

## Country Report: Germany (Baden-Württemberg) – The Ludwigsburg Model of Teacher Training in Ethics

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### General information about Education and Universities of Education in Germany

The majority of German pupils attend public schools (and later public universities). After kindergarten (age three to six) school is compulsory for nine or ten years. For the first four years, all children attend elementary school (Grundschule). After 4th grade, in accordance with their parents' wishes as well as their academic ability, the children have three different options of secondary education schools (Hauptschule, Realschule or Gymnasium). The Gymnasium provides an upper secondary level with an 11th, 12th and sometimes 13th grade in order to prepare the pupils for further studies at the universities.

In Germany education is regulated individually by each federal state, so there are differences from federal state to federal state. Baden-Württemberg in the south of Germany maintains six Universities of Education, which concentrate on educational science matters both in research and teaching. They also offer doctoral and post-doctoral degrees and are, therefore on a par with full universities. The largest of the six Universities of Education with approximately 5,500 students and 450 members of staff is located in Ludwigsburg. Although the main focus for the LUE is on elementary school and lower secondary school, the LUE also participates in teacher training for the upper secondary level by being part of a joint "Professional School of Education" (PSE) which is run collectively with universities and colleges in the area of Stuttgart.

### Current Situation regarding Philosophy and Ethics in Schools

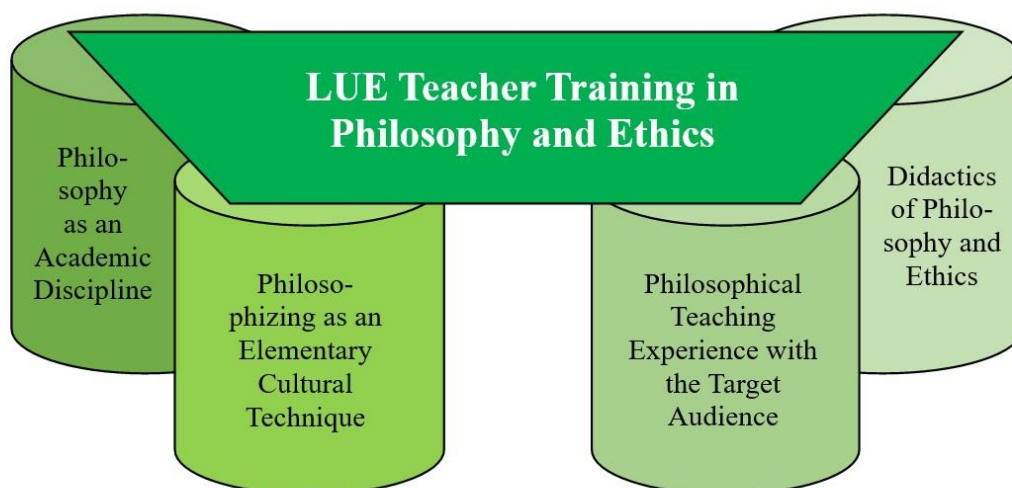
The situation of philosophy and ethics in German schools differs from federal state to federal state (Roesch 2012: 23-24). This report focuses on the federal state of Baden-Württemberg where ethics (Ethik) is taught as an alternative subject to religious education (Religion) at the secondary level only. As a result, the majority of pupils in ethics tend to have a non-Christian background and the ethnic heterogeneity in these classes tends to be significantly higher than in other subjects. Philosophy is compulsory optional at the upper secondary level only. So it is not possible to study those subjects as a future teacher at elementary schools in Baden-Württemberg. Usually ethics is only offered for grades eight and higher. However, some schools also offer philosophy for children at elementary level. This is sometimes encouraged by private foundations like the *Karl Schlecht Stiftung*, which tries to improve the situation of philosophy and ethics in schools especially for children of young age.

### Current Situation of Teacher Training in Philosophy and Ethics

In Germany teacher training in philosophy and ethics not only differs from federal state to federal state but also from university to university. Most universities have their own curriculum and the freedom of teaching is valued greatly among German philosophers. As a result, the education of each and every student is to a great extent individually unique with a very low degree of generally shared contents or methods. In addition to that many philosophers at the universities focus on research instead of teaching and especially take no great interest in teacher training which – like didactics of philosophy in general – is still considered by many as a field of activity more suitable for school teachers than for college professors.

Universities of Education are a case of their own. Instead of distinguishing research from teaching they try to combine both fields by doing research regarding the process of teaching and by teaching research and teaching at the same time. Teacher training in philosophy and ethics at the Ludwigsburg University of Education treats training in philosophical research and didactics of philosophy and ethics equally. In order to achieve that goal we developed the “Ludwigsburg Model of Teacher Training in Ethics” which I want to introduce here as *one* example how to train teachers for high quality classes in ethics and philosophy at all levels.<sup>1</sup>

We believe that teacher training in ethics and philosophy should rest on four equally important pillars. Universities in general tend to focus on the second, at some locations also on the forth pillar, while teachers at schools tend to neglect those two and focus on the first and the third one instead. At the Ludwigsburg University of Education we try to neglect none of those pillars. Taking into consideration the fact that we do not have any more time or workload for teacher training than other establishments, we undertake research about how to make each pillar more efficient.



1. The first pillar is *philosophizing as a useful activity* in everyday life, or, as Ekkehard Martens puts it, philosophy as an “elementary cultural technique” (elementare Kulturtechnik) next to reading, writing and mathematics (Martens 2016). Even very young children can learn

<sup>1</sup> For the tradition of teacher training in ethics at the LUE see Thyen 2002.

to reflect on philosophical and ethical questions, to shape their experiences in clear thoughts, to question common sense judgements, to think a problem through from all relevant sides, to argue for an opinion with good arguments, to have a productive discussion with others about it and to develop mental self-esteem. One can learn all of that only by doing it regularly. In addition to our philosophical classes we plan to offer optional workshops for our own students as well as for current and future elementary school teachers in order to enable them to professionally supervise children of all ages during the activity of philosophizing.

2. The second pillar is *philosophy as an academic discipline*. Its function is to add depth to the first pillar by emphasizing that philosophy is more than just common sense. If everybody starts from zero there can be no progress in academic philosophy. We have to carefully and systematically take note of what others have thought before and around us. Like studying literature at university usually does not mean writing new novels or poems, studying philosophy does not so much mean producing new theories but mainly doing professional (historical and systematical) research regarding the work of other philosophers in order to understand, critically evaluate and improve their thoughts and theories. We think that all teachers could use some basic knowledge about the most important positions and traditions in both, theoretical and practical philosophy. If they teach ethics or philosophy as their subject they should have detailed knowledge of philosophical areas of their special interest as well. (Dann 2016) For that reason we undertake empirical research regarding those philosophical contents and methods that ought to be part of every teacher training and regularly offer optional classes about those contents for students of all subjects.<sup>2</sup> In order to guarantee an intense scrutiny of those topics we use blended learning and peer review methods in these courses. In other classes our students have additional options to specialize in certain topics which is and always should be characteristic with regards to philosophical studies.

3. The third pillar is *philosophical teaching experience*. Although the first two pillars are precursory to becoming a good teacher of philosophy or ethics they are by no means sufficient. Students also need a specific set of teaching methods (Wittschier 2012; 2013; 2014) and skills as well as experience with their target audience and with the process of teaching their subject. All our students do an internship at a school for a whole semester and get visited there four times or more by a professor of one of their subjects. In addition to that they take a special course in each of their subjects in which they reflect on practical aspects of teaching. During and after the internship we encourage our students to bring real philosophy to the school classrooms instead of just imitating the given status quo, which in Germany is still defined by teachers who in the majority have never studied ethics or philosophy themselves. In addition to the internships, several of our philosophical classes include a workshop where the students reflect on how to use their specific philosophical knowledge and skills in their future jobs.

4. The fourth and final pillar consists of *didactics of philosophy and ethics*. This pillar is supposed to add depth to the third one just like the second pillar follows on from the first. Didactics of philosophy does not only mean knowing about the methods of teaching philosophy,

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<sup>2</sup> For students with ethics as their subject these courses are compulsory.

but having theories about teaching philosophy and being able to use these theories in order to reflect on the teaching process in an academic way. At the LUE we offer our students two compulsory blended learning classes in which they learn the basics about didactics of philosophy and ethics including interdisciplinary knowledge about related disciplines like psychology, sociology, linguistics and others. Our claim is not only to teach these theories but to also instruct our students to evaluate them as far as possible by using philosophical reflection and the methods of empirical education research both, quantitative and qualitative (Tiedemann 2011). In order to achieve that we do research about which specific skills are needed to teach and learn philosophy and ethics, how to develop and test these skills with different kinds of tasks, how to adapt those tasks to different audiences (including special needs education; Dederich 2013) and in which degree it is possible to use digital learning in all of those areas. Our students participate in this research by taking classes concerning the connection between didactics of philosophy and empirical education research.

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