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# Multi-Professional Cooperation in the Austrian School System and its Implications for Inclusive Education

**ABSTRACT:** The Austrian school system faces the challenge of breaking down barriers to learning for all students in view of the increasing heterogeneity of the students. With the adoption of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Austria faces the challenge of guaranteeing an inclusive education system. A brief overview of inclusive education in Austria is followed by the focus of this article: the multi-professional cooperation in the context of inclusive education in Austria. The cooperation on the part of the educators is discussed as a key condition for the implementation of inclusive educational systems. An ongoing research project about multi-professional cooperation in secondary school in Austria is presented below. The author identifies critical issues in this area based on selected research results.

**KEYWORDS:** inclusion, multi-professional cooperation, secondary school, Austria

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## INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN AUSTRIA

Since the beginning of the 1990s, there has been a uniform federal law for schools in Austria that enables integrative schooling for children with and without disabilities. In 1993, parental rights to choose between an inclusive or special education setting were introduced. As a result, the integration rate initially rose for around 10 years but then stagnated again. There are currently also major regional differences between the individual federal states (cf. Biewer, 2021). In this respect, a parallel system of joint schooling and special schooling has been able to hold up over the years (see Feyerer, 2019, p. 64). In 2008 Austria ratified the "United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities" (UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, CRPD). Article 24 of the UN Disability Rights Convention recognizes the right of disabled people to education: "In order to realize this right without discrimination, the contracting states ensure an inclusive education system at all levels and lifelong learning (…)" (BMSGPK, 2016, p. 19). This results in far-reaching changes for the Austrian education system. As a result, the National Action Plan Disability 2012 – 2020 (NAP) was prepared with the aim to achieve full inclusion by 2020. One of the central measures was the anchoring of inclusive model regions (IMR). The plan was to gradually convert the special school system into an inclusive system by implementing model regions and thus increase the integration rate at all Austrian schools (cf. BMASGK, 2012, p. 65). The previously independent training for special needs teachers was replaced by new curricula from 2014. Teacher training was restructured (NEW pedagogical training), and "specialization including pedagogy" was introduced in training. Teachers should do justice to the heterogeneity of the students in terms of (subject) didactics and methods and, together with colleagues, design school and lessons in such a way that (learning) barriers can be broken down (cf. Feyerer, 2019, p. 72). But despite these changes, there are still 36.9% of pupils in special schools or taught in special education classes. Accordingly, the inclusion rate throughout Austria is 63.1%

(Statistik Austria, 2020). This rate has changed little in recent years. Moreover, the proportion of students in special schools rose again slightly between 2011 and 2019, although the number of students overall has decreased (Statistik Austria 2021, p. 25). In addition, both the Court of Auditors (Rechnungshof, 2019) and the evaluation

of the National Disability Action Plan (BMSGPK, 2020) point to significant short-comings in the implementation of inclusive education and training in the Austrian education system. In summary, Austria is currently characterized by a very expensive parallel system (cf. Accounts Court, 2019). The so-called "multi-track system" (Feyerer, 2019, p. 64) refers to a well-developed system of different special schools with their own curricula on the one hand and the parallel pursuit of inclusive education in primary and secondary schools for pupils with special educational needs.

### INCLUSIVE EDUCATION – WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE?

While integration "aims to support pupils with special learning needs in the existing system," inclusion goes one step further and "starts not with the learners, but with the learning system itself" (BMBWF, 2021, p. 11). The ability of pedagogical institutions to meet the different learning requirements and needs of children and young people, as well as the reduction of institutional disadvantages in the education system, are regarded as the basis for the (further) development of school inclusion. The distinction between a narrow and a broad understanding of inclusive education also becomes clear here: "In the current discourse, there is a broad understanding of inclusion assumed that not only focuses on the different category disability, but also other educational risks such as migration and multilingualism, gender or social background and their interrelationships or intersectionality are taken into account." (Hoffmann, 2020). According to Dyson, an inclusive school is characterized by the following characteristics, among others: a school culture based on recognition and appreciation, educational opportunities provided for all students at their individual developmental levels,

teachers and educators work closely together, show a high degree of flexibility with regard to the forms of teaching (Dyson, Hows & Roberts, 2004). Werning adds that inclusive schools are also characterized by reliable structures and a continuous process of reflection. Intensive cooperation in multi-professional teams is the central condition for the successful implementation of such a vision of inclusive schooling (Werning, 2018).

### MULTI-PROFESSIONAL COOPERATION IN INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Inclusive teaching requires a wide range of qualifications from professionals. Chief among them is the capacity to cooperate. Based on the organizational-psychological definition of Spieß, cooperation " (...) is characterized by the reference to goals or tasks to be achieved jointly, it is intentional, communicative and requires trust. It presupposes a certain autonomy and is bound to the norm of reciprocity" (Spieß, 2004, p. 199). This flexible definition is suitable, according to Gräsel et al., especially for the field of school, because it "includes structural openness" (Gräsel et al., 2006, p. 207). It requires the three core conditions "that have been investigated in research – both in organizational psychology and in school research: common

goals and tasks, trust and autonomy" (Gräsel et al., 2006, p. 207). Multi-professional cooperation goes beyond teacher cooperation and can be defined as follows: "If more than two professional groups cooperate with each other, which have a certain degree of specialization, they coordinate their actions and exchange professional information, we speak of multi-professional cooperation (Kielblock et al., 2017, p. 142). The following occupational groups, among others, can be counted as part of multi-professional team for/in inclusive schools: general schoolteachers, special education teachers, school social workers, school assistants, school psychologists, therapists, counselors, and parents (Philipp, 2014, p. 10; Kricke & Reich, 2016, pp. 199–200; Stähling & Wenders, 2015). However, a variety of other professional groups can be included as well, depending on support services and specialists available and needed. Kullmann emphasizes that the forms and types of multi-professional cooperation in schools are as diverse as the schools themselves (Kullmann, 2018, p. 4). Among other things, the difference between the various professions involved in terms of training, access, and hierarchical positions are cited as complicating the implementation of cooperation. The lack of systemic anchoring of multi-professional teams in the German-speaking education systems also represents an obstacle to the implementation of inclusive schooling practices. But the cooperation of different professional groups in and outside the classroom is currently regarded as indispensable. In this context, Köpfer & Lemmer speak of cooperation in inclusive contexts being "negotiated as a sine qua non for successful teaching in inclusive schools" (Köpfer & Lemmer, 2020, p. 80). The European Agency for Development in Special Education Needs (2012) also stresses the relevance of cooperative and multi-professional cooperation at different levels in the context of inclusive school development processes and the professionalisation of teachers for inclusive teaching (European Agency for Development in Special Education Needs, 2012).

Werning emphasizes that inclusive teaching which requires a variety of pedagogical concepts, didactic and subject didactic, as well as diagnostic competences, which can only be brought in and made usable for teaching through cooperative forms of work by teachers with different competence profiles (Werning, 2018, p. 5). Löser points out that "at inclusive schools, cooperation processes with other specialist staff and / or with teachers with different qualifications represent an opportunity to respond professionally to the diversity of the students and to avoid overtaxing the regular school teacher" (Löser, 2013, p. 109). In short, the perceived diversity of the learning group requires diversity in the pedagogical team in order to reduce barriers to learning and stressful and overstraining experiences on the part of the teachers. Schools that work in an inclusive manner show a high degree of (multi-professional) cooperation winning schools of the Jakob Muth Prize for inclusive schools or the German School Award[1]. The importance of multi-professional cooperation in inclusive learning is also evident in the internationally used Index for Inclusion to support inclusive school development processes, where regular and cooperative collabora-

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1   For more information about the winning schools: https://www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de/de/unsere-projekte/abgeschlossene-projekte/jakob-muth-preis/preistraeger/ or https://www.deutscher-schulpreis.de/

tion, as well as shared responsibility of a team for a learning group, is emphasized (Booth & Ainscow, 2019, p. 193)

Research on multi-professional cooperation in inclusive education in the German-speaking countries has so far focused on the two occupational groups of special or inclusion educators and regular schoolteachers. In this way, a narrow understanding of inclusion and a dichotomous view of the students or teachers is strengthened (Lemmer, 2018). Other dimensions of diversity, such as those corresponding to a broad understanding of inclusion, are not addressed.

### MULTI-PROFESSIONAL COOPERATION IN SECONDARY SCHOOL IN AUSTRIA

Much research and professional discourse on school inclusion and cooperation focus on cooperation between mainstream and special needs teachers within the framework of the so-called interdisciplinary cooperation. Initial studies were published as part of the first accompanying research on the first integrative school models in the 1980s. From the very beginning, they identified the cooperation of the different professions as a central aspect of integration both in Germany and later Austria (Kreis et al., 2016; Werning & Arndt, 2013; Lütje-Klose & Urban, 2014; Urban & Lütje-Klose, 2014). This approach, however, turns out to be fundamentally problematic, as it always shows a "normative inside and a special outside and assumes a corresponding fundamental assignability of pupils into "normal" and "special" – also at the level of teachers, as "general" and "special education". (Köpfer & Lemmer, 2020, p. 82).

An ongoing research project of the author uses a mixed-methods design and collects various data on multi-professional cooperation. The main methods used include: by means of a quantitative online survey among principals of secondary schools (initially in the state of Tyrol, supplemented by an Austrian-wide survey in preparation), talks and interviews with interested principals and teachers, focus group interviews with multi-professional teams, and participant observation. My aim is to understand tutoring in class and participating in observations and group discussions with multi-professional team group-specific behaviors in the context of multi-professional cooperation, also with regard to teaching design of the teaching. Are there any particularities in professional theory in relation with regard to the division of roles? How are subject teachers and inclusion educators involved in teaching, and what influence do these patterns have on differentiated teaching? The quotations in the following are all taken from the short-sketched research project (period of the school year 2020/2021 and school year 2021/2022). It is important to point out that this is the first compilation; the further qualitative evaluations are currently being carried out. The data will be analyzed in the final report in more detail than is presented in this article below. In this respect, the quotations and notes can only provide clues to individual elements but cannot be presented as confirmed findings.

**FIRST RESULTS: ILLUSTRATIVE EXAMPLES FROM A SYSTEMIC PERSPECTIVE**

The following interpretation of the quotations and notes is intended to show that the above-mentioned challenges of multi-professional cooperation have to be seen in the context of the multi-level system. Fend distinguishes between the macro-systemic level (education administration, framework conditions, membership of the college, legal requirements), the mesosystemic level (local environment and internal school relationships, roles and responsibilities, areas of work and activity dealt with jointly and separately), and the microsystemic level (direct interaction in the classroom and other funding situations, attitudes and readiness of the participants, satisfaction). Based on this multi-level model from Fend's (2008) school development, it quickly becomes apparent that the different levels cannot be viewed and discussed separately in this context. Rather – and this is how the author's research project is structured – the levels are conditioned to each other, and different approaches are required in order to bring together the clues before theoretical assumptions (Lütje-Klose & Miller, 2017).

Example 1: Macro-systemic level
Quotation from a principal in a tyrolean middle school:

> „There are no predetermined structures on the part of the education administration that I could pass on as head of the school. Even counseling teachers must always be actively requested. The conditions are a total difficulty for joint cooperation."

The quotation from the school administration points to a lack of established structures on the part of the education administration: The guidance teachers established in the system are not clearly assigned to the schools and must be requested on a case-by-case basis via seemingly unclear channels. This points to the fact that problematic situations within the school, which on the part of the students are usually accompanied by negative assignments and experiences of failure, only legitimize support (keyword labeling-resource dilemma). The quotation should also be interpreted as meaning that there is uncertainty about how supporting staff can get to the schools. Two central demands for inclusion education are addressed here: a systemic allocation of resources that goes beyond teaching staff and other professions, such as guidance teachers, should be flexibly available to the school system. Furthermore, a systemic resource allocation, which is generally available in the individual school, has the advantage of being able to work preventively in cooperation with teachers and other actors, and of having fewer negative experiences on the part of the students. Reference to the lack of systemic anchoring of supporting multi-professional resources as called for in the discourse on an inclusive school (and see Canada, for example, is also very successfully established, cf. Oskadottir & Köpfer, 2021, Löser, 2013).

Example 2: Mesosystemic level
Quotation from a principal in a tyrolean middle school:

> *"The responsibilities of the individual collaborating colleagues are unclear. (…) What do the individual professions actually do?"*

What are the roles and responsibilities of the different occupational groups in the cooperation? In fact, this should also be clearly defined by the school board, or clear support structures for the college on the part of the school board should be specified. Co-operators in the early stages of cooperation should be given sufficient time to get to know and negotiate roles and tasks or to attend joint training courses to prepare for the joint task. The quotation points to an undefined working mode and a certain arbitrariness. But perhaps also due to the lack of communication processes between the acting teachers and the school management. This note from a conversation with a school principal also points to a certain ignorance on the part of the school administration:

Example 3: Microsystemic level
Note from an internship in class and a subsequent discussion with the teacher team (consisting of two specialist teachers and one integration teacher)

> *In this class all students (Note, all performance groups and all pupils with special educational needs) are taught together. In a short conversation after the class I am told that they are reluctant to do so and that they also like to teach the class separately according to their achievements and competences. It is also reported that Ms. T, the integration teacher, often "takes out" students with special educational needs and teaches them separately.*

Since the 2019/20 school year, permanent group education in Germany, First Foreign Language and Mathematics has been possible in Austria's secondary middle schools. The teachers cited make use of this group formation and expand it to include a further group, the students with special educational needs. This classification contrasts with inclusive didactic principles, which assume that heterogeneous learning groups have a positive impact on individual learning and development processes. The results show that lower-performing students, in particular, benefit from comparatively large differences in performance in classes and that no performance disadvantages can be observed in higher-performing children and adolescents (Decristan & Jude 2017, p. 117). From an inclusion pedagogical perspective, group formation on the basis of performance levels appears questionable, as it suggests that it could reduce barriers to learning. Rather, in the tradition of the (alleged) advantages of homogeneous learning groups, merit selection is described as a means of differentiation (BMBWF, 2020, pp. 13–15). Against the backdrop of the debate on overall education

in the 1980s, Feuser has already pointed out that a division into performance courses does not make it possible to overcome the segregating school system. According to Feuser, this "orientation on the model of "external differentiation" only leads to the fact that the multifaceted reality of schools is placed inside the schools. (Feuser 1989, p. 10, cf. also Feyerer, 2019). And as mentioned before, the roles of the teachers are carried out according to the division of the pupils into those with and without special educational support needs: the so-called integration teacher feels responsible for the separate instruction of the pupils with special educational support needs and the two specialist teachers for the other performance groups.

So far, multi-professional cooperation appears to be uncoordinated or not structured. Colleagues know little about the work and cooperation relationships in other classes or teams, and there are many different team constellations. The cellular structures of the school system are strengthened and lead to a degree of insecurity in everyday school life. Initial unpublished findings from the research project point to the fact that schools make no systematic use of potentially available occupational groups. The multitude of cooperation occasions, types of teams, and constellations of actors acting are not even aware of the school management. There is a lack of strategies for action at the individual level and clear guidelines at the institutional level so that reality is handled very differently, i.e., the overarching objective of reducing barriers to learning on the student side is used and enabled in very different ways. Indications of the continuing dominance of lone fighters and a continuing exclusionary division and little-inclusive role models between regular and special pedagogues, as well as a persistence of segregating teaching settings.

### CONCLUSION

Although multi-professional cooperation can be assumed to be a key condition for the success of inclusive schools and inclusive school development, everyday school life can be characterized by a wide gap between aspiration and reality in terms of actual teacher cooperation. On the other hand, establishing the new teacher education system, which no longer trains special-school teachers and therefore has a specialization in inclusive pedagogy, might be the way, at least in the long term, to defuse the issues raised at least at the practical level. As long as a close understanding of inclusion prevails at different levels, it will be difficult to overcome this hurdle within a multi-professional collaboration, and the interdisciplinary collaboration of regular and special teachers will continue to be the focus. In this context, it also seems questionable to overcome the two-group theory that goes with it. In principle, large-scale research projects and a clear educational administrative approach to multi-professional cooperation are needed. The current research project of the author can provide individual hints and further concretize wishes with the following publications.

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## WSPÓŁPRACA INTERDYSCYPLINARNA W AUSTRIACKIM SYSTEMIE SZKOLNYM I JEJ IMPLIKACJE DLA EDUKACJI WŁĄCZAJĄCEJ

**ABSTRAKT:** Austriacki system szkolny stoi przed wyzwaniem przełamania barier w nauce dla wszystkich uczniów w związku z rosnącą heterogenicznością grup studentów/uczniów. Wraz z przyjęciem Konwencji ONZ o prawach osób niepełnosprawnych, Austria stanęła przed wyzwaniem zagwarantowania systemu edukacji włączającej. Po krótkim omówieniu status quo następuje prezentacja głównego punktu niniejszego artykułu – współpracy interdyscyplinarnej w kontekście edukacji włączającej. Współpraca ze strony edukatorów jest omawiana jako kluczowy warunek dla wdrożenia systemów edukacji włączającej. Poniżej przedstawiono trwający projekt badawczy dotyczący współpracy interdyscyplinarnej w szkole średniej w Austrii. Opierając się na wybranych wynikach badań, autorka identyfikuje krytyczne kwestie w tym obszarze.

**SŁOWA KLUCZOWE:** inkluzja, współpraca interdyscyplinarna, szkoła średnia, Austria

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# An Analysis of Conditions that Promote Successful Practical Mentoring Processes in Teacher Education

**ABSTRACT:** This article discusses the importance of teacher mentoring in schools. It presents mentoring programs which are implemented in Austria in cooperation with universities and teacher training colleges. The study investigates three phenomena: learning in the internship with accompaniment, collaboration, and professionalism. It evaluates interviews with mentors and applies grounded theory as its research methodology, which shows the consequence in the form of six school practical mentoring functions in the mentoring process. Conditions with a positive impact on the mentoring process are derived from these mentoring functions. The article aims to contribute to the current discussion about mentoring in teacher education. The discussed research project is a qualitative-based survey on interviews with mentors (n=12) and mentees (n=12) and an evaluation with Grounded Theory.

**KEYWORDS:** mentoring, teacher education, best practice; mentoring curriculum, mentoring research

School mentoring is a pivotal aspect of teacher training, the school, and the formal education system. It takes place in school settings between a student teacher and a teacher. In Austria school, practical mentoring is structurally anchored in so-called pedagogical-practical studies in the curricula of teacher education and later in the induction phase. The article deals with the mentoring schools offer mentees for gaining practical teaching experience in the classroom and as an opportunity to complete the curricular parts of the school in the social environment of schools. Committed and specifically trained teachers act as mentors who accompany and support the professionalization process of mentees. In doing so, two individuals with different life and educational experiences meet and work together. The mentors generally have several years of professional teaching experience. Thus, they have a repertoire of pedagogical action patterns, have had various learning opportunities (Richter, 2011; Cramer, 2012, p. 34), and are able to answer pedagogical questions based on professional knowledge and experience. The mentor has gained experience and skills in teaching over the course of his professional career. The mentee has even less experience – but maybe ideas for implementation. Viewed critically, the mentor should always remain a student. With regard to school mentoring, the mentee (student teacher or protégé) usually has previous educational experience. This leads to the formation of ideas, expectations, and attitudes (Kraler, 2009) and entails a positive influence on the mentoring process. Reflecting these previous experiences is necessary to promote professional development (Haas, 2021, p. 82).

Historiographic perspectives show a teacher-expert model in the mentoring process. This is based on the master's own apprenticeship. The mentor provides support to the mentee based on their professional expertise. The aim of the mentor and mentee is to walk a common path and acquire skills and experience (Figure 1; Garvey, 2000, p. 9).
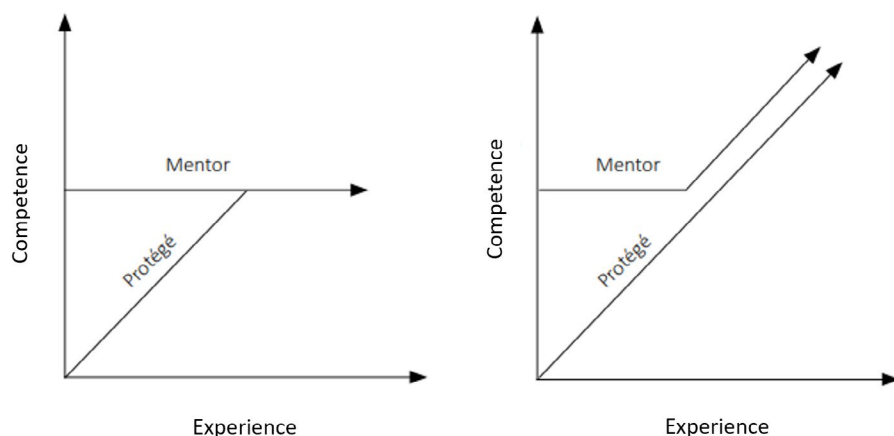
*Figure 1.* Competence-Experience Model in the mentoring process
(Garvey, 2000, p. 9)

Garvey (2000) shows in his figure that the currently prevalent concept of the mentoring process is a gradual approach of the mentee to the mentor in which professional interaction results in the parallel development and an increase in teaching competence. This perspective leads to various definitions of mentoring, one of which is the following:

> School practical mentoring processes ideally go hand in hand with a learning and development culture that is not geared towards master craftsman apprenticeships and workshop learning (historiographical and systematic access), but towards a personified, value-based, strengths and resource-oriented support process for those mentees who think, act and sentient and for profession-oriented mentors (personalized access). The focus is on working together in the internships within the framework of the school system and teacher training (systemic access), the ringing in and implementation of topic-related changes based on reflexive experience and taking a positive prospective look. (cf. Haas, 2021, p. 138)

This definition sees mentoring as a win-win situation for mentees and mentors. They enter a co-evolutionary relationship of professional learning. Oettler (2009) speaks of a win-win-win situation because the systems involved also profit from it: the school, the colleges of education, the universities, and formal education (Oettler, 2009, p. 82).

### MENTORING PROGRAMS FOR SCHOOL INTERNSHIP IN AUSTRIA

Experienced and specially trained teachers accompany mentees during their education. The accompaniment mode has changed in recent years – depending on the teacher training. The reorganization and redesign of teacher training also require a reorganization and redesign of additional education for teachers who want to work as mentors in the form of mentoring programs (Haas, 2021; Kraler et al., 2021). In Austria, mentors complete a shorter program to the extent of 30 ECTS credits or an intensive program of 90 ECTS credits (Masters' degree) at the colleges of education for two or six semesters, respectively. Each college of education has developed its own curriculum. There are currently no defined quality standards in the mentoring programs in Austria. The education of the mentors aims to provide support during practical school mentoring and during the induction phase.

The program presented here relates to a teacher education program designed by experts from the University of Innsbruck and Kirchliche Pädagogische Hochschule Edith Stein (KPH Edith Stein). The mentoring curriculum, amounting to 30 ECTS credits, is divided into two phases (15 + 15 ECTS credits). In the first phase, mentors deal with their own learning biography and develop a personal opinion about student-friendly and development-oriented aspects. The focus is on raising awareness of personal action strategies, concepts, subjective theories, and values. Research findings on mentoring underline the content of the program (Roßnagl, 2017). One important task profile, in terms of professionalization, consists of the acquisition of knowledge on the research-based training of new teacher training, the instruction on research-based learning, and dealing with reflexive action. In the second phase, the focus is on deepening theory and practice in terms of coaching, counselling, supervision, mentoring, and mediation, as well as counselling on didactic issues (planning, implementation, reflection, and evaluation of situations in teaching and education). Aims include an expansion of the professional self-image and the conscious use of a resource-oriented, development-promoting, personalized, value-free, and meaning-free room of experience.

The second example is a program resulting in a Master's degree from a college of education from eastern part of Austria. It is mentioned here because it shows differences in content to the minimized program and documents the variety of programs. This intense program, spanning six semesters with 90 ECTS credits, appeals to teachers in an employment relationship who have at least five years of professional experience. The content is focused on the following subject areas: professional understanding (10 ECTS credits), accompanying and advising (20 ECTS credits), communication and interaction (10 ECTS credits), teaching and learning (10 ECTS credits), organizational and personnel development (5 ECTS credits), research methods and research practice (10 ECTS credits), and a Master's module (25 ECTS credits). According to Marzano (2011), he concept is thus based on the domains of the knowledge and skill (Curriculum Mentoring 90 ECTS 2016, p. 5). The aim is to increase

the mentor's professional skills needed for the support process within the mentoring framework. The first programs will be subjected to an evaluation process and revised.

According to research findings (Hobson et al., 2009; Rogers, 2009; Nolle, 2012; Dreer, 2018; Hofmann, 2019), Haas (2021) proposed the following conditions or quality criteria in the sense of a framework curriculum for the formation of mentoring qualification programs: "Developing a curriculum with a reflective, proactive, research and transformation-led, systemic-integrative, intra- and interpersonal, profession-specific approach." (p. 237). In the further development of mentoring programs, standards could be developed based on this approach.

In the following, research findings on school practical mentoring are examined and discussed.

### RESEARCH ON SCHOOL PRACTICAL MENTORING

Research results show that it is primarily not the duration of internships that is crucial, but the quality of the learning processes (Gröschner et al., 2015) and the learning outcomes (Dieck et al., 2010; Müller, 2010). The success and benefits of internships are strongly linked to the questions of how the theory-based part of reflection is prepared or what is required of mentees in the accompanying courses (Hascher, 2012; Arnold et al., 2014). Thus, the accompaniment in the internships and the professional preparation and follow-up in the school and university sections are of particular value (Dehne et al., 2018, p. 109). The quality of mentoring is of great importance (Abel et al., 2008; Hascher et al., 2012; Wilson, 2011). What are the research insights into school practical mentoring? The theoretical foundations of mentoring concepts are mainly used in methods of personal development, psychology, and educational research. Research on practical mentoring in schools currently relates to five subject areas: (1) mode of action in internships (König et al., 2018; Hobson et al., 2009), (2) process accompanying formats between mentors and mentees (Reintjes et al., 2018; Schüssler et al., 2017), (3) generating success in mentoring (Hobson et al., 2009), (4) motivations of mentors (Weyland et al., 2011), and (5) attitudes of mentors (Haas, 2021, p. 72). Based on research results on the effectiveness of mentoring (1), the strengthening of self-confidence (Hobson et al., 2009), the development of self-concept (König et al., 2018, p. 44), and socialization in the school field (Crisp, 2010) are emphasized as being positive for mentees, while mentors receive a re-energization (Hobson et al., 2007) for their professionalism. The research on effectiveness is mostly individual case descriptions from the mentees' point of view, with conclusions on a generalization. The empirical verifiability of the effectiveness of mentors during the school internships constitutes a research desideratum (Haas, 2021, p. 65). If the research results of mentoring processes (2) are analysed, then they will be in connection with relationships and the course of conversations (Cherian, 2007; Schubarth et al., 2012). For Hobsen et al. (2009), the following four factors foster conditions that generate success (3): contextual support in mentoring, mentor selection and matching process, mentoring strategies, and training in mentoring (p.

211f.). Research on the motivations of mentors (4) and attitudes of mentors (5) (Haas, 2021, p. 72) reilluminates the mentor's perspective on the process.

In summary, there are two main lines of research for school practical mentoring: effectiveness based on case descriptions and improvement of the mentoring process. Both are expandable. International researchers, like the ECER (European Conference on Educational Research) team, set the goal of researching mentoring.

### RESEARCH DESIGN AND RESULTS OF THE STUDY

The present research is a qualitative-based survey on interviews with mentors (n=12) and mentees (n=12) and an evaluation with Grounded Theory. The aim was to empirically identify and reconstruct the central achievement conditions of school practical mentoring processes in teacher education. Based on studies, the following three research questions are dealt with by means of a qualitative study based on existing findings (Abel et al., 2008; Hascher et al., 2010; Wilson, 2011): (1) Which conditions of success can be reconstructed or identified in the mentoring process? (2) Which conditions for success can be reconstructed or identified from the mentor's point of view? (3) Which conditions for success can be reconstructed or identified from the perspective of the mentees? Teachers who act as mentors and mentees who have gained significant experience in the support process during the internship are called in as experts. The statements from the interviews were transcribed and coded with the aid of a computer. Grounded Theory was chosen as the research approach, and different coding methods (open coding, axial coding, selective coding) and operational options were used in the process (Strauss et al., 1996).

In the following, the research results are presented and discussed. The description focuses on the phenomena and consequences of the schools' practical mentoring process.

*Phenomena as the result of the study*

In the heuristic analysis model (Heiser, 2018, p. 231) of the Grounded Theory, the phenomenon is at the centre of the coding or core paradigm. The codes, concepts, sub-categories, and/or categories refer to the event or state that is expressed with the phenomenon. Consequences can also be derived from the data. For Strauss et al. (1996), the consequences are actions that are established on the basis of the phenomenon or the setting of measures that later become a condition (Strauss et al., 1996, p. 85).

There are two phenomena after the coding process in the core paradigms. According to the student interviews, the phenomenon is *"learning in the internships with accompaniment."* According to the teacher interviews, the phenomenon is *"collaboration."* The findings of the interview study (n = 24) show that mentors want to collaborate with the mentees while accompanying the school internships. For mentees, the focus is on the possibility of experiential learning with accompaniment.

If one analyses these two phenomena further and brings them into connection, then the phenomenon of professional development arises on the meta-core paradigm. For a successful school practical mentoring process, contextual, internship- and person-specific, as well as relationship-oriented conditions must be taken into account.
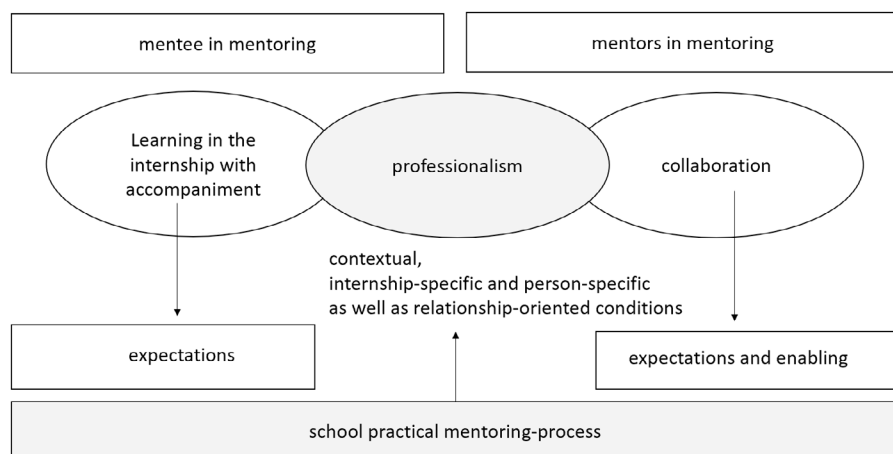


*Figure 2.* Phenomena in the school practical mentoring process (Haas, 2021, p. 234)

During the time of supervision, mentees enter into a phase of expectation. Mentees expect a trusting relationship, appreciative cooperation, and professional behaviour from the mentors and demand constructive feedback. During the internship, mentees want to be able to act independently and authentically, to be able to implement new perspectives so that developments are accelerated. Mentees want to be able to address theoretical concepts and models. Mentors have expectations and an attitude of enabling when exercising their function in the mentoring process. Different motives form the basis. Priority is given to the need to get to know new challenges, to discover mentoring as a new field of activity, to improve oneself in the profession, to accompany mentees in their training, to know about the new teacher education, to represent the field of school and to reflect on student behaviour. The central result of the study is that those involved in the dyadic relationship want to build up or enter into a profession-specific learning and development process with the aim of furthering their own professionalism. School practical mentoring supports and promotes this intention.

*School practical mentoring functions as a result of the study*

As consequences (actions, conditions) of a successful process, six school practical mentoring functions could be categorically reconstructed in the present study: professional competence functions via the availability of a role model, psychosocial and

personal-emotional aspects, requirements on the mentoring role, profession-specific functions, mentoring-specific functions, role functions.
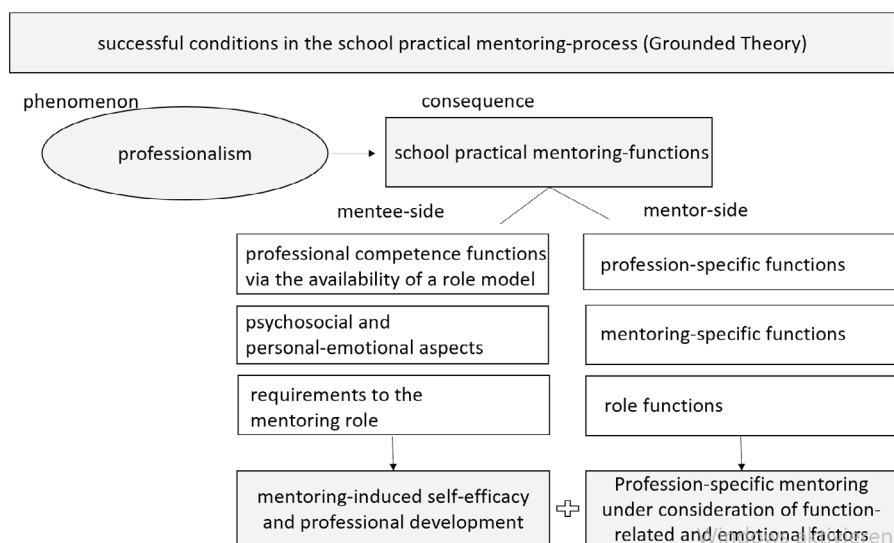


*Figure 3.* Six school practical mentoring functions as a consequence in Grounded Theory (Haas, 2021, p. 218)

The school practical mentoring functions of the student side (professional competence functions via the availability of a role model, psychosocial and personal-emotional aspects, requirements on the mentoring role) address conditions for success such as internship as a professional learning field, profession-specific self-efficacy, communication and interaction, mentoring mission, mentoring understanding and mentoring organization, mentoring professionalism, individual psychosocial experiences and competence development during the internship. The categories again indicate expectations within the mentoring process. The mentees show that tasks in mentoring must be worked on for the benefit of the mentees, that the affective-emotional aspects are taken into account, and that the professional field of school is made available as a learning and development space. For mentees, the school practical mentoring functions aim for mentoring-induced self-efficacy and professional development.

The school practical mentoring functions of the mentor side (profession-specific functions, mentoring-specific functions, role functions) describe categories such as professional cooperation and integration, understanding of the identification process leading to the teaching profession, subject-related exchange, mentoring mission, mentoring identity, mentor self-concept, psychosocial moment(s) and psychosocial exchange as successful conditions. Mentors use the mentoring process to develop their own profession as a teacher, work together with institutions and mentees, and thus work in a new field of activity. It is also important for the mentors that they

consider the emotional state of the mentees. Mentors understand their activity as professional-specific mentoring under consideration of function-related and emotional factors.

The challenge of practical school mentoring processes is that common, mentor-side and mentee-side desires and aspects are discussed. Expectations should be formulated and communicated right at the beginning of the process.

## CONCLUSION

The data of the present qualitative-reconstructive study on the conditions for the success of school practical mentoring processes are based on a survey of mentors and mentees with well-founded experience in the field of mentoring in teacher education. The study specifically dealt with the question of which conditions of success can be reconstructed or identified in the mentoring process. Statements from mentors and mentees indicate that mentoring process is all about professional development for those involved. Mentors want to professionalize further and are looking for cooperation with mentees and the education institution (university, college of teacher education). They open their field of action and impact to mentees, give them freedom in the design of school settings, and contribute to promoting learning and development. Mentees want to learn during their internship and need support on the way to professionalization. The meeting of mentor and mentee and the school practical mentoring process are shaped by expectations on both sides. Expectations must be clarified and discussed at the beginning of the process and during the process. Ultimately, mentoring is a win-win situation and, in the words of Socrates, shows: "Mentoring is about sharing wisdom – a two-way street that benefits both."

The results of the study outline topics for the modelling of mentoring programs. In this way, they underline the importance of expectations. In the discussion and debate, references will also be made to topics such as basic attitudes, values, and management style. Above all, the mentoring functions at school show that mentors have to deal with the task, requirements, and, in particular, the functions: profession-specific functions, mentoring-specific functions, and role functions. Mentoring programs should also deal with this, and mentors should be given instruments for assessing moods and dealing with challenges. However, the mentee's demand primarily relates to the opportunity to develop and learn. The following questions are, therefore, the focus of mentoring programs: How can mentors support someone who wants to learn? What is learning? Which competences are important for a mentee? How can a mentee develop? What experiences should a mentee have during the internship so that they can learn? What do I have to consider as a mentor? How can a mentor take the emotional aspects into account and respond to expectations? Essentially, it is about dealing with self-reflective analytical and development-related aspects. On the mentee's part, consideration of psychosocial and emotional aspects in the mentoring process is requested. The mentee is also assigned a role in the mentoring process that they must become aware of. It is important to clarify them at the beginning of

the process and highlight the expectations. As a mentee, what do I expect from the internship? What do I expect from my mentor? What can contribute to a successful process? These self-critical questions can help the mentee to get started in the process. Ultimately, both parties are responsible for the success of the mentoring process.

In the near future, research on school-based mentoring could deal with specificities such as a person, domain, or school type specificity. Questions about this form a desideratum. It remains to be seen how concepts for school-based mentoring will develop further.

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ANALIZA WARUNKÓW SPRZYJAJĄCYCH POWODZENIU PRAKTYCZNYCH
PROCESÓW MENTORINGOWYCH W EDUKACJI NAUCZYCIELI

**ABSTRAKT:** W artykule omówiono znaczenie mentoringu nauczycieli w szkołach oraz przedstawiono programy mentorskie, które są realizowane w Austrii we współpracy z uniwersytetami i kolegiami nauczycielskimi. Przedmiotem badania są trzy zjawiska: uczenie się w ramach stażu z asystą, współpraca i profesjonalizm. W artykule przeanalizowano wywiady z mentorami oraz zastosowaną teorię ugruntowaną jako metodologię badawczą. W konsekwencji, uzyskano rezultaty w postaci sześciu praktycznych funkcji mentorskich w procesie mentoringu a warunki mające pozytywny wpływ na proces mentoringu są wyprowadzane właśnie z tych funkcji. Artykuł ma na celu wniesienie wkładu do aktualnej dyskusji na temat mentoringu w kształceniu nauczycieli. Omawiany projekt badawczy jest badaniem jakościowym opartym na wywiadach z mentorami (n=12) i podopiecznymi (n=12) oraz ewaluacji z wykorzystaniem teorii ugruntowanej.

**SŁOWA KLUCZOWE:** mentoring, kształcenie nauczycieli, najlepsze praktyki, program mentoringu, badania nad mentoringiem