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The Educational Structure of the German School System

The German system of education adheres to the structures developed in the West (Western Germany) since 1948. The 1990 unification contract between the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany) and the German Democratic Republic (East Germany) requires that the unified Germany maintain a coherent system of education (Vertrag zwischen der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik [Unification Treaty] 1990). To realize such coherence, the former East German regional states (*Länder*) agreed to emulate the West's system by mid-1991 and have consequently displaced their traditionally centralized education system. This chapter focuses on the federal model of education developed in the West and currently in use throughout the unified Federal Republic of Germany.

Most Germans are educated within the public system of education (Führ 1989). The public system is divided into three general levels: elementary, secondary, and higher education. There is also a public system of special schools for students with disabilities. Although private educational institutions exist in Germany, they play only a supporting role. Private education makes its most important contribution in the areas of preschool and continuing education. While the public systems of higher and special education and the private systems of preschool and continuing education are important and will be briefly addressed, this essay emphasizes the public systems of elementary and secondary education. Before entering into a detailed depiction of these two domains, it will be helpful both to summarize key points from each of the different educational domains and to consider the larger political structure of public education as a whole.

The following discussion includes a summary overview of the different educational domains, an overview of the organization and administration of German public education, and a more detailed look at the structure of elementary and secondary public education.

Summary Overview of Educational Domains

Seen from the perspective of the individual student, German education entails a well-defined sequence of educational domains: preschool education, elementary education, lower- and upper-level secondary education, higher education, and continuing education (Sekretariat der Ständigen Konferenz der Kultusminister der *Länder* in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland [KMK] 1993a). The following includes a summary of the educational mandate and highlights for each domain, which provide a general overview of the system as a whole. Quantitative figures and trends follow.

Educational Mandate

German mandatory schooling begins at the age of 6 and usually lasts 12 years. Of these 12 years of schooling, at least 9 must be full-time. Students who discontinue their full-time schooling after their ninth year in school are required to attend a 3-year program of part-time vocational study. Some *Länder* require 10 years of full-time, mandatory schooling, thus bringing the total years of mandatory schooling up to 13 for those students participating in the 3-year program of part-time vocational training. The specific guidelines governing the educational mandate vary among the regional states within Germany (KMK 1993a).

Preschool Education

Schooling in Germany becomes mandatory for children after their sixth birthday. Prior to this age, schooling is voluntary and is not generally a part of the public system of education. Nevertheless, roughly 75 percent of 3-year-olds and 80 percent of 5-year-olds receive some form of preschool education, which has a long history and is widely available in Germany (Führ 1989).

German preschooling seeks to complement the training and upbringing provided by the family and emphasizes both the acquisition of knowledge and social and emotional development. The aim is to stimulate children's social learning, responsibility, and creativity through various activities, including arts, sports, and play.

There are four types of preschools in Germany:

- Kindergartens (*Kindergärten*) are the traditional form and by far the most common. In 1992, roughly 1.5 million kindergarten places were available; at the same time, there were approximately three million 3- to 6-year-olds in the population (Bundesministerium für Bildung und Wissenschaft [BMBW] 1993).
- School kindergartens (*Schulkindergärten*) places are less numerous (39,363 in 1991) (Ständige Konferenz der Kultusminister der *Länder* in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland [KMK] 1993b) and are geared to children who have reached their sixth birthday but who lack the maturity to begin mandatory schooling. School kindergartens are usually organizationally integrated into the elementary school and seek to develop in children the preconditions for later success in school.
- Preclasses (*Vorklassen*), like school kindergartens, are organizationally tied to the elementary school. They are, however, geared to 5-year-olds and seek to ease the children's transition to elementary schooling. Only a few *Länder* support preclasses, which in 1991 had an enrollment of 37,391 students (KMK 1993b).
- Special kindergartens (*Sonderkindergärten*) are provided for children with physical, mental, and emotional handicaps and are specialized according to type of disability.

Preschool education is largely supported by the private sector. Roughly 70 percent of kindergartens are operated by either individuals or independent organizations such as charities or companies active in child and youth assistance. Thirty percent are operated by government bodies, mostly at the local level. Both publicly and privately operated kindergartens are subject to legal guidelines and government oversight. Although private kindergartens often receive small government subsidies, both public and private kindergartens charge tuition, which varies considerably from state to state and can sometimes be quite substantial. The government provides tuition subsidies to families with low incomes (KMK 1993a).

Elementary Education

Elementary education encompasses the first through fourth years of mandatory education (ages 6 through 9) (Führ 1989). During these 4 years, children attend a common school (*Grundschule*) in the school district in which they live. School district boundaries are set by the local government agency responsible for elementary education (*Schulamt*).

In order to foster equality of educational opportunity, there is no tracking at the elementary level. Instruction aims to foster students' individual talents, build the basis for independent learning and community living, and impart basic knowledge and skills. Emphasis is placed on linking school material and extracurricular experiences. Elementary education has been the focus of reform efforts in Germany. Educational reform in the 1970s led to the introduction of a more academically based curriculum, including basic science courses and an emphasis on experientially based learning. Current reform discussions focus on problems posed by a greater integration of children with special needs and a rising percentage of foreign students in elementary schools (Führ 1989).

Secondary Education

The German system becomes somewhat complicated at the level of secondary education. Secondary schooling is divided into two levels:

- Lower level secondary schooling (*Unterstufe*) encompasses the first 5 or 6 years of secondary education.
- Upper level secondary schooling (*Oberstufe*) encompasses the last 3 years of mandatory education.

Lower Level Secondary Education

Lower level secondary schooling begins for most students at age 10, and ends when they reach age 15 or 16 at the completion of 9 or 10 years of general mandatory full-time schooling. (The number of years of schooling required varies by school type and *Länder*.) In general, academically oriented lower level secondary schools include the 10th year of schooling.

Types of school. While all schools at this level seek to impart to students a general, basic education, they vary according to the degree of emphasis placed on scholastic achievement. There are basically four types of lower level secondary schools:

- *Hauptschule* (school for practical education);
- *Realschule* (school for a mix of practical and liberal education, with the latter being given greater emphasis than the former);
- *Gymnasium* (school for liberal education); and
- *Gesamtschule* (comprehensive school offering practical, liberal, and practical liberal education).

The first three types reflect the traditional system of tracking in German education (Führ 1989, KMK 1993a). The *Hauptschule* emphasizes a practical, skill-based, non-academic education for those children who show less promise in the academic sphere. *Gymnasium* is dedicated to a liberal, theory-oriented education for children with more academic promise. Traditionally, there have been three types of *Gymnasium*: classical, modern languages, and mathematics/natural sciences. The *Realschule* is a compromise between the *Hauptschule* and the *Gymnasium*, and offers a mix of practical (skill-based) and liberal (theoretical) instruction. Taken together, the *Hauptschule*, *Realschule*, and *Gymnasium* form a traditional system of educational tracking in which assessments of the child's performance in the first 4 years of mandatory schooling provide a basis for initial placement within a hierarchy of the school types.

The fourth type of school, the *Gesamtschule*, offers an alternative to the traditional system of tracking. In the comprehensive school, students of all academic interests—from the practical to the theoretical—are included under one roof. The *Gesamtschule* may be either cooperative or integrated. The cooperative *Gesamtschule* retains the traditional hierarchical structure by incorporating different tracks within a single school. This structure allows for differing abilities while providing for greater mobility across tracks. The integrated *Gesamtschule* does away with tracks altogether, combining students of differing abilities within integrated classes. Students in these schools attend common classes in the fifth and sixth years, and thereafter differentiate into honors courses depending upon their performance.

Table 1 depicts the numbers and rough percentages of students attending *Hauptschule*, *Realschule*, *Gymnasium*, and *Gesamtschule* at the lower level in 1991 (KMK 1993b).

Table 1—Numbers and percentages of students attending different lower level types of secondary schools, 1991

School Type	Total in whole of Germany	Percentage in school type
<i>Hauptschule</i>	1,076,392	28.6
<i>Realschule</i>	1,038,982	27.6
<i>Gymnasium</i>	1,314,864	35.0
<i>Gesamtschule</i> ^a	329,014	8.8
Total	3,759,252	100.0

SOURCE: KMK, 1993b

^aIncludes only integrated *Gesamtschulen*.

More recently, three additional types of school have been introduced—the *Mittelschule*, the *Regelschule*, and the *Sekundarschule*—in which the activities of the *Hauptschule* and the *Realschule* are combined. These schools exist more typically in the former East German states and represent a transition from the previous East German school system to the educational structures of the West. The Bavarian peoples' school (*Volksschule*) is another infrequent variant in which the *Grundschule* and the *Hauptschule* are organizationally integrated.

The orientation period. The first 2 years of lower level secondary education, the fifth and sixth school years (ages 10 and 11), are sometimes considered an orientation or trial period (*Orientierungsstufe*) in which the match between the student and the assigned school type is assessed. The organization of this trial period varies both between and within the *Länder*, and may be either independent of or dependent on the type of school involved. The orientation period is dependent when the fifth and sixth grades are organizationally integrated into the different types of school, and independent when they are organizationally separate. The orientation period allows the

postponement of the final decision about the student's placement in a particular type of school until the end of the sixth school year, when the student is 12 or 13 years old. Both the timing of and the procedure for making this decision vary across *Länder*. Increasingly, the parents' preferences are taken into account in making this decision.

Completing lower level secondary education. Both the *Hauptschule* and the *Realschule* confer school-leaving certificates at the end of lower level secondary education: the *Hauptschule* after the 9th year and the *Realschule* after the 10th year of full-time education. Neither type of school includes an upper level; therefore, students who want to qualify for university entrance must transfer to a *Gymnasium* or *Gesamtschule*, both of which have grades 11 through 13. Students attending a *Gymnasium* or a *Gesamtschule* may opt to end their full-time liberal studies at the end of lower level secondary schooling (in which case they receive either a *Hauptschule* or *Realschule* diploma), but have the option to continue on within the same school. All students, whether they continue their full-time studies or not, receive a *Hauptschule* certification at the end of their 9th (and in some *Länder*, their 10th) year of full-time study.

Upper level secondary schooling. Upper level secondary schooling (*Oberstufe*) refers to the last 3 years of secondary schooling (years 10-12, or alternatively 11-13) and takes various forms. At this level of secondary education, the distinction between practical, skill-based education and liberal, theory-based education becomes even more distinct.

Structure. Liberal education is provided in the upper level of both the *Gymnasium* and the *Gesamtschule* and concludes with a university qualifying examination (*Abitur*). The *Gymnasium* is by far the most common institution for upper level secondary liberal education, accounting in 1991 for 89 percent of students pursuing liberal education at the upper secondary level (KMK 1993a).

Practical education is provided through two systems of vocational training. The first system requires full-time schooling and encompasses a heterogeneous collection of full-time vocational schools. Included in this system are the regular full-time vocational school (*Berufsfachschule*), the vocational extension school (*Berufsaufbauschule*), the technical upper level secondary school (*Fachoberschule*), the vocational *Gymnasium* (*berufliches Gymnasium*, or *Fachgymnasium*), and the technical school (*Fachschule*).

The second system of vocational training requires part-time classroom instruction at a part-time vocational school (*Berufsschule*) in combination with practical work experience. This arrangement is known as the dual system of vocational training, and entails a close collaboration between state and industry in the development of workers with specialized skills. The organizational form of the *Berufsschule* depends on the economic structure and the density of the population in the area served. In large cities, these schools specialize by trade; in the *Länder*, the schools provide five main vocational courses: industry, commerce, home economics, agriculture, and mixed courses. Lessons at the *Berufsschule* are coordinated with inhouse training provided by the firms where students work. *Berufsschule* lessons are often offered in blocks extending several weeks that alternate with periods in which students receive only inhouse training. Alternating patterns based on a shorter, weekly schedule are also common (KMK 1993a, Führ 1989).

Enrollment. Admission to particular forms of upper level secondary education depends on the kind of school-leaving certificate a student acquires at the end of lower level secondary education. Students who opt to stay in the *Gymnasium* and *Gesamtschule* continue their studies in liberal education within the same school and receive a school-leaving certificate only after completing the upper level secondary education at the end of their 12th or 13th year of schooling. Students leaving the *Realschule*, or receiving a *Realschule* certificate after having attended either *Gymnasium* or *Gesamtschule*, generally pursue some type of full-time vocational training. Students leaving the *Hauptschule* generally pursue a practical education through the dual system of vocational training.

Practical education, with its two systems of vocational training, accounts for much of the educational activity at the upper secondary level, as indicated in Table 2 (KMK, 1993a; Führ, 1989).

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Table 2—Number and percentage of students attending liberal versus vocational upper level secondary institutions

	1990	1991
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	Total number	Percent of Total	Total number	Percent of Total
General (liberal) education	557,217	20	619,528	21
(portion in <i>Gymnasium</i>)	(496,700)	(18)	(549,016)	(19)
Vocational schools				
Full-time	540,594	20	478,204	16
Part-time	1,621,165	60	1,824,269	62
Total	2,718,976	100	2,922,001	99 ^a

SOURCE: KMK, 1993a.

^a Because of rounding, detail may not add up to totals.

Students pursuing full- and part-time vocational education accounted in 1991 for 78 percent of total upper level secondary students. Part-time vocational education accounted for 79 percent of all vocational education.

At the end of upper level secondary education. Upon the successful completion of upper level secondary schooling, the student receives a school-leaving certificate. In Germany, school-leaving certifications are distinguished by the type of institution or profession to which the certification grants entry. At the end of upper level secondary education, the school-leaving certification qualifies the student either for higher education or for entry into a profession, or in some cases for both. (The vocational *Gymnasium* is a recent development in which students may acquire a dual professional and academic qualification after 4 years of upper level secondary schooling.)

Recent organizational modifications have led increasingly to a partial decoupling of the type of school attended and the student's subsequent educational career, particularly for the *Realschule* certification (KMK 1993a). For the vast majority of students, however, the type of certification received at the end of secondary schooling depends on the type of school they attend. Students leaving the upper levels of the *Gymnasium* and the *Gesamtschule* obtain certification for admission to any form of higher education, including the university. Those leaving upper level full-time trade and vocational schools receive a *Fachhochschulreife*, a certificate that declares them eligi-

ble for further education at polytechnical institutes but not at the university. Those participating in the dual system of vocational training obtain a final certification that qualifies them for entry into a profession and for admission into full-time vocational schools at the upper secondary level (the equivalent of a *Realschule* leaving certificate), but usually end their formal studies within the public system of education (Führ 1989, KMK 1993a).

Alternative Paths to Higher Education

In the 1950s and 1960s, an alternative path for gaining admission to higher education was developed to counter the social selection entailed in the *Gymnasium*. These include evening classes at the level of *Realschule* and *Gymnasium*, full-time enrollment in *Kollegs*, daytime schools, and a variety of forms of admission to polytechnics and universities by way of vocational training (Führ 1989).

Higher Education

Germany has a long tradition of higher education, and several German universities are among the oldest in Europe. Since 1948, the domain of higher education in Germany has undergone a dramatic expansion and transformation. As of 1991, there were 315 state-run or state-recognized institutions of higher, postsecondary education. They included various types of universities (regular universities; technical high schools and technical universities; combined universities and high schools; high schools with singular university courses of study, including theology, philosophy, medicine, and athletics; and teaching high schools), as well as academies of art and music, and technical and administrative high schools (Führ 1989).

Admission to these schools is open to any student possessing the requisite certificate. In some academic disciplines, admission is regulated centrally by the Central Office for the Distribution of Places of Study (*Zentralstelle für die Vergabe von Studienplätzen*). In addition, higher education in Germany includes some special institutions with closed admissions, including institutions of higher education (*Hochschulen*) run by the military and by the German postal service.

Continuing Education

The domain of continuing education is a complex combination of public and private profit and nonprofit organizations which has developed largely independent of governmental involvement. Organized in response to market forces, it encompasses general, professional, and social-political education.

Alternative Forms of Schooling

Although the general system of public education accounts for the bulk of educational activity in Germany, both private education and the public system of special education play important roles.

Private Education

There is no public monopoly on schooling in Germany; consequently, private schools are a notable presence not only in preschool and continuing education but at the elementary and secondary levels. Although private, these schools are subject to governmental oversight and must maintain standards equivalent to those of the state schools. State-recognized private schools award the same qualifications as their public counterparts and are generally not considered elite schools, either in terms of their educational support or of the students who attend them. Most private schools are church maintained, with Catholic schools accounting for more than half of all private schooling, although Waldorf schools (*Freie Waldorfschulen*) and private boarding schools (*Landeserziehungsheime*) have developed sizable constituencies (Führ 1989).

Special Education

Germany maintains an extensive system of special education for students with physical, mental, and emotional handicaps. This system seeks to provide children with disabilities with the education necessary for integration into broader society. Schools specializing by type of handicap (for example, learning disabilities, blindness, deafness, partial blindness, emotional disturbance, and mental retardation) provide expert care. Increasingly, integration has been viewed not only as a goal but as a means of bringing special education within the domain of the general public schools by teaching children with disabilities alongside other children. Special schools still play an im-

portant role, but they have been augmented by alternatives, including preventative education measures that seek to avoid the development of problems in the first place, special classes within the regular schools, and cooperative activities between special and regular schools (Führ 1989).

Teacher Preparation in Germany

Each workday, hundreds of thousands of teachers walk, bike, or drive to schools across Germany (Schulz 1990). With teaching a popular profession in Germany, a large number of incoming university students begin a course of study in education each year. In 1980, for example, more than 20 percent of all incoming students at German universities began a *Lehramtstudium* (teacher-training program). A decade later, in the face of declining enrollment in the schools and high unemployment for teachers, almost 16 percent of incoming university students were studying to become teachers (Sekretariat der Ständigen Konferenz der Kultusminister der *Länder* in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland [KMK] 1993a). In 1991, almost 41,500 students entered teacher training programs at German universities out of a total of 254,193 new university students (KMK 1993a).

Teacher-Training Programs

Students who choose to become teachers need to have the *Abitur*, the qualification for university admission (the comprehensive exit examination at the end of the 12th or 13th grade). **There are no entrance examinations or particular requirements to pass in order to enroll in a teacher-training program at a German university.** Students apply at the university of their choice. However, due to high enrollment, some states have attempted to limit the number of students entering teacher-training programs at universities. For example, in Nordrhein-Westfalen, prospective students must apply to a central agency (Zentralstelle für die Vergabe von Studienplätzen, ZVS) which handles university admission and sends students to a particular university. In Baden-Württemberg, due to *numerus clausus* restrictions, only students with above-average grades can count on admission to teacher-training programs.

Teacher training in Germany is the responsibility of the individual states (*Länder*), operating under guidelines set by the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (KMK). The KMK coordinates the work of the ministries of education in each of the 16 states. In each state, however, teacher training consists of two phases: university study and student teaching.

Phase 1: University Study (Lehramtstudium)

At the university, students pursue academic studies in their major subjects—the subjects they will teach—and in educational and social sciences. Students also receive training in didactics specific to their major subject areas and have the opportunity to apply their theoretical knowledge during several practica. **The duration of university training depends on the level of school at which the student wants to teach, such as elementary or secondary – a very strange item, which has got nothing to do with his abilities for teaching.** University studies for elementary and middle schools require at least 3.5 years, while studies for *Gymnasium* or vocational schools require at least 4.5 years. University training is completed with a comprehensive exit examination called the First State Examination (*Erstes Staatsexamen*). Passing the First State Examination is synonymous with attaining a university degree and is the prerequisite for entrance into the second phase of teacher training, directed student teaching.

Phase 2: Student Teaching

The second phase of teacher training, directed student teaching (known as either *Vorbereitungsdienst* or *Referendarzeit*), lasts for 1, 5 - 2 years, during which the student teaches in a school under the supervision of a mentor and participates in accompanying seminars on issues related to teaching. Upon completion of student teaching, the student takes the Second State Examination (*Zweites Staatsexamen*) (Führ 1989).

Directed Student Teaching (*Referendarzeit*)

The Process

A student who passes the First State Examination at a university may apply at the office of the local educational district (*Regierungspräsidium*) to begin directed student teaching. If there is a vacancy for a student teacher in the desired city, the applicant will be notified shortly before directed student teaching begins. If there are no vacancies, the applicant will be sent to his or her second or third choice. In some cases, students have to wait a year because there are not enough student-teaching positions available. This is especially true for students wishing to teach *Sekundarstufe II* (*Gymnasium*).

Usually, students complete their directed student teaching in the same state in which they passed their First State Examination. A student who wishes to move to a different state for directed student teaching may encounter difficulties and may have to provide reasons for the move.

The number of students who passed the Second State Examination fell during the 1980s. From 39,329 in 1980, the number of newly trained teachers dropped to 9,874 in 1991. The declining number of student teachers completing the Second State Examination probably reflects the poor employment outlook for teachers during most of the 1980s. However, this trend may be turning around due to predictions of improved prospects for teachers, especially in elementary schools, during the mid-1990s. In 1992, for example, 11,370 newly trained teachers were employed, a 15 percent increase over the previous year (KMK 1993a).

While university teacher education programs vary greatly from state to state, directed student teaching is similar in every state. Students are required to student-teach for 24 months, during which they earn around 1.000€ a month, depending on the school level, their age, and their marital status. Training takes place both in seminars (*Studienseminare/schulpraktisches Seminar*) and in schools. Appropriately trained instructors (*Fachleiter*) with teaching experience lead the seminars. They teach and discuss pedagogical, methodological, and subject-related aspects pertinent to the particular school level, such as assessment procedures and standards. Various issues, such as school regulations and legal procedures, are also part of the seminar curriculum. In addition, seminar instructors observe student teachers in the classroom, and later

discuss and evaluate the students' teaching performance. During student teaching, mentors help student teachers with teaching-related questions and allow student teachers to observe and teach their classes. The 2-year, hands-on student teaching experience consists of four parts (Kultusministerium Hessen 1990):

- Introductory phase of 3 months' duration (total 10 hours per week): observation or assisted teaching;
- Differentiation phase of 6 months' duration (total 12 hours per week): includes observation and 4-8 hours a week of teaching with or without assistance;
- Intensive phase of 12 months' duration (12-14 hours per week), including 4 hours a week of observation and/or assisted teaching, and 8-10 hours a week of teaching without assistance; and
- Preparation for the Second State Examination, lasting 3 months (10 hours per week): includes observation, assisted teaching, and teaching without assistance.

Second State Examination (*Zweites Staatsexamen*)

Student teachers complete the second and final stage of their training with the Second State Examination. The examination committee consists of six members and is chaired by a representative or "school inspector" from the state education ministry (known as the *Oberschulrat* or *Schulrat*). Other members of the examination committee include the head of the seminar, the two subject mentors, the head teacher of the school involved, and one teacher whom the student chooses. The examination committee's final evaluation is based on the following four items (Kultusministerium Hessen 1990):

- *Pre-examination grade.* The head of the seminar, the subject experts of the seminar, the head teacher, and the mentors of the participating school write reports on the student teacher's general performance.
- *Thesis grade.* The student teacher writes a thesis on lessons and units he or she has taught. Subject experts advise students on the choice of a topic and related issues; the topic is chosen 3 months before the thesis is due. The thesis is evaluated by two subject experts, chosen by the head of the seminar, each of whom writes an evaluation of the student teacher's written work and assigns the student a grade. If the evaluators disagree over the grade, the representative from the education ministry meets with the subject experts and decides which grade is appropriate.
- *Oral examination grade.* Students must answer questions on pedagogical, methodological, and subject-related issues, as well as questions about school laws and school organization. The oral examination takes 60 minutes.
- *Grades for lesson plans and observed lessons in two subjects.* Prior to the day of observation and evaluation of the student's teaching performance, the stu-

dent teacher distributes copies of lesson plans or units that he or she will teach to examination committee members. After observing the student teaching, the committee meets with the student to discuss his or her performance.

Evaluations of Teacher Training

Several surveys regarding the quality of university teacher education programs have found that students criticize the lack of balance between theory and practice in their studies. Many students preparing to teach in the *Grundschule* and *Hauptschule* stressed that they would prefer fewer courses in their major subjects and more practice-oriented courses in educational and instructional psychology. In addition, student teachers pointed out that they need more effective hands-on practice than their current practica offer and that University supervisors and mentors need to work together to provide the student teachers with more guidance during the practical experience. In contrast, students preparing to teach in the *Gymnasium* are satisfied in general with the quality and quantity of their subject matter. However, these teachers felt the required studies in education were of no value (Klinzing 1990). Students also complained about crowded seminars and lectures, the lack of relevant courses, and the poor organization of courses in general education (Steltmann 1980).

Concerning the second stage of teacher training, a number of student teachers complained that they received little assistance with lesson preparation, presentation, and assessment of students at school. Since student teachers received little feedback from supervisors and mentors concerning their lessons, they often felt anxious, stressed, and overworked during their directed student teaching; they also felt ill-prepared to deal with learning and behavioral problems (Klinzing 1990). Some student teachers remarked in a 1985 report that mentors did not provide them with opportunities for assessment of student achievements; other student teachers said they had excellent experience in one of their two subjects but none at all in the other subject (Department of Education and Science [DES] 1986). Consequently, lack of experience and inadequate preparation resulted in a "practice shock" for many student teachers.

Studies also indicate student teachers' attitudes toward teaching changes during the second stage of teacher training. Whereas students appear to be idealistic and open to new ideas about teaching during the first stage of their training, they seem to develop more conforming and less innovative attitudes toward teaching during their stu-

dent- teaching experience. Pressure to conform from mentors and other teachers at school has a great impact on the shift from progressive to traditional teaching attitudes and approaches.

A survey conducted among graduates of the teacher-training college in Berlin (before it was integrated into the University of Berlin) in 1980 revealed that new teachers felt that their training was too theoretical (Oesterreich 1987). The results from survey responses from 115 new teachers (out of 167 asked) are summarized in table 17.

Table 17—Suggestions for improving the work experience of beginning teachers from a survey of graduates of the Berlin Teachers' College: 1980

Suggestions for improving the work experience of beginning teachers	Frequency of suggestion	Percentage of respondents giving suggestion
More practical emphasis during studies	61	53.0
Reduction of pressure for success during second phase of training	39	33.9
More self-responsibility for teaching during second phase of training	35	30.4
More cooperation and support	35	30.4
More support from mentors and experienced colleagues	30	26.1
Better organization of seminars	21	18.3
Improvement of teaching conditions at schools	16	13.9
Improvement of job contracts	9	7.8
Nonclassifiable suggestions	20	17.4
Total number of suggestions	266	--
Total number of respondents	115	--

SOURCE: Adapted from Oesterreich 1987.

Reform Efforts Past and Present

In the 1970s, participants in an educational reform movement attempted to introduce a one-phase teacher-training program integrating university studies and directed student teaching. In 1974, such a training program was established as a model at the University of Oldenburg. However, within 5 years, political and economic forces, such as the lack of personnel and material resources, brought about the demise of the one-phase teacher-training model. According to Schwänke (1988), the one-phase training program failed largely because of conflicting political interests in the program. In another effort to bridge the gap between theory and practice, some have favored the reintroduction of teacher-training colleges, since the emphasis at the universities is on academic studies rather than practical training (Stallmann 1990). Others, such as Terhart (1992), still support teacher training at universities but recommend that the university system be improved to provide stronger background knowledge in the major subjects and training in didactic techniques. At present, the didactic courses offered by various university departments play a rather minor role in teacher training: reform efforts would strengthen and emphasize these didactic courses (Terhart 1993).

Reformers also advocate increased exposure to classroom practice for student teachers. Once students finish their training and take their first teaching position, they are on their own. Education theorists propose giving student teachers exposure to real-life school situations via case studies or video excerpts at all stages of teacher training. In this way, it is believed that they could gain a vision of reality and be able to build a repertoire of strategies for dealing with problematic situations (Terhart 1992). Education theorists believe that working with case studies not only helps make future teachers aware of ethical issues surrounding teachers' behavior and decisions but heightens their awareness of the professional teaching ethic (Terhart 1994).

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Recent Changes in Teacher-Training Programs

Prior to the 1970s, elementary (*Grundschule*) and middle school (*Hauptschule* and *Realschule*) teachers were not trained at universities but rather at teacher-training colleges (*pädagogische Hochschule*). *Gymnasium* teachers, however, received in-depth training in their subject areas at universities. But during the 1970s and 1980s, most states integrated teacher training at all levels into university programs. It was believed that the universities would provide elementary and middle school teachers with a more academic foundation in their major subjects. **Critics have questioned whether students receive an appropriate preparation for a teaching career at the large, crowded universities** (Führ 1989).

German universities have historically focused on research and university teaching (*Forschung und Lehre*) rather than on training for the professions. Thus, professional teacher education programs are often fragmented throughout various university departments, requiring students to take courses in many departments. For example, a student who wishes to become a German and English teacher must take classes not only in German and English but in psychology, sociology, and pedagogy. In 1990, the KMK agreed on the minimum requirements for the number of courses in major subjects as well as in education and social studies for completion of teacher training (KMK 1992).

State education ministries formally stipulate course requirements and examination regulations for each school type or level of teaching, such as elementary, lower level secondary, and upper level secondary (*Primarstufe*, *Sekundarstufe I*, and *Sekundarstufe II*, respectively). Still, students enjoy considerable freedom in choosing particular courses in each of the disciplines required by the education ministry. However, in the current crowded university system, students often lack **assistance and guidance in choosing relevant courses that will prepare them for a teaching career**.

All states require a component of practical experience and classroom observation as part of university teacher-training programs. (The only exception was the state of Baden-Württemberg, which only two years ago for the first time installed a practical component in the training program for *Gymnasium* teachers.) However, the exact requirements for practical experience vary from state to state. These interstate differences in teacher education programs and certification requirements may pose diffi-

culties for teachers or university students in education who wish to move to a different state.

Training for School Level Versus School Type

The type of teacher-training programs and requirements for teacher certification in a state are influenced by the state's political history and climate. States long controlled by the conservative Christian Democrats (CDU/CSU)—Baden-Württemberg, Bayern, Niedersachsen, Rheinland-Pfalz, Saarland, and Schleswig-Holstein—have maintained the tradition of training teachers for a specific type of school, such as *Grundschule*, *Hauptschule*, *Realschule*, or *Gymnasium*; whereas, states controlled by the liberal Social Democrats (SPD)—Bremen, Hamburg, Nordrhein-Westfalen, and, to some extent Berlin—have a system of training teachers for a specific level of school, such as *Primarstufe*, *Sekundarstufe I*, or *Sekundarstufe II*. In the SPD-controlled states, the teacher-training system was meant to serve as a forerunner to a reform of the entire school system. Training teachers for level rather than type of school facilitated introduction of a comprehensive secondary school, the *Gesamtschule*. Although the *Gesamtschule* proved unpopular, the new system of teacher training remains in effect in many states.

In states where teacher education programs are based on school type, new teachers are trained specifically to teach either in an elementary school (*Grundschule*), lower secondary school (*Hauptschule* or *Realschule*), or *Gymnasium*. In the state of Baden-Württemberg we have a broader range: trainees here are trained for elementary schools and secondary schools, but not for *Realschule* or *Gymnasium*. In contrast, in those states where teacher education is based on school level rather than type, teachers are trained for either the elementary school level (*Primarstufe*) encompassing grades 1-4, lower secondary school level (*Sekundarstufe I*) encompassing grades 5-10, or upper secondary level (*Sekundarstufe II*) encompassing grades 11-13. (In Berlin, the elementary level includes grades 5 and 6.)

Teacher training based on school level increases the flexibility of new teachers. For example, a teacher trained at the *Sekundarstufe I* level is prepared to teach subjects in grades 5-10 at a *Hauptschule*, *Realschule*, *Gesamtschule*, or *Gymnasium*. Most important, training teachers for school level instead of school type fosters closer cooperation and professionalism among teachers for all types of schools and levels.

This is achieved by strengthening the subject knowledge of elementary teachers and the practical knowledge of *Gymnasium* teachers. At least for the younger generation of teachers, the introduction of training for school level contributed to the dismantling of differences between teachers at different types of schools (Stallmann 1990). While the teaching profession as a whole has become more flexible as a result of the new training and certification system based on school level, the flexibility is particularly apparent for teachers at *Hauptschule* and *Realschule*, who now enjoy increased job options for teaching grades 5-10 at all types of schools.

In the end, teachers are classified according to several categories (KMK 1992). (Exceptions to the classification system exist in Hamburg, Berlin, and Bremen. In these cities, it is possible to become certified to teach grades 1-10. The training for this type of certification also differs from that described later.) The categories are as follows:

- Type 1: Teachers trained for elementary schools (*Grundschule*) or the primary level (grades 1-4);
- Type 2: Teachers trained for all schools (*Hauptschule*, *Realschule*, and *Gymnasium*) at the lower secondary level (grades 5-10);
- Type 3: Teachers trained for specific academic subjects at the upper secondary level in *Gymnasien* and *Gesamtschulen* (grades 11-13);
- Type 4: Teachers trained for specific vocational subjects at the upper level in vocational schools (*Berufsschulen*, grades 11-13); and
- Type 5: Teachers trained for special education at all levels in special education schools (*Sonderschulen*).

As table 16 shows, the largest percentage of students entering teacher-training programs in the former West Germany in 1991 studied at the *Sekundarstufe II* level in order to become certified as *Gymnasium* teachers (Type 3). The smallest percentage earned certification as *Berufsschule* (Type 4) teachers or became teachers at private schools such as Waldorf schools (KMK 1993a).

Table 16—Students entering teacher-training programs in the former West German States, by certification level and school type: 1991

Certification level	School type	Percentage
<i>Sekundarstufe II</i>	<i>Gymnasium</i>	43.5

<i>Primarstufe/Sekundarstufe I</i>	<i>Grundschule/Hauptschule</i>	30.7
<i>Sekundarstufe I</i>	<i>Realschule</i>	11.7
	<i>Sonderschule</i>	5.7
<i>Sekundarstufe II</i>	<i>Berufsschule</i>	7.9
Private	Private schools	0.5

SOURCE: Adapted from KMK 1993a.

Motivation for Choosing the Teaching Profession

What motivates individuals to become teachers? Surveys have indicated that the teaching profession is chosen for a variety of reasons, such as a desire to work with children, an academic interest in their major subjects, or the attraction of job security as a civil servant (Schwänke 1988). Overall, students were more attracted to teaching by intrinsic factors such as the nature of the work than by extrinsic factors such as salary or social status.

Although students still enroll in teacher-training programs despite high unemployment, teaching is often their second choice. A comparison of students' preferred field of study immediately after passing the *Abitur* with their actual enrollment in university programs indicated that, for many students, the teacher-training program was a second choice (Schwänke 1988). Students may have opted for their second choice if their first choice was one of the highly desirable and lucrative study programs—such as medicine, law, business, and many natural sciences—that have severe entrance restrictions (*numerus clausus*). If they were not accepted into restricted fields, they may have chosen teaching as a feasible alternative.

In other cases, indecisiveness about a career path may have led some students to teaching. For example, one survey revealed that more than half of the students who could not decide on a career path when they were about to finish the *Abitur* decided to enroll in a teacher-training program. One writer estimates that as many as one-

third of all students who are enrolled in teacher training programs chose this path because they were not accepted into a restricted field or could not decide on a career path (Schwänke 1988).

Overview of Phase I: University Study

Elementary Teachers

Elementary teachers (*Grundschullehrer*) attend a university for at least 3 years (six semesters) and complete their studies for the First State Examination during an additional year. Students pursue a course of study in general education and choose at least one subject in which to concentrate. As part of the general education requirement, students preparing to be elementary school teachers take courses in the philosophy and history of education, teaching methodology, didactics, educational psychology, and a basic course in either philosophy, sociology, or political science. However, in some states, students at the elementary school level, along with students who will teach at other levels, take the same number of classes in education and related social sciences.

In addition to the general education requirements, some states stipulate other subjects in which elementary teachers must concentrate. For example, in Nordrhein-Westfalen, elementary school teachers must concentrate in mathematics and German in addition to their primary subject. To avoid the mathematics requirement for elementary school teacher certification, some students switch to the secondary school teaching level.

The majority of students who study to become elementary teachers are female. During the summer semester of 1994 at the University of Frankfurt, for example, of 325 beginning elementary education students enrolled, 12 were male (Traxler 1994). The small percentage of male students compared to female students may be due to the relatively low prestige elementary school teachers have when compared to other teachers. Elementary school teachers receive lower compensation and carry a heavier teaching load than teachers at other levels.

Lower Secondary School Teachers

Lower secondary school teachers (*Realschullehrer* and *Hauptschullehrer*) pursue a course of study similar to that of elementary school teachers for 3 or 4 years (6 to 8 semesters). The length of study depends on the requirements of the individual state. In contrast to elementary teachers, however, middle school teachers choose two specific subjects in which to concentrate from the outset.

***Gymnasium* Teachers**

Gymnasium teachers study for a minimum of eight semesters at a university and must concentrate in two major subjects in addition to general education. In contrast to other teaching levels, the emphasis for *Gymnasium* teachers is on the academic content of their subject areas and not on pedagogical theory.

***Comprehensive School (Gesamtschule)* Teachers**

Students wishing to become teachers at a *Gesamtschule* do not enroll in a particular training program for this type of school. Rather, they are trained according to the grade level they plan to teach. A typical *Gesamtschule* employs roughly 40 percent *Hauptschule* teachers, 30 percent *Realschule* teachers, 27 percent *Gymnasium* teachers, and 3 percent miscellaneous educators, such as vocational teachers, special education teachers, or school psychologists (Schulz 1990).

Vocational School Teachers

Teachers at vocational schools (*Berufsschullehrer*) study for 8 to 10 semesters. The length and form of teacher training, the major subject combinations offered, and the required practical component at vocational schools all vary from state to state. For example, in Hamburg a student cannot combine a major subject, such as nutrition and home economics, with a second subject, such as geography. The KMK has approved a general outline of studies and examinations for each of the following subject areas: agricultural science, biotechnology, chemical technology, construction, economics, electronics, graphic arts, metalworking, nutrition and home economics, public administration, social science, and textile science.

All states require that vocational school teachers complete an internship with a firm for 12 months or have previously completed a type of vocational training (*Berufsaus-*

bildung). In addition to their main subject area, students must take classes in pedagogy and are required to study one interdisciplinary subject, such as biology, chemistry, German, English, religion or mathematics. Normally, students complete their studies with the First State Examination. However, in some cases it is possible to earn a diploma (*Diplom*), roughly equal to a master's degree in a single subject, instead of taking the state examination; this degree opens up additional possibilities for employment in industry (*Bund-Länder-Kommission für Bildungsplanung und Forschungsförderung und Bundesanstalt für Arbeit [BLK] 1993*).

Because many qualified students are attracted to more lucrative careers in industry, a low number of students are currently enrolled in vocational-teaching programs. Consequently, there is a deficit of vocational teachers in some subject areas. To satisfy this demand, qualified people from industry have been recruited and immediately accepted into the second phase of teacher training (Graf and Ronecker 1991).

Special Education Teachers

Teachers for special education (*Sonderschullehrer/Förderschullehrer*) study for 4 to 5 years (8 to 9 semesters). Students take courses in pedagogy, including courses in psychology, special education, and rehabilitation therapy. In addition, students choose two special education areas from among the following: learning difficulties, mental disabilities, behavioral disturbances, and speech difficulties. Depending on the requirements of the individual state, students study one or two general subjects—such as German, mathematics, or biology—in addition to their special education subjects. Teachers who are already trained for elementary and middle schools also have the opportunity to study special education for 2 more years (4 semesters) and gain certification as a special education teacher. Teachers who choose this route are not required to complete student teaching again (BLK 1993).

First State Examination (Erstes Staatsexamen)

All teachers, regardless of school type or level, finish their academic preparation for the teaching profession by passing the First State Examination. Passing the First State Examination confers the right to continue to the second stage of teacher training, practically oriented directed student teaching, which leads to the Second State Examination. The number of students passing the First State Examination has fallen

since the beginning of the 1980s. For example, in 1980 alone, 32,342 students completed the First State Examination, compared with 10,269 in 1991 (KMK 1993a). This drop in the number of students who passed the first part of teacher training reflects, in part, the overall reduction in the number of jobs for new teachers throughout the 1980s.

The ministry of education in each state (*Kultusministerium*) is responsible for setting the basic requirements for teacher training and certification for students in that state. While the ministry of education develops the content of the First State Examination, the state examination board (*Staatliches Prüfungsamt*) is responsible for administering the examination. As a rule, the content of the First State Examination is as follows (KMK 1992):

- a written thesis (*Staatsarbeit*) in one of the student's two major subjects of study or in general education (*Erziehungswissenschaft*) (4 to 6 months in duration);
- written and oral examinations in all of the student's major subjects of study, including pedagogy or general education;
- oral examinations in some subjects; and
- a practical examination, which consists of a performance for students concentrating in art, music, physical education, or other technical fields.

Female Teachers in Germany

The teaching profession in Germany was traditionally dominated by men. Beginning in the 19th century, when the introduction of compulsory education increased the demand for teachers, women were recruited to fill the additional positions. However, the number of women teachers remained low until the 1960s. Since then, the percentage of teachers who are women has risen steadily so that now more than half of all teachers are women (table 18).

Table 18—Number of teachers employed in Federal Republic of Germany, number and percent of women teachers, 1960-87i

Year	Total number of teachers (thousands)	Number of women teachers (thousands)	Percentage of women teachers
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1960	210.1	80.4	38.3
1965	243.1	108.1	44.5
1970	313.4	162.4	51.8
1975	425.9	237.9	55.9
1980	498.0	275.4	55.3
1985	497.6	272.0	54.7
1987	492.6	271.3	55.1

SOURCE: Adapted from Schulz 1990.

The Teacher as Civil Servant

Depending on the length of the teacher-training program and the time individual students take to finish, some teachers may be 26 to 30 years old when they apply for their first teaching position. New teachers are appointed to a probationary position (usually lasting 3 years) during which they are observed in class on several occasions. At the end of the probationary period, teachers are eligible to become civil servants (*Beamte*). The majority of teachers are civil servants with tenure. In the state of Nordrhein-Westfalen, for example, out of a total of 141,027 teachers, 129,750 (92 percent) are civil servants with tenure and 11,277 (8 percent) are nontenured employees (Schulz 1990).

As civil servants, teachers have to comply with the regulations for professional and ethical conduct developed for all civil servants. For example, civil servants must maintain impartiality, unselfishness, confidentiality, commitment to community support, and allegiance to the constitution. **There is no special code of behavior written specifically for teachers.**

Workload and Extracurricular Activities

The number of lessons taught per week varies from state to state and depends on school level. In general, teachers instruct from 23 to 28 lessons per week, each lesson lasting 45 minutes. In Berlin, for example, teachers have the following teaching obligation:

- 26.5 periods—*Grundschulen*;

- 25.5 periods—*Hauptschulen* and *Realschulen*;
- 24.5-periods—*Sonderschulen*; and
- 23 periods—*Gymnasien*, *Gesamtschulen*, and *Berufsschulen*.

Heads of schools (*Rektoren*) teach 4 to 11 periods a week depending on school type and size (Bergman & Ziemer 1993).

The teachers' workload also includes time spent outside the classroom. Teachers typically spend several hours each afternoon preparing lessons and correcting and grading students' work. Field trips and school excursions also require teacher's time, as do school committees (*Konferenzen*) and parent-teacher meetings (*Klassenelternversammlung*). A study conducted in Hessen in 1972-73 indicated that teachers spent 50 percent of their work time teaching, 37.5 percent in class preparation and grading assignments, and 12.5 percent in miscellaneous activities such as attending committee meetings, writing report cards, and talking with parents and students (Schwänke 1988).

Teachers who supervise students' extracurricular activities, such as a theater group or the school newspaper, are relieved of some of their normal teaching periods in exchange for their time. However, this extra time off for school-related activities has been harshly criticized in *Der Spiegel* because the teacher's absence may result in canceled classes ("Projekte am Teich" 1990). German schools do not employ substitute teachers. When a teacher is absent, his or her classes are taught by other teachers in the school if they are available during those hours.

The Teacher's Workday

A teacher's workday typically begins between 7:30 and 8 a.m. and concludes for most teachers around 1 p.m. *Gymnasium* teachers at the upper level (11th through 13th grades) may return to school after a lunch break at home or remain at school during the afternoon in order to teach art or physical education. In some states, teachers at all levels also teach on Saturdays until 11:25 a.m., except on the first Saturday of each month, when there are no classes.

German teachers do not follow the same schedule each day, and they usually change grade levels from year to year. For example, a teacher who teaches French on Monday first and third hour has a different schedule on Tuesday; a *Gymnasium* teacher, who teaches upper level students (11th through 13th grades) this year might

instruct fifth- and sixth-graders the next year, or might have a mix of upper and lower level classes.

At the beginning of every school year, each teacher is assigned a homeroom. A homeroom teacher not only teaches a particular subject but also handles the paperwork and various issues raised by students and parents in that class. Homeroom duties also include:

- Writing grade reports twice a year for students in his or her homeroom class;
- Arranging time at the beginning of the school year and after to meet parents and to elect parent representatives for the homeroom class;
- Meeting with parents as necessary to discuss issues such as classroom dynamics, or special topics such as sex education or class excursions;
- Supervising the students' election of a student representative; and
- Keeping a "homeroom classbook" in which are recorded lesson objectives and comments concerning students who behave disruptively.

Each school day has two breaks lasting 20 and 15 minutes, respectively, during which all teachers meet in the teachers' room to socialize and share experiences. Teachers also use the common teachers' room to prepare lessons or correct tests. Although teachers do not have their own desks in the teachers' room, every teacher does have a small cabinet in which to store books and other teaching materials. The teachers' room also has special books and magazines dealing with lesson plans and teaching techniques. Many magazines specialize in particular subject areas and practical techniques for teaching a subject in the classroom. In addition, teachers of particular subjects often use the teachers' room to discuss their subject matter.

The general public tends to believe that teachers have an easy life. Because teachers may be finished teaching at lunchtime, many people believe that teachers work part-time. Also, many are envious of teachers' vacations, which total 12 weeks: 6 weeks of summer vacation, 3 weeks at Easter, 2 weeks at Christmas, and 1 week in the fall (Stallmann 1990). Additional holidays vary from state to state. Teachers are not permitted to hold a second job either during school or vacation time unless the job is related to teaching, such as teaching an evening class. If teachers do hold such a job, they first must receive special permission from the regional school office, or *Schulamt* (McAdams 1993). Although teachers have the right to join a union, they are not allowed to strike because of their status as civil servants (*öffentlich-rechtliches Treueverhältnis des Beamten*).

Inservice Training for Teachers

Long periods of vacation are also used as time for teacher inservice training, which some states require. Accordingly, numerous state institutions and academies offer teacher inservice courses. On the local and regional level, unions, universities, and miscellaneous private organizations offer additional courses. More than 450 institutions offer inservice courses (Schulz 1990).

Although many inservice courses currently deal with computer technology, environmental education, and issues concerning foreign students in the classroom, schools may organize their own inservice training programs to address other issues of great concern. To this end, schools invite experts to discuss how to tackle particular problems at school (Schulz 1990).

Teacher Assessment, Promotion, and Compensation

Teachers are evaluated every 4 to 6 years until they reach age 55. The assessment arrangements vary according to the type of school and the individual state. In *Grundschule* and *Hauptschule* (and *Realschule* in Nordrhein-Westfalen), an inspector evaluates teachers. On an agreed-upon date, the inspector evaluates lesson plans, observes lessons, and examines the teacher's assessment of students' work. After discussing the observed lessons with the teacher, the inspector writes a detailed report and gives the teacher a grade. The report includes an evaluation of the teacher's subject knowledge, teaching performance, professional behavior, and overall contribution to school and community. The observed teacher has the opportunity to comment on the inspector's evaluation and must sign the report to show that he or she has seen it.

Teachers in *Gymnasium* (and *Realschule* in Bavaria) are usually evaluated by the principal (Rektor), although often with the involvement of the subject specialist inspector for the area or region. Each of the regions of Bavaria has a head *Ministerialbeauftragter* who checks the reports written by the *Gymnasium* school heads about his or her staff. The periodic assessment of teachers' performance provides the state with a dossier that will be used in considering teachers for promotion and higher salaries (DES 1986). Opportunities for promotion are especially extensive for *Gymnasium* teachers.

Promotion is highly desired because it brings a salary increase, which is substantial when moving to a higher position such as that of director of a department or principal. Teachers who are civil servants enjoy good fringe benefits, such as supplemental salary for spouse and children, a pension, health care, the possibility for sabbatical, and personal leave of several years' duration. Pay is determined by a national pay scale for civil servants (*Bundesbesoldungsgesetz*), which takes the amount of schooling into account. Teachers are paid at the salary levels A12 to A16. At the lower end of the scale, elementary and *Hauptschule* teachers are paid at the A 12 level (in Hamburg and Bremen A13). *Realschule*, *Gymnasium*, and vocational school teachers start at the A 13 level and may advance to a higher level by receiving promotions (Stallmann 1990).

Table 19 shows the pay range for teachers in 1994-95 according to federal policy (Statistisches Bundesamt 1995).

Table 19—Pay range for teachers according to Federal pay scales, 1994-95 in U.S. dollars

Pay level	Minimum pay		Highest	
	Single	Married	Single	Married
A-12	\$36,290	\$39,172	\$53,103	\$55,986
A-13	\$40,834	\$43,717	\$58,986	\$61,876
A-14	\$40,683	\$44,379	\$64,228	\$67,117
A-15	\$44,745	\$47,628	\$72,621	\$75,503
A-16	\$48,745	\$51,628	\$80,986	\$83,869

SOURCE: Statistisches Bundesamt 1995

NOTE: The pay rates above do not include supplements for dependents. Employees at the same pay levels in states of the former East Germany re-

ceived 84 percent of these salaries in 1995. Exchange rate used: \$1 = 1.45 DM.

The pay level that applies to each teacher is determined by the level of the school and the position the teacher holds. Level A-12 is for *Grundschule* and *Hauptschule* teachers; level A-13 is for *Realschule*, *Gymnasium*, special school, and vocational school teachers, as well as *Grundschule* and *Hauptschule* teachers with graded positions. Levels A-14 through A-16 are for graded positions at all schools; *Gymnasium* and vocational school teachers are at an advantage, as they can receive standard promotion to level A-14, and can be graded up to level A-16 for higher administrative positions, one level higher than the highest positions at *Realschulen* and special schools. *Grundschule* and *Hauptschule* teachers can only be graded up to level A-14.

When teachers reach age 65, they are eligible for retirement – by now. There are attempts to raise the ending age, due to financial restrictions. The size of the pension depends on the number of years worked. For example, a teacher with 35 years of teaching experience receives about 75 percent of his or her most recent compensation (Schulz 1990). Recently, however, many teachers have chosen to take early retirement because they feel frustrated and burnt out ("Horror Job Lehrer" 1993).

Teacher Employment and Unemployment

Primarily, the grade earned on the Second State Examination and the demand for a particular subject combination determine an individual's chance of finding a position as a teacher. Teachers are hired by states and work as civil servants; therefore, the demand for new teachers is strongly influenced by trends in school enrollment. When school enrollments drop sharply, as they did throughout the 1980s, there is an oversupply of teachers, and significant unemployment results. For example, in 1980, the German labor office reported that there were 7,390 fully trained teachers who were unemployed. This figure rose sharply, to a high of 25,012 in 1985, and then began to decline (as enrollments rose, especially at elementary schools), finally reaching a level of 13,200 in 1992 (KMK 1993a, 1993b).

Teacher unemployment is a problem mainly for beginning teachers. Although school enrollments strongly affect teacher employment, social and political factors operating together also influence the employment factor. For example, working conditions, such

as class size and number of hours in the school day, along with salaries and retirement policies, may affect teacher unemployment. However, in practice these conditions are set in large part by the political and economic climate (Stallmann 1990). Other less tangible factors also play a role in teacher unemployment. Specifically, the reduction in teacher unemployment between 1985 and 1992 was accomplished, according to the KMK, partly through the high degree of willingness of unemployed teachers to retrain for other professions. This fact, combined with the increase in the number of positions for new teachers, especially at elementary schools, is responsible for the reduction in teacher unemployment between 1985 and 1992 from 4.1 percent to 2.7 percent (KMK 1993a).

Summary

Even in the face of high unemployment, many students choose to become teachers in Germany. Primarily, students choose this career path because they wish to work with children and teach subjects of interest. **However, some students enroll in a teacher-training program because they were not accepted into a different field of study or because they could not make a career decision.**

Students wishing to pursue a teaching career must commit themselves to a long period of training. Training programs for elementary and middle school teachers last at least 6 years, while programs for *Gymnasium* or vocational school teachers last at least 7 years.

Teacher-training programs consist of two phases: academic training at a university and directed student teaching in a school, accompanied by seminars. Despite the years of training, many student teachers complain that they do not feel adequately prepared for their future career. Students often criticize the discrepancy between theory and practice in their training. Reform efforts to integrate university studies with directed student teaching in a one-phase teacher-training program have failed.

Once students finish their long training and enter their first teaching position, they are largely on their own. There is no master teacher assigned to assist the beginning teacher during the first roller-coaster year. After a probationary period normally lasting 3 years, teachers are eligible to become civil servants with tenure. Thus, the majority of teachers in Germany are civil servants. As such, teachers are obliged to

comply with regulations for professional and ethical conduct that have been developed for all civil servants.

Normally, teachers teach 23 to 28 lessons per week, depending on state regulations and school level. The teaching load of elementary school teachers is by far the heaviest, typically consisting of 28 periods per week. The principal also is responsible for teaching a few periods each week. If a teacher is absent, classes are covered by other regular teachers; substitute teachers are not used.

Offenburg, 1. 12. 2003