Motivations for teaching and relationship to general pedagogical knowledge

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Models of professional competences of teachers postulate both cognitive and non-cognitive elements as relevant for successful mastery of professional tasks (Baumert & Kunter, 2006). Teacher knowledge is regarded as a multidimensional construct, at least consisting of content knowledge (CK), pedagogical content knowledge (PCK), and general pedagogical knowledge (GPK). Non-cognitive elements are considered to contain various constructs such as teaching motivation, beliefs, self-efficacy.

Although on a general level, hypotheses about interrelationships exist, such as known from motivational psychology that, for example, highly intrinsically motivated persons generally outperform less intrinsically motivated persons, whereas extrinsic motivation is usually associated with poorer performance and educational outcomes (Baker, 2004), very few studies have specifically investigated the interrelationships between relevant cognitive and motivational elements of professional teacher competences.

The aim of the presentation is to report about research on the relationship between motivations for teaching and the general pedagogical knowledge (GPK) of teachers. It focuses on two studies that have been carried out to specifically investigate future teachers’ GPK as an outcome of teaching motivations (König & Rothland, 2012; König et al., 2013). Besides, adjacent studies that also investigate the relationship between non-cognitive elements of teacher competence (e.g., self-efficacy) and pre-service or in-service teachers’ GPK are mentioned. The presentation will give input to discuss the following questions:

• What conceptual frameworks have been used to consider the relationship between motivations for teaching and GPK (e.g., what hypotheses are used)?
• What do the empirical findings show to explicate the relationship (e.g., to what extent and how are motivation and knowledge connected)?
• What could be recommended for future research?

The two studies focused on in this presentation are longitudinal studies investigating teaching motivations using the well-known framework developed by Watt and Richardson (2007).

Founded on expectancy-value theory and the international state of research on future teachers’ motivations for choosing teaching as a career, Watt and Richardson (2007) developed and empirically examined a model with several factors that specifically influence future teachers’ decisions to become a teacher. The main components of the model are self-reports on individual ability related to teaching, individual values, professional beliefs, anticipated advantages, salary, external influences and prior experiences. This model of empirically tested factors provides the basis for the operationalisation into the FIT-Choice scale.

The first study (König & Rothland, 2012) examines possible effects the FIT-Choice motivational factors have on the acquisition of general pedagogical knowledge of pre-service teachers during initial teacher education. In the second study (König et al., 2013), those effects of the FIT-Choice motivational factors on GPK are investigated using a mediation model in which achievement motivation and goal orientations will mediate between motivations for choosing teaching as a career and GPK.

Teachers’ general pedagogical knowledge is measured by a paper-and-pencil test instrument (König et al., 2011) that was developed in the ‘Teacher Education and Development Study – Learning to Teach Mathematics’ (TEDS-M; Tatto et al., 2008). GPK is related to task-based dimensions, namely
GPK needed to prepare, structure and evaluate lessons (‘structure’), to motivate and support students as well as manage the classroom (‘motivation/classroom management’), to deal with heterogeneous learning groups in the classroom (‘adaptivity’) and to assess students (‘assessment’). Teachers’ declarative and procedural GPK is tested by the instrument thus covering various qualities of teacher knowledge (König et al., 2011).


