensibly providing equal opportunities, often reinforce these initial disparities through tracking systems, resource allocation, and hidden curricula that favor students from privileged backgrounds (Landsman & Lewis, 2023).

The influence of a family's social and occupational standing on children's primary educational outcomes extends beyond academic performance (Davis-Kean, 2005). This encompasses a complex interplay between the factors that shape a child's educational trajectory and future opportunities (Duncan & Murnane, 2011). Families with higher socioeconomic status often have access to better resources, including quality schools, tutoring services, and enrichment activities, which can significantly enhance their children's learning experiences and academic achievements (Fuligni & Yoshikawa, 2014; Liu et al., 2020). Moreover, these families typically possess greater social capital, which can translate into valuable networks and connections that may benefit their children's educational and career prospects (Bornstein & Black, 2008; Bornstein & Bradley, 2014).

Increased parental involvement in educational decision making might exacerbate the impact of social origin on a child's academic trajectory (Gwernan-Jones et al., 2015; Kremer-Sadlik & Fatigante, 2015). As a result, children from less-privileged backgrounds may find themselves at a disadvantage, and their educational choices are more constrained by their families' socioeconomic status and cultural capital (Loughlin-Presnal & Bierman, 2017; Antony-Newman, 2019). This phenomenon can create a self-perpetuating cycle in which social stratification is reinforced through generations as children's personalized learning programs become more closely tied to their family background rather than their individual potential or merit (Durante & Fiske, 2017). Ultimately, this personalized approach may lead to a more rigid social structure, where opportunities for social advancement through education become increasingly limited for those from disadvantaged backgrounds (Alwin, 2016; Bertaux & Thompson, 2017).

Influence of Social Networks on Family Decisions

Families do not exist in isolation but are embedded within broader social networks and communities (Mishra, 2020). These networks, which can differ significantly in size, structure, and available resources, play a crucial role in shaping both the family unit and the individual family members (Fong, 2017). Interactions between families and their social networks can have profound effects on children's identity formation, belief systems, and personal aspirations (Lawler, 2015). Additionally, these networks may impose certain constraints or expectations on families, further influencing how children are raised and the opportunities available to them (Eccles & Roeser, 2015). This complex interplay between families and their social contexts underscores the importance of considering the broader ecosystem in which child development occurs.

The concept of networks acting as a mechanism for perpetuating social inequalities extends beyond just the family and school (Hart, 2019). These institutions, along with others, such as workplaces, social clubs, and religious organizations, form an interconnected web that systematically reinforces existing social hierarchies (Piff et al., 2018). By controlling access to resources, opportunities, and social capital, these networks effectively channel individuals into predetermined roles based on their backgrounds and positions in society (Lareau, 2015).

Teacher Expectations and Children Performance

Another important aspect to discuss in relation to primary school learning programs is how teachers' expectations can influence children's performance (Wang et al., 2018). Expectations are statements about the future conditions and developments that play a crucial role in educational achievements in primary education (Mizala et al., 2015). It might happen that primary teachers may form preconceived beliefs about a child's academic abilities, resulting in expectations that may not align with the child's actual capabilities (Timmermans et al., 2016). These expectations can be either overly optimistic or pessimistic, potentially influencing the teacher's approach and child's performance (Papageorge et al., 2020). For instance, a teacher may assume that a child from a disadvantaged background struggles academically, leading to lower expectations and potentially less challenging coursework. Conversely, teachers might overestimate a child's abilities and set unrealistic goals that could lead to frustration and disappointment (Cherng, 2017).

The impact of these expectations can be far-reaching, affecting not only the child's immediate academic performance but also their long-term educational trajectory (Peterson et al., 2016). When teachers allow their prejudices to shape their expectations, they may inadvertently create *self-fulfilling prophecies* (Gentrup et al., 2020).

The experiment conducted by Rosenthal and Jacobson in a California primary school provided compelling evidence of this effect (Rosenthal & Rubie-Davies, 2015). By randomly selecting 20% of the pupils and informing their teachers of their supposed exceptional intellectual capabilities, the researchers set a chain of events in motion that ultimately led to improved academic performance and increased IQ. This study highlights the crucial role of teacher expectations in shaping children's achievements (Mizala et al., 2015). When educators hold positive beliefs about a pupil's potential, they may unconsciously provide more attention, encouragement, and opportunities for growth. Increased support and focus can lead to enhanced motivation, self-confidence, and improved academic performance (Wentzel, 2016). The results of the experiment suggested that the power of positive expectations extends beyond mere perception, as the selected students demonstrated measurable gains in intelligence quotient scores. This highlights the importance of fostering a supportive and optimistic learning environment, in which teachers consistently communicate high expectations and beliefs about their pupils' abilities to succeed, regardless of their social and cultural disadvantages (Ramli et al., 2023).

The latent nature of these expectations, combined with various support mechanisms within the primary educational system, can create an environment in which anticipated attitudes and behaviors are unconsciously reinforced (Bahrami & Amiri, 2020). This cyclical process can result in a narrowing of educational experiences and opportunities, as pupils may be guided towards paths that align with preconceived notions of their abilities rather than their true potential (Denessen et al., 2022). Ultimately, this study suggests the need for educators to remain vigilant against unconscious biases and continually reassess their evaluation methods to ensure a fair and comprehensive assessment of all children's capabilities (Campbell, 2015; Staats, 2016).

Implicit Selection in the Primary Education System

When a child lacks the motivation to study and fails to meet the objectives outlined in their individualized learning program, Italian law proposes a critical examination of the teacher's educational approach. This process involved evaluating whether the teaching methods aligned with the child's intellectual style and learning preferences. The underlying assumption is that the mismatch between the teaching approach and the child's cognitive processes may hinder the child's progress and engagement with the learning material (Woolfolk, 2016). When a child (for whom an individualized learning program has been designed) struggles with motivation and fails to meet learning objectives, Italian law emphasizes a shift in focus from the student to the teacher's methodology. This approach recognizes that learning is a complex interplay between teaching styles and individual cognitive processes (Slavin, 2015). By critically examining the educational methods employed, educators can identify potential misalignments between their approach and the child's intellectual style, allowing for necessary adjustments to enhance engagement and academic progress (Lee & Hannafin, 2016).

By tailoring the complexity and volume of material to suit a child's abilities better, this method aims to create a more supportive and engaging learning environment (Le et al., 2018). This strategy may be particularly beneficial for students who struggle with traditional teaching methods, potentially boosting their confidence and motivation to learn (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2016). Additionally, it acknowledges the diverse range of learning styles and paces present in any classroom, moving away from a one-size-fits-all approach to education (Pollard et al., 2023).

However, this approach also presents significant challenges and potential drawbacks that warrant careful consideration (Le et al., 2018). While lowering academic expectations may provide short-term relief and engagement for struggling children, it could potentially limit their long-term academic and professional opportunities. There is a danger that children who consistently receive simplified content may fall behind their peers in terms of knowledge acquisition and skill development, potentially widening achievement gaps over time (Buchs et al., 2017). Furthermore, this approach may inadvertently reinforce low expectations for certain students, particularly those from socially and culturally disadvantaged backgrounds (Timmermans et al., 2016). Striking the right balance between providing accessible education and maintaining high standards is crucial to ensuring that all children are adequately prepared for future academic and career challenges.

One suggestion might be to focus on increasing the motivation for learning and developing methodological instruments to address difficulties. This might be a more constructive approach than simply reducing or negotiating knowledge requirements (Wentzel, 2016). By cultivating intrinsic motivation, primary school teachers can foster a genuine interest in learning and encourage children to engage more deeply in their learning experiences (Birhan et al., 2021). This approach recognizes that knowledge acquisition is not merely about memorizing facts but also about developing critical thinking skills, problem-solving abilities, and a lifelong love for learning (Grigg & Lewis, 2018).

Furthermore, equipping children with effective methodological tools can empower them to independently tackle challenges. These tools might include study techniques, time management strategies, and metacognitive skills that allow students to reflect on their learning processes (Slavin, 2015). By teaching children how to learn effectively and overcome obstacles, primary teachers could prepare them not only for academic success but also for the real-world challenges they may face in their future careers (Birhan et al., 2021; Irwan et al., 2024).

Self-Selection and Equal Opportunities

The social expectations produced by an individualized learning program also influence the individual belief system, which in turn conditions their desires and preferences (Bicchieri et al., 2018). Elster (1989) asserted that action is explained by personal desires, preferences, and beliefs about the opportunities that the person has. If we have an ample group of potential actions, we conduct the first selection based on the social, economic, and psychological principles. Actions conforming to these principles form a group of opportunities. A second selection is carried out to determine the actions in the group of opportunities in relation to our *beliefs* about the opportunities we have (Elster, 2000). In other words, children choose actions in line with their beliefs about their existing intellectual, cultural, and social experiences, without questioning what other opportunities they might have (Boudon, 2017). Therefore, we can say that all the children have equal opportunities.

Italian educational assurance of unlimited access to higher education represents a significant step towards educational equality. However, other implicit selection mechanisms can complicate the formal guarantee of opportunities. The reliance on individual belief systems introduces a subtle but impactful form of self-selection whereby children may exclude themselves from advanced educational pursuits based on their self-perception of ability (Maddux, 2016).

This self-selection process can have far-reaching consequences for educational outcomes and social mobility (Crul et al., 2017). Children who doubt their capabilities may opt out of educational opportunities regardless of their actual potential (Häusermann et al., 2015). This phenomenon could perpetuate existing socioeconomic disparities, as children from disadvantaged backgrounds may be more likely to underestimate their abilities or feel out of place in advanced academic settings (Nauck,

2019). Ultimately, while Italian law ostensibly removes formal barriers to education, it may inadvertently reinforce invisible barriers rooted in individual psychology and societal expectations.

The self-perceived efficacy theory emphasizes three key aspects: personal efficacy, self-perception of competence, and taking action (Gangloff & Mazilescu, 2017). Personal efficacy refers to an individual's belief in their ability to successfully perform specific tasks or achieve desired outcomes. The self-perception of competence involves how individuals view their skills and capabilities in relation to particular challenges or situations. Taking action is a practical manifestation of these beliefs, in which individuals engage in behaviors that reflect their perceived efficacy and competence (Lauermann & ten Hagen, 2021). By recognizing and leveraging these interconnected elements, individuals can potentially enhance their performance, overcome obstacles, and persist in the face of difficulties, ultimately leading to personal growth and achievement in various aspects of life (Pellerone, 2021).

The implementation of individualized learning programmes in primary schools has raised concerns about their potential impact on children's personal identity formation and belief systems. Jones and McLean (2018) highlight the significant influence of these programs on young learners. This issue is particularly worrisome, given that primary school-aged children are at a critical stage of personal and social identity development, making them highly susceptible to external influences (Chorro et al., 2017). The malleability of children's identities during this period means that the educational approaches and content they are exposed to can have far-reaching consequences for their self-perception and worldviews (Reay, 2010). As such, educators and policymakers must carefully consider the potential long-term effects of individualized learning programs on students' psychological and social development, ensuring that these educational strategies support rather than hinder the healthy formation of personal identities and belief systems. Although individualized learning programs in primary schools aim to enhance educational outcomes, they may inadvertently pose risks to children's personal identity formation and belief systems during critical developmental stages.

The Role of Educational Politics

The influence of educational politics extends beyond the immediate school environment, permeating the broader social fabric and shaping cultural capital within networks (Giroux, 2018). This macro-level variable plays a crucial role in determining the effectiveness of individual actions in the educational domain (Maddux, 2016). By setting policies, allocating resources, and establishing priorities, educational politics creates a framework that either facilitates or hinders the development of human capital (Knight, 2019). The interplay between political decisions and individual actions creates a complex ecosystem in which the outcomes of educational initiatives are not solely dependent on personal efforts but are significantly influenced by the overarching political landscape.

To achieve meaningful improvements in education, it is imperative that political decisions lead to substantial shifts in the Italian 'investment map' of education. This entails the strategic reallocation of both financial and human resources to areas that can yield the most significant impact on educational outcomes. Ideally, such an approach would create an environment in which individual actions are more likely to produce positive results, thereby fostering a virtuous cycle of educational advancement (Knight, 2019). Italian educational laws have recently appeared to fall short of this ideal. By failing to address the fundamental issues that shape the educational landscape, the law may not provide the necessary foundation for transformative change, potentially limiting its ability to catalyze significant improvements in the country's educational system.

Conclusion

The implementation of personalized learning initiatives in Italian primary schools offers both prospects and obstacles for tackling educational disparities (Inthanon & Wised, 2024). While these programs seek to customize instructions to meet individual pupil requirements, they may unintentionally amplify existing social inequities (Pastorelli et al., 2019). The increased participation of families in educational choices, along with the sway of social circles, can intensify the effects of socioeconomic factors on children's academic paths (Bonavero & Cassatella, 2022).

Educator expectations significantly influence student performance. The impact of these expectations underscores the necessity for teachers to guard against unconscious prejudices and consistently re-evaluate their assessment techniques to ensure a fair evaluation of all pupils' abilities.

Subtle selection processes within the educational framework, including self-selection based on personal belief systems, further complicate the goal of providing equal opportunities. Although the Italian system formally ensures access to all educational levels, reliance on self-perceived capabilities and competence may result in self-exclusion from advanced academic pursuits, particularly for underprivileged children.

The influence of educational policies on shaping the local school environment, social networks, and cultural capital is significant. Recent educational reforms in Italy may not adequately address the fundamental issues shaping the educational landscape, potentially restricting their capacity to spark substantial improvements in the nation's educational system. Therefore, a more holistic strategy is needed to combat educational inequalities (Damyanov, 2024). This should encompass strategic educational investments, address systemic inequities, and foster equal opportunities for children. Educators must balance providing accessible education while maintaining high standards, concentrating on enhancing motivation for learning, and developing methodological tools to address difficulties rather than simply lowering knowledge requirements.

In summary, while the intent may be to improve student retention, this approach inadvertently constrains children's potential. It is crucial to determine who establishes individualized learning programs based on these criteria. There is a risk that predetermined minima could become self-fulfilling prophecies, where children only achieve their expected level rather than realizing their full potential. Students who perceive these expectations may internalize them, either striving to meet high standards or struggling to overcome low standards. This emphasizes the importance of educators maintaining an unbiased perspective and basing their expectations on objective assessments rather than on preconceived notions. By doing so, they can create a more equitable and supportive learning environment that allows students to progress at their own pace and reach their maximum potential.

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