

Tailored preparation or broad general knowledge? Comparison of two educational programmes preparing for teacher education in Switzerland

Educational institutions have to deal with demands and changes in the labour market. Currently, increasing numbers of pupils as well as teacher retirements challenge universities of teacher education (UTE) to train more (pre)primary school teachers.

While UTE directly prepare students for the teaching profession, the two educational programmes on upper secondary level that grant formal admission to primary and pre-primary teacher education programmes at UTE highly differ in their proclaimed proximity to the teaching profession.

While the *baccalaureate school* (*Gymnasium/École de maturité*) provides free access to all university studies and professions, the upper-secondary *specialised school* (*Fachmittelschule/École de culture générale*) with its *occupational field in educational science* and a respective *specialised baccalaureate* promises to explicitly prepare for teaching studies at UTE and the teaching profession via tailored subjects, tasks and practical training.

There is currently no research investigating and comparing these two different tracks leading into tertiary level teacher education and giving answers on how they are valued by relevant actors (students, teachers, headmasters, representatives of UTE, policy makers etc.). The dissertation project closes this gap and analyses the characteristics of the specialised school in comparison with the baccalaureate school as educational programmes preparing for UTE. How do they differ in their educational cultures (e.g. objectives, target audience etc.)? How do different actors value and legitimize them, especially regarding studying at UTE and the teaching profession?

To analyse the characteristics, valorisation and legitimisation of the two educational programmes I refer to the theoretical framework of the *Économie des conventions* (EC). It states that actors draw on different culturally established principles of values and justification (conventions) when evaluating and legitimizing actions, persons and objects – e.g. teaching methods, students and curricula,. However, their plurality and inconsistency also trigger critique and conflicts – e.g. about the ‘right’ way to prepare young adults for teacher training at UTE and the teaching profession.

To answer the research questions, the project pursues a multiple case study in different Swiss cantons and linguistic regions and refers to various data on the level of institutions, organisations and interactions: documents, field observations and interviews with UTE representatives, policy-makers, headmasters, teachers and students of both educational tracks.

First analyses show, that in the specialised school, the so-called industrial convention, which stresses professional expertise, is prevalent: the actors express a strong focus on specific preparation for teaching studies at UTE and the teaching profession. This is supported by values of the domestic convention like community-building, social skills, mutual care and support, which are seen as important and contributing aspects of preparing for the teaching profession.

The baccalaureate school however detaches itself from specific occupations and is perceived as a school preparing for being part of the academic, political, cultural or economic elite in society. The actors therefore refer to the civic convention that values general, abstract and disciplinary knowledge as well as intellectual performance. It is intertwined with a strong valuation of features like curiosity, creativity and artistic experience, which are features of the inspired convention.

UTE value elements of *both* educational programmes. However, two tension fields can be identified. UTE appreciate that specialised schools directly deliver upcoming teachers with pronounced social skills that are important for the teaching profession. At the same time, they criticize a lack of academic features like e.g. intellectual performance and literacy skills, characteristics covered by the students from baccalaureate school. However, as statistics show, graduates with a general baccalaureate often prefer other educational paths than primary and pre-primary teacher education at UTE.

Short bibliography

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