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1 Introduction

1.1 Context

This report on the state of literacy in the German part of Switzerland is one of a series produced in 2015 and 2016 by ELINET, the European Literacy Policy Network. ELINET was founded in February 2014 and has 78 partner organisations in 28 European countries. ELINET aims to improve literacy policies in its member countries in order to reduce the number of children, young people and adults with low literacy skills. One major tool to achieve this aim is to produce a set of reliable, up-to-date and comprehensive reports on the state of literacy in each country where ELINET has one or more partners, and to provide guidance towards improving literacy policies in those countries. The reports are based (wherever possible) on available, internationally comparable performance data, as well as reliable national data provided (and translated) by our partners.

ELINET continues the work of the European Union High Level Group of Experts on Literacy (HLG) which was established by the European Commission in January 2011 and reported in September 2012. All country reports produced by ELINET use a common theoretical framework which is described here: “ELINET Country Reports – Frame of Reference.”

The Country Reports about are organised around the three recommendations of the HLG’s literacy report:

- Creating a literate environment
- Improving the quality of teaching
- Increasing participation, inclusion (and equity).

Within its two-year funding period ELINET has completed Literacy Country Reports for all 30 ELINET member countries. In most cases we published separate Long Reports for specific age groups (Children / Adolescents and Adults), in some cases comprehensive reports covering all age groups. Additionally, for all 30 countries, we published Short Reports covering all age groups, containing the summary of performance data and policy messages of the Long Reports. These reports are accompanied by a collection of good practice examples which cover all age groups and policy areas as well. These examples refer to the European Framework of Good Practice in Raising Literacy Levels; both are to be found in the section “Good Practice.”

Introduction to the Report on German-speaking Switzerland

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1 For more information about the network and its activities see: www.eli-net.eu.
2 In the following, the final report of the EU High Level Group of Experts on Literacy is referenced as “HLG report.” This report can be downloaded under the following link: http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/school/doc/literacy-report_en.pdf.
3 See: http://www.eli-net.eu/research/country-reports/.
4 “Equity” was added by ELINET.
1.2 Introduction to the Report on German-speaking Switzerland

What does being literal mean today? And how is Switzerland contributing to this field? Which institutions get involved in the promotion of literacy? In what form? This report was written in connection with the European Literacy Project ELiNet (European Literacy Policy Network) and highlights the specific situation of Switzerland with a special focus on German-speaking Switzerland.

What it is about
The literacy report at hand should provide an initial overview of the actors in (German-speaking) Switzerland who are active participants in the promotion of literacy. The purpose is to create a base through which the promotion of literacy can be addressed coherently in future.

Unique Swiss Features:
The Swiss education system is not controlled centrally, nor is it in the hands of the Federal Government. Rather, the canton's or the municipalities hold the power of decision in important educational matters.
- Switzerland has four national languages and is divided into 26 cantons; the education system is largely regulated by these cantons.
- The education system in Switzerland is organised in a subsidiary manner: the Confederation acts in an organisational and comprehensive capacity whenever other actors are not yet inherently active.

For more see chapter 2.

The report at hand therefore remains patchy and in this first version exclusively refers to German-speaking Switzerland.

Overview (see also figure 1):
- At the very beginning in Chapter 2, the basic principle of subsidiarity in Switzerland will be discussed. It is essential for all responsibilities in terms of education. Here we explain how the actors in the Swiss educational landscape are organised – generally and more specifically with reference to the promotion of literacy
- Chapter 3 gives an overview over Swiss performance data concerning literacy.
- Chapter 4 is devoted to the promotion and teaching of literacy at school. It looks at how educational colleges and universities train teachers and which sectors Swiss universities engage in when it comes to researching and developing new concepts for teaching.
- Chapter 5 provides an overview over the means of the implementation of the promotion of literacy at school, namely the Swiss curricula (in particular «Lehrplan 21» (Curriculum 21)), the school material used in German-speaking Switzerland, and educational monitoring.
- In addition to school, there are a variety of institutions and projects dedicated to the promotion of literacy outside school, namely the pre-school promotion of literacy (see Chapter 6), reading and writing in leisure time (see Chapter 7), and the promotion of literacy in adulthood (see Chapter 8) – the projects, in other words, which follow the transition from elementary school to the life of adults.

Each chapter ends with a conclusion, where the given information is considered and reflected in terms of future activities in the field of literacy.

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For an overview over the cantons and the abbreviations c. f. appendix, table «cantons», p. 62.
Figure 1: Graphical overview of the Swiss education system and the report at hand
2 Political and Legal Framework of Literality Furtherance in Switzerland

Due to the principle of subsidiarity, federalism, and multilingualism, the responsibilities of the various actors in the Swiss education system are sometimes confusing. After a brief introduction, the individual levels with their actors are taken into view, and their interactions explained. The graphic in figure 1 provides a schematic overview.

What it is about
Switzerland is organised subsidiarily: the government is active federally or on a regional basis, while neither the cantons nor private organisations (e.g. foundations) are active on their own. 

Under the heading «harmonisation», the effort to unify the Swiss education system has existed for several years – with partial success so far.
See i.e. Lehrplan 21.

Language Situation in Switzerland

Multilingualism. Switzerland has four national languages: German, French, Italian and Romansh. Switzerland’s four national languages are written in the Federal Constitution.

Diglossia. In German-speaking Switzerland, there is a juxtaposition of Dialect and Standard German. Depending on the situation (formal – informal), interview participants (Swiss German – other language speakers), and medium (letter, email, WhatsApp, ...), dialect or standard German is used both in either writing or spoken language. The use of dialect or Standard German says nothing about the social status of a person.

Swiss Standard German or «Swiss Standard German» is the national variety of German, which is written and spoken in Switzerland as the standard language. The Swiss Standard German is subject of instruction in schools and the language of instruction. It is used in written form in official documents, magazines, and newspapers, and it is codified (Variantenwörterbuch des Deutschen, Schweizer Schülerduden).

Pluricentricity of the German language. Equivalent to Swiss Standard German, there is the Austrian and the German Standard German. These three national standard languages are equal. The principle of national varying degrees of standard languages is called pluricentricity.

Box 1: Language situation in Switzerland

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7 An outline of the Swiss cantons and their abbreviations can be found in the appendix.
8 Namely, in Article 4. In addition, the Federal Constitution (Art 70.) stipulates that the exchange and understanding between the languages is to be promoted and both Italian and Romansh should receive special support.
9 Ammon (1995)
2.1 Organising Principle «Subsidiarity»

**Box 2: Principle of subsidiarity**

In the federally organised multilingual Switzerland language learning and the corresponding educational coordination of language teaching play an essential role. Both the language regime and the education in Switzerland are subject to the principle of subsidiarity. Against this background the Swiss education system is subject to the individual cantons to a significant extent, with a great leeway left open to the municipalities in administrative matters.

The educational and language policy coordination alongside these political premises is exposed to change over time: The question about the aims how languages are learned, and what language skills should be acquired by the learner, adapts to social developments and insights from research (see Chapter 4).

**Box 3: Language promotion in transition**

Until the harmonisation efforts, first the local language, and later a second national language were learned in language teaching in Switzerland. Learning these second languages was carried out in isolation, but with the same objective: to handle both languages as correctly as possible.\(^{10}\)

The cantons in the different linguistic regions of Switzerland could follow this understanding of learning of their own accord. Meanwhile, however, a change in perspective has taken place: on the one hand, the majority of children - also due to migration - are in contact with different languages and cultures. On the other hand it is now proven that the learning of different languages should not be isolated but linked. This understanding of learning has changed under these premises to a communicative-action oriented, multilingual competence.

Against this background the development of a new Swiss language concept suggested itself in the 1990s. Furthermore, English as science and media language grew more important and should therefore be learned excessively as an additional foreign language. Some cantons were already planning this for the primary school level. Faced with these reasons, the cantons saw to the task of drawing up a coordinated solution throughout Switzerland.\(^{11}\)

But since nationwide regulations could not be worked out by the individual cantons, in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity, the Swiss Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education (EDK) took over the coordination of language teaching and developed a unified concept of language.

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\(^{10}\) Hutterli et al. (2012)

\(^{11}\) EDK (2004)
2.2 Actors in the Education System in Switzerland

2.2.1 Federal Level

EDK
The EDK is a link between the Confederation and the cantons. It is a national political authority in which all 26 Cantonal Ministers of Education are represented.\(^1\) The EDK has various tools at hand to tackle solutions for education issues that are of national interest. However, these instruments are only binding for the cantons if they agree with them or join respectively (see Box 5).

The Federal Constitution ensures that all cantons provide adequate primary school education, open to all children and free of charge at public schools (art. 19). At the federal level, Switzerland also firmly maintains the official quatrilingualism (See Box 1). The management and financing of the two Federal Institutes of Technology lie at the federal level. In addition, the federal government co-finances the cantonal universities (universities, colleges, higher vocational education). The State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (= SBFI) is responsible for educational matters at the federal level.

The concrete form of education and language policy, however, is up to the cantons. For this reason, there are different school systems in different cantons. Due to momentary trends (see Box 3), Switzerland-wide harmonisation work is in progress, which, however, cannot be coordinated by individual cantons. For the Switzerland-wide coordination, the EDK has jurisdiction (see Box 4).

Concordats: The most binding instrument of inter-cantonal cooperation in education is formed by the concordats with legal binding character. However, each canton decides on joining a concordat, making them ultimate decision-makers.

Recommendations: The EDK may adopt recommendations to contribute to the promotion and harmonisation of the school system. Unlike the concordats, recommendations do not create legally enforceable obligations.

Explanations: In the form of statements, the EDK takes a position on educational issues.

Which Organisations Serve on the Federal Level?
SKBF
The Swiss Coordination Centre for Research in Education (SKBF) reinforces educational research in Switzerland with their service. They cross-link education policies, practices, management, and research. According to the subsidiarity principle, the SKBF takes on tasks that are in the interest of different actors in the Swiss education system. This includes the documentation of research achievements and results of the Swiss educational research and information on Swiss educational research projects and their analysis. Additionally, the SKBF, in cooperation with the EDK, publishes the Swiss Education Report every four years (last time 2014).

12 The Principality of Liechtenstein is an advisory member of the EDK and can apply concordats and provisions with all rights and obligations.
2.2.2 Between the federal and cantonal levels: The HarmoS Agreement

The «HarmoS Agreement» of 2007 and the strategy paper «Language Teaching in Compulsory Education» from 2004 are the main anchor points of a unified language concept of the Swiss education policy.

In it, the acceding cantons define the compulsory education by standardising the education structures and the objectives of teaching, as well as developing common management tools (see Chapter 5).

Regarding the structure, the Concordat sets the duration of each school level (2 years Preschool, 6 Primary, 3 secondary level) and thus unifies the sequence of grades hitherto different from one canton to the other.

The HarmoS Agreement also aims at the regional harmonisation of curricula and coordination of teaching material (see Chapter 5.1). As for language teaching, the HarmoS Agreement regulates the number and order of foreign languages to be taught during compulsory education (see Box 6).

« Order of Foreign Languages According to HarmoS »

- A first foreign language (a national language or English) is learned from the fifth year of education (eight years of age).
- A second foreign language (a national language or English) is learned from the seventh year of education (ten years of age).
- A third language (a national language) is facultative from the ninth year of education (twelve years of age).

Box 6: Order of foreign languages according to HarmoS

With the requirements for foreign languages the EDK could unify the onset of foreign language teaching. For the order of the foreign languages to be learned, however, this did not happen and compromise formulated in the subsidiarity principle ultimately takes the self-determination of the cantons into account.

13 EDK (2007).
Therefore, two different models have been the result:

1) The Romandie, the bilingual and German-speaking cantons near the language border (BE, BL, BS, FR, SO, and VS = « Passepartout »-cantons) and the cantons GR and TI consider a national language as first foreign language.

2) The remaining German-speaking cantons start with English and later introduce French as a second foreign language.

The cantons which acceded to the HarmoS Agreement also agree to promote the development and establishment of the HSK-teaching (= Instruction in Native language and Culture). This way, children with migration background can consolidate and perfect their first language in a school environment. Sponsorship of the HSK-teaching are Consulates, Embassies or parents' associations of the different countries of origin. The HarmoS cantons provide free classrooms, school infrastructure and education for the coordinators as well as for the HSK teachers.

The special needs education is partly taken over by the EDK according to the subsidiarity principle, to relieve the cantons selectively. The EDK adopted a concordat in October 2007 in which the technical, legal and financial responsibility of the cantons is coordinated nationwide. Since 2008, however, the special needs education is legally the sole responsibility of the cantons: The technical and financial competence of special needs education, therefore, lies with the cantons, even though they will be coordinated by the EDK. Because of this new allocation of responsibilities, each canton is obliged to define its special needs educational programme and the procedures in a special needs education concept (i. a. speech therapy, curative education, integrative training).

2.2.3 Regional Language Level

The cross-cantonal cooperation takes place between those cantons which have common interests, linguistic reasons (cooperation between the French-speaking cantons) or due to geographical proximity (educational areas).

The increased cooperation between the cantons does not only work at national but also at regional language level. This concerns in particular the arrangements for the educational objectives and curricula. The French-speaking cantons have launched the Curriculum PER (plan d'études Romand), while the 21 German-speaking cantons have developed the Lehrplan 21 (see Chapter 5.1). Correspondent to the harmonisation of the curricula, an inter-cantonal cooperation consists in the teaching material coordination (e. g. Die Sprachstarken, Sprachland etc.) and performance tests (see Chapter 5.3).

14 The cantons AR, GR, LU, NW, TG, UR and ZG have not signed the Concordat, for various reasons; for the cantons AG, AI, OW and SZ, the decision of joining is still pending (as of 2016). However, all these cantons follow the order in which foreign languages are to be learned as established in the HarmoS Agreement.

15 For an overview over the cantons and the abbreviations c. f. appendix, table «cantons», p. 62.

16 Hutterli et al. (2012).

17 SKBF (2014).
Furthermore, there are educational areas that cooperate in education due to geographic proximity.

- Educational area of Central Switzerland (cantons LU, UR, SZ, OW, NW and ZG), which knows the cooperation with respect to curricula, teaching and development orientation work, and
- the educational area of Northwestern Switzerland (AG, BL, BS and SO), with the co-sponsored Pedagogical University and joint ventures, both in the context of teaching material, as well as with respect to performance tests 18.
- The main interest of these educational areas is a common representation of the respective cantons in the harmonisation process of the Swiss education system.
- In connection with the teaching of foreign languages, the cantons that teach French as a first foreign language have joined forces («Passepartout»-regions, see Chapter 2.2.1). They coordinate curricula, teaching materials, assessment tools, and teaching methods for foreign language teaching and justify this with the geographical proximity to the French-speaking region.

2.2.4 Cantonal Level

What it is about
In educational matters, most aspects of responsibility lie with the cantons. However, government, cantons, and other institutions such as the professional organisations or private training providers work closely together.

The education and language policy is a matter for the cantons. All competences that are assigned to the EDK due to the joint efforts to harmonise must be accepted or rejected by each canton.

The principle of subsidiarity in the education system of Switzerland is applied down to the lowest levels. The different responsibilities at the cantonal level are split between the canton, municipalities, schools and education (see Box 7). 19

Who Is Responsible For What?
Canton. Education policy laws and regulations, curriculum, resources, supervision
Municipalities. Education policy implementation and organisation, strategic management of schools, infrastructure
Schools. Operative school management, quality and personnel management, instructional development, parental involvement
Education.
  o Teachers: teaching, classroom management, assessment and career recommendation, parent contact
  o Students: learning and competence development, social behaviour and personal development, career decisions

Box 7: Cantonal level of education 20

In the last twenty years, the control of the schools has undergone changes in most cantons. Control mechanisms used to be rather input-oriented (e.g. through specifications to learning resources, curriculum, and finances), now a tendency shows that municipalities and individual schools are

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18 SKBF (2014).
19 SKBF (2014).
20 Based on Fend, 2008.
granted a more output-oriented leeway, while increasingly respecting the quality of the processes at the same time\textsuperscript{21}.

The intra-cantonal responsibilities for regulation, financing and implementation will vary depending on the level of education and educational institutions. These differently organised responsibilities are presented in detail below.

**Permeability**

The Swiss education system is characterised by its high permeability: There are several ways to get in or change schools or make up for an education. The Federal Constitution prescribes this permeability and commits the Confederation and the cantons into coordination. The Federal Vocational Education is an example where the high permeability applies: Basic vocational training with a federal certificate (ISCED 35) can be supplemented with a vocational baccalaureate (ISCED 34). The professional baccalaureate allows admittance to study at the University of Applied Sciences (ISCED 6). With the supplementary exam «Vocational education- university college» (Passerelle) the transfer to a Swiss university is possible.

**Compulsory School**

The cantons are responsible for regulating the compulsory education, whereas the municipalities support the nursery schools (ISCED 020)\textsuperscript{22} as well as, the primary (ISCED 1) and secondary schools (ISCED 2) (in some cases it is the cantons). This means: All lesson content for elementary schools is set by the cantons and executed by the municipalities.

**Secondary Education**

The Confederation, cantons and professional organisations are responsible for the vocational education (ISCED 35). The three project partners are working together for high-quality training. They are aiming for a market-oriented range of training courses and educational programs. The responsibilities of the project partners are governed by the Vocational Training Act and the Vocational Training Regulation. In finance questions of vocational training, the three partners decide together\textsuperscript{23}.

The cantons are responsible for the secondary school Matura and vocational schools (ISCED 34). They take over the supervision and financing. The Confederation in turn is responsible for the recognition of the Matura throughout Switzerland. This means that all cantonal secondary school Matura certificates entitle for admission to universities in Switzerland.

**Graduation Rate in Secondary Education**

The graduation rate in upper secondary education (ISCED 34 + 35) in Switzerland is 95.1% (as of 2013).\textsuperscript{24} The post-compulsory education at upper secondary level gives access to next levels of education (university, college, higher vocational education) and is regarded as a prerequisite for the

\textsuperscript{21} SKBF (2014).

\textsuperscript{22} ISCED stands for «International Standard Classification for Education» and was developed by UNESCO and enables an international comparison of educational levels.

\textsuperscript{23} SBFI (2015)

\textsuperscript{24} BFS (2015)
entry into the labour market. To increase the graduation rate, various measures are put at the interface between compulsory schooling and secondary education.\textsuperscript{25}

- Multiple bridge offers by the cantons (10th grade, career education courses, etc.)
  www.berufsbetreating.ch/dyn/1293.aspx
- Case Management Training (CM BB) for social and professional integration of young people at risk
  www.berufsberatung.ch/dyn/1293.aspx
- Two-year vocational education with vocational certificate (EBA)
  www.eba.berufsbildung.ch/dyn/2678.aspx
- Validation of prior learning efforts from informal or non-formal education
- Lehrplan 21: module «Vocational Orientation»

Box 9: Graduation rate in secondary education

**Tertiary Level**

The higher vocational education and vocational training (ISCED 6) are part of the vocational education and are primarily the responsibility of businesses and individuals. They are, to a substantial extent, privately funded.\textsuperscript{27}

The universities (polytechnics, colleges of education, and universities) (ISCED 6 + 7) are assigned to the cantons.\textsuperscript{28} Quality assurance in the form of laws and agreements are the joint responsibility of the Confederation and the cantons, but also take into account a degree of autonomy of the universities.

A central task of the cantons is the training of teachers. The EDK attests teachers and teacher education a key role with regard to the successful and harmonised realignment of instruction.\textsuperscript{29} The educational institutions assume the teachers’ training for compulsory education on behalf of the respective cantons.\textsuperscript{30} In the formation of the secondary education school teachers, the teacher education is completed at university (see Chapter 4.2).

For several years now, basic and harmonisation work has existed throughout Switzerland in the basic training of teachers (especially in foreign languages). The EDK is working closely with the COHEP (Swiss Conference of Rectors of Universities of Education).\textsuperscript{31}

**Further Education**

The federal government sets out the principles for professional training (BV64a). The vocational training is organised primarily by private providers; Federation and cantons act on a subsidiary basis. Financing and execution of further education are organised differently from canton to canton.\textsuperscript{32}

A federal law on further education is being developed (as of 2015). Life-long learning is therefore taken into account, especially in the promotion of literacy in adulthood: The education law aims i. a. to

\textsuperscript{25} EDK (2011).
\textsuperscript{26} Egger et al. (2015).
\textsuperscript{27} SBFI (2015).
\textsuperscript{28} However, the Federal Government operates both Federal Institutes of Technology (ETH) (see chapter 2.2.1).
\textsuperscript{29} EDK (2004).
\textsuperscript{30} In the canton of Geneva this lies in the responsibility of the university.
\textsuperscript{31} Hutterli et al. (2012).
\textsuperscript{32} www.edk.ch/dyn/24150.php.
coordinate measures for obtaining and retaining **basic competences in adults** and to provide financial support (see Chapter 8).³³

The teacher training colleges offer **further education of teachers** directly on behalf of the cantons. However, the teacher training colleges entertain an individual training offer which they base on research findings and needs assessments (see Chapter 4). Another approach lies in cooperation between individual schools: Therefore, schools with distinctive multicultural composition, for example in the canton of Zurich, have recognised the promotion potential and coordinate the developments of teachers together, this is done in the context of QUIMS project (= Quality in Multicultural Schools see Chapter 8).³⁴

### 2.2.5 Other Actors

The EDK considers it a principle for the successful development of language teaching that political, cultural, and social institutions which are not actively involved in the school system are integrated into the language support and participate in accordance with their respective competencies. This is the work of the PISA Plan of Action and the integration of «third parties»,³⁵ i.e. organisations employed by the federal government, such as the SKBF, or private institutions and foundations, such as the SIKJM (see Chapter 7).

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**Conclusion**

It is clear that educational aspirations in Switzerland are not mainly run centralised, but are supported by the cantons, the municipalities, schools, specifically created institutions, and private actors.

→ According to this finding, the present report must remain incomplete.

The coordination of the Swiss education system is placed between two opposing principles, namely between autonomy of the cantons and national harmonisation efforts. Switzerland can look back on a long federalist tradition, and simultaneously desires a uniformly organised school system due to altered circumstances (e.g. higher mobility of the population). Educational issues must be negotiated within these two (divergent) principles. Thus it is not surprising that they will lead to detailed discussions in Switzerland.

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**Swiss Education Report**

The SKBF publishes the Swiss Education Report every four years. It contains detailed information on the Swiss education system:

SKBF (Hrsg.) (2014):
Bildungsbericht Schweiz 2104.
Aarau: Schweizerische Koordinationsstelle für Bildungsforschung.

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³³ SBFI (2016).
³⁵ EDK (2004).
3 Literacy Performance Data

3.1 PISA-Findings for Switzerland

The study « Programme for International Student Assessment » commissioned by the OECD records the abilities of 15-year-olds from different states in a three-year cycle. In each cycle, a domain was foregrounded; in 2000 and 2009 it was reading competence. This is defined by the PISA study as «a person’s ability to understand written texts, to use, to reflect on and to deal with them in order to achieve their goals, to develop their knowledge and potential and to participate in society».

Although writing is as much a part of literacy as reading, it is rarely considered in large-scale studies since it is expensive to collect and to analyse relevant data.

Findings

Some of the key findings of the PISA reading tests are summarised in Table 1 below.

- **Slight improvement.** As the first row of data shows, over time, Swiss youngsters have improved slightly in their achievements (from 494 to 509 points). PISA has translated the results of the tests into «competence levels». Those who do not reach stage II are part of the risk group: the reading comprehension of this group is considered insufficient to participate in further educational courses. At Level II one should be able to extract individual or multiple pieces of information and to make local connections. These are basic reading skills. They are considered the basis for a more comprehensive understanding of text.

The risk group has shrunk: it fell from a fifth in 2000 to a seventh in 2012. The proportion of young people achieving basic level (=level II) has remained comparatively stable.

- **Reduction of heterogeneity.** In long-term comparisons, some distinctive features can be observed: The gap between academically strong and weak youngsters has decreased from 335 to 296 points. This means that Swiss schools have been better at reducing the heterogeneity in reading comprehension. Nevertheless, there are still four competence levels between the highest and weakest five per cent of adolescent.

- **More equal opportunities.** The following developments are also encouraging: both the effects of social background as well as the differences between locals and youth not born in Switzerland - first generation immigrants, in other words - have weakened. In addition, it has become less important whether the PISA test language corresponds to the language young people use at home with their parents.

- **Gender gap persists.** The differences in performance between boys and girls in the long-term trend have remained relatively stable: as before, the boys perform slightly worse than the girls do. The difference amounts to about half a competence level.

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OECD (2010).

<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average number of points on the total scale of 'reading'</td>
<td>494</td>
<td>499</td>
<td>499</td>
<td>501</td>
<td>509</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage risk group (below level II)</td>
<td>20 %</td>
<td>17 %</td>
<td>16 %</td>
<td>17 %</td>
<td>14 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage achieved basic level (level II)</td>
<td>21 %</td>
<td>23 %</td>
<td>23 %</td>
<td>23 %</td>
<td>22 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distance between strongest and weakest five per cent in points</td>
<td>335</td>
<td>313</td>
<td>311</td>
<td>308</td>
<td>296</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender (lead of girls in points)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effect of socioeconomic status in points (elevation of scale at increase of a unit related to indicators of social origin)</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influence of origin 1: locals measured against migrants of the 1st generation (not born in Switzerland) in points</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>k. A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Influence of origin 2: locals measured against migrants of the 2nd generation (born in Switzerland) in points</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>k. A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Einfluss Sprache zu Hause (Testsprache = Sprache zu Hause spoken at home in points *)</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>26 (E), 33 (2. Gen.), 71 (1. Gen.)</td>
<td>k. A.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Most relevant results from PISA studies in Switzerland, from OECD, (OECD, 2001), (OECD, 2004), (OECD, 2007), (OECD, 2010), (OECD, 2010b), (OECD, 2013), (OECD, 2014)

* Explanatory note: In PISA 2009 the three groups locals (E, children and parents born in Switzerland), 1st generation (1st Gen., parents and young people not born in Switzerland) and 2nd generation (2nd Gen., parents born outside, children born within Switzerland) were analysed specifically. This resulted in three different categories while in the first PISA studies, only one was displayed. N/A = no available data regarding the effects of migration in the OECD publications on literacy.

3.2 Swiss Literacy Performance data in the European Context

The following figures have been provided by ELINET. Switzerland participated in OECD’s PISA (15 year-olds’ reading literacy) since 2000. This means it is possible to describe the changes over time in average reading proficiency, according to different characteristics of the readers for that age group only.

In PISA 2012, Switzerland performed above the EU’s average (509 vs 489 EU-average), showing a gradual increase in reading: +7 score points between 2000 and 2009, +8 score points between 2009 and 2012. The difference between 2000 and 2012 reached 15 score-points. Whereas Switzerland performed just above the EU countries on average in 2000 (494 vs 489), it increased its advantage over time: the difference was by 20 score-points in 2012.
The proportion of students who can be considered as low-performing readers was below the EU countries on average (13.7% vs 19.7%). These students can read simple texts, retrieve explicit information, or make straightforward inferences, but they are not able to deal with longer or more complex texts, and are unable to interpret beyond what is explicitly stated in the text. The proportion of low-performing readers has decreased (by 7%) in Switzerland between 2000 and 2012. This decrease concerns girls (-7%) to the same extent as boys (-6%). The proportion of top-performing readers was higher than in EU countries on average (9.1% vs 7%).

In PISA 2009, the gap according to the pupils’ socioeconomic background was higher than the EU average (93 vs 89 on average). Similarly, the gap between native students and students with a migrant background was higher than in EU countries on average (48 vs 38 in EU). However, the mean score difference between those who always spoke the language of the test at home, and those who spoke another language was exactly the same in Switzerland as on EU average (54). It should be noticed that the proportion of students with a migrant was much higher in Switzerland than in EU countries on average (23.5% vs 8.3%).

In Switzerland, the gender gap (in favor of girls) was slightly lower in PISA as in the EU on average (39 vs 44) but it tended to increase between 2000 and 2012. Whereas girls improved their performance on EU-average by 5 score-points, they show a higher increase in Switzerland between 2000 and 2012 (+17 score-points). Boys’ performance increased by 11 points, while on the EU level, the trend was different: a decrease was observed (-5 points).

In conclusion, whereas Switzerland performed better than EU-average mainly in 2000 and more slightly in 2009, its score fell below the EU mean in 2012. Both girls and boys show a decrease of their performance whereas the European trend was an improvement of performance among girls. The proportion of low-performing readers decreased between 2000 and 2012 and is now below the EU average. Switzerland shows a higher proportion of top-performers. The gap according to socioeconomic status is higher than in EU on average, which could indicate that the educational system in Switzerland is more equitable than EU countries on average. The gap according to language spoken at home is similar to EU average. It should be underlined that the proportion of students with a migrant status and the percentage of students who speak another language at home are much higher in Switzerland than in other European countries; the results must then be taken with some caution.

**Conclusion**

Regarding the five cycles of reading skill assessments done to date, the following long-term trends of PISA can be noted:

- + Reading skills at the end of compulsory education have improved slightly.
- + The proportion of weak readers is falling.
- + The heterogeneity of the students gradually plays a lesser role.
- + The effects of migration have declined sharply, particularly in the 1st generation of migrants.
- + The effects of socioeconomic status are declining.
- – Gender differences remain relatively stable, but do not have as strong an effect as family characteristics

In contrast to reading, there is no evidence from PISA regarding the writing skills of young people. However, research results point to the importance of the promotion of writing skills.
4 Colleges and Universities

This chapter provides an overview of different projects these colleges are involved in concerning research and/or development of literacy. It also deals with the question of to what degree literacy should be included in the (further) education of teachers at educational colleges (pädagogische Hochschule, PH) in German-speaking Switzerland.

4.1 Research and development projects

The educational colleges do research and development on the promotion of literacy in a number of different projects. The following overview shows a relevant selection of completed and current individual projects of various Swiss German PHs. Some projects are presented in more detail (★).

The following list is incomplete: The quantitative distribution of the listed and illustrated projects may not be transferred to the actual relevance or importance of an educational college for the field of language didactics in German-speaking Switzerland.

Figure 2 visualises the current (or recently completed) literacy projects in research and/or development at the educational colleges of German-speaking Switzerland (and ZHAW).

What it is about

Literacy is being developed and researched in a detailed, multi-faceted and diverse way. Thus, the PHs contribute significantly both to the development of teaching as well as to the theory in terms of literacy.

The graph clearly shows that a lot of attention is paid to literacy in the broad sense of multi literacy with its precursor skills; this holds true especially for early schooling, but also for elementary school (primary and secondary Level).
It is also apparent that few projects are limited exclusively to one modality only (reading OR writing, red or green): It is much more common to tackle literacy multi-modally (brown and beige).

Detailed information (institution, duration, further descriptions★) may be found in the appendix (p. 68-74).

### 4.2 Literacy in the Training of Teachers

The chapter addresses the question of which domains of literacy are taught in the education of prospective teachers.

**What it is about**

Competences in literary language are not primarily acquired automatically or exclusively in the family, but rather in the formal acquisition at nursery and primary school. While children in nursery and primary school are taught by generalists, skilled specialist teachers are responsible for the lower and upper secondary school level. Teachers at all levels are trained at universities.

Children need the formal and institutionalised assistance in nursery and primary school as well as the socio-historic experience within their families for the acquisition of written language skills. In Switzerland, the teachers are trained at College- and University level. Teachers for nursery school, primary school and usually also for secondary school level I complete a professional scientific and didactically oriented course of study at an educational institution. 20–30% of their training is done vocationally.

For teachers in secondary education, a course of study at a university with a Bachelor's and Master's degree (a total of 300 ECTS) is mandatory, the university usually does not include didactic training. The pedagogical training (a total of 60 ECTS) follows the master's degree or is completed at the same time. This «Lehrdiplom für Maturitätsschulen» (teaching diploma for secondary education) can be attained mainly at educational colleges and some universities.

**Information on the education system in Switzerland and teacher training:**

www.edk.ch/dyn/13870.php

At nursery and primary school level, teachers are generalists: they teach almost every subject in a class, such as German, math, and music. At secondary level, the teachers are specialised in their subjects: at lower secondary level they usually teach two to four subjects. At upper secondary level, however, they only teach one or two subjects.

**What it is about**

Literacy is focused on and weighed differently in the study programs at the various universities.

**Procedure for data collection:** Based on module handbooks and course catalogues available online, it can be stated that the number of courses focusing on literacy varies in the training of teachers depending on the university. Without the vocational courses, the specialised academic and didactic courses the prospective nursery and primary school teachers attend amount to five to fifteen per cent (5-15%) of all courses. Teachers at lower secondary level complete a little more specialised courses, between ten and twenty per cent (10-20%). For teachers at upper secondary level, the amount is similarly high, with about fifteen to twenty per cent (15-20%) within the year of teacher training.

Furthermore, it can be stated that the share of the various literal domains (Literature & Reading, Writing & Spelling, Linguistics) varies from university to university. A general pattern is that the
absorbance of texts (Reading & Literature) both in technical science and in teaching methodology take priority over the production of texts (Writing & Spelling).

**Data Base and Methodology**

Module descriptions and course catalogues from five of the larger educational colleges (PHs) in German-speaking Switzerland were analysed for this report: PH Bern, PH Lucerne, PH FHNW (Northwest Switzerland), PH Thurgau, PH Zurich. All their modules have been taken into account, where at least one of the following areas of expertise relevant for literacy is addressed:

- acquisition of written language (reading, writing, spelling, literature),
- language,
- individual support (reading, writing, language) and
- media (if concerned with writing).

Both subject, scientific and didactic, as well as general teaching modules, have been considered. All non-linguistic subjects and the subject of German have been included. On the basis of the number of ECTS awarded for the identified courses, the amount of time a student spends on these issues has been estimated.

**An example:** The PH Bern offers the seminar «German 2: literacy and literacy learning» for the prospective pre- and lower-grade teachers. This course is credited with 3 ECTS. A total of nine topics are addressed in the seminar, including the following four topics on literacy: reading, writing, spelling, and linguistics.

Accordingly, we estimate the proportion of each topic to a ninth of the seminar and thus at 0.33 ECTS.

**What it is about**

Literacy topics are treated marginally outside of the language subjects and didactics.

Reading and writing are basic skills for all subjects, as there is no understanding in subject teaching without them. However, corresponding skills in the non-linguistic didactics and in general didactics are considered only marginally. Especially the smaller schools for education offer hardly any courses on literacy in non-language subjects. Most Swiss specialist teachers (who have not studied German at university) therefore lack in a sound knowledge on the development and teaching of (written) language skills. Such would be desirable, however, since language, writing and (multimodal) text skills are the basis of all learning at school.

**What it is about**

The importance allocated to reading, writing, linguistics, literature, and spelling varies at the different universities.

The module descriptions of the School of Education Bern indicate a relatively detailed literacy programme for teachers: students of all subjects can concern themselves with literacy scientifically and didactically. The School of Education Zurich and the School of Education FHNW (College of Higher Education of Northwest Switzerland), on the other hand, offer courses for general language issues and bilingualism to all students.
4.3 Literacy in the further education of teachers

This chapter gives an overview of further education for teachers concerning various aspects of literacy. Legally, the further education is regulated cantonally. Within the cantonal guidelines, the responsibility for the specific curriculum of each teacher’s further education lies with him- or herself: each can choose from a number of courses differing in formality and content.

Further education is part of the rights and duties of a teacher and is stated in the professional ethics of the «Dachverband Schweizer Lehrerinnen und Lehrer» (umbrella organisation of Swiss teachers). Guideline number 5 states: «Teachers have a college education, further their education and build their career.»38 Further education remains a part of the teaching profession for the entire duration of professional practice. School management, the community school board and the cantonal Department of Education usually arrange and approve further education. Teachers are encouraged to participate in joint developments with their teaching colleagues and to educate themselves personally in order to obtain an individual skills profile.

Both the educational colleges and the universities offer a vast choice of further education. This ranges from courses of two to nine hours to certified postgraduate courses (MAS / CAS).

**Offers from different educational colleges:**
- PH Fachhochschule Nordwestschweiz: www.fhnw.ch/ph/iwb/startseite
- Beratungsstelle Digitale Medien in Schule und Unterricht – imedias: www.imedias.ch
- PH Zug: www.zg.ch/behoerden/direktion-fur-bildung-und-kultur/phzg/weiterbildung
- PH Zürich: https://phzh.ch/de/Weiterbildung/
- PH Bern: www.phbern.ch/schule-und-weiterbildung.html
- PH Luzern: www.phlu.ch/weiterbildung/
- PH Thurgau: www.phtg.ch/weiterbildung/uebersicht/
- PH St. Gallen: www.phsg.ch/web/weiterbildung.aspx
- ZHAW: www.zhaw.ch/de/weiterbildung/

**What it is about**
A large number of individual further education is concerned with literacy.

**Educational Colleges and Universities:** all colleges and universities provide further education. Additionally, there are universities, departments of education and private institutions who organise further education (see Chapter 7). The formats are different: some offers of further education can be brought to individual schools as required, while others are available for free registration.39

**Different Considerations of Literacy:** The universities included in this research offer between 100 (PH Lucerne, PH Zurich, PH Thurgau) and 500 (PH FHNW, PH Bern) courses for further education of teachers each year. The different courses include offers on topics relevant to literacy (such as language acquisition and promotion): at the PH Bern only 3% (or 13 events) of the courses are on the developments of literacy; at the PH Lucerne, on the other hand, 23% concern themselves with literacy topics.

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38 LCH Dachverband Schweizer Lehrerinnen und Lehrer (2008)
39 The present analysis does not distinguish between the two types of offer. Likewise, the duration of the courses for further education (between 2 and 16 hours) is not taken into account.
Differently trained personnel: The courses for further education are taught by people with different skills and professional backgrounds: teachers of the respective school levels can be course leaders, as well as authors, librarians, communication trainers or university lecturers and professors.

Different focus within the literal domains: Within the courses dealing with literacy, the different universities weigh the various domains of literacy differently: at the PH Zurich, the focus clearly lies on GSL (50% of the courses), while the PH Bern offers only one course on the same topic. Here the focus is on reading (67%). At the other Phs, courses on reading are 15-50% of the total number of offers, with the PH Lucerne offering the least. However, the PH Lucerne is the only provider of courses to sensitize teachers from the non-language subjects for literacy, e.g. in the Sec-I-training «Alles ist Sprache – fächerübergreifende Sprachförderung in Regelklassen» (Everything is language - cross-curricular language support in regular classes).

What it is about
Postgraduate courses for literacy and literacy-related issues are rare.

At the five large Phs considered for this report, there is only one postgraduate course on literacy («Literale Praxis in Schule und Bibliothek», literacy practice at school and in libraries) and one postgraduate course for language development («Kindersprache», child language) - both at the FHNW. Certificates of advanced study (CAS) on the subject «German as a Second Language» (GSL) can be obtained at four of the Phs (FHNW, Zurich, Lucerne, Berne); the Phs Luzern and Bern offer CAS on general child learning, which include the topic of language and literacy.

Conclusion

The research and development work at educational colleges in German-speaking Switzerland are widespread. Literacy is being explored in all its facets: the promotion of reading and writing in digital and multimodal environments, school and teaching development, from the promotion of early literacy up to literacy in adulthood. Research and development projects focusing specifically on writing can also be found.

Looking at module handbooks, one gains a different impression: In the (further) education of teachers, the focus of topics on literacy lies in the mediation of receptive actions (reading, listening).

Topic related to literacy account for a small proportion in the training of teachers, which is reflected in the courses for further education of teachers. This must be considered critically, as written language skills are the basis of all (school) learning. In addition, it would be desirable for the various institutions to pool their expertise in training and further education of teachers in order to ensure the best possible education.

The overview of the offers in early education in German-speaking Switzerland shows: There is a remarkable selection of training courses in early education in general, early promotion of German, and early promotion of literacy, with different requirements for admission (see also SIKJM, chapter 7) and final qualifications.

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40 Whether or not this is correct in reality cannot be determined by analysing documents of the module handbooks alone.
5 The Harmonisation of Literal Educational Goals

In the following, the individual elements that serve to harmonise the educational goals of all cantons are explained: The Lehrplan 21 (curriculum 21) sets the literal skills to be acquired during compulsory schooling. Following this, the material used in German lessons in German-speaking Switzerland will be presented. Lastly, Swiss educational monitoring, which is carried out to verify the educational goals, will be discussed.

5.1 Lehrplan 21 (Curriculum 21)

What it is about
Based on the constitutional article on the harmonisation of educational goals and the HarmoS concordat, three language-region specific curricula have been developed. These serve as a template by the Federation; the individual cantons decide on the introduction of the curriculum themselves.

5.1.1 Overview of the Three Language-Region Specific Curricula

In recent years, three language-region specific curricula have been developed for the first time. Especially in the field of language learning, these curricula are based on identical language models. The « Plan d’études romand » (PER), valid in French-speaking Switzerland, has been in use for some time. The implementation of the « Piano di studio della scuola dell’obbligo ticinese » in the Italian-speaking canton of Ticino began at the start of the school year 2015/16. The curriculum for the 21 German-speaking cantons (hence the name Lehrplan 21) was completed in 2015. The introduction has already taken place in some cantons, while it is planned in others; in the rest of the cantons, the decision on the introduction is still pending.\footnote{For the current state please consult: www.lehrplan21.ch/kantone.}

3 Cycles in the New Curricula
All three curricula are designed for eleven years of school (two years of nursery school and nine years compulsory education). They are divided into three cycles:
1st cycle = nursery school (Kindergarten KG) and the first two school years
2nd cycle = the four following years of primary school
3rd cycle = three years of secondary school level I

Box 11: Cycles in the curricula

Figure 3: Structure of the Swiss curriculum (Source: http://vorlage.lehrplan.ch)

All three curricula define competences that are to be achieved for each cycle. They thus represent the building blocks of such competences during school years. In addition to subject-specific educational areas, interdisciplinary and transversal competences are described. These include cooperation and communication skills as well as dealing with ICT and media.
Concerning the school language, the curricula are based on the same speech act model and educational standards (so-called EDK basic skills): In all three language regions, the focus of teaching lies on listening, reading, speaking, and writing. In the Swiss-German curriculum, these four speech act domains, which are crucial for all subjects, are complemented by the competence areas «language in focus» (=reflection on language structures or grammar and orthography, and reflection on speech acts or pragmatics) and «literature in focus». The curriculum also specifies the basic competences described in the educational standards.

Figure 4: Speech act domain in the Lehrplan 21

5.1.2 Promotion of Literacy in the Lehrplan 21

This chapter explains the passages in the Lehrplan 21 which are relevant for the promotion of literacy, or rather for the competence areas «reading», «literature in focus» and «writing».

The competence area of «reading» is divided into four so-called competence aspects:

A Basic skills
B Understanding of subject texts
C Understanding of literary texts
D Reflection on reading habits

The aspect of «basic skills» essentially describes phonological awareness, fluency in reading, and receptive vocabulary especially with respect to (written) standard German. These skills are to be promoted in all eleven years of education. The fourth competence aspect «reflection on reading habits» includes the clarification of reading interests as well as reading strategies.

At the core of the «reading»-domain lie the second and third competence aspects: These refer to text comprehension. A distinction is made between the «understanding of subject texts» and the «understanding of literary texts». The understanding of subject texts mainly describes the extraction of explicit and implicit information as well as the understanding of discontinuous texts and is in accordance with the competency model of PISA (see Chapter 3). This competence aspect also entails reading strategies, techniques for working with dictionaries, the use of libraries for the gathering of information, as well as the (written) processing of what has been read (epistemic writing).

The «understanding of literary texts» focuses on narrative texts: its issues are the understanding of courses of action as well as the imagination of characters and locations. Formative reading and the use of the library as a place with a rich supply of reading material (audio books, books, other media such as DVDs and games) complement this competency aspect. Moreover, readers should be enabled to
describe their reading interests. The actual literary work with its various classes is portrayed in the competence area «6 literature in focus».

The competence area «6 literature in focus» covers three aspects of competence:

A Confrontation with literary texts
B Dealing with different authors and different cultures
C Literary texts: characteristics and functioning

«Confrontation with literary texts» addresses two things: First, methods of action- and production-oriented literature teaching, and second, the literary conversation and thus the imagining and the following of communication. The learning about authors and cultures includes the recognition and appreciation of dissimilarities of individual authors and cultures. The aspect of «characteristics and functioning» deals with the awareness of the formal and linguistic presentation of literary texts as well as the knowledge of genres and literary classes.

The domain «writing» is divided into the following aspects of competence:

A Basic skills
B Writing products
C Writing process: finding and planning ideas
D Writing process: formulating ideas
E Writing process: revising content
F Writing process: formal revision

The «basic skills» not only include the formation of a personal handwriting but also the ability to write fluently and to formulate ideas, which ensures the capability for more advanced writing processes. Again, it is implicated that the basic skills should be promoted throughout all eleven years of education.

The competence aspect of «writing products» describes textual structures which pupils should know, so that they can justify their writing goals for their own text production in terms of structure, content, and language.

The following four competency aspects show the writing process, with a distinction between content and formal revision. Formal revision includes orthographic correctness, amongst others. Correct spelling is also addressed in the area of competence «5 language focus» in the curriculum. The two areas are different with respect to the expected depth of orthographic correctness and in the form in which the spelling is taken into account. In the competence area «writing» less depth is expected, as in the production or editing of own texts, orthographic correctness is more demanding than in a focused and isolated exercise for a particular spelling issue. This is also described in the competence area «language focus». In this area explicit orthographic knowledge of rules is demonstrated. The domain «writing» ends with the competence aspect of «reflection on the writing process and own written products». Here aspects of monitoring and writing strategies are explicated.

Conclusion

The language-region specific curricula aim at the harmonisation of objectives for compulsory schooling. The implementation of the curriculum in German-speaking Switzerland falls to the cantons. Therefore, different versions of the Lehrplan 21 exist and its introduction is at different stages.

The common curriculum is the basis for harmonisation in other areas:
5.2 Teaching Material

The following provides an overview of the available teaching aids and teaching materials for the subject of German and German as a second language.

In Switzerland, the choice of teaching materials is organised by the different cantons; there are no nationally mandatory teaching materials (see Chapter 2). Common to all the cantons is that the selection of teaching materials for the different subjects such as German is regulated. However, the binding character of regulation varies greatly depending on the canton, grade and school subject:

Data Foundation
The requirements and recommendations of five German-speaking cantons were examined for the analysis. One canton of each of the five major regions of German-speaking Switzerland was taken into account: canton Lucerne (central Switzerland), canton St. Gallen (eastern Switzerland), canton Zurich (Zurich Region), canton Berne (Midlands), canton Aargau (Northwest Switzerland).

As part of this report, the requirements of the authorities have been considered and analysed, but it is assumed that schools also resort to other materials (for example from the Internet).

Only the recommendations of the authorities were considered for this report. Nevertheless, additional teaching materials (e.g. from the Internet) are expected to be in use in everyday school life.

while some cantons set mandatory or alternatively mandatory teaching materials, others merely provide lists of recommendations.

5.2.1 Courses for First Reading

What it is about
Switzerland does not have nation-wide mandatory teaching materials. The existing courses for first reading are very diverse; cantons give recommendations for the choice of teaching aids.

The choice of teaching materials for first reading is relatively free in all five cantons. While the cantons St. Gallen, Lucerne, and Aargau propose between two to four teaching materials as alternatively binding, the cantons Berne and Zurich leave the selection to the teachers entirely. The variety of choices mirrors the diversity in propagated methods of literary language acquisition. There are textbooks that incorporate synthetic and analytical methods («Tobi Fibel»), some which are more or less closely aligned to the method of reading by writing («Anton und Zora», «Lara und ihre Freunde», «Mimi die Lesemaus»), and still others that are based on the language experience approach by Brügelmann and Brinkmann [42] («ABC Lernlandschaften»). The textbook «Leseschlau», which has been developed in Switzerland and focuses on intense sound training, is also widely used. The teaching aid «Buchstabenreise», which has been developed in Switzerland as well, introduces a holistic promotion of language skills: It integrates the different methods for writing acquisition; however, the sole focus

does not lie with writing acquisition alone. The promotion of receptive and productive language skills (reading, writing, listening, speaking) and the related strategies are also subject of the textbook.

5.2.2 Language Teaching Materials

The situation is clear regarding language teaching materials. There are three teaching aids which are alternatively binding or binding: «Sprachfenster» (Lower School), «Sprachland» (Middle School) and «Sprachwelt Deutsch» (Secondary School level I) by the Lehrmittelverlag Zurich (publishing company for teaching aids), «Die Sprachstarken» (2nd – 9th grad) by Klett-Verlag Switzerland, and for secondary school teaching «Welt der Wörter» (Lehrmittelverlag Zurich). The latter is no longer republished and is to be replaced by the more recent teaching aids «Sprachwelt Deutsch» and «Die Sprachstarken 7 – 9».

All teaching materials are competence-oriented and compatible with the Lehrplan 21 (see Chapter 5.1). They focus on the promotion of all language skills, both receptive (reading, listening) and productive (writing, speaking). In different ways, they all concentrate on addressing and reflecting on language strategies such as reading and writing strategies: in Sprachfenster, Sprachland and Sprachwelt, the strategies are listed separately in a book for work techniques for the students and are to be used in the special issue booklets. In the Sprachstarken, procedures and strategies are integrated into the learning tasks and their application and reflection is explicitly introduced with learning tasks. They are expanded in a spiral-curricular way throughout the volumes: the individual volumes relate to one another. Each volume builds upon the strategies, methods, and content brought up in the previous one, and repeats and expands on it in accordance with the competence level of the school grade.

5.2.3 Storybooks and Reading Training

There is one recommended or mandatory storybook per grade:

- «Knuddeldaddelwu» (2nd grade, will soon be replaced by «Das Lesebuch»),
- «Platsch» (3rd grade),
- «federleicht und vogelfrei» (4th grade),
- «anderswie und anderswo» (5th grade),
- «mittendrin und hoch hinaus» (6th grade),
- «Alles und nichts» (secondary school).

The cantonal publishing company for teaching aids Schulverlag Plus (cantons Aargau and Bern), which is also part of the interkantonale Lehrmittelzentrale or ilz (centre for teaching aids), publishes all storybooks. Such books contain texts of different functions (entertainment, pleasure reading, information, etc.) and genres. There is a CD and teacher’s commentary (including didactic information as well as tuition sketches and materials) for each storybook.

In addition to storybooks Schulverlag Plus also recommends or prescribes poetry books such as

- «Die Welt ist reich» (4th-6th grade), and
- «Wort und Zauberwort» (Secondary school level I)

The teaching aid «Lesewelten» is for the teaching of literature at secondary level. It includes a selection of literary texts and suggestions for lessons. The texts are organised in special issue booklets (e.g. «Literature and Switzerland», «Literature and Suspense», etc.).

However, reading and literature classes are based on more than storybooks: individual and class reading are an important component of reading instruction. The materials on offer to are not
controlled by the state, but supported by it: full texts, which sometimes include didactic information and exercises, can be ordered for class reading at e.g. Bibliomedia43 (see Chapter 7). These offers are being widely used and replace or supplement working with a storybook.

Since the results of PISA 2000, the promotion of basic reading skills as well as reading training is of more importance. Learning aids have been developed for this purpose and have been recommended on many cantonal lists for teaching aids.

5.2.4 German as a Second Language (GSL)

The GSL teaching materials «Hoppla» (Primary School), «Pipapo» (Middle School) and Kontakt» are used in most cantons. They cover both the initial instruction and the following GSL lessons. Concerning German as a second language there is no uniform practice on how long students are taught individually without the rest of the class. In the canton of Zurich, for example, they are taught individually during the initial phase. Then they are integrated into their normal class, while they can receive additional language support in separate GSL lessons if needed. Since its implementation in 2013, a possible need for further coaching is determined by the language standard instrument «Sprachgewandt» (see Chapter 5.3).

Conclusion

The situation in Switzerland regarding teaching aids is relatively clear, apart from the courses for first reading. This is partly due to the limited number of publishing companies for teaching aids: the cantonal publishing companies for teaching aids of German-speaking Switzerland are united in the interkantonale Lehrmittelzentrale (ilz), and there is only one further publishing company, which is privately owned (Klett und Balmer).44] Because of the Swiss Standard German (see Box 1) teaching materials from Germany are not recommended other than for beginner classes.

In other words, there is little competition in the Swiss market when it comes to teaching aids. Nevertheless, this lack of competition has not had a negative effect on the quality of teaching materials: those for language teaching have all been developed in cooperation between experts in educational didactics, who are responsible for the conception and scientific support, as well as by teachers, and people from publishing companies. Such cooperation is complicated, but it guarantees that the teaching materials take into account the most recent scientific findings while they also integrate the practical side of teaching. So far, the resources for this cooperation have been available for the cantonal publishing companies for teaching aids. Private publishing companies for teaching aids adopt this practice, as it is the only way to ensure their ability to compete with the cantonal ones.
5.3 Performance Tests and Standardised Tests

What it is about
On a cantonal and national level, TIMSS and especially PISA 2000\(^45\) caused the desire to advance the development of subject teaching and of schools in general through performance testing.

In addition to class-internal performance assessments, some cantons and regions of educational reforms have established standardised test procedures for the evaluation of performance. These fulfil different functions:

- Tests for the individual, promotion-oriented positioning
- Tests to prepare balanced performance assessment (certification and selection)
- Tests to evaluate the effectiveness of the education system (e.g. PISA)

5.3.1 Monitoring of Education

Monitoring of Education

The Swiss Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education (EDK) and the State Secretariat for Education, Research, and Innovation (SBFI) have launched a monitoring system for education in Switzerland with the purpose of systematically and scientifically procuring, processing and analysing information on the Swiss education system (Education Report 14: 6). Based on this monitoring a Report of National Education is published every four years (the last report was published in 2014). It describes the entire educational system, spanning from pre-school to university and further education, and includes relevant context conditions and institutional characteristics of all levels of education. Moreover, the performance of the educational system is evaluated on the basis of effectiveness, efficiency, and equity. However, the Monitoring of Education is primarily a basis for research and data-driven education policies of the cantons and the federal government.

Box 12: Monitoring of education

In 2013, in order to verify the effectiveness of the educational system, the Cantonal Ministers of Education decided to examine whether the Swiss school system fulfils the basic skills (minimum standards) as defined in the Educational Standards (Überprüfung zur Erreichung der Grundkompetenzen ÜGK = verification of achievement of basic skills). Common tests for all three major language regions are being developed to this end (see Chapter 5.3).

A database structure for the promotion of the expected basic skills is being built for the same purpose.\(^46\)

Various Departments of Education have commissioned contracts for the development of tests for independent, individual positioning to publishing companies for teaching aids, educational colleges, and universities. The binding nature of the tests is regulated differently depending on the canton. It can be seen that in addition to the cantonal test developments, efforts are being made to design and coordinate the performance tests supra-regionally. Thus, in 2012, the educational area Northwest Switzerland set the goal to establish harmonised performance tests. To date, orientation and comparative tests as well as final exams with the aim of a standardised evaluation of performance have also been established in certain cantons.\(^47\)

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\(^45\) Check 5, developed in 2004; Klassencockpit ZH, developed in 2003.
\(^46\) www.edk.ch/dyn/12928.php, 30.03.2016.
\(^47\) www.bildungsraum-nw.ch/programm/volksschule.
The resulting tests «Lernlot», «Klassencockpit» and «eprolog» for levels from pre-school to 10th grade (school years 1 to 12) evaluate the learning status of students in the subjects German and Mathematics. Other tests like «Stellwerk», «Checks» and «Orientierungsarbeiten» assess the learning status of other school subjects and general cognitive abilities.

In school language, the competence areas of «Reading», «Listening» and «Writing» as well as «Spelling» are examined. In part, vocabulary and grammar are recognised isolated from other competence areas. The evaluation processes determine to what degree the areas of competence may be differentiated. Some individual assessments are evaluated laboriously by the teachers and enable differentiated testing of the level of education (orientation work). Others are completed online by the pupils, therefore enabling less differentiated testing. The tests are mostly competence- oriented, as they are currently being based off the Lehrplan 21 (see Chapter 5.1).

5.3.2 Language Assessment GSL

Since 2013, some cantons of German-speaking Switzerland have recommended (Bern) or declared mandatory (e.g. Zurich, Schwyz, Lucerne) the language level assessment «Sprachgewandt» to clarify the need for support in language teaching. It is used from pre-school level up to 9th grade. «Sprachgewandt» includes a standardised reading test and observation sheets on the four areas of language action, which help assess the need for support. The level that must be reached to be relieved from remedial classes may be determined by the cantons. Most cantons follow the recommendations by the authors, namely the level B - C according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), which roughly corresponds to the basic skills in school language of HarmoS and Lehrplan 21 (see Chapter 5.1).

5.3.3 Other Tests

Performance tests are used not only in school, but also in the process of career choice. Such tests are developed and performed by private providers and can be a precondition to apply for an apprenticeship.

Conclusion

The coming years will see the implementation of a large national Monitoring of Education in Switzerland in four subjects, including the school language across language boundaries. Its aim is to assess the achievement of basic skills. In addition, there will be different cantonal developments that provide psychometrically validated tests for the schools. These tests are mandatory for all pupils and are a means of control; they are also carried out for promotional purposes. It is difficult to estimate which solutions will be established for which cantons in the long run. In any case, the different approaches offer the potential for a productive development.
6 Early Literacy

The promotion of literacy and language begins long before school; in addition to the locus of the family, it takes place in nurseries, playgroups and generally in places where small children are cared for in everyday life. In German-speaking educational institutions, a situational language education integrated into the everyday life of 0- to 6-year-old children has established itself in the past few years. The focus of the linguistic and literal support is the successful communication through all means available - multimodal and multilingual. Through professionalisation, networking and research, this approach is to be further encouraged and strengthened in nursery schools.

Even small children acquire language and literal skills by communicating with competent others thus discovering, trying and developing (written) linguistic techniques. Caregivers of children (for example parents, siblings, or educational professionals) can support these acquisition processes by creating increasingly sophisticated linguistic action situations and allowing the children an ever more independent participation. The focal point is both on activities directly related to writing (for example «writing» a shopping list, or «reading» picture books) as well as on the understanding and producing of «oral texts» (e.g. experience reports, fantasy stories or explanations). Children from disadvantaged families can particularly benefit from such options at educational preschool institutions. Therefore, the actions of educational professionals in day care centres, home day care, playgroups, and nurseries must develop and coordinate the acquisition of linguistic and literal skills in real life situations.

**Situational Language Education**

Successful everyday conversations between children and their caregivers are acquisition contexts of linguistic and literal skills. When coaching and training care staff in the approach of situational language education, two dimensions are fundamentally important:48

- quality of interaction
- challenging language acts

It is always the common understanding, which is in the foreground and which is co-constructed by all means available (multimodal and multilingual).

Box 13: Situational language education

**Early Literacy**

Literacy skills include low- and high-hierarchy dimensions. Their acquisition already begins in preschool:

- The basal progenitor skills include phonological awareness and the knowledge of first letter shapes and sound-letter assignments.
- High-hierarchy precursor skills may be taken to mean oral as well as textual capabilities. Oral texts are individual, globally structured, linguistically differentiated, and exemplary representations of content that is detached from situational context.

Young children need access to media (including, but not limited to books), participation in media practices and discussions on media and their content in order to acquire literal skills through model learning.49

Box 14: Early literacy

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48 Isler 2014.
6.1 Framework of Pre-School Language Education in German-Speaking Switzerland

Children acquire language skills in all their living environments. This includes family, day care and day families, playgroup, and nursery school. For each of these ‘worlds’, specific conditions and frameworks apply. They will be briefly outlined below. The description is limited to public educational institutions for 0- to 6-year-old children in German-speaking Switzerland.

6.2 Changes of the Past Decade – Activism after the PISA Shock

Compared to the official education in nursery schools and schools, the area of early learning presents itself as a very heterogeneous field with various facilities – pre-schools, day care organisations, play groups and libraries, as well as community work, religious and ethnic communities or sports and music clubs – a variety of learning opportunities for young children and their parents (see Chapter 7).

After the PISA shock in 2003, early language education quickly came into the focus of education policy. Since a scientific and a conceptual basis were still largely missing, initially a certain activism ruled:

- First educational and structure-building measures
- Publication of preliminary research results on the efficacy of good quality pre-school education services
- Expertise and reports for early education
- Creation of additional childcare places
- Projects to strengthen early language education and integration
- Creation of an orientation framework «Frühe Bildung, Betreuung und Erziehung in der Schweiz» («Early Education and Care in Switzerland ») (FBBE)
- Continuous quality development of educational institutions in the area of early learning
- New library concepts as places of encounter and interaction (see chapter 7)
- Formation of a School Entry Level (4- to 8-year-olds, aside from pre-school and school education this also concerns the education of the respective teachers at teacher training colleges) (see also Chapter 4 an 5).

6.3 Projects for Early Linguistic Education and Literacy

This chapter provides an overview of a selection of works for early linguistic education and literacy. The selection is limited to German-speaking work with a clear focus on linguistic and literal education. (i.e. no longer on early education in general).

**What it is about**

The development projects listed and described below differ in how strongly they focus on the promotion of language and literacy. The only project specifically tuned to early literal education is «Schenk mir eine Geschichte» («Give me a story»). In the other projects, the acquisition of German by multilingual or socially disadvantaged children is at the centre.
«Schenk mir eine Geschichte – family literacy» (see Chapter 7)

**Spielgruppen plus (Playgroups Plus):** For children with disadvantaged educational backgrounds who learn German as their second language. Canton Zurich.\(^{50}\)

**From Playgroup to Nursery School - Spiki:** playgroup and parent exchange. Subsidised for low-income families. City of St. Gallen.

**Primano:** study with a control group to optimise training for educational professionals (including diagnostic capability and work with parents.). City of Bern.

**Mit ausreichenden Deutschkenntnissen in den Kindergarten (Off to Nursery School With Sufficient Knowledge of German):** Free, obligatory visit of a playgroup for children with low knowledge of German. With a complimentary offer for the family. Researched by the University of Basel. City of Basel.

**What it is about**

In addition to scientific bases there are also programmatic concepts and implementation-oriented materials for early language education, which are aligned with different emphases on a daily integrated language education and which are compatible with each other and with the guiding framework of the FBBE.

**Expertise, Concepts and Materials for Early Language Education**

Some papers have also been able to contribute to the further development of early language education. The following have recently appeared in German-speaking Switzerland:

**Sticca et al. (2013)** have interviewed actors active in early education with regards to the efficacy and consistency of language training in the Canton of Zurich and have derived recommendations from these interviews.

**Stamm (2014):** in her dossier for early language support, Stamm illustrates theoretical approaches and empirical findings and recommends five key elements for the development of early language support.

**Schneider et al. (2013):** in «Expertise zur Wirksamkeit der Sprachförderung» («expertise on the effectiveness of language training»), Schneider et al. gather the (as yet rather scant) empirical evidence of effective approaches to pre-school language promotion in everyday conversations (in their chapter 4.1).

**Kannengieser et al. (2013)** present a practical book «Nashörner haben ein Horn» («Rhinos Have One Horn»), which contains practical tips and applications for playgroups and day care centres and which teaches the fundamentals of language support for monolingual and multilingual children aged 2 to 4.

**Löffler und Vogt (Hrsg., 2015)** provide the manual «Strategien der Sprachförderung im Kita-Alltag» («Strategies of Language Promotion in Day Care»), in which five language support strategies, their basics and their practical application in the context of everyday integrated language support are presented.

**Kappeler und Plangger (2015):** In addition to «Nashörner haben ein Horn», Kappeler and Plangger provide a «quality guide to language training in playgroups and childcare centres» which specifies the dimensions of the structure, orientation and process quality for early language education.

**Isler et al. (im Druck):** In «Fachkonzept frühe Sprachbildung» («Concept for Early Language Education») Isler et al. describe the state of research, the basic understanding and six guidelines of early everyday integrated language education and their conditions in the family, day family, day care and playgroup.

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\(^{50}\) See: www.vsa.zh.ch/internet/bildungsdirektion/vsa/de/schulbetrieb_und_unterricht/schule_migration0/integra tionsfoerderung_im_vorschulalter.html.
Conclusion and Outlook

In German-speaking Switzerland, recent years have seen substantial progress made on the road towards a coherent support of everyday integrated language at all levels – development, training, research, and documentation. In the field of early language education many actors at different levels have been working on and dealing with the following elements:

- Measures for the promotion of pre-school reading (e.g. the Foundation GFZ [Gemeinnützige Frauen Zürich (Women’s Community Service Zurich)])
- Measures for the further development of early language education (e.g. Department of Education Canton of Zurich)
- Training initiatives for early language education in playgroups (Lead: PH TG).

Nevertheless, several tasks – some of them fundamental – remain to be solved:

Daily integrated language support needs to be developed with respect to multilingualism and (multimedia) literacy.

The hitherto selectively acting measures for the professionalisation of educational action must be applied more widely in an appropriate form.

There are tendencies towards separation between nurseries, play groups, early education centres and nursery schools, which must be overcome by a common understanding of language development and cooperation.

The lack of legal basis on the side of the cantons for the coordination, quality development and financing of institutions for early learning represents a structural problem that should be tackled politically.

The coordination and possible cooperation between the universities that deal with the research and development of early language and literal education should be strengthened.

There is as yet no systematic knowledge about the understanding of early language education mediated in these trainings. A comparative study of curricula and methods would be desirable.

With the introduction of the Lehrplan 21 many German-speaking cantons face a paradigm shift from a logic of stages to a logic of didactics on the level of nursery school. This bears some risk that the educational understanding of early learning and of nursery school may drift apart instead of moving towards one another, thus impeding the construction of an integrated language education. This challenge may require special attention and support.
7 The Promotion of Literacy Parallel to School

School is far from the only place where literacy is taught and encouraged. On the contrary: the formal literal socialisation and education at school is usefully flanked and supported by extracurricular offerings. In this chapter, both nationally and regionally active institutions committed to the promotion of literacy at different ages are presented. They are active through various offers, among other things through entertaining publishers as well as through prizes and projects in the promotion of literacy.

**Tradition of the promotion of literacy parallel to school**

Until the end of the 20th century, the extracurricular promotion of literacy in German-speaking Switzerland was closely linked to school and was operated by school-related associations and Bibliomedia Switzerland. There were virtually no initiatives for reading and writing for pre-primary level and the leisure time of children and adolescents. Since PISA 2000, the landscape regarding the funding of such initiatives has changed dramatically. Especially in the field of early learning, projects in favour of the promotion of literacy in families and in early learning institutions (Kitas, playgroups) throughout Switzerland have been implemented. But also the academic field of action has been extended to include services for families and peers to better achieve extracurricular reading socialisation.

Box 15: Tradition of the promotion of literacy parallel to school

The present compilation shows the key players in the promotion of literacy outside school and presents selected offers with a wide reach.

7.1 National and Widely Active Institutions in the Promotion of Literacy and Libraries

**Extracurricular Organisation of the Promotion of Literacy**

In German-speaking Switzerland, associations’ and foundations’ interest in and support of extracurricular reading promotion has a long tradition. These institutions have usually been founded out of the need to provide children and young people with «good» reading for their free time. Based on Article 15 of the Kulturförderungsgesetz (Cultural Promotion Act), the Confederation supports organisations and institutions active in the promotion of reading with structural funding contributions. It also supports sustainable individual projects in the area of the promotion of literacy, which are located at the interface between libraries and schools, while taking into account the competences of the federal government and the cantons, with regard to school (see Chapter 2). In order to be accessible to the operating businesses, the nationally active organisations usually work with a central office and language-regional offices.

Box 16: Extracurricular organisation of the promotion of literacy

**Schweizerische Gesellschaft für Lehrerinnen- und Lehrerbildung (The Swiss Society for Teacher Education) (SGL):** The SGL is a professional organisation of lecturers, scientific staff and assistants at PHs and according university

**Schweizerischer Verein für die deutsche Sprache (Swiss Association for the German Language) (SVDS):** The SVDS aims to maintain both forms of the German language (dialect and standard) in Switzerland and intends to deepen
departments (→ SGL online). It represents the concerns of teacher education in Swiss education politics and initiates professional exchanges between the respective universities through the organisation of conferences and the journal «Beiträge zur Lehrerinnen- und Lehrerbildung» (Contributions to Teacher Education). The SGL is organised in different professional groups, notably the «Forum Deutschdidaktik» (Forum of German Didactics, FDD) and the «Forum Fremdsprachen Schweiz» (Forum Foreign Languages Switzerland).

Among other things, it wants to ensure that schools are obliged to use standard German as a language of instruction. Furthermore, with the magazine «Sprachspiegel» (Mirror of Language) and the organisation of symposia, it significantly contributes to the political and public discourse. In addition, the SVDS carries the sponsorship of the Schweizerischer Dudenausschuss (Swiss Duden committee), which deals with helvetisms for the editorial office of Duden\(^51\).

**Bibliomedia Switzerland**: Bibliomedia Switzerland is a public foundation. It is committed to the development of libraries and the promotion of reading. It sees itself as a library of libraries and as an information hub in Switzerland’s library landscape. It provides a wide range of current books for children, adolescents and adults in all national languages and in several foreign languages, and promotes reading and the joy of literature. → Buchstart; → Mondomedia. The diverse offers of Bibliomedia are aimed at local libraries, schools and school libraries.\(^52\)

**Interbiblio**: The umbrella organisation of the intercultural libraries in Switzerland promotes the exchange of information and experience among its members and interested people or institutions. It also represents the intercultural libraries and their concerns and interests in politics and society, as well as being committed to the support of the promotion of first language. This is done in collaboration with Bibliomedia, the co-founder of Mondomedia.\(^53\)

**Mondomedia**: Mondomedia provides a platform for the exchange of experience and knowledge in intercultural library work for German-speaking Switzerland. It organises speakers for further education courses and counsellors who support libraries in the implementation of small and large projects.\(^54\)

**Schweizerische Arbeitsgemeinschaft der allgemeinen öffentlichen Bibliotheken (Swiss Community of General Public Libraries) (SAB)**: The SAB’s mission is to promote the activities of the 700 public libraries, school libraries and their employees. It mainly supports: the promotion, education and entertaining of reading. The SAB advances the strategic positioning and development of libraries and raises awareness for their importance for a democratic Swiss society. It co-organises the → «Welttag des Buches» (World Book and Copyright Day).\(^55\)

**Schweizerisches Institut für Kinder- und Jugendentien (Swiss Institute for Media Aimed at Children and Youth) (SIKJM)**: The SIKJM, which collaborates with eleven partners from cantonal and regional organisations, collects and documents media for children and youth. It examines such media with a cultural studies approach, presents the results through publications and exhibitions and

\(^{51}\) See: www.sprachverein.ch.
\(^{52}\) See: www.bibliomedia.ch.
\(^{53}\) See: www.interbiblio.ch.
\(^{54}\) See: www.mondomedia.ch.
\(^{55}\) See: www.sabclp.ch.
promotes pleasurable approaches to media for children and adolescents (see the projects listed below: Buchstart, Erzählacht, Lezseanimatorin SIKJM, Mein Buchumschlag, Schenk mir eine Geschichte). The SIKJM reports on media for children and youth, on trends and backgrounds, and honours outstanding children's books (Schweizer Kinder- und Jugendmedienpreis; Swiss Youth Literature Price). The SIKJM reports on media for children and youth, on trends and backgrounds, and honours outstanding children's books (Schweizer Kinder- und Jugendmedienpreis; Swiss Youth Literature Price).

**Further Information**

**Bischu:** Online Manual with the aim to support the development of good cooperation between libraries and schools. Bischu provides materials, annotated links to various educational programmes as well as handouts: www.bischu.zh

**School libraries:** Here you can find the guidelines for school libraries developed by SAB: www.sabclp.ch/images/Richtlinien_Schulbibliotheken_2014.pdf

### 7.2 Publishing Companies

**The Publishing Landscape of German-Speaking Switzerland**

Swiss German publishers for children’s books (such as Atlantis, Artemis or Sauerländer) played an important role for the German-speaking children’s literature up to the 1990s. Globalisation, the strong Swiss franc and fixed book prices have since greatly damaged this area of the publishing scene. Currently, there are three major trade publishers in German-speaking Switzerland (Atlantis / Orell Füssli, Aracari and NordSüd), which focus on and publish picture books and Swiss classics.

Additionally, there is the Schweizerische Jugendschriftenwerk (Swiss Youth Writing Group) SJW, which has since 1932 been publishing affordable CYL in all four official languages. The trade publishers are members of the industry association SBVV.

Box 17: The organisation of publishers

**Schweizerisches Jugendschriftenwerk SJW (Swiss Youth Writing Group):** The SJW is a foundation; it provides children and young people with timely and affordable literature in all official languages and hopes to awaken the desire to read, to provide an incentive to begin reading books and to disseminate information. For young authors and illustrators, it is a platform for first publications. In 2013, SJW-issue no. 2387 «Die grosse Flut» (The Great Flood) by the artist duo «It’s Raining Elephants» won 1st prize Grand Prix BIB at the Biennial of Illustration Bratislava (BIB) and in 2012 it won the prize for Illustration at the Children's Book Fair Bologna.

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56 See: www.sikjm.ch.
57 See: www.sjw.ch.
Schweizer Buchhändler- und Verlegerverband SBVV (Swiss Booksellers and Publishers Association):
The SBVV is a service company for over 500 organised members, ranging from the neighbourhood bookstore to the intermediate book trade to big publishers. It advocates a national book policy, publishing promotion, fixed book prices and measures to strengthen the retail book trade. Along with LiteraturBasel it awards the Swiss Book Prize and contributes to the World Book and Copyright Day.58

7.3 Prizes

Book Prizes
In Switzerland with its four official languages, awarding national literary awards is not so easy. Since 2012, the federal government has met this major challenge with a prize concept that takes into account all official languages, but which does not include children’s literature. For children and youth literature there is a separate, national prize awarded by two institutions. There are also regional languages prizes. The most important one for German-speaking Switzerland is the Swiss Book Prize.

Since 2008, the Swiss Book Prize has been awarded annually by SBVV and LiteraturBasel with the aim of honouring outstanding works and of giving authors the recognition they deserve beyond the boundaries of language regions and national borders. An independent jury honours narrative or essayistic works by Swiss authors. The Swiss Book Prize is worth 40,000 Swiss francs. The prize money for the winner is 30,000 Swiss francs, the nominees each receive 2500 Swiss francs.50

Swiss Literary Awards: The Federal Office of Culture awards an annual «Swiss Grand Prix of Literature» and five to seven Swiss literary awards. Eligible are Swiss citizens or authors resident in Switzerland. The winners of the Swiss literary awards each receive CHF 25,000; their works are then published in Switzerland and abroad. The Swiss Grand Prix of Literature honours a person who has promoted Swiss literature in a unique way. The winner receives CHF 40,000 prize money. In addition to this, every two years a special prize called «Translation», alternating with the special prize «Mediation», is awarded. These are given out by the Swiss jury for literature and are also endowed with 40,000 francs.61

Der Schweizer Kinder- und Jugendmedienpreis (The Swiss Youth Literature and Media Prize) is awarded every two years jointly by SIKJM and the «Dachverband Lehrerinnen und Lehrer Schweiz LCH»

58 See: www.sbvv.ch.
59 See: www.baobabbooks.ch.
60 See: www.schweizerbuchpreis.ch.
61 See: www.literaturpreise.ch.
(«Umbrella Organisation of Teachers Switzerland») for outstanding literary works for children and youth. It is endowed with CHF 10,000.62

The Baarer Rabe (The Baar Raven) is a prize for children’s literature and is awarded annually. The prize includes the sum of 4000 Swiss francs and the publication of the work in the form of a SJW booklet with the SJW publishing house.63

7.4 Readings – Literal Animation Focussing on «Reading»

Readings are Widespread and Supported by the Federal Government:
Readings by authors in schools are widespread in German-speaking Switzerland and are supported by the authorities. There are many national, regional and local extracurricular fun reading and storytelling events as well as reading promotion offers starting at early learning level.

Box 19: Readings in Switzerland

7.4.1 National Projects

Schweizer Erzählnacht (Swiss Story Night): «Same night, same motif, individual design». This slogan has been used for over 25 years, every year on the second Friday in November, at the biggest cultural event in Switzerland. Throughout the country, about 70,000 children and adults in over 500 locations tell each other stories. Schools, libraries, bookstores and various cultural institutions stage the respective motto freely according to their own preferences.

Swiss Story Night is a joint project of SIKJM, Bibliomedia Switzerland and UNICEF Switzerland.64

School Readings: School readings take place in all cantons of German-speaking Switzerland. They are often organised directly by the state, or at least financially co-sponsored. They run under the title «Literatur aus erster Hand» (literature Firsthand) (cantons AG, BS, LU, Eastern Switzerland, ZH) and «Literature Live» (canton ZH; soon also in eastern Switzerland for vocational and secondary schools): During a certain period of time up to 100 authors are invited to readings at schools. In addition, there are a few all-season offers, as in the cantons of Aargau («Kultur macht Schule»; Culture in Schools) and Berne.65

Survey on School Readings in Switzerland
www.a-d-s.ch/index.php?id=528&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=2275&cHash=dafd3662e8d011a33f0f6d5b5c110c817

63 See: www.abraxas-festival.ch.
64 See: www.sikjm.ch/literale-foerderung/projekte/schweizer-erzaehlnacht.
65 See: www.schuleundkultur.ch/109.0.html.
Buchstart Schweiz (Bookstart Switzerland): In the first year after birth, the parents of newborns receive a book package with books and information on how they can promote the language development of their children, so that they can gain access to the world of books and learning. Various materials are available on the website to download in other languages as well. Doctors, libraries, parent counselling centres and other institutions involved in the project can order Bookstart packs, information leaflets and promotional materials for free. Seven years after the project launch, the offer has reached approximately 40% of all families with infants. Bibliomedia Switzerland and SIKJM are supporters of the project.66

«Bookstart» in Other Countries
This project is also available in other countries, such as «Book start» in England and Austria. For more information see the projects ELiNet has collected and awarded 'Good Practice'.
Projects awarded ‘Good Practice’ by ELiNet

Schenk mir eine Geschichte – Family Literacy: (Give Me a Story) - Family Literacy: The project encourages parents with an immigrant background to tell stories and read picture books to their children from an early age. Parents are especially encouraged to do this in their family language. Reading animations are conducted by cultural educators and teachers for «Heimatliche Sprache und Kultur» («home language and culture») (HSK), who are trained for this task by SIKJM. The project is currently being implemented in 14 cantons in 17 languages.67

Accompanying Research about the Project:

66 See: www.buchstart.ch.
bookstar.ch is a reading project for adolescents. Youth juries present their favourite books on the bookstar website. Peers then select their favourite titles of the year. The whole project is presented as a competition with attractive prizes.68

Reading Animator SIKJM: Course: «LeseanimatorIn SIKJM – Literale Förderung im Frühbereich» (Reading animator SIKJM – Promotion of Literacy in Early Stages) and network: «Literaturvermittlung im Früh- und Vorschulbereich» (Promoting Literature in Early and Pre-School Education). Graduates of a two-year course support staff in institutions such as playgroups, nurseries, libraries and family centres in the early literal promotion with further education and coaching as well as providing events for children and parents.69

LiteraturSchweiz (Literature Switzerland): This is a meta-search engine for Swiss literature and a catalogue of Swiss books from the last 60 years that are considered worth reading. The catalogue includes children and youth literature, which the SIKJM has recommended. Also found on the literary agenda of LiteraturSchweiz is «Wer liest wo?» («Whoever reads where?»), a programme accompanied by internet radio.70

The Solothurn Literature Days provide a forum for contemporary writing in Switzerland, for meetings of Swiss writers from all parts of the country with each other and/or with the audience, with professionals and publishers. There are numerous readings, film screenings and exhibitions. The Solothurn Literature Festival has taken place every year since 1979 on the Ascension weekend in Solothurn; it is the main multilingual literary event in Switzerland and also features a children’s book programme.71

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68 See: www.bookstar.ch.
70 See: www.literaturschweiz.ch.
71 See: www.literatur.ch.
7.4.2 Regional Projects

**Abraxas – Central Swiss Children and Youth Literature Festival Train:**
The festival provides a platform for events related to children and youth literature. It invites all ages to the pleasurable experience of reading, listening, participating, exchanging, exploring and reflecting, offering the possibility of an enjoyable, varied extracurricular reading promotion.\(^{72}\)

**Das Basler Jugendbücherschiff 2016 (The Basel Youth Books Ship)**

*2016* is an annual meeting place for all who are interested in literature for children and youth. There are presentations of around 2000 new publications, exhibitions and readings on special topics.\(^{73}\)

**The Child and Youth Media Festival Köniz (KiBuK)** annually offers a wide range of workshops for all ages: readings, concerts, poetry slams and plays.\(^{74}\)

**Children’s Literature Bus:** This is a travelling offer by the public library of Basel, with which they promote their educational programmes about media, stories, and reading to children aged between 1 and 12. Reading animators offer customised, evocative book pleasure in different series of programmes. The project Children’s Literature Bus is largely financed by the canton of Basel-Stadt and is supported through various donations.\(^{75}\)

**The KIM Infomobile** is a rolling source of information, with over 1000 new books and media formats for children and adolescents. The exhibition car is heated and offers enough space for a whole class.\(^{76}\)

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\(^{72}\) See: www.abraxas-festival.ch.

\(^{73}\) See: www.edubs.ch/unterstuetzung/bibliothek/lesefoerderung/jugendbuecherschiff.

\(^{74}\) See: www.kibuk.ch

\(^{75}\) See: www.stadtbibliothekbasel.ch/index.php?kinderliteraturbus.

\(^{76}\) See: www.kjm-zh.ch/site/?CatID=19.
Winterthurer Lesesommer (Reading Summer Winterthur): Under this title, every two years a competition is held – each with a different theme and logo. Participating children are asked to read stories (or have them read to them) as often as possible for at least 15 minutes a day during about eight weeks and during the summer holidays. The «chosen» days are ticked in the reading pass, a sort of calendar. Children with at least 30 entries can return the reader passport in one of the libraries and receive a voucher for the final festival, which takes place after the summer holidays.  

More

Child and Youth Media Switzerland: Eleven associations structured in cantonal and regional organisations work independently or in collaboration with the SIKJM to realise various reading promotion projects.  
www.sikjm.ch/ueber-uns/regionalorganisationen/

77 See: http://bibliotheken.winterthur.ch/lesefoerderung/aussscherschulisch/lesesommer/.
7.5 Literal Projects Focusing on «Writing»

Writing is Also a Part of Literacy
Extracurricular offers have traditionally focused on the area of reading. Only for about a decade has a wider definition of literacy – as defined by PISA 2000 – encouraged the focus of extracurricular support measures on written communication and the acquisition of written language skills. These measures are often implemented in the form of writing competitions or offers for participatory writing. Initiators of these projects are often people or institutions closely linked to the world of literature.

Box 20: Writing as a part of literacy

7.5.1 National Projects

**School Novel:** In a fixed number of class visits, authors together with pupils write a fictional text - from the first ideas to the quasi printable manuscript. The writing project takes place in classes of lower performance categories of secondary school level Sek I. The formulated goal is to have a completed version of the text by the end of the course, with which the young people can identify and which they take responsibility for.\(^{78}\)

**Mein Buchumschlag (My Book Cover)** is a competition for students from 3rd to 8th grade, who develop the envelope for a book that does not yet exist, but which they would like to read. They invent their book title, an author, and publisher with a publishing logo and design an attractive cover. A jury evaluates the book covers received. The award ceremony has event character.\(^{79}\)

7.5.2 Regional Projects

**JULL Junges Literaturlabor (Young Literature Laboratory):**
Children and adolescents write literary and other texts. They come as school classes, in small groups and sometimes individually. In this project, young writers are supported by experienced authors. The resulting texts are published (instant prints, books, web, web radio, etc.).\(^{80}\)

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\(^{78}\) See: [www.schulhausroman.ch](http://www.schulhausroman.ch).


\(^{80}\) See: [www.jull.ch](http://www.jull.ch).
The Aargauer Literaturhaus Lenzburg offers writing workshops for children and adolescents.\textsuperscript{81}

Litaturhaus Basel: Young literature house. There are organised readings and writing workshops for children and adolescents.\textsuperscript{82}

Basler Eule (Basel Owl): Basler Eule is a writing contest, which annually encourages hundreds of young people in the region of Basel to create and write stories.\textsuperscript{83}

Conclusion

Especially for reading, there are many extracurricular support activities. Their target group is mainly children and adolescents in the education years 1-9 and in secondary school level Sek I. These offers complement and expand the schools’ promotion of literacy at the level of literal animation. They serve mainly as offers for participation and provide a bridge between school and home (ex. Story Night).

Since PISA 2000 a shift has taken place in libraries: Toddlers and small children as well as their parents have been identified as a new target group thanks to projects such as «Buchstart Schweiz» («Bookstart Switzerland»), so that such offers have been rebuilt or expanded on a massive scale.

There is hardly any reading without writing, nor any writing without reading: Increasingly, writing also comes into view – on its own or in conjunction with reading – as a communicative or literal practice. In this context, a gradual promotion of multiliteracy is occasionally taken into account. This element must and will probably be expanded in the coming years. Libraries increasingly become a place for communicative exchange, where all ages meet – in a real or a virtual forum.

\textsuperscript{81} See: www.aargauer-literaturhaus.ch.
\textsuperscript{82} See: www.literaturhaus-basel.ch.
\textsuperscript{83} See: www.baslereule.ch.
8 The Promotion of Literacy in Adulthood

This chapter concentrates on the promotion of literacy after compulsory schooling. First, the focus is on the promotion of literacy for adults struggling with forms of dyslexia — in other words, people affected by illiteracy. Then the role of vocational schools will be discussed. Formally classified as secondary level schooling, these institutions often represent the last stage of formal education for young adults, where reading and writing skills may be improved.

8.1 Structures for the Prevention and Reduction of Illiteracy

While federal and cantonal authorities support further education in adulthood, it is mostly privately organised (see Chapter 2.2). Regarding the promotion of literacy, the Confederation and the cantons provide the legal framework and finance some of the campaigns for the reduction and prevention of illiteracy. This chapter explains the measures recently developed for the control of illiteracy.

What is Illiteracy?

Illiteracy describes a social phenomenon: people affected by illiteracy cannot accomplish basic tasks in reading and writing despite the fact that they speak the local language and have completed compulsory schooling. They are not able to read and understand simple texts and can therefore not use written information in their daily lives. They also have deficits in written language, preventing them from communicating adequately in writing. Modern information and communication technologies as well as an increasingly complex working environment also constantly increase the requirements regarding literal skills.

In Switzerland, around 800,000 people are affected by illiteracy. They only have restricted access to social life and face a higher risk of unemployment.

Box 21: Definition of «Illiteracy»

Based on the trend report «Illettrismus b Wenn Lesen ein Problem ist», the Confederation has initiated a network of actors working in the prevention and reduction of illiteracy. In this context, various measures were implemented:

- The webpage www.lesenlireleggere.ch informs readers about projects based in Switzerland and abroad, as well as notifying them about studies and events. The platform also has access for learners who are interested in a reading and writing courses
- Every year, a national illiteracy-conference is organised. It provides a platform of exchange for the actors in the field of illiteracy.

Every year, the Federal Office of Culture puts around one million Swiss francs towards the eradication of illiteracy and the promotion of reading skills. The sum is used for structural and project funding.

84 BAK (2015)
85 Guggisberg et al. (2007)
86 Grossenbacher/Vanhooydonck (2002)
87 See: www.lesenlireleggere.ch/Dokumentation.cfm
2017, the new Law of Further Education (WeBiG) will be introduced, transferring the responsibility for the prevention of illiteracy and thus also its financial support to the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation SERI. The Law of Further Education regulates the promotion of the acquisition and preservation of the basic skills of adults, giving the federal government the opportunity to financially support cantonal measures. The aim of this support is the practical teaching of basic skills in reading, writing and oral communication in one of the official languages, as well as that of numeracy and the use of ICT.

8.2 Institutions in the Field of Prevention and Reduction of Illiteracy

The following unions, private associations and universities are committed to the promotion of literacy in adulthood. They offer reading and writing courses for adults and/or establish research and development projects, thus also raising awareness of What it is about of illiteracy.

What it is about
The prevention and reduction of illiteracy in Switzerland is driven by private and state institutions. Besides raising awareness of What it is about, their aim is the practical support of the affected people.

Dachverband Lesen und Schreiben (Umbrella organisation Reading and Writing) (www.lesenschreiben.ch): The national umbrella organisation in the field of illiteracy is committed to enabling adults access to reading and writing, to raising public awareness about illiteracy and to providing the necessary political attention to the phenomenon. The regional organisations «Verein Lesen und Schreiben Deutsche Schweiz» (www.lesenschreiben-d.ch), «Association Lire et Ecrire Suisse Romande» (www.lire-et-ecrire.ch) and «Associazione Leggere e Scrivere della Svizzera italiana» (www.leggere-scrivere.ch) offer local literacy classes for adults.

Zentrum Lesen, PH FHNW (Reading Centre PH FHNW): The Centre for Research and Development is in charge of the research focussed on reading, media and language at the School of Education FHNW. The aim of the Reading Centre is to support children, youngsters and adults in their language skills.

Projects by the Umbrella Organisation Reading and Writing
- Sensitisation of Educators (d, f, i) www.lesenschreiben.ch/Sensibilisierung.cfm
- Film «Boggsen/Terace» (d, f) www.boggsen.ch
- Project Driving School (d, f, i) www.lesenschreiben-d.ch/myUploadData/files/Schlussbericht%20H.P.pdf

Projects at the Reading Centre
- LAB – Literacy in Daily Life and Profession (d, f) → www.literalitaet.ch/, see also Box 22
- Illiteracy and New Technology – Learning Writing in Further Education (d, f) → www.illett.ch

Project «Literacy in Everyday Life and Profession – LAB» – Basic Skills in Reading, Writing and Numeracy
The project «Literacy in everyday life and profession» was conducted between 2009 and 2013 by the School of Education FHNW and the University of Bern. It is aimed at adults with low skills in reading, writing and numeracy, who cannot meet the requirements of everyday life and profession. The aim of the project was to promote the basic skills of these adults, so that they could participate in regular

89 SBFI (2016)
further training. To that purpose, a web-based teaching and learning platform (with the domains of reading, writing, numeracy, ICT skills and individual learning) was established, together with the development of a competence grid and diagnostic tools for assessing levels of learning. These materials and instruments were used in further education and other courses and were scientifically evaluated, following two lead questions:
1. Which obstacles to learning do adults meet in literacy courses and which forms of learning do they choose?
2. Which reasons lead to an early departure or an over-long retention time in literacy courses?

Box 22: LAB – Basic skills in Reading, Writing and Numeracy

**Schweizerischer Verband für Weiterbildung SVEB** (Swiss Federation for Adult Learning SVEB): SVEB campaigns for further education in Switzerland and advocates high quality standards of courses as well as a perfect network of all actors involved.

**Bibliomedia Switzerland:** This public foundation is committed to the development of libraries and the promotion of reading skills. Its services are aimed at local libraries, schools and school libraries. It sees itself as a «library of libraries» and as an information hub in Switzerland’s library landscape. The foundation is supported by the federal government, the cantons, and the municipalities (see Chapter 6).

**Projects by the SVEB**
- GO2 – Promotion of basic skills at the workplace (d, f)
  www.alice.ch/de/sveb/projekte/foerderung-von-wenig-qualifizierten/go2/
- ich-will-wahlen.ch – Promotion of political participation of people affected by illiteracy (d, f, i)

**Projects by Bibliomedia**
- Travelling exhibition on the theme «Lese- und Schreibschwäche oder Illettrismus» (d)
  www.bibliomedia.ch/de/angebote/ausstellungen.asp?navid=14

8.3 Vocational Schools

In Switzerland, the dual vocational training system is well established: upon completion of compulsory schooling, two-thirds of young adults choose basic vocational training.\(^90\) This chapter describes the various efforts taken to promote literacy at vocational schools.

Regardless of which basic vocational training has been chosen, all learners have to take the subject «General Education» at their vocational school, where the focus is on language and communication along with issues such as law, politics, culture, ethics, etc. Here language is not only the instrument to discuss social issues; it is also a learning object in its own right. The focus is on the promotion of communicative language skills, so that students are able to use language competently in personal, professional and social contexts.\(^91\) The curriculum applies to all two-, three- and four-year courses of basic vocational training, so it sets educational targets for all learners.\(^92\)

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90 SBFI (2015: 4).
91 Schneider (2014).
Most vocational schools offer remedial courses for students who struggle with job specific subjects or general education because of language deficits. These options are partly aimed at young people with an immigrant background (GSL, DaZ), partly at German-speaking learners with a need for additional support. These remedial courses for German often include the domains of text comprehension (for specialised subject lessons), written expression, spelling and grammar. Although some vocational schools assess the language and mathematical skills of their students at the beginning of training and accordingly define corrective measures (see box 23), there is no systematic language support framework for vocational schools.

**Diagnostic Procedures and Support Frameworks – An Example**

The Gewerblich-industrielle Berufsfachschule Liestal (commercial-industrial vocational school Liestal) (GiBL) assesses all learners within the first ten weeks of their training through an initial diagnostic evaluation: this concept of early detection allows to judge the learners’ basic skills in language and mathematics, as well as their learning and social behaviour.

If performance deficits and learning problems are detected, remedial courses are recommended to the affected learners. The so-called «combi courses» not only teach language skills, but also help with mathematics and learning techniques.

Learners are supported individually in these courses. Thus, they practise text comprehension by, for example, practising with texts from school courses, which they need to have read and understood for their specialised subject lessons.

Box 23: Diagnostic procedures und support measures – an example

At vocational schools, efforts to promote reading are being, and have been, made, both in individual projects such as «Sprachlich fit – ich mache mit» (linguistically fit – I’m in) at the vocational school «Gesundheit und Soziales» (Health and Welfare) in Brugg, which envisions language training in all training situations, or through reading support frameworks such as the didactising of texts in vocational training. Since 2016 the federal government has begun to increasingly support individual projects that focus on the promotion of reading among young people in transition to vocational school.

**Conclusion**

By now, there are several opportunities to improve literal skills for adults who, despite having received school education, experience problems with reading and writing. However, the struggle against illiteracy is a difficult one because further education in Switzerland was previously regulated differently by individual cantons. Now that further education is to become part of the Federal Constitution, the prevention and reduction of illiteracy will be embedded in the newly developed legal frames of the Law of Further Education, which are to support the promotion of literacy in adulthood, especially financially: this marks another major step towards a coherent approach to the problem. Nevertheless, the question as to which forms of support demonstrate an enduring positive effect remains to be researched.

Equally, the promotion of literacy within the vocational schools is not regulated by the Federal Government, but handled differently from school to school. Here, the attention is mainly aimed at the importance of language skills for professional learning and for learning and working in a company. This means: the need for

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93 Schneider 2014
94 www.bfgs.ch/Jahresmotto.360.0.html
95 Nodari/Schiesser (2006)
96 BAK (2016)
the promotion of literacy has been recognised at vocational schools, which is why various projects have been developed in order to further the promotion of literacy.
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Table « cantons »

* g = swissgerman/german, f = French; i = Italian; r = romansh