Report: Teacher Education at Studienseminar Marburg Beyond Competencies

1. Context – Initial Teacher Education in Germany, Studienseminar Marburg

Our teacher training college in Marburg, Hessen in central Germany offers a 21-month post-graduate training course for teachers who wish to teach at a secondary school of Germany's three-tiered school system.

Teacher education in Germany is generally divided into three phases:

1. University studies, often involving a degree in education alongside two/three subjects
2. 18-24 month phase which combines practical teaching with didactics and pedagogy
3. The third phase of in-service professional development alongside the job

We are a phase two institution. Students come to our college with a university degree in at least two subjects which they will be teaching in phase three.

The 21-month course is divided into 3 phases:

1. Shadowing and teaching attempts
2 Teaching classes with sole responsibility
3 Teaching and preparing for final exams

Throughout all 3 phases student teachers are assigned to only one school and become fully independent staff members with the same obligations and rights as in-service teachers.

At the school there is one teacher trainer who supports these student teachers at the school.

Student teachers teach different amounts of lessons depending on which phase they are in (shadowing and teaching with a mentor/guidance teacher in phase one; 10-12 lessons per week in groups of their own accompanied by 2-4 lessons guided teaching in cooperation with their chosen mentor in all the other phases). They teach at their schools on four days, so on the fifth day of the week they are able to attend classes at the teacher training college.

Thus, the focus of the course is on practical teaching through experience. At the teacher training college the student teachers take part in several courses which take place on day five of the teaching week.

In phase one there are introductory courses to the didactics of the student teachers' two chosen subjects as well as a complete course at the school introducing them to the legal, educational and structural aspects of teaching at that particular school and schools in general. Furthermore, there are several one- or half-day courses introducing the structural aspects of our teacher training programme. One particular element of the course at this stage is that students as a group (in their didactics courses and in the school group) take part in group lesson

planning and shadowing, thus focussing on reflection and cooperation from the onset. At this stage there is no summative assessment.

In phases two the course design continues in its basic structure with the student teachers now taking on sole responsibility for several classes at their school. They are accompanied by two teacher trainers at the college who focus on the didactics of their subjects and who are their permanent tutors throughout the whole phase. There are also several shorter courses (modules) in general pedagogy (one on teaching methods, techniques and innovation, one on diagnostics, differentiated instruction and assessment and one course where student teachers choose elements from the field of counselling, guidance and education).

The final course offers choices such as motivation or parent-pupil counselling. The counselling course at their school continues. This phase and all courses in it are subject to summative assessment with the exception of the course at the school which consistently remains free from summative assessment throughout the entire programme. Student teachers are also accompanied by two mentors of their choice who are in-service teachers at their school and independent of the teacher training college, but cooperate with the teacher educators involved in the student's course.

2. Competencies/Standards for Teacher Education in Germany

2.1. National Frameworks

The teacher training in Germany is guided by the KMK standards (Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs), which were first introduced in 2004 and updated in 2019. These standards emphasize 11 core competencies required for effective teaching. These competencies cover a wide range of skills:

Competence 1: Teachers plan lessons taking into account different learning prerequisites and development processes in a professional and appropriate manner and carry them out in an objective and technically correct way.

Competence 2: Teachers support pupils' learning by organising learning settings. They motivate all pupils and enable them to make connections and apply what they have learnt.

Competence 3: Teachers promote pupils' abilities to learn and work independently.

Competence 4: Teachers know the social, cultural and technological living conditions, possible disadvantages, impairments and barriers of and for pupils and influence their individual development within the school framework.

Competence 5: Teachers convey values and norms, an attitude of appreciation and recognition of diversity and support self-determined and reflective judgement and action by pupils.

Competence 6: Teachers find age- and development-psychologically appropriate solutions to difficulties and conflicts at school and in the classroom and contribute to an appreciative approach.

Competence 7: Teachers assess pupils' learning requirements and learning processes; they provide pupils with targeted and adequate support and advise learners and their parents.

Competence 8: Teachers record the performance development of pupils and assess learning processes and performance on the basis of transparent assessment criteria.

Competence 9: Teachers are aware of the special demands of the teaching profession and include social, cultural and technological developments into their actions. They understand their profession as a public office with special responsibility and obligation.

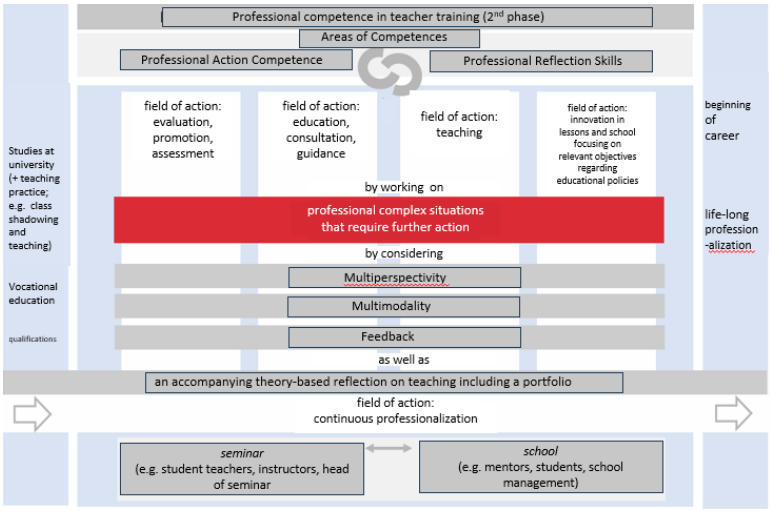
Competence 10: Teachers see their profession as a continuous learning task and continue to develop their competences.

Competence 11: Teachers participate in school and lesson development.

The KMK standards are further divided into specific guidelines for both theoretical and practical aspects of teacher training, ensuring teachers are equipped to meet contemporary educational challenges.

2.2. Hessian *Core Curriculum*

In Hessen, teacher education builds upon the KMK standards and integrates additional elements of professional competence:



- **Professional Action Competence:** Teachers are trained to address real-world educational challenges with innovative strategies.
- **Reflection Skills:** Emphasis is placed on reflective practices, enabling educators to learn from their teaching experiences and improve.
- **Continuous Professionalization:** Lifelong learning is a core focus, ensuring that teachers adapt to ever-changing educational requirements.

The *core curriculum* emphasizes practical applications such as classroom shadowing, lesson design, and performance assessments while promoting multiperspectivity and multimodality in teaching methods.

3. Description of how documents are recognized/used/developed in Teacher Education

3.1. The **"Matrix - Fundamentals of good teaching: counselling, assessment and evaluation at the Studienseminar für Gymnasien Marburg"** is intended to serve as a guide and aid for teachers in the preparatory service for lesson planning, implementation and reflection and as a basis for transparent and criteria-based counselling and evaluation of lessons for trainers. It is the result of a diligent participatory process involving trainees and trainers. The content is based on current findings from empirical teaching research, learning psychology and concrete experiences from many years of training work. This product is therefore the result of a joint endeavour to reach a basic understanding. At the same time, it is intended to form a basis for an ongoing joint communication process and the individual understanding process of all those involved.

The matrix is based on the fundamental idea that learning is a holistic and complex process. In order to analyse the successes and difficulties in shaping this process, a set of conceptual tools is needed to guide those involved. In this context, the further development of a common language is important in order to make communication about teaching and learning processes in training events and in counselling and assessment situations comprehensible and of high quality.

The structure and content of the tabular overview of the matrix should take into account the complexity of teaching activities.

• The origin of all teaching quality is the **teacher's personality**, whose attitude towards learners and subjects is of paramount importance. This is emphasised graphically by the fact that this criterion is shown above the system.

• The central categories of the matrix are to be read from left to right: The respective dimension for successful teaching is first assigned the aspects to be considered during planning, followed by the criteria that are important during implementation. The fields that darken towards the right potential show the progressions of the requirement levels. At the same time, each criterion can be implemented at different quality levels.

• Within the matrix, it is not possible for a criterion to outweigh other criteria. The respective reasons for the success of lessons are too individual and dependent on the situation in the very lesson for this. On the one hand priorities must be set on the basis of specific agreements with the trainers in the different courses at the college, and on the other hand they must be set on the basis of the respective teaching situation.

• Reflection, which should take into account aspects of planning and implementation with an appropriate focus, is an important part of counselling and forms a profound basis for evaluation.

The tabular overview is supplemented by indicators. The indicators clarify how the phenomena to be observed in lessons become visible.

MATRIX - Fundamentals of good teaching
Counselling, assessment and evaluation at the Studienseminar für Gymnasien Marburg

Teacher personality:	Appearance & charisma	Contact & empathy skills	Appreciation	Joy, enthusiasm	Clear and flexible action	Clarity of role understanding / self-reflection

Dimensions of good teaching	Planning	Realisation			
Didactics	Didactic centre, subject analysis, significance, material analysis	professional correctness	Meaningfulness for learners	Error culture	Flexibility
Specialised didactics	Basic principles of the subject, methods and media, embedding in the teaching context				
Expertise and goal orientation	intend. Learning and competence growth, thinking from the end, diagnosis and prior knowledge	Activation of prior knowledge	Task formats, task definition	Backup, exercise	Increased learning and expertise
Activation	Learning stimulus, e.g. cognitive conflict, consideration of different learning channels and social forms. Learning channels and social forms, Think - Pair - Share principle	cognitive activation	Motivation	Methods, media & social forms	Participation
Structure / transparency	Planning of requirement transparency and clarity of objectives and procedures	Clarity of objectives and procedures	Coherence / phase linking	Differentiation between learning and performance situations	Transparent dialogue structure
Learning process support	Learning group analysis, Creating differentiated access	Role of the teacher	Feedback	Dealing with diversity	self-directed learning
Class guidance	Stimulating learning environment, flexible time management, alternative lesson breaks	Perception of the learning group	Rules & routines / time utilisation	Intervention in the event of disruptions	Climate conducive to learning
Conducting dialogue	Anticipation of goal-oriented impulses	non-verbal dialogue	verbal dialogue	Networking & security	Assessment / meta-reflection

Colour gradient: Increase in the degree of complexity

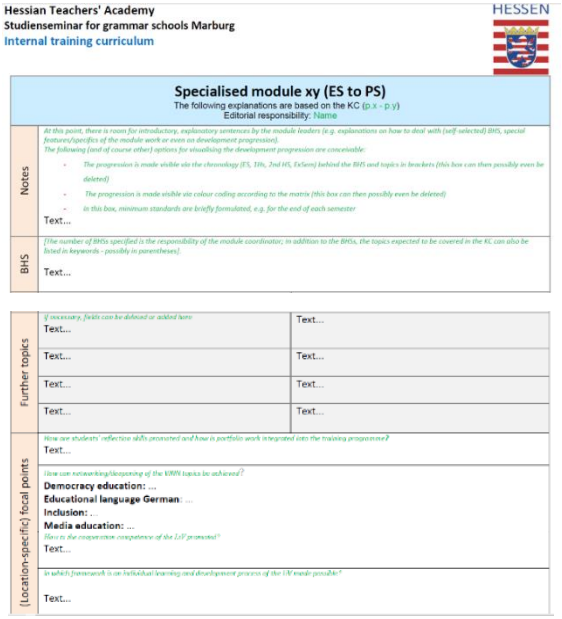
Reflection:	Structured & criteria-orientated	Thematisation of relevant strengths & weaknesses	Develop alternatives & consequences	realist. Assessment of the increase in competence	Quality of self-perception & situational awareness

Sources: Office for Teacher Training Hesse (2011). On the way to competence-oriented teaching - designing teaching and learning processes. A process model to support lesson development; Hattie, John (2014). Making learning visible for teachers. Hohengehren: Schneider Verlag Hohengehren; Helmke, Andreas (2015⁶). Teaching quality and teacher professionalism. Diagnosis, evaluation and improvement of teaching. Seelze: Klett-Kallmeyer; Hessian Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs (2011). Hessian Reference Framework for School Quality (HRB). Quality areas,

The criteria for good teaching are explained in the respective sections and concretised using indicators. The trainers at the Marburg Studienseminar have organised the "Matrix - Fundamentals of good teaching: counselling, assessment and evaluation at the Studienseminar für Gymnasien Marburg". They aim to evaluate the planning, implementation and reflection of lessons based on these criteria. At first glance, the complexity of teaching described above may appear to be an almost unmanageable challenge. The trainers at the Marburg Studienseminar für Gymnasien are aware of the fact that it will indeed be hardly possible to do justice to all aspects in the same way. Naturally, they take into account the respective level of training of the student teachers when making their judgements. The matrix can help to stay focused on the relevant aspects and to become more confident in implementing the criteria during the training process. This will be a balancing process in the sense of weighing up interests, as decisions must constantly be made regarding the prioritisation of criteria during teaching and its planning, which can always be considered in the light of other possibilities.

3.2. The **Marburg Curriculum** is autonomously designed by all of our staff members and for all of our seminars and aligns closely with both national frameworks and the Hessian Core Curriculum but goes

further by introducing innovative approaches:


Hessian Teachers' Academy
Studienseminar for grammar schools Marburg
Internal training curriculum
HESSEN

Specialised module xy (ES to PS)
The following explanations are based on the KC (p.x - p.y)
Editorial responsibility: Name

Notes
At this point, there is room for introductory, explanatory sentences by the module leaders (e.g. explanations on how to deal with (self-selected) BHS, special features/specifics of the module work or even on development progression).
The following (and of course other) options for visualising the development progression are conceivable:
- The progression is made visible via the chronology (ES, 11th, 2nd HS, ExSem) behind the BHS and topics in brackets (this box can then possibly even be deleted)
- The progression is made visible via colour coding according to the matrix (this box can then possibly even be deleted)
- In this box, minimum standards are briefly formulated, e.g. for the end of each semester
Text...

BHS
[The number of BHSs specified is the responsibility of the module coordinator; in addition to the BHSs, the topics expected to be covered in the KC can also be listed in keywords - possibly in parentheses].
Text...

Further topics
If necessary, fields can be deleted or added here
Text... | Text...
Text... | Text...
Text... | Text...
Text... | Text...

[Location-specific] focal points
How are students' reflection skills promoted and how is portfolio work integrated into the training programme?
Text...
How can networking/deepening of the MMN topics be achieved?
Democracy education: ...
Educational language German: ...
Inclusion: ...
Media education: ...
How is the cooperation competence of the LiV promoted?
Text...
In which framework is an individual learning and development process of the LiV made possible?
Text...

Fields of Action: The curriculum identifies four key areas:

- Teaching and innovation.
- Evaluation and assessment.
- Education and guidance.
- Lifelong professional development.

Theory and Practice Integration: It combines theoretical knowledge with hands-on experience and feedback, culminating in a portfolio that documents professional development.

The Marburg Curriculum represents a progressive model, preparing teachers to excel in diverse educational settings while fostering a commitment to lifelong learning.

3.3. Teaching and Learning at the Studienseminar Marburg – Key Aspects of Teacher Training

The following aspects were identified as characteristic of our training institution during a meeting of all our staff on January 14, 2025, as well as by a large number of our student teachers. As such, they form the foundation for our continued work:

1. High-quality training with reliable and transparent criteria
2. Opportunities for strength-oriented personal development
3. Individual support, guidance, and mentoring
4. Collaborative teamwork and a strong team culture
5. Linking theory and practice
6. Appreciative communication and a culture of feedback in a highly supportive working and learning environment

4. Literature

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