Initial Teacher Education in Germany: The pathway to qualified teacher status and the idea of professionalism

Dina Kuhlee

Humboldt University, Berlin
Faculty of Humanities IV
Department of Educational Science
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The structure of Initial Teacher Education: The pathway to qualified teacher status

Programme for teacher students (upper secondary level)

(1) Bachelor of Arts / Bachelor of Science (3 years; 180 ECTS/CP)
   - Students choose two subjects as majors for their study programme (academic subject knowledge) (150 CP)
   - Students take lectures in subject-specific pedagogy for each major and general pedagogy/educational science (pedagogical knowledge) (30 CP)

(2) Master of Education (2 years; 120 ECTS/CP)
   - Students follow their chosen subjects as majors for their Master’s programme (35 CP)
   - Students take lectures in subject-specific pedagogy for each major and general pedagogy/educational science (pedagogical knowledge) (70 CP)
   - Thesis 15 CP

(3) Teaching practice (Referendariat) (2 years)
   - Students acquire practical teaching skills in their subjects under the supervision of a senior teacher (mentor)
   - Students take courses in general pedagogy and subject-specific pedagogy and are examined at the end of the 2 years

Fully qualified teachers work in schools and traditionally have civil servant status.

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Teaching as a profession: Some key thoughts

(1) Development of teaching expertise:

- **BA/MEd university-based ITE**
  - Theoretical knowledge (focused on potential for practical problem-solving)
- **Practical ITE in schools**
  - Guided experiential knowledge
- **Career entry**
  - Experiential knowledge, building up expertise
- **Further teaching experience**
  - Experienced teacher

Expertise is generated by years of learning, targeted practice, professional support and feedback (Ericsson et al. 2006)

(2) Teaching – “Planning the unprojectable” (Gage 1972):

- **Planning of lesson (building hypotheses)**
- **Implementing /giving lesson (immediate adaptation of plans)**
- **Evaluation (analytical reflection)**

Reflective analysis connected to different kinds of theoretical knowledge to avoid getting lost in one’s own pool of experiences.

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Teacher shortages: The search for alternative routes

- Due to demographic factors the expected demand for teachers (constant number of appointments) (cf. Klemm 2009) is:
  - until 2015/16: 38,000 teachers per year
  - from 2016 - 2020/21: 32,000 teachers per year
  - only ca. 26,000 newly & fully qualified teachers per year enter teaching

- There is a particular shortage of teachers in MINT (STEM) subjects (the current discussion already relates to between 20,000 and 30,000 teachers)


- Programmes for career changers in each Federal State from 2000 until ca. 2016:
  1. Career changers entering mentored practical teaching (*Referendariat*, 2 years) (*Quereinstieg*)
  2. Career changers joining special training programmes on the job while teaching reduced time-tables (*Seiteneinstieg*)

  Pre-condition: Successful study (B.A./BSc. and M.A./M.Sc.) of the relevant subjects
ITE in Germany combines academic education and practical training, where substantial subject knowledge, subject-specific pedagogical knowledge and general pedagogical knowledge are pre-conditions for practical training in schools. The main aim of German ITE is to ensure a certain standard of teaching over all schools and subjects and over time.
References


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Current situation for MINT subjects (general)

By 2020 there will be an expected shortage of workforce employees with MINT-Qualifications: ca. 230,000 (‘Fachkraeftemangel’, cf. Pluenneke & Koppel 2009)

Due to rising replacement demand (e.g. Engineering: from 2011: ca. 43,000 per year; e.g. Mathematics/Natural sciences: from 2010: ca. 18,000 per year)

as well as to skill-based technological change (50,000 per year) (cf. Pluenneke & Koppel 2009; Bonin et al. 2007). Enhanced by a rising percentage of industry-based production with regard to national income.

Demand for graduates per year: ca. 113,000

Number of graduates per year: ca. 90,000