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## **Standards for Civic Education**

(in: *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte / Out of Politics and Contemporary History*, No. 12, 2005, pages 32 – 38, a supplement to the weekly journal *Das Parlament / The Parliament*)

The public reaction to the international comparative studies (PISA, TIMSS, IEA etc.) has found expression since 2001 in a large number of educational policy measures and demands. Although there have been studies of this kind since the 1970s, it was only first of all with the PISA study that the attention of the general public at large was aroused. And it was accompanying this public interest that politicians have recognized a strong need to take action for to make changes in the educational system. Only suppositions have been able to be made up to now on the reasons for these developments. There is, especially among parents, a latent discontent with schools in the population. The international competitiveness of the German economy appears to be threatened by the mediocre performance of the educational system. A public reaction was provoked only after the media had interpreted the results as a “catastrophy”.<sup>1</sup>

In the meantime, a variety of quality assurance measures have been introduced in the German Federal States. At the same time, the *KMK* (Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs) enacted the laws at national level to provide educational standards for the subjects German, mathematics and first foreign language in December 2003, and for physics, chemistry and biology in 2004. The subject of Civics is still not among these, but it must also be included. The *Institut für Qualitätsentwicklung im Bildungssystem* (Institute for Quality Development in the Educational System) has been set up at the Humboldt University in Berlin for to develop tests and activity pools, to put standards in a concrete form and to make them measurable. The standards for the education system are seen as an instrument

for assuring and raising quality. Therefore a change in paradigm has taken place. Hitherto, the educational system has been directed through the input of guidelines, budgetary plans etc. Now educational policy is being orientated with the help of standards to the learning results of pupils, i.e. to the output.

It is not to be assumed that a rise in performance can be achieved quickly with the introduction of standards. Rather a long drawn-out process should be expected. Experiences in the USA show this, where the development of standards had already been inaugurated in the 1980s.<sup>2</sup> Discussion has taken place there to the present on which type of standards are in use (e.g. content, performance or opportunity-to-learn standards<sup>3</sup>) and how they are developed. Added to this are the political contentious issues for instance between the federal states and the federal government or the struggle for allocation of the subjects that have to be incorporated in the group of standard-based subjects. In the USA, the experts seem to be in agreement that “standards can only change the school and the teaching and improve the teaching results if (a) the teacher has the necessary competencies and attitudes, or acquires them, (b) the school – supported by external advice – evaluates its own practices and continues to develop them, (c) the test procedures employed actually reflect the challenging educational goals, (d) schools, teachers and pupils respectively whose results are unsatisfactory are given targeted support.”<sup>4</sup> It appears to continue to be the case that teachers gear their teaching in practice less to standards and more to the test systems (teaching to the test).

Resulting from this is a series of policy control activities. In respect of the open issues on implementation and research in the USA, it can be estimated which educational and subject-didactic challenges are due to be faced by the German educational system. It is important to assert the claims of Civic Education in the on-going policy

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<sup>2</sup> See the presentation of Raymond A. Horn, Jr., *Standards Primer*, New York 2004.

<sup>3</sup> Opportunity-to-learn-standards stipulate the learning opportunities for learners; performance standards provide criteria for performance standards on the pupils' part, content standards compile the learning contents that the pupils have to master. Eckhard Klieme i.a., *Re.: The Development of National Educational Standards – an Expertise*, Berlin 2003, p. 24f.; Hermann Josef Abs, *Types of Standards in Civic Education* in: *GPJE* (publ.), *Test Tasks and Evaluations in Civic Education*, Schwalbach 2005 p. 9-22.

<sup>4</sup> Eckhard Klieme, *Justification, Implementation und Effect of Educational Standards. Current lines of discussion and empirical findings*, in: *Zeitschrift für Pädagogik* (Journal for Pedagogics), 50 (2004) 5, p. 631.

process. This purpose is served by the formulation of its own draft paper on national education standards by the “*Gesellschaft für Politikdidaktik und politische Jugend- und Erwachsenenbildung (GPJE)* (Society for Civic Education Didactics and Civic Youth and Adult Education)”.<sup>5</sup> Since the *KMK* had already commissioned work on educational standards in 2003, the following consequences resulted for the preparation of a draft paper by a scientific subject-related association: firstly the draft paper had to comply with the specifications of the *KMK* for the other subjects with regard to formal structure, scope and conception if it wanted to have any chance of being noticed and of having an impact on educational policy. Secondly it had to address a wider public (educational policy institutions, publishers, teachers’ associations, teachers) and not primarily a subject-related scientific audience. Thirdly, no new subject-related approach could be expected, but the standards had to represent pragmatically a broad consensus in the scientific didactics of political science.<sup>6</sup> This was necessary because the time-frame for the development appeared to be restricted at first to 5 months through the time-plan of the *KMK* for 2003.<sup>7</sup> So little that the standards decide over controversies in the didactics of political science, so little that they are obligated to a uniform didactic concept. All the same, they exhibit perspectives for solutions that are capable of reaching consensus for the aspects which are necessary for the further development.

The presentation of a draft paper on standards by a scientific subject-related association is an educational policy intervention that has been unprecedented to-date. The initiative to formulate standards for subjects otherwise emanates solely from the ministerial bureaucracy. However, the *KMK* is concentrating at first on subjects with a high lesson proportion and an established research landscape. Nevertheless, the policy endeavours on the quality of teaching should not be limited to these subjects. Also the social studies subjects have to be covered regularly within the framework of a system-monitoring if the educational reform is to be successful.

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<sup>5</sup> *GPJE*, Demands on National Educational Standards for the teaching of Civics as a subject in schools. A draft paper, Schwalbach 2004 ([www.gpje.de/bildungsstandards.htm](http://www.gpje.de/bildungsstandards.htm)). Specialized educationalists with many years of teaching experience have worked together on the formulation.

<sup>6</sup> On 16.9.2003, the general meeting of the *GPJE* decided unanimously to accept in principle the draft paper.

<sup>7</sup> The specialist association had to agree under time pressure, without long discussions of principles, on formulations that were capable of being met by approval. It is due to this quickness that many things have to be further developed. Re.: the decision-making process, see Wolfgang Sander, The

Preparatory work in Civic Education has already been effected through the international Civic Education studies.<sup>8</sup> The performance of German pupils in these studies has been rather mediocre, so that there is likewise here a need for control in respect of educational policy. The change in paradigm from an input to output orientation must not be confined to only some subjects. For even given all basic criticism on the introduction of educational standards, there is still agreement that “teaching should achieve something”.<sup>9</sup> The *GPJE* educational standards that are capable of reaching consensus were to be the reason for the *KMKz* to set up a commission. Activities that are desirable for subject didactics are to be coupled with a policy strategic procedure.

### **Development of educational standards for Civic Education**

The term educational standard is neither nationally or internationally uniformly used. Thus the German Federal States are working out new “educational standards” for the individual subjects in a continuation of their hitherto curricula and guidelines respectively. At the same time, “national standards” are being decided upon by the *KMK*. Klieme i.a. have suggested the following terminology usage in the scientific debate: “Educational standards formulate demands on teachers and pupils in school (...) Educational standards (...) pick up general education goals. They designate the competencies that the school has to impart to its pupils so that the key educational goals can be attained. The educational standards stipulate which competencies the children or young people are to acquire up to a specific school year level. The competencies are described in concrete terms in such a way that they can be

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educational standards from the background of the debate on the didactics of political science, in: *Politische Bildung* (Civic Education), 37 (2004) 3, p. 30f.

<sup>8</sup> Detlef Oesterreich, Civic Education of a 14 year-old in Germany. studies from the project Civic Education, Opladen 2002; Detlef Oesterreich, Open discussion climate in teaching and the civic education of young people, in: *Zeitschrift für Pädagogik* (Journal for Pedagogics), 49 (2003) 6, p. 817 – 836; Judith Torney-Purta u.a., Citizenship and Education in Twenty-eight Countries. Civic Knowledge and Engagement at Age Fourteen, Amsterdam 2001 (IEA-Studie).

<sup>9</sup> Peter Massing, The education policy and the pedagogic debate on the introduction of national education standards, in: *Politische Bildung* (Civic Education), 37 (2004) 3, p.17; see also Dagmar Richter, Discussions on educational standards – is everything just a déjà-vu experience? In: *ibid*, p. 20 – 29. An overview on the general educational critique is provided by Ulrich Herrmann, “Educational Standards” – expectations and conditions, constraints and chances, in: *Zeitschrift für Pädagogik* (Journal for Pedagogics), 49 (2003) 5, p. 625 – 639.

implemented in setting tasks and can be documented principally with the help of testing procedures.“<sup>10</sup>

Educational standards are accordingly orientated in their normative specifications towards the result (output). Their focus is, moreover, targeted on developing competencies that are subject-overlapping and subject- or domain-specific respectively. Thereby different levels of expectation can be formulated (minimum, control and ideal standards). The *KMK* can stipulate the average performance level through control standards. Since the educational standards relate to school subjects, an important role is accorded to the subject didactics in working out the operationalization and implementation.

The development of educational standards is faced with the principle dilemma to ensure a learning that is soundly subject-based and at the same time is meant to take into consideration the conditions for practical teaching. Good educational standards must be implementable and both the framework conditions and the individual interests have to be taken into account. According to Kristina Reiss, the integration of the standards “in practice is still not being examined or insufficiently so.”<sup>11</sup> Psychometric competency models that distinguish different stages or levels for the domain of politics have so far been lacking.<sup>12</sup> Their development is only beginning.<sup>13</sup> However, it is to be stressed that the German discussion on standards can be guided by the model of performance standards<sup>14</sup> for which a framework of

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<sup>10</sup> See Eckhard Klieme i.a. (note 3). p. 13. The tasks in the *GPJE* draft paper are no test tasks but solely learning tasks for the lesson. Regarding differentiation, see. Georg Weissenso, How can learning and test tasks fulfil the requirements of the educational standards? In: *Politische Bildung* (Civic Education), 37 (2004) 3, p. 70 – 81.

<sup>11</sup> “This study should be based on theoretically well-founded competency models which are so defined and associated that with their help courses of development of the (...) competency of pupils can be modelled over a lengthy period.” Kristina Reiss, Educational Standards and the Role of the Subject Didactics, for example Mathematics, in: *Zeitschrift für Pädagogik* (Journal for Pedagogics), 50 (2004) 5, p. 648.

<sup>12</sup> Competency models with a solid psychological reliability which are based on Rasch scalable tests are to be differentiated from input-orientated competency models which develop prescriptively e.g. democratic, methodical, social, or political competency.

<sup>13</sup> There are smaller pilot studies on the competency to make political judgement which are based on a one-dimensional competency model. Peter Massing / Jessica Simone Schattschneider, Tasks on the Standards for Civic Education. Results of a Pilot Study, in: *GPJE* (publ.): Test Tasks and Evaluations in Civic Education, Schwalbach 2005, p. 23 – 40; Georg Weissenso, Test Tasks for Civic Education, in: *GPJE* (publ.): Test Tasks and Evaluations in Civic Education, Schwalbach 2005, p. 41 – 60.

<sup>14</sup> The test questions in the USA are orientated contrastly to the model of the content-standards. In Germany the core curricula and syllabuses of the German Federal States are generally content standards, which can be checked empirically in the form of knowledge tests. The development of comparative works moves in this direction. A core curriculum in the subject didactics has been drafted for the *Oberstufe* (sixth form) by Günter C.

domain-specific demands that the pupils have to master is to be outlined. These components of a domain-specific competency are scientific constructs which are necessary for the testing procedure.

Considering the *GPJE* draft paper on educational standards for Civic Education from an angle of teaching and testing psychology, then it becomes clear that the formulations conceived in 2003 still do not meet these demands in all points. The standards have to be developed further in this direction. This is happening meanwhile via the subject-related discourse in journals and at conferences.<sup>15</sup> This process is not surprising because the development of national educational standards for Civic Education as test standards necessitates a new thinking in regard to traditional concepts. The classification of the *GPJE* standards is pursuant to the educational standards for other subjects presented prior to this by the *KMK*. 1.) The contribution of the subject of Civic Education to education, 2.) the areas of competency and finally 3.) the standards for the areas of competency are described.<sup>16</sup>

## Philosophy and Civic Education

The formulation of the educational goals of the subject in the canon of school subjects that was undertaken in the first chapter of *GPJE* standards is in line with the tradition of theory formulation for the didactics of political science. The leading goal of political maturity is an element of the philosophy of the subject and is not to be understood as competency within the sense of a competency model that has a solid psychological reliability.<sup>17</sup> The draft paper describes furthermore an all-embracing

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Behrman i.a., Politics. Core Curriculum for Social Studies for the *Oberstufe* in the *Gymnasium* (grammar school), in: Tenorth, Heinz Elmar (publ.): Core Curriculum for *Oberstufe* II in the *Gymnasium*, Weinheim/Basel 2004, p. 322-406. This concept is discussed in: *GPJE* (publ.), Civic Education between individualized learning and educational standards, Schwalbach 2004, p. 41 – 60.

<sup>15</sup> Examples for this are the No. 3 (2004) of the *Zeitschrift Politische Bildung* (Journal for Civic Education) und die volumes 3 und 4 series of writings of the *GPJE*. Alone the *GPJE* has been involved for two years and at two specialist conferences with the question of standardization. The discussion has a wide basis and is not concluded.

<sup>16</sup> Aspects of these standards have been taken up by the commission established to newly formulate the “*Einheitliche Prüfungsanforderungen in der Abiturprüfung (EPA)* – standard examination requirements for the Abitur examination”.

<sup>17</sup> See Hermann Josef Abs, Indicators for the introduction of standards in Civic Education, in: *Politische Bildung* (Civic Education), 37 (2004) 3, p. 82f. Regarding political maturity in general: Siegfried Schiele (publ.), Political Maturity, Schwalbach 2004.

political concept, the preparation for life in a modern democracy and the Beutelsbacher Consensus. The subject philosophy further includes the readiness to participate and to engage oneself as elements of the political culture, the orientation to current political events and the longterm problem situation behind them, as well as a look at the further development of the democratic system, its ideas of man and concepts of order. From a subject-systematic viewpoint, politics in a narrower sense, the problems of living together in society and the legal problems are differentiated. The subject philosophy is examined in the concepts of categorial didactics of Civic Education. Categories such as power, law, interests, human dignity, peace etc are used in many conceptions of structuring teaching content.<sup>18</sup> The medium for their pedagogic implementation are guidelines and core curricula which facilitate the understanding of what Civic Education is really about.

The subject philosophy and the categorial didactics of political science do not represent in the meantime any concept of core ideas of the subject that is needed to be able to determine empirically-valid competency requirements. Included in the core ideas are fundamental conceptual ideas, the operations and procedure of thought associated here, as well as the basic knowledge attributed to them.<sup>19</sup> The research into these is to a large extent desirable within the context of didactics of political science and this should be fully processed. The didactics of political science must work out core ideas for different age levels in respect to politics, power, interests, freedom, justice and others, in order thereby to find the connection to a justification of competency models in terms of learning theory.

Hitherto, there has not been any reliable learning-theory model which explains the development of domain-specific comprehension performances and the significance of the systematic networking of different elements of knowledge. The comprehension of highly complex realms of content, as e.g. politics, requires that in the course of the learning history the features of definition for the opening up of the subjects become more and more important, whereas everyday intuitive features, as e.g. a person's own opinion, moves into the background. The development of elaborated concepts is

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<sup>18</sup> Included here are the didactics from the 1970s of Hermann Giesecke, Wolfgang Hilligen und Bernhard Sutor. The new justifications begin with Paul Ackermann i.a., *Didactics of Civic Education: a summary*, Bonn 1994.

<sup>19</sup> Eckhard Klieme (note 3), p. 19.

an active and a very time-consuming process which must begin in primary school. The pupils must discover alternatives to their intuitive and often non-tenable political explanations. Thus we observe that children in the 4<sup>th</sup> schoolyear attribute 'power' to the parties and to the hierarchy in interpersonal relationships, as for instance "the CDU which would like to be the leader". These pre-concepts are removed in favour of scientifically tenable concepts which bind political power to a decision-making authority and an institution. The politicians in the *Bundestag* (German Federal Parliament) "decide over, for example now, BSE, what precisely happens or does not happen there."<sup>20</sup> The subject-related didactical teaching research has to become more involved with the psychology-of-learning research into operations of thought and the knowledge basis assigned to them.<sup>21</sup> A way to further develop the standards is to elaborate the core ideas of the subject.

### The Competency Model of the GPJE

The second chapter of the *GPJE* draft paper presents the underlying competency model. A three-fold dimensioning is undertaken in the areas of competency: The ability to make political judgement, the ability to act politically, and methodical capabilities.

<i>Conceptual Interpretation</i>	
<b>Ability to make political judgement</b>	<b>Ability to act politically</b>
Political events, problems and controversies, as well as issues of economic and social developments, analysed and judged in a reflective way under factual and value aspects	Formulate opinions, convictions and interests, represent them appropriately in front of other people, conduct negotiation processes and reach compromises.
<b>Methodical capabilities</b>	
Work independently on current political themes and orientate oneself to economic, legal and social issues, handle specialist themes using different methods and organize one's further political learning	

Source: GPJE (note 5), p. 13.

<sup>20</sup> See Georg Weissenso, An Orientation to the World of Life – a suitable concept for Civic Education in the primary school? In: Hans-Werner Kuhn (publ.), *Sozialwissenschaftlicher Sachunterricht* (Social Studies Teaching), Herbolzheim 2003, p. 91 – 98.

<sup>21</sup> Qualitative analysis from the research into subject-related teaching already provides criteria for further work e.g. on the concepts of power, morality, politics, law, stability of money, interests. see. i.a. Georg Weissenso, Types of Learners and Didactics on Learners in the Teaching of Politics, Frankfurt/ M. 1989; Tilman Grammes/Georg Weissenso (publ.), *Social Studies Lessons*, Opladen 1993; Tilman Grammes, *Communicative Subject-related Didactics*, Opladen 1998; Peter Henkenborg/ Hans-Werner Kuhn (publ.), *Everyday Teaching of Politics*, Opladen 1998; Dagmar Richter (Hrsg.), *Methods of Teaching Interpretation*, Weinheim and Munich 2000; Hans- Werner Kuhn (Hrsg.), *Formation of Judgement in the Teaching of Politics*, Schwalbach 2003; Carla Schelle, *A Hermeneutic Reconstruction of the Teaching of Political History*, Bad Heilbrunn 2003.

The specifications in the *GPJE* draft paper were made in a pragmatic way and were met with broad approval through the participation of the members.<sup>22</sup> Anyway “the fundament of educational standards is currently secured in a lot of fields rather more pragmatically than theoretically stringently.”<sup>23</sup> Therefore the standard formulations of *GPJE* are in a certain part more implicitly than explicitly theory-driven. The competency model is still not empirically valid because a competency diagnostics in terms of the didactics for political science is only being developed. A differentiation is made from the model of the American National Assessment Governing Board, which distinguishes between the dimensions of ‘civic knowledge, ‘intellectual and participatory skills’ and ‘civic dispositions’.<sup>24</sup> The *GPJE* has presented performance standards within the sense of the Klieme expertise.

### **Ability to make political judgement**

The area of competency assumes a central importance for the ability to make political judgement because it is testable via test activities.<sup>25</sup> The draft paper interprets judgement as statements on people or facts. Three steps are distinguished: the recalling of facts, the political analysis and the judgement itself. These three steps can be understood as a model for the development of competency, which move between less and more in the amount of differentiated knowledge. In doing so, not just new pieces are added to the individual stocks of knowledge but the new pieces can restructure the old pieces in a qualitatively

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<sup>22</sup> The discussion on the *GPJE* Standards has also been initiated by teachers’ associations at various meetings of teachers of Politics.

<sup>23</sup> Heinz- Elmar Tenorth, Education Standards and Core Curriculum, Systematic Context, Theoretical Educational Problems, in: *Zeitschrift für Pädagogik* (Journal for Pedagogics), 50 (2004) 5, p. 651.

<sup>24</sup> National Assessment Governing Board, Civics framework for the 1998 national assessment of educational progress (NAEP Civics Consensus Project), Washington/DC. In the USA criticism is voiced at the theme-related tests of the NAEP, because the questions i.a. mainly refer to contexts dealing with the knowledge of institutions and with the history of ideas and not with everyday politics. An overview of the critical points is provided by Richard G. Niemi/Mitchell S. Sanders, Assessing student performance in civics: The NAEP 1998 civics assessment, in: *Theory and Research in Social Education*, 32 (2004) 3, p. 326 – 348.

<sup>25</sup> This area was translated in two pilot studies into test tasks (see note 13). There are a large number of conceptional work of subject educationalist on the topic of formation of political judgement. See for example *Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung* /Federal Agency for Civic Education (publ.), *Formation of Political Judgement. Tasks and ways for the teaching of Politics*, Bonn 1997.

different way. This is assumed at a different level for all school stages (primary, secondary stage I and II).<sup>26</sup>

In this context it is furthermore pointed out in the draft paper that there should be solely formal criteria. Nevertheless, judgements are described e.g. as to the following subject-related core concepts: 1.) commitment to basic rights and political freedom, 2.) constitutional statehood and separation of powers, 3.) democracy as popular government, 4.) party democracy, 5.) principle of the welfare state, 6.) pluralism, 7.) basic principles of the market economy. This already makes clear that standards should be in no way confined to formal criteria. Should the idea of a reflective arbitral judgement on political issues be further connected with the judgement concept, then a description of the judgements in terms of content must be undertaken. "Political judgements are never judgement on facts. They require factual conceptions, but in their core they are always normative. Their normativeness lies in the fact that they furnish the circumstances addressed in the judgement with evaluations and/or with provisions for a course of action. (...) Furthermore, one cannot avoid taking sides with political judgements. For they are based on weighing-up considerations."<sup>27</sup>

The political judgement has to be weighted in content as a special form of judgement. The area of possibility for judgements on a factual circumstance or on the stages of the competency level is to be determined beforehand in future empirical studies in content on a scale of test values.<sup>28</sup> Insofar, the continual development of the term and concept of ability to judge politically is required from a subject-related and empirical viewpoint. Both the pilot studies on Civic Education have laid down standards in terms of content for the role of public representatives, for voting, for social justice, for the action of players as well as for the election of the Federal President and for models of democracy. This has been done for to be able to interpret the results from a theory basis. In this case, the formulation of standards in the draft paper was not sufficient. As a level they have differentiated between

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<sup>26</sup> The assumption of a progressive development of competencies has been justifiably questioned because the model of the GPJE does not allow any empirically-testable statements to be made about at which school stage which degree is to be reached. Hermann Josef Abs (note 17), p. 84.

<sup>27</sup> Joachim Detjen, Ability to make political judgement – a domain-specific core competency of Civic Education, in: *Politische Bildung* (Civic Education), 37 (2004) 3, p. 52.

reproducing, applying, judging (Peter Massing/Jessica Schattschneider) or understanding, analyzing, judging (Georg Weissenro), in order to be able to test the competency in the ability to make political judgement.<sup>29</sup> The findings show that teaching attaches too little value to the preparing the way for pupils to gain experience in judgement. They are significantly better with questions involving understanding and analysis than with questions involving judgement. Neither understanding nor analyzing are an adequate condition for the latter. It must be determined more precisely in follow-up studies what are the conditions for judging.

### **Ability to act politically and methodical capabilities**

Civic Education is not only a matter of building up knowledge but always also of developing practical capabilities for to be able to participate in the public arena and in political discussions in the context of private and occupational situations. This area of competency can be examined more closely via process-related standards. Involved here are attitude measurements, not the documentation of actual action, knowledge and capability. Ascertained are especially data on the school and teaching environment, the readiness to engage oneself in the civic society, the attitudes on the possibilities for participation. These studies are traditionally lodged in the political research into socialization and culture as well as in the educational research on young people.<sup>30</sup> In addition, teachers can be questioned on their attitudes to politics. These studies enable indicators to be attained that show which conception of goals, interests and models are present in the school, what degree of politicization can be expected and which model of citizenship is realistic or dominant.

The methodical capabilities are mostly subject-overlapping. Nevertheless, the working techniques can only be efficient when they are linked with content. They are

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<sup>28</sup> Wilfried Bos/Jürgen Baumert, Possibilities, Limits and Perspectives of International Educational Research: the example TIMSS/III, in: *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte* (Out of Politics and Contemporary History), Vol. 35-36/1999, p. 5.

<sup>29</sup> The American measurements of performance differentiate in respect of intellectual skills between 1) identifying and describing, 2) explaining and analyzing, 3) evaluating, taking and defending positions on public issues. Susan C. Loomis/Mary L. Bourque, National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). Achievement levels 1992 -1998 for civics, Washington/DC 2001, p. 5. The NAEP define e.g. defending position as follows: "Defending a position refers to advancing arguments and offering evidence in favour of one`s position and responding to or taking into account arguments opposed to one`s position." NAEP (note 24), p. 27.

<sup>30</sup> See e.g. Detlef Oesterreich (note 8); The Shell Studies on Young People; Hans Merckens/Jürgen Zinnecker, *Jahrbuch Jugendforschung* (Year-book Research into Young People), Wiesbaden 2004.

not teachable. Rather more, metacognitive competencies are a distillation taken from experiences of learning with content.<sup>31</sup> Methodical competence cannot be directly trained but can only be attained in association with the acquisition of challenging content.<sup>32</sup>

## Conclusions

External evaluations represent a challenge for the didactics of political science and for teachers. They are often seen critically. People are warned about having illusions of being able to control them and the authority of the interpretation of empirical findings is controversial even before something can be tested empirically. Moreover, both the theory and the practice of Civic Education are challenged to come up with answers for what is desired. The didactics of political science has to contribute more to the work in practice and to give the teachers a empirically reliable feedback on their performances. The teachers have to get to grips more with the theory on the didactics of political science if they want to do something towards improving educational standards. Joint evaluation and planning groups can make a contribution to bringing about a reform that is suitable for the practice. The output measurements have absolutely a practical use when e.g. too many demands or too few demands on people are identified or the level of performance is determined in line with criteria and standards. However, the problem field can only be worked on jointly by all participants. It is necessary to have an intensification in the exchange of profession and scientific didactics of Civic Education, in order to develop test tasks and to formulate learning tasks that are able to be evaluated. The chances available for improving quality in teaching and in learning performances should be used.

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<sup>31</sup> Elsbeth Stern/ Kornelia Möller, The acquisition of knowledge that can provide a link-up as goal of primary school teaching, in: *Zeitschrift für Erziehungswissenschaft* (Journal for Educational Science), supplement No. 3 (2004), p. 33.

<sup>32</sup> A large number of teaching models have appeared in the journal: *Politische Bildung* (Civic Education) which shows at least at the planning level how demanding contents can be imparted.