

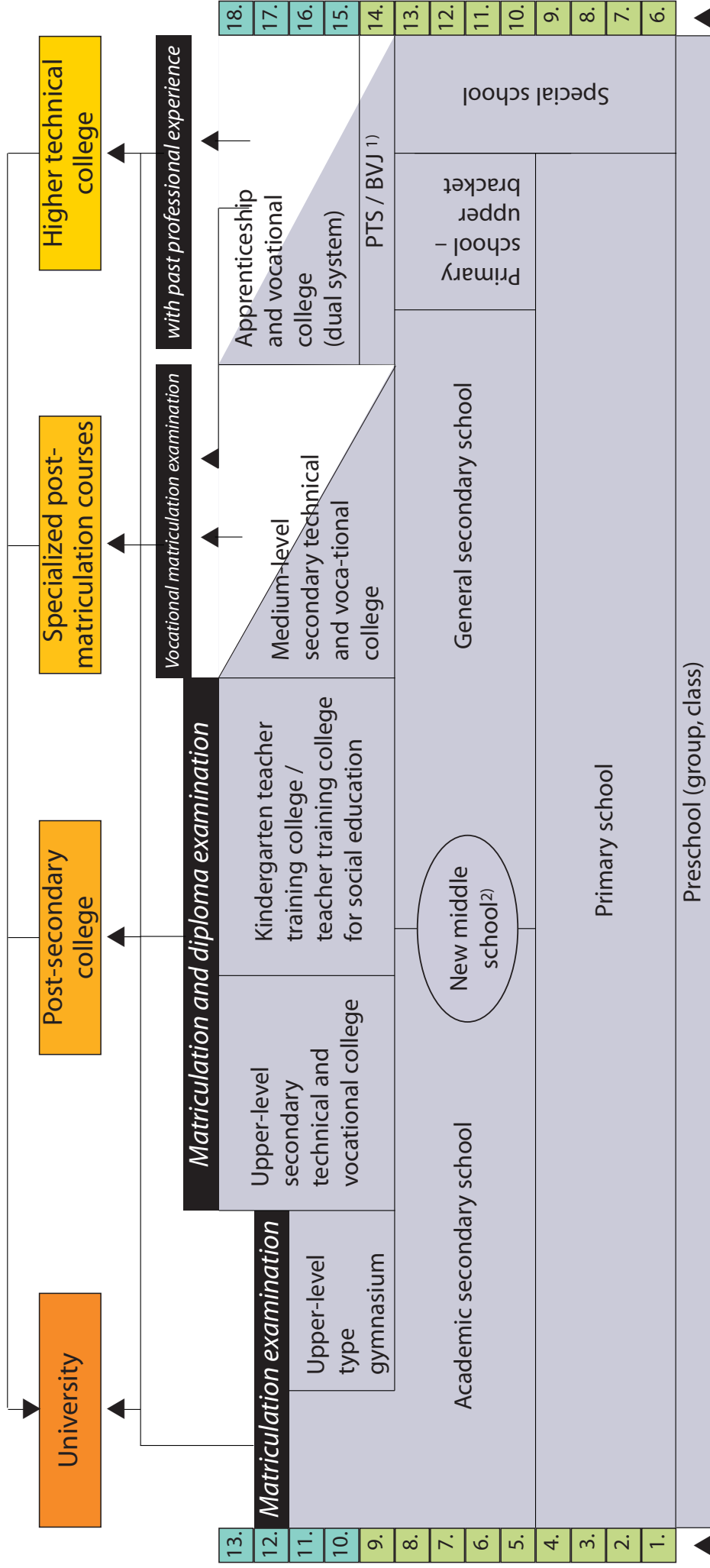


EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY  
EDUCATIONAL COUNSELLING

WE KNOW THE WAY FORWARD



# Educational Opportunities *in Austria*



Year Age

**Compulsory schooling** <sup>1)</sup> polytechnic school / Career preparation year <sup>2)</sup> Model test

# 1 COMPULSORY SCHOOLS

## Compulsory education

School attendance is compulsory for all children who are permanent residents of Austria. Compulsory schooling starts on September 1 following a child's sixth birthday and lasts nine school years. Compulsory schooling means attending the types of school listed below:

- In the *first four school years*

a Grundschule/Volksschule (primary school) or Sonderschule (special school);

- in the *fifth to eighth school years*

a Hauptschule (general secondary school), allgemeinbildende höhere Schule (academic secondary school), Volksschuloberstufe (primary school - upper bracket) or Sonderschuloberstufe (special school - upper bracket);

- in the *ninth school year*

a Polytechnische Schule (polytechnic school), continued attendance at Volksschule (primary school), Hauptschule (general secondary school), or Sonder-schule (special school), or attendance/continued attendance at a medium- or higher-level school.

## Grundschule (primary school) (ages 6 to 10)

All school-age children have to be registered by their parents or guardians at the primary school in the district where they live.

- Depending on the capabilities and needs of the child, he or she may require up to three years to master the material on the curriculum for grades 1 and 2. The following options are available: children who in the opinion of the school principal or class teacher will need three years for the first two grades (and in some cases nursery school) will either be put into classes with children in first grade or first and second grade, or they will be put into separate nursery school classes at the beginning of or in the course of the first year.

- *Early admission:* Children who are not yet of school age, but will reach the age of seven by 1 March the following calendar year and are not overtaxed by the requirements of the first grade, may be admitted to the first grade early provided their parents submit such a request (ruling in force since 1.9.2006).

- Starting in the school year 1998/99, the first grade curriculum will include required classes in a modern language, however without a grading requirement. After a transitional period ending with the school year 2003/04, required classes in “modern languages” are now compulsory in all primary school classes from first grade on.

- *Transfer:* in the fourth grade, parents or guardians are informed and advised about the recommended further educational opportunities for the pupil, based on his or her interests and past achievements. Successful completion of fourth grade is the requirement for admission to a *Hauptschule* (general secondary school).

Please refer to section 2 for conditions for admission to an *allgemeinbildende höhere Schule* (academic secondary school).

**Visit [www.schulpsychologie.at/hsoderahs](http://www.schulpsychologie.at/hsoderahs) for information on educational options after primary school.**

### **Hauptschule (general secondary school) (ages 10 to 14)**

The Hauptschule (general secondary school) is incorporated in a community and is relatively flexible in meeting the different needs of students (depending on region, individual interests, talents, etc.).

- In German, mathematics and modern languages, the children are streamed according to their ability such that the individual needs of students can be met. In these classes instruction is mainly given in small groups. The top stream must meet the requirements of the *allgemeinbildende höhere Schule* (academic secondary school).

- Additional tutoring is offered in all required subjects, and students frequently take advantage of this possibility for subjects in which they are grouped by ability.

- Within certain limits, each school can adjust the courses it offers to suit its specific situation. It may even be entitled to issue autonomous curricula. In this way a school may develop its own special profile or priorities (e.g. languages, music, art and design, sports, science, ecology, computer science, etc.).

- In addition, there are special types of general secondary school with a sports or music and arts bias.

In the third and fourth forms, particular attention is paid to preparing pupils for working life. This is accomplished by means of required "career orientation" classes, through job-sampling days, and on excursions and field trips. If a student has reached a certain level of achievement at a *Hauptschule* (general secondary school) he or she may be transferred directly to *allgemeinbildende höhere Schule* (academic secondary school) or to *berufsbildende mittlere and höhere Schule* (medium and higher-level secondary technical and vocational college).

### **Integration of children with special educational needs in primary schools, general secondary schools and the first grade of academic secondary schools:**

Integrative instruction and integrative counselling offer children and young people with and without disabilities the opportunity of learning together. Children with special educational needs can be integrated in primary school and general secondary school grades and in the lowest grade of academic secondary schools. School trials in integrative instruction may be held at polytechnic schools.

### **Sonderschule (special school) (ages 6 to 15)**

Special schools comprise eight grades, or nine if polytechnic schools or a career preparation year are taken into account. With the approval of the school authorities and the consent of the school financiers, students can attend a special school for up to twelve years. Austrian special schools comprise ten different branches. Students receive a basic education from specially trained teachers who use methods tailored to meet the child's individual requirements; this schooling is designed to prepare the student for career training or further education.

The following types of special school exist, each with different curricula:

Special schools with their own curricula:

*Allgemeine Sonderschule* (general-purpose special school) (for

children with learning disabilities); special schools for blind and deaf children and children with serious handicaps.

● Special schools using the curriculum of a *Volksschule* (primary school), *Hauptschule* (general secondary school), *Polytechnische Schule* (polytechnic school) or other type of special school:

● special schools for the physically handicapped, for children with speech impairments, for the visually handicapped, for the hard-of-hearing, and reform schools as well as hospital schools.

● The class in “career orientation in the 7th and 8th grades” was introduced as a compulsory subject at special schools in 1998. This required class is designed to help young people critically examine their personal development, their inclinations, interests and career aspirations, to give them an insight into everyday working life, and to open up possibilities for them to choose their own personal career paths.

● The “career preparation year” in the ninth grade of special schools is yet another means of preparing young people with special educational needs for working and professional life. This is designed to enable students to develop their own personal perspectives for their lives and jobs by means of general education and career oriented classes.

### **Polytechnische Schule (polytechnic school) (ages 14 to 15)**

Polytechnic schools can be attended after the eighth school grade and comprise only one grade. In the ninth, or a voluntary tenth school year, students are prepared for later life and especially for a career with more in-depth general education classes, career orientation and basic vocational training. An orientation period at the start of the school year and career orientation as the basic goal of all courses create numerous opportunities for students to become familiar with working life. A programme of company visits and job-sampling days at companies, non-school institutions and workshops is designed to help students select their vocation.

Basic vocational training is offered in various trades (elective subjects). These correspond to a wide variety of careers in trade and industry, and enable students to acquire basic abilities, skills and knowledge (key qualifications). Students’ individual talents and learning abilities are encouraged by means of practical, career-oriented learning. The curriculum of required subjects is broken down into core and non-core areas, and capable students are able to acquire additional qualifications.

Depending on his or her vocational interests and inclinations, each student selects one of seven subject areas:

- METAL
- ELECTRICAL
- WOOD
- CONSTRUCTION
- COMMERCE/CLERICAL
- SERVICES
- TOURISM

In addition to, or instead of, these subject areas, autonomous curricula make it possible for each school to offer new subjects such as information technology or mechatronics with special consideration for regional career opportunities and the interests of its students.

A more in-depth general education is offered in required general education subjects (religion, career orientation and life skills, political education and economics, German, modern languages (English), mathematics, physical education and sports, natural history, ecology and health). German, mathematics and English are taught in streamed classes and/or in career-oriented groups.

Thanks to the fact that tuition in elective subjects totals 14 periods per week, and in required subjects 18 periods per week, students acquire the basic vocational knowledge and skills to give them the best possible qualifications for entering into apprenticeships or transferring to more advanced schools. Autonomous school curricula make it possible to adjust the total number of periods per week both in elective subjects and in required subjects to suit regional circumstances and the students' interests.

The curriculum at polytechnic schools also allows for a broad spectrum of voluntary interest- and performance-oriented subjects, special interest groups and remedial courses.

A network of polytechnic schools is maintained throughout Austria, and depending on local circumstances they are run either as independent schools or in organizational units together with academic secondary schools.

Students who pass the final examination at a polytechnic school are also entitled to transfer to the second grade of a medium-level secondary vocational college of the same type with at least 15 hours/week in their selected area of specialization, or to the first grade of a higher-level vocational college without taking an entrance examination.

### **Model test *Neue Mittelschule* (New Middle School)**

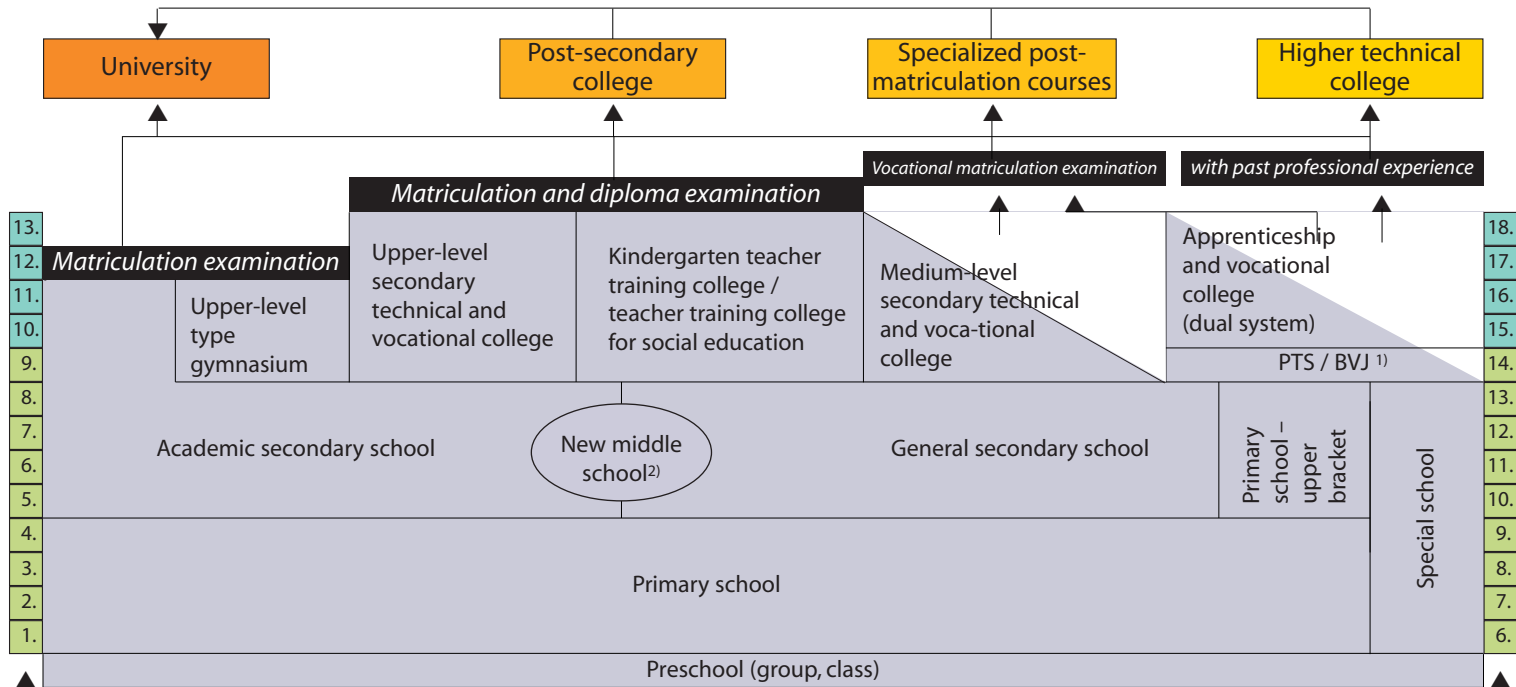
The goal of model tests with the *Neue Mittelschule* (NMS) (new middle school) is to provide a joint school for all 10- to 14-year olds that is open to all students who have completed the fourth grade in primary school.

Apart from eliminating separation of children into different educational avenues too early on, a central feature of the NMS is broad implementation of a new learning culture based on individualization and inner differentiation. This means that every child and his/her individual capabilities and talents can be challenged and nurtured. Children are given sufficient time and assistance to learn the material at their own speed, and they also have additional resources at their disposal to help develop their particular talents actively.

Instruction at the NMS follows the curriculum for the lower level (5th to 8th grade) of the AHS (academic secondary school) and is designed by teachers from *Hauptschule* (general secondary school) and AHS working together in teams. Successful completion of NMS entitled students – depending on their educational goals – to attend a more advanced middle school or upper school.

Model tests with the New Middle School are regulated by § 7a of the Public School Law, which ensures that schooling started at a New Middle School can also be completed. Additional model plans can be submitted by the provincial school boards/the City of Vienna school board until the 2011/12 school year, so that additional locations may be added.

**Further information is also available on the Internet at:  
[www.neuemittelschule.at](http://www.neuemittelschule.at).**



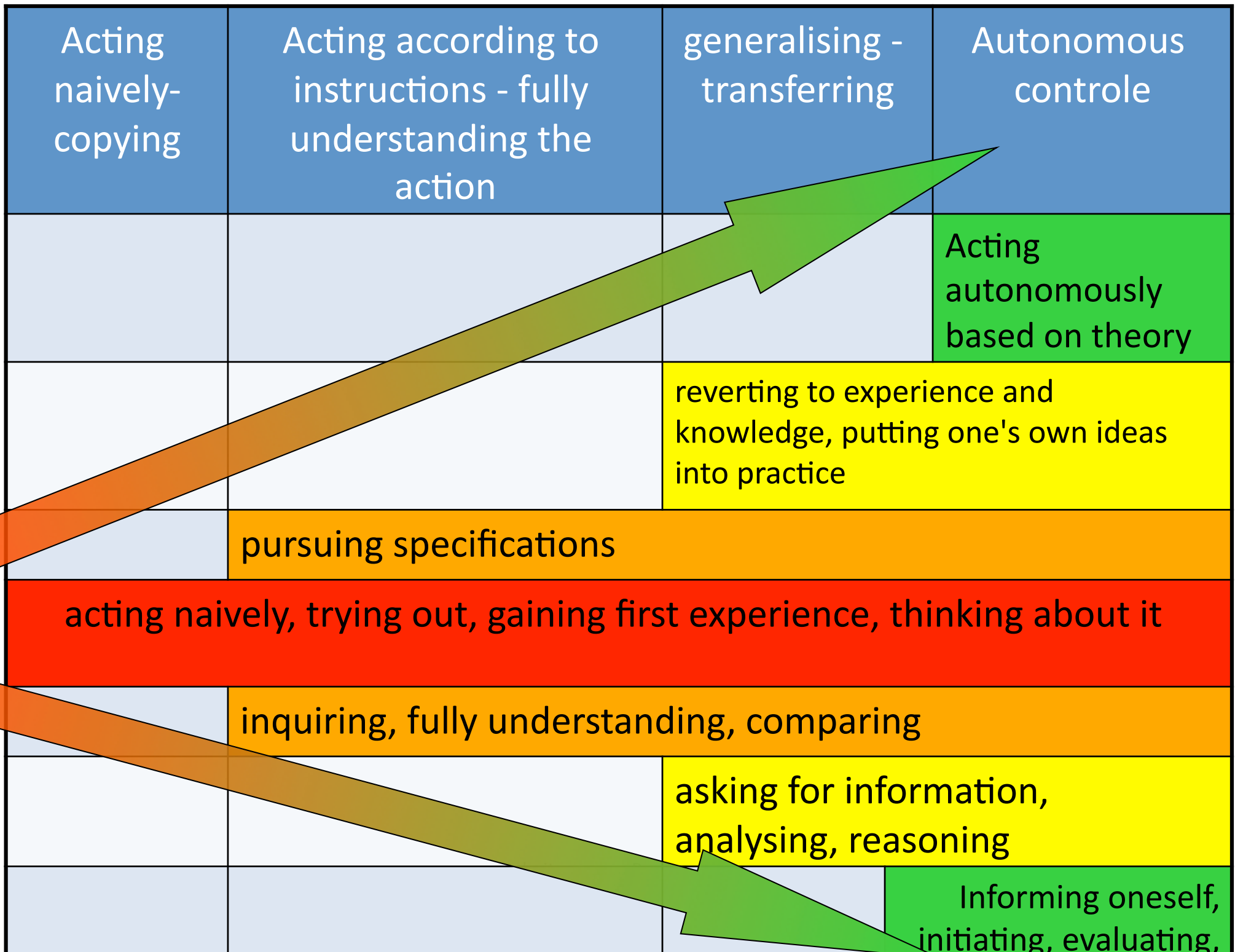
Year

■ **Compulsory schooling**

<sup>1)</sup> polytechnic school / Career preparation year

<sup>2)</sup> Model test

Age



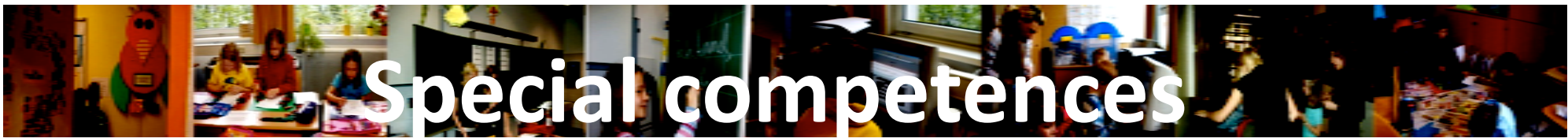


# Thematic areas

## „Getting along well with young people“

<b>EDUCATIONAL COMPETENCE</b>	Acting naive - imitating	acting according to instructions - fully understanding the action	generalising - transferring	Autonom ous controle
Establishing framework conditions for joint learning				
Communicating with each other				
Designing social learning processes				
Dealing with conflicts				
Establishing and fostering relationship				
Having pupils paticipate in				

vgl.  
Oser, 2005,  
Terhart, 2002  
KMK, 2004



# Special competences

## „ Getting along well with young people“

<p><b>EDUCATIONAL COMPETENCE</b></p>	<p>Acting naive - imitating</p>	<p>acting according to instructions - fully understanding the action</p>	<p>generalising - transferring</p>	<p>Autonomous control</p>
<p><b>miteinander kommunizieren</b></p>	<p>Students analyse their own language and become aware of which forms of communication .....</p>	<p>Students analyse their own language and become aware of which forms of communication (verbal, nonverbal) are suitable for the respective situation to be understood by their pupils.</p>	<p>Students further develop their communicative repertoire (conversation techniques, feedback, ...) to professionally communicate with their pupils and their parents/ guardians.</p>	<p>Students analyse their own language and become aware of which forms of communication (verbal, nonverbal) are suitable for the respective situation to be understood by their pupils.</p>