



## HAK/HAS *bfi* meets Haupt- and Mittelschule - A project report by Claudia Zekl

June 2001: The end of the school year was near and again some teachers realised that especially students in the first forms of a BMHS had failed the year. The reason for this phenomenon lay mainly in the fact that the school world of a BMHS differs in various ways from that of a Hauptschule or (Kooperativen) Mittelschule. And it normally took students much time to cope with this situation, to get used to new methods and subjects, to learn and work independently. A very problematic and dissatisfactory situation.

My colleague MMag. Rupert Gassner and I from the Schulen des *bfi Wien* did not want to accept this any longer and we had a lot of thoughts about how we could do something about it. What was clear from the beginning was that we alone could not change anything, that we needed help from teachers from various Haupt- and (Kooperativen) Mittelschulen in Vienna as well as from our colleagues at the Schulen des *bfi Wien* if we wanted to find a way of how we could help students to prepare their entry into a BMHS already while they were in their 7th and 8th years of compulsory education. So we invited teachers from various Haupt- and Mittelschulen in Vienna to come to a start-up meeting. Teachers from 11 schools responded and that was the beginning of the project HAK/HAS *bfi* meets Haupt- and Mittelschule.



More than three years have passed. More than three years where we have learned a lot about the various school worlds, where we have planned our project and already realised some of our aims, where we have used all our knowledge to develop materials,

where we have done a lot of joint projects and where we have made friends with other teachers. More than three years where our combined motivation and creative efforts are proving to make sense.

And still, all teachers who were in the project team already in June 2001 as well as those who have joined the project team in the course of time are still working on the project and will also do so in future.

At the moment we cooperate with the following Kooperativen Mittelschulen in Vienna: Hainburger Straße, Schäffergasse, Viktor Christ Gasse, Loquaipplatz, Enkplatz II, Johann Hoffmann-Platz, Svetelskystraße, Koppstraße I, Grundsteingasse, Roterdstraße, and Lacknergasse.

Our project comprises four columns:

**Column 1:**  
**Information about the education and training that students get at a BMHS** - Many students tend to choose their future school based on reasons like: which school does my friend want to go to, which school is near my home, etc. More often than not this then leads to the fact that some students find themselves in a school that does not really offer those things they are interested in, that does not prepare them for the job they would really like to do afterwards. Failures, dissatisfaction, hopelessness characterise the school day. In most cases these students then have to re-think their choice and have to decide whether they want to finish their school year at the "wrong" school or change to another school in the middle of the year.

The comprehensive information that students get before they have to decide which school they want to attend in the future is the way out here. Therefore the Schulen des *bfi Wien* offer a lot of possibilities in this respect: open house days, advice and information on the education and training that we offer, special days where students can visit our school and participate in the various lessons, a seminar for those students that have already enrolled for the next year and an information evening for these students



and their parents.

**Column 2:**

**Basics in the subjects: German, English and Mathematics** - Many students do not possess the basic knowledge that they need in order to be successful at a BMHS. While they then have to do remedial work in subjects such as German, English and Mathematics they have to get used to new subjects like business studies, accountancy, etc. More often than not students do not have the necessary energy and motivation to cope with all the difficulties they have to face.

In the course of our project many teachers of the project team have sat down together, have worked out a list of things that are necessary to know if you want to have a sound grounding in German, English and Mathematics and have produced a series of photocopyable worksheets that were published by VERITAS under the title *Das brauchen SchülerInnen für die BMHS*. With the help of these materials students can study, revise and practise those things that will be useful for them in a BMHS in both the 4th year at a Haupt- and (Kooperativen) Mittelschule and the first year at the BHMHS.

**Column 3:**

**Developing and supporting an intrinsic motivation as well as a promising attitude to work**

- Very often, however, students do not only fail because they lack a sound grounding in German, English and Mathematics, but because of the fact that there is not enough motivation for them to learn for revisions and tests, that they do not know which type of learner they are and therefore use the wrong learning strategy, that they are not prepared to cope with new and difficult situations.

A small group of teachers from the project team are therefore currently working on motivating and learner-type related materials and strategies that are meant to analyze and develop students' strengths.

**Column 4:**

**Various joint projects** - Apart from the cooperation of teachers in the fields mentioned above there are always smaller projects within the scope of the project HAK/HAS *bfi* meets Haupt- and Mittelschule.

With these joint projects students in the project schools get the opportunity to work together with teachers and students from the Schulen des *bfi Wien*. In the past a film with the title „Zwei Schulen zum Erfolg“ was made in cooperation with the KMS Loquaipplatz. It shows the school career of students from the first day in a KMS to the last day at the Schulen des *bfi Wien*, when they get their school leaving certificates. This film gives prospective students and their parents an insight into the daily work of both schools.

In the school year 2003/2004 the project was evaluated for the first time and the results show that we are on the right way to realise the aim of our project: to make it easier for students to change from a Haupt- or (Kooperativen Mittelschule) to a BMHS. And this gives us the power, motivation and courage to continue with this project.

If you want to know more about this project or the evaluation results then visit the project homepage at [www.schulenbfi-kms.at](http://www.schulenbfi-kms.at) or contact me.

**Professional profile:**

Claudia Zekl was born in Vienna. After finishing a Handelsakademie in Vienna she studied English and French at the university in Vienna. She has been a teacher of English at the Schulen des *bfi Wien* since 1996 where she works in the day and evening school and is the head of the project HAK/HAS *bfi* meets Haupt- and Mittelschule. She is also a trainer of English in the courses of *bfi Wien* preparing students for the Berufsreifeprüfung as well as a teacher trainer at the PI des Bundes and the PI der Stadt Wien.