

Career Counselling for Teachers



Online-based information, aptitude analysis, and career counselling

If one wants good teachers, one needs to win young people with motivation and potential for the teacher training. Online services can contribute to this by helping prospective students to figure out if a career in teaching is the right choice for them. Against this background the EU-project Career Counselling for Teachers (CCT) started in 1999 initiated by the Leuphana University Lüneburg. Now it is continued by a non-profit society with international participation. CCT wants to present the teaching profession as an attractive and challenging occupation. Further, CCT wants to encourage assessing one's personal aptitude for this profession as well as deliberately using the development and career opportunities that this occupation offers throughout the later stages of one's working life. The central means to that is the online platform CCT. Over the last couple of years CCT became the number one counselling program for teacher training in German-speaking countries and is used by numerous universities and centers for teacher training nationwide.

The screenshot shows the CCT website interface. At the top left is the CCT logo. To the right of the logo, the text 'Information und Selbsterkundung für den Lehrberuf' is displayed. Below this, there are six colored boxes, each containing a photograph and a label for a target group: 1. 'Studieninteressierte' (orange box, photo of a young woman smiling). 2. 'Studierende' (red box, photo of a group of students). 3. 'Berufseinsteigende' (green box, photo of a woman in a classroom). 4. 'Erfahrene Lehrpersonen' (blue box, photo of a man pointing at a chalkboard). 5. 'Lehrerinnen- & Lehrerbildung' (purple box, photo of a woman). 6. 'Forschung & Entwicklung' (grey box, photo of a man). At the bottom left, there is a logo for the German Federal Government (BM) and the Federal Ministry of Education and Women (BF). At the bottom right, there is a small link for 'Impressum Datenschutz Kontakt'.

Target groups:

- Prospective students
- Students
- Young professionals
- Experienced teachers

Teacher-trainers and researchers

CCT addresses prospective and working teachers. The platform offers i. a. the following content:

- **Information** about the teaching profession, the job market situation, training offers, career opportunities in the educational system, and consulting facilities as well as links for further information.
- **Reports** of prospective students, student teachers, and teachers about their lives – as a basis for reflection for everyone that are at a similar point in their working career.
- **Self-exploration methods:** Questionnaires and tests by which personal requirements for a successful and satisfactory working life as a teacher resp. for special careers in the educational sector can be clarified. The methods are theoretically well-founded, accessible online, and provide individualized result feedback. They aim at characteristics that have proven to be relevant in occupational psychology and research concerning the teaching profession. Most of the provided methods gather charac-

teristics, e. g., by means of personality and interest questionnaires. Other methods address the subject choice or the biography, e. g., by evaluating previous pedagogical experiences.

- **Guided tours:** For important decisions – as the decision in favor or against teacher training – a sequence of selected informational texts and self-exploration methods is offered that ends with a concluding interpretation and recommendations for further clarifications. These results can later be accessed by the user at any time.

In addition, there are instruments for mentors that support students during practicals and advise career changers or lateral entrants as well as a tool for researchers to retrieve data gathered from completing CCT.

The efficacy of CCT is being evaluated continuously, latest, e. g., in North-Rhine Westphalia. There CCT is used to prepare prospective students for the so-called aptitude practical. The prospective students are supposed to start the practical with specific questions where, for the first time, they will get to know school from the teacher's point of view and will be supported by means of counselling and portfolio work in order to make a sound and thought out decision in favor or against teacher training. Statements from these interns prove that this concept works in most cases: CCT calls their attention to new aspects of the profession, they discover approaches for personal development, and they decide to use the practical as guidance for career choices. Many experience CCT's feedback as encouragement to actually take up teacher training – especially those that have advantageous prerequisites for this career path.

One of the interns expresses the mood after completing CCT well: "For me visiting the website was an important step towards 'preparing my studies and my life after school'. At times I was afraid to miss important information and was highly concentrated. After I participated in the guided tour I felt relieved. All the more seeing that my own estimate regarding my capability to be(come) a teacher matched the result of the tour. By means of the subject-choice-questionnaire I realized that I should reconsider my previous subject choice and ask my teachers for their opinion."

Beneficial framework for CCT: CCT's effect develops especially well if it is embedded in the following contexts:

- *Timely placement:* Information, self-exploration, and counselling are more effective as long as there are still realistic alternatives to change the field of study without facing too high financial or social consequences.
- *Ensuring anonymity:* Self-exploration methods are only answered truthfully if the results are intended exclusively for the user, meaning if there is no obligation for disclosure.
- *Combination with other methods* for aptitude testing and development promotion: CCT's use is higher if it is combined with other components for self-reflection and skills development, e. g., the assessment of mentors, with personal counselling or with portfolio work.
- *Aptitude testing and career counselling* as a continuum: The study choice is not the last point to set the direction. Experiences during the practicals can imply a reorientation and after several working years the desire to change one's career might grow. Here CCT also assists with information and provides offers for self-exploration.

For further information visit www.cct-germany.de or www.cct-austria.at.

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