

The Specific Curriculum in Germany

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Starting point: History in Germany

The Specific Curriculum for students with VI has a long tradition in Germany (Hölscher 2016, pp. 36-43).

1989

- **Professional Exchange** between Prof. Dr. Waldtraud Rath (1930 – 2014) and Dr. Phil Hatlen (1934 – 2016; Visiting Professor at University of Hamburg) (Rath 1990).

1990

- **Rath's research stay in the USA**
- **Publication** of a brief description of the Dual Curriculum (Rath 1992)

1998

- **Further publications**, e.g., translation of the Expanded Core Curriculum, strengthened the discussion in Germany.
- Implementation of content from the ECC into the **KMK recommendations (KMK 1998)**

2011

- Under the direction of Prof. Dr. Degenhardt, the **Specific Curriculum for the school** is being developed in a working group. In 2013, curricula for vocational rehabilitation and for the transition from school to work, followed.

2021

- **Evaluation of the use of the Specific Curriculum (School)** in the pandemic situation (Schütt, Degenhardt & Gewinn, 2021)

Structure of the Specific Curriculum (School) in Germany

The Specific Curriculum for the school sector contains six areas: Vision Support; Perception and Learning; Orientation & Mobility/Daily Living Skills; Movement; Assistive Technology; Life Planning/Career and Leisure; and Social Competence (Degenhardt et al. 2016, pp. 176–181). In each area, five implementation levels are applicable (Diagnosis; Intervention; Methodology; Equipment & Media; Actors & Fields of Action) (see Table 1).

		Ebenen der Umsetzung				
		Diagnostik	Intervention	Methodik	Ausstattung & Medien	Handelnde & Handlungsfelder
Bereiche des spezifischen Curriculums	Förderung des Sehens	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.5
	Wahrnehmung und Lernen	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.4	2.5
	O&M; LPF; Bewegung	3.1	3.2	3.3	3.4	3.5
	Technische Hilfen	4.1	4.2	4.3	4.4	4.5
	Lebensplanung; Beruf & Freizeit	5.1	5.2	5.3	5.4	5.5
	Soziale Kompetenz	6.1	6.2	6.3	6.4	6.5

Area of the Specific Curriculum	Brief description / Examples
Vision Support	Knowledge of students' physiological and functional visual abilities; Use of optical and electronic aids (e.g., magnifiers, monoculars, screen readers); Optimization of environmental conditions for best possible support (e.g., workplace design)
Perception and Learning	Providing extensive perceptual experiences (haptic, auditory, olfactory, vestibular, gustatory, proprioceptive) to expand action possibilities; Concept formation; Learning strategies (e.g., tactile strategies)
Orientation & Mobility / Daily Living Skills / Movement	Orientation and mobility training (exercises in body perception, spatial perception, etc.); Training in daily living skills (dressing, shopping, cooking, etc.); Initiation of gross and fine motor movement experiences
Assistive Technology	Determination of assistive technology needs; Support in dealing with assistive technologies (Braille display, screen reader, etc.)
Life Planning / Career / Leisure	Target group-specific career orientation; Exploring leisure opportunities
Social Competence	Importance of nonverbal communication; Coping with impairment (coping strategies)

Research questions: How is the Specific Curriculum currently being used? What are the challenges in Germany?

Approach: Content analysis of publications and articles on the Specific Curriculum in Germany

Results: Challenges and potentials of the Specific Curriculum in Germany

Summary of the current situation

1. **Quality Assurance:** The Specific Curriculum is used in exchanges with political partners at state and regional levels (Degenhardt et al. 2016, p. 78).
2. **Special schools use the Specific Curriculum and provide information for partners, e. g. parents and mainstream school teachers.**
 - Explanations and examples are available on the websites.
 - The Specific Curriculum is also used for school development.
3. TVIs deal with the Specific Curriculum; in particular to describe **Individual Education Plans (IEP)**.
4. Individual federal states have formulated their own curricula (NRW 2023).
5. **Evaluations** (2014/2021 with focus of the pandemic situation) on the use of the Specific Curriculum point to further development.
6. A **lack of financial and professional resources** makes it difficult to implement the Specific Curriculum throughout Germany.

Challenge: Quality (regardless of the place of education)

- The quality of the educational provision and the implementation of the Specific Curriculum depend on the place of schooling (special school/mainstream school, or urban/rural).
- Inequalities should be compensated by supplementary offerings, such as summer schools.

Example: Summer Schools

Individual schools offer specific courses. This provision should be expanded so that, for example, science content can be taught to students with blindness/visual impairment in a way that is appropriate for the target group.

Challenge: Implementation of Universal Design

- In the current version of the Specific Curriculum, the concept of Universal Design is only addressed to a very limited extent.
- In the context of the further development of an inclusive school that uses the UDL concept, the responsibility of mainstream schools must be emphasized.

Example: Perception and Learning – Use of 3D printing materials

Tactile materials should be used to support students with blindness/visual impairments. Teaching in line with UDL already provides for the use of tactile materials as an alternative learning option.

Challenge: Evaluation and Ressources

- The evaluations of the Specific Curriculum are outdated (2014). It is important to conduct a new survey.
- Financial and professional resources are needed to promote high-quality schooling.

Example: Lack of future TVIs

There is a lack of TVIs, which affects the quality of educational provision. This means that there is a lack of experts to teach the content and provide support to mainstream school teachers.

Literature

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