

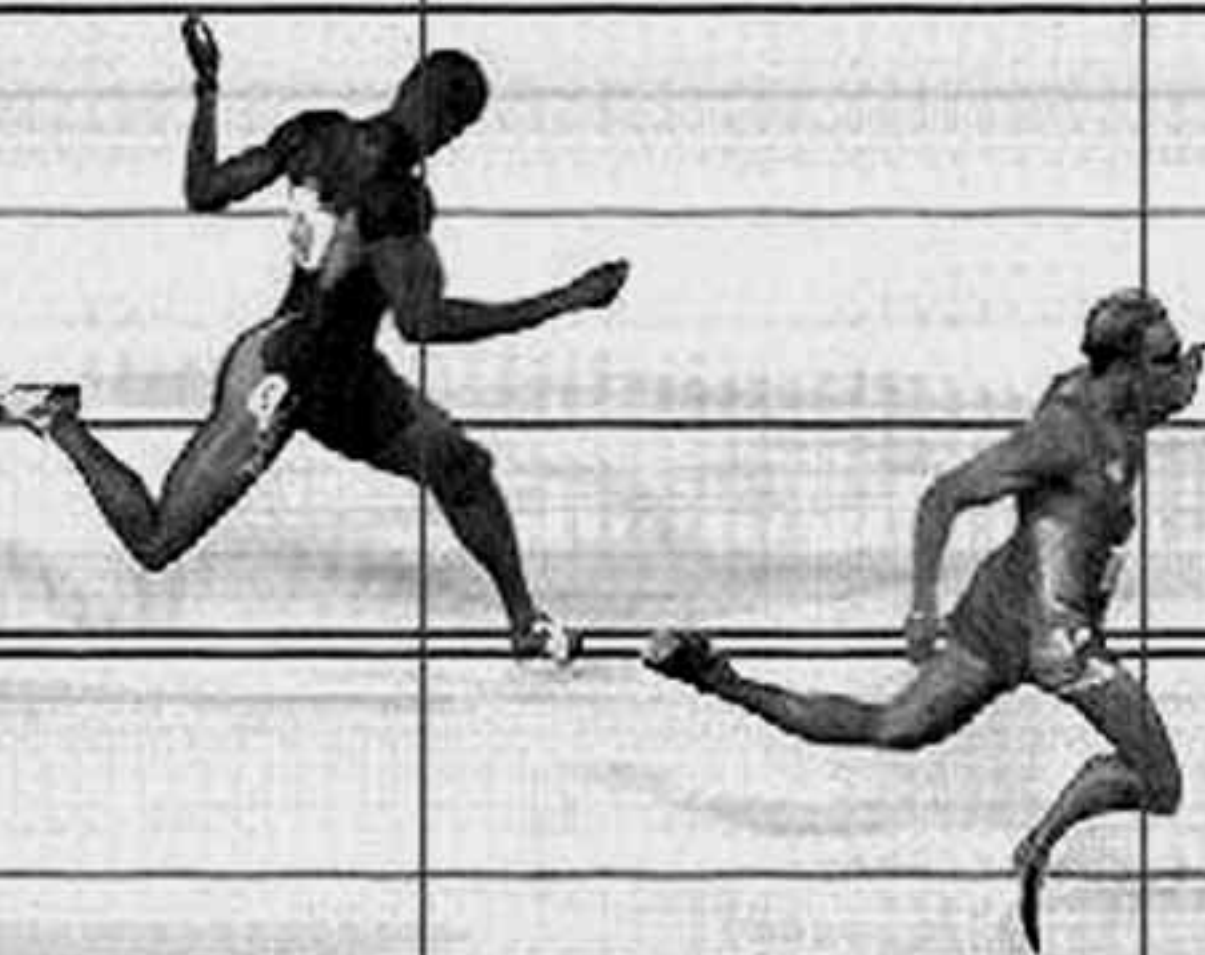
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Skill profiles of France, Germany, the Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden and the UK

Introduction

This article uses Labour Force and other national survey data, to examine stock levels and changes in the stock of skills (educational and vocational qualifications) of the population over the period 1985-1998 for six European countries - France, Germany, the Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden and the UK - with particular reference to the low-skilled. National qualifications are classified using the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) levels 0-7. The low-skilled are defined as those who gained no qualifications beyond compulsory schooling.

All countries have reduced the proportion in the low-skilled group over the period 1985-1998; however, countries which already had the lowest levels of low skills (Sweden, Germany) still made the fastest progress. Younger (age 25-27/28) populations are better qualified than the working-age populations. Considerable differences still remain between countries in stocks of skills in both the young (age 25-27/28) and working-age population. These differences are greater at the lower end of the ISCED scale (0/1/2) than at the higher end (ISCED 5/6/7).

In a number of countries (France, Germany, Netherlands, Portugal) higher level educational and vocational qualifications (ISCED 3 and above) were gained at a relatively late age (22-25). In Sweden and the UK only small proportions of the low-skilled gained further qualifications after the age of 21.

Proportions of low-skilled women in the working-age population have declined at

similar rates as the proportion of low skilled men in all countries. In Germany and the UK the proportion of women with low skills remains substantially higher. In France, Portugal and Sweden slightly more women have a higher education (ISCED 5/6/7) than men. In Germany, the UK and the Netherlands the situation is reversed and the gap between men and women has remained largely unchanged over the period 1985-1997/98.

Aims

This article examines the educational attainment of the population in six countries of the European Union (EU) with the focus on the low-skilled in the population. In all industrialised countries from the late 1970s onwards the low-skilled were increasingly likely to experience spells of unemployment (OECD, 1994a). In both the US and European economies the labour market is developing to the detriment of the low-skilled. In the less regulated US economy falling demand was reflected in falling real wages. In the more regulated European economies it is argued that the wages of the low-skilled were kept artificially high at a price which meant that demand fell and unemployment for these groups increased (OECD, 1994b). Falling labour-market demand for the low-skilled is a major socio-economic problem and challenge for the countries of the EU (Soete, 1996).

The article aims to establish the extent of low skills among the population of six EU countries and chart the progress in each country in reducing the stock of low skills in the working age population over



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This article examines the educational attainment of the population in six EU countries. It aims to establish the extent of low skills in the six countries and chart the progress in each country in reducing the stock of low skills in working population over the period 1985-1997/8.



“The most commonly used indicator of low skills for international comparisons is the highest stage of education or education and training completed. While these definitions of skills cannot claim to capture the reality of the whole range of skills that an individual brings to the labour market, they are the only ones available for the purpose of this study and they have some strengths.”

the period 1985-1997/98. Proportions with low skills in the same birth cohort across countries at two points during the skill acquisition process are compared and gender differences in skill acquisition charted over time in the countries examined here.

Measuring low skills

The most commonly used indicator of low skills for international comparisons is the highest stage of education or education and training completed. While these definitions of skills cannot claim to capture the reality of the whole range of skills that an individual brings to the labour market, they are the only ones available for the purpose of this study and they have some strengths. Information on educational level or qualifications is collected annually or biennially in almost all industrialised countries as part of a wider survey which asks questions about earnings, employment history, training, etc. This means that the relationship of low skills so defined to other characteristics of labour markets can be rigorously tested over a prolonged time period.

Stages of education completed or certificates awarded are also important labour market signals in their own right, used by employers and potential employees to convey information about skills and knowledge attained. This makes educational/training level a relevant measure to use in relation to labour market participation. Finally, bringing about change in educational level/qualifications lies within the scope of government policy. Measures to reduce the proportion of individuals at different levels of the education and training system can be clearly formulated and their success monitored.

However, there are still unresolved problems and weaknesses in the survey methods used in the different EU countries to construct the educational level indicator which must be borne in mind when making international comparisons of this sort. These problems and weaknesses were also investigated as part of the project (Steedman, 1999a). These difficulties arise essentially from different criteria used by national surveys when determining how

to allocate an individual's highest level of qualification to the appropriate ISCED level. In some EU countries only outputs (qualifications) are used to measure educational experience. In others, only inputs (enrolments) are used. In yet others, input measures are used at some levels of the education process and output measures used at other levels.

In this article, where possible, we have tried to adjust for known quality differences arising from measurement methods when allocating each country's educational level indicators to the UNESCO International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) scale for purposes of cross-country comparison.¹ Steedman (1999b) tests the robustness of this classification to the ISCED levels against performance on the single measure of skill (literacy) used in the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS). Set against this literacy measure the standards embodied in the ISCED categories look reasonably consistent across countries. The EU countries which participated in the IALS survey are Germany, Netherlands, Sweden, Britain, Ireland and Belgium. In those countries the proportion of the working-age population that was classed to ISCED 0/1/2 were identified. Almost all those at the lowest IALS level (Level 1) are found at ISCED 0/1/2. It was also found that, of this group in these EU countries, on average two-thirds are at IALS (prose) level 1/2. Therefore it can be concluded that a substantial proportion of the ISCED 0/1/2 group in these EU countries can be expected to score at a basic level of literacy and that ISCED 0/1/2 is a reasonable proxy for the low-skilled group in the working-age population. Table 1 below sets out the qualifications allocated to the four ISCED-levels (grouped to form four categories) in the six countries compared. The low-skilled group is defined as the group having as its highest qualification a completed lower secondary education. This choice of cut-off point (below ISCED 3) for the definition of low skills is based on accumulated evidence on mean relative earnings and mean unemployment rates of groups at this level of qualification across countries (OECD, 1999 and OECD, 2000). When these are compared, in every country those persons who fail either to complete upper-secondary education or to acquire post-compulsory vo-

1) The ISCED framework was recently (1997) revised by UNESCO and will be used in international statistical publications from 2000 onwards. This paper uses the ISCED framework in use from the mid-1970s and up to 2000. The ISCED-97 framework contains more sub-categories within the principal ISCED categories used here and using the 1997 version of ISCED would not change the conclusions of our paper.



Table 1

Principal education and initial training qualifications grouped by ISCED level - France, Germany, Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden, UK

Level	France	Germany	Netherlands	Portugal	Sweden	UK
ISCED 5/6/7	Higher Degree <i>Licence</i> BTS/DUT or equivalent	All first and higher degrees All <i>Meister</i> and <i>Techniker</i>	University 3 years or more HBO Higher professional ed	University (1 st degree or higher) Bachelor	Tertiary (post secondary) shorter and longer than 3 years	All first and higher degrees. All teaching, nursing qualifications. HNC/HND
ISCED 3	<i>Baccalauréat</i> , BT CAP, BEP	Abitur Fachhochschulreife. All apprenticeship passes or equivalent	VWO Pre-university ed HAVO Senior general secondary ed MBO Secondary vocational education	Intermediate courses Upper secondary Secondary (vocational)	Upper secondary education, academic and vocational programme 2-3 years	1 or more A-level passes, GNVQ 3 and equivalent, NVQ 3 and equivalent. Trade apprenticeship GNVQ 2 or equivalent NVQ2 or equivalent
ISCED 2	<i>Brevet</i> (all series)	Leaving certificate of the <i>Realschule</i> or equivalent. Leaving certificate of the <i>Hauptschule</i>	MAVO Junior general secondary ed VBO Pre-vocational education	Lower secondary Preparatory	9-year compulsory school	1 or more O-level/ GCSE passes, 1 or more CSE passes. All other qualifications
ISCED 0/1	CEP, no qualifications	No qualifications	Primary education only	Primary Less than primary	Elementary school shorter than 9 years	No qualifications

cational qualifications (ISCED 0/1 or 2) have distinctly lower earnings and higher unemployment rates than those with upper-secondary or higher education (OECD, 1994). In this article references to the low-skilled group, 'individuals at ISCED 2 or below' or 'below ISCED 3' or individuals without general or vocational upper-secondary education are interchangeable.

Interpreting data

Stock data allow us to observe trends over time. Changes in stocks of qualifications

in the population over time are the outcome of a number of processes; first, inflows and outflows of individuals from the population, second, improvement in the qualification levels of those who have completed their initial education and training (Green and Steedman, 1997). Flows of qualifications into the population are largely but not exclusively the result of young people completing their initial education and training. In some countries the initial qualification process extends long after the age at which schooling is no longer compulsory. For example, in Germany, where the age of graduation is ex-



Table 2
Percentage of working age population (16-64) without general or vocational upper-secondary education (below ISCED 3). France (1990) 1998, Germany (1985) 1997, Netherlands (1990) 1998, Portugal (1985), 1997, Sweden (1985) 1998, UK (1985) 1998

	France	Germany	Netherlands	Portugal	Sweden	UK
Below ISCED 3	(51) 41	(35) 22	(48) 39	(87) 77	(42) 27	(65) 50

Source: France *Enquête-Emploi* Special Tabulations prepared by the *Centre d'Etudes et de Recherche sur les Qualifications* (CEREQ). Germany *Mikrozensus* Special Tabulations prepared by the *Statistisches Bundesamt*, Wiesbaden. Netherlands *Enquête beroepsvolking* Special Tabulations prepared by the *Max Goote Kenniscentrum*, Amsterdam. Portugal, Labour Force Survey Special Tabulations prepared by CEPCEP, Catholic University of Portugal. Sweden, Statistics Sweden *Utbildning och befolkning (Education and population)* Special Tabulations prepared by Stockholm Institute of Education. UK Labour Force Survey Special Tabulations prepared by Centre for Economic Performance, London School of Economics and Political Science.

“Changes in the qualification of the population are thus not only the result of younger better qualified individuals joining the population of working age, but also the result of individuals gaining further qualifications after entering the labour force and of demographic changes.”

ceptionally late. The *Meister/Techniker* qualification is acquired after apprenticeship while working, and so even the 25-28 year old population does not include all initial qualifications acquired by a cohort. In Sweden, participation in adult education is high compared to other EU countries, and is undertaken for recreation as well as to improve qualifications. Thus, while the educational level of most people is usually determined by the time individuals reach their late twenties, for some the level may change at a later age or over the whole life-time. Greater emphasis is now placed on the concept of ‘lifelong learning’ by national governments and by the European Commission; in the future it will be necessary to find ways of monitoring the outcomes of lifetime learning as well as stocks of skills and knowledge accumulated in the course of initial education and training (European Commission, 1995).

Demographic factors also influence the change that takes place in the qualification levels of a population over time. If, as has been the case in Germany and in the UK, there has been a sharp decline in the size of the younger cohorts born since 1970 relative to the older ones, then numbers of newly qualified individuals at a given level may be similar to numbers exiting from the population. Consequently, high qualification rates of the younger cohorts will not translate into substantial growth in the qualifications of the population as a whole.

Flows into and out of the labour force may also be the result of immigration and

emigration of adults. Depending on the country’s immigration policy, these flows may or may not add to the stock of skills.

Changes in the qualification of the population are thus not only the result of younger better qualified individuals joining the population of working age, but also the result of individuals gaining further qualifications after entering the labour force and of demographic changes. Recent research has confirmed that in European countries where qualification levels have been improving from initially very low levels, a very high proportion of growth in qualification levels will be the result of older, less-qualified individuals retiring and younger, better-qualified individuals taking their place (Vincens, 2000).

The population of working age

The population of working age: low skills (ISCED 2 and below)

There is very considerable variation between EU countries in proportions of individuals with qualifications/education which do not go beyond compulsory education.

Table 2 shows that proportions at or below ISCED 2 range from around one quarter of the population of working age in Germany and Sweden, to around three-quarters of the population in Portugal. In the UK, the proportion is just one half of



Table 3

Annual average change in percentage of working-age population (16-64) below ISCED 3 during the periods 1985- 1997/98, 1990/91-1997/98

	Germany	Sweden	UK	Portugal	France	Netherlands
Annual change 1985-1997/98	-3.80	-3.21	-1.96	-1.00	-	-
Annual change 1990/91-1997/98	-2.78	-3.24	-2.47	-0.97	-2.84	-2.67

Source: As for Table 2, own calculations

the population. France and the Netherlands have similar proportions - around 40 %. In all countries, these proportions have been falling over the periods considered here - 1985-1997/98 for Germany, Portugal, Sweden and the UK and 1990-1998 for France and the Netherlands. Lack of consistency in the classification of qualifications before 1990 means that for France and the Netherlands stocks of qualifications for 1998 cannot be compared over time prior to 1990. Table 3 below shows for all the countries the average annual decline in the percentage of the population below ISCED 3 for the periods 1985 - 1997/98 and 1990/91 - 1997/98.²

Generally, in Europe in the post-war period, structural and institutional barriers to post-compulsory education have been progressively removed. Where a high proportion of the population is low-skilled it might be thought relatively easy to reduce that proportion quickly, since many in that group would have natural endowments which would place them in the upper half of the ability range. Table 3 reveals, perhaps rather surprisingly, that over the longer thirteen-year period the countries which already had the lowest proportions of the population at or below ISCED 2 - Germany and Sweden - still made rapid progress in reducing the proportions at that level. Their rate of improvement between 1985 and 1997/98 was greater than that of the UK and Portugal which had much higher proportions with low skills in 1985. However, over the period from 1990 onwards it can be seen that the rate of change in Germany slows while

in the UK it increases. The UK has made greater progress in reducing low skills in the working population since 1990 than during the earlier period while Sweden has maintained the same rate of change over both periods. France and the Netherlands can only be compared since 1990. Both show a rapid decline in low skills. Over the twelve-year period Portugal reduced the ISCED 0/1 group by 12 % from 57 % in 1985 to 45 % in 1997. For Portugal, therefore, an important indicator is the extent to which the group with primary and less than primary education (ISCED 0/1) has been reduced.

The population of working age in 1997/1996: qualifications at all levels

Table 4 shows the qualification profiles across all four ISCED-levels in France, Germany, the Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden and the UK.

Comparing these, Germany and Sweden have rather similar profiles. In these two countries most have a general or vocational upper-secondary education after compulsory school (ISCED 3) or a higher education (ISCED 5/6/7). Nearly two-thirds of the population of working age also has an upper-secondary/vocational education or a higher education in France (59 %) and the Netherlands (61 %). In the UK only half of the population and in Portugal only a quarter has further education and training to ISCED 3 or above.

We have seen from Table 2 that the proportion of the population of working age that can be considered to be low-skilled

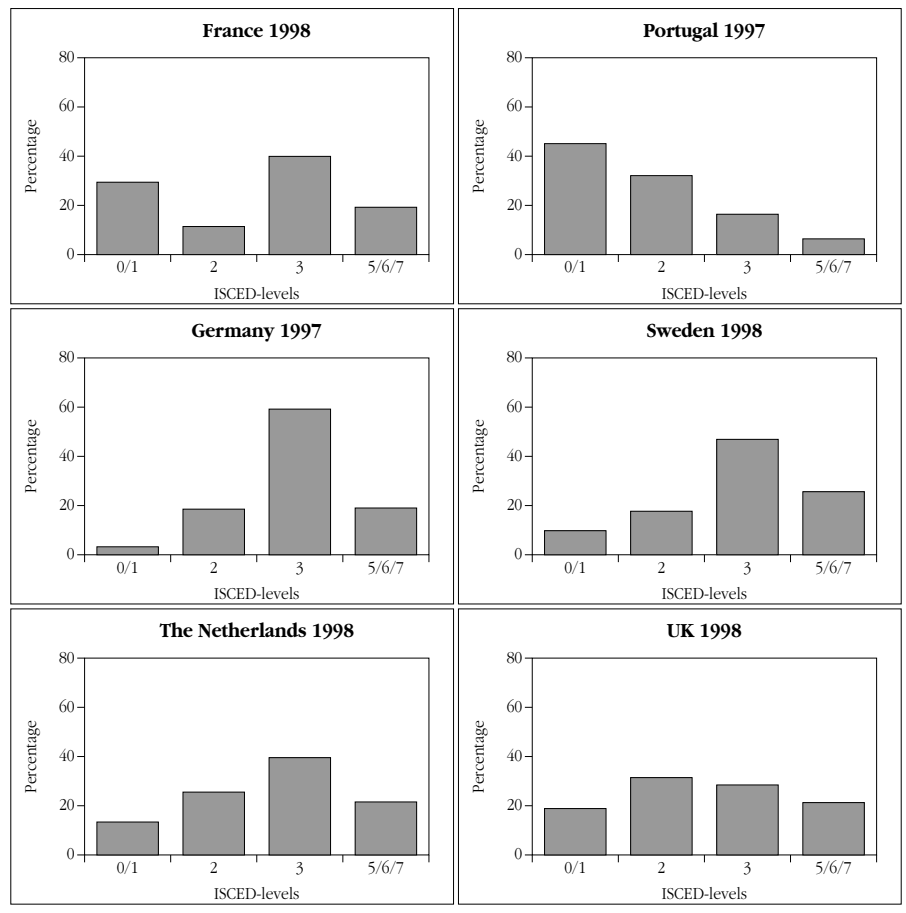
(...) "over the (...) thirteen-year period the countries which already had the lowest proportions of the population at or below ISCED 2 - Germany and Sweden - still made rapid progress in reducing the proportions at that level."

2) The formula used for the calculation of average annual growth was: A variable X at time t is assumed to have grown at a constant rate g since time $t-s$: $X(t) = (1+g)^s X(t-s)$
Hence the growth rate g is given by:

$$g = \left(\frac{Y(t)}{Y(t-s)} \right)^{1/s} - 1$$



Table 4.
Qualification levels of the population of working age (16-64 years old).



Source: as for Table 2

The population aged 25-27/8 in the 1980s and 1990s

Recent changes in the composition of the stock of skills: a comparison of 25-27/8 year olds in the mid 1980s and mid 1990s

Most of the improvement in skill levels in the population as a whole results from improvements in the education of young people reaching working age. Raising skills in the younger population is therefore an important task for the countries under investigation. By comparing the skills profile of 25-27 (or 25-28) year olds in the 1980s with those of the same age 10 years later in the 1990s, we can see more clearly the contribution that each country's initial education and training system has made to raising skill levels and reducing the proportion of those with low skills over a 10-year period. Table 5 shows the qualification profile of the 25-28 year old population in Germany and the UK and the 25-27 year old population in Portugal and Sweden in the 1980s and 10 years later in 1990s. For Germany and Portugal data is for 1987-1997; for the UK 1989-1998, for Sweden 1988-1998. The profiles of France and the Netherlands are from 1990 and 8 years later 1998. It must be recalled, however, that with respect to education policy, the periods being compared in each country are the years in the 1970s and 1980s when these younger groups were of school age.

Table 5 shows that the 25-27/28 year olds in the 1990s were better educated than the same age group in the 1980s. The greatest change has taken place in Portugal where young people at ISCED 0/1 have fallen from 35 to 19 %. At the same time a corresponding increase in the proportion of young people with education beyond compulsory education (ISCED 3 and 5/6/7) has taken place. A great change has also taken place in the UK among the low-skilled with a reduction of young people with ISCED 0/1 by 10 % and ISCED 2 by 4 % which has resulted in a corresponding increase in young people with ISCED 3 and 5/6/7.

Changes of a similar magnitude have also taken place in France and Sweden, countries where low levels of education were

varies to a great extent between countries. By contrast, the proportion of the population with higher education (ISCED 5/6/7) is very much the same in the six countries with the exception of Portugal where higher education is less frequent. Around 20 % of the population has a higher education in five of the countries compared, while in Portugal it is 6 %. Thus, with regard to higher education, the qualifications profiles do not differ very much between five of the six compared countries, but they differ substantially at the lower end of the educational attainment scale.



less common in the 1980s. The increase in qualifications in these countries has mainly resulted in a greater proportion of young people with a higher education (ISCED 5/6/7) - from 20 to 36 % in France and from 18 to 32 % in Sweden. In the Netherlands, Portugal and the UK an increase in the proportion with higher education has also taken place, while an increase in young people with an upper-secondary education (ISCED 3) can only be found in Portugal and to a very small extent in the UK and Germany.

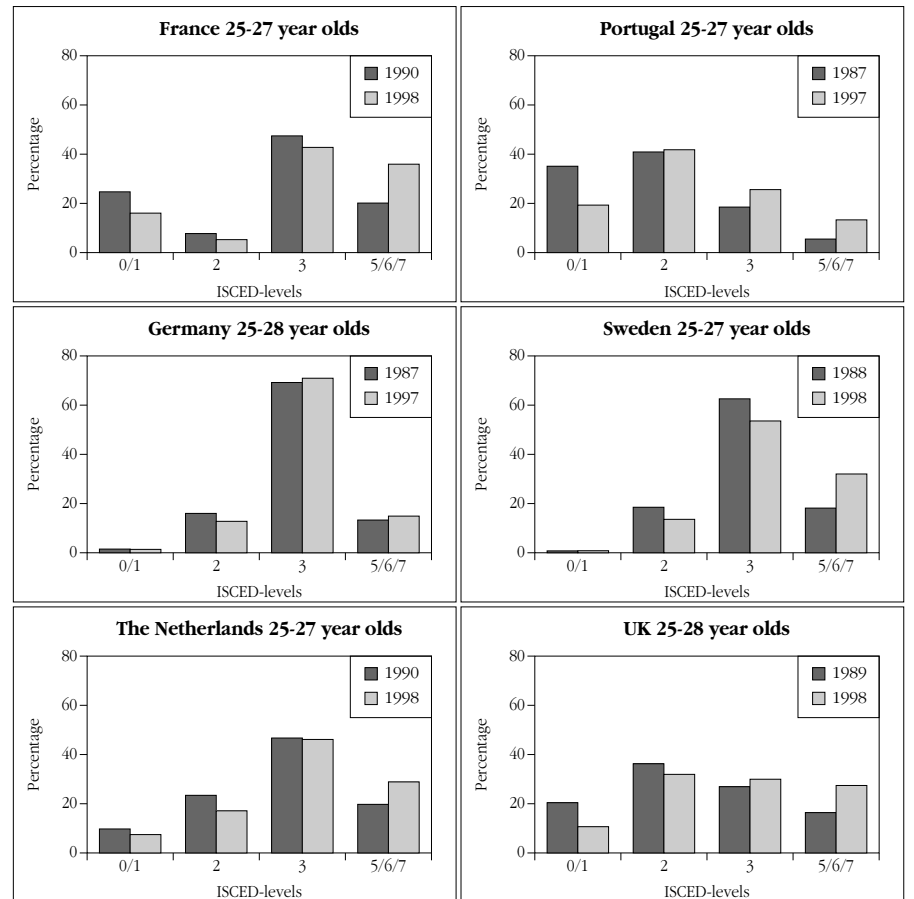
To summarise, a reduction of low-skilled young people has taken place in all six European countries which have been compared during the periods investigated. The greatest changes have been among young people with no qualifications (ISCED 0/1). This group has been reduced considerably in Portugal and the UK, countries in which this group was large in the 1980s. The proportion of young people with higher education has also increased considerably in all countries except in Germany where it has been almost unchanged. Instead the proportion with a general or vocational upper-secondary has increased even further in this country.

How improvements in qualification levels have been achieved

Progress of the 1990 19-21 year old cohort at age 25-27/8

Until now qualification levels at different points in time have been examined. We have seen changes in corresponding age-groups over time and noted how qualification profiles differ between countries. However, we have not observed the dynamics of this process in any detail. We have not studied the flows of students in the educational system. The best way to study the flows is to use longitudinal data, since the same individuals are followed over time. However, stock data does allow us to look at two randomly drawn samples from almost the same population at different points in time and construct what are commonly called 'synthetic cohorts'. We are able to do this for the six investigated countries here.

Table 5.
Qualification levels of the population aged 25-27/28 in 1987/88/90 and 1997/98.



Source: as for Table 2

The qualification levels of young people age 19-21 in 1992 (1991) and six years later when this group of the population reached the age of 25-27 (28) were investigated. The results are shown in table 6.

Sweden

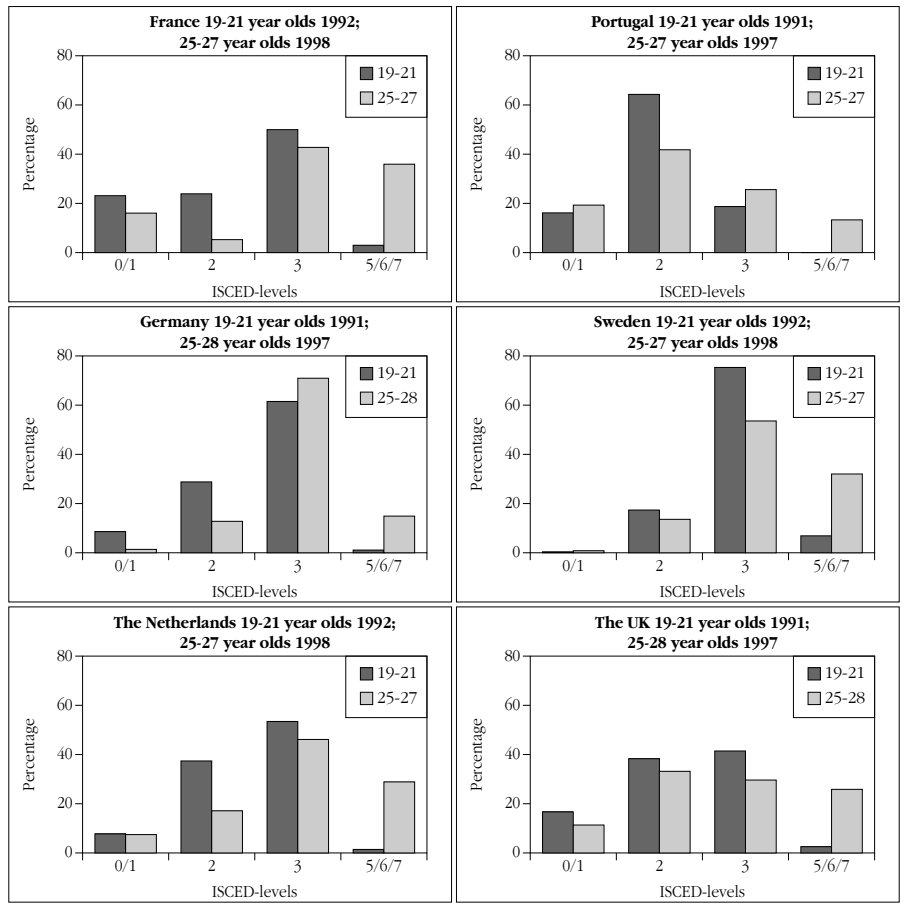
Only a further 4 % of the Swedish 19-21 year olds in 1992 had obtained an upper-secondary qualification six years later. This indicates that it is rather unusual in Sweden to obtain these qualifications after leaving the full-time initial schooling system. But it must be recalled that the proportion of 19-21 year olds in Sweden with low level (ISCED 0/1/2) qualifications was already very low. The proportions of 19-21 year olds obtaining higher education increased from 7 to 32 % during the six year period. An increase in the proportion of young people with a

(...) "reduction of low-skilled young people has taken place in all six European countries which have been compared during the periods investigated. The greatest changes have been among young people with no qualifications (...)."



Table 6.

Qualifications of 19-21 year olds in 1991/92 and six years later in 1997/98.



Source: as for Table 2

decline in numbers at the upper-secondary education (ISCED 3) level.

France and the Netherlands

In France and the Netherlands, significant proportions of 19-21 year olds with compulsory education or less in 1992 had achieved the level of general or vocational upper-secondary education (ISCED 3 or more) six years later. The ISCED 0/1 and 2 group declined from 47 to 21 % in France and from 45 to 25 % in the Netherlands. As in all the other countries, significant proportions qualified at the tertiary level by age 27 in France and the Netherlands. However, flows out of the ISCED 3 category to higher education were to a great extent compensated for by inflows from the lower levels.

Portugal and Germany

In Portugal considerable progress was made after age 21 in reducing numbers with only compulsory education. Proportions at ISCED 2 decreased from 64 to 42 % while the proportion at ISCED 0/1 increased very slightly (possibly the result of an inflow of immigrants). In Germany too, there was a large fall in numbers at ISCED 2 (from 29 to 13 %) and the ISCED 0/1 category virtually disappeared. In both Germany and Portugal proportions of young people with an upper-secondary education (ISCED 3) increased between ages 19-21 and 25-28 from 62 to 71 % in Germany and from 19 to 26 % in Portugal.

(...) "around one-quarter of young people aged 19-21 in 1991-2 had gained an upper-secondary qualification six years later in France, Germany, the Netherlands and Portugal. A smaller proportion of 19-21 year olds gained this qualification in the UK (10 %) and in Sweden (4 %)."

higher education should give a corresponding reduction of the proportion of young people with an upper-secondary education (ISCED 3) if the flows from levels below ISCED 3 are small. This is the case for Sweden.

The UK

In the UK, the proportion of young people without qualifications (ISCED 0/1) or with ISCED 2 decreased during the six-year period but the decrease is small both absolutely and relative to the other countries considered. Only 10 % of the 19-21 year olds obtained an ISCED 3 qualification or more during the six year period. Because of this small flow from the lower levels into the ISCED 3 category and the considerable increase in the proportion of young people with a higher education over the six-year period there is a net

In short, around one-quarter of young people aged 19-21 in 1991-2 had gained an upper-secondary qualification six years later in France, Germany, the Netherlands and Portugal. A smaller proportion of 19-21 year olds gained this qualification in the UK (10 %) and in Sweden (4 %). In the UK many young people leave school after compulsory education - or enter post-compulsory education and fail to qualify. This explains the low proportion that attained a further education during the investigated six-year period. In Sweden the proportion of 19-21 year olds with a general or vocational upper-secondary (ISCED 3) was already quite large and the proportion of 19-21 year olds with low education (ISCED 0/1 or 2) was already quite small in 1992. One explanation for this is that grade-repeating is quite widespread in the investigated countries, but



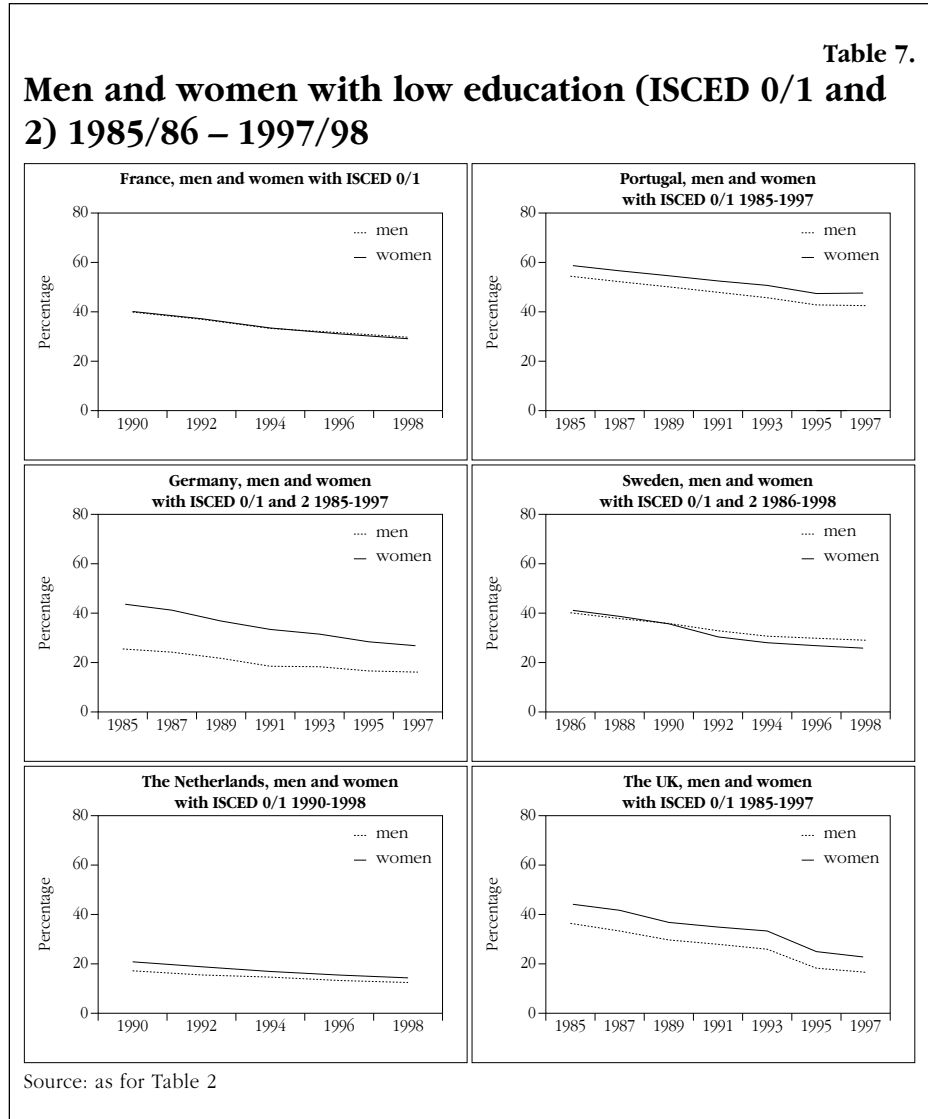
not in Sweden. Thus, most young people go through their school years without delay. Another explanation is that there are no formal examinations either after compulsory or upper-secondary school in Sweden. There are only national tests to standardise the teacher marks. When pupils have finished compulsory or upper-secondary school they are classified to ISCED 2 (compulsory school) and ISCED 3 (upper-secondary school) respectively without much delay. In other European countries (except for the UK) grade repeating and examinations prolong the number of school years until young people have got their educational credentials.

Another reason for the variation in the proportion of young people who have gained a further education during the six-year period is how attractive a general or vocational upper-secondary education is *per se*. Is further education only a means to a higher education or does it have a value of its own? In the UK the proportion of young people with an upper-secondary or a vocational education (ISCED 3) at age 25-28 is not much larger than the proportion of young people with a higher education in contrast to the other five countries. Germany shows the opposite tendency. These different trends suggest that proportions proceeding to ISCED 3 and not continuing to higher education depend upon the extent to which ISCED 3 qualifications are valued on the labour market in their own right.

Qualifications of men and women

Until now we have only studied the qualifications of the total population and of certain age groups. We have, however, not examined men and women separately. In this section we will examine the qualifications of men and women separately. One question is the extent to which men and women have the same level of qualifications. Another question is how the qualification profile has developed for men and women in the compared European countries. The development of the low-skilled group in the population of working age by gender is shown for some recent years in Table 7 for the six compared European countries.

In four of the six compared countries proportions of low-skilled are very much the



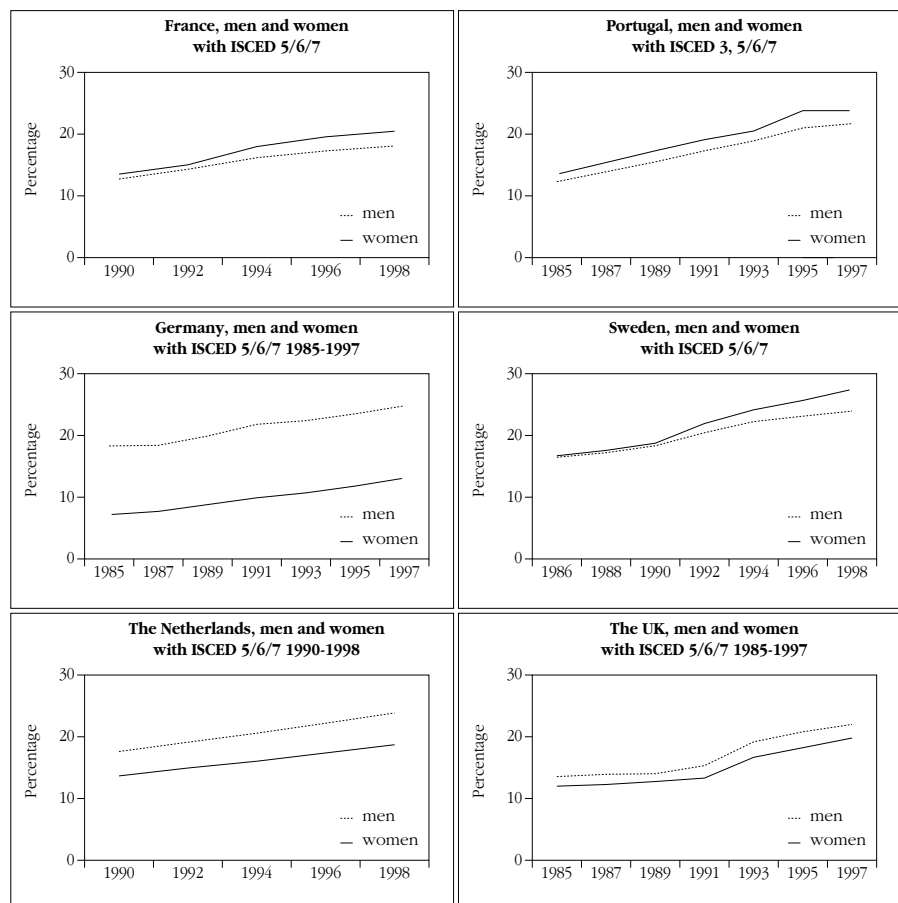
same for men and women. But in Germany there was a skill gap in favour of men of 18 percentage points in 1985 narrowing to 11 % in 1997. In the UK the gap in favour of men was 8 percentage points in 1985 and had not narrowed significantly by 1997. In Portugal and the Netherlands the gap in favour of men was smaller than in Germany and the UK. In France there were equal proportions of low-skilled men and women. In contrast to the other countries a slightly higher proportion of low-skilled men than women was found in Sweden. In table 8 the top end of the ISCED- scale (ISCED 5/6/7) is presented for men and women.

The differences in the proportion of men and women with higher education are small in all countries except Germany and the Netherlands where the male advan-

(...) “different trends suggest that proportions proceeding to ISCED 3 and not continuing to higher education depend upon the extent to which ISCED 3 qualifications are valued on the labour market in their own right.”



Table 8.
Men and women with higher education (ISCED 5/6/7)
1985/86 – 1997/98



Source: as for Table 2

Netherlands and the UK the reverse is the case and men are more educated than women. The advantage of men in these countries seems not to be narrowing, with the exception of Germany where the gap narrowed considerably at the lower end of the attainment scale. However, the gap between men and women is largest in Germany at both ends of the ISCED-scale. How can this be explained? One explanation is perhaps that the apprenticeship system which has a long tradition in Germany attracts more men than women or it offers more opportunities for men than women. Skilled workers are usually men. For instance in a Swedish study of young women with a traditional male vocational education it was found that these women did not end up as skilled workers as often as young men with the same education and training did but more often as an unskilled worker or a non manual worker (Hällner, 1992). Another explanation is that higher education takes a long time in Germany. Women may by tradition hesitate more than men to invest in a long and expensive higher education.

Summary and conclusions

Qualifications profiles of six European countries - France, Germany, the Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden and the UK - were compared in this article. About one in five of the population of working age has a higher education qualification in the compared countries; the exception is Portugal where it is less common. However, the proportion of low skilled (with ISCED 0/1 or 2) varies considerably between the six countries. A common trend is that the average educational attainment level of the population has improved. In all countries the low-skilled group (ISCED 2 and below) has declined over recent years but faster in some countries than in others. The decline in the proportion of low skilled is just as fast in countries with a small proportion of low skilled initially as in those with a large proportion of low skilled.

Comparing the qualifications profile of young people (25-27/28 year olds) over a recent period, we can get a picture of the most recent changes in the qualifications of young people in these EU countries. The greatest change has taken place

“Comparing men and women at both ends of the ISCED-scale there are only slight differences in their respective levels of educational attainment in France, Portugal and Sweden. A common trend for the three countries is that women of working age are to a small extent more likely to have a higher education than men.”

“In Germany, the Netherlands and the UK the reverse is the case and men are more educated than women.”

tage is 11-12 % and 4 % respectively. Men also had a slight advantage over women in the UK. In France, Sweden and Portugal a somewhat larger proportion of women than men has a higher education qualification. This difference has also been widening slightly in France and Sweden, while the development has been parallel for men and women in Portugal during the investigated period.

Comparing men and women at both ends of the ISCED-scale there are only slight differences in their respective levels of educational attainment in France, Portugal and Sweden. A common trend for the three countries is that women of working age are to a small extent more likely to have a higher education than men. In France and Sweden this small gap has been increasing during the last years of the investigated period. In Germany, the



in Portugal where the proportion of 25-27 year olds with ISCED 0/1 was reduced by 16 % from 1987 to 1997 and in France where the proportion with higher education increased by 16 %. A great change has also taken place in the UK where the proportion of 25-27 year olds with ISCED 0/1 decreased by 10 % and the proportion with ISCED 2 by 4 %. The proportion of young people with higher education has also increased in all the other countries. However, in Germany this change was very small. The age at which individuals move from the lowest skill levels was studied by comparing the skill profile of samples taken from the same age cohort at two points in time. This comparison showed that a considerable proportion of young people with low skills (ISCED 0/1 and 2) at age 19-21 had obtained higher level qualifications by age 25-27/8 in France, Germany, the Netherlands and Portugal. By contrast, only small proportions of 19-21 year olds improved their qualification levels by age 25-27/8 in the UK and Sweden. In Sweden only a small proportion of the 19-21 year olds were at ISCED 0/1/2 initially compared to the other five countries, as most young people have already finished their upper-secondary or vocational education by age 21. But this was not the case for the UK where half the age group remained at the lowest skill levels at age 25-27/8.

Comparing the skill profiles of men with those of women of working age we found that in Germany, the UK and the Netherlands men were better qualified than women, but in France, Portugal and Sweden the gender differences were very small and at the top end of the attainment scale to the advantage of women. Differences in the proportion of low-skilled men compared to women were small in all countries except in Germany and the UK. Gender differences in the proportions with higher education were small in all countries but here again, Germany was the exception. There was a 11-12 % gap in Germany in favour of men and this gap remained constant over the 12 year period.

Prospective

If the trends of the last 12 years continue, the skill profiles of the population of working age will become more alike in

the six European countries studied. In all countries the low skills group is declining. It seems likely that those countries where this group is already small (Germany, Sweden) will in future reduce low skills at a slower rate than countries where there are high proportions of low skills (Portugal and the UK). We therefore appear to be witnessing a process of convergence. However, we consider it unlikely that Portugal and the UK will move to a skill profile like that of Germany with a majority of the population having an upper-secondary or a vocational education. The proportion of young people with upper-secondary education has hardly increased at all during the last 10 years in the UK. In Portugal the proportion at ISCED 3 has increased to the same extent as the proportion of young people with higher education.

Extrapolation (based on average annual growth 1990-1997/8) predicts that in Sweden and Germany the ISCED 0-2 group in the population of working age could fall to below 20 % by the year 2010 as older workers leave the population and younger, better-educated workers take their place. But in the Netherlands and France just under a third of the population would still be at this level, in the UK just over one third, and in Portugal over two thirds may still be at ISCED 0/1-2.

With respect to the young (25-27/28) age groups, France, the Netherlands, Sweden and Germany seem to be moving towards similar skill profiles. In all four countries the ISCED 0/1-2 group could be reduced to 16 % or less. There may be few young people without upper-secondary education and a growing number of young people will obtain higher education qualifications. Despite Portugal's recent rapid growth in skill levels in the young age group, the low skill group may still account for over two-fifths of all 25-28 year-olds in the year 2010 on present trends. UK progress in reducing the low skill group has been less spectacular than that of Portugal and the UK could expect to have at least one quarter of the young age group at the ISCED 0/1/2 level by the year 2010 on present trends. We can thus expect to see substantial differences persisting over the medium term unless greater efforts are made to target the low skill group in Portugal and in the UK.



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Mechanical building services craft training in Great Britain: a comparison with France and Germany



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Introduction

The mechanical building services installation sector of the construction industry consists of three main areas: water supply and sanitation; heating, ventilation and air conditioning; and fabrication and installation of metallic components such as roof weathering. In the three countries studied, the occupations which go to make up the sector have recognisable similarities but there are differences in the areas of work that trades people undertake, which makes direct comparison difficult.

The methods employed to train personnel in these occupations and the qualifications associated with them until fairly recently had a firmly traditional root in all three countries. Great Britain has of course seen an extensive re-organisation in its vocational education and training system in recent years and the change to a competence-based system is of particular interest to this study. Many would now argue that the established *modus operandi* have been all but eradicated in Britain while Britain's EU neighbours not only retain tradition, but continue to build upon it. Consequently the British methodology appears out of step and there are three very apparent and major differences to be observed:

a) assessment of practical performance is favoured (albeit in tandem with testing of 'underpinning job knowledge'), rather than formal examination together with practical assessment as is the case in France and Germany;

b) informal client centred teaching is becoming more normal rather than the didactic instruction found in France and Germany;

c) there is little insistence upon general educational content in craft vocational training programmes unlike in France and Germany where general education runs alongside vocational training.

Furthermore, it would appear that young people in France and Germany are guided positively towards vocational training at a very young age. The British system (many would call it a non-system) unfortunately still has a tendency to dub as failures those youngsters unable to excel academically, and only once they have 'failed' does it guide them towards vocational training. There is however much evidence to suggest that this is changing and the traditional British ambivalence towards vocational qualifications is becoming much less common.

Competence-based training

It was recognised by the British government during the 1980s that Britain lagged far behind its competitor countries, particularly France and Germany with both the quantity of intermediate level (craft) training it provided, and the numbers of workers actually holding vocational qualifications (Prais 1995). The political climate at the time gave rise to a view that European states were rushing towards ever closer economic co-operation and that the free movement of labour across borders would very soon become the

Introducing competence-based training in Britain has not been without problems. However, the new qualifications have now become established and the philosophy more widely understood and respected at home and abroad. But the acid test for NVQs must be whether they have decreased the so-called "skills gap". Has Britain caught up with France and Germany in the mechanical building services industry?



“The mechanical building services occupations (...) in Great Britain are primarily those of plumber, heating and ventilation fitter, refrigeration and air conditioning fitter and gas fitter. Since these occupations are related very closely the types of work undertaken overlap in many cases. In France and Germany similar recognised occupations exist and similar overlaps occur, although the occupations are not directly comparable.”

“Gas fitting is recognised and taught as a trade in itself only in Britain (...). In Germany and France gas fitting in the domestic and small commercial area is integral to the water and sanitary installation trades, but firms carrying out gas works in the larger industrial sector would most likely be heating and ventilation specialists.”

norm. This free movement could not of course be guaranteed to ‘skilled’ workers who did not hold recognised vocational qualifications, and this was a problem the government had to address urgently.

In consultation with employers the government set up the National Council for Vocational Qualifications (NCVQ) in 1986, which introduced a framework encompassing the five levels of National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs). NVQs at levels 2 and 3 were to replace the largely outdated (so it was perceived) City and Guilds Craft and Advanced Craft certificates in all vocational areas. By 1993 NVQs were in common currency in plumbing, gas fitting, heating and ventilating, and refrigeration and air conditioning.

Types of work undertaken

The mechanical building services occupations recognised by the public and by industry in Great Britain are primarily those of plumber, heating and ventilation fitter, refrigeration and air conditioning fitter and gas fitter. Since these occupations are related very closely the types of work undertaken overlap in many cases. In France and Germany similar recognised occupations exist and similar overlaps occur, although the occupations are not directly comparable.

Plumbing

Plumbing in Great Britain is the most visual of the mechanical services trades, having developed to embrace the areas of central heating, water and sanitary installation, and sheet metal roofing in the domestic and small commercial sectors. These three areas are expected to be the province of the one trade, although it is true that a number of firms will tend to specialise in particular areas of work. The point here though is that demarcation is not common, particularly on small domestic works, and if a firm were on site carrying out (say) repairs to a heating system and were asked by the householder to investigate a drainage problem, they would probably not hesitate to become involved. In France or Germany this would not so often be the case.

In France *plomberie* is not generally regarded as an occupation in itself, rather it is a generic name for a group of occupations, these being *couverture* (sheet metal roofing), *chauffage* (heating) and *installations sanitaire* (sanitary installation). It appears then that there is much more tendency towards specialisation than in Britain. There is also no direct German equivalent of a plumber, although the work carried out by the *Gas- und Wasserinstallateur* (sometimes called *Sanitärinstallateur* or more frequently simply *Installateur*) bears the most relation, consisting of sanitary and water services installation and domestic heating.

Gas installation

Gas fitting is recognised and taught as a trade in itself only in Britain, although of course British advanced plumbers holding level 3 equivalent qualifications are also trained in domestic and small commercial gas installation. In Germany and France gas fitting in the domestic and small commercial area is integral to the water and sanitary installation trades, but firms carrying out gas works in the larger industrial sector would most likely be heating and ventilation specialists. There does not seem to be a French or German direct equivalent to the British gas fitter.

Metal fabrication

Sheet metal roofing is an area traditionally associated with plumbing in Britain, principally because of the use of lead sheet. Indeed prior to 1993 the plumbing craft syllabus required trainees to work with lead, copper, aluminium and zinc sheet metals in roof work applications. Most of these metalworking tasks however have long been regarded as highly specialised, and there has been in recent years very little expectation for plumbing firms to be able to carry them out. The reorganisation of curricula in the early 1990s and the introduction of NVQs however gave employers organisations more influence over curriculum content. The lead bodies decided in response to employer demands to remove all sheet metal skills from the qualifications except for lead roof work, which still remains an integral part of the plumbing trade. Optional lead work modules are offered at NVQ levels 2 and 3, although the take up



of these options is reportedly not high. The message here appears to be that tradesmen now may be more likely to specialise as is the case in France.

In Germany, metal working covers two mechanical services trades: the *Spengler* is concerned with roof weathering applications in all metals, and the *Kupferschmied* (coppersmith) is effectively a fabricator of primarily copper components for building services systems. This represents a degree of specialisation no longer seen in Britain and France, where roofing and fabrication skills are taught as integral modules in plumbing courses, albeit not to the same advanced skill level. The *Kupferschmied* carries out work such as the fabrication of tanks and storage vessels and so on, a traditional trade which it could be argued is no longer a necessity in an age where most components can be mass produced more efficiently and cheaply.

Heating, ventilating and air conditioning

Heating and ventilation fitting is a relatively new occupation in all three countries, being essentially a specialised branch of plumbing for the larger commercial and industrial sector. Since air conditioning (which requires buildings to be cooled rather than heated) has become more popular in recent times there is also a need for refrigeration fitters. Perhaps because of the newness and high degree of specialisation involved in these two occupations the types of work carried out in the three countries are much more similar than the more traditional occupations outlined previously. There appears to be a more direct correlation between the work carried out by a heating and ventilation fitter, an *installateur thermique* and a *Zentralheizungs- und Lüftungsbauer*, the same being true of the refrigeration and air conditioning fitter, the *installateur froid et climatisation*, and the *Klimaanlagenbauer* (see table 1).

Course content and assessments

Before the advent of NVQs in Britain, training courses in mechanical services

disciplines entailed structured inter-relating classroom lessons and workshop practical sessions. The lessons typically covered the theoretical aspects of the actual technical discipline, complementary building studies, industrial studies and communications. Assessment of the classroom elements would take place using written assignments set by the examining body and marked internally, and the practical element would be continuously assessed internally. The examining body's further responsibilities would be to moderate all the assessments and to set and mark multiple choice examinations at the end of course. Courses would be delivered typically on one day per week over two years to craft level and for a further two years to advanced craft level.

The diversity of subject matter delivered here was not great, there was little in the syllabus which did not relate directly to the technical discipline itself. The one piece of (some would say) extraneous material was communications, which tended to include aspects of English, mathematics and the social sciences. A typical day's college attendance might consist of two hours of technology, one hour of industrial studies, one hour of communications and three hours of workshop practical.

In contrast NVQs are based upon occupational competences and therefore awarding bodies are charged with setting standards rather than prescriptive syllabuses. Colleges and training centres had now to implement their training programmes to meet these standards, and this led to many courses excluding all subject matter not directly related to the actual technical discipline. Courses now tend to consist of two lessons only: 'job knowledge' and 'practical', these may even be combined where a workshop has an integral classroom area. Every single item of job knowledge relates directly to the occupation being learned and there is no general educational content as such. However the awards themselves could not be achieved without candidates demonstrating a level of ability in written and spoken English (or Welsh), mathematics and, increasingly, information technology. Sir Ron Dearing (1996) identified this in his review of qualifications for 16-19 year olds and proposed that instruction in the



Table 1

Summary of the main mechanical building services craft qualifications available in Britain, France and Germany

Country	Name of Qualification	Programme duration (months)	CEDOC level	% time spent in practical training	Occupation
Great Britain	NVQ 2 MES Plumbing	As required, typically 24	2	0 - 80 (not specified)	Plumber
	NVQ 3 MES Plumbing	As required, typically 24	3	0 - 80 (not specified)	Advanced plumber
	NVQ 2 Heating & Ventilation	As required, typically 24	2	0 - 80 (not specified)	H&V fitter
	NVQ 3 Heating & Ventilation	As required, typically 24	3	0 - 80 (not specified)	Advanced H&V fitter
	NVQ 2 Refrigeration and Air Conditioning	As required, typically 24	2	0 - 80 (not specified)	R & AC fitter
	NVQ 3 Refrigeration and Air Conditioning	As required, typically 24	3	0 - 80 (not specified)	Advanced R & AC fitter
	NVQ 2 Gas fitting	As required, typically 24	2	0 - 80 (not specified)	Gas fitter
	NVQ 3 Gas fitting	As required, typically 24	3	0 - 80 (not specified)	Advanced gas fitter
France	CAP* Installations sanitaire	24	1	10	Water and sanitary installer
	CAP* Installations thermique	24	1	10	Heating installer
	CAP* Froid et Climatisation	24	1	10	R & AC installer
	BEP** Installations sanitaire	24	2	10	Advanced water and sanitary installer
	BEP** Installations thermique	24	2	10	Advanced heating installer
	BEP** Froid et Climatisation	24	2	10	Advanced R & AC installer
Germany	Facharbeiterbrief Gas- u. Wasserinstallateur	42	2/3	70	Gas and water installer
	Facharbeiterbrief Zentralheizungs- u. Lüftungsbauer	42	2/3	70	H & V installer
	Facharbeiterbrief Spengler	42	2/3	70	Sheet metal roofer
	Facharbeiterbrief Klimaanlagenbauer	42	2/3	70	R & AC installer
	Facharbeiterbrief Kupferschmied	42	2/3	70	Coppersmith
	Gas- u. Wasserinstallateur-Meister	12 (after 24 months in industry)	4	40	Gas and water master installer
	Zentralheizungs- u. Lüftungsbauer-Meister	12 (after 24 months in industry)	4	40	H & V master installer

* CAP – Certificat d'Aptitude Professionnel; ** BEP – Brevet d'Etudes Professionnelles



three 'key skills' of 'application of number', 'communication' and 'information technology' should be initiated in secondary school and continued in all further and higher education courses. Key skills must now be routinely identified and mapped by course providers for government sponsored apprenticeships and traineeships, although the award of an NVQ cannot be withheld because a trainee fails to show competence in key skills alone.

The system replaced by NVQs was fairly rigid and meant that college enrolment could only take place each September and awards could only be conferred each June. One of the principle aims of introducing NVQs was to widen participation in training and promote easier access for non-typical candidates such as mature and unemployed people wishing to retrain. To provide this flexibility it is not unknown for colleges to run 'roll-on roll-off' training courses, which, together with the assessment on demand feature of NVQs, means that there need not be a fixed time scale for any training programme. Trainees can therefore (depending on local policy) gain entry to a course at any time of the college year and can achieve their qualification as and when all their assessments are complete. This presents an administrative nightmare for teachers since it effectively precludes the use of traditional didactic teaching methods and formal lectures. It is more usual nowadays for client-centred methods to be employed, for example a common technique is to distribute 'learning packs' containing course materials to the trainees who complete the work at their own speed using their lecturer as an information source. Attendance modes in college are theoretically very similar to those under the previous regime but there is much more flexibility inbuilt. For example, it has been known for unemployed and self-employed trainees to attend college on two days per week in-filling with first and second year apprentices to achieve the award in one year instead of two. There are also procedures for mature applicants to accredit any skills they have already learned on the job into units towards an award (accreditation of prior learning), although the logistics and sheer quantity of paperwork required of the trainee in following this approach are daunting.

To facilitate the ideal of flexibility there is no stipulation on the amount of training that must be given on site, this being a major bone of contention with many industrialists. It can be argued that trainees may well perform simulated tasks to adequate standards in a college workshop and they may achieve their qualification entirely within this artificial environment, but could the same trainees demonstrate those standards in a real situation? Trainees employed under the auspices of Modern Apprenticeships should not encounter such a shortcoming because in the apprenticeship contract the employer undertakes to provide adequate training on the job and there are checks and balances to make sure that this happens. But what of unemployed or self-employed trainees and those employed outside the Modern Apprenticeship framework? The German system takes no chances on this question – the dual system places duties on the sponsoring firm to provide the correct industrial training to back up what is taught in *Berufsschule*. This approach is favoured by much of British industry but would be politically impractical in Britain - the very barriers which used to prevent access to training for disadvantaged groups in society that the introduction of NVQs was designed to demolish, would be erected once more. The French system is much less prescriptive in this respect, typically trainees only spend 10% of their training time placed with firms. This arises because *CAP* and *BEP* courses are full-time and might legitimately be considered to be a continuation of secondary schooling, therefore less emphasis is placed on industrial placements and more time is spent on general education.

There are now no longer any formal written examinations in NVQ mechanical services craft courses, for each unit of the qualification the candidate must supply evidence of competence. This evidence must in turn be assessed by an appropriately qualified person, normally the college lecturer, although in some cases a line manager in company may be qualified to assess. The evidence provided is normally a written record of the assessor(s) observing the candidate carrying out (simulated) tasks, although other types of evidence are not precluded. Written testimony from a line manager or customer, or photographic evidence of

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Both France and Germany “have a commitment to providing a broad based general education to those undertaking vocational training. (...) There is (...) a belief that it is the duty of the vocational training system to create a ‘rounded’ trades person, someone who is not only skilled in their job, but also able to contribute to society in more abstract and affective ways. It is only in Britain that it is apparently considered a waste of resources to teach trades people skills and attitudes that will not be directly required to carry out their occupations.”

work carried out are often sufficient – it is for the assessor to determine whether the evidence is current, relevant and authentic. The assessment criterion in all cases is that a candidate must carry out a task to industrially acceptable standards, although this is of course a difficult measure to quantify. To combat subjectivity, cross sections of assessments must be internally verified within the institution and externally verified by the awarding body. It was the failure of this verification system in the early NVQ years, together with a general misunderstanding of the entire philosophy of competence-based training that led to the many reports of inconsistencies up and down the country.

The contrast with the situation in France and Germany is quite striking. Both countries have a commitment to providing a broad based general education to those undertaking vocational training. In both countries also traditional didactic teaching seems to feature large in vocational training programmes as do formal examinations.

In France *CAP* and *BEP* courses include almost half the time spent in *lycée* to consist of lessons in general education subjects and the remaining time in technological and vocational education including workshop practical sessions. These courses are full-time and are designed for pupils from the age of 15, as a progression from secondary schooling to vocational training. Thirty-five or so hours per week are normally spent in *lycée*, although the courses are interspersed with blocks in industrial placements, this contrasting sharply with the day-release system favoured in Britain and two days per week attendance pattern in Germany. An interesting comparison here is that trainees are normally employed and sponsored by firms in Britain and Germany while in France apprenticeship is ostensibly the responsibility of regional government. It must be stressed however that local industry is heavily involved with apprenticeship and ultimately pays for it through the levies system. The difference is that apprentices are not necessarily directly employed by their sponsoring firm as they are in Britain and Germany. The general education subjects taught might consist of French, mathematics, history, geography, economics, civics, a modern foreign lan-

guage, art education, home and social economics, and physical education. These subjects are graded using a continuous assessment system and the subjects related directly to the technical discipline are assessed formally by means of written and practical examination. Each industrial placement is also assessed by workplace tutors. The heavy insistence on general education and the fact that industrial placements take up just 10% of the training time is endemic of the French attitude to training - there is a generally held belief in France that education and culture are the right of every citizen. Indeed for many skilled occupations it is preferred that workers are educated to *baccalauréat* level, a phenomenon not seen in Britain and Germany where equivalent qualifications of this type are primarily seen as being relevant to university entrants.

In Germany *Facharbeiterbrief* (craft) courses for the mechanical services disciplines are taught on two days per week as part of the dual system. About one third of total teaching time at the *Berufsschule* is set aside for general education subjects, namely German, social studies, economics, religion and sport. The rest of the time is devoted to classroom technical instruction and workshop practice. Written, oral and practical examinations take place in the technical subjects, while continuous assessment is preferred for the general subjects. Trainees also have tutors appointed in their workplaces and these individuals are required to report back to the *Berufsschule* on the progress of each student. There is much more emphasis on the technical disciplines than is seen in France and consequently the general subjects are less in evidence. There is however still a belief that it is the duty of the vocational training system to create a ‘rounded’ trades person, someone who is not only skilled in their job, but also able to contribute to society in more abstract and affective ways. It is only in Britain that it is apparently considered a waste of resources to teach trades people skills and attitudes that will not be directly required to carry out their occupations. Dearing (1996) refers to training institutions having duties concerning the ‘spiritual and moral dimension of 16-19 education’ but makes only the most ineffectual of recommendations to this end.



CEDOC levels

It can be seen from the summary table that the three states require different levels of qualification of their trades people. For example, a water and sanitary plumber in France could hold a qualification as low as *Cedoc* level 1, their counterpart in Britain would need a minimum of a level 2, and the minimum German craft qualification is recognised as level 2/3. Does this represent an actual difference in levels of ability or skill of those possessing the qualifications or does it simply mean that the qualifications are difficult to ascribe levels? The problem here is of course that the system of numerical *Cedoc* levels recognised by Cedefop is quite a crude tool when attempting to make detailed comparisons of this kind. Indeed the only qualifications which run exactly parallel to the *Cedoc* system are the British NVQs and perhaps this is not surprising given their newness and the reasons behind their creation.

In fact, although it is possible for a French trades person to operate with just a *CAP* qualification, it is not unusual for employers to require a *BEP* or higher. Indeed many trainees take the *CAP* and *BEP* courses and examinations simultaneously at the age of 15-16. The *CAP* is effectively a qualification bridging the worlds of school and work leading to the more vocationally oriented *BEP* and higher vocational qualifications. Indeed much of the French system works in this way, each qualification leading more or less automatically to the next, ultimately to the vocational *baccalauréat*. The important factor here that is not seen in Britain is the idea of guiding school age pupils towards vocational training at such a young age. In Germany of course a similar thing happens at school age where pupils are groomed for their future careers by the type of secondary school they attend. In spite of Britain's comprehensive secondary education system and because of its national curriculum effective guidance towards vocational training is often not available to those who need it. The awful scenario of school leavers considering themselves failures if they have not achieved academic qualifications has long been a formidable problem. To combat

this certain NVQs at level 1 and other elementary level vocational qualifications are now being made available in schools, although in the field of mechanical building services this is yet to transpire. Schools generally are often ill-equipped to deliver vocational training, having neither the skilled staff, nor the facilities and physical resources - nor in many cases have they the political will.

In Britain it is fairly common for training to cease at level 2 and for trades people to stay at this level; indeed NVQ 2 would be considered by many employers as being a sufficient qualification for a competent trades person. Modern Apprenticeships however now make every encouragement for employers to train their personnel to level 3, which grooms employees to be able to work with minimal supervision and take on administrative duties. The comparable German qualifications it will be noted are ascribed the level 2/3. When the syllabus contents and examination papers are compared with British craft qualifications it is found that the knowledge content is comparable with the underpinning knowledge tested in a British NVQ 3. In fact the qualification as a whole is reminiscent of City and Guilds Advanced Craft Certificate.

It is of course well documented that NVQs confer awards on the basis of observing natural performance in the (simulated) workplace rather than performance in examinations. NVQs are designed to test every area of practical competency so that, it is claimed, the holder will be immediately operational in their job – trainees are often told that the pass mark for their course is 100%. French and German training providers make no such claims about their courses. Training programmes are designed to give trainees a starting point in the occupation, the ability to perform to industrially acceptable standards is seen as something more abstract that must be learned on the job. Germany in particular still retains the tradition of 'time-serving'; for example a newly qualified tradesman is still termed a 'journeyman' and must complete two years of professional labour before they would be paid the full tradesman's wage or be permitted to access any further vocational training. Furthermore the German system is the only one which actually teaches the skills nec-

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“The acid test for NVQs however must be whether they have actually decreased the so called ‘skills gap’ identified in the late 1980s. Has Britain caught up with France and Germany in the number of people active in the mechanical building services industry holding recognised vocational qualifications? Does Britain train any more plumbers, heating and ventilation fitters, gas and air conditioning fitters than it did a decade ago? The answer to both these questions is a qualified no (...)”

essary to run a business - the *Meister* qualification, of which a version exists for most skilled occupations, is available to trades people once they have accumulated the prescribed two years of sufficient industrial experience. This type of ‘time serving’, with its firmly traditional root is now seen only as part of the German training philosophy.

Conclusion

Introducing competence-based education and training in Britain has of course not been without its problems. As often occurred in 1980s Britain, political dogma led to root and branch re-organisation of a public service apparently without proper planning. The wholesale shake-up of the vocational training system of the late 1980s upset many educators and industrialists alike as established procedures were discarded unceremoniously in favour of a new system which few could understand. Teachers and trainers had effectively to relearn large parts of their jobs because new assessment methods were dictated and new delivery methods had to be developed to reflect the flexibility of the new system. However now that the new qualifications have become more established and the philosophy becomes more widely understood, there is a growing respect at home and abroad for competence-based training and qualifications. Furthermore there is evidence that French employers are unhappy with the excessively academic nature of their craft training, and trade associations and the Ministry of Employment are exploring competence-based qualifications.

The German Ministry for Education, Science, Research and Technology however rejects ‘the step by step accumulation of competences’ for failing to develop ‘pow-

ers of thinking and action outside narrow areas of competence’ (*Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft, Forschung und Technologie*, 1997 in Steedman, 1998).

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The answer to both these questions is a qualified no – qualified because precise figures for the mechanical building services sector are not available. Figures for the construction sector, however, are. Steedman (1998) records that in the period 1991 – 1996 in Germany the number of young people gaining construction craft qualifications remained almost static while in Britain the number fell by over 60%. The corresponding figures for France show a static pattern similar to Germany. The mechanical building services sector of course may not necessarily mirror construction as a whole, but it is unlikely that there will be much difference. Indeed from personal observation and taking into account anecdotal evidence this author would submit that in all likelihood the mechanical building services figures would be similar.

After an initial period of ten or so years competence-based education and training in Britain could well be considered to have failed in what it was designed to accomplish. Training practitioners might perhaps be wondering whether all the pain and anguish suffered in recent years was worth it.



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Making learning visible: identification, assessment and recognition of non-formal learning

During the last few years, most Member States of the EU have emphasised the crucial role of learning that takes place outside of and in addition to, formal education and training. This emphasis has led to an increasing number of political and practical initiatives, gradually shifting the issue from the stage of pure experimentation to that of early implementation.

Introduction

This article¹ treats the question of how to make learning, which takes place outside formal education and training institutions, more visible. While learning in the formal education and training system is a distinct feature of modern societies, non-formal learning is far more difficult to detect and appreciate.² This invisibility is increasingly perceived as a problem affecting competence development at all levels from the individual to society as a whole.

During the last few years, most Member States of the EU have emphasised the crucial role of learning that takes place outside of and in addition to, formal education and training. This emphasis has led to an increasing number of political and practical initiatives, gradually shifting the issue from the stage of pure experimentation to that of early implementation (Bjørnavald, 1998).

Identification, assessment and recognition of non-formal learning has to be based on simple and inexpensive methodologies and a clear notion of how institutional and political responsibilities are to be shared. But first and foremost, these methodologies have to be able to deliver what they promise, with the quality of 'measurement' being a crucial aspect. This article makes an effort to clarify, through an initial theoretical discussion, the requirements for reaching successful practical solutions in this field.

The character of learning

When approaching the questions of how to identify and assess non-formal learning it is crucial to keep in mind that learning is contextual in its character. When taking place in social and material settings, knowledge and competences are very much the result of participation in 'communities of practice' (Lave and Wenger, 1991). Learning cannot be reduced to passive reception of 'pieces' of knowledge. This perspective implies a focus not only on the relational side (the role of the individual within a social group) but also on the negotiable, concerned and engaging nature of learning (the communicative character of learning). The individual learner acquires the skill to perform by actually engaging in an ongoing process of learning. Learning is thus not only reproduction, but also reformulation and renewal of knowledge and competences (Engeström 1987, 1991 and 1994).

The results of learning processes, what we call competences, are partly tacit (Polanyi 1967) in their character. This means that it is difficult to verbalise and delimit the single steps or rules intrinsic to a certain competence. In some cases, people are not even aware of being in possession of a competence. This is highly relevant to the task of assessing non-formal learning and has to be reflected by the methodologies. Much of the know-how we possess was acquired through practice and painful experience. An ex-

1) This article is an extract of the executive summary of "Making learning visible" by Jens Bjørnavald, Cedefop Reference publication, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg.

2) The term non-formal learning encompasses informal learning which can be described as unplanned learning in work situations and elsewhere, but also includes planned and explicit approaches to learning introduced in work organisations and elsewhere, not recognised within the formal education and training system.



perienced carpenter knows how to use a tool in ways that escapes verbalisation. Normally, this know-how is taken so much for granted and the extent to which it pervades our activities unappreciated.

Assessment in formal education and training: main lessons

The important issue is whether it is possible to develop methodologies able to capture the (contextually specific and partly tacit) competences in question? While specialised methodologies for assessment of non-formal learning still have a long way to go, testing and assessment within formal education and training can refer back to a long history of practice, research and theory (Black 1998). The ongoing expansion of assessment into work and leisure time is inevitably linked to this tradition. It may be assumed that new approaches rely heavily on the methodologies developed within the more structured learning areas presented by formal schooling. At least it may be assumed that some of the same challenges and problems are shared between the two learning domains.

Assessment in formal education and training can be said to serve two main purposes. The formative purpose is to aid the learning process. No system can function properly without frequent information on the actual working of the process. This is important in classrooms as well as in enterprises: the more variable and unpredictable the context, the more important the feedback. Ideally, assessment should provide short-term feedback so that learning deficits can be identified and tackled immediately. The summative purpose is to provide proof of an accomplished learning sequence. Although these proofs may take many forms (certificates, diplomas, reviews, etc.) the purpose is to facilitate transfer between different levels and contexts (from one class to another, from one school to another, from school to work). This role can also be formulated as one of selection and a way of guarding the entrance to levels, functions and profession

The confidence attributed to a specific assessment approach is generally linked

to the criteria of reliability and validity. The reliability of an assessment depends on whether results can be reproduced in a new test occasion and by new assessors conducting the test. Validity can, in many respects, be looked upon as a more complex concept and concern than reliability. A starting point might be to consider whether an assessment measures what it was originally intended to measure by those preparing it. Authenticity is a primary concern; high reliability is of little value if the result of the assessment presents a distorted picture of the domain and candidate in question.

Reliability and validity are meaningless concepts, however, if not linked to reference points, criteria for judgement and/or standards of achievement, etc. We can identify two main principles used when setting these reference points and/or criteria. In formal education and training, norm referencing (according to the setting of a group) is commonly used. The second way of establishing a reference point is to relate a given performance to a given criterion. Criterion-referenced testing implies identifying a domain of knowledge and skills, then trying to develop general criteria on the basis of the performance observed within this specific domain (Popham 1973).

The lessons from testing in the formal system can be used to raise a number of questions and topics relevant to the domain of non-formal learning:

- a) Which functions, formative or summative, are to be fulfilled by the new methodologies (and institutional systems) for identification, assessment and recognition of non-formal learning?
- b) The diversity of learning processes and learning contexts raises the question of whether the same kind of reliability can be achieved in this area as in formal education and training.
- c) The contextual and (partly) tacit character of learning complicates the quest for validity and the question is whether methodologies are properly designed and constructed in order to deal with this issue.
- d) The matter of reference points ('standards') is a key issue which needs to be

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“The confidence attributed to a specific assessment approach is generally linked to the criteria of reliability and validity. (...) Reliability and validity are meaningless concepts, however, if not linked to reference points, criteria for judgement and/or standards of achievement, etc.”



“It is an open question whether assessments of non-formal learning implies the introduction of new tools and instruments or whether we speak of old approaches to new challenges. There is reason to believe that to a certain degree we at least face a transfer of traditional testing and assessment methodologies into this new domain.”

(...) “assessments of non-formal learning can not only be judged according to technical and instrumental criteria (...), but have to include a series of normative criteria (...). Furthermore, the acceptance of assessments of non-formal learning is not only a matter of their legal status but also of their legitimacy.”

addressed. The question is whether domain boundaries (including ‘size’ and content of competences) are defined in a proper way?

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Institutional and political requirements

The future role of systems for the assessment and recognition of non-formal learning cannot be limited to a question of methodological quality. While being important, reliable and valid methodologies are not sufficient to make individuals, enterprises and/or educational institutions trust and accept assessments. This is particularly the case if assessments are given a summative role, providing a competence proof to individuals competing for positions in the labour market and in educational institutions. A number of political and institutional preconditions have to be met to attribute some actual value to the assessments in question. This can be done partly through political decisions securing the legal basis for initiatives but should be supplemented by a process where questions of ‘ownership’ and ‘control’ as well as ‘usefulness’ must be clarified. As we move from pure experimentation to actual implementation of permanent systems, it becomes clear that the questions of participation and information becomes increasingly important (Eriksen 1995). Formulated in another way; are all relevant participants involved, governments as well as social partners?

In this way, assessments of non-formal learning can not only be judged according to technical and instrumental criteria (reliability and validity), but have to include a series of normative criteria (legality and legitimacy) as well. Furthermore, the acceptance of assessments of non-formal learning is not only a matter of their legal status but also of their legitimacy.

The European situation is presented herein through the examples of five country clusters as well as activities at EU level. Although countries within each cluster may differ somewhat in their methodological and institutional approaches and choices, geographical nearness as well as institutional closeness seem to motivate mutual learning and to a certain degree common solutions.

Germany and Austria; the dual system approach

The German and Austrian approaches to the question of identification, assessment and recognition of non-formal learning are very similar (Cedefop, Collingro et.al., 1997, Cedefop, Mayer et.al., 1999). It is interesting to note that the two countries where work-based learning has been most systematically integrated into education and training (through the dual system) have so far been reluctant to embrace this new trend. On the one hand, this reflects success; the dual system is generally viewed as successful both in terms of pedagogy (the combination of formal and experiential learning) and capacity (high proportions of the age groups covered). On the other hand, and reflecting the strong emphasis on initial training, the existing system seems only partly able to extend its functions to continuing vocational training and to the more diverse training requirements of adults. But, in spite of this, we can observe a substantial amount of project-based experimentation and the attention towards these questions is increasing. The discussion on recognition of non-formal learning in Germany and Austria is closely linked to the discussion on modularisation of education and training.

Greece, Italy, Spain and Portugal; the Mediterranean approach

The general attitude to the introduction of methodologies and systems for non-formal learning in Greece, Italy, Spain and Portugal is positive (Cedefop, Turner, 2000, Cedefop, Di Fransesco, 1999, Cedefop, Castillo et.al., 2000). Both in the public and private realms, the usefulness of such practices is clearly expressed. The huge reservoir of non-formal learning which creates the basis for important parts of the economies in these countries



needs to be made visible. It is not only a question of making it easier to utilise existing competences, but also a question of how to improve the quality of these. Methodologies for the assessment and recognition of non-formal learning can be viewed as tools for quality improvement, encompassing not only single workers and enterprises but whole sections of the economy. These countries also illustrate that the step from intention to implementation is a long one. Legal and political moves have been made through educational reforms of varying scope but the actual introduction of assessment and recognition practices has not progressed very far. The coming years will show whether the positive intentions almost unanimously expressed in the four countries will be translated into practices which actually affect and serve individuals and enterprises.

Finland, Norway, Sweden and Denmark; the Nordic approach

It is not possible to speak of a 'Nordic model' at least not in any strict sense (Cedefop, Haltia et.al., 2000, Cedefop, Pape, 1999, Cedefop, Nielsen, 1999). Finland, Norway, Denmark and Sweden have chosen different approaches and are working according to somewhat different schedules. These differences do not change the fact that all four countries have taken practical steps through legislation and institutional initiatives, towards strengthening the link between formal education and training and learning taking place outside schools. Despite the fact that some elements of this strategy have existed for some time, the most important initiatives have taken place in recent years, mostly since 1994-95. The mutual learning between these countries is strong and has become even stronger over the past two to three years. The influence of Finnish and Norwegian approaches on recent Swedish documents illustrates this effect. Finland and Norway are clearly opening up for the institutional integration of non-formal learning as part of a general lifelong learning strategy. The plans presented in Sweden and Denmark indicate that these two countries are moving in the same direction and that the issue of non-formal learning will become more focused in the coming years.

UK, Ireland and the Netherlands; the national vocational qualification (NVQ) approach

In the UK, Ireland and the Netherlands (Cedefop, SQA, 1998, Cedefop, Klarus et.al., 2000, Cedefop, Lambkin et.al., 1998) we can observe strong acceptance of an output-oriented, performance-based model of education and training. The general acceptance of learning outside formal education and training institutions as a valid and important pathway to competences is a basic feature in these countries. What is questioned, however, is how such a system should be realised. The UK and Dutch experiences illustrate some of the institutional, methodological and practical problems associated with establishing a system able to integrate non-formal learning within its framework. The challenge of developing an acceptable qualification standard seems to represent the first and perhaps most serious obstacle (Wolf, 1995). As long as assessments are supposed to be criterion-referenced, the quality of the standard is crucial. The UK experiences identify some of these difficulties balancing between too general and too specific descriptions and definitions of competences. The second important challenge illustrated in the UK and Dutch cases, but not reflected in our material on the Irish experience, is related to the classical assessment challenges of reliability and validity. In our material the problems have been clearly demonstrated but the answers, if they exist, are not so clearly defined. All three countries base their vocational education and training on modularised systems, a factor which seems to support the rapid and large scale introduction of methodologies and institutions in the field.

France and Belgium; 'opening up' diplomas and certificates

In several respects, France can be characterised as one of the most advanced European countries in the area of identification, assessment and recognition of non-formal learning. Belgium has been less active, but a number of initiatives have been taken during recent years, partly influenced by the French experiences (Cedefop, Vanheerswyngheles, 1999, Cedefop, Feutrie, 1998). The first French initiatives were taken as early as 1985

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“Initiatives at European level have clearly been important in pushing the issue forward in the minds of the public as well as politicians. The white paper on teaching and learning (European Commission, 1995) helped to define the issue in a clear way and thus supported the processes at national and sector level. The resulting programmes (mainly Leonardo da Vinci and Adapt) have initiated and financed unparalleled experimental activity.”

when the system of the ‘bilan de compétence’ was introduced. The aim of the bilan is to support the employer/employee in identifying and assessing professional competences; both to support career development and in order to support enterprise-internal utilisation of competences. The second important French initiative was the ‘opening up’ of the national vocational education and training system for competences acquired outside formal institutions. Since 1992, vocational certificates (Certificate d’aptitude professionnelle) can be achieved (to various degrees) on the basis of assessments of non-formal and prior learning. A new law, initiated by the Ministry of Labour and Solidarity, will be put into force from 2001. This law states the right of the individual to have his or her prior, non-formally acquired competences assessed and recognised. This law will broaden the French approach in this field and will make it possible to obtain entire certificates on the basis of non-formal learning. A third important initiative was taken by the French chambers of commerce and industry where the aim was to set up procedures and standards for assessment independent of the formal education and training system (Colardyn, 1999). Using the European norm EN45013 on procedures for certifying personnel as a point of departure, important experiences have been gained. Parallel activities based on EN 45013 are going on in Belgium.

EU approaches

Initiatives at European level have clearly been important in pushing the issue forward in the minds of the public as well as politicians. The white paper on teaching and learning (European Commission, 1995) helped to define the issue in a clear way and thus supported the processes at national and sector level. The resulting programmes (mainly Leonardo da Vinci and Adapt) have initiated and financed unparalleled experimental activity. While not interfering directly in the efforts to develop national systems in this area, the EU level has clearly strengthened attention towards the issue and also contributed in a practical sense by supporting methodological and institutional experi-

mentation. This does not mean that the particular strategy of the white paper, focusing on European standards and a European personal skills card (PSC), has been implemented (European Commission, 2000). One important reason for this is the mixing of objectives in the original conception of the task. On the one hand the PSC was presented as a summative approach; introducing new and more flexible proof of qualifications and competences. On the other hand the need for new assessment methodologies was promoted on the basis of the need to identify and utilise a broader basis of competences; what we may term a formative objective basically addressing the support of learning processes. Looking into the Leonardo da Vinci experiment, the first objective has only been elaborated and followed up to a limited degree. Where a summative element can be detected, it is normally with a clear reference to existing national qualification systems or linked to a limited sector or profession. The formative aspect, however, has turned out to become a main concern. Not in the form of extensive supranational systems, but in the form of practical tools for single employers and/or employees. Opening up for initiatives from a wide variety of actors, questions and methodologies have been initiated at a ‘low’ institutional level where formative issues and concerns have dominated. Or, to put it in another way, the activity of the projects illustrates the priorities of enterprises and sectors, not the priorities of the National ministries.

What has triggered this wave of activity affecting most European countries almost simultaneously? Answering this requires focusing on political and institutional objectives, developments and challenges. Below, we will emphasise three aspects.

Reengineering education and training; the aspect of lifelong learning

To establish a system for learning throughout life requires a stronger focus on the link between different forms of learning in different learning domains at different stages of life. While the formal system is still very much focused on initial education and training, a lifelong learning system has to face the challenge of linking a variety of formal as well as non-formal



learning areas together. This is necessary to meet the individual's need for continuous and varied renewal of knowledge and the enterprise's need for a broad array of knowledge and competences - a sort of knowledge reservoir to face the unexpected. Also in this context, the question of identification, assessment and recognition of competences presents itself as crucial. Competences have to be made visible if they are to be fully integrated into such a broader strategy for knowledge reproduction and renewal.

Key qualifications

Although normally treated as two separate issues, the question of how to define, identify and develop key qualifications (Kämäräinen, 1999) and the challenge of how to assess non-formal learning are closely related. We will argue that these two debates reflect different aspects of the same issue. In both cases we can observe increasing attention towards learning and knowledge requirements in a society characterised by unprecedented organisational and technological change. Methodologies and systems for identification, assessment and recognition of non-formal learning can be looked upon as practical tools for making key qualifications visible and stronger. The terms informal and non-formal learning are, however, not very helpful in this respect. Non-formal learning is a 'negative' concept in the sense that it is a negation of something else. It gives little positive indication of content, profile or quality. The concept is important, however, by drawing attention to the rich variety of learning areas and forms available outside formal education and training. A closer link to the key qualification issue might thus be useful and give the exercise more direction. The linking of formal and non-formal learning domains can be viewed as a way of realising and materialising the objectives expressed through key qualifications.

Solutions seeking problems; a supply driven development?

Only in a few cases can the development of measurement and assessment methodologies be described as driven by demand or by a push from the bottom up. If we study the last half of the 1990s when this

tendency gained momentum and strength the existence of programmes like Adapt and Leonardo da Vinci at European and sector level have contributed to the setting and changing of 'the assessment agenda.' The availability of 'fresh money,' linked to a limited set of specific priorities, inspired a high number of institutions to involve themselves in the development of instruments and tools. Although the results from these projects may be of varying quality, the long term impact on the agenda of the organisations and institutions involved should not be underestimated. The coming period will show whether this supply driven movement will find users, for example at sector and enterprise level, appreciating the effort put forth.

Answering the question of why attention to non-formal learning has been strengthened does not provide an answer to the question of how to support and strengthen the positive elements of these developments. Following the theoretical clarifications made in the first part of the report, the challenges ahead can be defined as both a methodological (how to measure) and a political/institutional one (how to secure acceptance and legitimacy).

Methodological requirements

Which functions are to be fulfilled by new methodologies (and institutional systems) for identification, assessment and recognition of non-formal learning? As indicated previously, it is necessary to build on the lessons learned from formal education and training. A direct transfer is not, however, possible. The increased diversity and complexity of the non-formal learning has to be appropriately reflected by the methodologies. Do we speak of a formative role where the instruments and tools are used to guide the learning processes of individuals and enterprises or do we speak of a more limited summative role where non-formal learning is tested for possible inclusion into the setting of formal education and training? The purpose of the assessments, in the non-formal as well as in the formal domain, is decisive for the methodological choices to be made and for the ultimate success of the exercise. Successful development of methodologies and systems implies that these functions are clearly understood and com-

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“The diversity of learning processes and contexts makes it difficult to achieve the same kind of reliability as in standardised (for example multiple choice) tests. The question is how (and which specific kind of) reliability should be sought in this new domain. Reliability should be sought by seeking optimal transparency of the assessment process (standards, procedures etc.).”



The highly contextual and (partly) tacit character of non-formal learning complicates the quest for validity. There is an acute danger of measuring something other than what is intended. The main thing is to avoid a distorted picture of the candidate and the domain and to strive for authenticity.

(...) "Some basic criteria must be fulfilled if proofs of non-formal learning are to be accepted along with proofs of formal education and training. (...) participants must be heard when setting up and operating systems of this kind. (...) relevant information must be fed into the process. [and] the transparency of the structures and procedures are very important. It is possible to establish structures where the division of roles (setting of standards, assessment, appeal, quality control) is clearly defined and presented. Transparency of procedures is 'a must' if acceptance and legitimacy are to be achieved."

bined and/or separated in a constructive and realistic way.

The diversity of learning processes and contexts makes it difficult to achieve the same kind of reliability as in standardised (for example multiple choice) tests. The question is how (and which specific kind of) reliability should be sought in this new domain. Reliability should be sought by seeking optimal transparency of the assessment process (standards, procedures etc.). Reliability could also be supported through implementation of systematic and transparent quality assurance practices at all levels and in all functions.

The highly contextual and (partly) tacit character of non-formal learning complicates the quest for validity. There is an acute danger of measuring something other than what is intended. The main thing is to avoid a distorted picture of the candidate and the domain and to strive for authenticity. Methodologies have to reflect the complexity of the task at hand; methodologies must be able to capture what is individually and contextually specific.

The question of reference points ('standards') is a major issue for assessment of formal as well as non-formal learning. While norm-referencing (using the performance of a group/population) has not been seriously discussed in the context of assessing non-formal learning (due to the diversity of competences involved), the issue of criterion or domain-referencing lies at the heart of the matter. The definition of boundaries of competence-domains (their size and content) and the ways in which competences can be expressed within this domain is of critical importance. The wider the area, the greater the challenge in designing authentic assessment approaches. This reverts, in many ways, to the question of functions to be fulfilled; do we want to improve learning processes or do we want to produce proofs (papers of value)? Both purposes are highly legitimate and useful. The setting up of reference points will, however, differ considerably according to the purposes selected.

Political and institutional requirements

As soon as the first methodological requirement has been met, by answering

the questions of methodological purpose and function (see above), institutional and political implementation could be supported along two main strategies; one focusing on 'institutional design' and the other on 'mutual learning.'

Institutional design: Some basic criteria must be fulfilled if proofs of non-formal learning are to be accepted along with proofs of formal education and training. First of all, participants must be heard when setting up and operating systems of this kind. Since systems for recognition of non-formal learning will have a direct effect upon the setting of wages as well as on the distribution of jobs and positions in the labour market, this matter clearly incorporates the balancing of interests. Although not emphasised very much until now, the question of who to involve and who to listen to will be of decisive importance in the coming period. Secondly, relevant information must be fed into the process. On the question of representation, the definition and articulation of standards and reference points (in particular) require sufficient and balanced information. Thirdly, the transparency of the structures and procedures are very important. It is possible to establish structures where the division of roles (setting of standards, assessment, appeal, quality control) is clearly defined and presented. Transparency of procedures is 'a must' if acceptance and legitimacy are to be achieved. The attention of both researchers and policy makers must be drawn to all these issues in the near future.

Mutual learning should be sought and supported between projects, institutions and countries. A substantial amount of learning is already taking place at various levels. As concluded in other parts of this report, and especially in relation to activity at European level, the potential for mutual learning is much greater than the actual and factual achievements thus far. Establishing such learning mechanisms must reflect the various purposes and functions to be fulfilled. Finally, it is very necessary to increase coordination and to support activities (at European and national level) in order to capitalise on the experiences gained through numerous existing projects, programmes and institutional reforms.



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The upside and downside of the 'initial qualification': towards a basic baggage of competences for everyone



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Introduction

An initial qualification for everyone has been regarded for some time in the Netherlands as one of the key policy principles in the qualification offensive led by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science. This has been reflected in various fields of policy in recent times. Examples are policy in the area of early school-leaving, the internal rate of return from secondary vocational education, the association between education and the labour market and the training of those in employment and jobseekers. Level 2 of the national qualification structure for vocational education is used in principle as a point of reference. In essence, it is a matter of as many people as possible acquiring competences which are the minimum requirement to enable them to enter the labour market and hold their own there.

The policy effort towards an initial qualification for everyone has undeniably had a significant catalytic function in recent years, and continues to do so. But might it also be the case that this concept is interpreted too rigidly, is excessively absolute and, consequently, causes misunderstandings, for example by equating not having an initial qualification with early school-leaving?

A first balance sheet is drawn up in this article by analysing the value and significance of the initial qualification for everyone in present relationships.

To establish the background, an examination is first made of previous history and their responsibilities. Considerations in favour of and opposed to adhering rigidly to an initial qualification for everyone are then discussed. Finally, conclusions are formulated for an updated policy commitment.

History and commitment

It was agreed as long ago as 1984 in the 'Wagner Open Consultation Exercise' (Open Overleg Wagner) that government, social partners and education should jointly take responsibility for all young people in the Netherlands being given the opportunity to acquire a vocational qualification at the level of 'prospective craftsmanship'. The reason for this was the importance the Wagner Commission attached to fostering the (vocational) qualification level of the working population to revitalise the economy, attract employment and force down (youth) unemployment. It is not by chance that the Wagner Commission formulated its recommendations at the same time as the now infamous 'Wassenaar Agreement' was concluded between the central social partners (1982).

It was the Rauwenhoff Commission which, in 1990, for the first time put 'an initial qualification for everyone' explicitly on the policy agenda. It also defined the decisive criterion quite clearly as a qualification comparable to that of the final level of primary apprenticeship (at present

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(...) "the Rauwenhoff recommendation to work towards 'an initial qualification for everyone' was almost unanimously adopted in policy circles, as was its definition in terms of the final level of primary apprenticeship."

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level 2 of the national qualification structure for vocational education). An initial qualification for everyone (school-leavers, those in employment, jobseekers) is recommended by the commission as an absolute priority for policy aimed at improving the association between education and the labour market. Although, partly propagated by international organisations such as the OECD, motives of an economic nature appear dominant, two perspectives explicitly apply: the demand side and the supply side of the labour market, specifically the need for qualifications of firms/institutions and of (potential) participants. The commission formulates this as, 'More equal participation in education and training, expressed in any case in a continuing supply to stimulate a particular initial qualification with which everyone can enter the working world and has the basis on which to continue to learn in it.'

There was a firm foundation for the recommendation of the Rauwenhoff commission: on the one hand developments in the labour market and in the labour establishment (upgrading, flexibilisation, individualisation, etc.) and on the other socio-cultural developments (cultural-policy objectives, participation in society, social integration, etc.).

This foundation was also apparent from the fact that the Rauwenhoff recommendation to work towards 'an initial qualification for everyone' was almost unanimously adopted in policy circles, as was its definition in terms of the final level of primary apprenticeship. This is expressed among other things in the agreements prompted by the Rauwenhoff Commission between the government and the social partners (1991) with secondary vocational education (at that time still represented by 'VBVE' (1991)) and the national bodies for vocational education (1993). The level of support among relevant players was high, as was the commitment by each of them to contribute what they could to the implementation of this policy endeavour.

Evidence that this commitment is still present in full is provided, among other things, by the STAR recommendation 'life-long learning at work' (June 1998), in which the foundation once more stresses the importance of a 'basic quali-

fication', meaning an initial qualification. The government has since explicitly confirmed its commitment in the policy documents 'A good preparatory start' and 'Continuing to learn' (both from 1993). It is also implied in several places in the coalition agreement, and it is again very explicitly in the Cabinet response to the STAR recommendation (December 1998).

Responsibilities

The policy endeavour 'an initial qualification for everyone' has become more firmly established among those involved in recent years, although the feasibility of the addition 'for everyone' has been repeatedly questioned.

This appears partly justified as it is based on the reality of what is genuinely unattainable. In a review study for the (then) Council for Adult Education (RVE), it becomes clear that it is not realistic to assume that an initial qualification in the strict sense is genuinely achievable for everyone (Hövels, 1993). This relates to what is sometimes referred to as the category of the 'unable'. However, it is emphasised in the same study that the size of the group for which an initial qualification is attainable can easily be underestimated. More is possible than is often thought, as examples from practice also show, albeit with the necessary effort and under adequate conditions.

Doubts over the feasibility of an 'initial qualification for everyone' appear in part unjustified, and ensue from an insufficient view of the possibilities which exist, insufficient willingness to use existing policy perspectives to the full, and insufficient awareness of the attractiveness of a general upgrading of the level of qualifications of the working population for trade and industry and the versatility of people.

With regard to responsibility for an initial qualification, it is interesting first of all that the Rauwenhoff Commission emphasised that the solution to problems in the association between education and the labour market 'is only to be found in improved collaboration between (all) the players involved'. In its response to the



STAR recommendation (op. cit.), the cabinet stipulated once again that the existence of differentiated responsibilities does not detract from 'the need to move ahead together and coordinate actions'. It will be clear that prime responsibility for providing so many young people, specifically school-leavers, with an initial qualification lies with the government, in particular the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science. Social partners are considered primarily responsible for those in employment and the Manpower Services Organisation (Arbeidsvoorziening) primarily for jobseekers.

Within this overall distribution of responsibilities, there is a great deal of argument over how to specify the limits and, in particular, the detailed contents of joint responsibilities at interfaces and in transitional areas. Examples are discussions on age limits, on 'co-makship' relationships in the context of the BBL, the apprenticeship system, and on costing and financing systems to be adopted.

The "upside" of the initial qualification

In essence, the most important considerations of various parties involved in favour of an initial qualification are of three kinds: content-related, political and strategic.

In terms of content, it is a matter of the option that everyone is provided with a basic baggage of knowledge, attitudes and skills – that is to say competences – with which they can get by in a society and in a labour market increasingly characterised by turbulence, (horizontal and vertical) differentiation and uncertainties. The debate over employability and 'lifelong learning' makes this abundantly clear. The content and level of what is defined as initial qualification is a minimum requirement for this purpose. The civil effect of this, with the award of diplomas/certificates at that level as a basis, is used in particular to guarantee versatility on the external labour market as far as possible. Alongside – and concurrent with – the labour-market perspective, there are two other perspectives of an initial qualification: the possibility of access and progres-

sion to follow-on paths in education, initial and/or continuing training, and personal and social development/socio-cultural skills.

As far as the responsibility of government for initial paths is concerned, this means that extra store is set by access to and availability of secondary vocational education, the quality of the national qualification structure and the primary learning processes. The criterion is therefore always an adequate baggage of competences to gain access to the labour market and be able to hold one's own there. An interesting question is to what extent basic baggage geared towards the labour market corresponds to what is also necessary from a broader perspective of citizenship to keep up in society.

Politically, there are broadly two types of considerations. The first consists of commitments entered into previously with and by other relevant players, particularly in the area of vocational adult education, national bodies and social partners. From the political and policy-making point of view, the 'initial qualification for everyone' is an important and broadly-based point of reference for policy, at least for those involved at national level. The second consideration, specifically relating here to the responsibility of the government for initial paths, is that those considered responsible after making efforts can, with some justification, put the ball back in the court of others, particularly those who take and use qualifications in the business community. Criticism by the social partners of 'overdue maintenance' by the government will have less justification. 'Certainly under the generally accepted regime of joint responsibility for a good association between (vocational) education and the labour market, the business community can be addressed with more justification than previously on actual acceptance and optimum use. Complaints regarding adequate supply of qualifications in the labour market may therefore meet with more of a response as a motive for maintaining undesirable situations in the labour establishment: unfillable vacancies in the labour market, suboptimal utilisation of the qualification potential and/or inadequate quality of labour' (Droste, 1993). All other things being equal, the business community can

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“The introduction a number of years ago of the initial qualification as an explicit and well-defined part of policy has undeniably had a catalytic effect, certainly for efforts targeted at the bottom of our education and labour-market edifice. It is difficult to establish precisely its extent. It is safe to say that the overall effect in purely quantitative terms may not perhaps have been really substantial (...). But there has been a real upgrading for substantial groups from more vulnerable categories.”

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be approached on its responsibilities in this, for example with regard to the active recruitment of people without qualifications, without itself offering adequate qualification paths in compensation.

Strategically, relatively the significance of ‘an initial qualification for everyone’ entails a risk of relevant players (educational institutions, the business community, national bodies, and young people themselves) suboptimising their efforts, with the risk of large groups easily and unnecessarily slipping down to qualification levels below that of an initial qualification or not qualifying at all. In addition, a sharp definition of the concept of initial qualification ensures the necessary clarity and transparency, so that ‘grey areas of policy’ can be avoided or at least recognised as such.

Formulated positively, attention can be drawn to the importance of making maximum use of available options for helping people as far as possible along the way to an initial qualification, and of optimum use being made of available instruments to attain this. This applies within initial paths, but also post-initial paths, such as through the manpower services organisation, training agreements under collective labour agreements and R&D funds, and initiatives such as ‘investors in people’ and so on.

The “downside” of the initial qualification

The introduction a number of years ago of the initial qualification as an explicit and well-defined part of policy has undeniably had a catalytic effect, certainly for efforts targeted at the bottom of our education and labour-market edifice. It is difficult to establish precisely its extent. It is safe to say that the overall effect in purely quantitative terms may not perhaps have been really substantial (large groups would have reached the level of an initial qualification without this policy). But there has been a real upgrading for substantial groups from more vulnerable categories. This certainly applies in comparison with the period prior to the Vocational and Adult Education Act (WEB), when these groups ended up in the ‘grey’ areas

with few prospects (for example part-time non-formal education for young adults (‘vormingwerk’) and O&S). In addition, attention can be drawn to spin-off effects for policy frameworks of relevant players other than the government, such as the efforts of the social partners at central level in the direction of training agreements under collective labour agreements and the policy of R&D funds.

Now that this foundation has been laid, the time appears to have come for a review of the question of how rigidly the policy of initial qualification for everyone should be adhered to.

On the one hand, this review is based on further developments in thinking in which the emphasis has moved increasingly away from education and training to learning in the broader sense. In addition, it is increasingly recognised that learning is not the prerogative of particular, demarcated phases of life. In other words, it is not just thinking about the arrangement, design and location of education/training/learning that is shifting, but – partly under the influence of increasingly heterogeneous populations of participants – also the situation in the life career.

On the other hand, an important background for an interim review of the initial qualification for everyone is the doubt, already mentioned, about the feasibility and productivity of this endeavour in practice. Under the regime of changing management concepts, “listening to” obstacles and problems from practice is increasingly gaining in importance in remote government.

The government has meanwhile learnt a lesson from the realisation that an initial qualification is not attainable for everyone, or in any case not at the same time. The bar has been lowered a little for this purpose for particular categories, particularly through the introduction of assistant level in the national qualification structure and through the introduction of the practical school in pre-vocational secondary education (VMBO). In addition, the concept of the initial qualification has been nibbled at by regarding senior general secondary education (HAVO) and pre-university education (VWO) diplomas also as initial qualifications. More recently, the



Cabinet has been warning that not every citizen will be in a position to obtain an initial qualification. In its response to the STAR recommendation, it states that: 'It must be ensured that this group is not automatically pushed aside and socially excluded.'

Practice indeed shows there are significant comments to be made in passing alongside an excessively rigid interpretation of the policy on initial qualifications.

Firstly, research shows young people without an initial qualification are found to make an acceptable start in the labour market, without any evidence to date that this signifies a stable position in the longer term (Eimers, 1995). Other research shows relevant players at local and regional levels are far from always being informed about, or appreciating, the sense of an initial qualification as a policy goal for jobseekers. The research report concerned states: 'Benefit and mediation consultants report when asked that they do not consider an initial qualification to be attainable for large groups of their client base and that they often do not adopt this as a point of reference in their analysis of training' (Warmerdam et al., 1998).

A second note refers to the commitment of the social partners at the central level and ways of demonstrating this commitment in practice. In most cases, national players are forced to call on their backers, individual firms and institutions, and the opportunities for implementation offered for example by collective labour agreements and R&D funds. Partners to collective labour agreements with attached R&D funds are autonomous in their policy; in addition, there are some signals from practice that the implementation of sectoral training agreements at the level of individual companies and institutions is an awkward problem.

The crux is obviously the existing autonomy of individual companies and institutions themselves with respect to their own policy in the area of admittance/recruitment, investment in initial and continuing training, and organisation of work. Certainly with regard to those (already) in work and to a certain extent also jobseekers, the effective impulses will have to come from there. Some degree of

scepticism appears to be in place with regard to the translation into practice of commitments at central level to the level of individual companies and institutions.

A third note relates to the difference within the category without an initial qualification between those who are 'unable' and 'unwilling'. Both categories are relevant in the context of a realistic policy on the way to an initial qualification for everyone and appear to demand a differentiated policy. A combination of both dimensions, culminating in the following ideal types (Droste and Grönloh, 1993) is perhaps interesting and provocative in this context:

- unable, unwilling: the 'reddelozen' (irretrievable)
- unable, willing: the 'radelozen' (distraught)
- able, unwilling: de 'redelozen' (irrational)
- able, willing: de 'redelijken' (reasonable).

Depending on the differing types, a different type of policy is conceivable and desirable, not just in terms of content, but also in level of ambition. Adhering rigidly to a uniform endeavour for an initial qualification for all these categories might have a stigmatising and counterproductive effect, including now that the shaping and implementation of this policy has increasingly come to be located at local level.

To summarise, it can be stated that we are not only concerned with changes in thinking on education and learning, with consequences for the detailed contents and location of the concept of initial qualification. Practice also provides signals which set (or should set) policy-makers thinking. With regard to the latter, it is also important to point to the concern to keep as small a distance as possible between national policy and the (wishes and opportunities in) local practice.

Weighting-up and conclusions

Weighting up the upside and downside of the initial qualification for everyone, it

(...) "research shows young people without an initial qualification are found to make an acceptable start in the labour market, without any evidence to date that this signifies a stable position in the longer term (...)."

There is a "(...) difference within the category without an initial qualification between those who are 'unable' and 'unwilling'. (...) Depending on the differing types, a different type of policy is conceivable and desirable, not just in terms of content, but also in level of ambition. Adhering rigidly to a uniform endeavour for an initial qualification for all these categories might have a stigmatising and counterproductive effect, (...)"



(...) “it appears that the conclusion to be drawn must be that it is valuable from the point of view of policy to adhere to the initial qualification for everyone as a point of reference, but at the same time to renounce an excessively rigid interpretation of that concept in the strict sense.”

“As such, everything should be geared towards laying an adequate foundation for lifelong learning, not just from the point of view of employability but also – more broadly – from the point of view of participability.”

appears that the conclusion to be drawn must be that it is valuable from the point of view of policy to adhere to the initial qualification for everyone as a point of reference, but at the same time to renounce an excessively rigid interpretation of that concept in the strict sense. Realism should then win over rigidity with possibly counterproductive consequences. From the point of view of policy, attention should be paid in line with this to two key items.

Firstly, it should be emphasised that the lack of an initial qualification cannot be necessarily identified with other significant social phenomena, such as early school-leaving. Learning, including learning in the direction of an initial qualification, does not take place just within educational institutions, and additionally extends, also depending on the needs and options of those involved themselves, beyond various phases in the course of someone’s life. From this point of view, the concepts of initial qualification and early school-leaving are less bound up with each other than is sometimes assumed. ‘So my niece with just a MAVO diploma is an early school-leaver’ is, in other words, a nonsensical statement, provided the prospects for skills development (vocational, geared towards the labour market) are intact.

Secondly, emphasis should be given to the importance of taking all necessary steps within initial and post-initial paths to ensure that people acquire a sufficient basic baggage of competences, wherever possible embellished with a formal qualification. Within initial paths, this means that great store is set by the content and arrangement of learning and guidance processes, and by relevant conditions for this purpose. For post-initial paths, this means optimising the effort and opportunities available to the Manpower Services Organisation and the business community.

In essence, it is a matter of an initial basis of competency for the (further) development of responsive craftsmanship and lifelong learning, action competences, of which an appropriate combination of general and work-oriented components form the basis. As is noted in the Cabinet response to the Education Council recommendation “Een leven lang leren, in het

bijzonder in de bve-sector” (“Learning for life, particularly in the vocational and adult education sector”), the government regards it as part of its task and responsibility to do everything in its power to ensure that a) everyone is adequately equipped for a good start in the labour market and b) the initial baggage contains within it sufficient ingredients for (further) development on the way to “responsive craftsmanship”, for work and for other spheres of life in various phases of the life career. Substantially, this means in concrete terms at least baggage which enables people to:

- attain access to (paid) work;
- hold their own in the labour market;
- learn – including on-the-job – and act in an efficient and versatile way;
- have sufficient awareness of rapidly changing requirements in the world around and their own position in it.

As such, everything should be geared towards laying an adequate foundation for lifelong learning, not just from the point of view of employability but also – more broadly – from the point of view of participability. Key questions in this connection relate firstly to the relationship between responsible craftsmanship (as an exponent of the employability perspective) and full citizenship (as an exponent of the participability perspective), and secondly – certainly under the influence of ever less clearly definable boundaries between initial and post-initial paths – the distribution of responsibility between government, social partners and individuals.

The crux of the matter is the concern to equip as many people as possible for lifelong working and learning in a society and a labour market where (old) certainties are subject to severe erosion. It is there that interests of the participant, those of the labour market and society appear to coincide. Being realistically occupied means not closing one’s eyes either to the ‘unable’ or to the – at that time ‘unwilling’. It also means dealing strategically with the field of influence of players at the various (national and local) levels and where necessary leaving scope for alternatives. Taking realistic account of the necessary concern for the civil effect of awarding diplomas, the most important criterion is that the policy aim of ‘an ini-



tial qualification for everyone' does not become counterproductive for (the development opportunities of) individuals or groups concerned themselves, but a

stimulating prospect which need not be accomplished necessarily within the school walls and not necessarily in a particular phase of life.

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What are we going to do about school leavers? : Comment

There are inherent dilemmas in attacking the school leaver problem. Potential failures need to be caught by early monitoring, but monitoring by achievement testing actually generates future school leavers. The entire culture of school needs to be changed. Once non-completers have left school, we need to draw them into vocational training programmes that result in certificates of competence. But the very process of certification tends to defeat the practical aims of vocational education.

Introduction

This article on the school leaver problem was inspired by the Jean Piaget project, a pilot scheme carried out in the province of Guadalajara in Spain in the years 1995-98 by a group of lecturers at the University of Alcalá (Madrid), whose purpose was to integrate a group of unemployed youngsters aged 16-20 into the "world of work". The problem of school leavers and youth unemployment is particularly acute in Spain but it is of course a significant problem throughout Europe and the United States, not to mention Third World countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America. However, what follows covers mostly post-compulsory schooling in western Europe and the United States. In addressing the school leaving problem, consideration will be given to firstly, what are the in-school factors that produce school drop-outs and, secondly, what remedies are available to tackle youth unemployment once drop-outs have left the school system.

In-school programmes

Some terminological clarification is needed at the outset. Students who leave the educational system as soon as they are legally able to do so - 16 years of age in most European countries and most American states - are usually labelled "early leavers" in Britain and "school drop-outs" in the United States, but these terms imply that failure to complete secondary education, to stay on until the age of 18 to qualify for a high school leaving certificate, or the 2-3 "A" levels that are equivalent to that in Britain, is the result of individual choice and hence explained

by the psychological or sociological characteristics of the student and their families. But many non-completers are pushed out at 16 by their school, explicitly or implicitly, in consequence of some school practice like "streaming", "tracking" and "setting" by ability, which either results in expulsion from the school because of the failure to pass an examination at the age of 15 or 16, or stigmatises and discourages low-ability students who then leave the school system on their own initiative. The term "drop-out" clearly places the blame for non-completion on the student, while the alternative term "push-out" puts the blame on the institutional structure of the school; the very use of either term already implies a difference in the remedies that will be adopted to tackle the problem of school leavers (Kelly, 1995).

In practice, school leavers both drop-out and are pushed out in what might be called a mutual process of rejection. As Fine (1990) has shown in the American context, school leavers who leave at the age of 16 have started disengaging from school 3, 4 or 5 years earlier, withdrawing from school-sponsored events, becoming increasingly alienated from other students who are doing well by the standards of the school and bonding instead with other potential failures. In fact, the single decisive moment of leaving the school system may never occur because the disengaged student begins to play truant more and more frequently, leaving and returning several times in a process that has been nicely described as fading out: they are not so much drop-outs or push-outs as "fade-outs" (Kelly, 1993).

The first major point is, if we want to do something about early school leavers, we must develop a system of monitoring stu-



dents at an early age of dropping out or being pushed out at a later age. Waiting until they are 14 or 15 years of age, may be too late to repair the damage. The time to ring the early-warning bells is probably more at the age of 11 or 12.

Having concluded this much, most educationalists will then move on to recommend literacy and numeracy testing at age 11 and perhaps 7 and 9. But the call for achievement testing in the early stages of elementary and secondary education introduces a new and more potent source of school failure, namely, an emphasis on academic attainment as measured by standardised achievement tests. The earlier the age at which such tests are employed in the school system, the sooner teachers learn to distinguish the sheep from the goats in a class, which will inevitably affect their treatment of individual students and even their tone of voice in addressing them. At this point, a well-attested psychological phenomenon comes into play, the self-fulfilling prophecy: if we are treated by any social superior as if we are stupid, or slow or lazy, we often cease to make an effort to be smart, fast and alert, in consequence of which the original treatment justifies itself. In short, achievement testing, whatever its merits in providing teachers with some check on the educational progress of students, has the unfortunate tendency to divide students into high and low achievers, after which the low achievers will begin to disengage from the educational process unless rescued by remedial action. However, the standard provision of remedial classes for low achievers may exacerbate the problem because it only serves to publicise the failures of the low achievers and thus to broadcast it throughout the school. One thing learned from the famous Coleman Report, *Equality of Educational Opportunity* (1966), it is that individual educational achievement is almost as much affected by the attitudes and achievements of other students in the class as by teachers, parents and general school resources (see e.g. Hanushek, 1995).

We are thus caught in a Scylla and Charybdis dilemma: to identify potential school leavers at an early age, we may have to submit students to achievement tests and yet to do so is to discriminate

between them with the likely effect of driving an even deeper wedge between the more and less able students; achievement testing in schools is almost always a recipe for producing a certain proportion of early school leavers in any school system.

The economic value of schooling

Before considering a way out of the dilemma just outlined, it should be remembered that educational achievement scores measure only cognitive knowledge and that cognitive knowledge is not what makes school leavers employable. If non-completed school leavers become unemployed, it is not because they failed to score well on literacy and numeracy tests taken in schools. A fundamental truth about the economic value of education that is so little understood (Blaug, 1987).

Benjamin Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives (1956), still the veritable bible of curriculum reformers the world over, made the extraordinary claim that the objectives of all curricula in any subject at any stage of education can be exhaustively classified into three categories, namely

- cognitive knowledge;
- psychomotor skills; and
- effective behavioural traits.

By cognitive knowledge, Bloom meant the sum of memorized facts and concepts that are crammed into the heads of students; by psychomotor skills, he meant the manual dexterity and muscular co-ordination that a student is supposed to acquire; and by effective behavioural traits, he meant the values and attitudes shaping behaviour, which a student is supposed to take away with him or her at the completion of a course. The same idea has been expressed much earlier in much simpler language by a famous nineteenth-century philosopher of education, Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi. Pestalozzi said that all education touches either the "head", the "hand" or the "heart" of the child and these three Hs correspond exactly to Bloom's more forbidding terminology.

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(...) "it should be remembered that educational achievement scores measure only cognitive knowledge and that cognitive knowledge is not what makes school leavers employable."



(...) “what employers really value in most workers is, not what they know, but how they behave. What matters [are] “effective behavioural traits”, such as punctuality, attentiveness, responsibility, achievement drive, cooperativeness, compliance, and so on.”

“It is a curious fact that these crucial behavioural traits which largely account for the economic value of education cannot be efficiently conveyed directly, but only as a byproduct, as a “hidden agenda”, of an educational process directed at cognitive knowledge.”

In saying that education is economically valuable, that it makes people more productive, most think immediately of the first ‘H’, cognitive knowledge. It is asserted that it is the educated workers’ knowledge of certain facts and concepts that makes them valuable to employers. This can be called “the pilot fallacy”: in order to fly a plane, you need a pilot, and flying a plane requires cognitive knowledge (and some psychomotor skills) which can only be learned by a formal training course. But what employers really value in most workers is, not what they know, but how they behave. What matters is the third ‘H’, Bloom’s “effective behavioural traits”, such as punctuality, attentiveness, responsibility, achievement drive, cooperativeness, compliance, and so on. The cognitive skills required to carry out most jobs in industry and agriculture are learned by doing, by what is called on-the-job-training. What formal education does, therefore, is not so much to train workers as to make them trainable.

It is a curious fact that these crucial behavioural traits which largely account for the economic value of education cannot be efficiently conveyed directly, but only as a byproduct, as a “hidden agenda”, of an educational process directed at cognitive knowledge. Imagine a class in punctuality: it would be possible but it would also be immensely tedious and probably ineffective. But punctuality is powerfully fostered by an educational process rigidly tied to a timetable throughout every moment of the school day. One of the greatest problems in running a factory in a newly industrialized country is that of getting workers to arrive on time and to notify the plant manager when they are going to be absent; the lack of punctuality in the work-force can raise labour costs in a developing country by as much as 50 % over those of a developed country.

This is a simple but telling example of a general phenomenon: the economic value of education resides much more in the realm of behaviour than in the realm of cognitive knowledge.

This is why individual test scores in high schools have never shown a strong or even unambiguous connection with either productivity or earnings measured for the

same individuals at a later age (Levin and Kelley, 1994). Public policy in recent decades in both the US and the UK has placed great emphasis on education to energise the economy by encouraging higher test scores in schools in the belief that this would raise the quality and quantity of education in the workforce, which in turn would generate higher economic growth. An influential American National Commission on Educational Excellence went so far as to assert that America was a Nation at Risk (1983) because it was not producing enough students with the high achievement scores obtained by students in other school systems, such as Japan, Korea, Taiwan, etcetera. This is the cognitive-knowledge fallacy writ large. If only economic growth were the sort of thing that can be increased by raising the educational test scores of 11, 13 or 16 year olds, how easy it would then be for any country to grow as rapidly as it wanted.

This is not to deny that workers need a minimum threshold of competences to perform adequately on a job. One comprehensive American study tried to specify these minimum computational, reading and communication skills (National Academy of Sciences, 1984). While these specifications are largely qualitative, and not quantitative in nature, and hence cannot be mechanically applied to different types of school leavers, they suggest that at best so-called at-risk students, namely, school leavers from ethnic minority and extremely poor families, might fail to meet the minimum standards, which brings us back to the question of how to help potential school leavers without drawing undue attention to them.

Changing the entire school

This article suggests that the only way to help school leavers is to change their values and attitudes rather than their scores on cognitive achievement tests. Indeed, to emphasize achievement testing is to produce a school environment guaranteed to change the values and attitudes of school failures in the wrong direction, that is, towards alienation and disengagement. We can go a step further: anything which divides pupils in a school, particularly in



terms of cognitive abilities, is virtually guaranteed to produce school failures. Britain, until very recently, never formally tested children in schools, but now does at the ages of 7, 11, 13 and 15. Previously, many British state schools separated children by cognitive abilities either in all subjects ("streaming") or in some subjects ("setting"). Many British private schools advertise themselves as either "academic" or "non-academic", depending on the emphasis given to completing secondary education with qualifications that entitle students to enter higher education. This sort of separation and division of pupils into different types of education will produce early school leavers just as effectively as a system of achievement testing.

The only alternative to testing, streaming and setting is the "comprehensive high school" in which a determined effort is made to carry all students to their highest level of achievement, practising as little discrimination as possible between individual students. The contention that the nearer we approach this ideal in any secondary school system, the smaller will be the problem of school leavers.

The idea of tackling potential school leavers, not by remedial treatment of individual failures, but by transforming the entire school culture is perfectly exemplified by the 10 year old American Accelerated Schools Project. Starting with two pilot schools in the San Francisco Bay area in 1986, the project now comprises almost 1,000 elementary and middle high schools in more than 40 states with high concentrations of at-risk students. (Accelerated Schools, 1996-97). Instead of placing weak students in remedial classes, Accelerated Schools attempt to provide all students with constructivist, hands-on learning activities traditionally reserved only for "gifted" students. Teachers are enrolled on short training courses to encourage them to adopt new open-ended and imaginative learning strategies that minimise rote learning and that draw on students' own life experiences using problem-solving methods. Moreover, every effort is made to involve all school staff, parents and students in the assessment of the school's progress as well as its internal governance. Although the literature surrounding the Accelerated Schools Project reads at times like a church ser-

mon, some serious evaluations of Accelerated Schools do indicate improvements in student achievements, increases in attendance rates, reductions in student repeating grades, and an overall transformation of school culture at a minimal marginal cost of about USD 30 a year per student (Hopfenberg, W., *et al.*, 1993; McCarthy and Still, 1993; Levin and Chase, 1995; Knight and Stalling, 1995; Levin, 1995; Levin, 1997).

A recent British government programme, creating Education Action Zones, clusters of problem schools in areas of severe social and economic deprivation, is a pale reflection of the Accelerated Schools Project with too much emphasis on literacy and numeracy targets and too little on teacher training and parental involvement. Be that as it may, some such model as the Comprehensive High School or the Accelerated School is the only effective in-school remedy for the school leaver problem.

Out of school programmes

Virtually all non-completers in industrialised countries become unemployed, sometimes for years, but not all youth unemployment consists of non-completers, consequently the question of what to do about youth unemployment would remain valid even if all students completed high school education. Therefore, we turn now to the question of out-of-school programmes for young people aged 16-21-22, bearing in mind that a large proportion of them will be non-completers.

First, we must dispose of a remedy for youth unemployment that is frequently advocated by educationists: raising the legal school leaving age. As a general rule, youth unemployment rates in industrialised countries tend to fall as the level of educational attainment rises. This makes it only too easy to think that youth unemployment is due to a lack of education. If youngsters aged 16 and over are unemployed, what could be more obvious than to solve the problem by compelling them to remain longer in the educational system? This gives the best of both worlds: more education and less unemployment.

"Virtually all non-completers in industrialised countries become unemployed, sometimes for years, but not all youth unemployment consists of non-completers, consequently the question of what to do about youth unemployment would remain valid even if all students completed high school education."



(...)“another (...) belief [is] that the education provided is of the wrong kind. According to this view, young people are increasingly unemployed because the educational system has failed to provide them with marketable skills employers are looking for. The cure (...) is less bookish, academic education and more vocational and professional training, usually as a transitional phase between formal education and full-time employment. (...) such vocational training programmes will make little impact as such on youth unemployment unless, at the same time, new jobs are created in a buyers’ labour market as a result of expansive macroeconomic policies.”

Alas, this is really the worse of both worlds. Firstly, it fails significantly to raise the numbers of students who stay on in school. Those who would normally have left at, say, 15 years of age, when the school leaving age is raised to 16, either become chronic truants - the truancy rate of 15 years old rose dramatically in Britain when it raised the school leaving age in 1967 from 15 to 16 - or else “disengage”, that is, are only present in body but not in spirit. In short, the effective quantity of education is not raised by compelling unwilling pupils to remain “imprisoned” in the education system. It is instructive to realise that virtually all American states only passed compulsory schooling laws in the wake of attendance rates, basically legalising what had then become a 90 or 95 % age-specific enrolment rate (Stigler, 1950). Secondly, even if it marginally reduces the unemployment rate of 16 year olds, it will inevitably raise the unemployment rate of 17 year olds and then 18 year olds, 19 year olds, and so on. Youth unemployment cannot be cured simply by passing the problem up the age scale (Jallade, 1985).

More education is only one of the remedies popularly proposed for curing youth unemployment; another is the belief that the education provided is of the wrong kind. According to this view, young people are increasingly unemployed because the educational system has failed to provide them with marketable skills employers are looking for. The cure for youth unemployment, therefore, is less bookish, academic education and more vocational and professional training, usually as a transitional phase between formal education and full-time employment. The 1980s and 90s have witnessed a vast array of employment-related vocational training programmes throughout the USA and all the countries of western Europe.

In evaluating these programmes, two points should be emphasized. The first is that whatever the merits of the comprehensive high school, there will always be middle school students who have already decided at age 15 or 16 to try to qualify for admission to higher education and others who have no interest in continuing beyond the age of 17 or 18; in short, there always will be academically-minded and vocationally-minded high

school students. Although what in America are called “shop courses” or “practical projects” ought to be part of the compulsory syllabus for all students in a comprehensive secondary school, it will never be possible to persuade all the vocationally-minded high school students to stay on until the age of 18 to obtain the high school leaving certificate. In other words, a good secondary school system will provide part-time and full-time vocational training centres at which students can qualify for a variety of training qualifications. However, a second and more important point is that such vocational training programmes will make little impact as such on youth unemployment unless, at the same time, new jobs are created in a buyers’ labour market as a result of expansive macroeconomic policies. Vocational training can help if unemployment is falling because of excess aggregate demand but by itself it cannot solve youth unemployment. A recent British study (Robinson, 1999) provides a dramatic illustration of this thesis: the rate of youth unemployment in Britain in the 1980s and 1990s was more sensitive to the economic cycle - rising quickly in recessions and falling sharply during periods of recovery - than to any family-background or school-quality variables. All this is really standard neo-Keynesian doctrine (Marris, 1996; Modigliani, *et al.*, 1998), but it is extraordinary how frequently it is ignored by educationalists who are only too keen to consider as correct the old fallacy that education can cure every ill, including youth unemployment.

Evaluating off-the-job training

Youth unemployment apart, it would be naïve to expect substantial results from either vocationalised secondary education or formal vocational training programmes. Recall our earlier discussion of the economic value of education: the very distinction between “academic” and “vocational” education, in which only the latter is supposed to be geared to the needs of the labour market, plants the suggestion that much, if not most, education is economically irrelevant. But the “hidden curriculum” of teacher-pupil relations in



academic-style education has as much to do with the world of work as the explicit curriculum of manual skills in vocational education. The frequently repeated research finding that few workers ever make specific use of the cognitive knowledge acquired in schools thus indicates, not some sort of monstrous mismatch between education and work, but the pivotal role of affective behavioural traits in job performance. If those with academic qualifications earn consistently more than those with notionally equivalent vocational qualifications (Robinson, 1999), it is not because they know more than their vocationally-trained peers, but because vocational training courses are not very good at imparting achievement drive. The truth is that most jobs in a modern economy require about as much cognitive knowledge and psycho-motor skills as are necessary to drive an automobile! In any case they are typically acquired, as are virtually all skills, on the job by a process of learning-by-doing.

Despite all the cogent arguments for general as against specialised vocational education, the fact remains that those who drop or are pushed out of the education system are more likely to enter vocational schools or participate in vocational training programmes than rejoin mainstream formal education. Thus, post-secondary vocational education institutions will remain part of the educational landscape. How successful are they both in meeting the demand for extra schooling and in making trainees more employable?

The impact of training schemes has attracted a massive evaluative literature (see, for example Shackleton, 1995; Ashenfelter and LaLonde, 1996) not all of which has paid sufficient attention to the macroeconomic context in which the training took place. Moreover, there is a world of difference between the US and the UK experience, stemming in part from the difference between the education systems of the two countries and, in part, from the long established tradition of vocationalism in US high schools compared to the legacy of half-hearted vocationalism in British secondary schools (Williams and Hornsby, 1989).

America enrolls more than half of all 18-24 year olds in some type of higher edu-

cation and as many as two-thirds to three-quarters of all American high school students stay on until the age of 18 to obtain a high school certificate, which almost always includes one or more vocational courses irrespective of whether the students are work-bound or college-bound (Shackleton, 1995). Britain now enrolls about a third of 18-24 year olds in higher education and entry into British higher education at 18 requires, not a general secondary school leaving certificate as in every other country in the world, but high grades in 2-3 specialised subject examinations, the 'A-levels', implying that the decision to go to college in Britain has to be taken more or less at the age of 15 or even 14. In short, despite a massive increase in the late 1980s in the staying-on rates among over-16s, the British secondary education system remains relatively élite in its outlook, which is perfectly calculated, as argued, to produce disgruntled school leavers. It is no surprise that only 36 % of 16 to 19 year-olds were enrolled in full-time post-compulsory education in the UK in 1997 (Low Pay Commission, 1998). Moreover, despite an enormous number of youth training schemes and vocational training projects in Britain in the last two decades (for example the Technical and Vocational Education Initiative - (TVEI) - for 14-16 year olds, the Certificate of Prevocational Education - (CPVE) - for those aged 16 or over, the Modern Apprenticeship and National Traineeship) the formal education system has remained stubbornly academic and, in general, continues to grade students in terms of cognitive standards; vocationalism has never really caught on in Britain as it has in the USA.

A new complication in the 1990's is the idea of a "workfare", which emanates from the USA. This is a welfare system in which able-bodied welfare recipients, such as the unemployed, are required to work on assigned community jobs or to undertake a specified course of training or education in return for continued receipt of welfare payments (Burton, 1987). "Workfare" remains a dirty word in Britain and is carefully avoided in all discussions of welfare reform. The latest British venture in tackling the problem of youth unemployment, a programme labelled "The New Deal" for 18 to 24 year olds, is essentially a workfare scheme

"The frequently repeated research finding that few workers ever make specific use of the cognitive knowledge acquired in schools thus indicates, not some sort of monstrous mismatch between education and work, but the pivotal role of affective behavioural traits in job performance."



except that "training-fare" would be a better label in that it is designed to move unemployed youngsters off welfare and into training programmes, followed hopefully by gainful subsidised employment.

The programme, having started in April, 1998, is too new to have been evaluated but, by way of a conclusion, we may note two relevant features of such an evaluation when it is forthcoming. The scheme was introduced in 1998 when the unemployment rate in Britain was still close to 8 %. Since then, it has declined to 6 % and seems likely to decline further in the next year or two. This is just the sort of macroeconomic scenario in which training schemes to reduce youth unemployment are likely to succeed. In addition, although higher education in Britain has expanded dramatically in recent years, the bottleneck of entry into higher education remains limited to those who can study intensively on a full-time basis 2 or 3 subjects between the ages of 16 and 18, and furthermore some 10 % of 16-year olds still leave the school system without any paper qualifications whatsoever. To launch a training scheme like the New

Deal without due attention to the malaise of British secondary education, its narrow focus on A-level examinations, is once again to attach a vocational appendage to a recalcitrant academic educational system. Indeed, the current British Labour government in its obsession with achievement testing, not just in secondary schools but also in primary schools, and its insistence on school league tables, ranking schools solely in examination results, has carried academic élitism further.

In summary, there are inherent dilemmas in attacking the school leaver problem. Potential failures need to be caught by early monitoring, but monitoring by achievement testing actually generates future school leavers. The entire culture of school needs to be changed, but that is extraordinarily difficult. Once non-completers have left school, we need to draw them into vocational training programmes that result in certificates of competence. But the very process of certification tends to defeat the practical aims of vocational education. There are no easy answers to any of these deep-seated problems.

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A comparative analysis of the testing/assessment and certification systems in France and Germany with Turkey



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Introduction

A comparison of testing, assessment and certification practices aims to increase the transparency of the various systems, helping the actors in each to understand and appreciate more thoroughly how qualifications are attained in the other countries. There is also a need to develop an approach to quality assurance adapted to each national system, reflecting the role of the different partners in the vocational education and training process after a careful analysis of each system. In trying to compare the national systems, there is still a need for a basic frame of reference. The present comparative analysis concerns not only different kinds of concepts, creation, implementation of the systems, but also to a greater extent, access to qualifications: conditions, procedures, routes and modes of acquisition. It is based on the scheme generated for the various systems of testing, assessment and certification with due emphasis on the French and German testing, assessment and certification systems, as they have been found to be the most similar and relevant systems for a better understanding of the Turkish context.

Concepts, creation and implementation

Legal responsibility

In EU countries vocational education and training systems, different bodies have

final legal responsibility for the full-time school-based, apprenticeship, part-time, or alternance routes towards vocational diplomas and certificates. In France, full-time school-based training is the most dominant route towards vocational diplomas and certificates, whereas the apprenticeship training under the dual system forms the backbone of the German vocational training system.

In general, the main actor is usually the Ministry of Education in both countries including a major role for the social partners, especially in Germany. Full-time, school based vocational diplomas and certificates are under the authority of the Ministry of Education in France since responsibility for certification has traditionally been centralised under this ministry. In Germany, the Federal Institute for Vocational Training, (*BIBB*) brings together social partners and educationalists to establish and develop awards for vocational education and training. For the work-based part of the dual system, the role of the social partners in Chambers of Industry, Commerce and Crafts includes organising and conferring awards. They fulfil this role based on a mandate from government.

In Turkey, the system has the features of both French and German systems including a third organisation, the Higher Education Council for the Technician level. For the occupations under the scope of the Ministry of National Education (*MEB*), the qualifications leading to vocational diplomas and certificates are under the

This article presents a comparative analysis of systems of testing, assessment and certification in France, Germany and Turkey, with a view to providing a better understanding of Turkish arrangements.

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“Although the system in Turkey has features of both the German and French systems, the Turkish situation is more similar to the French, in that the Ministry of Education has an authorised unit similar to the competent committees in France, which decide the objectives, content and, type of assessment. Their role also includes updating the curriculum and determining the form of assessment for each diploma for full-time training.”

direct control of the *MEB*, similar to the case of France. For the rest of the occupations, the qualifications are available by the *TESK* (Confederation of Turkish Craftsmen and Tradesmen) similar to the case of Germany. The above-mentioned occupations cover the journeyman and mastercraftsman certificates. The remaining occupations for which qualifications lead to technician level are under the direct control of the Higher Education Council. However, recently developments are undertaken to involve the social partners and the Ministry of Employment especially for the vocational certificates outside the scope of the *MEB*.

Establishing the offer

In Turkey, as in France, it is mainly the Ministry of Education which decides the scope of occupations for which certificates and diplomas are to be offered. This means that for the scope of the occupations under the Ministry of Education, qualifications are obtained through full-time schooling or apprenticeship training, while the trainee has a work contract with a company. For the occupations under the scope of *TESK*, qualifications are obtained through work-based apprenticeship training and, as for the technician occupations, qualifications are obtained through full-time schooling.

Decision-making on the objectives, content and assessment

The school-based part of the curriculum and its assessment is determined by the Ministry of Education for the particular *Länder* following the outlines centrally planned by the *BIBB* in Germany. There are also vocational training commissions in each of the German *Länder* advising on training programmes. The general situation in France is that the occupational consulting commissions advise the Ministry of Education on the objectives and curriculum content of national awards. They also define the type and content of examinations. However, the final decision remains that of the Ministry of Education.

Although the system in Turkey has features of both the German and French systems, the Turkish situation is more similar to the French, in that the Ministry of

Education has an authorised unit similar to the competent committees in France, which decide the objectives, content and, type of assessment. Their role also includes updating the curriculum and determining the form of assessment for each diploma for full-time training. For the work based apprenticeship training similar to the activities of *BIBB* in Germany, *MEB* jointly with *TESK* decides on the objectives, content and type of assessment. Recent developments are underway to establish a tri-partite (involving *MEB* and the social partners) and an autonomous organisation to improve the vocational training system through the introduction of the occupational standards.

Organisational principles

An initial distinction needs to be made to determine whether or not the majority of qualifications available are organised into a system of “national qualifications”, or official diplomas under the direct control of the national Ministry of Education.

There are four main systems for organising assessment in the 15 EU Member States:

- central elaboration and delivery
- decentralised elaboration and delivery
- mixed approach
- central guidelines and quality control with local delivery

In the case of central elaboration and delivery, initial procedures establishing vocational education and training diplomas and certificates and their assessment, are centralised under ministerial control. France, has a predominantly centralised approach. Diplomas and certificates as such are designed under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education. In decentralised elaboration and delivery, decentralised decision making usually goes right down to the assessment as in Germany. However, there are different characteristics to the decentralised systems.

In Turkey, assessment is organised along the lines of the central elaboration and delivery system in France with some tendency towards decentralisation after the enactment of Apprenticeship and Vocational Training Law No. 3308. In vocational high schools and apprenticeship



training centres, a predominantly centralised approach is adopted. The examinations for such vocational education and training diplomas and certificates are designed under the responsibility of the *MEB* to conduct assessment (for around 89 occupations). However, for the occupations, which are not under the scope of the *MEB*, the competent bodies (for example *TESK*, Chambers) are mandated to organise and deliver the examinations for assessment.

Examinations and examiners

Establishing the content and assessment

Content of examinations is largely determined by the aims and curriculum of the qualifications and, therefore, by the body which makes the decisions about them. Initial procedures concerning assessment in establishing vocational education and training diplomas and certificates are under the control of the related authorities. In France, examinations are written centrally and taken by all candidates on the same day as is the case in French national diplomas. In Germany, each *Länder* is mandated by the Federal Government to organise examinations within their schools, but it is the schools which set-up the examination panels and carry out assessment. For the craft side of vocational training, the competent bodies (i.e. the Chambers of Industry and Commerce and of Crafts) are mandated to organise and deliver the examinations.

The appropriate authority responsible for offering the vocational education and training diplomas organises the assessment and certificates and therefore, a variety of assessment systems coexist in Turkey. For full-time school-based training, examinations take place in each school where such training is provided. Frequently, examinations take the traditional form of written, knowledge based papers accompanied, mainly at craft level, by practical skill tests. For the occupations, which are not under the scope of the *MEB*, the training solely occurs in the workplace and the Chamber does the assessment. In apprenticeship training, sig-

nificant part of the training occurs in the workplace, although the test will take place in the school under the responsibility of the examination commission. The concern behind this organisation is usually to maintain standards, equity and fairness.

Testing tools and instruments

In some countries like Germany, candidates' passing a formal written test as well as an assessment of practical performance in a set piece of work by external assessors is common. In others like France, they insist on the two components of assessment – the written knowledge test and the practical performance test - but allow partial certification of the practical element on the grounds that an individual may be adequately skilled in their own occupational area without being able to complete the written test. In Turkey, similar to France and Germany, multiple-choice tests are widely used for the theoretical part of the examinations. On the other hand, the assessment of skills are obviously based on their demonstration, thus requiring the use of practical tests. Recent developments are underway to improve the quality of written and practical tests and to test items used in the examinations for assessment.

Main bodies and other ministries

Generally, in the EU Member States, particularly in France, responsibility for certification has traditionally been centralised under the authority of the Ministry of Education. Nevertheless, new awards have begun to be accredited by the social partners and occupational consulting commissions advising the Ministry of Education on the objectives and curriculum content of national awards. They also define the type and content of examinations therefore, the final decision remains that of the Ministry of Education. Usually the awards for specifically labour-market oriented training courses require the involvement of the Ministry of Employment. Such courses are financed, organised and examined under the responsibility of the Ministry of Employment, but the certificates are accredited

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“Social partners [in Turkey] have the right to intervene through different means, such as consultation, collaboration, negotiation as in the case of France, and co-management and management as in the case of Germany. They will be required to play an increasingly important role in adapted and adaptable testing, assessment and certification systems, whether through consultation procedures, participation in examination, accreditation of occupational sector-based vocational training certificates, or in their essential role as providers of sufficient number of training places for young and adult trainees.”

by the Inter-Ministerial Commission for Accreditation which comes under the auspices of the Prime Minister's Office. However, in France, the Ministry of Employment usually takes a secondary role as compared to the status of the Ministry of Education. Other ministries take a very limited role specific to the occupational sector covered. In France, the certificates obtained have to go through a process of accreditation.

In Turkey, the *MEB* obviously hold a privileged position in the certification process, as in France. It sets up the organisational structure to determine the offer, the content and the type of assessment. Other Ministries in Turkey take a very limited role, specific to the occupational sector such as tourism. However, at present, the certificates obtained as such do not go through a process of accreditation. As already mentioned above, it is expected to establish a tri-partite and autonomous organisation (involving social partners) to accredit such vocational training certificates offered by the other ministries or chambers especially for the occupations outside the scope of *MEB* where due emphasis is given to “on-the-job training”.

Chambers of industry, commerce and crafts

The competent bodies in some EU Member States such as the Chambers of Industry, Commerce and Crafts, hold legal responsibility for the work-based part of the qualifications obtained especially in the case of Germany. Their role involves organising and granting vocational education and training diplomas and certificates, on a mandate from the government. The chambers in Germany also play a decision-making role as they decide on the occupations, which must be certificated, and make proposals on the organisation and content of training to the Ministry of Education. They also countersign certificates.

In Turkey, like Germany, *TESK* has a specific role in the certification of skills and competences for the craft and trade types of occupations (around 250), which are not under the scope of the *MEB*. It is also involved in work-based apprenticeship training leading to craft and trade

certificates. For such training, *TESK* in close collaboration with the *MEB* decides on the objectives, content and type of assessment. Initial procedures concerning assessment establishing vocational education and training diplomas and certificates are under the control of *TESK* chambers. The content of the testing and assessment is largely determined by the objectives of the qualification to be attained. The assessment is organised by the appropriate chamber responsible for offering the vocational training certificates. The chamber and *MEB* representatives countersign the certificates offered. However, as already mentioned above, certificates granted by *TESK* do not go through a process of accreditation at present.

Social partners

Involvement of social partners in the testing and assessment and certification system and in the configuration of vocational education and training is essential to adapt them to ever changing occupational requirements and the needs of the economy. Vocational education and training, accordingly, opens up an area accessible to negotiation, collaboration and agreement between the social partners, even if they encounter certain difficulties in putting them into effect.

Social partners have the right to intervene through different means, such as consultation, collaboration, negotiation as in the case of France, and co-management and management as in the case of Germany. They will be required to play an increasingly important role in adapted and adaptable testing, assessment and certification systems, whether through consultation procedures, participation in examination, accreditation of occupational sector-based vocational training certificates, or in their essential role as providers of sufficient number of training places for young and adult trainees.

In Turkey, a number of projects have been developed to involve the social partners in vocational education and training to enhance the bridge between employment and vocational education and training systems starting from the negotiation stage similar to the French system with the ultimate aim towards co-management or



Table 1

Diplomas and certificates in Turkey corresponding to level 2-European skilled worker (a preliminary scheme)

Country	Name of the diploma and certificate	Mode of acquisition	Type of diploma or certificate	Level of responsibility	Organisation of assessment	Usual age for obtaining the diploma and certificate
Turkey	Ministry of Education (MEB) Journeyman Certificate	Apprenticeship	Nationally recognised certificate	MEB	MEB has overall responsibility. Examination commissions are set up at schools.	16-19
	Mastercraftsman Certificate	Apprenticeship or full time+ 1 year work experience	Nationally recognised certificate	MEB		18+
Turkish craftsmen and tradesmen	Confederation of (TESK) Journeyman Certificate	Work-based training	Nationally recognised certificate	TESK Chambers of Crafts and Trades	TESK Chambers of Crafts and Trades conduct examination.	16-19
	Mastercraftsman Certificate	Work-based training	Nationally recognised certificate	TESK Chambers of Crafts and Trades	TESK Chambers conduct the examination.	18+

management similar to the German system. Requests of social partners are embedded in the social culture and constructs. The role of social partners is seen essential for the system to function correctly. Therefore, social dialogue has started in economic sectors in a concrete fashion that can contribute to general progress in vocational education and training. Recent developments are taking on board the need to associate the social partners in devising of vocational education and training diplomas and certificates, developing occupational standards along with the systems of testing, assessment, certification and accreditation.

Access to qualifications: conditions, procedures, routes and modes of acquisition

There are basically two major types of routes, full time provision as in France, and apprenticeship training within the

dual system in Germany, for the acquisition of qualifications.

In Turkey, both French and German type routes exist. There are vocational and technical high schools, which offer full-time provision leading to vocational and technical high school diplomas as well as mastercraftsman certificates after one year of work experience. There are also apprenticeship-training centres leading to journeyman and mastercraftsman certificates. If the training in such centres is complemented, their graduates can also be granted vocational high school diplomas.

Higher vocational education institutions also offer full time provision for technician diplomas in Turkey. As mentioned above, the apprenticeship route is still valid for mastercraftsman and journeyman certificates, as well as the vocational and technical high schools for the occupations

“In Turkey, both French and German type routes exist. There are vocational and technical high schools, which offer full-time provision leading to vocational and technical high school diplomas as well as mastercraftsman certificates after one year of work experience. There are also apprenticeship-training centres leading to journeyman and mastercraftsman certificates.”



Table 2

Diplomas and certificates in Turkey corresponding to level 3-European Technician (a preliminary scheme)

Country	Name of the diploma and certificate	Mode of Acquisition	Type of diploma or certificate	Level of responsibility	Organisation of assessment	Usual age for obtaining the diploma and certificate
Turkey	Vocational Higher Education Institution Diploma	Full time	Nationally recognised diploma	Higher Education Council	Higher Education Council has overall responsibility.	20+
	Ministry of Education (<i>MEB</i>) Mastercraftsman Certificate	Apprenticeship or full time+ 1 year work experience	Nationally recognised certificate	<i>MEB</i>	<i>MEB</i> has overall responsibility. The examination commissions are set up at schools	18+
	Confederation of Craftsmen and Tradesmen (<i>TESK</i>) Mastercraftsman Certificate	Work based training	Nationally recognised certificate	<i>TESK</i> Chambers of Crafts and Trades	<i>TESK</i> Chambers of Crafts and Trades conduct the examination.	18+

under the scope of the *MEB*. For the other occupations, under the scope of *TESK*, work-based training is the route for access to such qualifications.

Occupational competency levels

Generally, according to the European level system based on the scheme of vocational education and training diplomas and certificates are offered based on the following levels: level 2 (skilled worker) (see table 1), level 3 (technician) (see table 2) and level 4 (higher technician) (see table 3).

Level 2 (skilled worker) vocational education and training diplomas and certificates are the first full vocational qualifications obtained at the end of compulsory education. Traditionally they lead directly into the labour market. Courses take place either in secondary schools or in specific post-compulsory institutions.

Level 3 (technician) diplomas are equivalent to those conferred at the end of secondary general education. These form an integral part of the second cycle of secondary education and have both a general and a technical content leading to either higher education or labour market entry. The courses take place both in schools and in specific post-compulsory vocational education and training establishments.

Level 4 (higher technician) are the diplomas obtained through full-time education and training and are studied in secondary schools, post compulsory institutions or higher education institutions.

In Turkey, the system of testing, assessment and certification and vocational education and training diplomas and certificates offered have been analyzed to set up a general comparison with levels 2 to 4 of the European system. The present



Table 3

Diplomas and certificates in Turkey corresponding to level 4-European Higher Technician (a preliminary scheme)

Country	Name of the diploma and certificate	Mode of acquisition	Type of diploma or certificate	Level of responsibility	Organisation of assessment	Usual age for obtaining the diploma and certificate
Turkey	Vocational Higher Education Institution Diploma	Full time	Nationally recognised diploma	Higher Education Council	Higher Education Council has overall responsibility.	20+

levels comparable to such a classification are journeyman, mastercraftsman and technician levels. The diplomas and certificates awarded have been compared to the ones offered in the EU based on the European level system.

Selection criteria

Most vocational education and training qualifications in France and Germany require a certain prior level, 10 years of full time compulsory education, to be able to follow the appropriate course to be assessed. For entry to the European level 2 (skilled worker), the candidate is either required to have attained a certain level at the end of compulsory education through full-time school based or apprenticeship training which also exists at European levels 3 (technician) and 4 (higher technician) in Germany. The situation is similar at each level of award. For skilled worker level, France has also established traditions of apprenticeship and offers apprenticeship route to skilled worker level. Access to a vocational qualification at levels 3 and 4 may be conditional on the candidate holding the appropriate award.

In Turkey, the candidate is required to go through 8 years of compulsory education for entry to the journeyman and mastercraftsman level similar to European levels 2 and 3. Access to mastercraftsman level and technician level may be conditional on the candidate's holding the appropriate certificate and training.

For the journeyman certificate (similar to the European level 2 (skilled worker) in some occupations). The candidates are required to:

- a) complete 3-4 years of apprenticeship training (for the occupations under the scope of *MEB*) or,
- b) work for 2 years in the occupation concerned (for the occupations outside the scope of *MEB*).

For the mastercraftsman certificate (similar to the European level 2 (skilled worker) and level 3 (technician) in some occupations), candidates are required to:

- a) take apprenticeship training with 3-4 years of work experience (for the occupations under the scope of *MEB*) or,
- b) work for 5 years in the occupation concerned (for the occupations outside the scope of *MEB*) or,
- c) take vocational and technical high school training with one-year work experience afterwards.

For the vocational and technical high school diploma (similar to the European level 2 (skilled worker) and level 3 (technician) in some occupations) candidates are required to:

- a) be a graduate of a vocational high school or,
- b) take the complementary courses in apprenticeship training.



For the technician diploma (similar to the European level 4 (higher technician) in some occupations) candidates are required to complete two years of vocational higher education (ideally after the vocational and technical high school)

Conclusion

Changes taking place in labour markets influence work organisation and the definition of qualifications. Consequently, the systems of testing, assessment and certification along with the systems of vocational education and training are not static, but involve a dynamic series of relationships, which change and evolve according to the rapid technological developments and the changing needs of the societies. Equity in reducing barriers of age, sex and educational background and taking on board the evolving changes and needs are the major means of access to a more flexible and adaptable system.

The systems of testing, assessment and certification hold a different significance according to each country. Transparency and comparability of different systems require not only their harmonisation, but also better understanding of their differences and originality helping the actors in each of the systems to understand and appreciate comprehensively the ways and means the qualifications are attained. In this framework, the French and German systems in the EU set fine examples for better understanding the comparative analysis of the system of testing, assessment and certification in Turkey.

As for future possible joint projects, the main objective in comparing the qualifications between Turkey and the EU Member States should be that of raising their level and development with the aims of improving economic well-being, promoting social cohesiveness and possibilities for personal development. This will bolster full membership of Turkey to the EU.

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Vocational training in Latin America

Introduction

The first half of the 1990s brought about considerable changes in vocational training policy in many Latin American countries. This article examines the consequent modifications in vocational training systems, and in the previously highly centralised organisations which deliver education. These modifications are not yet complete. The changes in Latin American education systems have come about as a consequence of the widespread shortcomings of the established educational agencies in the provision of training. These shortcomings have become very evident with the opening up of markets in the wake of globalisation and the unification of economic areas (e.g. Mercosur). The inadequacies were nonetheless already evident in the 1980s. Their structural causes will be considered below.

Today, it can be observed in many countries of central and south America that:

a) the monopoly of training enjoyed by traditional vocational training establishments appointed by the state has been broken. Increased competition in education markets calls for considerable institutional changes on the part of the traditional organisations;

b) medium-sized and large enterprises are having an increasing influence on the arrangements for vocational learning and are questioning the payroll training levy imposed by law for the funding of traditional education and training providers. They no longer wish to surrender this money, but are demanding to retain their contributions for their own company-based initial and continuing training provision at a time of rapid technological change;

c) the traditional division of responsibilities in vocational education and training

between the Ministries of Labour and Education, and the consequent areas of competency, are being called into question in favour of greater flexibility.

These attitudes and developmental trends are also being discussed increasingly in the European vocational training scene.

Current developments in Latin America cannot be adequately explained without a brief discussion of the circumstances in which the vocational training organisations 'typical' of that continent were established. This article will therefore:

a) explore the historical development of Latin American vocational training organisations, and identify their particular characteristics;

b) examine their weaknesses, and their attempts to adapt systemically to changes in the economic, technological and social environment;

c) make suggestions for a changed and more efficient training landscape in Latin America.

This article is based largely on experiences in Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, and Peru, where the changes referred to above are currently most in evidence, although to varying degrees. Brazil is in many respects a special case, and will not be considered here.

Historical background

Economic and social development in Latin America was boosted in the 1940s and 1950s by wars in Europe and Korea, and the consequent war production in the United States. The wartime economy of the United States led to greater demand in Latin America for raw materials, semi-finished industrial goods and foodstuffs.



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This article examines modifications in vocational training in a number of Latin American countries. It explores their historical development, weaknesses and subsequent attempts to adapt to change. It also makes suggestions for a changed and more efficient training landscape in Latin America.



“For a long time, therefore, Latin America has practised what is currently being proposed in Germany: employers are required to fund vocational training through a training levy, and this training is provided in traditional vocational training centres by bodies not tied to particular companies, unlike in Europe.”

These developments placed greater training demands on industries that were slowly becoming established. With the help of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), similar organisations were set up throughout the continent to provide initial and continuing vocational training. With the exception of a few countries such as Mexico and Uruguay, these typically had a number of common features.

They were subject to Ministries of Labour with no legal or institutional connection with the existing technical secondary schools run by Ministries of Education, which, generally, provide broad technical qualifications in a range of occupations, which can also lead to higher education. Because of the possibility of moving on to higher education, the technical courses offered in secondary schools are known as *educación técnica*, while the vocational training provided under the aegis of Ministries of Labour is termed, somewhat dismissively, *formación profesional*. Since vocational courses do not lead to university education, these supplementary, free courses are also referred to as *educación no formal*. They often last only one or two years, and their purpose is to provide practical vocational training in industrial and craft trades. Moreover, they aim to respond to the socio-political needs of the less well off section of the population.

The initial and continuing vocational training provided by these typical institutions in classroom-based teaching centres is controlled by a system of so-called *tripartismo*, in which the state, employers and representatives of the trade unions are supposed to have equal shares in determining the policy of these organisations and in responsibility for their operation and development. The main social actors have thus been closely involved, through a formal mechanism for agreement and models of management that assume agreement, in planning and guiding the vocational training establishments subject to Ministries of Labour.

The compulsory levy imposed by law on employers in practically all Latin American countries has ensured that these training providers have received consistent and substantial funding. Employers' levels of

contribution have varied from country to country according to size of enterprise (payments being compulsory for any business with five or more employees) and the nominal size of the wage and salary bill (between 0.5 and 2%). These payments have been levied together with social security contributions and passed on to the vocational training establishments subject to Ministries of Labour (Atchoarena 1998). For a long time, therefore, Latin America has practised what is currently being proposed in Germany: employers are required to fund vocational training through a training levy, and this training is provided in traditional vocational training centres by bodies not tied to particular companies, unlike in Europe.

This arrangement has provided the regulatory framework for the development of a system of vocational training outside the technical secondary schools and the Ministries of Education. The numerous regulations underpinning these quasi-governmental training establishments provided industry in the 1960s and 1970s with a body of skilled workers that was more or less adequate in quantity and quality. At the same time, disadvantaged sections of the population were involved more closely in society by being drawn into some form of education through the flexible provision of initial and continuing vocational training. The formal education provided under the aegis of Ministries of Education was complemented by vocational training establishments under Ministries of Labour addressed above all to those sections of the population who had for various reasons dropped out of Ministry of Education courses. These establishments, with their one-year and two-year initial training, and continuing training courses, became an indispensable adjunct to the provision of Ministries of Education and took on the educational responsibility associated with a welfare State for providing some institutional security for poorer sections of the population.

This is one of the reasons why private companies have launched, and still launch, few initiatives of their own in vocational training. The guaranteed involvement of poorer sections of the population in vocational training provided under the aegis of Ministries of Labour but



funded by enterprises (systemically guaranteed by the state) was intended to ensure that employers had a supply of skilled workers. But this was an assumption that was not sustainable in the long term, since training moved into academic training centres that were removed from places of employment.

Because of worldwide changes in the division of labour, and as a result of the economic recession in all Latin American countries in the 1980s (known colloquially as the 'lost decade') brought about by a policy of so-called import substitution (tariff barriers to protect local markets), these training providers were vehemently criticised, largely by the employers. Against background of falling market prospects, business bemoaned above all the obsolescence and lack of practical relevance of the vocational training provided. The causes of this criticism are to be found in:

- a) worldwide trends in economic development and systematic neglect of the workplace as a place of learning;
- b) the excessive socio-political burden placed on these training organisations, their structure and operational systems.

Weaknesses of traditional vocational training provision

The increasingly burdensome function of socio-political integration of poorer sections of the population imposed on training organisations led in the 1980s to a widespread failure to deliver. Some examples are outlined below.

The majority of training providers deal with all sectors of the economy and pursued their own purposes in the crisis-ridden 1980s, expanding the quantity of (short) training courses of questionable quality for political ends. These failed to meet the needs of employers but appeared impressive because they produced higher enrolment figures.

The training providers not only run courses but are also required to act as their own monitoring and support agency

(similar to the role of the Federal Institute of Vocational Education in Germany). At the same time, they are supposed to plan training provision professionally in response to employers' demands and the needs of the population. In an education and training landscape that is changing because of technological developments, the shortcomings in the training of their own staff means that the establishments have not had the potential required to meet the complex tasks of revising the system (e.g. updating the content of the vocational training) to match changes in economic circumstances, technology and infrastructures.

Private providers have seen improved prospects in the largely unregulated training market that has come into being. Even though some provision is questionable, this has led to a further loss in the prestige of the established providers, which have had to argue ever harder for continued payroll funding by industry and craft trades.

Furthermore, three strongly hierarchical levels of functioning can also be identified as weaknesses, alongside the failure to modernise the system.

Firstly, the level of delivery of vocational training: teachers and trainers are directly charged with delivering vocational initial and continuing training although, significantly, there is in Latin America no training (of various types) for vocational teachers that is comparable to training in European countries. Those appointed are generally either graduates of the self-same courses, or, increasingly, unemployed engineers who have no training in education or have received at best a quick dose of basic rudimentary training. In the almost school-like centre-based training given by the traditional training providers it is evident how quickly skills in such fields as electronics and electrical technology become outdated without adequate professional training.

Secondly, the level of planning and management: this level includes curriculum developers, planners of training and heads of centres. Some of these professionals show weaknesses for much the same reasons as teachers, i.e. because they lack proper training. Moreover, appointments

"(...) as a result of the economic recession in all Latin American countries in the 1980s (...). Against background of falling market prospects, business bemoaned above all the obsolescence and lack of practical relevance of the vocational training provided."

Furthermore, three strongly hierarchical levels of functioning can also be identified as weaknesses (...).

Firstly, the level of delivery of vocational training (...). Secondly, the level of planning and management (...). Thirdly, the level of decision-making, which is heavily politicised (...).



“In the final analysis, tripartismo has been unable to offer training courses that respond to needs and relate to practice (...). (...) in the 1980s, it became increasingly difficult to argue the case for vocational training in these organisations, given constantly falling cost-effectiveness and efficiency despite expansion of provision in all three sectors of the economy and the consequent rise in the (bureaucratic) complexity of operation.”

are often made at this level for political reasons rather than by virtue of professional ability.

Thirdly, the level of decision-making, which is heavily politicised: management teams in the vocational training establishments have not demonstrated well-founded professional knowledge and appropriate management skills, but have been appointed because of the political and meritocratic influence exercised by their own interest groups in society, which care relatively little about matters to do with the internal and external effectiveness of vocational training systems.

Weaknesses have not, however, been confined to the faults of particular groups, but relate also to the entire manner in which these systems have operated. The major weaknesses are discussed below.

There has been a lack of ‘interfaces’ in the organisation of training establishments, since they have seen themselves as State agencies: limited responsibility, and the accompanying overloading of middle and senior management with bureaucratic tasks, have prevented the cooperation that would have improved internal organisation, and have made the planning, arrangement and implementation of training courses time-consuming because of the excessive division of labour. These organisations’ provision has therefore lost proverbial contact with the current situation at the workplace, especially as it has been given in academic centres.

The absence of strategies for overall staff and organisational development has led to questionable attempts at updating to match changed needs and requirements: this has had a detrimental impact on the level of skills among the professional staff, who have tended to carry out the tasks required by each autonomous establishment, rather than providing a service to customers by responding rapidly to employers’ immediate practical needs. The more glaring the obvious inability to offer training provision of relevance to employers has become, the more establishments have stressed their autonomy and monopoly of responsibility.

In the final analysis, *tripartismo* has been unable to offer training courses that re-

spond to needs and relate to practice: the supervisory boards of these organisations, whose members were appointed largely for political reasons by the State, trade unions and employers, have degenerated into disputatious and divergent interest groups of social actors, who have failed in the event to fulfil their decision-making tasks of planning and updating vocational training provision. The latent politicisation of the establishments has led to the obsolescence of their provision: the formally agreed manner of operation of the entire sub-system of vocational training has ignored the real level of practical cooperation between public and private places of learning and has shifted this ‘cooperation’ on to a multi-layered plane of bureaucracy which has failed to meet employers’ practical requirements.

Hence, in the 1980s, it became increasingly difficult to argue the case for vocational training in these organisations, given constantly falling cost-effectiveness and efficiency despite expansion of provision in all three sectors of the economy and the consequent rise in the (bureaucratic) complexity of operation: ‘A high degree of organisational complexity means above all that a system displays ... a high level of specific selectivity towards its environments. The practical consequence of this is that it behaves with indifference to most of what happens in its environment ... It insists on having room to put forward its own possibilities and alternatives, and takes decisions that agree with its own perception of itself. This all places considerable difficulties in the way of intervention and change in organisations...’ (Willke, 1996, p. 148).

Political tasks and institutional adaptation

The current changes in vocational training in Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica and Peru are tackling the problems set out above. Their education and training systems can only be described in outline.

The most far-reaching updating (throughout the field of education and training) can be seen in Chile (Arnold/Krammenschneider 1997). As a result of neo-liberal economic policy, the state has largely



withdrawn from the delivery of vocational education and training. In the field covered by the Ministry of Education, grades nine to twelve may either offer conventional general education or broad vocational preparation (in technical secondary schools). These courses also lead, however, to an examination granting access to higher education. A school may be:

- a) run by the local authority and receive a modest State grant (per pupil);
- b) private and still receive this State grant plus fees from the beneficiaries or their parents; or
- c) run privately and maintained exclusively out of the contributions of the beneficiaries.

The curricula laid down by the Ministry of Education, and legal supervision by the Ministry, are compulsory for all types of school. The schools of highest quality, according to national evaluations, have so far been the private establishments providing general and vocational education since their services are in high demand and are paid for by those sections of the population who can afford them.

The Chilean state has withdrawn to a model of minimum provision, the quality of which can only be guaranteed for certain if the beneficiaries help to fund it, or fund it in total. In practice, leaving qualifications that are formally identical vary greatly, as in Asia, in accordance with the actual quality of individual secondary schools. Employers recruit, in accordance with their economic potential and skills requirements, from the full range of secondary schools of varying quality.

This largely market approach, with basic state provision, has led the Ministry of Education to draw up a special programme for the schools of poorest quality. The worst tenth of the state schools, according to evaluations, are to receive additional state aid for teacher training, supplementary teaching and training materials, etc. Thus, even in Chile, the state is intervening to control purely market solutions (Clement 1998).

The vocational training previously provided by Inacap (*Instituto Nacional de*

Capacitación) – a traditional organisation dependent on the Ministry of Labour – has been completely privatised. This sponsoring body, which continues to exist, must earn its money by offering training in the market place. This includes activities for which the Chilean state invites bids from the education and training market and which are then carried out by the cheapest private body, which may be Inacap. The funding of Inacap from a payroll levy, which used to be more or less forcibly governed by legislation, has been completely abolished. An incentive for employers has remained, however: up to one per cent of the wage and salary bill spent on staff training can be set off as expenses against tax. This one per cent is passed on by employers, in the booming construction industry for example, to bodies providing training for particular industries – so-called *corporaciones*. These are not tied to individual companies and, in return, provide initial and continuing training for member companies in particular sectors.

In Costa Rica, too, traditional training providers dependent on the Ministry of Labour have been heavily criticised. The first changes in these institutions and in their manner of organisation are now being seen: continuing training which responds to needs has been set up for proprietors of small enterprises, who had previously constantly criticised the activities of INA (*Instituto Nacional de Aprendizaje*), which had little to do with practice. Moreover, that body has established a department of dual training. This is intended to expand initial vocational training in accordance with a nationwide model, and in collaboration with employers.

So far, this department has had little power, however, and criticises the unwillingness to cooperate of many employers, who acknowledge the need for vocational training but whose behaviour and commitment appear to be limited to the passive payment to INA of a two per cent payroll levy. The private sector should accept greater responsibility for vocational training, for which there is, as the system is presently configured, insufficient legislation and inadequate institutional arrangements at the level of implementation.

Policy in Costa Rica has, however, now given greater recognition to the role of

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“Policy in Costa Rica has, (...) given greater recognition to the role of education and vocational training in the general development of the country and in the encouragement of domestic and foreign companies.”

“In Colombia, institutional changes and updating of the system can also be observed at SENA (Servicio Nacional de Aprendizaje). (...) SENA must now spend a proportion of the two per cent payroll levy on specific vocational training activities agreed with employers.”

“In Peru, (...) [the] SENATI (Servicio Nacional de Adiestramiento en Trabajo Industrial) has been transformed by decree from a traditional, quasi-governmental institution run by tripartismo into a modern, market-oriented service provider.”

education and vocational training in the general development of the country and in the encouragement of domestic and foreign companies. A commission of enquiry is to examine the provision and quality of implementation of all vocational training provided under the aegis of the Ministries of Education and Labour, and to make recommendations for reform. These will concern both the social actors – primarily the employers – and issues of funding and certification throughout the system (with the emphasis on greater portability by upgrading INA qualifications).

The performance profile of INA is also to be strengthened. Skills that cannot be taught because the physical infrastructure is lacking or the institution does not have the know-how are to be transferred to private training providers. In a manner similar to that of the German employment service, contracts will be issued on the basis of criteria devised by the Institute itself, which will reserve the right at any time to monitor and evaluate the activities carried out on its behalf.

In Colombia, institutional changes and updating of the system can also be observed at SENA (*Servicio Nacional de Aprendizaje*). These derive from criticism by industry of the poor quality of the training provided by the body which they fund. SENA must now spend a proportion of the two per cent payroll levy on specific vocational training activities agreed with employers. These particularly include activities directly carried out outside SENA's own academic training centres by industry or by other training providers (universities, etc.) in response to immediate demand.

SENA has, moreover, set up so-called round tables (*mesas redondas*) with employers' organisations in the various sectors of industry. The purpose of these is to discuss technological changes and their consequences for existing provision of initial and continuing vocational training with the specialist staff concerned in industry. The direct involvement of business personnel is intended to circumvent the political abuse of *tripartismo* by senior government officials and to keep training courses up to date. For the first time, SENA has set up mechanisms for coop-

eration with local employers at the level of implementation. This is still regarded as one of the strengths of the dual system; while that system may not be transferable, it is once again attracting much interest among many Latin American experts (in a form appropriate to each country, and with learning organised in modules).

In Peru, huge strides have been made in updating what used to be a traditional training organisation subject to the Ministry of Labour. The path chosen appears sensible for many countries in Latin America, and responds to:

- a) the structural requirements of vocational training guided by the market, incidentally relieving the empty state coffers by obliging the beneficiaries of vocational training to pay for it through fees and contributions;
- b) the socio-political demands of poorer sections of the population, whose occupational careers at best begin with training as skilled workers. Such qualifications are increasingly being taught in Peru.

SENATI (*Servicio Nacional de Adiestramiento en Trabajo Industrial*) has been transformed by decree from a traditional, quasi-governmental institution run by *tripartismo* into a modern, market-oriented service provider. Freed from Chilean stop-go neo-liberalism, the institution has had enough time to adapt systematically to changed circumstances. The previous cosy funding from the payroll levy has been cut over a period of five years from 1.5% to a guaranteed 0.75%, and at the same time the threshold for contributions has been raised from companies with five to those with 20 employees. SENATI may retain only 15% of all the funds available to it to cover its own staff and administration costs, and the remainder must be spent on the vocational training for which it was set up, including payment of the specialist staff needed. The spread of bureaucracy has thus been checked more or less by fiat.

The organisation may also sell skills training on the market, and this it is doing successfully now that it receives less funding from the payroll levy. The guaranteed 0.75% from employers' wage and salary



bills is spent largely on the costs of 'dual' training: more than 25,000 apprentices are now taking part in such training, most of which is given at the workplace, although it is structured, monitored and certified by SENATI. The principle of cooperative training has thus been incorporated into a manner of operation suited to the country, in which the (academic) sponsoring body predominates (World Bank/ILO 1988).

Summary

The outstanding feature is that the monolithic block of Latin American vocational training organisations has in recent decades been breaking down and undergoing tumultuous change. In all the four countries mentioned, the former enshrinement in legislation of their monopoly of responsibility and substantial funding have not succeeded in ensuring:

- a) either the long-term quality of provision of initial and continuing vocational training; or
- b) keeping the design and content of these up to date.

The complicated manner in which such (sub-)systems have operated in an increasingly complex environment can therefore no longer be reduced in Latin America to so-called 'basic factors': money and legal guarantees are not enough to ensure the ability of vocational training to deliver per se (quality, high enrolment and graduation figures, low subsequent unemployment, etc.). The example of Peru shows that organisations work more efficiently with less money and fewer staff. The debate about funding vocational training in Germany and other European states by means of a levy is heading in almost the opposite direction, however.

In the 1990s, the organisations underwent changes, some of which were common, and some different. These can best be described in terms of decentralisation and privatisation, or genuine involvement by the productive sector, through the gradual erosion of the erstwhile monopoly. The organisations must now hold their own in the complex mesh of interests in Latin

American societies. This process of 'finding themselves' has much to do with the traditional burden of excess objectives that could not be achieved through vocational training: in addition to the tasks for which they were set up, the organisations were supposed to satisfy the socio-political (and educational) needs of a population that was frequently very poor. Vocational training was intended to combat poverty, although training can at best provide only a rudimentary solution (Wallenborn 1998).

At the moment it appears as though the vocational training establishments on the continent are defining their 'core business' by greater reference to the market, and especially to employers. This cooperation calls for staff and organisational development, so that vocational training organisations can become effective and respected partners of local employers. This in turn means mounting appropriate professional initial and continuing training. Insufficient training of vocational training staff remains a crucial stumbling block for the organisations described: inadequate and inefficient systems of teacher training still hinder intended improvements in institutional standards of quality throughout the system.

The discussion of modularisation of vocational training – seen almost as a cure-all – which has arisen in recent years in Latin America will change nothing about this stumbling block (see Reuling 1998 or Cinterfor 1997), since the undoubted advantages of greater flexibility of courses do not affect the problem of quality of vocational provision. There are still some illusions that teaching of good quality can be achieved by means of regulation, while teachers' and trainers' actual skills remain (largely) unchanged.

In future there will therefore be a huge increase in the prime importance of further training for professional and management staff working for training providers in Latin America. The focus of further training will remain on teaching staff (teachers and trainers): only through improved skills are they able to deliver better teaching.

Cooperation between colleges and business will become increasingly important in the further training of these teachers.

“In the 1990s, the organisations underwent changes, some of which were common, and some different. These can best be described in terms of decentralisation and privatisation, or genuine involvement by the productive sector, through the gradual erosion of the erstwhile monopoly.”



This will both provide a flexible response to skills shortages, and tend to break down even further the institutional autonomy of traditional training providers. There is no way of knowing at present, however, whether all traditional Latin American training institutions will be able to survive in a changed economic environment. Strategies for providing initial and further training for their own staff will

need to be accompanied by changes within the institutions, and throughout the system, to meet the training needs of the economy more closely. On this side of the Atlantic there are at present no generalisable cure-all strategies. Instead, we hear of individual 'success stories', which need to be introduced jointly by the social actors into the system in order to produce the best conditions.

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Europe International

Information, comparative studies

Atypische Beschäftigung im internationalen Vergleich: Rezension [A review of atypical employment: an international comparison]

Talos, Emmerich

Wien: Kammer für Arbeiter und Angestellte für Wien, 2000

In: *Wirtschaft & Gesellschaft*, 1 (2000), p. 143-147

ISSN 0378-5130

In a study commissioned by the Austrian Minister for Women, developments and socio-political regulations affecting "atypical employment" were investigated in 15 European and 2 non-European countries (U.S.A and Australia). The review, written by the author of this anthology, is in every respect positive. Besides a wealth of information on labour and social legislation in the individual countries, plus political backgrounds, the anthology offers in the summary overviews and tables that present a good picture of the status and developments of atypical employment in the countries investigated. Among other things they indicate that the developments in the particular forms of atypical employment vary greatly in the individual countries.

Employability ("Beschäftigungsfähigkeit") als Herausforderung für den Arbeitsmarkt: auf dem Weg zur flexiblen Erwerbsgesellschaft: eine Konzept- und Literaturstudie.

[Employability as a challenge for the labour market. Towards a flexible employment society: a study of concepts and research literature]

Blancke, Susanne; Roth, Christian; Schmid, Josef

Akademie für Technikfolgenabschätzung in Baden-Württemberg

Stuttgart: Akademie für Technikfolgenabschätzung in Baden-Württemberg, 2000, 60, 22 p.

(Arbeitsbericht/Akademie für Technikfolgenabschätzung in Baden-Württemberg,

157)

ISBN 3-934629-00-8

The goal of the study is to explore, from an interdisciplinary standpoint, the current state of the debate and research on "employability" and to develop a concept for the German context. The primary argument behind the notion of employability is that strategies to create jobs in Germany must focus on promoting the dynamism and flexibility of labour markets. In order to stimulate these processes, it is necessary to reorganise the institutions that structure employment. Individuals must participate in lifelong learning and must be equipped with strategies for self-management and self-marketing so that they may move freely in flexible labour markets and thus secure their livelihoods. Enterprises must provide employees with comprehensive training and must be willing to and capable of making flexible use of their employees. It is also necessary to increase the flexibility of wages and working hours and to reorganise traditional training strategies.

Erlebnis Erwachsenenbildung: zur Aktualität handlungsorientierter Pädagogik

[The experience of adult training: the relevance of practice-oriented pedagogy]

De Cuvry, Andrea

Neuwied: Luchterhand, 1999, 367 p.

(Grundlagen der Weiterbildung)

ISSN 0937-2172

ISBN 3-472-03980-9

The collection of essays presents an overview of the current state of practice-oriented approaches to adult learning. The authors describe the origins and development of the concept of practice-oriented learning with particular attention to its implementation in the field. Theoretical foundations are explained and practical examples in general and vocational continuing training are presented. The authors also take account of the fact that practice-oriented approaches are being used to a growing extent at the higher

Reading selection

This section has been prepared by

Anne Waniart,

and the Documentation Service with the help of members of the national documentation network

This section lists the most important and recent publications on developments in training and qualifications at an international and European level. Giving preference to comparative works, it also lists national studies carried out as part of international and European programmes, analyses of the impact of Community action on the Member States and national studies seen from an external perspective.



education level. The volume closes with critical reflections on questions of implementing practice-oriented approaches in adult education and takes a look at future developments.

Erziehungstheorie und Bildungsforschung

[Educational theory and training research]

Achtenhagen, Frank

Opladen: Leske und Budrich, 2000, 168 p.
(Lebenslanges Lernen im Beruf: seine Grundlagen im Kindes- und Jugendalter, 5)

ISBN 3-8100-2751-0

The authors present expert opinions which address basic pedagogical issues in lifelong learning. They analyse the debate to date and make recommendations for solving perceived problems with the concept. Contents: Heid: Kinds of arguments used to assert the need for lifelong learning; Beck: Ethical differentiation as the basis, responsibility and motivation of lifelong learning; Bucher: Lifelong learning of religious belief; Reetz/Tramm: Lifelong learning from the perspective of curricular research guided by vocational and economic pedagogy approaches; Baumert: Lifelong learning and international long-term studies of the results of institutionalised training processes; Krumm: The impact of family on attitudes toward lifelong learning; Arnold: Lifelong learning from the perspective of adult training.

Moderne Lernformen und Lerntechniken in der Erwachsenenbildung: Formen selbstgesteuerten Lernens

[Modern forms of learning and learning techniques in adult training: forms of self-directed learning]

Brinkmann, Dieter

Bielefeld: Institut für Freizeitwissenschaft und Kulturarbeit, 2000, 194 p.
(IFKA-Schriftenreihe, 17)

ISBN 3-926499-41-9

Ph.D. thesis, University of Bielefeld, 2000

The study focuses on self-directed learning as a modern "life-form" and learning technique. It is becoming more and more important in the world of work and leisure. Self-directed learning, according to

the author, is a way of adding diversity and enjoyment to the learning process. Learning at work and during leisure time (and for work and leisure) must be promoted in order to offer everyone access to the information society. The author begins by problematising the notion of the information society and systematically explaining theoretical aspects of new and traditional forms of learning. This is followed by a critical evaluation of the various forms of self-directed learning and a description of strategies for promoting self-directed learning.

The public employment service in a changing labour market

Thuy, Phan; Hansen, Ellen; Price, David
International Labour Office - ILO

Geneva: ILO, 2001, 258 p.

ISBN 92-2-111388-4

In an age of unprecedented turbulence in the labour market, the Public Employment Service (PES) plays a crucial role in many countries in helping people to adjust to change. This book is a unique survey of the latest developments in the PES. It looks not only at the main PES functions of job broking, labour market information, administration of labour market adjustment programmes and unemployment benefit; but also at such controversial issues as resources, privatisation, decentralisation, partnerships, the relative role of communication and information technology and staff development in future service delivery and the tensions arising from policing unemployment benefit.

Understanding the digital divide

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development - OECD

Paris: OECD, 2001, 32 p.

As used here, the term "digital divide" refers to the gap between individuals, households, businesses and geographic areas at different socio-economic levels with regard both to their opportunities to access information and communication technologies (ICTs) and to their use of the Internet for a wide variety of activities. The digital divide reflects various differences among and within countries. The ability of individuals and businesses to take advantage of the Internet varies





significantly across the OECD area as well as between OECD and non-member countries. Access to basic telecommunications infrastructures is fundamental to any consideration of the issue, as it precedes and is more widely available than access to and use of the Internet. The so-called "digital divide" raises a number of questions. Where does it occur and why? What are its causes? How is it to be measured? What are the relevant parameters? What is its extent, that is, how wide is the digital divide? Where is it most critical? What are its effects likely to be in the short term? In the longer term? What needs to be done to alleviate it? These questions have only recently been raised, and it is not possible, as yet, to answer all of them with any certainty.

URL: http://www.oecd.org/dsti/sti/prod/Digital_divide.pdf

World employment report 2001: life at work in the information economy

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation - UNESCO
Paris: UNESCO, 2001, 300 p.
ISBN 92-3-103729-3

World Employment Report 2001 examines the employment challenges and opportunities emerging from the rapid growth of information and communications technologies (ICTs) around the world. Recognised as one of the major drivers of economic growth and wealth creation, ICTs are raising productivity, reducing costs and increasing the speed of communications to help shape the new global economy. The effects of ICTs on the emergence of new enterprise and the demand for new skills and knowledge are profound, and this study illustrates how they have changed labour market conditions and industrial relations as well. Up to now, access to information and communications technology remains exclusive; should current trends persist, the new technology could potentially worsen national and global inequalities. The Report addresses these concerns, offers important strategies for development and poverty alleviation and identifies critical policy measures that can be taken to help improve the lives of people and provide decent work all over the world.

URL: <http://www.unesco.org/education/information/wer/index.htm>

European Union: policies, programmes, participants

Social policy agenda: communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the regions.

European Commission
Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2000, 31 p.

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Cat. Nr.: KT-CO-00-391-EN-C

Availability: EUR-OP, 2 rue Mercier,
L-2985 Luxembourg,

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Social policies have a key role in building Europe's economic strength and in developing a unique social model. The Social Policy Agenda's aim is to ensure the positive and dynamic interaction of economic, employment and social policy. Some of the Agenda's targets focus on full employment potential by creating more and better jobs, on modernising and improving social protection, on promoting international co-operation and on making the social dialogue contribute to meeting the various challenges. The Agenda refers to these topics as well as to the challenges and opportunities ahead and to the quality of the social policies. It also contains graphs with past and comparative data and with forecasting data.

The concrete future objectives of education systems

European Commission
Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2000, 25 p.

(Documents COM, (2001) 59 final)

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This report is a response to the invitation of the Education Council launched at the Lisbon European Council Meeting in March 2000 where it was asked to “undertake a general reflection on the concrete future objectives of education systems, focusing on common concerns and priorities while respecting national diversities...” This report covers not only the educational systems as such, but the training systems as well. It starts with a brief analysis of the main elements emerging from the contributions made by Member States in response to the Commission’s questionnaire and of work done at EU-level. It then proposes a number of concrete objectives which could form the bases for a joint work programme to be agreed by the Council; and finally it puts forward suggestions as to how to take forward this work programme in the context of the “open method of coordination” proposed for cooperation in the education field by the European Councils of Lisbon and Feira.

URL: http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/objet_en.pdf

Final report on the implementation of the first phase of the Community action programme Leonardo da Vinci (1995-1999) report from the Commission

European Commission
Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2000, 28 p.

(Documents COM, (2000)863 final)

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The legal base for this report is Article 10 § 4 of the Council Decision of 1994 (94/819/CE of 6 December 1994). In this report the Commission puts forward a political appraisal of the programme and of the actions required to improve its delivery structures around the most salient thematic aspects. The assessments are based on a) the external evaluation report by the consulting firm Deloitte & Touche; b)

the national reports of the Member States and the other countries participating in the programme, and c) the final reports from the social partners at European level.

URL: http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/leonardo/report_en.html

Integrating all young people into society through education and training Vol. 1 - Proceedings of the Conference, Brussels, 7 and 8 May 1998

Vol. 2 - Compendium of the projects

European Commission, Directorate-General for Education and Culture;
Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2000, 178 p.

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URL: <http://www.eur-op.eu.int/>

The Commission organised a large conference on the theme of integration through education and training. The conference was a broad exchange of ideas and experience structured round the issues which form some of the main challenges of the second chance schools. Participation in the conference was however not limited to the European pilot projects - on the contrary: the purpose of the event was to achieve a large-scale mobilisation of confirmed programmes and projects which deal with the integration of disadvantaged young people through education and training. This conference therefore had three objectives: to review in detail the forms and cause of failure at school; to bring together significant examples of education and training measures that have been successful in integrating these young people; to promote transnational exchanges of co-operation projects within a network infrastructure supported by the Commission.

URL: <http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/2cbance/integration2%5Fen.pdf>



20 years of promoting better understanding of education systems

Information Network on Education in Europe - EURYDICE

Brussels: Eurydice, 2001, 102 p.

ISBN 2-87116-309-X

Availability: EURYDICE European Unit,

Rue d'Arlon 15, B-1040 Brussels,

Tel.: (32-2) 2383011,

Fax: (32-2) 2306562,

E-mail: eurydice.uee@euronet.be,

URL: <http://www.eurydice.org/>

One of the strategic mechanisms established by the European Commission and Member States, Eurydice has for 20 years been working to boost co-operation through improved understanding of education systems and policies. Eurydice can today look back on a very worthwhile first 20 years of activity. To mark the event, the Eurydice European Unit has published a short book which gives an account of its current expertise, describes the way the Network has developed and outlines its role in the future.

URL: <http://www.eurydice.org/>

Publication_List/fr/

Liste_pub_Autres_EN.btm#20 ans

Eurydice

Taitoa ja työllisyyttä Euroopasta: Leonardo-ohjelman vaikuttavuutta etsimässä 16.-17.2.2000, Finlandia-talo, Helsinki: seminaariraportti [Skills and employment from Europe: searching for the effectiveness of the Leonardo Programme 16.-17.2.2000,

Finlandia Hall, Helsinki: seminar report]

Nyyssölä, Kari; Vähäkainu, Milla

Helsinki: Opetushallitus, 2000, 107 p.

ISBN 952-13-0903-2

Availability: Opetushallitus / Kirjasto,

PO Box 380, FIN-00531 Helsinki,

Tel.: (358-9) 77477234,

Fax: (358-9) 77477869,

E-mail: kirjasto@oph.fi,

URL: www.oph.fi

A pan-European valorisation project to evaluate the effectiveness of the Leonardo Programme was launched in summer 1999. As part of the project two seminars were organised, one of which was held in Finlandia Hall, Helsinki, on 16-17 February, 2000. The title of the seminar was "Skills and employment from Europe - searching for the effectiveness of the Leonardo Programme". The topics of the seminar were mobility and the internationalisation of vocational education and training, and transparency of education systems. The seminar considered the effects of the Leonardo Programme on the internationalisation of vocational education and training and on the development of students' vocational skills and labour market qualifications. The aim was to present experiences gained from Leonardo projects and to utilise them by making recommendations to decision-makers. This report contains the papers read at the seminar. At the same time the report highlights problems related to internationalisation and proposals for their solution.





From the Member States

AT Bildung als Schlüssel zur Informationsgesellschaft [The key to the information society]

Institut für Bildungsforschung der Wirtschaft - IBW

Wien: Institut für Bildungsforschung der Wirtschaft ibw, 2000, 374 p.

ISBN 3-900671-85-0

The IBW works in the field of vocational training research both in Austria and in European projects. It has carried out approximately 800 projects to date. The function and dynamics it offers in terms of research and service can be gauged by the number of the projects as well as by the diversity of their content. On the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the IBW, 28 contributions by employees and collaborating authors will be published in this anthology. The following fields of topics will be included: The Development and Tasks of the ibw; The Transition from School to Training and Vocation - Support and Findings; Initial Vocational Training Facing New challenges; Colleges and Universities - Diversification of the Selection of Study Programs; Lifelong Learning - Developments and Concepts; Education Perspectives for the Information Society.

B Modalités et conditions d'une alternance intégrée des pratiques scolaires et professionnelles [Conditions and procedures for integrated alternance training incorporating in-school and vocational practice]

Depover, Christian

Liège: Faculté des Sciences de l'Education, 1999

In: Education - Formation, 256, p. 4-13
Availability: Ministère de l'Education, de la Recherche et de la Formation, Direction générale de l'organisation des études et du service de la recherche scientifique, Université de Liège Sart-Tilman, Faculté des Sciences de l'Education, B-4000 Liège, Tel.: (32-04) 3662072

This research study explores the many different aspects to be taken into account

when setting up an alternance training project. The authors successively examine the challenges of alternance training, its procedures, a description of integrated alternance training in terms of curricula, the teaching staff and assessment, the attitude of the trainees and their central position in the project; it concludes with an overall systemic view of alternance training. As described in this article, the quality of an alternance training project is assessed on the basis of the competences the trainee acquires, their integration to and relevance for the labour market.

D Berufliche Bildung in Deutschland und Frankreich: Ergebnisse aus dem ADAPT-Projekt COREFO: wechselseitige Qualifizierung von Berufsbildungsexperten der Arbeitgeberverbände Deutschlands und Frankreichs = Formation professionnelle en Allemagne et en France: résultats du projet COREFO: échange et qualification d'experts en formation professionnelle des associations patronales d'Allemagne et de France [Vocational training in Germany and France: results of the ADAPT Project COREFO: exchange and qualification of vocational training experts from employers' associations in Germany and France]

Fietz, Gabriele , Loebe, Herbert , Severing, Eckart

Bielefeld: Bertelsmann Verlag, 1999, various pagination

Wirtschaft und Weiterbildung 18

ISBN 3-7639-0113-2

With the growing internationalisation of economic relations – accelerated in Europe through the introduction of the EURO – vocational training providers are facing new challenges which compel them to look beyond national frontiers. Up to now transnational cooperation played an extremely insignificant role in the field of vocational training. This is all the more regrettable because international cooperation between training providers could considerably enhance the quality of vo-



cational education and training in Europe and thus improve the competitiveness of European enterprises. This line of thought is the point of departure for the transnational part of the ADAPT project COREFO: the aim of this project was to make the (company) representatives of the employers' associations in Germany and France more aware of the importance of vocational training and continuing training as a prerequisite for the development of innovative concepts for SMEs. This report, written in German and French, summarises the results of the COREFO project and is addressed to persons responsible for continuing training in companies and private training providers working closely with the enterprises. The report is divided into three parts: Part 1: European cooperation in vocational training, Part 2: Cooperation components – results of the COREFO Project, Part 3: Perspectives for European cooperation. The Annex contains a detailed glossary and a summary of project results from the viewpoint of the French partner of CNPF (Conseil National du Patronat Français – National Council of French Employers' Associations, name changed from 10/98 to MEDEF, Mouvement des Entreprises de France – Movement of Enterprises in France). Volume 18 is bilingual (German and French).

Lernen im Wandel - Wandel durch Lernen: "Lernkultur Kompetenzentwicklung": BMBF stellt sich mit umfangreichem Forschungs- und Entwicklungsprogramm vielschichtigen Fragen

[Changes in learning - change through learning: "Skills development as a learning culture": The BMBF examines multifaceted problems with a comprehensive research and development programme]

Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung - BMBF; Arbeitsgemeinschaft Quem

Berlin: Arbeitsgemeinschaft Quem, 2000

In: Quem-Bulletin, 5, p. 1-20

ISSN 1433-2914

The Federal Minister of Education and Research, Edelgard Bulmahn, has approved plans for a new research and development programme dedicated to "Skills Development for a Learning Culture". The

programme, which is conceived as an open development programme, will be financed by the German Federal Government and the European Social Fund and will be carried out from 2001-2007. The objectives of the programme are: the creation of efficient continuous learning structures as an impulse for innovation and competitiveness and as the prerequisite for innovation, stronger individual vocational competence and the development of complex strategies to maintain competences during unemployment. Programme components are: basic research; on-the-job learning; learning in social environments; learning within the continuing training institutions; learning in networks and multimedia. The Working Group on In-Company Continuing Vocational Training Research (AWBF), with its executive office QUEM, has been charged with the management of this complex programme. The Minister has also appointed a board to supervise the programme.

DK **Åbne læringscentre: hvorfor og hvordan** **[Open learning centres: how and why]**

Neil Jacobsen, Andrew

Undervisningsministeriet - UVM,

Uddannelsesstyrelsen

Copenhagen: UVM, 2000, 149 p.

(Uddannelsesstyrelsens temahæfteserie, 35-2000)

ISSN 1399-2279

ISBN 87-603-1860-0

Availability:

Undervisningsministeriets forlag,

Strandgade 100 D,

DK-1401 Copenhagen K,

Tel.: (45-33) 925220,

Fax: (45-33) 925219,

E-mail: uvm@uvm.dk,

URL: <http://www.uvm.dk>

The new pedagogical paradigm needs new frames of reference for learning and teaching. The open learning centre is an experimental approach to the demand for flexibility and a physical as well as aesthetic re-thinking of creative learning environments. The author has visited educational institutions in England and Denmark; through 6 case studies, which include diagrams, ground plans, photos and descriptions of open learning environments, he has created a basis for a discussion on how to re-organise the actual



physical frames at educational institutions. The appendix also includes mission statements, tools for internal evaluation and information strategies for the public. A short summary in English (pages 132-134) and references to home pages will guide your own experimental journey, which might begin at www.uvm.dk or www.delud.dk

E Las cifras de la educación en España: datos estadísticos (Figures on education in Spain: statistical data)

Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte. Dirección General de Programación económica, personal y servicios
Madrid: Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte, 2000, 317 p.
ISBN 84-369-3339-7

A summary of statistical data on the most important aspects of education in Spain in the academic year 1996-1997. The quantitative information in the publication includes statistics on university and non-university education, both general and special, vocational training, special education, adult and distance education, occupational training and labour market training, with disaggregation taking place for all of them at Autonomous Community level. Among the aspects set forth, information is given on geographic, demographic and economic contexts in which education develops, the introduction of the new education system, the education offered by schools; human resources; student participation; academic results; the state of public, private and state-subsidised private schools and the effect of the size of the municipality on the number of students; the different languages in which classes are given; the teaching of foreign languages; expenditure on education; educational grants and aid; foreign students; validation and recognition of foreign qualification and the results of labour market training and a comparison of the state of education in Spain and in other countries.

F Diplôme, compétence, élévation des niveaux de formation (Diplomas, skills, raising the level of training)

Germe, Jean-Francois; Planas, Jordi
Élévation des niveaux de formation, emploi et marché du travail. Toulouse. 9-10 Novembre 2000

Toulouse: LIHRE, 2000, 15 p.

Availability:

LIRHE, Université des Sciences Sociales, Place Anatole France, F-31042 Toulouse Cedex, Tel.: (33-5) 61633863, Fax: (33-5) 61633860, E-mail: lrbe@univ-tlse1.fr, URL: <http://edex.univ-tlse1.fr/>

The LIRHE (Laboratoire interdisciplinaire de recherche sur les ressources humaines et l'emploi – Interdisciplinary laboratory for research on human resources and employment), supported by Cedefop (European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training), organised a seminar as a forum for discussion between European and American researchers working on the links between training and employment in the context of raising training levels. In the last six years this network has developed two international comparative projects dealing with the improvement of training levels and their effects on the labour market. Having reached the last phase of the project on "Educational Expansion and Labour Market", the network would now like to discuss the results of its work and compare them with the findings of other researchers working on the same subject.

URL: <http://edex.univ-tlse1.fr/edex/colloquenovembre.htm>

L'école d'apprentissage Renault (1919-1989)

[The Renault Apprenticeship School (1919-1989)]

Quenson, Emmanuel
Paris: CNRS, 2001, 480 p.
ISBN 2-271-05850-3

The author describes the creation of a school within Renault which aims to consolidate the skills of, and provide further training for, skilled workers whose job it is to transmit guidelines adopted by the management and the engineers to production line workers. The aim is to build a bridge between the mastery of techniques and the mastery of human resources. This approach stresses the participation of French employers in the ini-



tial vocational training of employees. It focuses on the principal actors in initial training - employers, engineers, supervisors, directors of the apprenticeship school, training agents, trade union leaders - whose role, up to now, has been overshadowed by the role of the State.

Pour une économie de l'insertion professionnelle des jeunes
[Towards an economy promoting the job integration of youth]

Giret, Jean-François

Paris: CNRS, 2000, 248 p.

ISBN 2-271-05813-9

Job integration of youth is a particularly sensitive subject in a country like France where the youth unemployment rate is almost double that of adults. Why do the generations with successively better training paradoxically have more and more difficulty in entering the labour market? Why are the access routes to work so very different? The answer to these questions is made even more difficult by the fact that integration in the working world is a complex issue located at the intersection of several disciplines. An explanation highlighting the economic aspects is proposed for these ideological, theoretical and empirical questions.

GR Training and development in Greece 2000

Powell, M., Ashton, D., Jecchinis, Ch., Papavassiliou, M., Sung, J.

University of Leicester, Centre for Labour Market Studies - CLMS

Leicester: CLMS, 2001, 300 p.

ISBN 1-86027-040-9

The report summarises the key findings of the first national training and development survey of establishments in Greece. The research consisted of survey interviews with 298 training managers or the most senior person responsible for training in an establishment.

IRL Employment and human resources development operational programme, 2000-2006

Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment

Dublin: Stationery Office, 2000, 127 p. +

appendices

ISBN 0-7076-9008-0

Availability: Government Publications,

Postal Trade Section,

4-5 Harcourt Road,

IRL-Dublin 2.,

Tel.: (353-1) 6613111,

Fax: (353-1) 4752760

An investment of Euro 14,199 million is proposed for this Operational Programme (OP) in human resources, of which Euro 901.09 million will be provided from EU Structural Funds over the coming 4 years. With the current economic boom in Ireland and the resulting tightening in the labour market, the emphasis in this OP is on pursuing policies that provide an adequate supply of appropriately skilled workers to sustain this growth. To this end, actions to increase the supply of labour whether women returners, older people, people with disabilities or immigrants, are given priority. Proposals on in-company training concentrate on improving the quantity and quality of training and human resources development and providing support for social-partner driven approaches to training. The life-long learning of the individual is also to be supported with flexible delivery of education/training. Improving the quality of teaching at all levels of the education and training system and the ongoing development of a framework of certification and qualifications are also discussed. Hospitality best practice: a benchmarking study

State Tourism Training Agency - CERT

Dublin: CERT, 2001, 37 p.

Availability: CERT, CERT House,

Amiens Street, IRL-Dublin 1,

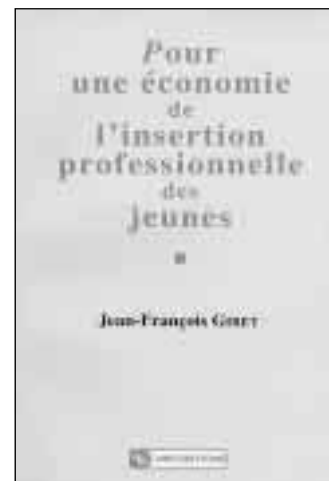
Tel.: (353-1) 8556555,

Fax: (353-1) 8556821,

E-mail: info@cert.ie,

URL: http://www.cert.ie

This study of international best practice in hospitality management represents a first step by CERT- State Tourism Training Agency - to benchmark best practice. It aims to establish how Irish firms can adapt their existing business processes in a practical manner to improve performance in the areas of human resources and operations management. Management practices in successful hotels and restaura-





rants across Europe and the US are examined. The 21 key business processes identified for the purposes of the study are described, among them training and development. The report details a number of case studies to illustrate how Best Practice can be implemented. It identifies some of the measures by which respondents track their performance. The report concludes with recommendations as to how the Irish hospitality sector should begin to implement best practice and the role of CERT in supporting companies.

**SE Kompetensutveckling
i kunskapsföretag:
fallstudier i två IT-företag**
[Competence development in knowledge-based companies: Case studies in two IT-companies]

Lundmark, Christina; Moritz, Helen
Luleå tekniska universitet - LUTH
Luleå: Luleå University of Technology,
2000, 40 p.

(LTU examensarbete, 202(2000))

ISSN 1404-5508

Availability:

*Luleå University of Technology,
Department of Industrial Economics
and Social Sciences,*

SE -971 87 Luleå, Sweden,

Tel.: (46-920) 91000,

Fax: (46-920) 72849,

URL: <http://www.ies.luth.se>

This report deals with competence planning, competence acquisition and internal competence development in knowledge-based companies. The competence planning undertaken by companies is to various extents influenced by the strategies of the company and its environment. Companies can use different types of internal competence development and competence acquiring. Examples of internal competence development are education, work rotation and guidance. Competence acquiring involves recruitment and external consultants. The environment of the case study companies is characterised by rapid technological development and hard competition. This leads to significant resource investments by the case study companies in the area of education and competence development in these companies is strongly connected to the companies' strategies.

**Perspektiv på lärande och förändring
i organisationer**

**[Perspectives for learning and change
in organizations]**

Augustinsson, Sören

Luleå tekniska universitet - LUTH,
Institutionen för Arbetsvetenskap

Luleå: Luleå University of Technology,
2000, 166 p.

(LTU-LIC, 26(2000))

ISSN 1402-1757

Availability:

*Luleå University of Technology,
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Tel.: (46-920)91000,

URL: <http://www.luth.se>

The study was conducted in organisations that have started competence and work-organisational development with the support of the EU-programme Mål 4. The results of the study show that the culture and structure of an organisation present a number of feasible perspectives for and an understanding of the process of learning and change. According to the study, the organisational structure of the nursing home shows the largest opportunity for the development of learning processes. Research shows that meetings, close communication, dialogue and discussion all promote learning. The organisation facing the most obstacles for learning and change is the local shop. The conclusions of the study are that it is not enough to rely on measures for competence development of the individual. In the initial stages, measures should be taken to deal with organisational requirements thus allowing individuals to develop their competences in an environment where their knowledge can be used and where they are given the opportunity to develop further.

**UK Learning at work:
a combination of experience-based learning and theoretical education**

Paulsson, Katarina; Sundin, Lisa

Arbetslivsinstitutet; Kungliga Tekniska
Högskolan - KTH

London: Taylor & Francis, 2000

In: Behaviour and Information Technology,
19(3), p. 181-188

ISSN 0144-929X

Availability:



*Taylor & Francis Ltd,
11 New Fetter Lane,
UK-London EC4P 4EE,
Tel.: (44-171) 5839855,
Fax: (44-171) 8422298,
URL: <http://www.tandf.co.uk>*

This study examines conditions and obstacles in integrating a Web-based course at work in order to enhance employees' level of competence. The employees had a positive attitude towards work despite an increasing workload, which was the greatest barrier toward integrating the web-based course at work. Competence development involved a certain degree of stress, but was outweighed by the fact that it was stimulating and led to work feeling easier.

Young people's perspectives on education, training and employment realizing their potential

Unwin, Lorna; Wellington, Jerry
London: Kogan Page, 2001, 192 p.
(Future of education from 14+ series)
ISBN 0-7494-3122-9

Based on interviews with over 150 young people in education and training, this volume reflects their perspectives on the issues and challenges that education and training have to offer. The book also develops a comprehensive response to policy and makes suggestions for improvements, particularly in the field of vocational education.



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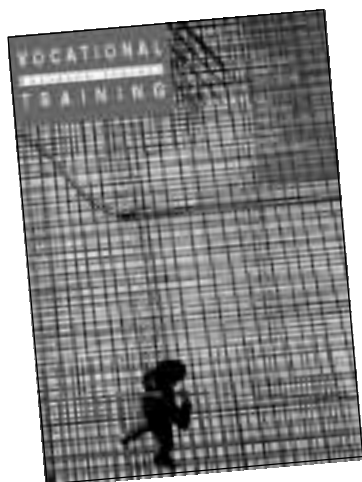
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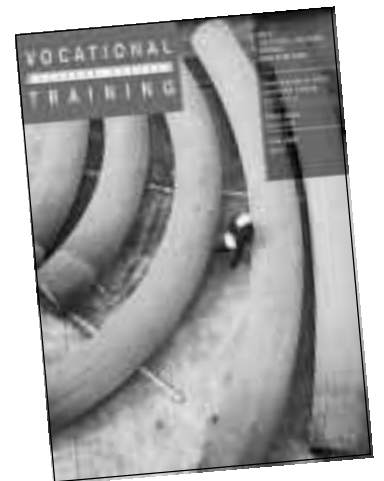
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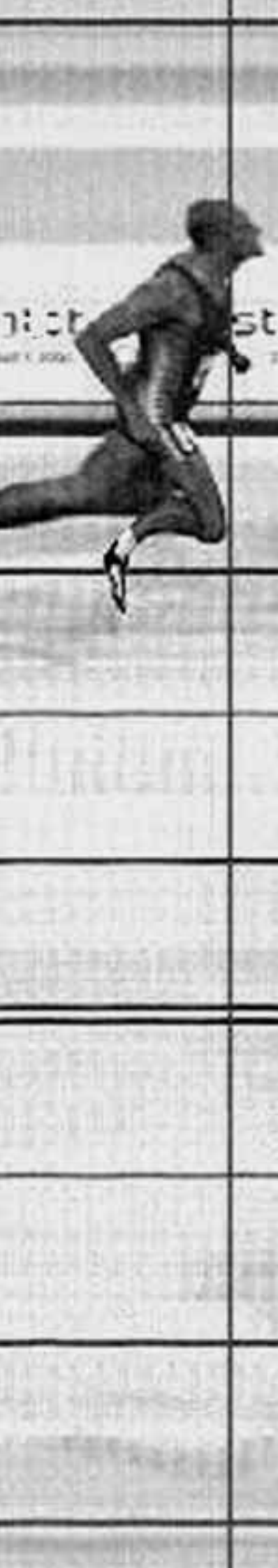
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