

# WHEN THE EYES OF PUPILS SHINE BRIGHTLY

Searching for Motivated Teachers: KIT Researchers Develop Methods to Enhance the Value of Teacher Examinations

BY SOPHIE KOLB // PHOTOGRAPHS: PHOTOCASE, PRIVAT // TRANSLATION: MAIKE SCHRÖDER

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**ith his team of researchers, Professor Johann J. Beichel is studying the performance of teachers in order to enhance the validity of teacher examinations. This KIT research project is unique in Germany and has produced findings that may reform and improve the second state examination and studies of teachers-to-be.**

Often, a bad teacher is remembered for a long time. The subject he or she taught still is not really understood and the only thing produced during the lessons is a number of scribbles. But there are also good teachers from whom we have learned a lot and even had fun. What makes a good teacher? And how can that quality be discovered in teacher examinations?

To answer these questions, a team of scientists from the KIT Department of Humanities and Social Sciences under the direction of Professor Johann J. Beichel analyzes teacher examination criteria as well as teaching and learning processes. The team concentrates on artistic projects such as music, theater, and dance productions, because the teacher-pupil relationship in those instances is much more open, exciting, and emotional.

"Teachers have to enthuse their pupils and to give them wings."

Johann J. Beichel



The project conducted by Professor Beichel is unique in Germany. As a director of the State Teacher Examination Office of the Karlsruhe regional administrative authority and lecturer at the KIT Institute of Vocational Education and Training and General Paedagogics, he balances two worlds that normally hardly communicate with each other, according to Beichel. His findings are of a fundamental nature.

#### Disciplinary Excellence Alone Does Not Yield Teaching Success

The first finding is that disciplinary knowledge and didactics alone are not sufficient for being successful in teaching. Teachers must be able to create a positive learning atmosphere together with their pupils. "They must be able to make the eyes of their pupils shine brightly, because the latter are eager to learn something. They have to enthuse them and to give them wings," believes the educationalist.

Teachers today are also facing other challenges. Working parents, the increasing number of single children, and the influence of media have resulted in tougher school education requirements. Beichel thinks that pupils have changed. Their respect for fellow pupils, parents, authorities, and even objects has decreased. Beichel has also noticed that age groups are more heterogeneous: "Today, we no longer have classes, but 25 individuals and their demands." In meeting these complicated requirements, the personal and social skills of teachers, such as empathy, morality, intuition, and humor, play a decisive role. However, these skills have hardly been considered in teacher examinations to date.

If teachers do not manage these tasks, they suffer themselves. "We have very many teachers with good marks working at all types of schools, who become ill or dissatisfied after two or three years, because they simply do not manage." Beichel emphasizes that this has nothing to do with disciplinary competence. "These are emotional dispositions."

#### From Examination to Fitness

Which concrete criteria can be used to evaluate these emotional qualities? "This is difficult to tell, because every school is different," explains Professor Beichel. "Even at the same vocational school, the graduating class and the vocational preparation class are completely different realities." These realities are associated with different requirements. It is not important to be qualified, but to fit. The basic finding of Beichel is that general professional qualifications cannot be standardized, as has been assumed by the system to date. This finding puts the complete examination system into question.

Beichel suggests that the general examination be replaced by a specific skill test. Only then will the evaluation of a teacher be informative. This may be a normal application procedure with a probationary period. If the candidate does not have the necessary skills for one class, he or she will apply somewhere else.

Beichel even goes a step further. He wishes to identify motivated teachers. For the pupils to learn, the teacher must be seriously determined to teach them. Today, teachers-to-be frequently consider other aspects of their profession to be more important. Beichel emphasizes that future teachers in Finland consider it an honor to study paedagogics. He points out that admission to studies of paedagogics in Germany should not be based only on marks in the respective subjects. Due to the lack of teachers, such a selection was impossible in the past. But soon, teachers will no longer be in short supply.

Reform is still a long way off, as "it is only a research project." But this will change. The state-overlapping study performed by the Karlsruhe scientists is already creating a pressure to think about such matters: Concrete changes will follow. "I am very confident," says Professor Beichel, "that we will have made a big step forwards in three years' time." ■

KIT-Forscher entwickeln  
geeignere Lehramtsprüfungen

## WENN AUGEN LEUCHTEN

Mit seinem Forschungsteam untersucht Professor Johann J. Beichel das Handeln von Lehrerinnen und Lehrern, um die Validität von Lehramtsprüfungen zu erhöhen. Bei dieser in Deutschland einzigartigen Forschung am KIT stößt er auf Erkenntnisse, die das zweite Staatsexamen und gar das Lehramtsstudium grundständig reformieren und verbessern könnten. Die Wissenschaftler nehmen Lehramtsprüfungskriterien sowie Lehr- und Lernvorgänge an Schulen unter die Lupe.

Was Professor Beichel macht, ist hierzulande einmalig. Als Leiter des nordbadischen Landeslehrerprüfungsamtes sowie gleichzeitig Dozent am Institut für Berufs- und Allgemeine Pädagogik am KIT leistet er einen gedanklichen Spagat zwischen zwei Welten, die ansonsten, laut Beichel, kaum miteinander kommunizieren. Und so bringt er Grundlegendes ans Licht: Fachwissen und Didaktik reichen für einen Lehrerfolg nicht aus, Lehrende müssen mit Schülern auch eine positive Lernatmosphäre erzeugen können: „Es muss ihnen gelingen, dass die Schüler glänzende Augen kriegen, weil sie etwas lernen wollen.“ Dabei spielten auch personale und soziale Qualitäten wie Einfühlungsvermögen, Moralität, Intuition und Humor der Lehrer eine entscheidende Rolle. Allerdings werden sie in Lehramtsprüfungen bisher kaum berücksichtigt.

Beichels Vorschlag lautet: „Wir müssen weg von einer generellen Prüfung – hin zu einer spezifischen Handlungserprobung“. Nur so könne die Lehrerevaluation aussagekräftig sein. Im Prinzip wäre dies ein ganz normales Bewerbungsverfahren mit Probezeit. Der Forscher will motivierte Lehrer herausfiltern. Heute stünden bei Lehramtsstudenten noch viel zu oft andere Aspekte des Berufes im Vordergrund.

SOPHIE KOLB