

Career Orientation in Germany

The issue of vocational / career orientation and career guidance has become very important in Germany in the last years. This can be stated because once everywhere deficits in the current state of the career choice of young people are identified and discussed.

Young people who face the transition from school into apprenticeship and / or the labor market don't have it easy to make the right individual choice with a broad range of influences and information. Therefore it is important to know early on both (a) information about the world of work and the perspectives after school and (b) their own desires, strengths and weaknesses.

Sometimes career orientation becomes reduced to the fact that it is a process in which a preparation is made on the future career choices of learners. In this process targeted information about occupations and career fields that are presented must be assessed and the associated requirements have also to be clarified. Sometimes this view is supplemented by information on the meaning of professions and occupations. In this condensed view of career orientation and career choice is almost equal.

This view of vocational / career orientation does, however, clearly too short because it sticks to a very classical view. This view consists of career orientation in public schools with their special curricula and the focus on internships for their pupils. This classical view also contains company visits in schools and professional advice of workers / occupational agents in schools as well as visits to job information centers.

According to the 'Bundesagentur für Arbeit' (Federal Employment Agency) the tasks of career orientation measures include:

- to give young people the opportunity to review their abilities and skills concerning a possible career choices and to evaluate to orient themselves in the multitude of professions and to make a career choice,
- to show young people the necessary skills for taking up vocational training and
- to integrate young people in a sustainable way into the education market.¹

In a modern way vocational career orientation encompasses tasks that arise in the context of the preparation and execution of transitions in work or training. They focus on professional orientation by exploring individual conditions and prerequisites and vocational requirements on the labour market. In addition, the integration of these two perspectives in the form of a matching process is relevant. In consequence, there is an implementation task, in which the learner has to make his decisions and implementation steps are carried out (targeted job search, writing application forms, etc.). Specific training or work placement opportunities are not in the foreground. But rather individual support needs a holistic approach. It leads to individual sustainable skill development and development of competencies. This aims to give the learner the opportunity for a self-directed professional orientation and reorientation.²

In the handout 'vocational training pact – career orientation' of the 'Bundesagentur für Arbeit' (Federal Employment Agency) three phases of the career orientation are highlighted:

- (a) orientation phase,
- (b) decision-making phase and
- (c) implementation phase.³

¹ See BUNDESAGENTUR FÜR ARBEIT 2010.

² See KREMER, H.-H. 2010, S. 5. And see BEUTNER, M./FREHE, P./KREMER, H.-H./ZOYKE, A. 2009

³ See Ausbildungspakt Berufsorientierung 2006, S. 10.

This leads to a modern five step approach in German Vocational and Career Orientation:

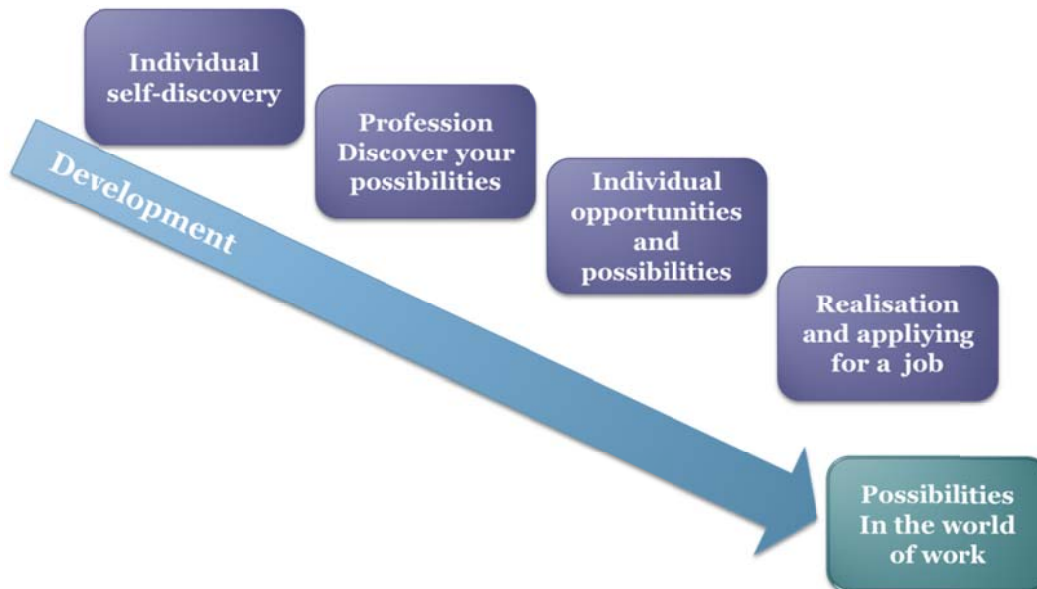


Figure 1: 5 Steps of Career orientation in Germany⁴

The core elements in this process are:

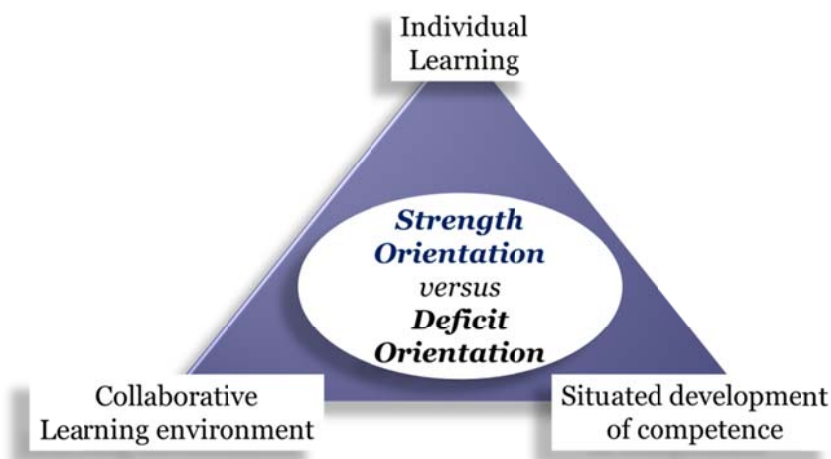


Figure 2: Core elements

⁴ See Beutner / Gebbe / Kremer 2009, p. 39-70 and see Beutner / Frehe / Kremer / Zoyke 2009, p. 15-38.

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