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**Germany**

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## **Germany**

PETER DÖBRICH & CHRISTOPH KODRON

### **Preliminary Remarks**

Germany is a federal state consisting of the 16 States (*Länder*) of Baden-Württemberg, Bayern, Berlin, Brandenburg, Bremen, Hamburg, Hessen, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Niedersachsen, Nordrhein-Westfalen, Rheinland-Pfalz, Saarland, Sachsen, Sachsen-Anhalt, Schleswig-Holstein and Thüringen (in German official expressions). These *Länder* are the result of a historic process deeply rooted in a long-lasting federal tradition that was encouraged after the Second World War and again with the unification of both German states in 1990.

There have been basic differences between the two former German states especially in the field and structure of education. Following the treaty of identification the five new States are in a rapid process of change. Socialist centralism on one hand and former structural differences (e.g. primary teacher training institutions at the level of upper secondary schools) on the other have to be overcome and aligned to the Basic

Law (*Grundgesetz*) of the Federal Republic of Germany, observing mutual agreements between the States and EC-Regulations (e.g. on mutual recognition in higher education).

The autonomy for educational policy and educational planning is determined by the federal structure of government. According to the Basic Law only limited competencies are assigned to the Federal Government, whereas the States have a general competence in the field of cultural (including educational) policy. In the area of teacher education and the teaching profession we are faced with a situation in which the Federal Government and the States share competencies as follows:

(1) The Federation (*Bund*) is in charge of regulations concerning the framework structure of training for careers in the civil service, and salaries of teachers since 1974 (the actual payment of teachers' salaries is provided by the States) and together with the States it is conducting important experiments in the field of teacher education and inservice training through the *Bund-Länder-Commission* for Educational Planning and Advancement of Research. Academic freedom of research and lecturing is constitutionally guaranteed. The 'frame-law on higher education' (*Hochschulrahmengesetz*) at federal level clearly states that research in higher education is closely linked with lecturing. Research is dominant at university level and in special institutions.

(2) The States are in charge of teacher training with respect to structure, content and methods: as teachers normally (about 90%) are civil servants of the States their training follows special regulations made under the auspices of autonomy by each State. In practice considerable differences arose among the States in terms of the mutual recognition of teacher training. In accordance with the status of civil servants and the prerequisites of the salary structure, initial teacher education is subdivided into two distinct, consecutive phases:

—the first phase up to the First State Examination in universities or respective institutions of higher education;

—the second phase in special seminars and training schools run by the school administration of the State and leading to the Second State Examination.

To be a fully qualified teacher both State examinations are required to get a teaching post and full entitlement.

## **A. Research and Initial Teacher Education**

### *A.1 The First Phase of Teacher Training and Research*

Due to Federal framework law, the organisation of teacher education in Germany clearly follows a consecutive, two-phase model. Universities (independent in the free pursuit of the objectives defined by the Basic Law: fostering and developing science and the arts through independent research and teaching) are responsible for the academic training mostly in two subjects, educational studies and some practical experience (which is not obligatory in all kinds of teacher education). The first phase enjoys all the privileges of 'academic freedom' although it ends with the First State Examination (*I. Staatsexamen*).

The staff of the first phase is academically trained, has normally gained academic diplomas, doctoral degrees and—for some years—postdoctoral lecturing qualifications. At the end of their studies it is a normal requirement that all students write studies and theses, which prove they are able to apply academic and scientific methods. This kind of thesis is part of the first State's examination in all types of

teacher training (primary, lower secondary or upper secondary). There is a huge variation of content and in the methods applied, according to the various fields of studies (education, psychology, social sciences, subjects as mathematics, German, geography, etc., or the didactics of the subjects). So it is not only educational research that is imparted to the students, but also research methods of other academic subjects.

Provided research projects (with a huge variation in terms of content, range and methods applied) are run by individual professors or teams of professors, students' participation in different forms of research is usual. A clear distinction between primary and secondary teachers can not be made as, for example, the same department of education is in charge of both categories of teachers or the same department of mathematics is in charge of both categories.

It is usual in most of the institutions of higher education that teachers' students follow the same academic lectures and seminars as those students who follow diploma courses in the respective subjects or disciplines. But there are some special seminars for teachers' students only (introduction to practicals, didactic seminars, etc.).

In accordance with academic style and academic habits, the entire staff and studies are more orientated towards the 'academic or scientific community of the given discipline' than towards the real problems of schools and their development. In education there is some domination of theoretical, historical research, whereas empirical and longitudinal studies are rather rare. For students this often means an orientation towards idealistic thinking and lack of knowledge of how to cope—in a theoretically reflected way—with the practical problems of their future work.

## *A.2 The Second Phase of Teacher Training and Research*

The second phase of teacher training also shows a lot of differences, but in all States it is directly dependent on the Ministry of Education and in most of the States organised in special training seminars (*Ausbildungsseminar*) and/or training schools (*Ausbildungsschulen*).

The staff of the second phase consists of experienced teachers who are chosen by competent persons of the ministry or the educational administration according to their competence in the subject, in teaching and their competence to reflect teaching in the light of theory. Sometimes they have published articles in their teaching subject(s), on teaching questions or have worked in curriculum development. Some of them have also conducted research in teaching or passed a doctorate, but this is not a formal requirement. In general all of them have a competence in the application of research methods from their own training in an institution of higher education.

Normally it is possible to distinguish between two types of trainers: those who are responsible for the teaching of one subject; and those for general didactics, general teaching questions such as for marking, questions of educational law and administration. Apart from the director of the training seminar (*Ausbildungsleiter*) all trainers generally teach in the type of school for which they are training future teachers; their teaching load is reduced, according to the number of future teachers they are training.

The 2 years (in only a few cases are there shorter periods) of professional training generally comprise a first short hospitalisation period, a main period of teaching with assistance, up to teaching on their own responsibility and a shorter third period for the examination. The importance of research is formally low, because practical induction into teaching and the curriculum, preparation of lessons and reflections on teaching

experience is the centre of this training. But in most of the States it is not unusual to find units of very limited research within the training in two senses:

—to gain experience with new inputs (new content, new media or new learning or teaching style) into lessons and to control the outcome, or

—to evaluate a given teaching lesson by using (elements of) empirical research methods.

Before the reforms at the end of the 1960s and during the 1970s this period was to a much greater extent an introduction to a given teaching tradition only, while today it is really training combined with theoretical reflection on teaching processes and the results of research in teaching and learning. Whereas during the university-based first training phase research is mainly centred around the scientific disciplines related to basic questions of learning and teaching (e.g. psychology of learning) or in very new areas and the research orientation of the scientific community, research which is taken into account in this second training phase is specially relevant for the school as it is research into teaching and learning, while the individual small research work is centred around practical questions.

The requirements for the second State examination (*II. Staatsexamen*), which always finalises this period, normally consists of

—a written exposition on the teaching experience of the candidate, reflecting the teaching objectives, the planning of the lesson(s) with the empirical facts in the light of theory;

—examination of lessons held in the candidate's subjects; and

—an oral examination in the subjects and in teaching theory.

One could argue that the written exposition, frequently of more than 100 pages, is mainly small-scale research into limited individual teaching experiences. Sometimes the candidates are also using empirical methods, but more often it is a reflection, discussion of comparison of the teaching experience in the light of several theoretical or empirical scientific approaches.

## B. Research and Inservice Education of Teachers

The role of research in inservice education of teachers (INSET) is different depending on the basic philosophy of the 16 States. Some of them still prefer the so-called R-D-D model (research-development-dissemination) which regards research as superior in education, which tries to control research in special state institutions, bringing only those methods and content to INSET that are in line with the leading philosophy of the ruling agencies. It is obvious in this case that research is not conducted with the privilege of academic freedom, INSET is playing the role of dissemination only, the interests of individual teachers or the teaching staff of a given school are normally neglected. In many international studies this model has been evaluated to be a failure.

In other States a differentiation of INSET has taken place, not totally omitting the course system and its practice of implementing research results, but implementing other forms of regional and school-based INSET tool. In these cases special interests—according to acknowledged common problems in a given INSET-group or a single school—lead to request for research and the cooperation of teachers, heads of the schools and research persons. The main topic of this kind of cooperation is often problem-solving or the development of the school. Researchers in this case often act as a kind of critical mirror for improving reflection and understanding or as a source of information, etc. It is, in its essential understanding, a process of cooperation between

research and practice. New insights and information in this case are experience-based and theoretically reflected. There are partners with different background but at the same level of prestige, etc. There are rarely career problems in this kind of cooperation, as teachers are normally civil servants, earning sufficient money. In most cases researchers have the same income and prestige level, except if they are professors at the highest ranks of the salary system. But professors in the first phase are not so frequently engaged in this kind of INSET. They normally prefer their lecturing style with a greater audience, that does not take up so much of their time (as cooperative processes normally do).

As teacher organisations support the professional development of the teaching profession they approve of all kinds of INSET.

Most INSET institutions have series of documentations of their course activities and the results of all kinds of INSET activities. In many cases these materials play a substantial role in practice, but it is a kind of grey market rarely connected with regular publications in journals, books, etc.

### **C. Agencies and Partners in the Promotion of Educational Research**

Educational research in the Federal Republic of Germany has different institutional backgrounds:

- (1) the university-based research of each professor and the related research projects (about 110 institutions mostly with several chairs in various branches of education);
- (2) special research institutes and research branches at universities (11 institutes);
- (3) the research institutions of each State (which are also responsible for curriculum/school development, and in some smaller States for inservice training too), including two special federal institutes (about 20 institutions);
- (4) public research (development and service), institutes of importance for the whole Federal Republic of Germany, jointly financed by the federation (*Bund*) and the States (*Länder*) (9 institutions);
- (5) other research and service institutions, e.g. financed by churches, associations (8 institutions); and
- (6) research institutions in other areas but related to fields of education (about 25 institutions).

The size and the personnel employed in these institutions differs to a great extent (e.g. special institutions with more than 100 people on the staff versus others with four or five people).

While the formal impact of university-based research on teacher training is institutionally given and based on the dual function of teaching and research of every teacher trainer who is a university professor in the first phase of teacher training, the impact of all other educational research on teacher training is not institutionalised. It is possible that teacher trainers of the second training phase are also entrusted, e.g. with research or development functions of a state or another research institute, but this will depend on the person, not the function.

Compared with other countries the impact of research into teacher training seems to be perhaps more institutionalised and rather realised on a personal basis, than by an exchange and discussion in relevant publications. It is obvious that the most well-known journal in educational research, the *Zeitschrift für Pädagogik* rarely touches on

practical questions of teacher training and school education; the orientation is a predominantly theoretical one, largely ignoring school-related practical aspects. There is no specific (scientific) journal or periodical handling questions of teacher training. There are about 300 periodicals in the field of education, most of them with a limited number of copies (400 to 3000) and aimed at special interest groups.

Due to the sovereignty in cultural questions of the 16 States, including the content of teacher training, central publication agencies are lacking, as well as a nation-wide public discussion of relevant themes, including the question of the impact of research into teacher training. On the other hand, there is a great variety of different scientific publications (in the whole German-speaking area). Here relevant scientific research results in education can be found as well as, from time to time, explicit articles on specific questions of research into teacher training. In the 1970s, on the other hand, there was a very wide range of different explicit research into teacher training, including a great number of agencies. Extra money can be acquired from the German Research Agency of some of the Federal Ministries, Foundations, the European Community or others.

Comparative research is located in some specialised individual institutions and on a smaller scale is conducted by working groups or institutions in university. Some of the universities' chairs in comparative education have recently been disbanded, some have been newly established. There are more or less stable connections between German educational comparative research and international agencies.

#### **D. Educational Research, its Dissemination and Impact on Policy and Practice**

In the Federation as in all States (and there, where districts (*Landkreise*) or cities have their own rights) the general directions for educational policy and administration are fixed by law after discussion and vote in the parliament. Therefore one should consider the influence of educational research on political parties and parliaments, where teachers are one of the most well-represented professional groups.

The influence of educational and social science research was comparably important at the end of the 1960s and in the 1970s, when there was a certain political creed as expressed in slogans such as "education is a general right of every citizen" or "reform and promotion of society by reform of the educational system". Since then the political influence in general has declined very quickly, mainly due to the widespread feeling that the former theoretically based promises have not been realised. In addition to that, education, especially teacher education, lost nearly all political interest as the shortage of teachers turned into the unemployment of fully trained teachers in the late 1970s and as the school reform debate lost interest while the economy was running well. Therefore one can conclude that today the influence of educational science and research is very low, but there are some hints that a revaluation could take place in the coming years.

The *Bund-Länder-Commission for Educational Planning and the Advancement of Research* (*Bund-Länder-Kommission für Bildungsplanung und Forschungsförderung*) founded in the time when educational science influenced policy and when all political parties accepted the need to cooperate for the sake of the whole educational system, is still working and especially coordinating, but in this field of teacher training hardly any cooperative research projects remain. Another institution, the Council for Sciences (*Wissenschaftsrat*), a politically highly respected council, is doing a lot of evaluating and counselling work also in the field of educational sciences. It also evaluated certain state

financed educational research institutions and gave advice on future developments, especially taking into account the university-based research possibilities and the role bigger research institutions should play in coordinated large-scale research.

The influences of educational research on a lower institutional base is difficult to estimate and the influence varies depending on the general political orientation of the administration and the researchers. On a small scale there are sometimes very good links and therefore a potential influence, but in general the influence is also rather small.

In addition to what has been described in the preliminary remarks about the federal structure one has to take into account that the States are very different in area (smallest: Bremen, 404 sq. km.; largest, Bayern, 70,554 sq. km.) and number of inhabitants (smallest again Bremen, 0.7 million inhabitants; largest: Nordrhein-Westfalen, 17.1 million inhabitants). These differences are also very important in terms of tax collecting and the financial possibilities, and the question has been raised as to whether these differences and the relatively small size of most of the States are not endangering the whole federal system. For the question of research these differences are important. Big and important States are financing different institutions for research in education, for inservice training and for the promotion of school and curriculum. In small States all these functions are completely or partly integrated. Generally, it seems clear that only state research institutions sometimes have the chance of direct access to policy, but sometimes one has the impression that the political decisions of a ministry are not influenced much by research results, but more by general political thinking in the relevant parties. One example could be the break-down of the experiment of the one-phase teacher training at the University of Oldenburg which the minister in charge personally regarded to be good and effective, but which ended due to general political power implications by a decision of the Parliament.

As mentioned in section C there are a lot of periodicals publishing educational research; there are also some specialised libraries and documentation centres. For example the Library of the University Erlangen-Nürnberg has the task of collecting publications on research in education (*Sammelschwerpunkt Bildungsforschung*) and publishing quarterly a list of these publications; DOPAED (*Dokumentationsring Pädagogik*), a cooperation among 28 libraries and documentation institutions in the Federal Republic of Germany, Austria and Switzerland provides information in this field; in ZEUS (*Zentralblatt für Erziehungswissenschaft und Schule*) or in the BIB-report (*Bibliographischer Index Bildungswissenschaften*) one can find relevant publications. There are also several documentation circles mainly for materials related to classroom teaching.

There are in addition, information collecting systems for empirical research in social sciences (*Informationszentrum Sozialwissenschaften*) or documentation of research related to the education and training of the labour force (*Forschungsdokumentation für Arbeitsmarkt und Berufsforschung*).

But there is still no overall documentation or information system for education-related research and no special system only for research related to teacher training. Therefore the States and the Federation have started a service project '*FIS-Bildung*' (*Fachinformationssystem Bildung*) at the German Institute for International Educational Research with the objective of combining the existing regional or special documentation systems in order to establish an overall retrieval system with the same general common base in the field of educational research.

In the Federal Republic of Germany we have a lot of societies dealing with special questions of education and educational research. The most well-known and important



is the association for educational science (*Deutsche Gesellschaft für Erziehungswissenschaft*). But it is a particular disadvantage that there is no special association for all questions related to teacher education; there is one section within the society just mentioned where one finds almost only researchers and university trainers (p. 107) and one association (with State branches) for trainers of the second teacher-training phase (p. 108) and a special association for in service teacher trainers.

### E. Priorities and New Trends in Educational Research

In the Federal Republic of Germany educational research is challenged by special problems:

- the almost complete reorganisation of the school system, teacher training and universities and other institutions of higher education, including the research institutions in the five new States in East Germany;
- the challenge to integrate young people of German origin, coming from the former Soviet Union, Poland and Romania, into the educational system, and to work on the identity problems those people have;
- different questions which arise from the social and pedagogical experiment of quickly unifying two educational systems, which have had a different development over 40 years due to an opposing basic philosophy, different structures and functions;
- new demands related to the fact that the former socialist eastern neighbour states demand cooperation and help; but new demands and new orientations are necessary for German educational science too.

However, in general research actually plays an inferior role because of the fact that the solution of practical problems demands much attention. But the unification also aroused some new interest in older research results, for example experiments in teacher training published by the Bund-Länder Commission for Educational Planning and Advancement of Research.

Nevertheless research is mainly conducted in the old 11 States, as the centralised educational research institute of the former GDR (*Akademie der Pädagogischen Wissenschaften, APW*) was abolished on 1 January 1991 and the universities are being restructured. The introduction of new technologies, environmental education, gender-related discrimination in sciences, questions of transition between different school types and from school to work are now issues of great interest in research-programmes.

The development of and changes in the school system, which were highly important in the publications of the 1970s, have been replaced by numerous publications on the 'climate' of the school, the individual school's 'ethos', cooperation within schools and the greater amount of autonomy of the individual school to develop its own profile in contrast to the profile of other schools. 'In-school research' is playing a growing role, for example analysing also in a comparative way, time for instruction, the time spent in school and other school-related time issues.

Compared with the 1970s it is obvious that the amount and importance of educational research has declined due to smaller budgets being allotted to these research fields. In consequence there are no longer clearly discernible main research priorities as in former decades; today educational research is predominantly characterised by small-scale research and the lack of clear priorities.

**F. Research and the Status of Teachers and Teacher Education**

The clear connection between the status of the teaching profession and research was shown in section A, in which the situation of the first and second phase of teacher training was described. Teacher educators of the first phase of teacher training at universities have a legal obligation to undertake research and lecturing. In any case research needs to be done to qualify for the post of professor, but after that the interest in pursuing research is not as strong as it should be in many cases. However, the problem of overcrowded universities, and the lack of teaching personnel in the universities should be taken into account too, as lecturers have no time or energy left to pursue research. Professors in teacher education are employed as civil servants, who hold full tenure, when they have gained a doctor's degree and a postdoctoral lecturing qualification, which is the highest academic degree in Germany. In some cases the amount of publications, based on personal research after having gained a chair, is crucial for internal advancement within the given salary structure of professors. But this advancement is mainly connected with a call to another university.

There are a lot of manuals on practical questions such as teaching methods, assessment, classroom management, etc. Also manuals written in English are used. But they are of limited value, as they cannot replace personal practical experience, which must necessarily be gained in the whole process of teacher training. Modern technology can in many cases assist the reflection process on the way to become a teacher. But there are some doubts concerning the role of modern technologies in the process of research on individual teaching. Research in most cases ends up with some kind of publication, in whatever form; the application of modern technology in teacher training for internal support—even if there are reflective methods—cannot be regarded as research in this respect.

Some research institutions have specialised in issues of the teaching profession. Compared with the whole research capacity in education, their share is negligible.

In 1991 a management consultancy enterprise (no-one from educational research!) was employed to conduct a huge study on the internal functioning of the school system in Nordrhein-Westfalen. But this research was linked with 17 comparisons on the old 11 States of the Federal Republic of Germany on various aspects of the school system. A new debate on the accountability of the school-system, its 'inner economy' resulted from this study. The background of the study was the gap between the decline in the birth-rate and smaller classes on the one hand, and thousands of lessons not being held each week—due to a lack of teaching posts—on the other. Perhaps the last example sheds some light on the image of educational research today.