PHBern

Pädagogische Hochschule

Project Title	**RILZCHECK** Allocation and effects of reduced individual learning objectives: A secondary data analysis of Checks data in Northwestern Switzerland
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Abstract	Over the past twenty years, learners with special educational needs have been increasingly integrated into mainstream education in Switzerland and internationally. However, not all learners in heterogeneous classrooms are able to meet the regular learning objectives. Reduced Individual Learning Objectives (RILZ) is an important measure employed in all Swiss cantons to ensure that every learner can be educated in mainstream classrooms. Despite the widespread use of RILZ, there is currently little research available on the allocation, implementation and effects of this integrative measure. This raises the question of whether socially selective allocation practices and divergent learning gains – phenomena that are well documented for external differentiation of learners (i.e. tracking) – are also present with regard of the allocation of RILZ. Contrary to the goals of inclusive education, the implementation of RILZ could contribute to educational inequalities between learners with and without special educational needs. Results from a previous study led by the applicant, the Bernese Longitudinal Study BELIMA (2014-2025), point to potentially disadvantageous effects of RILZ. Specifically, the findings indicate that 1) learners from socioeconomically disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely to be assigned RILZ, 2) learners with RILZ are underestimated by teachers regarding their cognitive abilities and 3) learners with RILZ show attenuated school performance development that comparable learners without RILZ. Due to the BELIMA study's limited sample size of approximately 2300 learners and the known cantonal differences in the implementation of RILZ, the results can only be generalised to a limited extent to other cantons or school systems. Novel secondary data from large-scale school performance tests carried out in Northwestern Switzerland, known as the "Checks", provide a unique opportunity for in-depth analyses that go beyond the scope of BELIMA. In addition to standardised school performance tests administered to entire cohorts of compulsory school students in the Cantons of Aargau, Basel-Landschaft, Basel-Stadt and Solothurn, the Checks also provide subject-specific information on RILZ. These data enable the observation of up to 195,000 students at different points throughout their school careers.

The research project aims to analyse the allocation of RILZ and its effects on educational performance and attainment. To this end, a data linkage is established between the Checks and register data from administrative sources covering detailed information on learners' sociodemographic background and educational pathways. The project addresses five overarching research questions using established statistical methods.

The project not only offers important insights into integrative measures, but also provides an empirical basis for the further development of RILZ by identifying conditions that may mitigate potential negative effects.

Keywords	social selectivity, reduced individual learning objectives, special educational needs, inclusive education, educational inequality
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