

20 January 2014

Inclusive education in teacher training: "Team work and supervision of colleagues must be practised at university."

The German Rectors' Conference (HRK) welcomes the intention of the new President of the Standing Conference of Education Ministers, Sylvia Löhrmann, to make diversity and inclusive education in teacher training a priority during her term of office.

"The universities are aware of the special responsibility they bear with their contribution to teacher training. Working with learning groups, whose requirements, type of learning and cultural background vary, is a major challenge for teacher training at universities," stated HRK Vice President Prof. Dr. Holger Burckhart today at the international teacher training conference organised under the auspices of the HRK nexus project in Essen.

Inclusion in particular represents a core social and political task with regard to equal participation in social processes and a fair share of resources, continued Prof. Dr. Burckhart. The HRK advocates that when the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities is implemented into teacher training at universities, the focus should not be on subject teachers becoming specialists in inclusion pedagogy, rather on the cooperation of multi-professional teams, which will increasingly take into account the social dimension overall. Prospective teachers should be equipped with diagnostic skills, enabling them to work effectively with inclusion support workers, special education teachers and social education workers in schools and in the wider educational environment, such as in communities.

"That is why it is important to increase the cooperative forms of research-based and problem-orientated learning in teacher training courses at universities. For example, team work and the supervision of colleagues could become part of the course," proposes Vice President Burckhart.

One workshop at the conference "Education and Training for European Teachers", attended today and tomorrow by over 200 national and international experts in teacher training, will be dedicated to the subject of inclusion. A further workshop will consider the question of how teachers' intercultural skills can be improved.

Another topic to be discussed in Essen will be how to successfully dovetail theory and practice in teacher training at universities, how to identify suitable candidates for the teaching profession and how to supervise them appropriately during their training. The closing panel discussion on Tuesday will primarily focus on the creation and development of a joint European model for teaching guidance. Participants will include OECD education expert Andreas Schleicher.

Further information on the "Education and Training for European Teachers" conference

HRK's recommendations on teacher training dated 14.5.2013