

Which Skills Should Teachers Have?

KIT Scientists Review Examination Criteria



Profession: Teacher. KIT scientists study the actions of teachers during lessons in order to evaluate professional eligibility criteria. (Photo: pixelio.de)

Disciplinary knowledge alone does not yet make a teacher. In addition, personal and social skills, such as communication skills, empathy, respect, and humor are required. In teacher examinations, however, these relevant qualifications are largely neglected, criticizes Professor Johann Beichel. A team of KIT scientists directed by him analyzes teaching and learning processes at school in order to review all aspects of professional eligibility. It is aimed at enhancing the informative value of teacher examinations.

“The multidisciplinary qualities and potentials relevant to successful learning, sustainable education, and professional satisfaction of teachers have been largely underestimated so far,” says the educationalist Johann Beichel, Director of the State Teacher Examination Office of the Karlsruhe Regional Administrative Authority and extraordinary professor at the KIT Institute for General Pedagogics. Beichel reports that teacher examinations nearly exclusively focus on disciplinary knowledge. He demands to increasingly consider aspects like intuition, communicative skills, empathy, esthetics, and

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morality in the assessment of teachers in the future.

At the KIT Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, a team of researchers headed by Beichel is now analyzing actions of teachers during lessons in order to evaluate professional eligibility criteria, including disciplinary excellence, interest in further training, and innovative capacity as well as personal and social skills. The paramount objective is to improve the validity of state teacher examinations. The team consists of Ph. D. students, bachelor and master educationalists to be, and students of pedagogics. It is supported by the Dean of the Department, Professor Klaus Bös, and cooperates with the Vice Dean for Studying and Teaching, Professor Jürgen Rekus. For future examination regulations to ensure not only informative, but also justiciable results, the team of researchers cooperates with the Department of Law of the University of Heidelberg.

Studies were and are made at the Humboldt-Gymnasium and the Leopold-Hauptschule in Karlsruhe, at the Eichendorff-Gymnasium in Ettlingen, and at the Freie Waldorfschule Mannheim. There, students and Ph. D. students observe teaching and learning processes above all in esthetic education, in musical theater and dance productions. The results are supposed to increase the reliability of the selection of teachers after their examinations. "Chances of employment will decrease due to the years with a low birth rate," explains Beichel. "If less young teachers will be needed in the future, we will have to find the most eligible ones."

Karlsruhe Institute of Technology (KIT) is a public corporation and state institution of Baden-Württemberg, Germany. It fulfills the mission of a university and the mission of a national research center of the Helmholtz Association. KIT focuses on a knowledge triangle that links the tasks of research, teaching, and innovation.

This press release is available on the internet at www.kit.edu.