

Johanna Maria Gold  
Universität Bielefeld  
Research School Education and Capabilities

Breite Straße 37  
33602 Bielefeld  
[Johanna\\_maria.gold@uni-bielefeld.de](mailto:Johanna_maria.gold@uni-bielefeld.de)

## Entrance requirements to the experimental College “Oberstufen-Kolleg”

### A chance to overcome social injustice in education?

The German school system is very selective. The main way of transition between the several types of schools (Hauptschule, Realschule and Gymnasium) is the way downward to a worse type of school (Bellenberg, 1999). The young students are restricted by their school grades in the first four school years. These grades and the recommendation they receive from their teachers decide about their further way of education. Once set in a school type there are only a few possibilities to switch to a higher type of school. Furthermore the passage from the tenth grade into the secondary school's upper level and thus to the chance of achieving a university entrance diploma is also restricted by school grades. Many studies (Baumert/Schümer, 2001, p. 323-407) document a close interrelation between the social background and the educational opportunities. The social standing of the student's families is one of the determining factors for the student's aspiration to higher education, their strategies and techniques of learning and their school achievement. In turn the school achievement decides about the recommendation and therefore about the way of higher education. From this interrelation results, that the concept of “performance fairness” which is propagated in the majority of German schools is insufficient to provide equal opportunities (Bourdieu, 1971, p.19-91). Contrariwise the concept of “performance fairness” replicates the existing disparity. Social selectivity and missing social mobility restrict the options of a person to the effect that the personal development is early and durable restricted. This matter of fact is contradictory to the definition of development as amplification of real freedom and the comprehension of justice. So the German education system seems to be not adapted to request the potential of certain groups in particular the group of socially deprived people.

The experimental College “Oberstufen-Kolleg” tries to go beyond these systems and reorganise the access to higher education. The entry requirements to the secondary school's upper level (Sekundarstufe II) at the “Oberstufen-Kolleg” differ from entry requirements at regular schools. At regular schools students need a formal qualification to pass into the secondary school's upper level. This formal qualification is solely based school grades. The admission procedure at the “Oberstufen-Kolleg” contains three aspects:

1. Last attended school's end of year grades
2. Personal discussion
3. Presentation of a scientific product

The discussion and the presentation of the scientific product are attended by two teachers and a student of the "Oberstufen-Kolleg" (aside from the applicant). After this procedure the applicants are classified into three categories (A, B and C) irrespective of their end of year grades. All applicants who achieved category A are accepted into the "Oberstufen-Kolleg", the remaining places are shared in equal parts to B-applicants with and without a formal qualification for attending secondary school's upper level (Boller/ Keymer/ Mentz/ Rosowski/ Schweihofen, 2004, p.8-10).

Along the way the "Oberstufen-Koleg" avoids focusing on formal school achievement in form of school grades and makes so a contribution to break the process of replication of social injustice in the German education system.

The "Oberstufen-Kolleg" accomplishes two things. On the one hand the access to education, what means that the students who failed in the regular school system receive the chance to achieve the university entrance diploma, on the other hand the process of education, what means that the pupils are supported in several ways during their education. The admission procedure in the OSK elevates the substantial freedoms of the pupils to actually participate at the sixth form and the support systems help to develop the capabilities to reach the intention to achieve the baccalaureate.

## References

- Baumert/ Schümer (2001): Familiäre Lebensverhältnisse, Bildungsbeteiligung und Kompetenzerwerb. In: Deutsches PISA-Konsortium (Hrsg.): PISA 2000 – Basiskompetenzen von Schülerinnen und Schülern im internationalen Vergleich. Opladen 2001, p. 323-407
- Bellenberg, Gabriele. (1999): Individuelle Schullaufbahnen. Eine empirische Untersuchung über Bildungsverläufe von der Einschulung bis zum Abschluss. Weinheim [u.a.] : Juventa-Verl.
- Boller/ Keymer/ Mentz/ Rosowski/ Schweihofen (2004): Das Aufnahmeverfahren am Oberstufen-Kolleg das Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen an der Universität Bielefeld. Beitrag zum Peer-Review. Bielefeld: Oberstufen-Kolleg Bielefeld: 8-10
- Bourdieu, Pierre; Passeron, Jean-Claude (1971): Die Illusion der Chancengleichheit: Untersuchungen zur Soziologie des Bildungswesens am Beispiel Frankreichs. Stuttgart: Klett , 1971 p19-91