

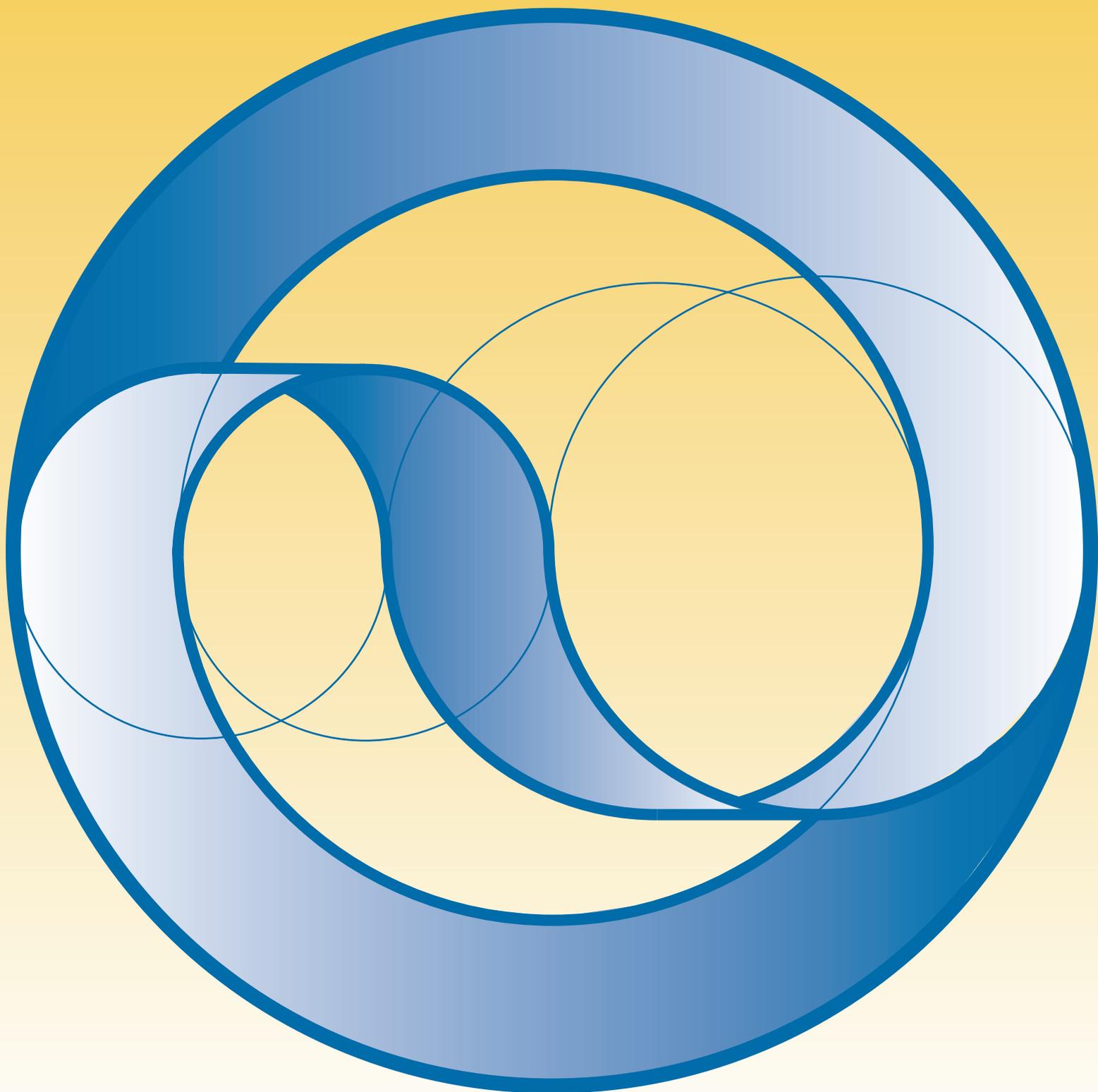
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Cedefop assists the European Commission in encouraging, at Community level, the promotion and development of vocational education and training, through exchanges of information and the comparison of experience on issues of common interest to the Member States.

Cedefop is a link between research, policy and practice by helping policy-makers and practitioners, at all levels in the European Union, to have a clearer understanding of developments in vocational education and training and so help them draw conclusions for future action. It stimulates scientists and researchers to identify trends and future questions.

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# Researching guidance: Cedefop's Agora X on social and vocational guidance



**Eric Fries  
Guggenheim**  
*Cedefop*

## Introduction

The articles presented here under the heading "Researching guidance" were written by two French academics, who took as a starting point their contributions to Cedefop's Agora X conference. This Agora, which took place in Thessaloniki on 19-20 October 2000, examined the issue of social and professional guidance.

Two documents provided the theoretical starting point for this Agora:

□ Volume 29, no. 1 of *L'orientation scolaire et professionnelle* (March 2000), published by INETOP, France's Institute of Work and Vocational Guidance (Institut National d'Etude du Travail et d'Orientation Professionnelle), which was dedicated to guidance counselling;

□ A joint publication by Dublin's European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions and Cedefop on *Lifelong vocational guidance: European case studies* by Sylvie Chiousse and Patrick Werquin, published in Cedefop's Panorama series. (Can be downloaded from the website of the European Training Village).<sup>(1)</sup>

The Agora demonstrated that in a world characterised by constant change in the fields of technology and labour organisation it is an illusion to seek a strict match between training and employment; as a consequence, the approach to guidance and the profession of information and guidance counsellor have completely changed.

The traditional model – to find for each citizen the career best matching his/her capacities and preferences – is gradually giving way to a model of guidance which seeks to help individuals best adapt to the existing structures in the real world. People must now be able to seize any interesting job opportunity in a fluctuating and unforeseeable labour market (Jean-Francois Germe, Director, Centre d'Etudes de l'Emploi).

As demonstrated by a number of speakers (Jean Guichard, director, INETOP; Jacques Limoges, Sherbrooke University, Canada; Finn Thorbjørn Hansen, Danish University of Education), this means that the client seeking advice can involve his/her entire personality into the counselling and guidance process.

In a society affirming the absolute need for lifelong learning, guidance can no longer be limited to a specific point in life, corresponding to the transition from school to work. There are in fact multiple points of transition and individuals must learn to obtain guidance on an ongoing basis. This is changing the nature of guidance: it has become a fully-fledged educational act in which the vocational guidance counsellor has become both a trainer and a tutor. This was demonstrated by a number of case studies presented to the Agora: guidance counselling for unemployed persons at risk of social exclusion (Centro Informazione Disoccupati per persone a rischio di esclusione sociale) in Italy; "job seeker mentor" (Berufsfindungsbegleiter) in Austria; integrated training project for young people with learning difficulties aiming at improving their lifelong vocational guid-

<sup>(1)</sup> [http://www2.trainingvillage.gr/etv/publication/download/panorama/5079\\_en.pdf](http://www2.trainingvillage.gr/etv/publication/download/panorama/5079_en.pdf)



ance in Bremen, Germany; and the integration of teachers in a guidance initiative for initial vocational training at the higher vocational school of Frederiksberg, Denmark.

All participants seemed to be in favour of a holistic approach to guidance, which takes account of both the occupational future and the personal life project of the individual. This is also the direction of the European Commission's efforts to reach a quality standard in the field of guidance and counselling.

Guidance counselling has therefore become an increasingly complex and long-term activity. It now implies the active participation of the client, who must not only be able to evaluate his or her skills, if necessary using existing tools, such as the skills evaluation (bilan de compétences) centres in France, but also (and increasingly) demand from the counsellor analytical and educational skills which are far removed from the traditional role of careers information provider. The information side is in fact losing ground. In view of the development of modern communication and information tools, in

particular the Internet, the information side of the work can be left to the client. This leaves more time and scope for the other tasks of the counsellor: training, tutoring, accompanying the client in his or her search.

A good guidance counsellor therefore requires human rather than just technical skills, such as the ability to ask the right questions at the right time and to propose the best strategy in individual (life project) and collective (career project) terms. This can be termed a Socratic approach, as pointed out by Finn Thorbjørn Hansen of the Danish University of Education.

All contributions to this Agora, as well as the synthesis report prepared by Volker Köditz, are available on the European Training Village:  
<http://www.trainingvillage.gr/etv/agora/themes/agora10.asp>

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# Aims and issues in guidance counselling <sup>(1)</sup>

## Introduction: Background, context and aims of guidance counselling

In industrialised countries, guidance counselling professions came into being at the beginning of the 20th century. At that time guidance took the form of psychological analysis; its purpose was to assist the transition from school to work. The predominant model was that of matching young people individually to a type of occupation, essentially on the basis of their aptitudes. The counsellor was an expert in psychological techniques who sought to convince the client of the soundness of his advice.

Nowadays the practice of guidance counselling is very different and far more varied. In the first place it no longer confines itself to coping with the passage from school to the world of work. Lifelong guidance is the byword. It begins while a young person is still at school and operates in two ways – by assigning pupils to different streams within the school system and through various educational activities designed to prepare pupils for choosing a career and mapping out their life. At the same time, guidance is seen as a collection of ways and means of assisting adults to cope with the various transitions occurring throughout their life.

Secondly, current guidance practice tends to have a broader focus than merely choosing and finding employment and coping with transitions. The emphasis nowadays is on what Donald Super (1980) referred to as the 'life-span, life space approach to career development' and hence on creating a dynamic link between different social roles. Thirdly, counsellors

in general tend to adopt a less directive stance than was formerly the case. They take as their guiding principle that it is the client who has to decide: their objective is to help the client address as thoroughly as possible the task of choosing an occupational route and defining priorities for personal development.

Fourthly, the client is seen as an individual who goes on developing throughout life and is capable of acquiring new competences on the basis of personal experience. We now talk of 'qualifying organisations', 'validating acquired knowledge and skills', and 'skills auditing'. Finally, the demarcation between vocational training and guidance has become blurred. Guidance education in its various forms is accorded increasing space in school curricula in the wealthier countries and provided as often by teachers as by trained counsellors. Some continuing training courses combine the provision of general education or instruction in occupational skills with activities designed to help trainees formulate their personal or career objectives.

This evolution in the practice of guidance counselling would seem to have been triggered by the evolving conditions under which it is given. Understanding the changes, assessing the relevance of each at a given moment and attempting to predict their further development requires that they be placed within wider social change. An analysis of this kind may be performed at three levels, namely the general ideological background that determines how we formulate certain problems, the contributory influence of the economic, technical, social and scientific contexts, and the aims and objectives that implicitly or explicitly underlie counselling practice.



**Jean Guichard**

*Professor at the Institut National d'Etude du Travail et d'Orientation Professionnelle, Conservatoire National des Arts et Métiers*

**Guidance counselling has changed considerably since the early 20th century, due to changes in work organisation and new conceptions of what constitute vocational qualifications. However, counselling practice is also influenced by a number of theoretical models used for research purposes and by its ethical, political and social objectives. Apart from the fact that the social sciences nowadays adopt a different view of the human subject from that generally used as the basis for counselling, the purposes of counselling in practice are less than clear. The author suggests that in the present world context it might be appropriate to review counselling practice and to replace the aim currently central to guidance counselling: rather than assisting each person individually to realise his or her full potential as a separate individual, the aim should be to assist each individual to realise his or her own human potential by helping others to do the same.**

<sup>(1)</sup> This paper includes a number of points discussed in J. Guichard and M. Huteau. *Psychologie de l'Orientation*. Paris: Dunod, 2000.



## 1 The general ideological background

Four factors of an ideological nature help to determine our current concept of how guidance should be conducted in practice. These are: focusing on the client, assuming that the client is responsible for his or her own development, the central role of work in establishing identity and allowing for social integration, and our perception of the future as uncertain and unstable.

### 1.1 Focusing on the client

Édouard Toulouse (1903) and Alfred Binet (1908), the first psychologists to lay the foundations for vocational guidance counselling in France, made no distinction between individual and social problems. Binet for example considered that vocational guidance should contribute towards the construction of a society 'in which each works according to his recognised ability so that no portion of physical effort is lost to society'. For these two authors the creation of a fair and just social order constituted the *raison d'être* for vocational guidance.

Frank Parsons (1909), on the other hand, known as the father of vocational guidance in the United States, saw things somewhat differently. His view was closer to the ideological framework enshrining counselling practice today. For Parsons guidance counselling should centre on the individual client, with society's needs taking second place. Society is seen, to quote the title of the book by Norbert Elias (1987, 1991), as a 'society of individuals'.

### 1.2 Find out what you want to be and develop yourself

Nowadays we tend to look on people more as autonomous individuals responsible for and capable of independence vis-a-vis their specific environment. This leads us to see personal development as a kind of basic moral imperative: 'Develop yourself'.

### 1.3 Achieve self-fulfilment and social integration through work

We also believe that engaging in some kind of work is a particularly effective way

of achieving self-development. 'Development through self-fulfilment in one's work' would appear to be the chief way of viewing existence in the rich countries in the 20th century. Of course this principle is not unanimously accepted. In the first half of the century it referred particularly to men and boys. Today high unemployment in many of the wealthier countries and the emergence of new forms of poverty have led to some people becoming 'excluded' and their employability questioned, casting doubt on the principle of identifying an individual in terms of his or her job.

The critical unemployment situation during the 1970s has been described by a number of authors, including Jeremy Rifkin (1995, 1996), Dominique Méda (1995) and Bernard Perret (1995), as marking the beginning of an era in which the number of jobs steadily declined under the combined influence of technological advance and economic globalisation. As a result, they claimed, many people inevitably found themselves out of a job or forced to work part-time. Work thus forfeited its central role. Dominique Méda (1997) pointed out that work 'has not always been associated with the concept of value creation, transforming one's personality, self-realisation etc.' and that 'it is not the principal way in which people become socially integrated'. What Rifkin terms 'the end of work' would therefore make it 'a disappearing value' (Méda). Viewed in this perspective and over the longer term, individuals always need help – probably today more than ever – but vocational guidance as we know it is losing its meaning.

Despite the changes to which work is subject, however, we can hardly consider it just another form of activity destined to become of minor importance. The findings of Dominique Méda and others notwithstanding, Yves Clot considers that what makes work fundamentally different from other non-work activities is that it is structurally impersonal and to a degree impartial. Work, he suggests, represents a break between an individual's personal 'pre-occupations' and the 'occupations' required of him by society. "These alone enable him to participate in an exchange whose location and function are defined independently of the participating individuals at any given moment"



(Clot, 1999, p.71). In Clot's view, it is precisely because work no longer occupies a person's almost entire life and no longer constitutes an obligatory activity resulting from the circumstances of his birth – as in a rural society, where sons succeed their fathers as a matter of course – that it now holds a more central place in an individual's existence. It has become “the object of a new need for self-realisation which drawing much of its vitality from non-working instances” (Clot, 1999, p.71).

#### 1.4 An unstable future

Our manner of perceiving guidance counselling and what it involves is also determined by our view of likely future developments. We see the future as uncertain and unstable. A number of contemporary authors, such as Riverin-Simard (1996), Boutinet (1998) and Dubar (2000), stress that from now on working patterns will show not so much career development as occupational chaos with much less continuity in the sense, say, of progress to increasingly skilled jobs in a single firm or sector of industry. People are now faced more often with interruptions in their career that are paralleled by events in their personal life: families are becoming less stable; moving to other regions becomes more frequent. Such breaks have been generally designated ‘transitions’. Henceforth, therefore, as Denis Pelletier and Bernadette Dumora (1984, p.28) point out, vocational guidance counselling will necessarily involve teaching clients “strategies for the shorter term” and “how to cope with successive adjustments”.

## 2 The contexts

While ideology influences the way in which guidance counselling is conceived, the social context also plays its part. Three such environments seem to me to play a fundamental role here: on the one hand, the way in which work and training are organised, and on the other, the scientific considerations that influence the way in which they are modelled.

### 2.1 Work organisation, qualification and guidance

In an article published in 1995 that has lost none of its relevance, Alain Touraine

described three forms of work organisation that emerged in the course of the 20th century, to each of which corresponds a particular conception of vocational qualification. Guidance counselling seems to have been strongly influenced by all three of these, and as a consequence can be classified under three main headings – to which we can add a fourth, more recent, type of guidance counselling, linked to growing job insecurity.

#### 2.1.1 *Occupationally focused work organisation and guidance counselling*

At the beginning of the century work organisation was mainly occupationally based.. Production was more in the line of craft trades: a worker needed to have the right knowhow and possessed a fund of knowledge and skills acquired through a generally lengthy and systematic apprenticeship. Skills were specific in that the worker could be identified as a mechanic or a joiner, just as at the professional level a person *is* a lawyer or a doctor. The craft trade was a major constituent of an individual's identity .

Being lengthy, apprenticeship was also expensive. Choosing an occupation was a serious matter to be seriously undertaken. Advice was available from a counsellor trained in psychological techniques. The main consideration was aptitude for the job. The counsellor's task was to foresee as objectively as possible the occupation for which a young person should be trained and in which he would work for the rest of his or her life. The ‘psychological guidance test’ provided the prototype for guidance counselling.

#### 2.1.2 *Fordism and job-directed guidance counselling*

The notion of trade or craft and occupationally focused guidance based on aptitude came under critical scrutiny in many sectors of industry as a result of the innovative work organisation of Taylor and Ford, who drew on Taylor's principles. The result of the new form of work organisation was that many people could no longer claim to have a trade, merely a job. Qualification took on a new meaning, being no longer something possessed by an individual or defined by the skills a person possessed, but related directly to the job (Dubar, 1996, p. 182). Hence-



forth it was the technical specifications of the machines (arduous? complex?) that determined the job qualification.

Under the Fordist form of work organisation 'the hard core of skills acquisition was on-the-job training' (Dubar, 1998, p.166). A worker was no longer able to identify himself solely in terms of craft or trade. At best he was a production hand, a machine operator. If he changed employer his qualifications could be questioned. In this case, according to Dubar, the main identifying factor was the bond between the individual and his fellow-workers, who constituted a real occupational community with its own jargon and own informal standards.

The observations of Paul Willis (1977, 1978), who studied steelworkers in the Midlands, typically illustrate the specific traits of the occupational identity in this particular industry. The workers' identity was based on a marked sense of 'us' and 'them' – those employed on the shopfloor who knew what it was all about and the rest, the 'softies'. Virility was considered of prime importance. The steelworkers were proud to be doing a 'real job' that demanded strength and stamina, unlike the office workers and others doing 'women's work'. This sense of identity was experienced daily when work in the melting shop was organised by the foremen who gave their formal instructions jokingly in the works' own jargon in a manner designed to remind the men of the group's standards and values – what Paul Willis summarised in the term 'shop-floor culture'.

In this type of context guidance counselling lost its occupational focus. Personal aptitude was no longer the central point of interest. What became important was to ascertain whether a young man was likely to fit in well in the working environment, whether he would see himself as part of the team and whether he already shared the values of his fellow workers or could be brought to do so. Although guidance counsellors do not appear to have thought the subject through systematically, the Fordist form of work organisation considerably weakened the link between an individual and his occupation compared with the occupationally focused approach that still un-

derlay the tools (mainly interest questionnaires) used by counsellors – who referred to themselves as 'vocational guidance counsellors – and whose significance, apparently, was only that accepted by the counsellors themselves. The job-focus was indeed based more on considerations of the worker as a social person. The interests questionnaire drawn up by Edward Strong at the end of the 1920s may be regarded as the prototype for this form of approach. As you will know, those completing the questionnaire were asked to state their preferences in various fields of activity or for well-known people. The aim was to ascertain whether an individual had the same tastes as those with whom he would be working.

### **2.1.3 The competence model and counselling for occupational functions**

Over the past 20 or 30 years one of the chief factors influencing industrial production has probably been the progress made in computer technology, which has also had a major impact on work organisation. Touraine notes that automation marked the introduction of a new form of work organisation that he terms 'technical'. Here qualification corresponds to a recognised status in a social production system. This 'technical working system' calls for a number of specific skills on the part of employees differing from those required for trades under the occupationally focused system: they are linked to the interactions that from now on mark the working situation. Work becomes a function performed within a network. In such a context, as Even Laurent and Michel Huteau (1997) and Philippe Zarifian (1988, 2001) point out, certain skills are essential. Among them are the ability to work in a team (demanding sociability and an ability to communicate), initiative (calling for adaptability), responsibility (requiring the capacity to cope with the unexpected and develop new skills) and strict standards as regards the results to be achieved.

This model differs fundamentally from the two previous ones in three ways. First of all the worker is seen as possessing a fund of competences, which the Fordist operator is not. Secondly he or she is regarded as capable of evolving new skills, particularly as the work situation develops. Such terms as 'qualifying organisation' and



'lifelong learning' begin to be used. Then again, unlike the aptitude model, these skills tend to be closely linked to the circumstances in which they are displayed. It is not so much the person performing the tasks who is the central focus here as the interaction in a work context – actions, discussions, roles and so on.

Skills auditing techniques and validation and recognition of knowledge and skills are paradigmatic for counselling under the technical system of work organisation.

#### **2.1.4 Globalisation and 'occupational chaos': counselling as an aid in making transitions**

Recent economic changes such as the advent of new information processing and communications technology, coupled with the progressive globalisation of capital and industry, have resulted in a growing segmentation of the employment market. According to the theory of segmentation, there is not just one labour market but a number of compartmentalised markets (see, for example, Tanguy (ed.), 1986, p. 217-221). The primary segment is that possessing the most interesting and best paid jobs. The second market, which accounts for an increasing number of employees, is for jobs that are poorly paid and often involve deplorable working conditions. On this market workers need very little training. They need to be extremely flexible and they 'belong to groups that are victims of discrimination: women, young people, and foreigners' (Orivel et al., 1995, p.407).

For a growing number of workers the increase in job instability takes the form of repeated transitions which do not generally serve the purpose of career development. For example, a transition such as the switch from being unemployed to taking part in a course for job-seekers offers no prospect of finding a higher-grade job, requires no additional skills and offers no more responsibility. But as Nancy Schlossberg, Elinor B. Waters and Jane Goodman (1995, p.28) stress, a transition can also be seen as an event which brings the individual gains just as often as losses.

The notion of a 'psychosocial transition' was formalised by Colin Murray Parkes in 1971. It was defined as a major change

in the course of a person's life, with lasting effects, which takes place in a relatively short space of time and has a decisive influence on the person's world-view (quoted by Dupuy, 1998, p. 49). For the purposes of lifelong guidance, a psychosocial transition has been defined as any event producing changes in relationships, daily occupations, beliefs and roles (Schlossberg et al., 1995, p. 27).

In such a context guidance counselling has less ambitious objectives than in the case of the competence model. It aims simply to assist clients to cope as well as possible with the various events that affect the course of their life. It involves analysing with them the situations in which they find themselves, the kind of support they might find helpful, their personal resources (such as their psychological traits) and the strategies they might adopt (Schlossberg et al., 1995, p. 49).

#### **2.1.5 Eclectic practice**

The various types of work organisation described emerged successively. Economic globalisation, with its worldwide division of labour and work 'relocations', is a recent phenomenon. This does not, however, mean that all the trades requiring specific aptitudes have disappeared. Similarly, Fordist-type jobs exist alongside functions falling under the competence model heading. At the same time, many people have to face up to repeated transition situations that can be long and painful. Vocational guidance counselling nowadays is thus confronted with a variety of widely differing problems. As a consequence it often appears eclectic, combining tools and methodologies evolved at different stages of its evolution.

### **2.2 Organisation of training and issues in school-based guidance**

Work organisation is not the only contextual factor influencing vocational guidance. The way in which the school system is organised is another, very important one.

It is interesting to compare Germany and France in this connection. The school systems in these two countries are very different. In France there is just one type



of secondary school which also provides technical and vocational training. In Germany, on the other hand, there are three kinds of school, and responsibility for technical and vocational training lies largely with employers. The result is that vocational guidance counselling in France and Germany are radically different.

Under the French system, as Henri Eckert (1993, p.272) points out, 'control over occupational mobility between the generations lies with the schools, to the detriment of the counselling services'. Counsellors are no longer decision-makers but accompanying mentors. The question arises: should a counsellor confine herself to providing information, or should she seek to educate her clients in decision-making strategy – or even become a psychologist concerned with personality development?

In Germany, according to Eckert, vocational guidance 'is situated at the point of transition between general school education and the vocational training provided by firms. Its task is to coordinate supply and demand on the training market'. The counsellor, therefore, exercises a controlling function in terms of young people's social mobility, not merely assisting their process of transition to an apprenticeship but also assessing the rationality of the choices they make.

### **2.3 Scientific models of guidance counselling: the psychology of guidance**

While the problems arising in connection with guidance counselling are basically of a social nature and determined by the conditions and the background against which counselling takes place, they may also be influenced by considerations of social science, especially psychology. The founders of guidance counselling were convinced that growing scientific knowledge would provide the justification for guidance practice. Nowadays we have more reservations on this point, tending to feel that it is only the ends which justify a given practice. Moreover, the multiplicity of competing or complementary models is such that one can hardly talk in terms of a single guidance psychology but of several such psychologies.

#### **2.3.1 Differential psychology and the match between individual and occupation**

For Parsons (1909) the scientific method of guidance counselling is a simple one. It involves using what he terms 'common sense' in order to match the characteristics of an individual with those of a job. We have seen that this way of considering vocational guidance counselling accords with the occupationally focused system of work organisation. The basic postulate is that there are clearly defined occupations with similarly clearly definable requirements that can be matched with the stable features of an individual's personality. The basic question for the scientists is how to determine the nature of the match or matches between an individual and a given occupation.

This question was studied in the framework of a differential psychology that considers the individual as having a stable personality definable in terms of intellectual functioning and general personality traits. In relation to guidance counselling, differential psychology has led to a closer study of aptitudes, values, interests and occupational types. It has been found that the first of these notions – aptitude – accords with the concept of an essential match between individuals and occupations, while models based on values, interests and types tend rather to regard the relationship as one perception.

René Dawis' and Lloyd Lofquist's theory of work adjustment (1984) is probably the prototype for a differential approach in vocational guidance counselling. John Holland's questionnaires (1966, 1973) are the major example of the more specific field of youth counselling.

#### **2.3.2 Developmental, cognitive and social questions of lifelong guidance counselling**

Since the fifties research into guidance psychology has had other concerns, such as how plans for the future and the desire of young people to pursue a given career evolve, and with the development of personality and occupational careers over a lifetime. These questions have been modelled in a variety of ways. One may quote by way of example the model of John Krumboltz (1979), inspired by Albert Bandura (1977), the cognitive chart model



of Linda Gottfredson (1981) and that of Fred Vondracek, Richard Lerner and John Schulenberg (1986) inspired by the ecology of human development of Urie Bronfenbrenner (1979). Some approaches merely offer general frameworks, while others, such as that of Bernadette Dumora (1990, 2000), are based on broad-ranging empirical observation. Donald Super's very general 'life space, life span career development' model is in a way a synthesis of previous analyses.

More recent research has been concerned particularly with describing the process of socialisation and studying personal and occupational transition situations. Here the emphasis is no longer on development but on transition. The pathways of adult life are seen as being far more dependent on context and events than was hitherto imagined. Thus Claude Dubar (1992, 1998) describes the 'biographical transactions' and 'relational transactions' that determine the make-up of a person's identity. Certain studies, such as that of Nancy Schlossberg et al. (1995), deal particularly with the strategies individuals adopt in order to cope with predictable and unforeseen events over the course of their life.

### **2.3.3 Carl Rogers and counselling psychology**

One can draw a demarcation line between studies aiming to determine the factors affecting the formulation of plans for the future and social and occupational integration (what Anthony Watts and John Killeen term 'career theory') and those concerned with the possibilities for effective intervention ('guidance theory'). In the field of practice Carl Rogers (1951) is certainly one of the most influential authors, acknowledged as such in the United Kingdom and implicitly accepted in France. His central idea is that a non-directive interview conducted by a counsellor who adopts a stance of empathy and understanding permits the person being counselled to restructure his personality. A number of interactive counselling methods have since been developed more or less along these lines.

### **2.3.4 Link between psychological research and practical guidance counselling**

While most theoretical guidance models result from addressing societal questions

using one or other of the different psychological approaches (behaviourism, neo-behaviourism, cognitivism, dynamic psychology, psychoanalysis etc.), developments in psychology have in turn certainly played a role in the very conception of guidance counselling. Nonetheless the gap between psychological research and counselling practice has now widened. This is borne out by four phenomena. The first is a certain apathy with regard to theoretical counselling models on the part of many practitioners, in whose opinion theory bears little relation to what actually happens in counselling in practice, particularly during an interview (Fielding, 2000, p.80).

Secondly, one hears criticisms from theoreticians - often severe - of guidance counselling as it is practised. Claude Chabrol (2000, p.174) wonders whether the interview is not a soft technique that encourages counsellors to favour explanations in terms of an individual's character ('that's how he is') rather than in terms of situational, social or other factors. In vocational guidance counselling, notions such as "employability" sometimes give rise to such assessments of "disposition".

A third indication of the current gap between theory and practice in vocational guidance counselling lies in the fact that certain problems encountered by counsellors in the course of their work are not seized upon by psychologists as the subject for major research projects although they would be suitable. Little attention is paid, for example, to the measuring and validation of skills, which is essential for counselling practice ('In what circumstances is a competence transferable or can be made so?'). The theoreticians in the field of social sciences have distanced themselves from the questions raised by practitioners.

But the reverse is also true. Marked differences now exist between the conception of the human subject underlying the tools used by practitioners and those constituting the principal paradigm in social science. The tools used in practice, such as John Holland's 'types', generally view the individual as possessed of a stable personality. Recently psychologists and sociologists have postulated a less stable model than hitherto.



A synthesis of the various contemporary approaches in social science has thus led to the outlining of a model of human subjectivity (Guichard, 2001a) resting on three basic propositions. The first is that this subjectivity can only be analysed taking into account the society in which the individual lives. The second stresses the comparatively malleable nature of this subjectivity, while the third considers a human being as a person under tension between certain personal identifications of himself and the universal (and trinary) 'I' of the person (Jacques, 1979, 1982).

The assertion of the need to take society into account when analysing an individual's subjectivity is based on the finding that a given society will at a given moment determine a certain 'identity offering' which the members of that society use as perceptions of themselves, each in his own way. This identity offering is structured in their minds in the form of mental outlines which one can consider, to use the term proposed by Martin Minsky in 1975, as 'cognitive frameworks' in which individuals perceive themselves and others. Such identity frames constitute a substratum for perceiving the structure of relationships between social categories (groups or communities of any type) as organised in the mind of an individual situated objectively and subjectively in his social cosmos (Pierre F. F. and Loic Wacquant, 1992, p. 73). Each individual, therefore perceives other people or himself in identity forms constructed with reference to certain cognitive frameworks. The identity form (Dubar, 1998) may then be defined as a conscious perception of oneself or another in accordance with the structure of a specific identity framework.

The subjectivity of a human individual is nonetheless comparatively malleable. The findings of research into identity and groups lead us to distinguish, from among the various identity forms, those which are subjective. Just as certain stereotyped dimensions sometimes enable us to situate a person in a specific identity frame, so the 'subjective identity form' seems to be a true construction of self within an identity frame which involves phenomena of 'identification' and 'personalisation' (Mairieu, 1979), of "*primus inter pares*" (Codol, 1975), and of 'subjectivisation'

(Foucault, 1982, 1994-IV) etc. This construction of self is in large measure dependent on the contexts in which an individual interacts, suggesting a vicariousness of subjective identity forms. This would mean that an individual constitutes himself in different identity forms according to the contexts in which he interacts – hence the posited comparative malleability of subjectivity. The stability or malleability of self depends in fact on the degree of complexity of the society in which an individual lives, since the identity offering (and particularly its volume) will vary with the society concerned. The malleability of subjectivity, moreover, will also depend on the extent of integration of the different fields of social relationships in that society. Depending on the society, the different identity frames will be more or less connected or disconnected, so that the degree of malleability will depend on the interactions of the individual offering him the possibility of making more or fewer experiments in self-construction in accordance with the structure of different identity frames.

The fact that subjective identity forms are vicarious does not mean that the sense of constructing an individual identity is lost. Each identity is in fact a different way of being oneself. Taken together they form a unified system constituting the subjectivity of the individual. Even more fundamental, however, is the fact that the latter appears 'in tension' between each of his particular identities and the universal 'I' of the person (Jacques, 1979, 1982), leading him to see himself necessarily and simultaneously as both 'I', 'you' (in the language of the other person to whom he is speaking), and 'he/she' (the person 'you' speak to in 'my' absence), in other words as outside each of his own particular identities. Confronted with a changing environment, the subject is constantly crystallising in identity forms without ever being able to resolve to halt at any one of them because as 'I-you-s/he' he or she can never perfectly coincide with any of the separate selves<sup>(2)</sup>, being apparently driven by a primordial impetus that leads one both to seek to identify oneself in one or other form but always to remain outside of them.

This concept of the subject renders the issues of vocational guidance counselling

<sup>(2)</sup> This boils down to saying that the personalisation and identification processes are interminable.



more complex. The idea of a client whose principal personality characteristics are definable is gradually giving way to that of a 'multivocal' subject (to use Bakhtine's terminology, cf Wertsch, 1990 and Häyrynen, 1995) whose identity is never finally structured. Should the counsellor's objective therefore be to assist her client in becoming stabilised in certain identities – as is postulated, for example, by the model of John Holland? Or should she on the contrary seek to help the client diversify a subjective system of identities, as the political philosophy of Michel Foucault (1988, 1994-IV) would suggest?

### 3 Aims and objectives of guidance counselling in practice

The steadily widening gap, over the last century, between the practice of guidance counselling and psychological research may be due to the failure of science to provide answers to practitioners' chief problems. Academic studies tend to be concerned with throwing light on the process itself, on how things happen. They do not ask the question 'what should be done?'. They ask 'how?' but not 'to what end?'. Theoretical research seeks to know and to describe phenomena as they are. It is not evaluative or practice-oriented: it does not tell us what action or actions should be taken to achieve a given end.

This should not lead us to conclude that the scientific approach holds no interest for practitioners. In fact, it does so in two ways. In the first place, it can contribute to their greater effectiveness by, for instance, helping them to understand the processes involved in their activity. Secondly, it can uncover hitherto unsuspected ethical problems, by asking, for instance, whether the benevolent neutrality that constitutes the fundamental principle of non-directive guidance counselling is not, perhaps, a very subtle form of manipulation.

Nonetheless, only by establishing the ethical, economic and social objectives is it possible to define the practical objectives of vocational guidance counselling. For Binet (1908) these were obvious. In his view, the mission of vocational guidance

counselling was to achieve a harmonious society based on the recognition by each member that he was in the situation appropriate to his abilities. The counsellor's objective was therefore a simple one: to define accurately the aptitudes required for a specific occupation and those possessed by each individual. The aims and practical objectives of counselling were intrinsically linked.

The current situation is different. First of all the objectives of counselling in practice are more diverse than they were at the beginning of the century. Then it would seem that the purpose of vocational guidance counselling is rarely questioned, particularly in ethical and social terms. Then again, the question of the link between aims and objectives would seem to be somewhat complex.

#### 3.1 Objectives, demands and practice

The objectives of vocational guidance today are manifold. Because of their institutional position counsellors find themselves formulating these objectives in response to the more or less explicit expectations of their clients – which again may vary considerably. Sometimes, for example, it may be a case of helping a client to consider what he wishes to become and the subjective identities he wishes to construct for himself. Here the objective is to help him to take a more detached view of the identity forms that are his. At other times the problem is one of taking a decision. Its nature may vary, calling for different techniques. In cognitive terms it may mean assisting the client to a better perception of the problem; whereas in terms of personal development helping someone to decide may mean allowing him to crystallise in certain identity forms.

##### 3.1.1 What is asked of the counsellor

If we juxtapose the observations of Josette Zarka (2000) regarding the interactions of counselling with those of Bernadette Dumora (1990) concerning the thinking underlying young people's choices, we may distinguish four main categories of questions which the young people – or their families – may put to the counsellor. The strategic questions are those of 'school consumers' (Ballion, 1982) focusing on excellence. They may take the form



of 'What is the best strategy for reaching the highest social position I can hope to reach?' Some young people of modest origin whom Bernadette Dumoura refers to as 'pragmatists' transpose the question into a minor key and ask 'What can I do to achieve the modest aim that I have set myself?' What she terms 'ambiguous questions' reflect the fact that young people are in a situation of expectancy or adopting an attitude of resignation. These questions mix questions of scholastic strategy with the pupils' principal concern, namely whether they should or not give up hope of attaining certain academic, occupational or even personal identity forms in which they had put their hopes. For these young people the interaction of counselling is of primary importance. Then again, certain demands are paradoxical. They may be expressed as 'Influence me to make me capable of deciding' or 'Influence me in this direction to make sure of the decision I take'. Such demands emanate from young people who are either engaged in a process of rationalisation that is leading them to abandon their previous hopes, or are holding fast to illusory hopes – though these are at odds with their present situation.

The question asked of guidance counselling sometimes takes a very general form: 'How can I cope with this transition?' Certain questions presuppose that the person asking is conducting a general audit of his or her principal experiences of life and defining plans for his future. One speaks, for instance, of a skills audit which can also mark the beginning of a process aimed at the validation of knowledge and skills acquired by experience, i.e. a procedure terminating in the award of a certificate recognising all the knowledge acquired in the course of various occupational or non-occupational activities.

### ***3.1.2 An example of how to handle a guidance counselling relationship***

In order to meet these various demands counsellors employ a number of different relationship techniques and a variety of tools such as tests or questionnaires. We could mention, for example, the approach proposed by Norman Gysbers, Mary Heppner and Joseph Johnston (1988, 2000) which is made up of four principal stages.

The interview begins by establishing a 'working alliance' between the counsellor and his client. The process has three aspects: an agreement as to the goals to be attained, an agreement as to the most suitable means for doing so and the construction of a link between the counsellor and the client. As Gysbers et al. point out (1998, p. 125), some kind of link between counsellor and client, a relationship of caring and confidence, would seem to be necessary; without such a relationship, the efforts to attain the objectives are jeopardised.

The second stage involves gathering information about the client in different fields using a variety of methods. Among the fields to be explored are the client's interests, the values he holds, his aptitudes and abilities, his view of himself, others and contexts; the fundamental dimensions which seem to structure his conduct; his identity in terms of ethnic origin and gender, the means used to render these roles, frameworks and past, present and future events in his life significant, the potential obstacles and coercive factors, whether personal or contextual, the type of decision to be taken etc. The many techniques that may be used in order to gather this information include: assessing the course of the client's personal life and career (Life Career Assessment) based on the theory of Alfred Adler (1931); Adler distinguishes between three spheres of an individual's relationship with the world that are interlinked – the sphere of work, of social relations and of sex (meaning friendship and love). Other techniques are the career genogram developed in an extension of the work of Monica McGoldrick and Randy Gerson (1985, 1990), occupational categories, personality or ability tests, standard interest or work value inventories, questionnaires such as the Career Transition Inventory of Mary Heppner (1991) aimed at measuring variables linked with internal processes that may prove helps or hindrances in a transition situation.

The third stage involves understanding the information about the client and formulating hypotheses as to his objectives and problems. The counsellor bases himself on theoretical models and personality theories with which he is familiar. He takes into account intercultural ap-



proaches and work on gender identity. This enables him to identify and analyse the themes that run through a client's career and personal life. Gysbers et al. (1988, p.238) define these themes as words people use to express their ideas, values, attitudes and beliefs about themselves (statements of the 'I am....' type), and other people ('X is...') or the world in general ('Life is...'). This definition of life themes constitutes a kind of content analysis dialogue in which the counsellor proposes themes to the client during and after the information-gathering process.

The last stage is designed to help the client construct career objectives and formulate a plan of action and to conclude the counselling relationship. Defining an objective sometimes requires that the consultant search for information. The fundamental requirements for an objective are that it should be precise and observable, include a time-frame for its realisation, be feasible and, possibly also, take written form. Objectives should be susceptible of being included in a specific plan of action leading to their realisation. The counselling relationship concludes by taking stock of the whole process and winding up the relationship.

### 3.1.3 Guidance education

The one-to-one counselling relationship is not, however, the only form of counselling in practice. From the seventies onwards most of the wealthier countries saw the gradual development of career education (Guichard, 2001b; Guichard, Guillon et Lowit, 2001) aimed at helping clients, chiefly young people, gain a better view of the problem and make choices for guidance.

From the practical teaching point of view one can distinguish two main types of process here, namely what Hoyt (1977) referred to as 'infusion' and those incorporated in specific programmes. 'Infusion' means using ordinary teaching to give guidance education. One talks, for example, of infusion when a teacher of languages uses his lesson to work with his pupils on documentary material concerned with the work done by young people in another country where the language being taught is spoken and when he or she leads them to compare this

material with material produced in their own country.

Guidance education programmes can be enshrined in school timetables alongside other subjects. Many such programmes for use in school are based on the traditional model of matching and lead participants to construct portraits of themselves in terms of their interests, values, qualities, school performance etc. The structure of these portraits is obviously dependent on the taxonomies on which a particular method is based. The pupils perform a similar process with occupations and training and thus end up with a list of their characteristics and those of various occupations and training. The programme leads them on to determine how these characteristics can be combined and hence to effect a match. One of the most frequently used taxonomies is that of John Holland.

### 3.2 Aims

If the objectives of practical counselling are generally clear, the same cannot be said of the aims. It would seem as if, since Parsons, a sort of consensus has reigned to the effect that the focus is on the individual and his or her capacity to face transitions. Starting out from the client's request, the counsellor's task is to help him make the most of his advantages while bearing in mind the limitations imposed by the prevailing conditions.

Implicitly the model dominating vocational counselling is to help the individual adjust to the world as it is. This view has sometimes been expressed by ideologues in radical terms. For example, one of the leaders of a French employers' organisation said recently that the purpose of vocational guidance counselling was to lead everyone to accept the results of economic globalisation, and that young people needed to be prepared to live in a world of minimal collective bargaining. The purpose of guidance today would therefore be to "prepare young people to be flexible" and help them accept the structural changes revolutionising the labour market (de Calan, 1997, p.205).

Others, though remaining client-centred, see the aims of vocational guidance counselling from a less economist point of



view. This is the case, for example, of Claude Pair, who in a paper presented in reply to the above assertion stated that “school has to develop and anchor the personality so as to enable every young person to establish his own identity, pursue objectives and be creative. In fact, this is what is called education by choice”. (Pair, 1997, p.251).

It would seem, however, that one could conceive of other aims for vocational guidance counselling. In 1970 a UNESCO committee of experts proposed a definition of vocational guidance that opened the way for less individualistic considerations. This committee stated that guidance counselling consisted in enabling a person to become aware of, and develop, his or her personality traits in order to choose his or her course of study and work in every situation, while being concerned with serving society and extending the scope of his or her responsibilities (Danvers, 1992, p.190).

This definition puts the stress on an individual’s social and moral development (serving society and assuming more responsibility). From this standpoint one might perhaps suggest that with four-fifths of mankind living in growing poverty, vocational guidance counselling might be used to prepare young people to contribute to creating a world in which the gap between the ‘haves’ and ‘have-nots’ is narrower. One might also consider that at a time when questions of identity have become so crucial (as the multiplication of identity-motivated conflicts testifies), it should try to help the person realise the limits of the identity frame that makes up his or her little world.

### 3.3 The link between aims and objectives

The question of how the aims and objectives of guidance counselling tie in with one another also requires investigation, since a single objective may be associated with opposing aims. Thus activities designed to distance subjects from their current identity forms may very well have the aim both of encouraging flexibility in future workers and of leading young people to reconsider their identity stereotypes and realise the dangers they involve. Similarly, in an activity such as a local devel-

opment project, in which adolescents from different environments work together as a team, participants acquire skills they can either use to further their careers in today’s economically competitive world or to involve themselves in developmental work in poorer countries.

### 3.4 Guidance aimed at personal development

One last remark is necessary. Most approaches to choice of occupation and life-long or transition planning have two features. Firstly, they do not concern the person as a whole but concentrate – admittedly to differing degrees – on only one aspect: training, guidance or finding a job. Secondly, they are based on a positive conception of human beings and may be regarded as laicised versions of the idea of man occupied in doing God’s work on earth. Consequently they disregard the often negative factors bound up with certain crystallisations of identity, which human beings have demonstrated throughout the 20th century. While they explain quite well how one becomes an engineer and even the reasons that might lead a person to become one, they say nothing about what that engineer will do. Will he or she help to develop a deprived region or design a device to be used for the destruction of whole sections of the population?

The question underlying counselling practice and research today is how to enable each client to realise his full potential. Moreover, as we have already seen, counselling practice centres around the concept that a person should, with the counsellor’s individualised help, discover the answer to this question for himself. This does not exclude the possibility that a given individual may consider that for him self-realisation requires his involvement in a group of political activists who embrace an ideology of nihilism...

This explains why counselling practitioners and theoreticians nowadays seem to have no alternative but to reflect on the good and the common good. This might lead them to place concern for their own and others’ personal development at the centre of guidance counselling, and to follow the fundamental principle that self-fulfilment as envisaged by counselling



practice cannot be achieved without the development of others. The central question would thus no longer be 'How can one help a person to fulfil himself as a separate individual?' but 'How can one help a person to realise her human potential by assisting others to fulfil their own potential in their own way?'. While both these approaches are directed to the individual, in the first case the aim is fulfilment of a person conceived as a separate individual, whereas in the second the aim is to develop each member of society.

This new focus for guidance counselling needs to be based on values for action that could be accepted as universal, values such as allowing each person to develop her entirely human characteristics in her own way. This search for universally acceptable principles as a foundation for guidance counselling, in practice would certainly cause counsellors to evolve certain individual expectations which, when roughly formulated, cannot be rendered universal. This is the case, for example, of the statement 'I wish to achieve complete self-fulfilment'. Such a wish could in fact imply deciding to destroy everything regarded as an obstacle – including other people.

One need hardly stress that this search for universal principles will not result in proposing some kind of abstract model of humanity. The objective is not to deny

particular identity forms. On the contrary, it is to encourage recognition of the humanity of others regardless of ethnic, cultural, religious, social and sexual differences. This, of course, involves designing guidance methods aimed at avoiding an individual enclosing himself in his identity and rejecting as not human any identity form that does not correspond to his own subjective identities (Guichard, 2001a; Guichard et al., 2001). This type of guidance would aim to provide a client with the opportunity to recreate himself as a person (Jacques, 1982), that is as a ternary product (I - you - s/he) of the relationship of dialogue with others. This is what creates him and leads him, each time it occurs, to distance himself from each of his self-crystallisations.

The proposal that we should ensure a universally acceptable moral basis for guidance counselling would inevitably have its consequences for counsellors in practice. Thus if it is found that some existing forms of work organisation do not lead to personal development but genuine suffering at work (Dejours, 1988; Hirigoyen, 2001), one would have to draw the appropriate lessons for guidance education programmes. One might, for instance, conceive of these programmes as based on a reflection of what human work involves; that their objective is to prepare young people so that they can claim this human element for themselves and for others.

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# Vocational guidance, training and employ- ment

## Training for a specific occupation or to adapt to market changes?

**The author argues that individuals, faced with a labour market that is more active and volatile, and hence more uncertain and complex, are adapting their behaviour accordingly. Put briefly, 'one might describe it as a more businesslike approach to the labour market, in that people begin to adopt a more commercial attitude'. As a result the idea of a medium- to longer-term occupational project that underlies certain approaches in vocational guidance is not always the most appropriate strategy for people to adopt or that best adapted to the present labour market.**

I should like to put forward three ideas.

The first is that one's understanding of the nature of vocational training is necessarily based on a particular model or analysis of the link between training, job and career.

The second is that current trends in the labour market <sup>(1)</sup>, careers and job changes run contrary to certain concepts implicitly or explicitly inherent in vocational training.

The third is that the idea of a medium-to-longer-term occupational project that underlies certain approaches in vocational guidance is not always the most appropriate strategy for people to adopt or that best adapted to the present labour market.

### Is rational vocational guidance the answer?

Vocational guidance, particularly where young people are concerned, seeks to establish a link between the person, an occupation or profession, and a form of training. Different concepts of guidance counselling exist depending on the perception of each of these three elements and how the possible links between them are defined.

Let us take an imaginary concept of vocational guidance counselling which one would like to regard as rational and nor-

mative for guidance counselling in practice. It might be based on the following three elements:

- occupations organised in **trades** that are clearly identifiable and well defined;
- **vocational training** designed to prepare people for these occupations;
- individuals able to **choose** the trade or profession they wish to exercise.

### How are these three elements linked?

Vocational training is a means of gaining access to existing types of occupation. A certificate of training functions as a kind of passport to the occupation concerned. Individuals have to make a rational choice based on their abilities and on which occupations are in need of manpower.

This brings another factor into the process - namely the individual who, in order to perform his or her role correctly, must fulfil certain requirements:

- he must have a **plan or project** for achieving his career, that is to say he must formulate an intention and a schedule for putting the various means, mainly training, into effect to make it reality. The existence of such a plan or project is one of the conditions for ensuring rational vocational guidance, while scheduling the various means establishes a normative relationship between the individual, training and work;

<sup>(1)</sup> This paper is partly based on previously presented material.



❑ the project is necessarily a **long-term** one, since the process of training and finding a job takes time;

❑ the elements that go to make up individual routes possess **continuity** – continuity between the intention formulated and the project, between training and the type of occupation involved and, within a person's working life, between the various jobs held;

❑ **information** is obviously another key factor for rational guidance counselling, since it is the basis for the choice an individual is called upon to make.

This concept of vocational guidance is, of course, unrealistic. As we all know, reality is far more complex and constantly shifting. It also differs from one country to another because the systems of training and employment are different. But it is only partly theoretical. It sometimes has a normative value in the sense that it guides action. Helping individuals to construct a project, improving their knowledge as to what occupations involve and what their own abilities are, are in today's world vital aspects in the provision of vocational guidance.

## The emergence of new occupational routes

I should now like to show how the notions on which we have based our imaginary model of vocational guidance are increasingly diverging from job and labour market trends. The divergence, indeed, is so great that the model risks losing its normative value.

One way of doing this is to analyse each of the elements mentioned above. The notion of 'trade', for instance, would merit in-depth discussion. The emergence of the notion of competence and management of competences has been made the subject of a number of studies that could well lead to a new concept of guidance. However, for this paper I shall confine myself to one aspect of the developing employment scene that is less well known – that of job mobility.

My argument is a simple one, namely that the notions of project, continuity, and long

term do nothing to explain some of the mobility taking place on the market. It might even seem impossible or not very relevant for people to plan long-term occupational projects. I am talking now about the job mobility of adults in France, but some of the points will no doubt also apply to young people starting their first job.

Let us begin with three facts regarding the evolution of job mobility which seem to indicate a new logic underlying occupational routes and new links between them and training.

❑ The external inter-company market for jobs is becoming more active – witness the growing number of people who switch from one firm to another.

❑ Nowadays job changes are accompanied by career advancement less often than in the past, probably because they are less often voluntary.

❑ The link between training and job movements is becoming more tenuous. Training is less frequently followed by promotion within a firm. Employees in the most stable jobs are the group that tend to benefit most from training.

These trends bring with them a number of consequences.

The first is a direct result of the brakes applied to upward mobility.. Nowadays job changes tend to be more horizontal, i.e. at the same officially designated job level. We may thus assume that job mobility nowadays involves a change in type of activity at the same level more often than in the past or that it involves major functional changes in the various jobs an individual does. Drexel (1996) referred to the weakening link between vocational training and promotion and the changes in function that go hand in hand with an improvement in job situation at an unchanged level as 'diagonal mobility'. The growing number of diagonal or horizontal job changes also points to a weakening of the link between specialist initial vocational training and the specialised nature of the job being performed. Thus, job changes now take place less within a single occupational space and more in an occupational market (Paradeise, 1988).



The second consequence concerns individuals' projects in relation to their working career and the training they wish to pursue individually. Realising such projects, looking for another job, aiming for career advancement, or pursuing some form of training within one and the same firm is no longer so easy as it used to be. The fact that the external market has become more active leads people to set themselves occupational and training objectives for the relatively short term because of the market's uncertainty. The growing likelihood of finding oneself out of work is another factor which makes long-term investment in training and long-term aims riskier and more expensive.

The third consequence I wish to mention lies in the nature of individuals' training objectives. Training is regarded as a resource that enables an occupational project to be realised. The shortening time horizon of the project and changes in both function and occupation lead people to look for shorter forms of training to ease these transitions. Intermediate qualifications or supplementary training, which is cheaper than a traditional course leading to a more higher-level qualification, are more useful in enabling people to seize the opportunities the market offers. Studies of employment and recruitment show that the possession of dual competences and of factors other than skill in a specific occupational field are becoming more important, altering the demarcations between different type of qualification (Combes, 1996). This is particularly noticeable in the case of jobs in the tertiary sector, where definitions of occupation are more blurred than in industry.

### **Discontinuity, short-term employment, and individual strategies**

#### **The declining significance of the idea of a 'having a trade' and career discontinuity**

The present job and labour market situation results in a pronounced discontinuity in terms of special skills between a person's current job and his initial training and projected occupation.

A study made using a sample of French adults undergoing vocational training at their own initiative (Germe et al., 1998) showed that over 60% of the population studied had suffered discontinuity between their current job and that originally hoped for on completion of training. The structural impact of this discontinuity on the typology of the population was very marked, its existence or otherwise splitting them into two contrasting groups. The first falls into what we might term the 'trade' category: the individuals concerned direct their actions and formulate their plans in terms of the occupational field to which they belong by virtue of their present job and initial training. The second falls into a category in which belonging to a given occupation is not the standard of reference against which projects are measured. Looking more closely at these two contrasting groups we find that technicians and engineers tend to come into the trade/profession category and are typified by a long career route, often through the internal market of a single firm where scientific and technical competence constitutes the basis for their work. Office and manual workers, on the other hand, tend to fall into the second category. Middle-level managers and professionals in the tertiary sector may be found in either category, which is consistent with the blurred demarcation between the various types of jobs here.

The idea of continuity and of belonging to a trade or profession in fact raises certain problems of a methodological nature, since the nomenclature does not take proper account of the continuity or lack of it. Thus the term 'computer specialist' covers people who in fact do very different jobs and come under different occupational headings. Changes in work organisation, hierarchical delayering, and the growth of the tertiary sector, combined with an out-of-date job nomenclature, render the new forms of job mobility less visible. In particular it is clear that changes in function and hierarchical position and the exercise of dual skills are essential elements in career routes that the existing nomenclature fails properly to identify. Furthermore, changes in the rules governing internal company markets inevitably diminish the appearance of belonging to a trade. One need only think of the reduced weight given by many



firms to a formal link between training and jobs and the preference given to individual assessments, using criteria that are only partly related to possession of necessary technical competence.

Contrary to a number of studies which assume areas of occupation that are relatively homogeneous, clearly defined and closed to outsiders, the proportion of the population whose career does not follow a logical course of progression or mobility within a specific occupational field seems very high. Although the findings of our survey drew no distinction between internal and external labour markets, the high instance of discontinuity shows the effect of a market in which formal rules linking training and jobs are less heeded in either individual behaviour or company organisation.

#### **A short time horizon and new individual strategies**

Faced with a shorter time horizon, people tend to plan for the shorter term.

There is no discernible consistency between individuals' training plans, on the one hand, and the typology of the population we have described in terms of occupational career, on the other. To put it more clearly, no link between career plans and plans for training in terms of duration and acquisition or non-acquisition of a formal qualification seem to exist. Whatever the advice given in vocational counselling, individuals state training intentions which would seem to bear no relation to their plans for a career. One might, for example, expect people thinking of re-training to devise a project for the longer term, so as to give themselves time to acquire a formal qualification; but this is not the case. Moreover, people with no plans for a career are the very ones whose training plans are clearest in terms of the qualification being aimed at. One is thus tempted to think that training plans are ousting career plans.

It would be mistaken to view people's routes and projects as following a logically structured sequence of desired career, route, training plan. This would involve a long-term plan of action on the part of those concerned that would make for unity and system in day-by-day

choices. It would seem, however, that a large proportion of people constantly adopt a short-term view and adjust their training choices as a function of the information they possess about the labour market, their perception of available training, and progress with their career plans. Their action would seem to be directed far more to seizing opportunities than to building and pursuing a project whose purpose, organisation and duration are fixed in advance and enshrined in a plan of action. As a result, people are continually restructuring their route and are constantly on the look-out for forms of training which permit them to keep their career options open, rather than embarking on a rigid course.

#### **Training for the market rather than for a trade or profession**

It would seem that nowadays a great many job changes are not the result of a career analysis embedded in the continuous exercise of a given occupation or trade. Training may, of course, sometimes be seen as an attempt to gain career advancement in a specific field; but only some of the job changes can be explained in these terms.

Straining matters a little, one is tempted to say that a section of the active workforce, which probably includes young people, undertakes training not so much with a view to preparing for a given occupation (because of a need for retraining or a lack of initial vocational training) or to gaining a higher-level job in their existing occupation, but rather in order to anticipate the labour market: they aim to accumulate 'resources' that enhance their chances of promotion and of moving to other jobs, whether in their present firm or with another. When these resources involve training – which is only one element – they may take a variety of forms, ranging from a diploma or other formal qualification to knowledge in disciplines and fields that are variously combinable and to gaining access to relational networks or firms. The individual finalises his or her choice as late as possible so as to leave a maximum of possibilities open on the labour market or within the firm. Choices made by individuals in order to accumulate such resources are not



based on long-term planning but rather on a series of decisions representing short-term adjustments in their occupational and training route. For them it is less a case of training for a specific occupation in which they think they might find a job than of positioning themselves to maximise the chances of benefiting from opportunities as they arise.

Such behaviour clearly constitutes adjustment to a labour market that is more active and volatile and hence also more uncertain and complex: it is the product of greater job flexibility (Trottier, 1997). One might describe it as a more businesslike approach to the labour market in that people begin to adopt a more commercial attitude, gathering information, seeking out opportunities, making flexible choices in line with the market, and adjusting their preferences for the shorter term.

Having begun with an analysis of routes, we thus come back to the subject of the

outlook for skilled trades, contrasting the approach based on a planned requirement for labour possessing rigidly defined skills for specific jobs to a more market-oriented approach (Plassard, 1997) in which specialist training loses its analytical relevance. Looked at from this standpoint, a person's lack of career project – the 'wait and see' approach – can be regarded as an indication of market adjustment. We might also turn our thoughts to the idea of eligibility (Espinasse, 1996). According to Espinasse, the expansion of eligibility zones leads individuals to seek and find, by a process of trial and error, what makes them eligible for a certain kind of job, with specialist training and formal qualifications being only one element among many others, such as experience, an unusual qualification or combination of skills, and so on. Analyses of employment and of job mobility based largely on a study of downgradings and links between specialist training and specialist job would then lose some of their relevance.

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# Human resource development in Europe - at the crossroads



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## Introduction

The term 'human resource development' (HRD) refers to educational, training and development activities related to working life. Although it is often used in a very wide sense to refer to all work related learning activities, more accurately, it relates to development and learning activities for those who are at work and have completed their basic professional or vocational education and training. HRD, however, is not a stand-alone concept, but is derived from theories of 'human resource management' - HRM (see Box 1 for notes on HRD and HRM and the other key terms used in this paper). (Continuing vocational training (CVT) is often used in some contexts as a synonym for HRD.)

Following this introductory section, this paper begins (in section two) by examining the emergence of new workforce management strategies in the context of the recent challenges facing European companies. This section then goes on to trace the origins of the Harvard 'human resources management' model which has had a great influence internationally, (including Europe) in providing a comprehensive framework for understanding and dealing with the human and social processes at play in work organisations (Hollinshead, 1995). The Harvard model represents a movement from a compartmentalised, and in most cases marginal, 'Personnel Management' approach, to a 'human resources management' one that is embedded within a company's overall business strategy.

Section three goes on to show how the 'humanistic-developmental' values inherent in the Harvard HRM model mean that a high priority is assigned to generative and lifelong learning. In fact this approach to learning or competence development is seen as a prerequisite for long-term

business success. This has given rise - for example - to the emergence of the concept of the 'learning organisation' that attempts to embed professional and personal development opportunities within work activities.

Against the background of the international HRD model, section four of the paper focuses specifically on the nature of organisational development and learning policies within companies in a European context. While acknowledging that the terms HRM and HRD have their origins in the USA, there is an indigenous European tradition related to these issues. This is derived from the values and principles underpinning what can loosely be called European industrial/working life and vocational education cultures. Some striking similarities between the European tradition and the international 'humanistic developmental' HRM model are then discussed.

In section five, it is argued that a competing human resource management model based on 'instrumental-utilitarian' thinking is gaining a stronghold in international, including European, circles. The effects of the emergence of this model are briefly examined. This model that is inspired by neo-tayloristic work organisation principles and neo-liberal economics portrays 'human resource development' as a contingent activity shaped mainly by environmental factors.

In the light of the existence of these two competing models, the concluding section six raises questions about the future direction of 'human resource' policies in Europe. It presents a challenge to 'human resource development' professionals to devise new innovative models, which transcend short-term instrumental-utilitarian strategies. Thus, HRD can contribute towards building a sustainable learning economy in Europe based on policies of

**This paper examines the concept and practice of human resource development (HRD) from a European perspective. It locates HRD, which is seen to refer specifically to learning, training and development activities in companies, within the context of underlying 'people management' theories (human resource management - HRM). The paper contrasts two theories of HRD derived from two different ways of conceiving human resource management. The first of these, which is seen to have much in common with classical European industrial and working life values, is the 'humanistic-developmental' tradition. The second, the competing model is characterised by an 'instrumental-utilitarian' way of looking at human resources. The paper concludes that at the present time, HRD policy makers in Europe are caught up in a debate about these two approaches. Europe can be seen searching for human resource management and development policies that promote lifelong learning for everybody at work with the view to building a strong and sustainable economy.**

**Box 1:****Notes on key terms**

The terms elaborated below are interpreted by authors in many different ways. The practice often determines the theory. Below, these terms are described as they are used in this paper.

**Industrial/working life cultural traditions**

This refers to the guiding principles and assumptions according to which a society or a company/institution designs its work organisation and work management systems (Taylorism, for example, forms an industrial/working life cultural tradition).

**Personnel management**

This term which is now giving way more and more to 'human resource management' (HRM) refers to a specialist function or department within companies (or workplaces) dealing with the building of efficient and satisfactory (just) working systems from the human perspective. Initially 'personnel management' had more of a reformist purpose counterbalancing the excesses introduced by mass industrialisation. Beginning with a concern for promoting social welfare and fair employment practices, it took on board 'scientific management' practices and 'human relations' concepts.

Typical activities undertaken are:

Recruitment and selection, training and development, performance appraisal, industrial relations, compensation and benefits and health and safety.

**Human resource management (HRM)**

This represents a transformation of the 'personnel management' function from being an ancillary service to senior management to that of a strategic influencing role under the responsibility of a director who is a co-equal board member. Instead of being a separate and specialist (and often a kind of occasional) function the management of human resources becomes an embedded company strategy and the concern of all line management who must carry out activities formerly passed on to personnel management.

**Human resources development (HRD)**

This can be interpreted in a wide or in a narrow sense. For some commentators HRD is almost synonymous with HRM. More commonly however, HRD refers to learning and competence development actions, although these are integrated with other HRM actions and have an organisational learning and developmental form as much as an individualistic one.

**Continuing vocational training (CVT)**

This is another term used which is closely related to HRD but can have a wide or a narrow meaning. Ant et al. (1996) adopt a non restrictive definition in their review of continuing vocational training in Europe taking it to cover more or less the same ground as HRD. A narrow interpretation of CVT restricts it to training activities at craft or worker level excluding management development and organisational learning actions.

lifelong learning and long-term investment in human resources.

**New ways of organising work**

Over the last fifteen or so years European companies have had to radically revise their attitudes to work organisation - 'human resource management' - in order to respond to the dramatic changes taking place in both the global and European business environments. These challenges have been outlined in countless publications, but just to recall them, four of the major change factors are briefly summarised here.

□ Firstly, world business has witnessed a major decrease in markets for mass produced goods and a significant increase in demand for more customised 'high quality' goods;

□ secondly, the globalisation of world trade has threatened the competitiveness of European industries;

□ thirdly the creation of the Single European Market on the one hand, and the opening up of a market economy in the eastern parts of Europe on the other hand, have forced all European companies to rethink their work organisation strategies;

□ fourthly advances in Information and Communication Technologies have raised questions about investment in and use of these technologies and the work organisation implications in introducing them.

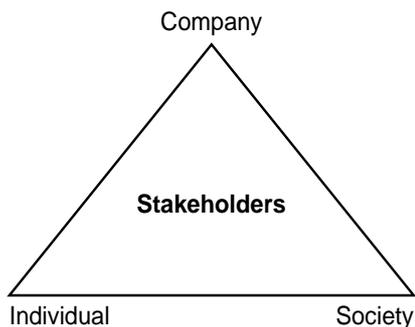
In response to these new challenges companies began to adopt new more 'flexible' (both internal and external) types of work organisation which are reflected in new forms of a workforce management strategies and became known as 'human resource management' strategies (see Sparrow and Hiltrop 1994; Miles and Snow 1984). These theories of 'human resource management' entailed the abandonment of centralised bureaucratic work production strategies - according to which everyone had a clearly designed function, suited to an age of sustained mass production - and the adoption of a new organic workforce model which devolved



wider responsibilities (both vertically and horizontally) to employees, although excluding financial control which tended to continue to be centralised. This entailed putting a heavy emphasis on 'human resource development' practices such as team building, multiskilling, work based learning in order to promote greater degrees of functional flexibility<sup>1</sup> (OECD 1999, p. 183).

### Humanistic-developmental tradition

One of the most influential models of 'human resource management' which has had a major impact on the European and the wider international business and research (Hollinstead 1995) is the 'humanistic-developmental' model devised by Beer et al (1984 and 1985) at the Harvard Business School. The strength of this model is that it attempts to align the goals of a company's effectiveness with those of individual well being and positive benefits for society.



It is in the interconnected triangular dimension of the Harvard model that the notion of stakeholder interests is introduced. All of those with a stake in the company have a role in influencing company policy. This includes employees, trade unions, the community, government, as well as the traditional company controlling groups of shareholders and management.

From an employee work relations perspective the model represents a radical departure from the 'tayloristic' scientific management (instrumental) view based on tight *control* of employees in an atmosphere of mistrust, towards one based on winning their *commitment* in a context of mutuality of purpose. It also lays great emphasis on intensive 'human re-

source development' in generating high levels of employee competence. The other expected outcomes of this 'human resource management' philosophy which are seen as justifying the risk in moving from a 'control' to a 'commitment' based approach are:

- greater loyalty to one's organisation and on the part of individuals a greater sense of self-worth and a sense of belonging;
- cost effectiveness in relation to turnover of staff, low rates of absenteeism as well as societal and individual costs;
- greater congruence between management and employees, between different groups of employees, and between employees and their families and society as a whole (Beer et al. 1984).

### From a 'personnel management' to a 'human resource management' perspective

One of the main implications of adopting this 'human resource management' model is that human resource policies are integrated with all activities of the company. This is illustrated by the fact that the implementation of 'people related' policies is devolved to front line supervisory management levels. Because this entails a shift from a compartmentalised view of the management of 'people related issues', under the responsibility of a specialised 'personnel department', to an integrated notion, the overall change has been described in terms of a movement from a 'personnel management' to a 'human resource management' perspective. The demise of the 'personnel management' approach was due to the fact that as a specialist function it failed to place human resource policies as a strategic issue in the company. In the era of 'human resource management', a very senior management person who is normally a member of the board (a director of human resources) ensures that enlightened 'people policies' are embedded in a systemic manner throughout the organisation.

The overall effect of the adoption of this human resource strategy is that the 'human factor' is assigned a *key influencing role* with regard to the shape of the com-

<sup>(1)</sup> The extent to which, what are termed, flexible work organisation practices have been introduced in firms is discussed in an OECD report (1999). According to that report the position is far from clear as it is difficult to separate empirical changes from 'management fad'. According to Ellström's review of international research in this area, including OECD studies, about 25 to 50 per cent of companies have adopted 'transformed work system' to some extent (Ellström 1999). However, a complication in estimating the degree of implementation of these practices is the lack of a clear definition of what is meant by flexible work organisation approaches. Authors often fail to differentiate between external flexibility such as outsourcing and internal flexibility based on devolved management and autonomous work groups. One of the hypotheses postulated in the OECD report (1999) is that these changes represent a pendulum swing from management philosophies based on 'tight management control' to ones based on 'employee commitment'. This paper argues that these represent two competing HRM philosophies, the one being 'instrumental and utilitarian' and the other 'humanistic and developmental'.



pany's business, organisational and technological parameters. This entails involving all employees in company change and development actions. A prerequisite for this is the continuous building of broad competence levels through formal and non-formal learning initiatives.

This 'human resource management' model, therefore, has given a great impetus to 'human resource development' activities as one of the key objectives to be addressed in an integrated 'human resource management' policy closely linked to the issues of recruitment; career management; organisational development; work design; pay and benefits and employee relations<sup>2</sup> (Sparrow and Hiltrop 1994 and McLagan 1999). Regarding the boundaries between 'human resource management' and 'human resource development' in reality, some authors such as McLagan argue for more integration seeing the distinction between them as too fine (McLagan, *ibid.*).

## HRD and competence development

In line with the theory presented above, 'human resource development' objectives are focused on developing the 'competence' of employees. The notion of 'competence development', within a HRD framework, lays the emphasis on a comprehensive programme for all employees including intermediate and frontline workers as well as management. This is in contrast to a development approach that is biased towards enhancing management's skills.

The term 'competence' refers to a person's ability to carry out a series of actions (or a whole complex action) in an autonomous or independent manner. Competence gives one the ability to be able to perform in a highly proficient manner in a variety of social contexts, generalising know how and transferring it from one context or situation to another, be it related to work or personal life. According to Docherty and Marking (1997); see also Docherty and Dilschmann (1992) 'competence' relates to an individual's ability to execute tasks to meet external demands and is based on the understand-

ing of the individual as an interpreting, acting and problem solving human being. This notion of competence is closely related to the concept of 'core competences' which entail generalist knowledge allied to a capacity for deliberation, judgement and action (Nyhan 1993). Competence gives one the ability to make connections between theoretical knowledge, practical knowledge gained from experience, constantly building up one's 'practical knowledge' to use in the different situations of one's life.

## Learning organisation

This contextual/situated and 'high transfer value' notion of 'competence' has generated theories and promoted 'social innovations' related to the integration of learning and working and individual with organisational learning agendas. Senge (1990, 1997) who is one of the foremost exponents of the concept of a learning organisation as offering possibilities for professional as well as personal growth, asks why is it not possible for people to attain company goals 'in a work environment that is close to the things that workers really value in life' (Senge 1997, p. 144).

For Senge all significant learning for action is social and collective by nature.<sup>3</sup> A prerequisite for learning is the development of 'a sense of connectedness, a sense of working together in a system and an understanding of how each part of the system is affected or being affected by other parts and where the whole is greater than the sum of the parts' (p. 129). Learning is about sharing knowledge and this occurs when people are genuinely interested in helping one another develop new capacities for action.

A learning organisation can be described as 'an institution which involves all its members in increasing organisational and individual competence, through continuously reflecting on how strategic and everyday tasks are handled' (Nyhan 1999). These two dimensions, organisational effectiveness and individual competence are seen as interdependent factors. Organisational effectiveness provides an impetus for individual learning, while the latter in turn contributes to an increase in organisational effectiveness. If this model is implemented in an idealised situation,

<sup>(2)</sup> In a HRM context the term 'employee relations' is preferred to 'industrial relations'.

<sup>(3)</sup> Prahalad and Hamel (1990) use the term 'core competence' in a similar way to Senge although in a different sense to the way it was used earlier, to mean the 'collective competence' or 'collective learning' of an organisation, in particular referring to the ability to co-ordinate and integrate different skills and technologies.



line workers are learning as a result of being assigned challenging tasks and through being assisted to continuously reflect on those tasks, so as to learn from them. The work content therefore becomes the learning content, as work and learning become part of a constant improvement spiral having an impact on the competence level of individual workers, the collective learning of work groups and the total organisation (Nyhan 1999; Stahl et al. 1993).

### Level of implementation

As regards the degree to which these 'human resource development' or competence development measures are being implemented, even though sufficient research has not been carried out, and as already stated in footnote 1, according to Ellström's review of the recent findings, somewhere between 25 to 50 percent of companies have adopted them, at least to some degree (Ellström 1999). In the study of Cressey and Kelleher (1999), undertaken in the auspices of the European Commission's Leonardo da Vinci programme, it was found that there was a great degree of consensus among employer and employee representatives (the 'social partners') in large companies in the car manufacturing, telecommunications and banking sectors in the UK, Germany and Sweden about the need to adopt these new 'human resource development' models. A different rather sceptical view about the impact of this new models, however, is that the interest by the management and academic community in these concepts is perhaps more due to their attractive presentation by management gurus rather than solid research evidence (OECD 1999). Méhaut and Delcourt (1997, p. 30) argue that neither on the European nor global stage do we see convergence towards a uniform model of new forms of work and learning organisations away from the 'old' 'tayloristic' control model. According to Poell (1998, p. 6) instead of understanding the changes in work organisation in terms of the replacement of one dominant 'tayloristic' model by a new dominant one we should pay attention to the diverse ways in which work and learning is organised.

In any assessment of the implementation of these strategies, it must be acknowl-

edged that the adoption of radical transformative learning approaches is a complex process. There is often a big difference between what people say they are doing (or perhaps what they would like to do) and what they are actually doing. First impressions can be deceptive. One has to deeply analyse companies to see the extent of the changes achieved. In one intensive study of eleven European companies, that claimed to have introduced radical learning organisation principles (and at first sight seemed to have done so) it was found that many of the changes had an impact only of introducing new learning methodologies at the frontline (shop floor) level or at a level of management structure without any transformation in a company's values/vision/culture (Docherty and Nyhan 1997; Nyhan 1999; Nyhan 2000b). A genuine transformative level of change, internally driven and built on radical new insights about the contribution which employees can make to the company, was achieved by only five of the eleven companies examined. This entailed radical change at all levels of the organisation in relation to values, structures and work processes. This required the following elements - visionary leadership from the chief executive, the development of a 'shared vision' generated by everyone in the company, risk taking by management and employees, the development of a long term strategic programme and a commitment to follow it through in all its time consuming practical steps. What is more, the study also showed how fragile human resource innovation can be. Opportunities to change can so easily be let pass by, and major gains made, often after the expenditure of enormous effort in terms of time and finances, can be lost overnight (Nyhan 1999, p. 20).

## HRD in Europe

### European industrial/working life cultural traditions

Historically, within Europe, more particularly northern continental and Nordic Europe, one finds many different versions of what can loosely be called a European industrial development/working life model based on common threads running through national and sectoral traditions



## Different 'national corporate cultures'

### Box 2:

#### 'Power oriented' corporate culture'

A leader in this hierarchical but person oriented culture can be seen as a caring 'patron', who knows better than his subordinates what is good for them and in appealing to their deepest feelings, directs them on how things should be done. This form of leadership can be referred to as 'management by subjectives'. The ways of thinking and learning in such cultures tend to be intuitive, holistic, lateral and error correcting, and according to Trompenaar are typical of Spain and to a lesser degree France and Belgium.

#### 'Role oriented' corporate culture'

This is based on a bureaucratic division of labour with the various rules and functions prescribed in advance. When each role is performed in accordance with the overall system then tasks are effectively completed. The approach to thinking and learning in this culture, which according to Trompenaar is typical of Germany and to a lesser extent Denmark and Netherlands is logical, analytical, vertical and rational.

#### 'Project oriented' corporate culture'

This third category differs from the power and role oriented cultures in being egalitarian. Even though it resembles the role-oriented model in being impersonal and task oriented, it differs from it in that the jobs people do are not fixed in advance. The UK (and the US) are seen as having many examples of these kinds of companies where thinking and learning patterns are problem centred, practical and cross-disciplinary.

#### 'Fulfilment oriented' corporate culture'

This is based on the notion that organisations are secondary to the fulfilment of individuals. These kinds of organisations that operate in an environment of intense emotional commitment are, according to Trompenaar, typical of Sweden. The approaches to thinking and learning in these organisations are creative, ad hoc and inspirational (one has to question the rhetoric as opposed to the reality!).

Source: Trompenaar (1993)

ment and trade unions loosely 'share' power (in Germany 'co-determine' policies) with the state playing a major role in areas like initial vocational education and training and providing a safety net for those who lose their jobs. This model has existed for nearly a century in Germany, the Netherlands and France and in many respects, although taking a different form, in the Nordic countries. The 'Anglo-American' model, which mainly applies to the USA (but also to the UK in many respects) gives a greater reign to market capitalism, stressing the state's subordination to the economy and business activities, with a consequent lesser focus on government intervention. Some of the European traditions outlined above have been enshrined in European Union legislation or agreements such as the Social Charter (in 1989) the European Works Council Directive (in 1994) and the European Confidence Pact for Employment (in 1996). Of course this is not to deny the fact that the manner in which these agreements are applied differs in line with national Member State traditions and legislative frameworks. Thus the 'principle of subsidiarity' which was enshrined in the European Union Maastricht Treaty strikes a balance between the 'unifying' policy making role of the EU and the diverse autonomous positions of the Member States.<sup>4</sup>

Within a common European heritage, of course, significant cultural differences exist between the different countries which affect how issues surrounding work and learning are understood and related policies and strategies implemented.

Trompenaar (1993) carried out an extensive worldwide survey of people in the business world to find out the corporate cultural factors influencing how they perceive and design work organisation. He developed a fourfold typology - 'power oriented', 'role oriented', 'project oriented' and 'fulfilment oriented' corporate culture. A resume of how these four types apply in a European context is provided in Box 2.

### Europe and humanistic-developmental HRD

Despite the American origin of the Harvard human resources model de-

and common problems encountered in the different historical paths and choices taken on the road towards industrialisation. European industrial/working life cultural traditions differ from those in the US in that they place much greater emphasis on the role of skilled workers rather than managers (in particular in small and medium sized companies), on the role of social partners in the employment relationship and envisage an intervening role by Government (see Brewster et al. 1993; Guest 1990; Pieper 1990).

Albert in his book 'Capitalism Against Capitalism' (1993) contrasts the European continental economic and industrial model, what he terms the 'Rhine Model' with that of the 'Anglo-American' one. According to the 'Rhine Model', manage-

<sup>(4)</sup> Art. 127 of the EU Treaty is a good example of how this works out in practice regarding the implementation of vocational education and training policies.



scribed earlier, it can be argued that its 'humanistic-developmental' perspective and in particular its effort to align company objectives with those of the needs of the individual and society as a whole, complement mainstream European industrial and working life traditions. The adoption, or at least the application of its underlying principle of embedding 'open' and developmental 'people management' and learning activities in all aspects of a company's activities, by many large European countries in the late 1980s and 1990s had a positive impact in revitalising practices that were often being implemented in a rather regimental (and Tayloristic) fashion. The dynamic and integrated organisational perspective also challenged the rather compartmentalised and rigid thinking of those in charge of vocational education and training institutes. It certainly improved the status of 'personnel' and 'training and development' functions within enterprises and gave rise to new university and business school courses in this area.

Perhaps one of the most noteworthy effects of the 'human resource management' movement was the modernisation of peripheral countries and regions in Europe which did not have a well-developed industrial development tradition. So, for example, for a country like Ireland coming late to industrialisation and cut off from progressive continental European industrial/working life traditions, the investment by American and European multinational companies with sophisticated and enlightened modern management systems, many of them with humanistic-development approaches, had an impact not only on the economic development of the country, but also offered illustrated lessons on how to design organisations that promote human systems for development and learning.

The humanistic-developmental 'human resource management' model also can be seen to share some common underlying principles with European originated innovation movements. The 'sociotechnical' systems thinking tradition is one of them. The original work in this area was undertaken by the Tavistock Institute in the UK in the 1950s and implemented in particular in the Nordic countries (e.g. the Norwegian 'Work Democracy Programme' in

the 1960s) and also in the Netherlands. The work organisation design, put forward by the 'sociotechnical' school, centring on the notion of 'semi-autonomous groups', stressed the benefits to be derived (in relation to efficiency and worker satisfaction perspectives) from workers having control over and shaping their work and technological environment. There is emphasis on introducing the latest technology but designed in a way to fully harness workers' skills and motivation. The benefits to be derived from such a 'sociotechnical' tradition are seen to be superior productivity and work performance as well as a more fulfilling work environment in the form of challenging work that also offers opportunities for learning and development.

The relationship between the 'humanistic' human resource management tradition and the concept of 'social shaping of technology and work', which came from the German tradition is also worth commenting on (see Rauner 1988; Heidegger 1997). According to this concept a high degree of control ('influence' or 'shaping' - in German '*Gestaltung*') by the workforce of the work environment is essential to ensure productivity and create an environment in which people learn continuously. This concept has similarities with 'sociotechnical' thinking but differs from it in that it is derived from the discipline of vocational education and training rather than a top down 'systems design' approach. It also gives an active role to workers in continuously modifying and developing new work processes. Through this, they are also developing 'practical expert knowledge', called 'work process knowledge' which can only be learned in an experiential (bottom-up) fashion. In relation to technology, this means that the know-how and the competence in the workers' heads must be superior to the 'software know how' embedded in the technology. This concept is based on the notion that the cornerstone of effective production systems is the expertise or 'work process knowledge' of the human being and not the technology. According to a related concept of 'anthropocentric technology' (or 'human centred technology') - 'it is only when the technologies allow the development of human capabilities and skills that they become optimally productive' (Wobbe 1990, p. 11).



This emphasis on the centrality of the skilled worker (intermediate level profession or craft/ trade level) who has a high degree of discretion, authority and responsibility can be seen as one of the hallmarks of the more highly developed indigenous human resource policies in Europe. This gives them a clear stakeholder role within the company - reflected in the wages offered. This role is strengthened by an occupational identity through membership of a professional group and in the extended society by what has been termed an 'industrial citizenship'. Referring back to the German context, Hendry (1991) states that it is not a platitude to say that Germany's greatest asset is her people. While the German concept of HRM differs from the US originated humanistic model, both of them concur in recognising the need for a highly motivated, flexible and trained workforce. HRM, therefore, should not be considered a new or alien concept for German organisations.

### **A competing human resource strategy - instrumental-utilitarian approach**

A recent study of 'human resource development' trends within seven European countries (ter Horst et al. 1999) concluded that in the face of globalisation, there appears to be a tendency towards convergence in the human resource policies of Europe, the United States and Japan. According to the study, the common aspects of human resource policies between large companies in the three most powerful global trading blocks are seen to be more significant than the differences. This conclusion is drawn on the basis that the globalisation of business is forcing all companies, who wish to compete in world markets, to adopt human resource policies focused on meeting companies' immediate business performance objectives. This emphasis on more or less short term performance objectives gives rise to a contingent and situational view of human resources along the lines of Trompenaar's 'project based' corporate business culture outlined above.

In line with this, many companies today see themselves more like loose 'market-led networks' rather than organisations. These networks are constantly redefining their structures offering project based work opportunities for people in a dynamic market environment. We live in the age of the contingent worker in which jobs are being replaced by 'projects'. In the United Kingdom, Brown and Keep (1999) make the point that 'taylorism' and 'neo-taylorism' still offer a powerful model of competitive advantage, in particular within the service sector. In a large study of British manufacturing companies, Acroyd and Proctor (1998, p. 171, cit. in Brown and Keep 1999) conclude that profitability is not secured through 'the acquisition of a highly trained 'core' labour force but by a combination of relatively unskilled labour and a willingness to utilise external sources of production'.

In France, on the same day that the Michelin tyre manufacturing company announced a net profit of EUR 292 million for the first half of 1999, up 17 percent from a year ago, the company also announced that it would cut its workforce in Europe by 7,500 over the next three years. This news received a euphoric reception in the Paris Bourse. The new finance director justified the cost cutting exercise by stating that: 'Our principal rivals have clearly announced firm intentions to target Europe. We want to react before anything happens' (International Herald Tribune, September 11-12, 1999, p. 11). This newspaper report went on to note that while 'the family controlled company has traditionally been considered as paternalistic towards employees and unresponsive to shareholders, three months after taking over as president, however, Eduouard Michelin, 36, appears eager to break away from the old school management style of his father, François, and introduce business practices he learned in the United States.'

This is an example of growth in 'shareholder power' in European companies, which according to an article in *The Economist* (2000), promises to remake European capitalism. German critics of the Vodafone hostile take over of Mannesmann in early 2000 see this as the first severe blow to the country's well found Rhineland capitalism model built on con-



sensus and close ties between bankers, business, employers, trade unions and the government. This article goes on to state that behind this trend towards shareholder power is a new generation of managers who believe that 'firms belong to shareholders, not bosses or 'society''. Germany is singled out here because it is a stronghold of the classical European social market economy, but taking Europe as a whole there has been a merger boom in response to shareholder pressures in recent years. The values of mergers and acquisitions in Europe for 1999 was 1,200 billion dollars, an increase of 50 percent over 1998 and 700 per cent over 1994 (source cited in Economist, 2000 - Thompson, Financial Securities Data).

In line with the above trend, 'human resource management' policies are driven principally by the situational context in the external market environment. This entails *adapting* human resource policies to fit in with the corporate business strategy. Companies 'upskill' or 'downskill' as the market demands. Brought to its logical conclusion, human resources are a contingent, instrumental factor with no inherent value in their own right.<sup>5</sup> Accordingly, 'human resource development' as a distinct activity may or may not be a part of the 'human resource management' policy, but based on the principle of 'external flexibility', human resource stocks can be renewed more effectively through a process of short term 'project based' recruitment, outsourcing products and services, downsizing staff etc. The concept of 'business process engineering' (see Hammer and Champy 1993) entailing an overnight reshaping of one's organisation, and indeed the whole supply and sales chains with an emphasis on cost cutting and downsizing the number of employees, offers a way of implementing this form of 'human resource management' which can be called an 'instrumental-utilitarian' approach.

This is referred to as the 'hard' model of human resources derived from Tayloristic and neo-Tayloristic/neoliberal thinking. It is contrasted with the 'soft' 'humanistic-developmental' model that attempts to match company needs with individual career development and wider societal effects. The 'hard model' is based on the 'external flexibility' (or 'numerical flexibil-

ity') of the outside labour market (the classical free market 'hire and fire' approach) as distinct from the 'internal flexibility' (or 'functional flexibility') of the workforce within the company, which is cultivated through continuously developing people's competence and capacity for change. The difference between these two strategies is that one entails a 'redundancy of parts (people)' approach in which people are constantly replaced in accordance with the tasks that need to be undertaken, while the other implies a 'redundancy of function' approach (Morgan 1986, pp. 98-100) according to which, even though jobs may change, the company sees it to be in its long term interests to retain people, within the firm, sufficiently well skilled (or being retrained) to take over new tasks. The dominance of neoliberal policies across the world is strengthening the position of those putting forward this 'redundancy of parts' view and is strongly challenging the 'humanistic-developmental' model of human resources.

While in an earlier book Handy (1989) portrayed the arrival of a flexible labour market with its flexible companies (or as he also called them 'shamrock companies') as offering people (with their portfolio of skills) liberation from rigid employment patterns and providing them with opportunities for choice and personal fulfilment, he changed his mind later on, saying that although this situation may be in the interests of the elite highly skilled professionals - the 'symbolic analysts' who comprise a small percentage of the workforce - it was not really enhancing the quality of working life for the average person (Handy 1994).

According to Sennett: 'in attacking rigid bureaucracy and emphasising risk, it is claimed, flexibility gives people more freedom to shape their lives. In fact the new order substitutes new controls rather than simply abolishing the rules of the past - but these new controls are also hard to understand' and represent 'an illegible regime of power' (Sennett 1998, p. 10). In addressing the question - 'The HRM Organisation - Rhetoric or Reality?' Sisson (1994, p. 15) contrasts the 'rhetoric' of certain HRM slogans with their 'reality' counterpoints - '*flexibility*' often means that '*management can do what it wants*'; '*lean production*' can in fact be '*mean*

(<sup>5</sup>) A 'Human Resource Director' of a major international firm, shedding much of its workforce in a restructuring exercise, facetiously referred to his job title as 'Human Remains Director'!



*production*' and *'team working*' can mean *'reducing the individual's discretion*'.

Adler and Cole (1993) attempt to resolve the polarisation of the 'instrumental' with the 'humanistic' type of work organisation<sup>6</sup>. The result is what they term 'democratic taylorism'. This is an attempt to implement in an integrated and pragmatic way some of the principles underlying the notion of semi-autonomous work groups with a 'humanised' version of tayloristic or neo-tayloristic principles. Accordingly, workers have a certain degree of discretion about how they organise their work which is different from the classical tayloristic (scientifically derived) 'one-best-way' approach. For this reason Adler and Cole have adopted the term 'democratic taylorism' to describe this compromise version of 'taylorism'. 'Democratic taylorism' seeks to integrate the characteristics of efficient bureaucracy along neo-tayloristic lines with a genuine humanising environment (characterised by good working conditions and training opportunities). They see this as an 'enabling' formal system rather than a 'coercive' one. They claim that it is romantic nonsense to talk about the notion of a workplace characterised by autonomous workgroups and see the 'humanised lean production' plant of NUMMI - a joint venture between Toyota and General motors in the US - as offering a model that can be implemented in practice. The NUMMI plant, according to Adler and Cole, represents a good balance between the exigencies of efficiency and satisfying work, making what they term a 'humanised' work environment. This environment has a good layout, is ergonomically well designed and has good worker support facilities. It combines features of 'lean production' systems with classical Fordist ones, with workers having responsibility for quality assurance and routine maintenance (see Cressey and Kelleher 1999; Ellström 1999).

## Future direction for HRD in Europe

This concluding section raises question about the future shape of 'human resource development' policies in a European context. In discussing the challenge of

globalisation facing Europe, Lundvall and Borrás (1997), in their report 'The Globalising Learning Economy: Implications for Innovation Policy'<sup>7</sup>, argue for the introduction of wide transformative social innovations, laying an emphasis on building societal frameworks focusing on new forms of interorganisational cooperation and alliances between enterprises and knowledge producers. They talk of the need to build 'learning economies' which enhance the lifelong learning capability of individuals, firms regions and countries. What is more, Lundvall developed this notion further at the European Socio-Economic Research Conference, in 1999<sup>8</sup>, when he spoke about creating a 'socially sustainable learning economy'. The idea of a 'socially sustainable learning economy' draws attention to the fact that economic policies cannot be divorced from social ones. In fact, social values such as trust and co-operation (which have been termed 'social capital') and social policies supporting social justice and providing lifelong learning opportunities for all is seen as a prerequisite for civilised economic development. The approach of Lundvall and Borrás appears to be in continuity with the wider implications of an earlier 'socio-technical systems' theory, which addressed the issue of building strong institutions to deal with turbulent social environments. This means according to Emery and Trist (1965) that interconnected organisations must contribute to the creation of shared value systems that have meaning for everybody involved and can guide their actions.

For Lundvall and Borrás the neo-liberal solution and the neo-protectionist solution must give way to the 'new new deal' which focuses in particular on the learning capability of the weak learners, people and regions (Lundvall and Borrás 1997, p. 38). In this regard the regional territorial dimension become important because 'territory and proximity play a central role in the genesis of tacit knowledge and the capacity to exploit it. The region is increasingly the level at which innovation is produced through regional networks of innovators, local clusters and the cross-fertilising effects of research institutes.' (ibid. p.39) The concept of the 'learning region' is put forward as a model for mobilising all of the actors in a region to build inclusive innovation policies ad-

<sup>(6)</sup> This a kind of 'third way' work-organisation version of Giddens' political and societal 'third way' concept that attempts to go beyond the two dominant political philosophies – social democracy (which is rooted in Keynesian demand-management, interventionist government, the welfare state and egalitarianism) and neo-liberalism/ market fundamentalism (Giddens 1998).

<sup>(7)</sup> In this publication, which is an analysis and synthesis of the findings of seven major European socio-economic research projects, covering many disciplines, supported by the European Commission's Fourth Framework Targeted Socio-Economic Programme, Lundvall and Borrás have attempted to provide policy makers with an overview of the implications of these studies for innovation policies and identify the direction of further research.

<sup>(8)</sup> This conference, organised by the European Commission, took place in Brussels on April 28-30, 1999.



dressing integrated economic and social development goals (see Nyhan et al. 2000a).

The central message of Lundvall and Borrás is very relevant to the debate about the future direction of HRD policies within industries for the reason that companies cannot survive without learning from and contributing to their environment. However, to do so, innovation at the level of the company is called for. Coriat (1995) refers to organisational innovation as being the missing link in European competitiveness. He calls for new organisational models to be developed in a research process which is concurrent with experimentation by enterprises. This means research imbedded in practice that will provide practical knowledge for a new generation of managers and professionals within firms.

Returning to the question of 'humanistic' versus 'instrumental' models, the need to have a more business-led focus of HRD was put forward by a European keynote speaker, Harrison (1999) at the Academy of Human Resources Development Conference at Washington in 1999. To the contrary, a leading American keynote speaker at the same event, McLagan (1999) criticised the 'mechanistic, more authoritarian worldview' in which people are seen as 'resources in the sense of being optimised and even exploited'. She pointed out the 'dichotomy between this utilitarian view which is based on behaviourism with the generative view which is based on humanistic philosophy'. She

went on to ask the question: should the HRD specialist become a performance engineer and systems consultant or focus on unleashing the capacity of people so that they can work for themselves (McLagan 1999, p. 17).

In responding to the above question, it would appear to be an abdication of the role of the 'human resource development' professionals were they to adjust themselves or merely submit to the dictates of those espousing the utilitarian view of human resources, which is derived from perspectives and values outside of the 'human resource development' one. Having overcome most of the inefficiencies and lack of competitiveness which became apparent in European companies in the 1990s and 1980s, particularly in the face of superior Japanese innovativeness and productivity, surely the challenge now is to devise innovative solutions which look beyond the present situation and can contribute to building a 'socially sustainable learning economy'.

Perhaps the reflection of the 'business guru' Handy (1994, p. 1) should be kept in mind by the HRD research and practitioner community in building a future model: 'In the pursuit of these goals (*economic growth and efficiency*) we can be tempted to forget that is we, individual men and women, who should be the measure of all things, not made to measure for something else. It is easy to lose oneself in efficiency, to treat that efficiency as an end in itself and not as a means to other ends'.

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# Computer-supported collaborative learning: an inducement to deep learning?

## Introduction

Vocational education should prepare students to function in a rapidly changing knowledge economy. This requires competences such as the ability to perform specific tasks in complex contexts, to be able to resolve problems and to continue to develop learning capacity (Mulder, 2000). The knowledge of facts and concepts is essential for this purpose, but is not in itself sufficient. Students must, after all, be able to apply the learned knowledge, rules and facts. This is why the nature of the learning process is of great importance, since what students learn depends on the learning activities carried out during learning (Shuell, 1988).

Collaborative learning is a teaching method which, if applied properly, encourages students to be actively involved with the subject matter. If so, there is a greater likelihood that they will later be able to apply this knowledge effectively. In the case of collaborative learning, a particular problem for which there is no obvious solution has to be solved in a group. Students must consult together and weigh up different factors. The ultimate goal is to enable them to arrive at a solution that is supported by the entire group.

Computer supported collaborative learning (CSCL) is a variant of collaborative learning that is presently generating much interest. As the name suggests, CSCL involves collaborative learning supported by a computer network. Students can communicate and consult with one another

and can exchange information by means of written messages (notes) on a network.

Much research has already been done into CSCL, in particular its effects on the learning result (Lethinen, Hakkarainen, Lipponen, Rahikainen and Muukkonen, 2001). However, it is still unclear what learning activities are performed by students with the assistance of a computer network during a protracted process of cooperation. These learning activities are, nonetheless, certainly important since they have implications for the final learning results. Recent research attempts to analyse the learning and social processes of computer supported collaborative learning (Verburgh & Veldhuis-Diermanse, 2001; Veerman, 2000).

This paper concentrates on the learning process and presents a study of the extent of deep learning by students. For this purpose, the content of the network communication and how the students deal with the subject matter have been analysed.

The rest of this paper will examine first of all the theoretical concept of the learning and the scope for collaborative learning. It then goes on to explain the research format and method. The method distinguishes between three types of learning activities: cognitive, metacognitive and affective. The results are discussed by reference to this sub-classification. The section on conclusions examines the extent to which the results bear out the assumptions and expresses a view on the usability of CSCL in higher education.



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**The research results presented here show the resistance of students to deep learning. Despite the undoubted potential of computer-aided collaborative learning to induce students to engage in critical and interactive work among themselves and with their environment, student too often manage to find loopholes and remain at the level of superficial learning. The article concludes that the teacher is of crucial importance in stimulating the learning activities of students, in particular by his or her capacity to ask stimulating questions to students or confront them with their contradictions.**



## Theoretical framework

Marton and Säljö (1976) distinguished between two forms of learning: superficial learning and deep learning. They also showed that there is a relationship between how students learn and the learning results they achieve. Students who engage in superficial learning try to complete their task as quickly as possible without delving deeply into the subject matter. They accept without critical evaluation the facts presented to them, memorise instead of acquiring insights, and do not try to relate the subject matter to their own previous knowledge. Students who use an in-depth approach attempt to gain a thorough understanding of the subject matter. In deep learning the students critically examine the content of the subject matter, attempt to relate it to their own previous knowledge and to establish links between the various elements. A very definite aim of vocational training courses is that students should endeavour to acquire an in-depth comprehension since the knowledge and skills they acquire are for the most part intended to be applied with proper insight in the real situations they encounter in their working life.

In practice, it is found that students construct their own knowledge into an entity that is meaningful to them (Scardamalia & Bereiter, 1996). The result of deep learning is that students are able to use the knowledge they have acquired in concrete situations. Students who have acquired a superficial knowledge of a subject are less well able to do this since the links between what they have learned and the situation are not clear.

Although deep learning is the aim in higher education (Gokhale, 1999), many students do not adopt an in-depth approach. This is due not only to the personal inclination of the students but also to the learning environment (Biggs, 1999) where superficial learning is often not discouraged or punished. If superficial learning fails to produce success, however, students will be inclined to switch to deep learning. This is in keeping with the pragmatic theory of human thinking and action: all cognitive activities entail certain costs, and a person assesses the efforts needed to achieve a given goal in

the light of the costs that must be incurred for this purpose (Perkins, 1993). Deep learning requires a greater cognitive effort than superficial learning and if this effort is not required in order to achieve good results, students will not make it.

In our view, a properly organised CSCL learning environment is a learning situation which encourages deep learning. First of all, because it promotes interaction between students, which is regarded as a critical dimension in learning since during such interaction students are challenged to propound their ideas, which are then critically assessed by the members of the group (Lowyck, Elen, Proost and Buena, 1995). Moreover, students engaged in collaborative learning are in general (i.e. with or without computer support) obliged to convey their ideas clearly to the others. Research has shown that formulating and explaining one's own ideas in words has a positive influence on the learning process (Palincsar and Brown, 1984). This is because it is then necessary to recast one's own knowledge in order to make it understandable to others, and implicit assumptions and methods of argumentation must be rendered explicit. This tends to reveal more easily any misconceptions and lack of clarity in one's own thinking. In addition, a person's cognitive faculties are limited. Complex hypotheses can better be examined by a group of people, since they can together take a broader view of the problem than each person individually. Often the quality of the solution is then also better.

In addition to the advantages of collaborative learning in general, computer supported collaborative learning has four other characteristics that are beneficial to the learning process. First of all, to communicate the student has to write down his thoughts and writing proves to be an effective means of learning because not only the content is then important but also the manner in which the information is conveyed. The story must be coherent and logical for the reader. For this purpose the writer must transform his own thoughts into language intelligible to the reader. In addition, a written communication creates a conversation history. The communication is then less fleeting. Not only can messages be re-read but it is also



possible to respond later to something said at the outset. In this way, it is possible gradually to accumulate or refine knowledge. Each line of discussion can be expanded further independently of time and person. Spoken communication is much more chronological. It starts with an idea, which is then elaborated. Other ideas are often forgotten in the course of the conversation and by the end of the discussion those taking part often no longer really know where they started. A third advantage of written communication through a computer network is that everyone has an equal chance to be heard (or read), unlike face-to-face contact in which often just a few people exchange ideas and the remainder listen. People who need more time to reflect before giving an answer then have plenty of time in which to formulate their reply, because the communication is asynchronous. The final advantage is of an organisational nature. It is possible in CSCL to identify members of the group who are getting a 'free ride', in other words members who profit during group work from the efforts of the other members and do not themselves make an unduly great contribution. In a network it is easier for the teacher to trace shirkers and take appropriate action.

## Method

The CSCL software used here is Web Knowledge Forum (WKF) (2001). It is an electronic discussion environment that provides various tools designed to facilitate discussion between students. Anyone who has a password can log on through the Internet. Once they have logged on, students have access to all data stored in the Forum. The Forum consists of two main parts: a communal and a personal part. In the communal part students can place, read and process information. The most important feature is the discussion section in which students can place notes. These notes may be either requests for clarification or additions to others and critical observations or comments on the views of other students. The system is designed in such a way that it is clear at a glance what note is a response to the previous one. The list of notes shows the 'build-on' notes of this kind not aligned on the very left but somewhat indented

### Example of thread structure in WKF

Figure 1:

- **NI brazil** #162 by Paulina Tuomela on Feb 15 2000 (13:24:52)
- **GP: "OUR PROGRAMME"** #164 by Jonathan Vayssieres on Feb 15 2000 (21:02:50)
  - **Draft orange juice production chain** #230 by Danilo Christiaan on Feb 25 2000 (12:51:05)
  - **MT fruit and juice quality** #240 by Danilo Christiaan on Feb 28 2000 (14:46:28)
  - **NI additional information on quality** #356 by Danilo Christiaan on Mar 9 2000 (14:46:27)
  - **NI: Result of the meeting of 07/02/2000** #435 by Jonathan Vayssieres on Mar 22 2000 (17:35:30)
- **Maybe interesting** #174 by Danilo Christiaan on FEB 16 2000 (14:46:02)

to the right (Figure 1). This helps to show how the discussion has developed. (E.g. the notes named 'Draft orange juice production chain', 'MT fruit and juice quality' and 'NI Result of the meeting of 07/02/2000' build on the note 'GP: OUR PROGRAMME'. The note 'NI additional information on quality' builds on 'MT fruit and juice quality'. )

In addition, links can be made to interesting Internet sites and documents can be stored in a common database. Each student can keep his own documents in a personal section accessible only to him.

The participants in the study were 49 final-year students in a module class at an agricultural college. The class consisted of regular and exchange students. The module comprised a series of lectures, a number of practicals and a group assignment. Each group of 5-7 students was given a collaborative task. The object was to define the critical points in the cultivation of a crop in a region (e.g. juice-oranges in Brazil) and consequentially the control points had to be weighted in importance for the final quality of the crop and the five most critical points had to be selected, based on a profound argumentation. There was no clearly defined answer possible, which is important to invoke a discussion.



In carrying out the assignment the students could use an electronic network. The normal face-to-face meetings could simply be extended by means of communication through the computer. The teacher could follow on the Forum what the students were doing and could, if desired, intervene or make suggestions. During the eight weeks that the project lasted a discussion was held between the teacher, the various groups and the researcher. During this discussion the progress of the students was examined and they could raise any problems concerning either the content or the collaboration. The teacher intervened only once and the intervention was not content-related but a remark on the fact that in one group some notes were written in Dutch in stead of English, with the disadvantage that the exchange students could not follow the discourse.

In order to assess what learning activities were carried out by the students, the notes sent by the students to one another on the network have been analysed. The written notes are the product of the cognitive processes of the students. Using these products it is possible to form a picture of the thinking and learning process (Veerman, Veldhuis-Diermanse, submitted). The substantive analysis has been carried out by reference to the coding schedule developed by Veldhuis-Diermanse (1999). Following the example of Vermunt (1992), the schedule is divided into three main categories of learning activities: cognitive, metacognitive and affective activities, and a residual category. Each of these categories is then further divided into subcategories. The cognitive activities involve the processing of information. A distinction has been made between debating, the introduction of new information and the linking or repeating of information previously given. A distinction is made in the case of debating between the introduction of a new idea, whether or not with reasoning (arguments), the asking of questions and the response to one another (reaction) Metacognitive activities are taken to mean regulative activities such as making appointments or providing further explanation. Affective activities are concerned with the atmosphere in the group. Units which cannot be coded in one of the previous categories are placed in the residual category.

Although the three categories of activities are important to the learning process, we will concentrate largely on the cognitive activities since the quantity and nature of these activities are indicative of the depth of learning. If students learn in the intended manner it could be expected that they would engage in lively debate and respond to one another's arguments. Argumentation and interaction are, after all, important to deep learning.

The first step in the coding process was to divide the notes into units, i.e. meaningful units that express a particular learning activity. Each unit was then given a code. Account should be taken of this in interpreting the data. As long as the same activity is performed, a given note receives a single code. Where a note contains argumentation followed by a question it is given two codes. If a question is asked in the middle of argumentation, four codes are assigned to the note since there are four successive activities, namely argumentation, question, argumentation and question. Although it appears as though there is more argumentation in the second case, there is in fact no difference.

## The results

The first step in determining the results involves examining the principal categories, their incidence and any change in the distribution during the course of the module. Thereafter, the cognitive activities category is examined in more detail.

### The incidence of the various principal categories

The results indicate that the learning activities of the students were wide-ranging (Table 1). There were cognitive, metacognitive and affective activities. Affective-oriented communication was the least prevalent. The metacognitive activities mainly involved the making of appointments. The residual category is rather voluminous in relation to the other categories. But the length of those units was short (mostly not more than four words) and most units consisted of greetings such as 'hello', 'bye' or the name of the student (301 of the 378). The other units were mostly short personal descriptions. Only very few units (19) could not be coded.



The nature of the activities of the students changed over time. The cognitive activities really only materialised in the second half of the period. Metacognitive activities occurred throughout the entire period, but they too increased towards the end of the module. Affective activities were particularly frequent at the beginning and also in the last week before the presentations. Chatting about matters other than the task in hand frequently occurred in the first week, but thereafter disappeared almost entirely.

To some extent the increase in the different categories could be attributed to a general increase in the activity of the students. However, there was also a change in the ratio (Figure 2). The proportion of chatting declined in relation to that of the other categories. The proportion of metacognitive activities peaked in the third week and declined thereafter. The cognitive activities became dominant in the second half of the module. The proportion of affective activities was in general reasonably small, although it was slightly larger in the first and seventh weeks.

**The breakdown of cognitive activities**

42% of the cognitive units involved debating, 35% involved the use of information and 23% involved the communication of information (Table 2). The majority of debating units concerned the presentation of an idea. Only a limited number of units involved reactions to other notes and almost no questions were asked. It can be seen over time that the cognitive activities did not increase until the second half of the module and peaked in the sixth week (Figure 3).

External information was exchanged throughout the entire period, but was at its peak during weeks 5 and 6. The students began argumentation in earnest at the start of the second half of the module. The communication of information started rather later, namely in the sixth week.

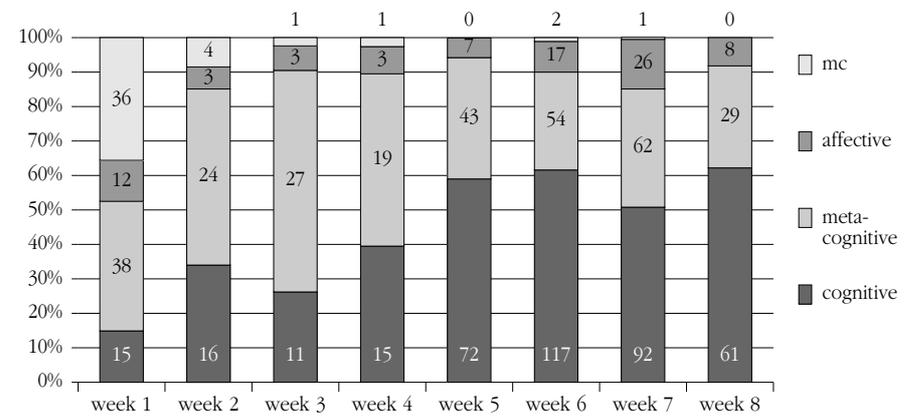
**Discussion**

Social talk was fairly prevalent initially. This involved short notes in which the

**Table 1:**  
**Number of units per principal category**

Type of principal category	number
Cognitive activities	402
Metacognitive activities	298
Affective activities	80
Residual category	378

**Figure 2:**  
**Changes in the number and in the ratio between the different categories of learning activities.**



members of the group introduced themselves to one another. Not all the students knew each other because the group consisted of both regular and exchange students. Once this process of making each other's acquaintance had been completed, the social talk on the network disappeared. This was perhaps partly due to the fact that they had by this time made social contact with one another in a different way (in face-to-face situations) and also partly because the need for such chit-chat declined once they had become acquainted.

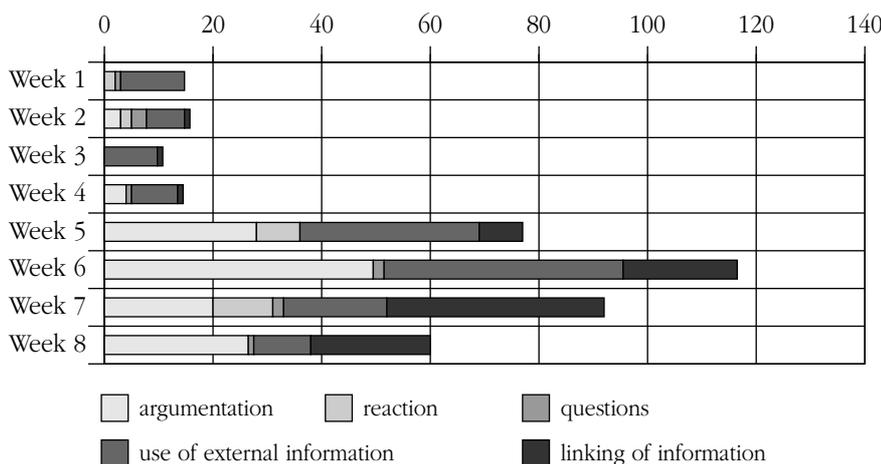
One could suggest that the disappearance of social talk could be influenced by the fact that students knew they were going followed, by the teacher and by the researcher. However, in the notes students wrote, there were some rather negative remarks on the teacher, indicating that



**Table 2:**  
**Number of units per sub-category of the cognitive learning activities**

Type of cognitive activity	number	percentage
Debating		42
- argumentation	133	
- asking questions	10	
- reaction	24	
Use of external information	140	35
Linking or repeating of information	95	23

**Figure 3:**  
**Changes in the number of cognitive activities**



they did not fully realise or forgot that the teacher was able to read their comments. Therefore it can be doubted that the influence of being part of a social experiment was of importance to the content of the students' writings.

The affective activities were comparable. Here we can see two periods in which the proportion of affective activities was greater, namely the first and seventh weeks. These were key periods: the first week was important because it was then that the group members made one another's acquaintance and learned what they had to do, and the seventh week was the week preceding the presentations when a number of decisions had to be taken.

As far as the cognitive activities are concerned, the degree of argumentation and response to one another's arguments was greater than expected. This was in fact mainly true of the argumentation and less of reactions. The low number of reactions to one another's arguments shows that the WKF was not used entirely as intended since there was little real interaction. Strangely, however, there was a high degree of argumentation. Students took positions and generally supported them by means of arguments and illustrations. This is an essential first step in any discussion. Unfortunately, they did not learn much from one another: their opinions did not change significantly during the module. This is borne out by the fact that the majority of the final reports amounted to little more than an amalgam of notes and linking texts. Students worked to a large degree individually on their task. They may perhaps have divided the responsibilities for the task among themselves, each being responsible for his or her part. This explains why there was a large degree of argumentation (the choice had to be defended), but there was little reaction to others (each person being responsible for his or her own part). It can be concluded that the objective of genuine collaborative learning was not met. Although students worked rather individually, they performed some activities in collaboration but not at the extend as expected.

The distribution over time was in keeping with expectations. The students did not start working on their task immediately, but tended to postpone it. The first cautious step was to make agreements, and action was taken only in the second half of the module. It cannot be inferred from the data that the interaction increased as time passed. Such an increase might have been expected since in a face-to-face debate the initial step is to take and defend a position. Only afterwards are the reactions of others received and links established between the different positions. In this study the reactions to the arguments of other students largely failed to materialise, but towards the end links were established between the different notes. We can therefore conclude that although the CSCL environment did invite the students to engage in deep learning, this did not occur to the expected extent.



The analysis is based on the group of students in general, but there were also differences between the groups noted, although conclusions here should be regarded with great caution.

There were two groups which worked remarkably better on the platform than the others and there was one group where the collaboration was problematic. In the researcher's opinion, this had nothing to do with the number of students involved in the group, because the groups working very well consisted of five and seven students and the problematic group also had five members, but more with the inspiring driving force of one or two individuals in the group, who encourage the others and placed high standard for the work done.

What can be concluded on the basis of this study about the usability of CSCL in higher vocational education? The fact that students try to do the bare minimum when carrying out a task and thus learn differently from the intended manner is not exceptional. It is a common and widely noted problem (Biggs, 1999; Scardamalia and Bereiter, 1996b). The study also shows that changing the learning behav-

our of students is no simple matter. It was thought that students would be encouraged by CSCL to learn deeply, but clearly they still find loopholes in the system and manage to succeed by means of superficial learning too. This study has shown that CSCL has the potential to induce students to engage in deep learning, but that this in itself is not sufficient. We think that guidance and assessment by the teacher is of crucial importance in this connection. Teachers can invite more interaction and reaction by means of stimulating questions and observations. Previous research has already demonstrated the influence of teacher interventions on the learning activities of students (Veerman, 2000). An important aspect of the assessment is that students should no longer be able to succeed by means of superficial learning, since they will otherwise be quickly inclined to deliver no more cognitive effort that is strictly necessary. A follow-up study into the implications of teacher intervention is therefore desirable. The teacher could be instructed to ask triggering questions to the students or confront them with contradictions in the notes of students or in literature. This could invoke a more profound discussion between the students.

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# Mobility in Europe (EU and EEA)

## with particular reference to health care occupations and recognition of the relevant vocational qualifications



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### Introduction

This article is a revised version of a paper given by the author at the conference on care of the elderly in Wiesbaden at the end of 2001 <sup>(1)</sup>. It is based on the relevant literature on migration, mobility in the health sector, and the issue of recognition of vocational qualifications in the EU, as well as on the author's own work in the context of his activities as a Cedefop project coordinator.

We begin with a brief analysis of recent trends in migration and mobility in the EU and an evaluation of the current situation and future prospects. We then describe the EU's most recent initiative promoting open European labour markets. We go on to analyse data on the number of applicants for recognition of vocational qualifications in the health sector. We show what obstacles remain, which groups (skills, vocational sectors) are particularly mobile, which regions of the EU are affected by this, and whether those involved are nationals of EU Member States or migrants from non-EU countries.

Our analysis and description are based on Mariann Skar's research study <sup>(2)</sup>, published by Cedefop, and on a dissertation written in 2001 for a 'Master of European Administration' degree and researching the administrative activity involved in implementation of directives on the recognition of vocational qualifications in the sector, where the author was invited by her educational institution to draw up an (external) expert opinion and to report

on the work from the expert point of view <sup>(3)</sup>.

### 1. Recent trends in mobility and migration

#### 1.1 Forced and economic migration

Migration within Europe and, in particular, **emigration** overseas is a phenomenon that goes back many centuries, one that took on significant dimensions with the colonisation by Europeans of whole continents since the middle of the last millennium and in the course of industrialisation in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The two world wars also radically changed the population of Europe, and people were frequently forced to migrate when new states were created and/or national boundaries were redrawn <sup>(4)</sup>. Thus migration is nothing new. It is just that there have been many changes in its face, and its causes and reasons.

Now we in the EU are for the first time experiencing a phase in which forced migration or emigration resulting from economic conditions in the country of origin is becoming the exception rather than the rule. Right up until the 1980s, migration was still regarded as being fundamentally economically driven, with the so-called push and pull effects prevailing at the time, in which low-skilled or unskilled workers from rural areas migrated to the industrial centres of northern Europe, similarly to the migration of large sections of the rural population within these coun-

**We begin by looking back over the trend in migration and mobility in Europe and evaluating the current situation and future prospects. We then describe the EU's most recent policy on the promotion of open European labour markets. We go on to analyse Eurostat and European Commission data on the number of applicants for recognition of professional qualifications in the health sector. We show what obstacles remain, which groups (skills, vocational sectors) are particularly mobile, and also in which regions EU mobility is particularly marked and whether those involved are nationals of EU Member States or migrants from non-EU countries. Finally, we list a number of framework conditions necessary if mobility and migration within the EU, in the context of open labour markets in Europe, are to be supported more effectively than has hitherto been the case.**

<sup>(1)</sup> Paper given on 22.11.01 to the Bundesfachtagung des Arbeitskreises Ausbildungsstätten fuer Altenpflege in Wiesbaden on care of the elderly in Europe.

<sup>(2)</sup> Cedefop (2001): *Mobility in the European health sector*, Mariann Skar (Cedefop Panorama), Luxembourg.

<sup>(3)</sup> Zingel-Lang, E. (2001): *Die europaweite Anerkennung von beruflicher Qualifikation - Das Beispiel der Gesundheitsfachberufe*, Dissertation for a Master of European Administration degree at the Fachhochschule für Verwaltung und Rechtspflege Berlin (unpublished manuscript).



(<sup>4</sup>) The First World War alone was estimated to have led to the 'migration' of 7 700 000 people within Europe (cf. Kosinski, L. (1970): *The population of Europe*, Longman, London). In the 1930s, 2 800 000 immigrants from Italy and Poland in particular were working in France; there were many Dutch, Polish and Italian people in Belgium, the latter in the coal and steel industry in particular. And there were countless Irish nationals working in the UK. The Second World War led to massive 'shifts' of entire populations, particularly from Central and Eastern Europe. These shifts affected 25 million people, most of whom were forced into 'employment' in industry and agriculture as prisoners of war or workers. In the post-war period, there were millions of refugees and resettled population groups in the wake of the redrawing of national borders owing to the conclusions of the 1945 Potsdam Conference of the victorious powers, and the emigration or flight of refugees from Eastern to Western Europe. In the course of the decolonisation of Africa, the Indian subcontinent, the Caribbean Islands, etc., many millions of people left the former colonies for the countries that had ruled them. Indians, Arabs, Pakistanis, Nigerians and Kenyans came to the UK, North and West Africans to France, and Indonesians to the Netherlands.

The 'immigrant worker phase' began at the end of the 1950s. In the 1970s, there were estimated to be approx. 7 500 000 foreign workers in the countries of the EEC and EFTA (ILO 1973: *Some growing employment problems in Europe*, Geneva). This figure was probably far too low, since there were also large numbers of people working illegally. (Cf. European Commission/Eurostat (2000): *Patterns and trends in international migration in Western Europe*, Luxembourg, pp. 1 to 5.)

(<sup>5</sup>) The reason for this is likely to be the relative prosperity of the countries of origin, primarily owing to EU grant aid from the Structural Funds and the Mediterranean Fund.

(<sup>6</sup>) In the male-dominated industrial sector, the same also continues to be true of the construction industry.

tries in the course of their industrialisation. This trend has now considerably declined. Within the EU, it has actually been replaced by a degree of **remigration**, where the previously unskilled (or their children) have acquired skills in the host country and/or accumulated capital, and create a new life for themselves in their country of origin (<sup>5</sup>). This applies in particular to the northern Mediterranean countries that have joined the EU, but also (despite the continuing civil war) to the countries of the former Yugoslavia. It applies even more markedly to Ireland, which was traditionally a country of origin for a long time. However, the same cannot be said of Turkey, which cannot demonstrate the relevant level of prosperity, which appears to be a precondition for remigration of this kind. Thus the economic and (limited) social integration within the EU has helped to ensure that, contrary to original expectations and particularly since the effective introduction of the internal market in the early 1990s, not only has migration within the EU not increased, but on balance it has also decreased and is likely to decrease further.

The second phenomenon is characterised by the above-mentioned trend away from the industrial society towards a service-based society on the one hand and, on the other, the development of industry itself from labour-intensive production-line organisation into a capital- and technology-intensive production system. The recruitment by industry of cheap low-skilled or unskilled labour has largely ceased. There was a huge increase in unemployment among the remaining foreign workers, primarily owing to this structural change in the production of goods and the service orientation; in the mid-1990s it was significantly higher than that of the indigenous population, and this remains true today. In the service sector, however, particularly in weaker labour market segments and in those with poor working conditions, such as the hotel and restaurant sector, catering, and blue-collar personal services (domestic help, cleaners, gardeners, etc.), foreign workers are still recruited and employed, as is the case with ancillary staff in the health sector and, in particular, in care of the elderly. Not only are these labour market segments characterised by a high proportion of female workers, but they are also

segments in which informal employment, precarious employment relationships and even illicit work tend to be the rule rather than the exception (<sup>6</sup>).

## 1.2 Increasing competition for skills

As a result, there has been a fundamental change in the character of migration in the industrial sector, from unskilled ancillary workers and low-skilled assembly-line workers to the recruitment of senior and high-level skilled workers and management staff, particularly in the flourishing computer industry and in the information and communications sector (cf. the green card initiative in Germany). The capacity of trade and industry to innovate appears to be at risk, firstly owing to past failings in education and training, but secondly, and more importantly, because of the ageing of the working population in line with the demographic trend and the increased level of early retirement in the past two decades owing to high unemployment. Despite high unemployment, there is an unsatisfied demand for skilled workers which, according to the European Commission, is actually inhibiting growth and jeopardising the capacity of the European economy to innovate and compete, in comparison with other regions.

The Commission is currently making a series of proposals for action to the Council and Parliament, under the heading of 'New European labour markets, open to all, with access for all'. They provide for the creation of a genuine European labour market, in order to make better use of the existing employment potential, as well as actions to support the recruitment of additional skilled workers in certain sectors, in which it includes, in particular, the health sector in addition to the ICT sector. The strategic goals targeted are, in particular:

- to remove the main remaining barriers to the development of European labour markets;
- to ensure that the new European labour markets are attractive, efficient, open to all, with access for all;
- to ensure the effective development and utilisation of the potential European



workforce, especially for effective matching of skills supply and demand, and to develop the skills levels of the potential European workforce through lifelong learning;

□ to maximise the potential of the Internal Market by ensuring a harmonious development between the integration of product and capital markets, and a modern highly-skilled European labour market.

In order to tackle barriers to mobility and skills gaps, the Commission is proposing initiatives in the following areas <sup>(7)</sup>:

- *more effective procedures for recognition of vocational qualifications for the highly skilled,*

- *recognition or accreditation of informal skills or skills acquired at work,*

- *action plan for the promotion of lifelong learning,*  
and, finally,

- *further development of education and training systems* as regards quality and efficiency, access to education and training for all, opening up educational systems to the wider world.

Thus this phase in the EU's migration policy can be described as a ***phase of skills competition***. The knowledge-based society needs more and more people with knowledge – more than ever before, human resources are the most important energy stocks or raw materials of trade and industry and society for innovation, competitiveness and progress.

### 1.3 Mobility in the health sector

Very detailed statistics on the number of non-national employees and the trend in their number are published by Eurostat, the EU's Statistical Office, at regular intervals. However, they are rarely differentiated according to occupations and occupational groups. The statistics on mobility in particular are not very meaningful. The data sets that can be drawn on for comparison go back to 1995. In addition, Member States' own statistics on non-nationals do not always distinguish between nationals of other EU Member

States and nationals of countries outside the EU.

With figures of over 70%, Luxembourg, Belgium and Ireland have the highest proportions of nationals of other EU Member States (out of all non-nationals employed in the country concerned). In Luxembourg and Belgium, the figures include large numbers of cross-border commuters and employees of EU institutions and associated organisations, and in Ireland the figure includes many Britons. Germany, Denmark, Italy and Portugal have the lowest proportions, with 20-30%. France, Greece, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom constitute an 'average' group. The 'official' figures for Greece are actually very low, but the figure for unregistered workers is likely to be a great deal higher <sup>(8)</sup>. However, the reasons underlying these various proportions differ for each country.

Since the mid-1990s, the proportions of women among EU migrants have been increasing more markedly than is the case for men almost<sup>(9)</sup> everywhere, and this trend has recently increased further. However, despite this tendency for their share in the foreign population to increase, in absolute terms men still predominate, with approximately 66% of all non-national employees.

There were no fundamental shifts in the proportions of non-national employees between the mid-1980s and the mid-1990s. However, there was a notable reduction in the numbers of young people aged under 24 among EU non-nationals, with the exception of Germany <sup>(10)</sup>.

Although mobility and migration have been tending to stagnate since the 1980s, or even to decrease in the case of EU non-nationals, the field of blue-collar personal services is a special case. It is expanding further and has become a segment for ancillary workers from outside the EU with few or no skills, and particularly for female workers. These services often have little attraction for nationals of the country concerned. This is a general phenomenon throughout the EU. It has become necessary specifically to recruit foreign ancillary workers and, increasingly, also specialists such as doctors from outside the EU <sup>(11)</sup>. The increased opportunities

<sup>(7)</sup> European Commission (2001): *New European Labour Markets: Open to All, with Access for All*. Communication to the Council (COM (2001) 116 final).

<sup>(8)</sup> Cf. European Commission/Eurostat (2000): *Patterns and trends in international migration in Western Europe*, loc. cit., pp. 120 ff.

<sup>(9)</sup> Germany, Denmark and Luxembourg are exceptions to this.

<sup>(10)</sup> No figures are available for Denmark for 1995, cf. loc. cit. p. 124.

<sup>(11)</sup> In addition to the health sector, with its comparatively poor working conditions and low pay, only the construction sector has as many foreign workers (many of whom have, for many years, also come from non-EU countries). Here, the working conditions are usually even worse than in the health sector, although pay is generally better.



for mobility within the EU appear to be insufficient to achieve a balance between supply and demand, particularly since the field of personal services in general, but especially the field of health care and welfare, is expanding strongly owing to the factors cited, such as the demographically based ageing of the population.

To the best of our knowledge, unfortunately no specific figures are available for the health sector. It is included in 'Other services', which covers all personal services. In Germany, the proportions of non-nationals under this heading increased from 14.5% to 18.3% between 1985 and 1995, and in Denmark their share in non-nationals in employment rose from 36.4% to 41.7%.<sup>(12)</sup> In fact, these percentages are likely to include many employees working in care services and health services in the two countries. The only comparable increase in percentages by employment sectors was in the retail and hotel and restaurant sectors. In all other sectors, the proportions remained unchanged or, as in the manufacturing sector, decreased sharply. Hence when other personal services are included in the figures, they are likely to indicate an increase in these activities<sup>(13)</sup>. Even in the health sector, however, the trend is increasingly towards more highly skilled workers (see Section 1.2).

## 2. Problems of recognition, particularly in the field of health care occupations

This means that recognition of vocational qualifications is once again right at the top of the agenda, not only in order to safeguard freedom of movement and support mobility, but also to further competition for qualifications and to dynamise the European labour market as a whole. There is support for new, more flexible procedures and systems. In analytical terms, this means that while the systems in place to date are formally adequate, the practical actions of Member States and the instruments employed are not (or are no longer) adequate.

The right to freedom of movement within the European Community is, for all citi-

zens of the Union, one of the fundamental pillars of the efforts to achieve European integration. Since the EEC was founded in 1957, great efforts have been made to make it easier for workers and professionals to exercise this right. In addition to the creation of an appropriate legal framework, numerous programmes have been launched to promote cross-border mobility for young people in education and training and for workers.

A key aspect of commencing or leaving a job in another Member State is recognition by that State of vocational qualifications obtained. Such recognition may be a condition of practising one's occupation if the latter requires an appropriate qualification, or it may be necessary in order to prove to a potential employer that a qualification has been obtained. However, formal recognition of an occupation or a recognised vocational qualification is not always required in order to begin work. This applies in particular to ancillary workers and ordinary employees, particularly large numbers of whom are found in the care sector and especially in the field of care of the elderly, for example.

Cedefop has performed in-depth analysis of the existing starting points and concepts for mutual recognition and transparency of vocational qualifications in the health sector and their actual or potential use in health care occupations<sup>(14)</sup>. Here, recognition procedures for regulated occupations in accordance with both sectoral and general directives are brought to bear<sup>(15)</sup>. Many of the health care occupations for which in Germany, for example, training is provided in the form of vocational training organised by enterprises or in 'vocational training schools in enterprise' involve training in institutions of higher education in many Member States, while in others it takes place at (higher) secondary level or at tertiary level in the vocational training arm of the formal education system. In the past, this has made it particularly difficult for German specialists to achieve recognition and effective validation of their qualifications. The directive of May 2002 takes more account of this fact, and this should make it much easier for the relevant group to obtain recognition of their qualifications.<sup>(16)</sup> Increased weighting is to be

<sup>(12)</sup> Loc. cit., p. 126.

<sup>(13)</sup> There also appears to be an increasing demand for more highly skilled workers in nursing, and a trend towards greater professionalisation of what were previously ancillary activities (cf. Landenberger, Margarete (2001): *Professionalisierungspfade der Pflege in Europa*, in: *Lebenslanges Lernen, Expertisen zu Lebenslangem Lernen - Lebensarbeitszeiten - Lebensweiterbildungskonten*, No. 44 in the *Senatsverwaltung für Arbeit, Soziales und Frauen* series, Berlin, pp. 271 ff.

<sup>(14)</sup> Cedefop (2001): *Mobility in the European health sector*, loc. cit.

<sup>(15)</sup> Since 1977, 'sectoral' directives have increasingly been adopted and transposed into national law in the Member States. The general directives covering occupations requiring higher education or higher levels of vocational training were adopted by the Council of the European Communities in 1989 and 1993 (see References).

<sup>(16)</sup> The recently adopted Directive 2001/19/EC amending Directives 89/48/EEC and 92/51/EEC on the general system for the recognition of professional qualifications and Directives 77/452/EEC, etc.

(the sector-specific directives: author) on the activities of nurses, dental practitioners, veterinary surgeons, midwives, pharmacists and doctors provides for fundamental changes, and in particular for increased account to be taken of relevant professional experience in recognition and for improvement of the legal position of applicants.



given to vocational experience acquired and it is to be recognised as constituting an equivalent or additional qualification. This will also strengthen the applicant's legal position.

At **European level**, the elimination of obstacles to mobility and of possible discrimination against non-nationals and, in particular, against EU citizens is a priority. Under the Treaties, the common market also includes a common labour market for employees and the self-employed and for the provision of services. For some years, realisation of a knowledge-based European society has also been to the fore, and this will be decisively expedited by increased occupational mobility<sup>(17)</sup>. In this context, difficulty in transferring a qualification obtained in one Member State to another is regarded as a crucial obstacle to the exchange, networking and cooperation of managerial and skilled employees or human resources<sup>(18)</sup>.

At **Member State level**, the emphasis is on the need to equip the labour market with the best and most suitable skilled people. Formal vocational qualifications prove that competence to practise particular occupations has been effectively imparted. They guarantee particular standards in the practice of an occupation. Important players – state bodies, the social partners, chambers or professional associations – specify, in accordance with their mandate under public law, the knowledge and skills required in the sector concerned and have a degree of authority to lay down rules or tests/examinations. They also monitor the quality of training provided by suppliers and the testing of participants. Thus they guarantee training quality and the qualifications of successful trainees.

At the **level of individual EU citizens** who wish to exercise their right to freedom of movement, there is a wish to obtain, quickly and painlessly, recognition in the host country of vocational qualifications obtained in their country of origin under the regulations in force there. Furthermore, the acquisition of competences<sup>(19)</sup> (at least) comparable with a vocational qualification in the host country should be made clear to a potential employer.

Many conflicting interests need to be taken into account in acceptance of a recognition procedure.

According to Zingel-Lang<sup>(20)</sup>, such conflicting interests may be:

- ❑ preservation of the power of vocational associations and training providers in a sector; or
- ❑ protection of the relevant labour market segment;
- ❑ inferiority complexes on the part of persons without further education/training in relation to those who have it;
- ❑ arrogance of skilled workers as regards qualifications that they have not come to know and value adequately; and, last but not least,
- ❑ the cost/benefit ratio as regards training costs and benefits, in terms of both the economy and business management.

Considerable scope for interpretation is available to governments implementing general directives on mutual recognition of vocational and higher-education qualifications. Obviously this has both advantages and disadvantages – it is just as easy to adopt a restrictive and protectionist approach as to adopt a customer-oriented approach focusing on liberal and pragmatic viewpoints.

The author of a dissertation produced at the Verwaltungs-Fachhochschule Berlin examined the implementation and effectiveness of statutory regulations on the basis of the criteria listed and of their intended effects, in the context of specialised occupations in the health sector. An attempt is made to clarify the effects of these governmental approaches on the concept of mobility as supported by the European Commission. In this context, the author emphasises that the general (horizontal) directives are at a disadvantage in comparison with the sectoral/occupation-specific (vertical) directives, in that they offer the competent authorities almost no information facilitating effective comparisons of training and vocational qualifications, on the basis of which it would be possible to make rapid decisions<sup>(21)</sup>. She refers to what essentially

<sup>(17)</sup> Cf. European Commission White Paper (1995), pp. 24 ff.

<sup>(18)</sup> E.g. Cedefop, Information on vocational training in the European Union 2/2001, p.1.

<sup>(19)</sup> Here, competences are understood as meaning the skills and knowledge required for a particular occupational activity or occupation.

<sup>(20)</sup> Loc. cit.

<sup>(21)</sup> Zingel-Lang, loc. cit.



amounts to passing the buck, with the competent bodies blaming each other when the general directives in particular are not implemented very effectively. She says that the EU does not provide adequate aids to decision-making, in the form of summaries or databanks of comparable training and qualifications, and Member States do not always supply the relevant information and data, with reference to the fact that the relevant Member State alone is competent to make the decision with regard to recognition, a compensatory measure or rejection. This indicates that at least the so-called general directives are ineffective.

In 1996, the European Commission, Internal Market Directorate-General, submitted a detailed report to the European Parliament on the numbers of applicants for recognition of diplomas and other vocational qualifications, to which we shall refer. However, the actual numbers of mobile skilled workers are likely to be much higher than those cited for applicants. Here too, only intermediate and higher levels of specialised and management staff are included, and not ancillary and skilled workers in more basic occupations in the care sector and in hospital or private services. This means that no direct conclusions can be drawn about the extent of the mobility of individual occupational groups, but nevertheless a degree of indirect extrapolation is possible.

This overview suggests that the number of health care specialists migrating between the EU Member States was lower than that of immigrants into the EU from non-EU countries. This applies not only to low-skilled workers, as explained earlier, but also to more highly skilled people such as doctors. (Table 1)

Thus in all sectors and all Member States, 53 182 applications for recognition were made between 1993 and 1996. Of these, 82% or 43 809 came from the health sector and less than 18% (mainly teachers) came from other sectors. In 1997/98, there were 13 522 applicants, i.e. from 1993 onwards there were an average of 11 117 applicants a year (all sectors combined). The UK, Germany and France were the countries with the highest numbers of applicants from other countries (not only from within the EU).

An analysis of the period between 1993 and 1996 shows that in 15.5% of cases compensatory measures were necessary (special probationary period for 63% and testing for 37%). There were 1781 rejections, or 12%.<sup>(22)</sup>

Table 2 indicates the countries with the most recognised qualifications and the countries of origin.

The countries exporting the most qualifications can be seen in Table 3.

Table 4 shows the main migrations.

The comparatively large numbers of specialised hospital nursing staff migrating between Austria, Spain, Germany, France, Luxembourg and the UK and of paediatric nurses migrating to Austria and Italy can be explained by the fact that many of these skilled workers were trained in these countries. Paediatric nurses and specialist nurses migrate mainly from Germany to Austria. Similarly, physiotherapists migrate mainly from the Netherlands to Germany. Smaller numbers of masseurs and radiographers migrated to Italy. The effects of the second general directive became apparent in the 1997-98 reporting period. This reporting period showed a threefold increase in the occupations covered by Council Directive 92/51/EEC, with a total of 4603 cases.

Some further comments can be made on the basis of the statistics:

- countries that export qualifications receive few in return;
- countries that grant many recognitions export few qualifications;
- migration occurs in relatively homogeneous regions: the German-speaking countries, the Nordic (Scandinavian) region, Belgium/Luxembourg/France, UK/Ireland;
- there is a higher level of migration in areas close to borders.

The UK Council for Professions Supplementary to Medicine (CPSM) drew up statistics on membership registrations from overseas (including a total for EU and EEA countries), enabling certain conclusions

<sup>(22)</sup> Cedefop (Mariann Skar), loc. cit., p. 44.



Table 1:

**Numbers of skilled health service personnel applying for recognition of professional qualifications in the EU Member States on the basis of sector-specific and general directives and bilateral agreements from the EFTA countries(\*) and from countries outside the EU from 1993 to 1996**

	1993-94	1995-96	Total
Dental practitioners	425	921	1346
EFTA	25	7	32
Specialists		16	16
Doctors	3545	5095	8640
EFTA	122	102	224
Specialists	476	1633	2109
EFTA	23	43	66
Doctors providing services	283	309	592
Bilateral agreements	534	1577	2111
Non-EU countries	7217	7307	14524
Midwives	326	319	645
EFTA	0	3	3
Nurses (all)	3739	3470	7209
EFTA	7	59	66

*Paramedical staff (incl. other occupations in the health and academic sectors)(\*\*)*

Homeopaths			25
Non-medical practitioners			10
Orthopaedic specialists			1
Physiotherapists (Physiotherapeuten)		1578	
Psychologists/psychotherapists			222
Radiologists			73
Nursing: teachers/trainers			153
Speech therapists			303
Dieticians			44
Occupational therapists			188
Opticians			163
Orthopaedic technicians/engineers			6
Hearing aid technicians/engineers			6
Recognised (micro)biologists			33
Recognised chemists			183
Laboratory technicians			82
Dental technicians			32
Physiotherapists (Heilgymnastiker/-in)			102
Masseurs/masseuses			30
Pharmacists	306	0	306
Non-EU countries	572	0	572
Pharmaceutical assistants			6
Social workers/social education workers			120
Veterinary surgeons	472	0	472
Veterinary surgeon's declaration	147	0	147
Bilateral agreements	814	0	814
Non-EU countries	555	0	555
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>19 588</b>	<b>20 861</b>	<b>43 809</b>

(\*) EFTA: The European Free Trade Area was dissolved in the mid-1950s and replaced by the EEA, the European Economic Area, which includes Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein. The EEA has joined EU programmes involving educational cooperation, inter alia.

(\*\*) Some of whom come under the heading of 'Specialists', depending on practices in individual countries.



Table 2

**Recognition of diplomas, by countries of origin,  
total: 1995- 98(\*)**

**Member States  
which recognise diplomas**

Norway	1 535
Germany	1 589
Luxembourg	283
Spain	229
UK	279
Austria	255
Denmark	137
Italy	69
France	37
Ireland	36
Sweden	52
Netherlands	33
Portugal	20
Finland	24
Liechtenstein	18
Belgium	7

**Member States  
from which they originate**

Sweden, UK, Greece
Netherlands, UK and Belgium
France, Germany and Austria
Germany, UK and France
Ireland, Netherlands and Finland
Germany
Germany and Sweden
Germany
Belgium
UK
Finland, Denmark, Norway and Iceland
Germany and Belgium
France and Spain
Sweden
Austria and Germany
Netherlands

(\*) Across all occupations

Source: Report on the application of Directive 92/51/EEC (OJ EC L209 of 24 July 1992, p. 25.) to the Council and the European Parliament.

We also have information on nursing. (Table 7)

According to the table, the mobility of nursing occupations appears to be relatively stable. However, it increased in the course of EU enlargement.

A picture similar to that for doctors in general emerges for dentists, where there is an increase for dentists from the UK and Spain in particular.

However, there is likely to be more migration in the health sector than is shown in these data. For example, there was no detailed recording of mobility in areas close to borders. Nor is it known to what extent employers always insist on proof of formal recognition. If they have already previously employed graduates of recognised training institutions, they may waive such proof in individual cases. Furthermore, recognition procedures often vary in the public and private sectors.

**3. Conclusions and outlook**

There has been no major increase in the mobility of EU employees, as was anticipated when the single market was introduced in 1993. As has been shown, however, there are wide variations in the proportions of non-nationals from other EU Member States in individual countries. Although the quantity of migration has stagnated, the quality has changed. Migration no longer primarily consists of emigration. We now have what is known as fluid migration, characterised by migration to one country followed by onward migration to another and/or return to the country of origin. Migration is becoming increasingly complex and varied, with the development of a 'mosaic society'<sup>(24)</sup> – people are living longer and in better health, they need effective nursing and medical care and general support, and they live and work in different places, including across borders. At the same time, the rate and complexity of change are increasing, with growing uncertainties as regards general conditions. Modern means of communication and transport and transnational networks are making distances smaller. Childcare and care

to be drawn about migration in this field<sup>(23)</sup>. (Table 5)

Although the UK is one of the largest importers of specialist health care practitioners, even here the proportion of immigrants from EU/EEA countries, at 1136 out of 109 569, is only some 1% of all the specialist practitioners covered.

These data apply to applicants from the fields covered by the general directives (of 1989 and 1992). Doctors, nursing sisters and nurses and dentists are covered by sector-specific directives, and the overviews that follow provide information on their numbers. (Table 6)

Germany has supplied no further data since 1986. There appears to be a small increase in the number of doctors migrating. According to the table, however, only 1.7 per 1000 doctors obtain recognition in another Member State.

<sup>(23)</sup> Council for Professions Supplementary to Medicine (CPSM): *Quality assurance procedures and their context for the boards and council at CPSM covering the professions of: Art Therapists, Chiropodists, Dieticians, Medical laboratory Scientific Officers, Occupational Therapists, Orthoptists, Physiotherapists, Prosthetics and Radiographers.*

<sup>(24)</sup> Ducatel, Ken and Jean Claude Burgelman (1999): *Employment Map, The futures project, Joint Research Centre of the European Commission (IPTS); Seville, p. 43.*



Table 3

### 'Exports' of diplomas – by countries 1997-98

Member States exporting diplomas	To:
Sweden: 701	Norway: 620, Denmark: 30, Finland: 15 and UK: 13
UK: 580	Norway: 460, Germany: 54, Spain: 32, Ireland: 21
Netherlands: 574	Germany: 504, UK: 36, Spain: 12
Germany: 307	Spain 75, Austria: 68, Luxembourg: 37, Italy: 32, Norway: 34, Denmark: 27
France: 277	Luxembourg: 206, Spain: 38, Germany: 10
Denmark: 142	Norway: 86, Germany: 27, Spain: 18
Spain: 136	Norway: 98, Germany: 14, UK: 11
Austria: 131	Norway: 51, Germany 42, Luxembourg: 24
Belgium: 124	Germany: 53, France: 35, Luxembourg: 11, Spain: 10
Greece: 111	Norway: 93, Germany: 7
Finland: 101	Norway: 35, Sweden: 22, UK: 22
Ireland: 89	UK: 77, Norway: 18
Iceland: 52	Germany: 35, Norway: 16
Italy: 47	Spain: 22, Germany: 13
Portugal: 28	Germany: 12, Norway: 8
Luxembourg: 14	Germany: 13
Norway: 7	Germany
Liechtenstein: 4	Germany

Source: Report, loc. cit.

Table 4

### Mobility of skilled health service personnel

- Important specialised health care occupations, their recognition under Directive 92/51/EEC
- Physiotherapists (migrating to Germany)
- Specialised nurses (migrating to Austria, Spain, Germany, France, Luxembourg and UK)
- Opticians (to France)
- Dental hygienists (to UK) and dental technicians (to Portugal)
- Masseurs (to Italy)
- Paediatric nurses (migrating to Austria and Italy)

Source: Report, loc. cit.



Table 5

### The proportion of foreign specialists in UK professions supplementary to medicine, 1999

Occupations	EU/EEA	UK	NON EU/EEA	TOTAL
Specialised orthopaedic staff	6	1 244	18	1 262
Art therapists	31	1 390	57	1 447
Prosthesis makers/ Orthopaedic-shoemakers	21	676	34	710
Physiotherapists	513	28 811	2325	31 138
Occupational therapists	119	19 985	874	20 859
Radiological specialists	198	19 314	523	19 837
Dieticians	134	4 512	338	4 850
Medical engineering specialists	56	20 903	280	21 183
Chiropodists	58	8 139	144	8 283

of the elderly are becoming more important, as are other personal services (laundry, cleaning, housekeeping and gardening), one reason for this being the increasing mobility of the working population (who do not necessarily change their main domicile). Many new occupations are coming into being, and they still include precarious and informal jobs, some of them for low-skilled workers. Meanwhile, however, the mobility of skilled and highly skilled workers is likely to increase, including in the health sector. In Germany, for example, this is already apparent in the recruitment of skilled workers from Central and Eastern Europe. This is likely to result in increasing polarisation of highly skilled and low-skilled workers, including in respect of mobility, while the costs involved and the associated general expenditure of time and effort will also tend to increase.

Issues of migration and mobility are increasingly considered from the point of view of competition for skilled and highly skilled workers, not only in ICT occupations but increasingly also in health care occupations. A brain drain is apparent, e.g. from Eastern to Western Europe, and this may have negative consequences for the countries of origin as regards their development prospects <sup>(25)</sup>.

The social divide between workers with varying skills levels in terms of working conditions and earnings has recently been joined by a 'digital divide' in terms of

access to information and communication. The widely promoted reorganisation of the health sector that is on the agenda must be accompanied by comprehensive professionalisation of personal services, an increase in their efficiency and a focus on the customer. New skills training avenues and paths must be opened up, and new or revised job profiles must be developed as a yardstick for improved training. In this context, it is entirely possible to learn from the experience acquired in the various countries. The Netherlands, France and, to an extent, the UK have instructive examples to offer, at least in some segments. Although the mobility of specialist health workers is not enormous, it is increasing overall and is likely to be further facilitated in future, and it can play a part in this exchange of experience. However, the fundamental obstacles to mobility are likely to remain with us for some time:

- Language barriers;
- Obstacles owing to the differences between social security systems;
- Cultural barriers;
- Living and housing conditions and educational conditions for children;
- Employment prospects in general.

A generally identifiable increase in willingness to participate in mobility <sup>(26)</sup> is

<sup>(25)</sup> Cf. the findings of the joint Cedefop/ETF project on scenarios and strategies for vocational education and lifelong learning.

<sup>(26)</sup> Cf. the most recent Eurobarometer on the attitudes of young people in the EU.



Table 6

### Numbers of doctors obtaining recognition of qualifications for exercise of their profession in a country other than that in which they obtained their initial qualifications, 1981-97

	B	DK	D	EL	E	F	IRL	I	L	NL	A	P	FIN	S	UK	Total
1981	13	5	478	129		52	57	17	12	93					546	1 402
1983	19	9	1 018	402		75	35	20	7	45					567	2 197
1984	36	7	989	346		62	34	23	5	54					302	1 858
1985	31			D	F	64	30	21	8	53					332	918
1986	67	6	749	332	49	114	32	23	7	76		15			445	1 915
1987	102	14		290	154	129	25	51	11	92		31			995	1 894
1988	129	16		311	54	157	19	52	11	73		64			1 309	2 195
1990	153	14		256	64	117	43	68	10	57		26			1 020	1 828
1991	182	10		205	51	136	40	79	3	64		26			956	1 752
1993	149	24						58	18	89					1 157	1 495
1995	126	48		101				59	48	60	107		20	71	1 796	2 436
1996		108				1881		40		76	75			57		2 237
1997	149	73		92	203		73	81		161	74		69	80	1 908	2 963

Source: Commission of the European Communities, Directorate-General for Internal Market and Industrial Affairs; statistical tables relating to the migration of doctors: 1981, 1983-88, 1990-91, 1993, 1995-97.

Table 7

### Specialised nurses (all) obtaining recognition of qualifications for exercise of their profession in a country other than that in which they obtained their initial qualifications, 1981-97

	B	DK	D	EL	E	F	IRL	I	L	NL	A	P	FIN	S	UK	Total
1981	80	9	132	2		147	535	44	64	63					239	1315
1983	66	10	178	3		278		35	65	56					355	1046
1984	49	12	35	4		329	150	38	71	81					606	1375
1985	41	13	132	5		205		41	101	79					674	1291
1986	74	14	66	8	30	190		31	107	64		3			530	1117
1987	59	8		2	61	188	121	42	129	136		19			1002	1767
1988	48	12		4	54	182	202	51	134	52		64			586	1389
1990	50	18		7	45	293		66	193	92		23			761	1548
1991	61	8		10		1481	534	84	154	134		29			627	3122
1993	77	17		7		410		75	200	70		29			438	1323
1995	58	48		13			590	25		104	108	43	4	40	756	1789
1996		31						42		301	74	40		26	1041	1555
1997	55	30		11	81	186		37		200			5	44	1171	1820

Source: Commission of the European Communities, Directorate-General for Internal Market and Industrial Affairs; statistical tables relating to nurses responsible for general care: 1981, 1983-88, 1990-91, 1993, 1995-97.

not the same as putting it into effect. There are still too many gaps in information and communication, largely but not exclusively for linguistic reasons. They exist at individual, institutional, national and European level. There is a limit to the extent to which European bodies can intervene to plug the gaps. Member State institutions must cooperate more strongly and exchange more information, enter into partnerships and exchange their specialist knowledge and their staff. Only then will increased integration of labour markets ensue on an ongoing basis. Although these institutions are ever less likely to be wholly opposed to such ex-

changes, opposition still exists, at least in individual minds.

Systems have yet to be made transparent, and institutional, corporate and national framework conditions still need to be aligned to some extent. The forum on the transparency of vocational qualifications set up by Cedefop and the Commission has made some proposals for action, which are currently being implemented (cf. 2000 action plan). It is to extend its activities to the area of recognition of non-formal learning. Reference points and information centres are being developed, to make it easier for citizens to obtain



information on their rights and obligations if they (intend to) take advantage of opportunities for mobility. Training certificates are to be made more transparent and certificate supplements are to be made available in most of the EU's official languages. Binding, specific, comprehensible and reliable information is in short supply, despite the ever more effective dissemination of information in general in the age of the Internet, the

mobile phone and e-mail. There is a need for even greater efforts, specifically geared to producing results, vis-à-vis information, to support the development of (open) European labour markets and to ensure more effective implementation of the general directives in particular. This information must be made much more accessible to and understandable for citizens, and must be continuously checked and updated.

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*establishment and freedom to provide services*. *Official Journal* L2336, 24 August 1978, pp. 1-9

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**Pascaline  
Descy**  
Cedefop



# Having a low level of education in Europe: an at-risk situation

**The European labour market is witnessing changes in the supply of skills and the demand for skills. The direction taken by these changes is far from advantageous for people with low levels of education. This group accounts for around one third of the population aged 25 to 59 years in the European Union (i.e., 59 582 000 individuals, equivalent to the population of France), which makes the situation particularly worrying. Using a set of statistical indicators drawn from recent surveys and analyses, this article is intended to shed light on the situation in the labour market of individuals with a level of education below upper secondary, especially during their initial quest for employment, and to describe their situation in the context of lifelong learning. Some proposals for lines of action are put forward in conclusion.**

(<sup>1</sup>) In this article, the term 'level of education' refers to the levels defined in the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED, 1976). Three levels of education are used here: ISCED 0-2, which corresponds to a level of education at best equivalent to lower secondary education, ISCED 3, which corresponds to a level equivalent to upper secondary education, and ISCED 5-7, which corresponds to a level equivalent to tertiary education.

It should be noted that the categories ISCED 0-2 and ISCED 5-7 are very broad. ISCED 0-2 covers levels of education ranging from early childhood education (ISCED 0) to lower secondary education (ISCED 2), while ISCED 5-7 ranges from non-university tertiary education (ISCED 5) to post-graduate university programmes (ISCED 7).

This article sets out to describe the situation of people with low levels of education<sup>1</sup> in Europe, on the basis of a number of indicators calculated using data from the Labour Force Survey (Cedefop, European Commission, Eurostat, 2001; Eurostat, Newcronos Database, 2001). This description will be set against the background of indicators based on level of literacy skills (taken from the International Adult Literacy Survey: OCDE and Statistics Canada, 2000). Following a discussion of the rise in the level of education and skills in Europe, these two sources will be used to illustrate, sequentially, transition from the education system to the world of work, employment, unemployment and access to training as functions of level of education and literacy skills. The purpose is to demonstrate the phenomenon of selective exclusion among groups with low levels of education and skills.

## Skills required in knowledge-based societies

It is no longer news that the level of education of the population is rising. Within one generation, the proportion of individuals not completing secondary education has fallen from approximately 50% to less than a third in the European Union (Fig. 1, Table 1). Among individuals aged 30 to 34 years, one person in two now has a certificate of upper secondary education, and one in four a tertiary education qualification. This change is to be welcomed. A clear consensus has in fact grown up in Europe that upper secondary education has become the minimum for a satisfactory start to working life,

given the increasing demands of knowledge-based societies.

**Table 1:  
Population aged 25 to 59  
years by level of education  
in the European Union,  
in thousands, 2000**

ISCED 0-2	ISCED 3	ISCED 5-7
59 852	75 546	38 372

Source: LFS, Eurostat, Newcronos, 2000.

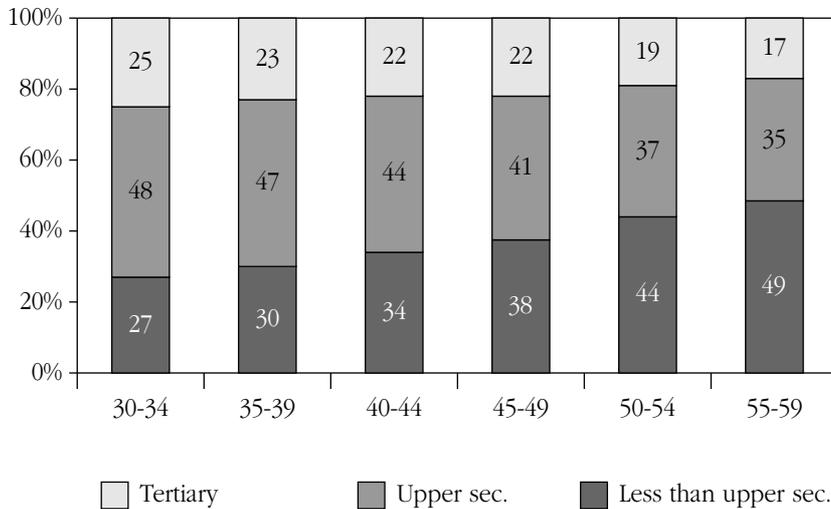
This general opinion is confirmed by the results of the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS, OECD and Statistics Canada, 2000). On the basis of tests, this survey defines a minimum threshold of reading (literacy level 3) which is required to meet the demands of everyday life and work in developed societies. From Figure 2 it is evident that individuals who have not completed upper secondary education do not, on average, reach this minimum threshold of skills (or only just do so, in Germany and Sweden). On the other hand, in all the countries in the European Union which took part in the IALS survey, people with upper secondary qualifications attain, on average, literacy level 3 and thus have the minimum skills needed to cope with the demands of those societies.

These results are confirmed by an examination of the percentage of the population who, while having failed to complete upper secondary education, attain at least level 3 in document literacy (Figure 3). Although the situation differs greatly be-



**Figure 1:**

**Population by level of education and by age, EU-15, 2000, %**



Source: ECFT, 2000.

**Box 1:**

**International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS)**

In the International Adult Literacy Survey, three domains of literacy are defined: prose texts (e.g., newspaper articles, stories, brochures and instruction manuals), document texts (e.g., job applications, payroll forms, public transport timetables), and quantitative texts (e.g., cheque books, bills, order forms, determining the amount of interest on a loan or an investment). For each of these domains, five levels of literacy are specified:

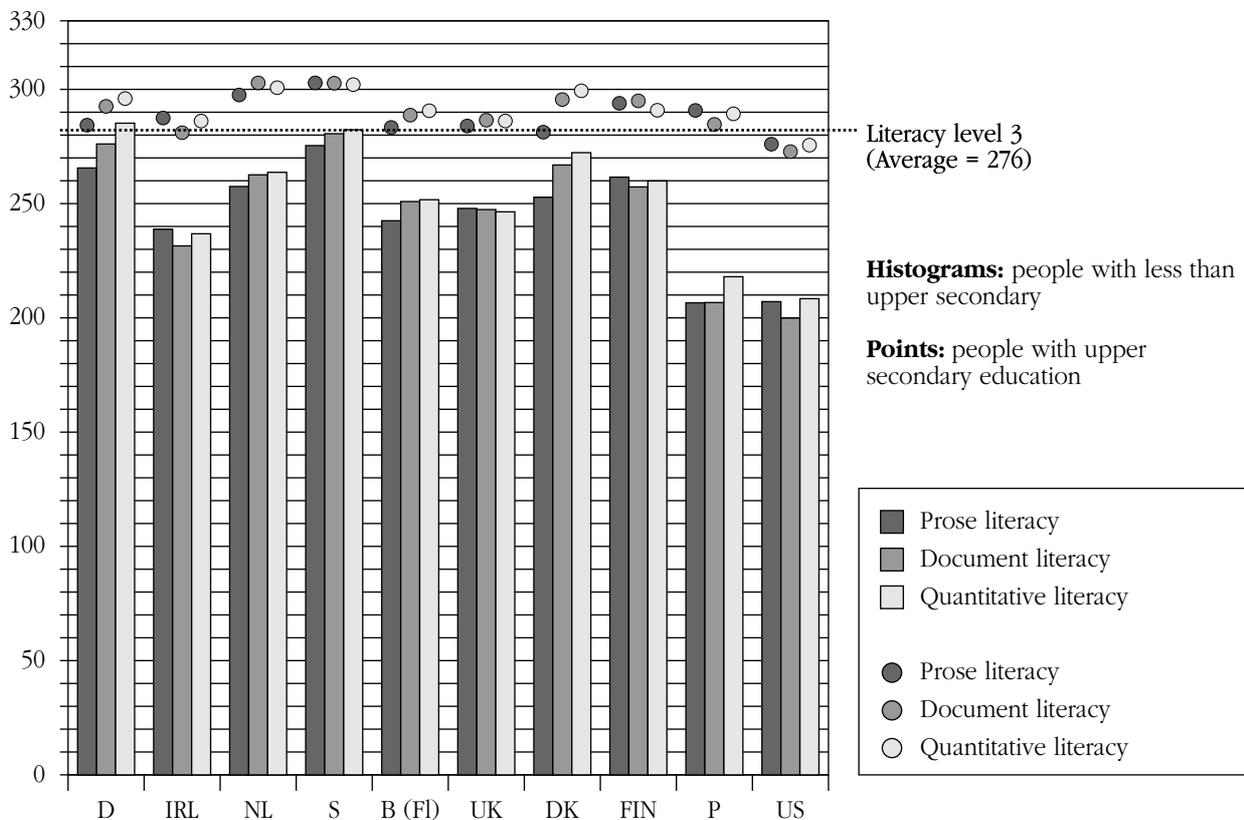
- Level 1: a low level of skill (e.g., being unable to determine the dosage of a medicine to be given to a child from the instructions on the packaging);
- Level 2: a level of skill which makes it possible to handle simple, clearly worded material, where the tasks involved are not too complex. The level of skill is low but is nonetheless higher than at Level 1. The people concerned can read, but their level of skill makes it difficult for them to cope with unfamiliar demands;
- Level 3: the minimum necessary to cope with the demands of everyday life and working situations in developed societies. It calls for the ability to handle several sources of information and to solve complex problems. This level corresponds more or less to the level of skill required to complete secondary education successfully and to enter tertiary education;
- Levels 4 and 5: high levels of skill at handling information.

Source: OECD and Statistics Canada, 2000.



Figure 2:

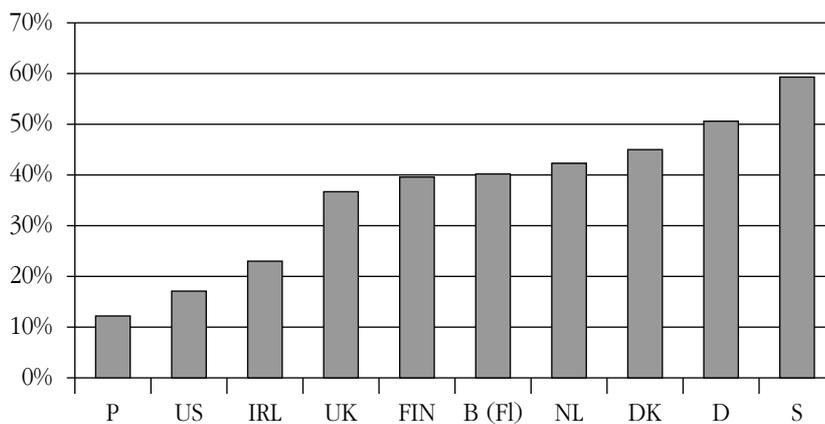
Mean literacy scores by level of education, 16-65 years, 1994-1998



Source: IALS, 1994-1998, OECD, Statistics Canada, 2000.

Figure 3:

Population not having completed upper secondary education achieving scores at levels 3 and 4/5 in document literacy 16-65 years, %



Source: IALS, 1994-1998, OECD, Statistics Canada, 2000.

tween countries, in most cases over half of the individuals concerned can read but experience difficulties using this skill in complex and/or unfamiliar situations (according to the definition of IALS levels 3 and 4/5, see Box 1).

This article will now consider how these differences in level of education and skills are reflected in access to employment, vulnerability to unemployment and participation in lifelong learning.

**Entry into employment for young people with low skill levels**

Despite the general rise in the level of education, there are still a substantial number of young people not completing upper secondary education. In 2000, one in five young people aged 18 to 24 years in the European Union (18%) had at most a lower secondary level of education (ISCED 0-2). However, the European average hides significant differences be-



tween Member States, since this percentage ranges from 8% in Sweden to 43% in Portugal.<sup>2</sup>

According to the TIMSS<sup>3</sup> study, which evaluated young people's skills in mathematics and sciences, if young people leave the education system before completing upper secondary education, they are unlikely to have a level of numeracy sufficient to ensure their employability and to allow them to update their skills during their working lives (McIntosh and Steedman, 1999).

As regards level of literacy (Table 1), although the general rise in the level of education seems to have had the effect of increasing the overall level of skills among young people (16-25 years) in comparison with the preceding generation (46-55 years), a substantial percentage of them do not reach literacy level 3<sup>4</sup> in the countries studied (between one in five young people in Sweden and the Netherlands, and one in two in Ireland). They are thus theoretically not prepared to meet the demands of life in developed societies.

How do young people with low levels of education (ISCED 0-2) fare during the transition to employment? If one looks at the unemployment situation of young people with less than 5 years' experience in the labour market (juniors), it quickly becomes apparent (Figure 4) that the tran-

sition from the education system to active life is more difficult for young people with ISCED levels 0-2, even in countries where it generally seems easier to find a job (those where juniors are on average not at a great disadvantage in comparison with adults with more than 15 years' experience in the labour market: Denmark, the Netherlands, Austria and Germany). In almost all countries in the European Union (the exceptions being Greece, Italy and Portugal), young people with a low level of education face unemployment rates appreciably higher on entry to working life than those who have continued in education and obtained qualifications at higher levels.

It is also worth mentioning that these young people continue to face difficulties in the labour market even though the size of the cohort is declining and competition should thus be becoming less fierce.

Figures for transition to unemployment and employment (in relation to the employment situation in the previous year) also illustrate the greater difficulties faced by young people who have not completed upper secondary education. When they are new entrants to the labour market (i.e. with less than 5 years' experience), young people with ISCED levels 0-2 are not only more susceptible to unemployment but also less likely to escape from it quickly (within a year) (Figure 5).

However, rather than the level of education as such, it is individuals' implicit levels of skills that matter in employment terms. Despite low levels of education, young people with a high literacy score are unlikely to be unemployed (Figure 6). Nonetheless, there is an undeniable correlation between level of education and level of literacy, and the probability of having an adequate level of reading skill without completing secondary education is relatively low (see Figure 3 above).

### Once in the labour market...

The size of the group at risk of exclusion in the labour market fluctuates in accordance with the socio-economic situation.

**Table 2:**

**Percentage of population attaining literacy level 3 or above**

	Literacy level 3 or above	
	16-25 yrs.	46-55 yrs
S	80 %	73 %
NL	77 %	52 %
B (FI)	76 %	52 %
CH	67 %	45 %
D	66 %	58 %
UK	56 %	47 %
IRL	50 %	34 %
US	45 %	51 %

Source: OECD, Statistics Canada, 1997.

(<sup>2</sup>) Labour Force Survey, Eurostat, 2000.

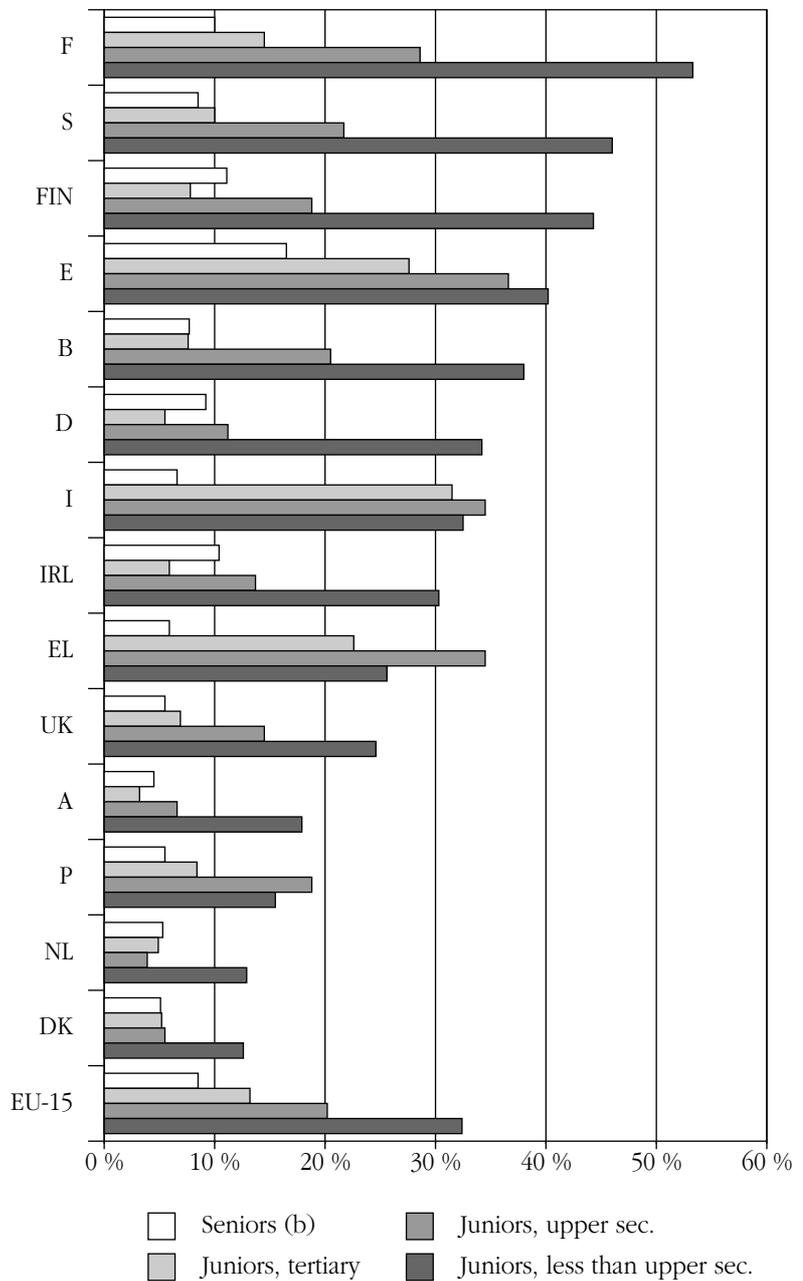
(<sup>3</sup>) Third International Mathematics and Science Study.

(<sup>4</sup>) See Box 1.



Figure 4:

**Unemployment rates of juniors (a) by level of education, EU-15, 1997, %**



(a) young people with between 0 and 5 years of experience on the labour market.

(b) more than 15 years of experience on the labour market.

Source: Key Data: the transition between education and working life, 2001

In developed societies, unfavourable economic conditions, shortage of jobs and rising demands in terms of skills mean that individuals without higher levels of education are subject to greater economic uncertainty. While they used not to be particularly stigmatised, people who have not completed upper secondary educa-

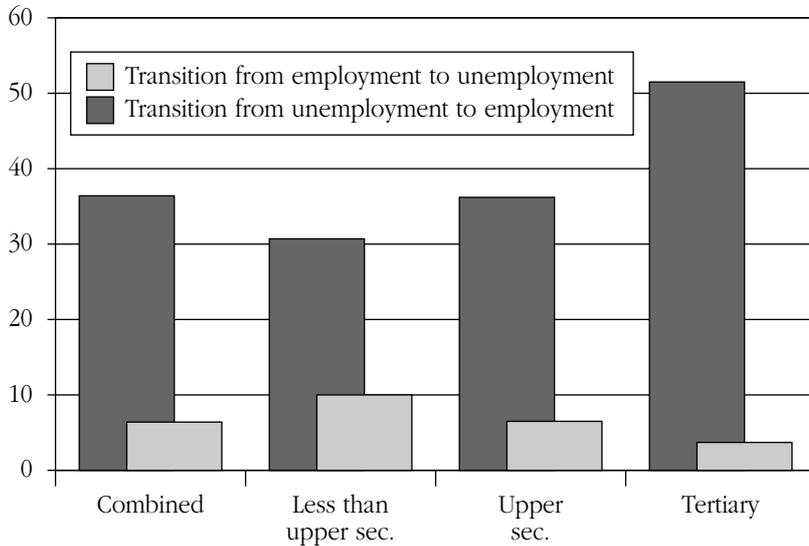
tion are now increasingly regarded as an 'at-risk group'.

In the course of their working lives, individuals with ISCED levels 0-2 can expect to spend more time in unemployment than people with higher levels of education. In the countries shown in Table 3,



Figure 5:

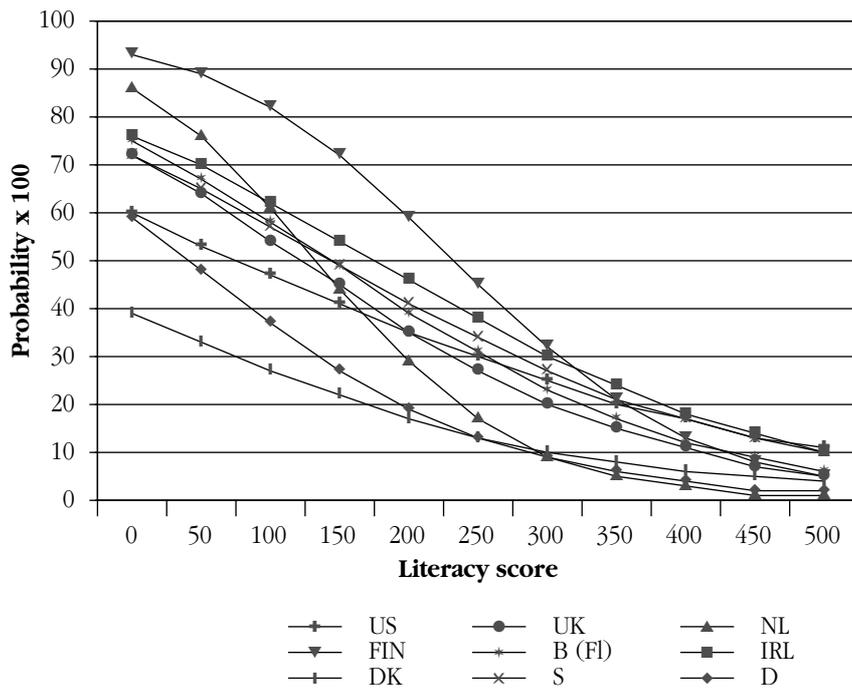
**Transitions on the labour market <sup>(a)</sup> by level of education, juniors <sup>(b)</sup>, EU-15, 1997, %**



<sup>(a)</sup> as a function of the professional situation of the individuals the previous year.  
<sup>(b)</sup> young people with between 0 and 5 years of experience on the labour market.  
 Source: Key Data: the transition between education and working life, 2001

Figure 6:

**Probability of being unemployed by literacy score (prose comprehension), men aged 16 to 25 years with a low level of education**



Source: IALS, 1994-1998; OCDE, Statistics Canada, 2000.



Table 3:

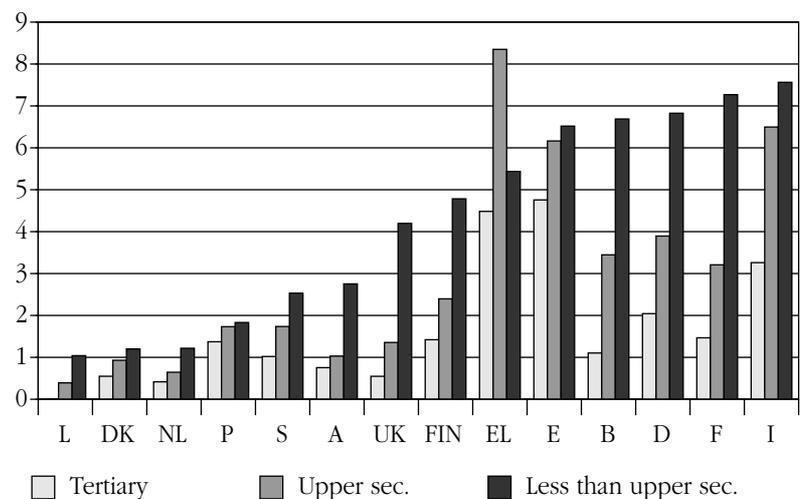
**Expected years of unemployment <sup>(a)</sup> during working life by level of education, men aged 25 to 64 years, 1995**

	Level of education		
	Less than upper sec.	Upper sec.	Tertiary
L	0,7	0,6	0,1
A	1,6	0,9	0,6
EL	1,8	1,7	1,9
NL	1,9	1,1	1,1
P	1,9	1,6	1,4
I	2,2	1,4	1,8
B	3,0	1,4	0,9
US	3,0	1,7	1,1
DK	4,0	2,8	2,0
S	4,3	3,3	2,0
F	4,4	2,5	2,1
D	4,5	2,3	1,6
IRL	5,0	2,3	1,4
UK	5,4	2,9	1,6
E	5,6	3,9	2,9
FIN	6,8	5,8	3,1

<sup>(a)</sup> Expected years of unemployment means the number of years for which an individual will be unemployed over his or her entire working life, at current rates of unemployment (for further information on methodology, see OECD 1998).  
Source: OECD, 1998

Figure 7:

**Long-term unemployment rates (1 year and more) by level of education, 2000, %**

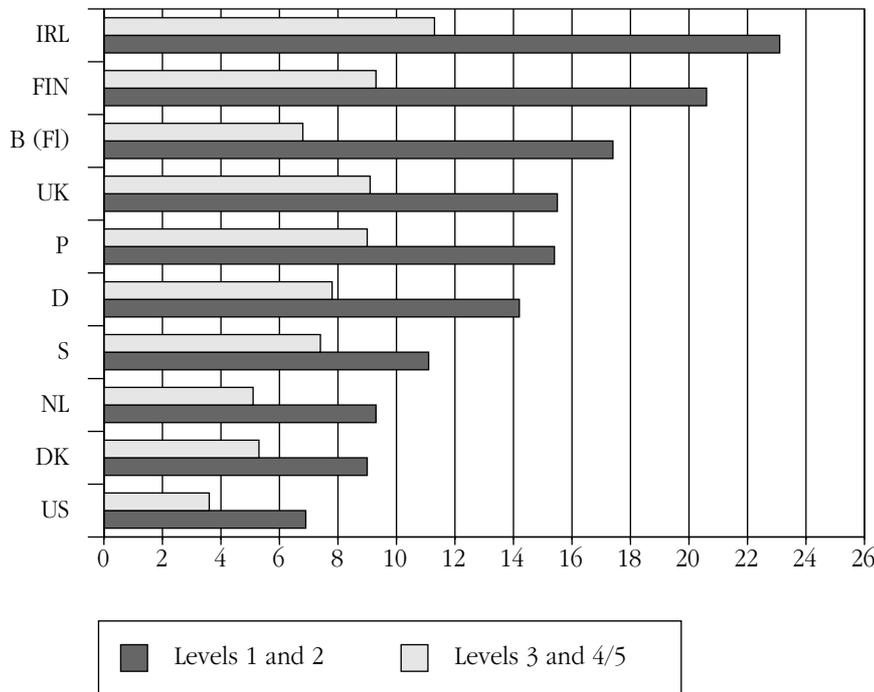


Source: Eurostat, LFS, 2000.



Figure 8:

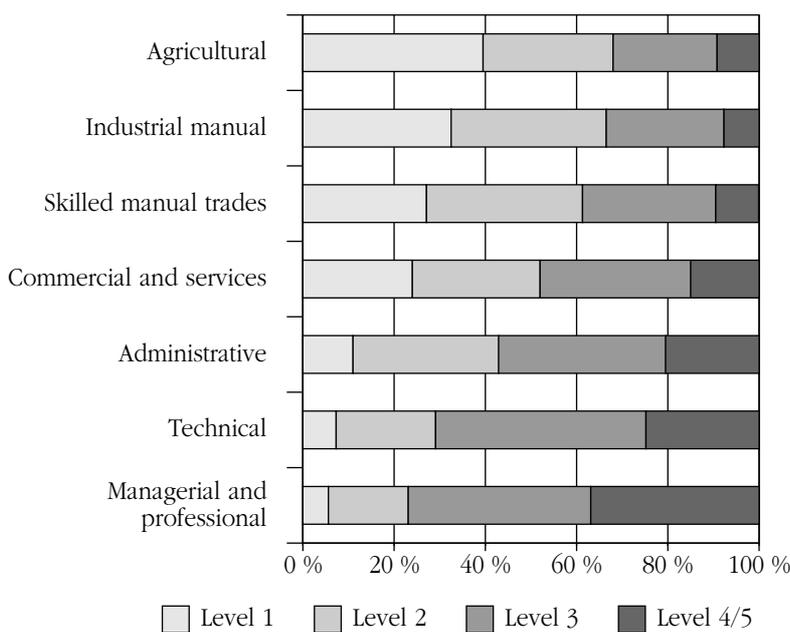
**Unemployment rate by level of literacy (prose comprehension), 16-65 years, %**



Source: IALS, 1994-1998; OCDE, Statistics Canada 2000.

Figure 9:

**Category of occupation by level of literacy (document comprehension), 16-65 years, average IALS countries, %**



Source: IALS, 1994-1998; OCDE, Statistics Canada, 2000.



adults in ISCED category 0-2 can expect between 8 months and nearly 7 years of unemployment during their working lives. If these figures are compared with those for individuals with high levels of education (between 1 month and around 3 years), there is seen to be a substantial difference. A person's level of education is thus a predictor of the time which will be spent in unemployment. This is confirmed by the indicator of long-term unemployment (one year or more) by level of education: individuals with ISCED levels 0-2 are more likely to be affected by this phenomenon (Figure 7).

An examination of the relationship between literacy and employment shows equally clearly the disadvantage suffered by people who have low levels of skills (Figure 8): everywhere, their rate of unemployment is appreciably higher. The level of reading skills is also a predictor of occupation. Literacy levels 1 and 2 are markedly less well represented among managerial, professional and technical occupations but account for the majority of manual occupations (Figure 9). There is a wide gap in the labour market between literacy levels 1 and 2, and levels 3 and above.

It would therefore appear from an examination of these indicators that a substantial number of individuals have not completed secondary education. This low level of education correlates with a poor level of ability in reading tasks: most of those who have not completed secondary education have a level of reading skill which does not enable them to cope with work and everyday situations in present-day society. These people first encounter difficulties when they start out in the world of work. And once they have entered the labour market, they form the most vulnerable groups of individuals, and are most likely to suffer unemployment in general and long-term unemployment in particular.

### **Lifelong learning: a need and a requirement**

The situation of those with few qualifications is made all the more worrying by studies showing that they take part in less

training during their working lives, and thus have fewer opportunities to update their skills, than those with better qualifications. This is found both among the population in general, and among those undergoing training as part of their work. It means that the workers least likely to have the skills and knowledge required in the labour market are also those who participate least in training, one of the ways of remedying that situation.

On average, only 2.4% of the population in the European Union with ISCED levels 0-2 had taken part in education or training during the four weeks preceding the Labour Force Survey in the year 2000. This is almost four times fewer than those with upper secondary qualifications (9.4%) and six times fewer than those with tertiary education qualifications (15.5%) (Figure 10).

In all the European countries studied, people with ISCED levels 0-2 have lower rates of participation in work-based training and spend fewer hours in training, with the exception of Germany and, to a lesser degree, Denmark, where the number of hours of training offered to employees with ISCED levels 0-2 is greater (Figure 11).

Level of literacy also correlates positively with participation in lifelong learning: the lower the level of reading skill, the less a person will take part in training (Figure 12).

In all countries, *the situation of individuals with low levels of education thus appears critical*. Not only do they constitute the group least able, given their formal education and average level of literacy skills, to cope with the various demands of present-day society, but they are also the group participating least in training and thus having least chance of updating and renewing their skills.

### **Conclusions and proposed lines of action**

In view of the necessarily very restricted space available for this article, and the limitations of the comparative data available at the European and international

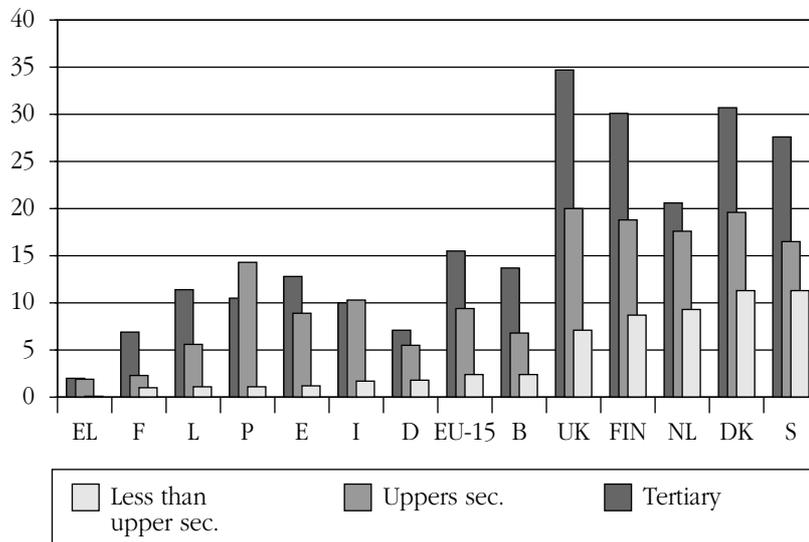


level, it is not possible to describe in detail the causes and consequences of the selective disadvantage suffered by individuals with low levels of education and skills. However, we have shown that their situation in the labour market is precarious since they tend, as a group, to suffer cumulative deficits, *exclusion from both employment and learning reinforcing one another*. Furthermore, the decline in the size of this group has not led to any improvement in their relative situation. This is all the more worrying in that individuals with a low level of education account for more than one third of the population aged 25 to 59 years within the European Union.

This selective exclusion would appear to be the result of a combination of factors linked to the substantial changes which have transformed the demand for skills in the labour market: the widespread introduction of new technologies, changes in working processes and the organisation of work, increased competition, re-

Figure 10:

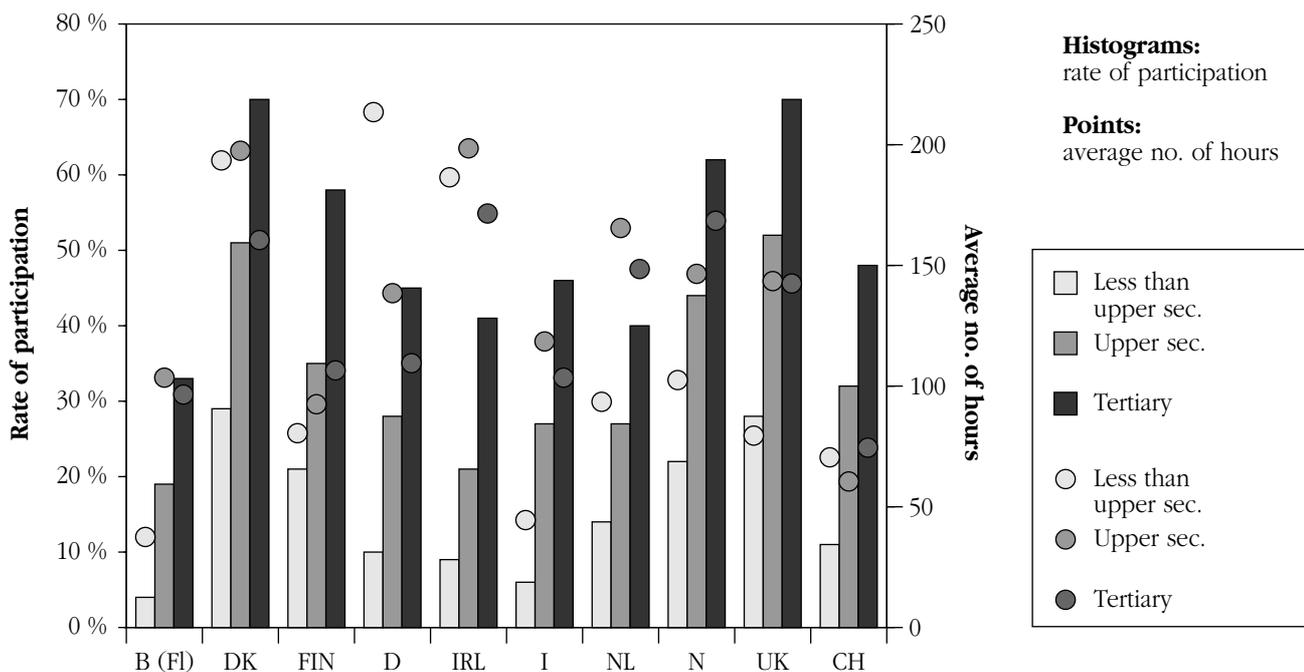
**Population aged 25-64 having taken part in education or training during the previous four weeks, EU-15, 2000, %**



Source: ECFT, 2000. IRL, A: no data available

Figure 11:

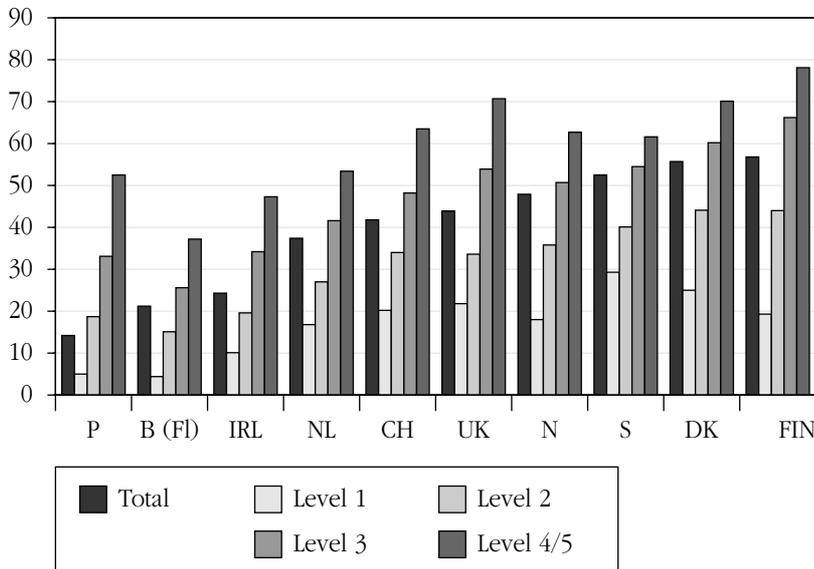
**Participation in work-based education and continuing training by level of education, rate of participation and average number of hours in education or training**



Source: IALS, 1994-1998, OCDE, Statistics Canada, 2000.  
 B (Fl) IALS 95/96, DK IALS 98/99, FIN 1995, D 1997, IRL IALS 95/96, I IALS 98/99, NL IALS 94/95, N IALS 98/99, UK IALS 95/96, CH IALS 98/99.



**Figure 12:**  
**Participation in adult education and training during the year preceding the survey by each level of literacy and in total, document literacy, 15-65 years, %**



Source: IALS, 1994-1998; OCDE, Statistics Canada, 2000.

structuring of industries, polarisation of labour markets, etc. Paradoxically, it is also partly the outcome of changes in supply. In a market where qualifications are commonplace, substitution phenomena appear, with the result that low-skilled jobs are taken by people whose qualifications are higher than those required by the job. The general rise in the level of education thus appears to be a factor in the exclusion of the least skilled. Research findings are not clear as to the relative significance of these different factors, but it is certain that changes in both the supply and the demand side have transformed the relationship between these two poles, to the detriment of people with low levels of education. What can be done about this? The following suggestions, which remain at the level of general principles, may be put forward.

□ It is often impossible to isolate education, training and employment from other key aspects of individuals' private and

social lives: habitat, health and voluntary activities. There is a need for targeted policies, specifically tailored to different groups (young people, those in employment, the unemployed, those outside the labour market, and older workers). Life-long learning is one of the key elements of these active policies. The aim must be to maintain and update the skills of the individuals concerned and to encourage them to become integrated into the labour market and, more generally, into society. If this aim is to be achieved, practical steps, policies and legislative provisions need to be coordinated.

□ While training, especially from a life-long learning perspective, aims to integrate all individuals into employment and the cognitive economy, it needs to be preceded by a policy of support (orientation and guidance) so as to prepare individuals to undertake the training that is appropriate for them under the best possible conditions.

□ To the extent that the criteria which define the category of people with low skill levels are based primarily on the results of formal education and do not take into account all the skills acquired from working experience and everyday life, evaluation and validation of non-formal and informal learning may prove useful tools. Hence, it is obvious that this disadvantaged group will benefit, both in the labour market and in terms of lifelong learning, if all their skills are validated and recognised, regardless of the manner in which they were acquired. If an individual's skills can be identified, this not only may make it possible to guide his or her learning and to build on skills previously acquired, but will also make it easier to give recognition to those skills and to make them count in the labour market.

Improving and maintaining the abilities of people with low levels of education and labour market skills is an absolute necessity if the marginalisation and exclusion of a significant proportion of the population and the labour force is to be avoided.



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# Assistant training: Safety net or labour market preparation?

**This article deals with the design and implementation of a new training programme in the Netherlands intended to function as a safety net for young people who dropped out of compulsory education or are otherwise not eligible for enrolment in a vocational education and training programme. It is based on case-study research conducted in five regional training centres. These ‘safety net programmes’ do fulfil a need, given the increasing numbers of young people participating. However, to make them more effective, both in terms of providing a basis for labour market entry and for lifelong learning, a shift in focus is needed.**

## Introduction

Various European countries have recently reformed their upper secondary education including vocational education and training (VET). The need to adapt VET to meet the changing economy and labour market is an important driving force for these reforms. A redesigned VET system to help young people make the transition from school to work and prepare them for working life is needed in which flexibility, employability and lifelong learning have become key issues.

The Netherlands are no exception. After some years of preparation, a new Vocational and Adult Education Act (the WEB, after its Dutch abbreviation) was implemented in 1996. This Act, which can be characterised as a framework law, has brought together all vocational and adult education (including non-formal education for young adults) in both a legal and institutional setting. The institutional setting consists of newly established regional training centres (ROCs) that have been given substantial autonomy in all organisational and educational matters. The locus of government control has shifted from prescriptive regulations to accountability and output control (Brandsma, Noonan & Westphalen, 2000). Introducing a national qualification structure for vocational training programmes, in which various qualifications (or programmes leading to a particular diploma) and attainment targets are defined is an important element of the reform. Developing these qualifications and attainment targets is the responsibility of the so-called national bodies for vocational education in accordance with the social partners. The national qualification structure is built

upon four training levels and two training pathways. The lowest of the four levels, level 1 or assistant training programmes, is a novelty for VET in the Netherlands. Overall, the reason for introducing a qualification structure was and is to improve further the match between VET and the labour market.

This article reports on the outcomes of a research project that investigated the way in which assistant training programmes are implemented by ROCs. The study was designed as a comparative case study, in which five ROCs were involved (of current 43 ROCs) (Brandsma, Van Esch, Huisman & Abbenhuis, 2000).

## School-to-work transition and safety nets

The transition from school to work has been a major theme in educational debates and educational policy over past decades and remains so today. This is due, not least, to rapid changes in occupational practice. Changes that concern work content – influenced by technological developments – as well as employment structures (for example, disappearing lifetime employment, flexible work and working hours). More and more, workers are expected to be flexible (OECD, 1996). There are various reasons school-to-work transition and the match between (vocational) education and the labour market in particular, remain high on the policy agenda. First, youth unemployment remains a cause for concern. Even though in some European countries (such as the Netherlands) youth unemployment rates have been fairly low in the past few years, there are still substantial differences between



young people in their chances to find gainful employment. Differences are related to characteristics such as level of educational attainment, ethnicity and socio-economic background. Given the changes in the labour market and dropping demand for unskilled and low-skilled workers, young people with little or no post-compulsory education are particularly at risk. Second, there is growing awareness that improving the match between education and labour market needs more than acquisition of occupational skills. Improving this match also requires young people to work in changing circumstances and environments. The question is to what extent vocational education and training prepares young people for lifelong learning. Third, school-to-work transition in itself has changed. It is no longer a clear demarcation point between different stages in life. Many young people either combine their education with a part-time job or choose to broaden their orientation before entering the labour market (for example, travelling around for some time or additional training abroad).

In its review covering 14 countries, the OECD attempted to identify the characteristics of education and labour markets that improve the 'effectiveness' of school-to-work transition. 'Effectiveness' means absorbing young people into stable and gainful employment with the perspective of remaining employed. Although it is not possible to provide one single solution for different countries, some key features of successful transition are identified. One of these features is 'tightly knit safety nets' (OECD, 2000), aimed at those at risk in the transition process. Such 'tightly knit safety nets' consist of measures or structures aimed at redirecting young people at the brink of falling through the cracks into education, training or work experience as quickly as possible. 'Tailored pathways', good coordination between education, labour market and welfare policies, local initiatives, great efforts in career guidance and counselling, and attention to both prevention and remediation are key ingredients for such safety nets. Scandinavian countries provide some good examples of effective strategies incorporating these ingredients. They show that individually designed learning pathways, specialised guidance and counsel-

ling services and a 'sticks and carrot' regime can contribute towards developing effective safety nets.

### **Safety nets within the Dutch Vocational and Adult Education Act (WEB)**

An important aim of the WEB is to increase access to vocational education and training. To reduce social inequalities, the groups in society that have had insufficient educational opportunities, should be given preferential access to vocational education and training (Engberts & Geurts, 1994). ROCs have a unique position within the education system. Whereas access to general upper secondary education and to tertiary non-university education is based on previous educational attainment, ROCs are obliged to provide a suitable offer to everyone who wants to enrol. In today's multiform society, ROCs are confronted with more and more diversity in their student population and with new target groups such as young immigrants with varying cultural backgrounds and mastery of the Dutch language, early school leavers and employed as well as unemployed persons with either obsolete or no qualifications at all (Kraayvanger, Eimers & Hövels, 2000).

Another important aim of the WEB is to provide as many people as possible with an initial qualification (also called 'starting qualification'). Level 2 of the national qualification structure is used as a point of reference defining an initial qualification. This is comparable to the final level of the previous primary apprenticeship (Hövels, 2001). Obtaining this initial qualification is necessary to gain a good starting point in the labour market. It is also necessary for maintaining gainful employment and to continue learning throughout working life (MOW, 1993). Although it is an overt aim of the WEB to provide as many people as possible with an initial qualification, it has been acknowledged that this might not be possible for all (young) people. At least not without additional aid. Individuals confronted with learning problems or with barriers to learning (such as prior (negative) learning experiences, language problems or socio-economic disadvantages) might not



be able to step up at once to the level of an initial qualification.

To provide these groups with a minimal opportunity to gain some vocational qualification, the level 1 qualification or assistant training programmes were designed. Assistant training is intended for those for whom the gap between lower secondary education and basic vocational training leading to an initial qualification is too big. In this sense, assistant training is a (tightly knit) safety net. As assistant training is intended for those not immediately accessible to level 2 training programmes, it has to perform a double function:

- preparing participants for rather simple jobs (unskilled or very low-skilled);
- preparing participants for continuing their studies in level 2 programmes.

### Implementation of assistant training programmes

Assistant training programmes were first introduced in 1996 as part of the reforms started by the WEB. The question is how these training programmes have been designed and implemented in practice and whether they can serve as safety nets. This section deals with these questions and will elaborate on the characteristics of those enrolled in assistant training, the embedding of the programmes within ROCs, the didactical model applied in training, guidance and counselling of students, in particular on-the-job training. The final part of this section deals with the necessary preconditions for successful implementation of assistant training.

#### Participants' characteristics

Solid figures on the background characteristics of those participating in assistant training programmes are not (yet) available. There are, however, some indications on the type of students enrolled, though these have to be interpreted with caution. Students enrolling in assistant training are mainly:

- early school leavers (that did not complete lower secondary education);

- students that completed prevocational lower secondary education at a very low level;

- students enrolled in individually designed lower secondary pathways;

- students enrolled in special needs education;

- immigrants or refugees (including minors).

If the target group for assistant training consists of those with insufficient educational opportunities, these training programmes serve the groups for which they are intended. At the same time, enrolment in assistant training programmes is varied.

Although, according to the WEB, no entrance requirements are needed to enrol in assistant training, in practice some ROCs do establish thresholds. ROCs put much effort into the intake of students, especially those who want to enrol in levels 1 or 2 programmes. Intake procedures differ between ROCs and even units within ROCs. In general, however, previous educational attainment is considered as well as knowledge of the Dutch language, numeracy skills, motivation, learning skills (or problems) and communicative skills. Important reasons for non-admission to assistant training programmes are: insufficient proficiency in the Dutch language, lack of motivation for training and/or 'behavioural problems' (such as not being able to work in a group). Should potential participants not be admitted, they are either referred to adult education (if the problem is literacy or numeracy deficiencies) or to the guidance and counselling unit in ROCs to find or design a suitable trajectory.

#### Embedding assistant training in ROCs

A major assumption when establishing ROCs was that by bringing different disciplines together (vocational education, adult education and non-formal education for young adults (*vormingswerk*), ... they would all be strengthened by using each other's expertise. It was presumed this would result in added value especially for assistant training. It is clear, however, that the extent to which such 'cross-fertilisa-



tion' does occur, depends on the way in which assistant training is embedded in the organisation of ROCs.

On the organisational embedding of assistant training, two different models are applied:

- embedding assistant training programmes in the various units for vocational training;
- embedding all assistant training programmes in the adult education unit.

It is difficult to indicate which model is the best. Both models have advantages and disadvantages. Embedding assistant training programmes in the related units for vocational training can strengthen the bond with other vocational programmes and improve continuation in a level 2 programme, for instance. At the same time, this model can inhibit cooperation with other disciplines, unless ROCs succeed in integrating these disciplines in multidisciplinary teams for assistant training programmes. A disadvantage of the second model is that contacts with related vocational programmes may become weak. At the same time, this model allows for concentrated development around assistant training as well as for a more efficient implementation of those activities not specific to one particular programme.

Clearly, irrespective of the chosen model, ROCs attempt to stimulate and improve cooperation between the different disciplines. This proves not to be easy. Differences in approach and culture as well as common unfamiliarity sometimes impede cooperation. Bringing the different disciplines together and strengthening the position of assistant training is part of a more general process of organisational development ROCs are going through.

### **The didactical design of assistant training programmes**

In literature on the design of education and training pathways for (young) people at risk, it is often stated that a different and more tailored approach is needed. Which ingredients should be part of such an approach remains, however, often unclear. Such a tailored offer is a recur-

rent theme for WEB reforms as well. This raises the question whether ROCs succeed in delivering tailored pathways in assistant training and whether these tailored pathways are specific to assistant training.

In answering this question, there is a difficulty or at least unclarity about assistant training that can hamper the choice for the best didactical model. This dilemma concerns the earlier mentioned double role of assistant training programmes: qualifying for narrow (low-skilled) jobs versus preparation for further studies. It appears that no ROCs or units within ROCs clearly take the position that assistant training should be a bridging course preparing for level 2 training programmes. Nevertheless, opinions about aim and role of assistant training do differ. Often, assistant training is perceived as 'terminal education'. Those of this opinion perceive high transfer percentages as indicating level 2 programmes lack the adaptability needed to keep students on board. In practice, assistant training is sometimes used as a possibility for students underachieving in level 2 programmes, to transfer to a lower level, instead of a training opportunity for those who have no other chance.

Different opinions are not reflected in great differences in didactical approaches within different assistant training programmes. Any differences in approach are explained mainly by the autonomy ROCs have for their teaching and learning processes. In general, the (ideal) didactical model for assistant training should at least include working in fairly small groups and a big investment in (individual) guidance, in particular during periods of on-the-job training. 'Learning while working' and designing flexible and individualised pathways are especially important. At the same time, managing such flexible and individualised pathways draws heavily on the qualities of teachers. Traditional whole-class teaching is no longer a fitting approach. Teachers working in assistant training (as well as level 2 programmes) have to make their teaching attractive. As one teacher coins it: 'Teachers will have to stake everything to present their subject matter in an attractive way. Those who think that whole-class teaching will do, are absolutely wrong.'



For the necessary didactical reforms, some ROCs are trying to introduce problem-based instruction. Given the particular target groups of assistant training, some point out problem-based instruction has its limits. Problem-based instruction requires independent learning. Participants in assistant training programmes do not always have the necessary learner independence. Students must be provided with the opportunity to gain this learner independence steadily throughout their learning process.

ROCs are still searching for the best didactical approach. Small groups and emphasis on guidance and practical learning are the key elements. Both the role of the teacher and the teaching methods have to change. Teachers have to assume the roles of coach and counsellor as well. Whole-class teaching has to be replaced by individualised, active and attractive methods. These changes take much time. Many teachers stick to whole-class teaching using existing teaching methods and materials.

### **Guidance, counselling and practical training**

Intensive guidance of students while learning at school and learning within an enterprise are important pillars for assistant training. Ideally, student guidance at school and guidance during practical training should be tied strongly. In practice the strength of these ties differs, depending on the more general guidance model adopted. Overall, three models can be distinguished:

- guidance as an integrated part of the learning process: guidance and counselling is a task of every teacher. Teachers are also responsible for guiding of students during their practical training;
- guidance as a semi-integrated part of the learning process: guidance and counselling are separate tasks, which, however, are performed by teachers. Guidance during practical training is one of those tasks;
- guidance is not integrated in the learning process: guidance of students is concentrated in separate jobs, carried out by staff members not teaching assistant training. These staff members do not have a

responsibility for guidance during practical training.

Practical training has gained an important place within reformed vocational training pathways; both in the school-based pathway (or BOL) and in the work-based or former apprenticeship pathway (or BBL). The WEB only stipulates the limiting conditions to be met, for the minimum and maximum amount of time to be devoted to practical training in an enterprise. The design and duration of this training period as well as the organisation and intensity of guidance are at the discretion of ROCs. Within the work-based pathway for assistant training, traditional apprenticeship models are mostly still in place. This means that students are learning while working four days a week and visiting school one day a week. In the school-based pathway there is much more variety. Both for structuring practical training within the curriculum and for guidance provided. Guidance during practical training is more intensive, the more the general guidance model has the characteristics of the above-mentioned 'integrated model'. Nevertheless, there are signs that enterprises providing practical training would like to intensify further contacts with ROCs.

It has been assumed that finding practical training places for students enrolled in assistant training would be difficult. First, because it concerns a new training pathway that might not yet be well-known by enterprises. Second because it concerns training for fairly low-skilled jobs for which demand has dropped. Third, because enterprises are not interested in training these students since they need much coaching. Our study shows this assumption does not hold. At least not for the moment. ROCs report little problems in finding practical training places for their students of assistant training. If they do face problems, these are mainly related to the 'quality' of these positions. 'Quality' in terms of the time enterprises can invest in coaching these students. Nevertheless, a less recent study shows there are problems in obtaining practical training places for students in assistant training programmes. In particular, it is difficult to obtain such places in enterprises accredited as 'training enterprises' (Van Eijndhoven & Vlug, 1998).



The booming economy could be an explanation for surprisingly little difficulties in providing practical training in assistant training. Companies are happy with every hand they can get hold of. At the same time, staff shortages might go at the expense of the necessary coaching of students. If the economic situation, however, is the explanation why finding practical training places for students enrolled in assistant training is not as difficult as expected, things might change once an economic recession sets in. In this case, it will become difficult to provide satisfactory on-the-job training for this group of students.

### **Necessary preconditions for successful implementation of assistant training**

Which bottlenecks do ROCs meet when implementing assistant training? Implementation does not only concern introducing a new training programme. It also entails a process of organisational development, including its mission and vision on assistant training. The most important preconditions for successful implementation are categorised as follows.

### ***Aim and function of assistant training programmes***

An important issue -influencing other preconditions as well- concerns both the aim of assistant training and the target group(s) that should be given priority. These issues are unclear and the WEB does not provide decisive answers. The question is whether it concerns qualifying (terminal) education for specific target groups? Or whether it concerns mainly a possibility to absorb students that fail level 2 programmes? Or should both roles be combined within assistant training programmes? If this is the case, the next question is whether these two roles are reconcilable. According to the OECD (2000), such ambiguity on the primary focus of tightly knit safety nets will result in problems. Problems on the necessary coordination between different policy frameworks, choice of fitting partners for cooperation as well as priorities in allocating resources.

### ***Financing assistant training programmes***

The issue of priorities in allocating resources is a crucial bottleneck for assist-

ant training. The principle of working with small groups of students has a clear financial implication. The funding model for vocational programmes in general and assistant training programmes in particular, sets limits on this principle. Though many teachers and coordinators involved with assistant training programmes prefer to work with groups of 10 to 12 students, this is not possible financially. Even if the group size is increased to about 14 to 16 students, financial resources are not always sufficient. Reallocation of budgets between training programmes at different levels sometimes meets resistance from programmes at higher levels.

A particular financial problem is encountered if integration of adult education services is considered necessary for students enrolled in assistant training. Whereas funding for vocational programmes is directly transferred from the Ministry of Education to ROCs, this is not the case for adult education provided by ROCs. The national budget for adult education is allocated to local authorities responsible for planning and providing a satisfactory adult education offer. Local authorities also hold responsibility for defining the targets of adult education and the target groups to be given priority. Priorities that do not necessarily match the priorities of ROCs. In practice, this forms a hindrance for developing pathways in which (adult) education and vocational training are integrated.

### ***Support of top and middle management***

Support for assistant training from both top and middle management in ROCs is indispensable for successful implementation. This concerns material as well as moral support. For material support the main question is whether management is willing to allocate sufficient resources and whether project-based budgets will become structural in the long run. The need to fight for a budget each year, is demoralising for coordinators and teachers involved in assistant training.

On moral support, the main issue is to what extent ROCs can and want to create an organisation-wide mission for their policy for groups at risk and assistant training programmes. Decisive is the extent to which management is able to get



the message across that these programmes are important. The impression is that in some ROCs, developing and implementing assistant training is mainly the responsibility of the staff directly involved. They run the risk of becoming rather isolated 'problem owners' with large(r) organisations taking an indifferent position (Bremer et al., 1999). However, materialisation of such managerial support in overall mission statements is one thing. Translating such statements into day-to-day practice in ROCs will not occur automatically. The fact that organisational units within ROCs have large autonomy can be at odds with the idea of more centralised steering.

### ***Cohesion in the organisation***

As indicated before, it was expected that establishing the ROCs would bring added value through the cross-fertilisation of different disciplines. This was seen as a precondition for providing a satisfactory offer for groups at risk and implementing assistant training. In practice, cooperation between the three disciplines (vocational training, adult education and non-formal education for young adults) is often not optimal. Sometimes, working relations consist more of frustrating one another than of cooperation. Common unfamiliarity combined with differences in working cultures and organisational barriers between the disciplines are the main causes for lack of cooperation. Levelling out these barriers will take time, though time alone may not be enough. Active organisational intervention is also needed. Again, such central steering can be at odds with the idea of decentralisation within the organisation.

### ***A motivated and strong team***

Providing tailor-made training pathways relies heavily on those doing the work: the teachers. Strong 'working teams' consisting of highly motivated teachers are a precondition. Creating such teams requires well-designed professionalisation and personnel policies. An issue which many ROCs have started to address only recently. Creating such teams also requires sufficient financial resources. As shown, these are not abundantly available.

### ***The national qualification structure***

A final but important precondition -or rather bottleneck- is the national quali-

cation structure. As mentioned, with implementation of the WEB a new national qualification structure was introduced as well. Even though ROCs have a high discretionary authority for all matters of designing teaching and learning processes, they have to comply with the rules set by the national qualification structure and the qualifications and attainment targets included in it. These qualifications and attainment targets are heavily criticised by staff members involved in delivering assistant training. Their major objection is that in developing these qualifications a top-down approach has been applied, deriving content and attainment targets for level 3 programmes from level 4 programmes and so further downwards to level 1 programmes. This approach, labelled by some as the 'tea bag' model, has resulted in a content definition too theoretical for the target group of assistant training programmes. In these programmes 'working practice' should be the central focus and all subject matter -even if 'theoretical' in nature- should be learned -and examined- in working practice. The limits imposed by present attainment targets and examination rules hinder ROCs in adapting assistant training towards the needs and preferences of the target groups at stake. Nevertheless, some ROCs are redesigning programmes according to the didactical principles they think should underpin these programmes.

## **Conclusions and discussion**

Assistant training programmes are a novelty introduced with the new national qualification structure for initial vocational training in the Netherlands. These training programmes have been primarily introduced for those who left lower secondary education without a diploma or those who have suffered otherwise from deficiencies in their prior educational career. Assistant training programmes could be the (tightly knit) safety nets for groups at risk, as intended by the OECD. From the study presented here, it is clear that implementing this assistant training is still in progress. ROCs are still in search of didactical models that do justice to the diversity of the (potential) student population. At the same time, both an increase



in the supply of and participation in assistant training make clear there is a demand for this educational offer. The question whether this supply also answers a labour market need is still an issue of major debate (Brandsma et al., 2001). This also holds for the question whether ROCs are sufficiently capable of designing individualised and tailored training pathways. For the recent evaluation of the WEB, Doets and Westerhuis (2001), state that the original target group of these programmes suffer from 'substitution' students that want (or need) to transfer to a lower level. ROCs are still 'wrestling' to find the right balance in designing programmes that are both attractive and challenging for participants (De Bruijn, 2001).

Assistant training programmes have to deal with a 'double paradox'. On the one hand, the policy assumptions underpinning the reform -in particular the national qualification structure- take broad and sustainable qualifications as a starting point. Assistant training, however, prepares primarily for rather unskilled, simple jobs. On the other hand, the earlier mentioned ambiguity on the aim of assistant training results in unclearness on its role and position and, with that, in unclear priorities. Solving this double paradox needs greater emphasis on the association between initial and post-initial training.

### **A layered training model for groups at risk**

Kraayvanger, Eimers and Hövels (2000), state that for the low-skilled, social-normative and social-communicative competences are much more important for their chances on the labour market than technical competences. While social-normative and social-communicative competences are determinant for 'entry chances' of the low-skilled, technical competences are important for maintaining a position on the labour market (Den Boer, Hövels, Frietman & Buursink, 1998). Kraayvanger et al. draw up the following proposal. For the most vulnerable groups, the ambition to acquire broad occupational competences should be moderated. Instead, the focus should shift towards acquiring an ideal set of skills to increase their chances of entry onto the labour market and, at the same time, provide them with a basis for further (occu-

pational) skill development. This suggests a 'layered' training model. In initial training, emphasis should be on acquiring necessary social-normative and social-communicative skills. Gaining technical competences takes place during on-the-job training and mainly helps with acquiring social-normative and social-communicative competences. Only in the second instance, after entering the labour market, does the emphasis shift towards gaining technical competences. 'Learning while working' can have an important role in this. Either immediately after acquiring the necessary 'labour market entry' skills, or after a period of employment.

Designing assistant training according to these principles might be a solution for the double paradox. In the long run, this might also create the necessary opportunities for those entering the labour market with an assistant qualification for strengthening their qualification level and, in the end, for lifelong learning. The implications of such an approach are, first, that assistant training programmes should be less differentiated than is the case now. The branch- if not job-specific character of many assistant training programmes might mean that once they entered the labour market, former students get stuck in dead-end jobs that may disappear over time. This approach also has major implications for the design of an adequate training supply. Both for school- and work-based learning opportunities and for dividing learning contents between school-based and work-based learning environments. Finally, it also has major implications for training and competence development policies within enterprises.

### **The need for consideration of the low-skilled in HRD**

In general, it is feared that those who hold a qualification of assistant worker, will be the first to be threatened with unemployment if the economy slides into recession. Their qualification is below the initial vocational qualification considered necessary for obtaining and keeping gainful employment. Generally, enterprises underinvest in training and developing their least skilled employees and low-skilled workers hardly benefit from participating in continuing training. At the same time, most current literature on HRD and



knowledge development and management, focuses mainly on 'knowledge work' and (better educated) 'knowledge workers'. If we want to create possibilities for the least qualified to continue their own development by learning through work, it will require targeted use of human resource development instruments within enterprises. Targeted towards the low-skilled. As indicated earlier, 'blueprints' are not yet available and probably cannot be generalised across companies.

The right strategy will depend on the features of specific labour organisations. However, some ingredients can be outlined here. Job-coaching, intensive coaching and counselling on-the-job, careful small-step job enrichment, carefully designed learning opportunities tailored towards individual learning styles and preference, and assessing and recognising prior acquired competences can be promising elements in such a targeted strategy.

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# Moving learning venues abroad – a pilot scheme in Germany

## Europeanisation in German initial vocational training

'Promoting bi-national exchange programmes' is one tenet of the federal government's Bündnis für Arbeit und Ausbildung (Alliance for Jobs and Vocational Training). It also marks a new departure in vocational training, in which Europeanisation is becoming an increasingly significant catchword in the German educational vocabulary. The alliance's federal, regional and business partners apparently agree that this offers interesting prospects, particularly for the vocational training sector. The motto Lower Saxony's Education Minister, Renate Jürgens-Pieper, has proposed for young trainees and workers, sums up the trend: 'There's nothing better for trainees than time spent abroad!' (*Neue Osnabrücker Zeitung*, 3 December 1998, p. 17). The European unification process is rendering such periods of training abroad more essential than ever. Moreover, financial support from the EU vocational training programme Leonardo da Vinci II has made it much easier for young trainees to gain experience abroad. The new version of the programme was passed on 26 April 1999 and runs from 1 January 2000 to 31 December 2006. Leonardo II challenges vocational schools as well as enterprises in their role as both dual partners and work experience providers for school-based initial training (e.g. assistantships) to inject life into the European idea. Previously, exchanges covered periods of only three to four weeks, but now placements of three months and more will be an option in initial vocational training.

## The EU Leonardo da Vinci vocational training programme

We can trace the roots of EU training programmes back to 1957, when a decision to join forces to promote initial and continuing vocational training accompanied the founding of the EEC. Conflicts between the concept of harmonising training throughout Europe and retaining national training traditions and systems have always been a moot point in European educational policy. Although European educational policymakers have striven to foster cooperation and the mutual recognition of qualifications from all Member States, the complete harmonisation of educational structures and content has always been ruled out. With this proviso, 1985 witnessed the first vocational training funding schemes. We can regard these as precursors of the current programmes. Today Articles 126 and 127 of the Maastricht Treaty form the basis for the consolidation of EU educational cooperation. While cooperation between European institutions of higher education became the focus of European educational policy in the 1980s and early 1990s thanks to the Erasmus programme, since 1994 vocational training has played a more prominent role (Müller-Solger et al., 1997, p. 3 ff.; Münk, 1999, p. 4 ff.).

The historical development is mirrored in the evolution of terminology. Even the term 'European training programme' or 'EU training programme' is not standardised in German documentation. The expressions 'EU action programme' and 'EU support programme' are both in use

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**Getting a period of work experience at a foreign company recognised as a unit of a dual or scholastic initial training programme is not easy. But this is exactly what agencies in the Weser-Ems region of Lower Saxony are trying to achieve. They have managed to forge an alliance with the chambers of commerce and industry, vocational schools, specialised institutions of higher education and the Education Ministry of the Land and are riding the wave created and sustained by the EU Leonardo programme. After clearly defining the term 'practical training' and presenting its various forms, the article outlines the advantages and disadvantages of a practical period abroad compared to traditional work experience. The authors specify conditions conducive to establishment of foreign placement as a vocational training institution. They show that periods of work experience in another country are bound to benefit the German dual training system and boost its reputation in the rest of Europe.**



(Münk, 1999, p. 4). However, the Federal Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Technology (BMB+F) refers to 'EU training programmes'. This term first appeared officially in the 1996 Vocational Training Report for Leonardo da Vinci, Socrates and other programmes. The explanation for the use of this term in the Leonardo context is the dovetailing of previously separate individual EU training areas such as Comett, Eurotecnet, FORCE, PETRA and parts of Lingua (Federal Institute for Vocational Training, no date, p. 3; BMB+F, 1996, p. 132). In the 1999 Vocational Training Report the term 'EU vocational training programme' features for the first time with reference to Leonardo da Vinci and Socrates and is consequently applied to the relaunched Leonardo da Vinci II in the 2000 Vocational Training Report. However, the new edition of Socrates II is described as an 'EU training programme' (BMB+F, 1999, p. 189 f.; BMB+F, 2000, pp. 202 and 204).

All in all EU training programmes promote various target areas and groups. Even experts find orientation difficult, despite the fact that numerous components from earlier programmes are incorporated in the current initiatives. The main programmes ran for five years (1 January 1995 to 31 December 1999). Leonardo was allocated a total budget of ECU 670 million and Socrates ECU 850 million. These EU training programmes – Leonardo da Vinci and Socrates – expired in 1999. However, *'Education – a Key Issue in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century'* remained a priority for the European Commission (Commission of the European Communities, 1999). The Council of European Union therefore adapted the EU vocational training programme and renamed it Leonardo II. On 26 April 1999 the Council of Ministers adopted it for an extended seven-year period (1 January 2000 to 31 December 2006). This decision was published in the EU Official Journal on 11 June 1999 (Rosenstein, 1999, p. 10). The planned budget now totals EUR 5.4 billion, divided among approximately 30 participating EU partner countries. At least EUR 1.15 billion has been earmarked for Leonardo II, of which a good 40% is intended to finance mobility measures (Fahle, Nijsten, 1999, p. 14; Rosenstein, 1999, p. 10, Thiele, 1999, p. 20). The chief objective is to

maintain continuity in European education policy. The Commission plans to achieve this by increasing resources, simplifying application procedures and improving the quality of exchange programmes and projects.

According to the 2000 German Vocational Training Report, Leonardo alone initiated around 40 000 exchange programmes between 1995 and 1999. Furthermore, more than 1000 pilot projects imparting international vocational qualifications through the joint development of curricula or training modules, concepts and products ran during this period (BMB+F, 2000, p. 206). The implementation centre for this action programme and as such the primary contact for the initial training sector is the Carl-Duisberg-Gesellschaft in Cologne, a non-profit-making organisation responsible for international continuing training and personnel development. It is the largest German provider of vocational training abroad and can boast more than 50 years' experience with foreign programmes (Alexander, 1999a, p. 396; BMB+F, 1997, p. 179; Müller-Solger et al., 1997, p. 65 f.).

### **Moving learning venues abroad – a European practical training pilot scheme organised by the Weser-Ems region**

#### **'European practical training' and 'moving learning venues abroad' – what do they mean exactly?**

The very term 'practical training' is problematic. For example, we hear of 'supervised' and 'unsupervised practical training', 'in-company practical training' or 'practical apprenticeship' and even 'foreign practical training' and 'European practical training'. If we investigate the etymology of the word 'practical', we arrive at the Greek word *prátein* and its meaning 'to do, perform, execute, carry out, etc.' (Duden, 1997, p. 548). 'Practical training' itself can then be defined as 'practical application of (academic) learning' (Duden, 1997, p. 546), and alternatively as 'a practical activity to be performed outside the training institution in



the course of an apprenticeship' (Duden, 1982, p. 617). Based on the Duden definition, we can regard the term 'in-company practical training' as analogous, although the Association of German Chambers of Industry and Commerce (DIHT) interprets it as the 'introduction to business and the world of work' in general (Quante-Brandt, 2000, p. 32). Familiarity with business and the world of work can be achieved in professional studies for lower secondary school pupils (Schmiel, 1976, p. 52 f.) or via a vocational preparation year or basic vocational education year (Preyer, 1978, pp. 181 and 214 ff.). We refer to 'supervised practical training' when German teachers or trainers in the host country provide guidance, for example. 'Unsupervised practical training' lacks this element. Performance during a 'practical apprenticeship' in school-based training occupations (in blocks or alongside classes) is by its very nature 'supervised practical training'. The supervisors are responsible for assessing trainees and awarding grades in consultation with qualified workers from the institutions providing training (Lower Saxon Education Ministry, 2000, p. 351). To summarise, we can say that we must define 'practical training' more narrowly for this article. Here it primarily refers to people in dual and school-based initial training. 'Practical training abroad', which is synonymous with 'European practical training' in the context of the EU Leonardo da Vinci vocational training programme, refers to appropriate opportunities for trainees to familiarise themselves with work structures and processes in various departments of a foreign company and generally to glean practical experience of the working day in other (European) countries (Müller-Solger et al., 1997, p. 91 ff.). The 'practical training abroad' is 'unsupervised'. This is an important distinction for recognition as a training component in Germany. 'Moving learning venues abroad' indicates an extension of the expressions 'practical training abroad' and 'European practical training', as the new trend focuses on completion of longer, usually three-month periods of work experience in another country during initial vocational training under the German dual and school-based system (Brandt, Suchanek, 1997; Gehrke, Alexander, 2000B, p. 42 F.; Rundblick, 1999).

### **Moving learning venues abroad – a regional pilot scheme organised by the Weser-Ems Authority**

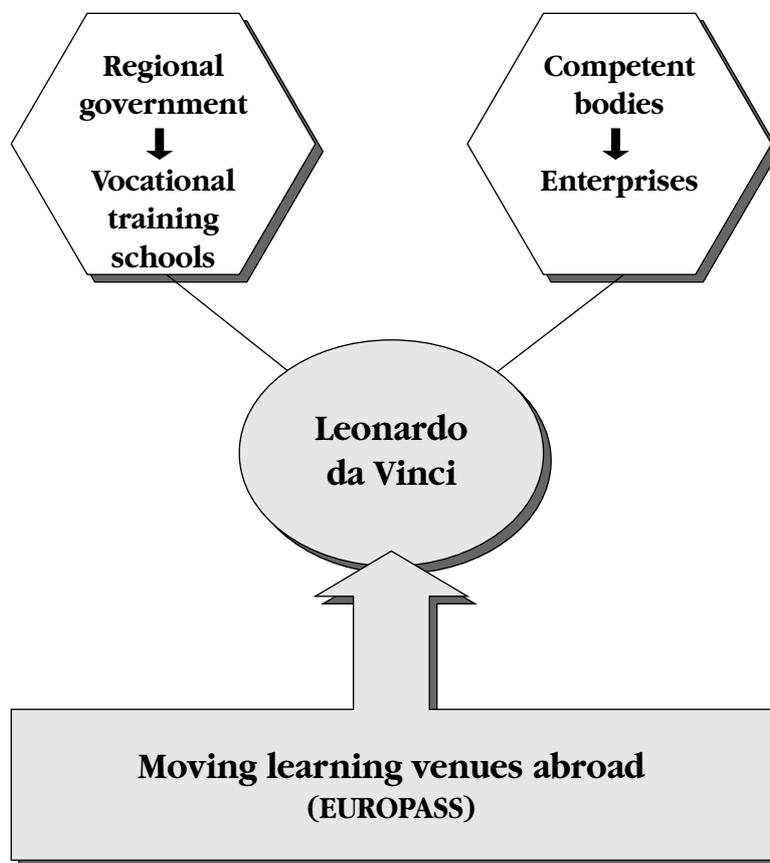
The Weser-Ems Authority's Vocational Training Department in north-western Lower Saxony has teamed up with the *Fachhochschule* Osnabrück (specialised institute of higher education, FH-Osnabrück), the Regional Innovation Strategy for Weser-Ems (RIS) and several regional chambers for four years to give trainees the opportunity to *move their learning venue abroad* for several months during their initial vocational training (Figure 1). It was only in June 1999 that the Lower Saxon Education Ministry succeeded in removing the obstacle of compulsory attendance for vocational school students wishing to take advantage of this option. Furthermore, the chambers of commerce and industry and the Weser-Ems Agricultural Chamber have agreed to accept periods of training completed in other European countries as part of dual vocational training under certain conditions. Advertising campaigns organised by the RIS initiative in Weser-Ems are currently promoting the scheme, and initial steps are being taken to prepare interested trainees for participation (Alexander, 2000, p. 188).

Close relations have been established with the Carl-Duisberg-Gesellschaft (CDG). The Federal Institute for Vocational Training (BIBB), as the coordinator of the scheme, has designated CDG as the implementation centre for the EU's Leonardo vocational training programme. CDG provides comprehensive support for the planning and implementation of new EU activities. In addition, a cooperation agreement with the *Fachhochschule* Osnabrück exists for work at grassroots level. This institution arranges internships abroad for students and has many years' experience with EU training programmes. It also networks with companies which send trainees and students abroad and those which receive foreign students. This can be difficult for a company to manage. Both partners, the higher education institute and the local government, benefit from this cooperation. The *Fachhochschule* gains access to the vocational training schools (BBS), from which it can recruit potential students, while the schools profit from the FH's European reconnaissance. This co-



Figure 1:

**The ‘Moving learning venues abroad’ model**



operation is also the stepping stone to a concept which other *Länder* have yet to implement – the Leonardo pool (Figure 2). The pool is a *regional alliance* of various vocational training schools striving to promote the European idea through common application of Leonardo.

The Leonardo pool has opened up interesting prospects for the Weser-Ems government, particularly in connection with the *Moving learning venues abroad* scheme. The new edition of Leonardo II and the Europass vocational training scheme (see box) are important components of this pool concept. The latter aims to continue to bring apprenticeship courses in Europe into line. As Edelgard Bulmahn, Federal Minister for Education and Research, explained, the Europass successfully fulfils the objectives of the Alliance for Jobs and Vocational Training by promoting cross-border mobility among trainees and students through various European cooperative ventures and

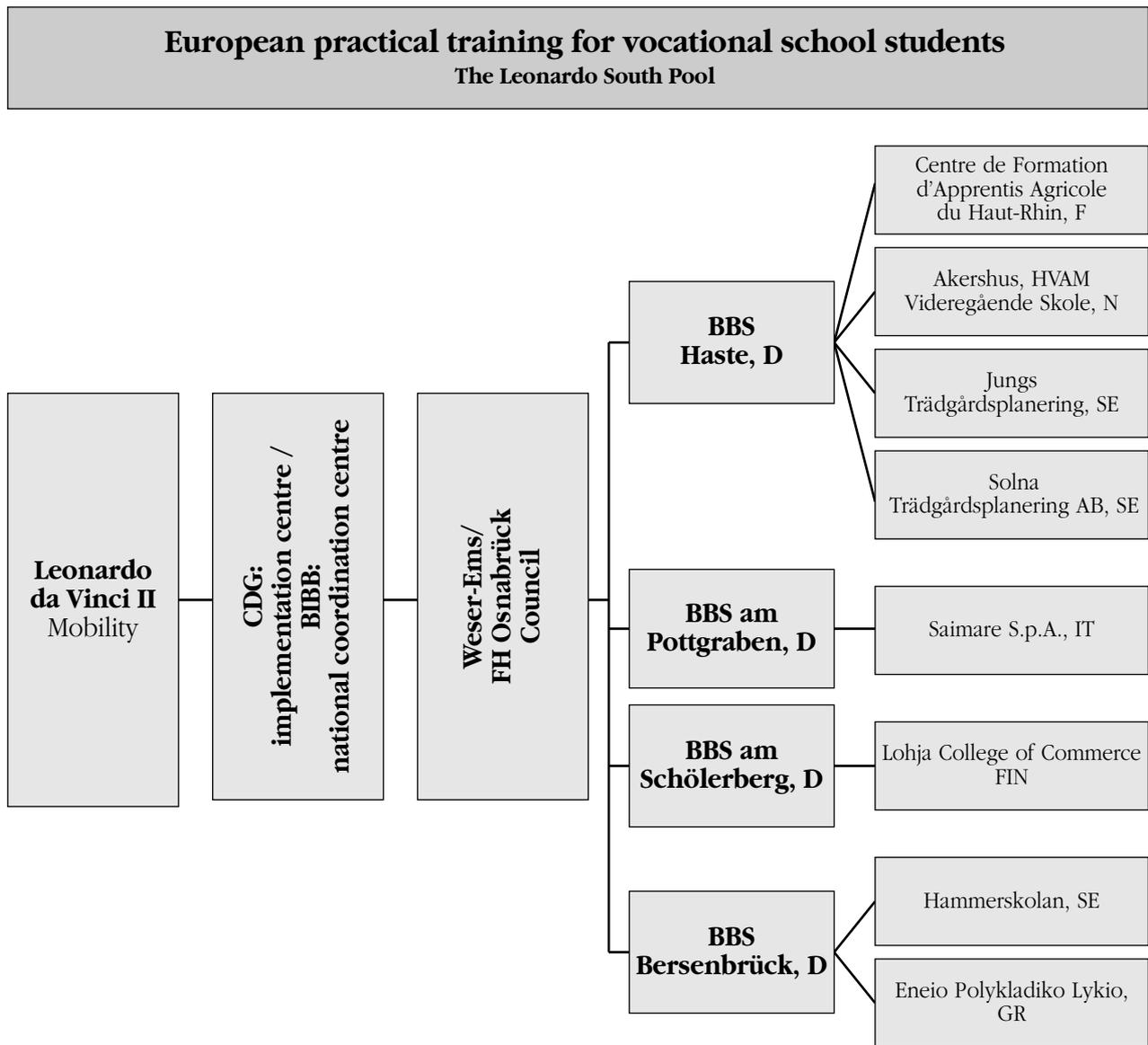
partnerships. In addition, dual or school-based periods of training completed in a participating European state are to be mutually recognised and certified with the Europass from 1 January 2000, in accordance with a European Union Council decision. Several steps have already been taken in school-based vocational training. The Lower Saxon Ministry of Cultural Affairs has ordered the recognition of ‘unsupervised’ practical training to replace the traditional ‘supervised’ practical training. This dispenses with the previous restriction that practical training abroad must comply with German stipulations. In the past these limitations prevented regional governments such as Weser-Ems from organising this kind of training. Now all vocational schools providing training for occupations with school-based courses have entirely new prospects.

Dual vocational training providers can also take advantage of new opportunities. The above-mentioned chambers of com-



Figure 2:

**The Leonardo South Pool**



merce and industry and the agricultural chamber, the institutions responsible for initial dual training in Weser-Ems, have already advocated similarly flexible regulations. Evaluation of foreign practical training by chamber training counsellors would not be feasible except in border areas. 'Unsupervised' practical training abroad is thus a recognised stage of vocational training in principle. Nevertheless, training companies and the chambers still have to clarify certain points regarding the format of contracts, training duration and final examinations. Moreover, the chambers, for example, must ask themselves to what extent the practical

training reports which Leonardo demands can replace trainee record books. However, *Moving learning venues abroad* is already in use. We can see it in the support of the Osnabrück Chamber of Commerce and Industry for pilot exchange measures for prospective freight clerks, for example, or when the East Friesian and Papenburg Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Emden registers a need for this type of long-term training abroad for occupations in navigation, haulage and aviation companies, the hotel and catering sector, and for dental technicians and adopts an aggressive vocational training policy.



## Europass Vocational Training

The Europass is valid for all forms of vocational training which feature a period of in-company training, including higher education courses. The informative A5 document in passport form is standardised throughout Europe. Certification of structured overseas vocational training qualifications is chiefly based on the continuation and increased promotion of mobility measures in the context of the new EU Leonardo da Vinci II vocational training scheme. However, the Europass can also be used for other EU programmes. European institutions wish to do justice to the increased mobility of younger employees as a whole with the Europass in the light of greater interaction between individual national training systems observed within the EU. The objective of such a certification system is a further step along the way to increasing qualification transparency. However, the Europass does not regulate formal recognition of partial qualifications. A standardised European vocational training system is not envisaged.

Establishing a partnership between the sending institution or country of origin in which the candidate is completing initial or continuing training and the receiving institution of the host country is a prerequisite for voluntary Europass use. Furthermore, a trainer must approve the training content and supervision of the participant. Until now certification of qualifications obtained abroad during more than 20 years of vocational training exchange cooperation was insufficient and inconsistent in language and content. From now on all Europass holders should receive an EU certificate with a standardised design and layout for essential information (participant's personal data, name of host institution, time, duration and objective of training, content of the qualifications obtained, information on trainee's performance in two languages, i.e. those of the host and the home countries) for alternating periods of initial and, to a lesser extent, continuing vocational training abroad (Alexander, 1999b, BMB+F, 1999, p. 18 and p. 187 f.; Gehrke, Alexander, 2000a, p. 13 f.).

Of course, problems inevitably arise. Internal considerations affect the willingness of certain sectors and some international concerns to send their trainees for 'unsupervised' practical training elsewhere in Europe for three months. And the majority of trainees are not adventurous enough to deny themselves home comforts to take advantage of a foreign placement. These obstacles surfaced in connection with periods of training abroad as short as three or four weeks. Problem potential increases proportionally when *learning venues move to another country* for several months. It is therefore hardly surprising that, according to the 2000 Vocational Training Report (p. 206), less than one percent of all German trainees took the plunge into the international practical training pool. This reluctance was exacerbated by complicated and time-consuming application procedures and difficulties in making financial arrangements and establishing reliable international partner-

ships. This prompted the Weser-Ems government to launch the Leonardo pool via a service point, reducing administrative problems significantly. In addition, networks developed through the Carl-Duisberg-Gesellschaft and the German-French Youth Foundation (DFJW) focus on advertising longer-term learning relocation schemes and recruiting companies and young people for training activities abroad.

Incorporation of additional, higher EU qualifications in apprenticeship is still in its infancy. Dual training courses such as EU industrial clerk and EU gardener, and the school-based EU assistantships could receive Europass recognition and encompass a broader spectrum of additional vocational qualifications by means of curricular modules. These could include foreign languages in general, intercultural cooperation and communication, European law, European economics and ge-



ography and occupation-based bilingual classes in connection with several-month periods of practical training in various participating European states. Germany has already conducted several pilot projects. Albstadt Business School, for example, offers training courses for EU industrial clerks, which are unfortunately restricted to border areas. These programmes cover individual chamber regions. Such additional EU qualifications are not yet provided nationwide.

### **Moving learning venues abroad – a new departure in German vocational training?**

If German vocational training moves in the direction outlined here, close cooperation between schools, higher education institutions, educational authorities, school sponsors, companies, professional chambers and EU coordination centres such as the Federal Institute of Vocational Training, the Carl-Duisberg Gesellschaft and the German-French Youth Foundation will be necessary. Networks with

educational institutions in other European countries must guarantee a constant flow of information. Alliance for Jobs and Vocational Training partners are therefore making extensive demands on a modern vocational training. Companies in general, and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in particular, will feel an increasingly urgent need to develop human resources which can be deployed in a frontier-free Europe. Only employees with international vocational qualifications will enable companies operating within Europe to compete successfully with global players such as the U.S. and Japan. The European training programmes will certainly make a valuable contribution, as they promote transfer of vital vocational training know-how between participating European states. German and European reactions to the opportunities presented by the *Moving learning venues abroad* model could write a new chapter of German or even European vocational training history. The European training programmes undoubtedly have the potential to render the German dual training system more attractive throughout Europe by means of the 'alternance vocational training' concept propagated by the EU Commission.

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UIE, 2000,  
ISBN 92 820 1104-6

On all continents, education has become a matter of strategic importance. 'In order to survive and improve their lives and achieve quality of life, adult men and women are striving to develop their capacity to act and understand the ways of the world'. However, according to the authors, it is not possible to grasp the significance of recent trends without acquiring a broader view of this field. Adult education, re-defined in this way, has become one of the new areas where, through multiple negotiations, some of the major events affecting societies today are taking place. The difficult challenge of liberating the creative forces is the main subject of this book. Reaping the fruit of five years of empirical research conducted by the Unesco Institute for Education in 24 industrialised and developing countries representing six regions of the world (Europe, Asia, Africa, Arab countries, Latin America and North America), this publication closely examines the content and dynamics of adult learning policies and strategies: objectives and functions of current policies, changes in problems, measures for the formulation of educational needs, policy to shape the various educational responses, the new role of the State and other stakeholders, the key factors for the future. This document provides both an analysis of the new trends and a practical reference tool.

### Future trends in European vocational education / Gerald Heidegger.

Strategies for reforming initial vocational education and training in Europe, p. 266-279

Jyväskylä: Koulutuksen tutkimuslaitos,

2000  
ISBN 951-39-0743-0  
*Koulutuksen tutkimuslaitos,  
Jyväskylän yliopisto,  
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This paper is included in the final report of the SPES-NET project carried out under the Leonardo da Vinci programme. It proposes, on the basis of current debates mostly in Germany, some principles to underpin a reform of vocational education and training (VET) in a European context. In view of modernisation trends in the industrial production and service industry, the idea of the social organisation of innovation is gaining ground, a process which could be furthered by adopting the 'shaping principle' as a guideline for vocational education. Starting off with a diagnosis of the current crisis of VET, the paper proposes, in particular, core occupations and open and dynamic occupational profiles. Further perspectives of future-oriented VET are outlined, stressing the importance of work-based learning, human resources development and 'learning regions' for the establishment of networks of learning environments.

### Unity in Diversity / Robert Taylor, ed. [et al.]

Montreux: EQP/BEN, 2002, 450 p.  
ISBN 2-940320-08-X  
*EQP/BEN-Business,  
Place de la Paix  
Case Postale 379,  
1820 Montreux 2  
Switzerland,  
Tel.: (4121) 9613441,  
Fax: (4121) 9613403,  
E-mail: eqp@unity-in-diversity.com,  
URL: <http://www.eqpltd.com>*

This book is a canvas of different views and visions of the historic, political, economic and institutional events that have

## 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.*



shaped, and continue to shape, the European Union, and at the same time a concrete contribution to understanding the reality of Europe. For Education and Training, see the chapter 'Bringing together EU vocational education and training partners' / J van Rens, Director of the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop), and 'Vocational education and training: a role of crucial importance' / Peter Derooij, Director of the European Training Foundation, Turin.

## European Union: policies, programmes, participants

### Benchmarking working Europe / edited by ETUC and ETUI.

European Trade Union Confederation – ETUC

European Trade Union Institute - ETUI  
2nd ed.

Brussels: ETUI, 2002, 75 p.

ISBN 2-930143-98-3

*ETUI,*

*Boulevard Emile Jacqmain 155,*

*B-1210 Brussels,*

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*URL: <http://www.etuc.org/etui>*

Social benchmarking is an appropriate instrument with which to mould social processes and social policy. To ensure that the benefits of progress are shared more equitably, it is not enough merely to defend minimum standards: rising standards must be promoted through benchmarking. With the first ETUC/ETUI report on Benchmarking Working Europe, we are seeking to make a genuine contribution to the practical implementation of a social benchmarking process. Succinct texts, accompanied on almost every page by data in graph and table form, give abundant information on seven areas of particular relevance to the world of work in Europe: employment, income distribution and social exclusion, working time, social protection and social infrastructure, education, continuing training and lifelong learning, working environment and occupational health and safety, as well as worker participation, information and consultation.

*[http://libserver.cedefop.eu.int/vetelib/euorg/etuc/2002\\_0001\\_en.pdf](http://libserver.cedefop.eu.int/vetelib/euorg/etuc/2002_0001_en.pdf)*

### Commission's action plan for skills and mobility: (communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions) / Commission of the European Communities.

European Commission

Luxembourg: EUR-OP, 2002, 36 p.

(Documents COM, (2002) 72)

ISSN 0254-1475 (en)

*EUR-OP,*

*2 rue Mercier,*

*L-2985 Luxembourg,*

*or from its national sales offices,*

*Tel.: (352-29) 2942118,*

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*E-mail: [info.info@opoce.cec.be](mailto:info.info@opoce.cec.be),*

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

This Action Plan is the culmination of the process launched in February 2001 by the Commission's Communication on the New European Labour Markets, and other initiatives. It builds on the conclusions of the High Level Task Force on Skills and Mobility which highlights the creation of a more favourable environment for more open and easily accessible European labour markets by 2005. It puts forward a coherent political vision to promote human resources in the Union in accordance with the Lisbon goals, primarily create opportunities for citizens to move around the Union for educational or professional purposes, and make it easier for them to take advantage of the benefits of European integration, including the European Single Market. Three fundamental challenges are highlighted: 1) the challenge of inadequate occupational mobility, showing up the need to adapt education and training systems more effectively to the labour market, to boost lifelong learning and skills acquisition (particularly skills in information and communication technologies - ICT), and to improve systems to recognise qualifications and competencies; 2) low levels of geographic mobility within and between Member States suggest that the benefits of the internal market are not yet fully explored. Many obstacles to mobility still exist, including deficiencies in language skills, family circumstances, as well as in relation



to taxes, pensions, social security and related issues; 3) deficiencies in access to and the quality of information on mobility and individual sectors deter many people from considering a job move or particular career choice.

[http://libserver.cedefop.eu.int/vetelib/eu/leg/com/com\\_2002\\_0072\\_en.pdf](http://libserver.cedefop.eu.int/vetelib/eu/leg/com/com_2002_0072_en.pdf)

**Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on education and training in the context of poverty reduction in developing countries / Commission of the European Communities.**

Luxembourg: EUR-OP, 2002, 21 p.

(Documents COM, (2002) 116)

ISSN 0254-1475 (en)

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

The purpose of this Communication is to stress the vital importance of education in reducing poverty and in development and to present an overall framework for the objectives, priorities and methods of the Community in education and training in developing countries. It refocuses sectoral support on reducing poverty in line with recent international undertakings, in coordination with developing countries' policies and on the basis of complementarity with other donors. Its purpose is to focus all of its methods on support for education and training and to set out guidelines for the Community. The Communication recognises the vital role of the countries and identifies three priorities for Community support: basic education, in particular primary education and teacher training, work-related training and higher education, especially at regional level. The strategy to be pursued will involve support for basic education as first priority (at both qualitative and quantitative level) and ensuring that girls as well as boys have attained an acceptable level of schooling, before support of work-related training. Higher education will be supported at regional level in particular.

[http://libserver.cedefop.eu.int/vetelib/eu/leg/com/com\\_2002\\_0116\\_en.pdf](http://libserver.cedefop.eu.int/vetelib/eu/leg/com/com_2002_0116_en.pdf)

**E-learning and training in Europe: a survey into the use of e-learning in training and professional development in the European Union.**

European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training - CEDEFOP

Luxembourg: EUR-OP, 2002, 71 p.

(Cedefop Reference, 27)

ISBN 92-896-0106-X

ISSN 1608-7089

Cat. No TI-41-01-931-EN-C

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

E-learning has the potential to change education and training radically, open new ways of learning and increase the ability of people to acquire new skills. It has created new markets for teaching and learning material and equipment. Despite its importance, there is a shortage of information on the extent of e-learning and its rate of growth. This survey, while not a statistically representative sample, covers a range of organisations of different size and type from all EU countries. As such, it provides insight into the rate of the development of e-learning in the EU, the differences between the Member States. The survey was carried out online on the European Training Village (ETV) website [www.trainingvillage.gr](http://www.trainingvillage.gr), by Cedefop, in 2001.

**Employment in Europe 2001 / European Commission.**

European Commission, Directorate General for Employment and Social Affairs;

Luxembourg: EUR-OP, 2001, 118 p.

Cat. No KE-38-01-762-EN

EUR-OP,

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

This is the annual report of the European Commission presenting an analysis of the employment situation in the Member



States of the European Union for 2001.  
[http://libserver.cedefop.eu.int/vetelib/eu/pub/commission/dgesa/2002\\_0007\\_en.pdf](http://libserver.cedefop.eu.int/vetelib/eu/pub/commission/dgesa/2002_0007_en.pdf)

**EU employment and social policy: jobs, cohesion, productivity / EU, European Commission.**

Brussels: European Commission- Directorate-General Employment and Social Affairs, 2001, 28 p.

ISBN 92-894-1533-9

Cat. No KE-38-01-681-EN-C

*European Commission -  
Employment and Social Affairs  
Directorate-General,*

*Rue de la Loi 200/Wetstraat 200,*

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*URL: [http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/dgs/employment\\_social\\_affairs](http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/dgs/employment_social_affairs)*

This report contains: Balancing jobs, cohesion and productivity; Getting Europe back to work: the European Employment Strategy; The interaction of economic, employment and social policy: putting Lisbon into practice; Improving labour-market access for disadvantaged sections of the community; Mobility and new European labour markets; Jobs in the information society; Moving forward on social dialogue and working arrangements; A productive and inclusive society; Modern and sustainable social protection as a productive factor; Preparing for enlargement.  
[http://libserver.cedefop.eu.int/vetelib/eu/pub/commission/dgesa/2002\\_0009\\_en.pdf](http://libserver.cedefop.eu.int/vetelib/eu/pub/commission/dgesa/2002_0009_en.pdf)

**European glossary on education - volume 3: teaching staff / Information Network on Education in Europe - EURYDICE.**

Brussels: EURYDICE, 2002, 221 p.

(Ready Reference)

ISBN 2-87116-333-2

*EURYDICE European Unit,*

*Rue d'Arlon 15,*

*B-1040 Brussels,*

*Tel.: (32-2) 2383011,*

*Fax: (32-2) 2306562,*

*E-mail: [eurydice.uee@euronet.be](mailto:eurydice.uee@euronet.be),*

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

This glossary on education deals with nearly 600 national terms used to designate staff directly responsible for class teaching at all levels of education. In the first section of the glossary, terms are listed in alphabetical order. Besides the explanatory note on the term, the information given for each entry includes a country reference, the most common grammatical forms of the basic term, and the level of education concerned. The second section comprises summary tables for the 30 countries covered by this terminological tool.

<http://www.eurydice.org/Documents/Glo3/EN/FrameSet.htm>

**European Union discourses on un/employment: an interdisciplinary approach to employment policy-making and organisational change / Peter Muntigl, Gilbert Weiss and Ruth Wodak.**

Amsterdam: Benjamins, 2000, 235 p.

(Dialogues on work and innovation, 12)

Employment is clearly one of those fields of political activity that reveal the manifold problems and difficulties accompanying the process of European integration and supranational institutionalisation. In particular the conflict between supranationalists and intergovernmentalists and the degree to which Member States show willingness to cooperate with each other become manifest. The Union is struggling for new employment policies that should, on the one hand, be compatible with the European model of the welfare state, and, on the other, adapt to new economic constraints. These debates are accompanied by many conflicts between different interest groups and lobbies. This study succeeded in looking behind closed doors within the EU organisational system. Committee meetings were tape-recorded and analysed, drafts of policy papers were examined for recontextualisations, and the impact of interest groups and different economic and ideological concepts on policy-making made explicit. A comparison of decision-making processes in the European Parliament and in small networks of the Commission illustrates the different argumentation patterns and discursive practices that are involved in the formation of new employment policies. The ethnographic research



is accompanied by a systemic linguistic and sociological analysis of various institutional genres and political areas.

**Framework of actions for the lifelong development of competencies and qualifications: joint document from ETUC, CEEP and UNICE / UEAPME.**

Union of Industrial and Employers' Confederations of Europe – UNICE  
European Trade Union Confederation – ETUC  
European Centre of Enterprises with Public Participation and of Enterprises of General Economic Interest - CEEP  
Brussels: UNICE, 2002, 6 p.  
UNICE,  
rue Joseph II 40/bte 15,  
B-1040 Bruxelles,  
E-mail: [js@unice.be](mailto:js@unice.be),  
URL: <http://www.unice.org/>

After 14 months of discussion between the European social partners (ETUC/UNICE/CEEP), the Social Dialogue Committee (SDC) adopted a 'Framework of actions for the lifelong development of competencies and qualifications' on 28 February 2002. This framework of actions highlights the joint responsibility of employers and employees for the lifelong development of competencies and qualifications in Europe and identifies four areas for priority actions: identification and anticipation of competencies and qualification needs; recognition and validation of competencies and qualifications; information, support and guidance; resources. Social partners will promote this framework in Member States at all appropriate levels taking account of national practices.

[http://libserver.cedefop.eu.int/vetelib/euorg/unice/2002\\_0002\\_en.doc](http://libserver.cedefop.eu.int/vetelib/euorg/unice/2002_0002_en.doc)

**La qualité du travail et de l'emploi: enjeux et défis / European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions - EFILWC.**

**[Quality of work and employment: stakes and challenges]**

Dublin: Eurofound, 2002, 36 p.  
(Foundation paper, 1)  
Cat. No TJ-42-02-860-FR-C  
EUR-OP,  
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URL: <http://www.eur-op.eu.int/>

The objective of the papers is to make past, present and future work of the Foundation relevant and accessible in a synthesised format. This issue covers four aspects identified by the European Foundation as key dimensions of quality of work and employment: career and employment security; health and well-being; skills development; and the reconciliation of working and non-working life.  
[http://libserver.cedefop.eu.int/vetelib/eu/pub/foundation/2002\\_0001\\_fr.pdf](http://libserver.cedefop.eu.int/vetelib/eu/pub/foundation/2002_0001_fr.pdf)

**Lifelong learning Europe: wide consultation / European Commission, Directorate General for Education and Culture.**

Brussels: European Commission - Directorate General for Education and Culture, 2002

Feedback from the consultation clearly signalled the need for lifelong learning strategies to reflect the balanced objectives of learning. The consultation also saw considerable debate on the fundamental principles which must be at the heart of lifelong learning. A key conclusion was the need for the learning offer to be based on the needs of the learner, or potential learner. In other words, lifelong learning strategies must emphasise the centrality of the learner. Equality of opportunity, both in terms of gender mainstreaming and making learning genuinely available for all, was also a crucial concern among respondents because of the way in which knowledge and competences impact on citizens' life opportunities. Consultation responses also stressed the importance of high quality and relevance, as investments of time and money in learning are fully effective only if the learning conditions as well as the underlying policy planning and systems are of high quality.

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/life/consultation\\_en.html](http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/life/consultation_en.html)



**Lifelong learning opportunities close to learners: CEDEFOP - presentation / Johan van Rens.**

EfVET conference. Netherlands. 2001  
Brussels: EFVET, 2001, 16 slides  
*EfVET*,  
E-mail: [efvet.central@skynet.be](mailto:efvet.central@skynet.be),  
URL: <http://www.efvet.org/>

The presentation aims to stimulate debate on the need to re-evaluate attitudes and approaches to training in the EU, draws attention to three key policy issues, approach to which need to be re-evaluated and reconsidered points: lower-qualified; financing of vocational education and training, and ICTs and e-learning.  
[http://www.efvet.org/EfVET2001/Documents/Johan\\_van\\_Rens-filer/frame.htm](http://www.efvet.org/EfVET2001/Documents/Johan_van_Rens-filer/frame.htm)

**Making a European area of Lifelong Learning a reality: communication from the Commission / Commission of the European Communities.**

Luxembourg: EUR-OP, 2001, 40 p.  
(Documents COM, (2001) 678)  
ISSN 0254-1475 (en)  
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URL: <http://www.eur-op.eu.int/>

This Communication contributes to the establishment of a European area of lifelong learning, the aims of which are both to empower citizens to move freely between learning settings, jobs, regions and countries, making the most of their knowledge and competences, and to meet the goals and ambitions of the European Union and the candidate countries to be more prosperous, inclusive, tolerant and democratic. This development will be facilitated by bringing together within a lifelong learning framework education and training, and important elements of existing European level processes, strategies and plans concerned with youth, employment, social inclusion, and research policy.  
[http://libserver.cedefop.eu.int/vetelib/eu/leg/com/com\\_2001\\_0678\\_en.pdf](http://libserver.cedefop.eu.int/vetelib/eu/leg/com/com_2001_0678_en.pdf)

**Mobility and cooperation in education: recent experiences in Europe.**

European Journal of Education, Vol. 36, No 4  
Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2001  
ISSN 0141-8211

Special issue on mobility and cooperation in education presenting recent experiences in Europe. Articles are: The internationalisation of education: schools in Europe and the SOCRATES Programme; Learning by leaving: towards a pedagogy for transnational mobility in the context of vocational education and training (VET); The international dimension in national higher education policies: what has changed in Europe in the last five years? Mobility during the course of study and after graduation; ERASMUS: continuity and change in the 1990s; Internationalisation of higher education in the Czech Republic: the impact of European Union programmes.

**National report on the Memorandum on lifelong learning: Bulgaria**

Republic of Bulgaria.  
Brussels: European Commission, 2002  
*European Commission - Education and Culture Directorate-General*,  
Rue de la Loi 200/Wetstraat 200,  
B-1049 Bruxelles/Brussel,  
Tel.: (32-2) 2991111,  
URL: [http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/dgs/education\\_culture/index\\_en.htm](http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/dgs/education_culture/index_en.htm)

The Republic of Bulgaria fully supports the Memorandum on Lifelong Learning elaborated by the European Commission. Bulgaria joins the debate launched by the Commission with the aim of developing European strategy on lifelong learning. Lifelong learning (LLL) is considered, also from the national perspective, as one of the major factors in improving the professional activity of people and in encouraging active citizenship. The policy of the Bulgarian government regarding human resources is a component of the overall social policy directed towards building up a society of learning and knowledge, towards broadening European cooperation in education, research, culture and technology, and free movement of workers.  
[http://libserver.cedefop.eu.int/vetelib/eu/pub/commission/dgeac/2002\\_0004\\_en.pdf](http://libserver.cedefop.eu.int/vetelib/eu/pub/commission/dgeac/2002_0004_en.pdf)



**National report on the Memorandum on lifelong learning: Cyprus / Ministry of Education and Culture.**

Brussels: European Commission, 2002  
*European Commission - Education and Culture Directorate-General,*  
*Rue de la Loi 200/Wetstraat 200,*  
*B-1049 Bruxelles/Brussel,*  
*Tel.: (32-2) 2991111,*  
*URL: [http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/dgs/education\\_culture/index\\_en.htm](http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/dgs/education_culture/index_en.htm)*

All governmental and non-governmental organisations have been asked to participate in the process and help to formulate useful suggestions on the messages of the Memorandum. The coordinators from all the organisations involved met three times and examined measures and suggestions on the implementation of the six messages of the Memorandum.

*[http://libserver.cedefop.eu.int/vetelib/eu/pub/commission/dgeac/2002\\_0006\\_en.pdf](http://libserver.cedefop.eu.int/vetelib/eu/pub/commission/dgeac/2002_0006_en.pdf)*

**National report on the Memorandum on lifelong learning: Czech Republic / Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports.**

Brussels: European Commission, 2002  
*European Commission - Education and Culture Directorate-General,*  
*Rue de la Loi 200/Wetstraat 200,*  
*B-1049 Bruxelles/Brussel,*  
*Tel.: (32-2) 2991111,*  
*URL: [http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/dgs/education\\_culture/index\\_en.htm](http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/dgs/education_culture/index_en.htm)*

The core of the consultation process was implemented in the form of workshops. The positions of representatives of various institutions and bodies expressed at the workshops were recorded and conclusions were formulated at the end of each workshop. The analysis method was based on a comparison of the aims of the Memorandum with policy goals of the Czech Republic which were set out in recently released strategic documents.

*[http://libserver.cedefop.eu.int/vetelib/eu/pub/commission/dgeac/2002\\_0005\\_en.pdf](http://libserver.cedefop.eu.int/vetelib/eu/pub/commission/dgeac/2002_0005_en.pdf)*

**Proposal for a Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council on the recognition of professional qualifications / Commission of the European Communities.**

Luxembourg: EUR-OP, 2002, 124 p.  
 (Documents COM, (2002) 119)  
 ISSN 0254-1475 (en)  
*EUR-OP,*  
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*URL: <http://www.eur-op.eu.int/>*

The purpose is to simplify the rules relating to the recognition of professional qualifications in order to facilitate the free movement of qualified people between the Member States, particularly in view of an enlarged European Union. The proposed Directive will replace fifteen existing Directives in the field of recognition of professional qualifications. The proposal constitutes the first comprehensive modernisation of the Community system since it was conceived forty years ago. A number of changes are proposed, including greater liberalisation of the provision of services, more automatic recognition of qualifications and increased flexibility in the procedures for updating the Directive. It proposes to develop cooperation with the Member States in order to keep citizens better informed about their rights and give them more help in getting their qualifications recognised. It establishes the principle of the free provision of services under the original professional title, subject to certain conditions with a view to protecting consumers. It introduces a more flexible and automatic procedure based on common platforms established by professional associations at European level, stemming from increased cooperation between the public and private sectors. In addition, it proposes the developing of cooperation amongst national administrations and between them and the Commission, with a view to informing citizens of their rights and resolving any difficulties they might encounter with regard to recognition of their professional qualifications.

*[http://libserver.cedefop.eu.int/vetelib/eu/leg/com/com\\_2002\\_0119\\_en.pdf](http://libserver.cedefop.eu.int/vetelib/eu/leg/com/com_2002_0119_en.pdf)*



**Public funding and private returns to education: a cross-country policy-oriented perspective on private benefits of education: final report / Asplund, Rita; Research Institute of the Finnish Economy – ETLA.**

Ely: PJB Associates, 2001, 147 p.  
(New perspectives for learning: briefing paper, 29)

The TSER-financed project on public funding and private returns to education - PURE started in November 1, 1998, and ended in October 31, 2000. The project involved 15 European countries (Austria, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and United Kingdom) with Finland as the coordinating partner. The project has produced, on a comparable basis, cross-country evidence at a European level on a broad set of policy-relevant issues related to private returns to education. Starting from a comprehensive analysis of individual returns to education across the 15 countries, the project expanded to investigate the interplay between education and work experience, including differences between cohorts; the productivity-enhancing versus the signalling role of education; the interaction between education and wage inequality; the relationship between education and unemployment; the importance of the supply of and the demand for highly educated labour as well as of labour market institutions for individual returns to education; the influence of public funding and enrolment into higher education on educational outcomes; and the structure of student loan systems. In brief, some of the main findings are as follows. The private returns to education, as well as the so-called college wage gap, vary considerably across Europe, and there are no signs of a convergence of returns to education across the European countries. One possible consequence in the future might be higher mobility across national borders, particularly of highly educated people trying to exploit these cross-country differences in the rewarding of individual investment in education.

[http://improving-ser.sti.jrc.it/default/page.gx?\\_app.page=entity.btml&\\_app.action=entity&\\_entity.object=TSER—000000000000034EE&\\_entity.name=Report](http://improving-ser.sti.jrc.it/default/page.gx?_app.page=entity.btml&_app.action=entity&_entity.object=TSER—000000000000034EE&_entity.name=Report)

Cedefop

**The rebirth of apprenticeship in Europe: linking education to work / Fernando Marhuenda.**

Strategies for reforming initial vocational education and training in Europe, p. 222-235

Jyväskylä: Koulutuksen tutkimuslaitos, 2000

ISBN 951-39-0743-0

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This paper is included in the final report of the SPES-NET project carried out under the Leonardo da Vinci programme. It reviews the different concepts of apprenticeship training underlying employment and education policies in four Member States of the European Union: Spain, United Kingdom, France and Germany. The paper analyses the status quo in each of these EU countries, trying to sort out, in conclusion, the common trends which can be found in them. The perspective adopted for the analysis focuses on a consideration of apprenticeship training, basically, as one more scheme, though not all that new, devised in the fight against youth unemployment. It is a measure which, as opposed to the majority of such undertakings, has the additional aim of preparing young people for the process of initiation into the world of work, an aspect of apprenticeship training to which varying degrees of attention are paid in the different European countries, despite the fact that it underlies the apprenticeship policies pursued in all of them.

**Users' views on e-learning: Cedefop online surveys / European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training – CEDEFOP**

Luxembourg: EUR-OP, 2002, 80 p.

(Cedefop Reference, 29)

ISBN 92-896-0109-4

ISSN 1608-7089

Cat. No TI-41-01-939-EN-C

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This unique publication brings together the results of seven surveys dealing with e-learning, carried out online on the European Training Village (ETV) website [www.trainingvillage.gr](http://www.trainingvillage.gr), by Cedefop, in 2001. The surveys identify trends in e-learning at European level, as expressed

by users and suppliers. The surveys look at such issues as the use of e-mail as a learning tool, economics of e-learning, teachers and trainers' skills in relation to e-learning, e-learning as an aid to the learning process of people with disabilities. The surveys are not a statistical analysis of the use of e-learning as a means of learning and teaching, but rather provide an overview and insight into trends emerging in the field.



## From the Member States

### **A** IT outlook 2002: recent developments in Austrian IT policies: final report / Bernhard Dachs, Petra Wagner.

Seibersdorf: Österreichisches Forschungszentrum Seibersdorf, 2001, 18 p.

The OECD regularly presents recent trends concerning IT policies in its member countries in the biannual publication 'Information Technology Outlook'. In order to supply the OECD with an update on new developments and measures in IT policies in Austria, the Austrian Federal Ministry of Transport, Innovation and Technology (BMVIT) has commissioned the Division of Systems Research Technology-Economy-Environment of the Austrian Research Centre Seibersdorf to undertake a study to collect information on recent developments concerning IT policies in Austria. Valuable support has been given by the Federal Chancellery in coordinating the various contributions by the involved federal ministries and public agencies, which form the basis for this report. The aim of this report is twofold: Firstly, an outline of general trends and new developments in IT policies since 1999 will be presented. As in the latest IT Outlook 1, the focus is on recent developments, since the general rationale and direction of Austrian IT policies have already been laid down in strategic documents such as the Report of the Working Group of the Austrian Government on the Information Society (1996). New directions can be expected from the Task Force report 'e-Austria' (forthcoming in 2001). Secondly, we will also include examples of recent policy initiatives, which can be regarded as good practice and representative of the host of activities in Austria, and are thus hopefully of interest to other OECD member countries. These examples have been described in more detail for likely presentation in the policy section of the IT Outlook.

[http://www.bka.gv.at/bka/service/publikationen/IT\\_OUTLOOK\\_2001\\_Austria.pdf](http://www.bka.gv.at/bka/service/publikationen/IT_OUTLOOK_2001_Austria.pdf)

### **B** Relations industrielles comparées: le syndicalisme à l'ère de la mondialisation / cours présenté à la Chaire Franqui de l'UCL- ULB en 1997- 1998 par Georges Ross et retranscrit par Jean-Paul Delière.

[Compared industrial relations: trade unionism in the age of globalisation / course presented at the Franqui Chair of UCL-ULB in 1997- 1998 by Georges Ross and re-written by Jean-Paul Delière]

Université Catholique de Louvain - UCL [Louvain]: Fondation André Renard, 2002, 101 p.

Georges Ross analyses industrial relations as a system of exchanges between the leading actors: the government, the employers and the trade unions. Among other things, one of the merits of his work is that he induces the attentive reader to ask many questions on the subject. Questions on the system as such. Questions on how these exchanges function. Questions on unionism's loss of impact within the context of these exchanges. Questions on the impact of globalisation of the economy on the system of exchanges. After giving a brief description of what a social movement is and what trade unionism represents within this movement, Professor Ross goes on to show the evolution of European trade unionism by taking the examples of Germany, Sweden, France, England and Italy. Applying a method of historical-comparative analysis, he takes a look at these five countries at two crucial moments of contemporary history: the growth period following the Second World War and the period from 1980 to the present. In doing this he presents his explanation for the two cases of success (Germany and Sweden), the two 'disastrous' cases (France and England) and the case in between (Italy).

[http://libserver.cedefop.eu.int/vetelib/nat/bel/socpart/2002\\_0001.doc](http://libserver.cedefop.eu.int/vetelib/nat/bel/socpart/2002_0001.doc)



## **D Accreditation Handbook/ IASCU.**

International Association of Schools, Colleges Universities - IASCU  
Berlin: IASCU, [2002]

The International Association of Schools, Colleges Universities is aiming, in its capacity as an accreditation body with world-wide activities, to provide and maintain high academic standards for its members, in addition to facilitating the unilateral acceptance of degree programmes world-wide for the association's member schools, colleges and universities.

[http://www.iascu.org/  
accreditation\\_handbook.btm](http://www.iascu.org/accreditation_handbook.btm)

## **Work Report of the Accreditation Council / Akkreditierungsrat.**

Bonn: Akkreditierungsrat, 2001, 19 p.

Two years after its constituent assembly on 7 July 1999, the Akkreditierungsrat (Accreditation Council) takes this opportunity to present a report which documents the corporate identity and profile of the Akkreditierungsrat and aims to serve as a basis for an evaluation of its work. This presentation of the activities of the Akkreditierungsrat is incorporated in the international discussion on reforms aimed at quality assurance, transparency and internationalisation within higher education. The report essentially focuses on outlining the contours of the developing accreditation system in Germany and includes an outlook on possible future prospects.

[http://libserver.cedefop.eu.int/vetelib/nat/  
deu/ngo/2002\\_0001.pdf](http://libserver.cedefop.eu.int/vetelib/nat/deu/ngo/2002_0001.pdf)

## **DK Focus on quality in the Danish system of vocational education / Kim Faurschou.**

European forum on quality of vocational training. Brussels. 2001

Thessaloniki: CEDEFOP, 2001, 24 p.  
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Quality in vocational education is an area of international interest. To improve quality, countries need to share their experience in creating systems to encourage good practice. The Danish system has learned a great deal from the experience of other countries. In 1999 Denmark won the prize for the best system of vocational education from the German 'Bertelsmann Stiftung' organisation. The Danish system won the prize for: the successful collaboration seen between industry, education and Government; the cooperation between employers and employees; the extensive autonomy of the individual vocational schools with regard to curriculum and budget administration; the close relationships within the education system between vocational and higher education; the flexibility of the system in responding to change.

[http://libserver.cedefop.eu.int/vetelib/eu/  
pub/cedefop/internal/2001\\_0021\\_en.doc](http://libserver.cedefop.eu.int/vetelib/eu/pub/cedefop/internal/2001_0021_en.doc)

## **E Los sistemas de Formación Profesional europeos**

**a exámen: desafíos, innovaciones y perspectivas de cambio para un entorno cambiante / María Jesús Martínez.**

[**The European vocational training systems under examination: challenges, innovations and perspectives of change for a changing environment.**]

Revista Española de Pedagogía, Nº 219  
(Ago 2001), p. 301-330

Madrid: Instituto Europeo de Iniciativas Educativas, 2001

ISSN 0034-9461

This is a comparative study of the organisation of vocational training in the countries of the European Union. The countries covered by the study are divided into two blocks: countries from the south and countries with a German influence. The areas examined are the typology of the centres for post-compulsory secondary vocational education; vocational training at higher education level; the study programme, specialisation and curriculum; and evaluation and certification.

**F Les institutions locales  
et le programme 'emplois-  
jeunes' dans les activités culturelles et  
socioculturelles / Bernard Simonin [et  
al.]; Centre d'études de l'emploi - CEE.**



**[Local Institutions and the 'employment-youth' programmes in cultural and socio-cultural activities]**

Paris: CEE, 2002

(Rapport de recherche, 01)

The first analyses of the implementation of the 'New employment-youth services' programme (Nouveaux services Emplois jeunes - (NSEJ)) highlighted the innovative nature of the organisation of this programme which undertook the attempt to break away from the traditional methods of administering employment. This report is an analysis of the positions taken up by the different groups of actors two years after the initiation of the programme.

[http://libserver.cedefop.eu.int/vetelib/nat/fra/gov/2002\\_0001.htm](http://libserver.cedefop.eu.int/vetelib/nat/fra/gov/2002_0001.htm)

**Quel modèle qualité pour la e-formation? / Algora.**

**[Which quality model for e-learning?]**

Paris: Le Préau, 2002

Nine partners, collaborating with Préau, the monitoring unit of the CCI in Paris for information and communication technologies in education, set out to examine an extremely important question: do existing quality standards respond to the needs of the actors involved in e-learning? This analysis covered the following: analysis of the open and distance learning process; identification of the phases where quality assurance is required; study of existing lists of criteria and standards; a comparison of their application at different stages of the process to verify that they respond to the targeted quality assurance objectives; identification of the 'gaps'. This study also presents some recommendations which make quality one of the determinant criteria for return on investment in e-learning. While waiting for a list of criteria which is truly adapted to e-learning, this study has the objective of assisting all those who design, sell, buy or consume online learning, so that each one of them, whether on the supply or the demand side, can acquire a shared concept of quality in e-learning.

[http://libserver.cedefop.eu.int/vetelib/nat/fra/socpart/2002\\_0001.pdf](http://libserver.cedefop.eu.int/vetelib/nat/fra/socpart/2002_0001.pdf)

**FIN Enterprises and schools as work-based learning environments in Finland / Johanna Lasonen.**

Strategies for reforming initial vocational education and training in Europe, p. 177-202

Jyväskylä: Koulutuksen tutkimuslaitos, 2000

ISBN 951-39-0743-0

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This paper is included in the final report of the SPES-NET project carried out under the Leonardo da Vinci programme. It examines the relationships between education and work in Finland. The workplace learning scheme, the Bridge from Vocational Education to Work project (the Bridge experiment) and the related assessment procedures examined here are a part of a quantitative and qualitative general reform of upper-secondary-level vocational qualifications. The results of the follow-up study explore the objectives that the different parties (students, teachers, workplace trainers and employers) set for workplace learning and see how they evaluate workplace learning environments. The workplace learning period had the greatest effect on students' social skills and occupational growth, and on increased self-esteem and self-confidence. The tools used by the students to assess their own learning included learning diaries, self-assessment forms, portfolios, reflection and discussion. The employers judged their enterprises positively as learning environments in terms of the general qualities involved. Previously distributors of information, vocational teachers have now become organisers of learning also outside school. According to the workplace instructors, the greatest benefits from cooperation with educational establishments were related to personal learning and a broadening of perspectives, as well as to the acquisition of the labour represented by the students' contribution.



**Strategies for improving vocational education: the Finnish case / Ulla Numminen.**

Strategies for reforming initial vocational education and training in Europe, p. 74-91

Jyväskylä: Koulutuksen tutkimuslaitos, 2000

ISBN 951-39-0743-0

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This paper describes reforms undertaken in the Finnish educational system and developmental projects and reforms of vocational education and training, focusing particularly on how these have improved or consolidated the status of VET. The paper concentrates on initial vocational education and training (upper secondary level VET, post-16 VET, ISCED 3), which has been vigorously developed in Finland since the 1970s. Secondly, attention is paid to post-secondary vocational education and training (college-level VET, ISCED 5B), which was closely connected to and in part parallel with upper secondary education in the 1980s. Thirdly, the relationship between vocational and general education is also touched upon because it has been a part of two major school reforms: upper secondary education reform 1982-88 and youth education pilot projects 1992-02.

**IRL Making networks work: a review of networks in Ireland and abroad with particular reference to training and human resource development / by Gerard Doyle; Skillnets.**

Dublin: Skillnets, 2000, 171 p.; bibl.

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The subject of this report is a training networks programme called Skillnets. In contrast to other training schemes which provide support for individual firms, Skillnets focuses on mobilising groups or networks of companies to develop a collaborative approach 'tailor-made' to their own needs. The initiative is predominately enterprise-led and enterprise-driven and is comprised of representatives of employers, unions and Government. Funding by Government is matched by industry and in its initial stages by the ESF. It is intended that this report will act as an information and reference resource to Skillnets networks as well as developing awareness as to the usefulness of networks among business people and policy makers in Ireland. The report discusses the benefits of networks, the theoretical context, the types and forms of networks, SMEs and network cooperation, Irish public policy on networks, the international experience, the development of networks and, the potential for networks. The public policy approaches to networks in the EU countries of Denmark, Italy, Germany and UK along with those in Australia, New Zealand and the US are presented.

**Towards a national framework of qualifications: a discussion document / National Qualifications Authority of Ireland – NQAI.**

Dublin: NQAI, 2001, 68 p.

*NQAI,*

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This document sets out to promote debate about the implementation of the functions of the NQAI set out in the Qualifications (Education and Training) Act, 1999 and, in particular, about the development of a national framework of qualifications. The Authority was established to fulfil three main objectives: to establish and maintain a national framework of qualifications; to establish and promote the maintenance of the standards of awards of the Further Education and Training Awards Council and the Higher Education and Training Awards Council;



to promote and facilitate access, transfer and progression. The issues and implications of these actions are discussed in detail and questions posed to stimulate debate for further consultation among the 'partners in learning'. These partners include learners, education and training providers, the awarding bodies and business people and employers. The document represents the beginning of a short consultation process which will begin by inviting submissions from the partners and will culminate in a Forum on February 2002. Submissions on the discussion document will be made available on the Authority's website.

<http://www.nqai.ie/>

[NQAI%20Framework%20Report.pdf](http://www.nqai.ie/NQAI%20Framework%20Report.pdf)

### **N** **Entreprenørskap i Norge / Distriktsaktiv skole og entreprenørskap. [Entrepreneurial schools in Norway.]**

Stavanger: Høgskolen i Stavanger

Entreprenørskap i Norge, No 1 (2002), unpagged

This pamphlet presents information about entrepreneurial projects in schools in Norway. The entrepreneurship activity is a national priority to develop local communities and to strengthen closer relations between school and community. The project has five focus areas. One is to bring together the school and companies in the local community by developing innovative activities. The establishment of business classes as a pedagogical method is another important area. The project is also developing a study period at university colleges in order to build up useful competence for local economic development, and creating a network between active partners in entrepreneurship. Finally a municipal strategy plan for development of entrepreneurship in the municipality has been developed. The pamphlet gives information on relevant websites for further information.

**P** **Crescimento, bem estar econômico e coesão social: o período de 1995 a 2000 em síntese / com coord. de Maria Henriqueta Almeida e colab. de Maria Lucília Gomes, Nuno Santos, Ilda Costa e Joana Figueiredo**

### **[Growth, economic well-being and social cohesion: a summary of the period from 1995-2000].**

In: Portugal 1995-2000: Perspectivas de evolução social, v. 1, p. 13-40

Oeiras: DEPP/MTS-Celta Editora, 2002

(Coleção Cogitum, v. 1)

ISBN 972-774-134-7

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Today, it is commonly felt that participation in the construction of the EU was not the sole encouragement for innovation and modernisation efforts, but that access to the European Structural Funds made it possible to achieve considerable progress in decisive areas of development in Portugal. This certainly applies to the European Social Fund (ESF). It is a fact that the financial subsidies provided through the programmes co-financed by the ESF in fields such as vocational training and qualification, employment, education, scientific and technological innovation, preparation for the information society, modernisation of the economy, health, the quality of administration or the fight against social exclusion, were a decisive factor in bringing about the change which has taken place in our country. The basis for this work is the strategic objective defined in the Lisbon summit in 2000 for the next ten years, namely, to make the EU an economic area built up on innovation and more dynamic and competitive knowledge, capable of raising the levels of economic growth, quality of employment and social cohesion.

### **UK** **Developing good practice in New Deal in colleges / Ratcliffe M, Atkinson J, Burgess C, Cartner N.**

London: LSDA, 2001, 72 p.

ISBN 1-85338-694-4

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New Deal is a test of providers' ability to respond flexibly and effectively to the



needs of individuals who are disengaged from the learning process. These guidelines show what can be done to develop and improve the quality of the full-time education and training (FTET) option within the New Deal for 18-24 year olds. They identify features of high quality provision and principles of effective deliv-

ery, together with case studies and suggestions for further improving practice. These guidelines aim to assist providers of FTET New Deal programmes and the partners with which they work, to share and develop good practice.

*[http://libserver.cedefop.eu.int/vetelib/nat/gbr/ngo/lda\\_2002\\_0001.pdf](http://libserver.cedefop.eu.int/vetelib/nat/gbr/ngo/lda_2002_0001.pdf)*



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