

# PANORAMA

## **Agora IX** **Alternative education** **and training processes**

Thessaloniki, 26 – 27 June 2000



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Alternative education and training processes

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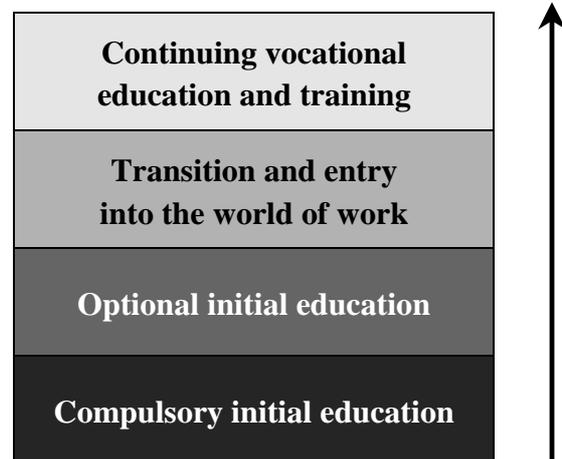
# Foreword

If people's education is looked at as a whole throughout life, it can be said to fall into three stages:

- (a) Initial education, itself divided into two parts, basic education, which corresponds to the period of compulsory education, usually up to the age of 16 in Europe (but 15 years in Portugal, 18 years in Belgium and Italy, and so on), which is intended to provide the basic tools and the minimum knowledge needed for social, family and occupational relationships as a whole, and non-compulsory initial education, which is becoming increasingly indispensable and may be a period of general education or vocational training.
- (b) Transition to active life, namely a time when the initial knowledge acquired during initial education comes up against the realities of the workplace and, more generally, the social and occupational environment. This period always exists, whatever historical era we look at, but it is particularly crucial at a time of crisis and underemployment because at such times businesses shift the effort and cost of this transition on to the young people, their families and the community. While employers cover the costs of adaptation associated with the transition of the young workers whom they need as a matter of course in times of labour shortage, without complaining about the new recruits' lack of experience, it is a different story when they have a choice.
- (c) Continuing education, or adult education, which may be general and/or vocational, but tends increasingly to have an occupational purpose as people fear for their jobs and/or as it is of short-term benefit to employers.

Within this scheme of things, the education and training system works like a fractionating or refinery column. The most obvious elements in such an arrangement are the 'heavy' oils of the distillate, which are the most difficult to make use of, while the higher one goes up the column, the more refined are the products, the more flexible and adaptable the refined products obtained.

Separation into 'heavy' products more naturally subject to social and occupational exclusion, and 'light' products destined for higher profiles and professional careers occurs very early in school life. Essentially, the game is won and lost at the end of compulsory education. The transition stage and continuing education should provide some compensation for the ground lost, and the disadvantages and handicaps accumulated during initial education, but the statistics show clearly that the lower the level of education, the greater the difficulties in



finding a first job or acquiring initial occupational experience, and the fewer the opportunities of entering continuing education.

It is this obligation, this overriding need, to leave compulsory education with a satisfactory level of education, to have acquired and mastered a minimum quantity of knowledge – which may vary from country to country in Europe but is common to every system – that is the problem, as Jordi Planas pointed out at Agora IV on the low skilled (Agora IV, Panorama Series, 1999).

The education systems established in developed European countries work according to the democratic principle of equality of opportunities. Such a system is thought to give everyone the same rights of access to education that is secular, free and of standard quality, so that whatever his or her rank, station and fortune, physical characteristics, race or religion, every young person has the same opportunities as all others to gain knowledge. The differences and distinctions between people, for good or ill, are thus due to personal qualities, sense of organisation, intelligence and capacity for work.

According to this ideal vision of the education system, success or failure at school is seen as the responsibility of the pupil. All pupils begin from the same starting line, and may the best man (or woman) win! This is to overlook the fact that initial equality is highly relative. It is not a trotting race around a flat course but a steeplechase over hurdles. The son of a family of immigrants, neither of whose parents has even completed compulsory education or speaks the language of the school, or more generally the language of the host country, is obviously not on an equal footing with the son of a university professor familiar with the ins and outs of the education system who possesses from the outset the cultural and social baggage that will enable him to make best use of it. Similarly, the daughter of a woman who serves behind a railway station kiosk does not have the same openings, the same models or aspirations as the daughter of a head of personnel for a major national brewery. Without even mentioning the physical or intellectual differences that cause particular stigmas and handicaps such as deafness, blindness, paralysis or trisomy 21, the differences between people are such that it would be illusory to imagine that all young people start from the same place at a given age, and that they have the same abilities and aptitudes for learning, education and training.

Girls are, for example, generally more mature, attentive and docile than boys of the same age and social background. They are thus often further ahead at school. On the other hand, they suffer from a cultural bias which still restricts their occupational prospects to a very small number of jobs (in personal services, health, education, secretarial services, etc.), leaving them less opportunity than boys of choosing their training. They are also at a disadvantage during the period of transition and over the course of their entire occupational careers.

Lastly, even within a given category, not everyone has the same maturity, receptivity or aptitude for learning or understanding the same things at the same time.

Thus, the way in which the education system works in most cases results in the production of both well-educated, skilled young people who can adapt to a world that is constantly

changing, and educational failures, with serious consequences in terms of personality disorders, family break-up, imprisonment in closed communities and small survival units, and disastrous effects on the physical and mental health of the young people themselves, and on the security of the goods and people around them.

However, school dropout, illiteracy and low skill levels are not inevitable, and many initiatives have been launched in Europe, usually as pilot projects but sometimes as institutionalised schemes, to combat what is generically termed educational failure but should no doubt be more exactly defined (cf. Casal, Garcia, Planas, 1998) and should perhaps rather be called incomplete education. Furthermore, while educational failure has fallen quantitatively, along with this reduction has gone a worsening in qualitative terms. Although less frequent, it is both a greater stigma and more of a distinction, whereas it used to be commonplace and quite normal. We have to admit that illiteracy has in fact to some extent been invented by our form of society.

Most of the initiatives are carried out outside educational institutions as such, perhaps because the young people concerned are beyond the age of compulsory education and/or have retained a very negative image of school. Apart from a number of attempts at integration developed within the education system (for example, comprehensive schools in the form of the *Folkeskole* in Denmark or the *Laborschule* in Bielefeld, Germany) and attempts to divide the target population into homogeneous groups (for example, comprehensive schools for girls or schools for 'gifted' pupils), most experiments are of a remedial nature: they may take an institutional form (for example, the *Produktionsskole* in Denmark or the *Escuela Taller* in Spain, and 'second chance' schools in a number of countries in the Union); they may also be located outside the formal education system (for example, the 'Program 501-301' in Berlin, Germany, or the experiment conducted in the Dioguardi area in Apulia, Italy).

In the face of inadequate levels of basic knowledge, failure to assimilate core facts, inability to manage affairs, and an obvious lack of key transverse skills, initiatives have been undertaken at a local level, and programmes have sometimes even been run at the national level, to combat the most urgent shortcomings and to compensate for some of the accumulated ground lost.

Common to all these initiatives is the fact that they provide 'new educational opportunities' for sections of the population that have missed out on their first chance at school. They are thus often referred to as 'second chance' schools even when the activities take place outside schools.

These initiatives, which are addressed to sections of the population that have broken off their education and are often heading for economic and social exclusion, focus essentially on employment and aim both to give their target population a sense of responsibility by integrating them into a work collective, to socialise them by providing access to earnings from employment, and to give them either technical or vocational training on a social level. This type of training is generally given in the form of work experience combined with education

and, in addition to vocational skills as such, is often used as a ‘Trojan horse’ to introduce general and cultural development.

The young people who follow these alternative routes – and sometimes they are not as young as all that – are looking above all for social integration by way of entry into the world of work, which is the means of obtaining both income and social recognition. Collaboration by business in this type of training is indispensable, therefore. Without it, these experiments would not take place. Without a place of employment, there is no part-time workplace training, and no social reintegration. The role and responsibility of businesses in the education system is thus an urgent issue, largely because they generally decline to see themselves as actors in the education system – their purpose being perceived above all as that of making a profit. However, they do play a part in vocational education and training through workplace training, and if they do so it is undoubtedly because they benefit thereby. It is therefore fair to ask what the true extent of their educational responsibilities is, what skills they have and what they know about vocational training, and to ask what ‘social control’ should be exercised over this aspect of their activities. What other institutions and agencies should play a part alongside businesses: local community groups, the social partners, consular and professional bodies, etc.? Furthermore, workplace training costs money: who is to pay for it? The businesses, because they are making an investment in human capital, the young people (and their families) because it leads to a qualification, or the State because it will guarantee the social peace and the proper functioning of the civil society, and because education is a collective asset?

Lastly, schools themselves are called into question. There is no denying that some remedial solutions have proved effective. But, to quote the questions raised by Jordi Planas at Agora IV: ‘We cannot see, however, why we should wait for these students to be long-term failures before taking action and offering them more sensible methods that are better suited to their characteristics. When all is said and done, we cannot see why more suitable and effective methods should not be used from the moment when a lack of adaptation that will lead to failure becomes apparent’. Is it reasonable to wait for educational failure in order to remedy it?

The debate on alternative forms of education and training cannot therefore be restricted to remedial action alone. We are certainly a society which is marked by extraordinarily rapid technical and organisational change, and by a process of constant and apparently irresistible modernisation of economic and social structures. But what is needed is to find a way of ‘modernising without excluding’, as Bertrand Schwartz has said. In an economic and social system such as ours, which promotes competition, encourages individual solutions, and looks above all for immediate returns, it goes without saying that efficiency, flexibility and independence are the primary individual characteristics which need developing, and that this is what the education system sets out to achieve. But in doing so, it necessarily leaves on one side all those who do not fit the mould, who do not match the standard model. These leftovers are a threat to social cohesion in that they want their share of goods and services, in a society in which consumption is the one and only way of living. There is a huge threat that, having no purchasing power, they will help themselves. Nor is it any longer merely a threat. Urban

violence is a reality in most so-called developed countries. From that point of view, it is quite understandable that public authorities should wish to give priority to sections of the population who are in difficulty, and are economically and socially marginalised, since it becomes a public health requirement to take care of them.

But giving priority to the rehabilitation of sections of the population that are in difficulty carries with it the risk of neglecting the reform of the entire education and training system, which is a necessary but, no doubt, not a sufficient condition for the long-term eradication of school exclusion. In a society in which the opportunities for accessing knowledge are becoming increasingly diversified in time and space, it is clear that the need to intervene in the short term on behalf of those sections of the population must not as a result reinforce existing structural rigidities.

Hence, the entirely legitimate desire to match the content and methods of educational initiatives to the varied needs of those receiving the education should not call into question the principle of equity in access to education and training, or lead to the creation of educational ghettos. The more varied the environment, the surroundings, and the community, and hence the broader their potential content and the more challenging and questioning their relationship with existing systems, the more they will help positively to develop the skills and abilities of those in education and training. It should thus be admitted that while the division of pupils, trainees and other students into homogeneous groups according to criteria such as age, gender, social and occupational status, etc., increases the immediate returns to educational investment, it also impoverishes the educational experience. This contradiction in approach between integration and segregation, between comprehensive and streamed classes, is one of the main challenges facing European education systems. Streamed classes encourage the breakdown of communities into irreconcilable groups, run counter to the homogenisation of the body of society and to social cohesion, and foster the distillation of persons excluded by selection through failure. Homogeneous classes certainly encourage socialisation, no doubt allow people to become familiar with what is strange to them, and are thus an opportunity for mutual enrichment through difference, but they also impede the progress of pupils whose maturation is more rapid, without preventing slower pupils from falling behind.

Thus, both the 'made to measure' and the 'ready to wear' approach bring with them their attendant contradictions. The essential question is therefore how to create a dynamic balance in a number of fields (short versus medium term, remedial versus preventative approach, integration versus segregation, etc.): this process must involve all the actors concerned, not only the education system and business, as emphasised above, but also the other elements of the 'civil society', especially what the European Commission calls the 'third system'. The need to develop alternative approaches in the field of education and training goes hand in hand, indeed, with this other need to strengthen 'participatory citizenship'.

This does not mean promoting or imposing an arbitrary favourite alternative 'model'. It does mean, in the light of the three 'stages' identified at the beginning of this paper, which are in fact increasingly overlapping, both strengthening the capacity of the entire education and

training system to prevent exclusion as far in advance as possible, and facilitating the social, cultural and occupational integration of those who are 'marginalised'. This challenge is made more complex by the overriding need to maintain the overall coherence of the system, especially by ensuring that the specific actions and measures taken in the interests of certain target groups (particularly the 'excluded') do not lead to its fragmentation and, through a well-known 'counter-effect', to the greater marginalisation of those very sections of society.

### **Questions for discussion**

- (a) How can our cultural and social differences be managed in order to avoid educational failure?
- (b) How can educational failure be remedied?
- (c) What types of actors for what types of education?

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# Agenda of the meeting

**Monday 26 June 2000**

- 09.00 Welcome and opening of the Agora: Stavros Stavrou, Deputy director, Cedefop
- 09.15 The question at stake: integration in respect of people's differences by Éric Fries Guggenheim, Agora Thessaloniki project manager, Cedefop

## **Session I How to manage our differences so as to prevent academic failure**

- 09.30 Study cases: The comprehensive school system: the integrated curriculum solution
- Integration of bilingual pupils in the Danish Folkeskole, Johannes Bang, Danish Ministry of Education (Denmark)
  - The integration of special needs pupils into mainstream classes Annet De Vroey, Katholieke Hogeschool Leuven, VOBO-Further Education for teachers in special education (Belgium)
- 10.00 Study cases: The tailor made school system: the differentiated solution
- Single sex school or coeducation? Heidi Schrodt, the Rahlgasse School (Austria)
  - School for gifted children: Franz Mönks, Catholic University of Nijmegen, (the Netherlands)
- 10.30 General discussion on 'integration/differentiation'
- 11.30 The democratic transformation of school: a common culture for all? By Jean-Yves Rochex, Maître de Conférences in Education Sciences at the University of Paris VIII – Vincennes – Saint-Denis
- 12.00 Debate on democracy and common culture

## **Session II How to remedy academic failure**

- 14.40 Study cases: Alternative school
- The *produktionskole* in Denmark: Verner Ljung, *Foreningen for produktions-skoler og produktionshøjskoler* (Denmark)
  - The *Escuela taller* in Spain: Lucas Herrero, *Escuela Taller de Hervas* (Espagne)
  - The Second chance school: Barbara Brodigan, Principal of the Second Chance School of Leeds (United Kingdom)
  - The applied leaving certificate: Jim Gleeson, University of Limerick, Department of Education (Ireland)

- 16.15 Study cases: The alternative to school
- The 501-301 programme in Berlin: Manfred Schneider, Litter des BBJ-Grupp (*Verein zur Förderung kultureller und Beruflicher Bildung Jugendlicher und junger Erwachsener*), Germany
  - *Sperimentazione condotta dall’Azienda Dioguardi in Puglia: Massimiliano Franceschetti, Istituto per lo sviluppo della formazione professionale dei lavoratori – ISFOL* (Italy)
  - Nightriders – tailoring training to young lifestyle: Jane Lavelle, Newport County Borough Council Youth Service, Wales (United Kingdom)
  - Reforming and experimenting in education and training: the paradox of success. Joaquim Casal, Autonomous University of Barcelona (Spain)
- 17.45 General debate on how to remedy academic failure

## Tuesday 27 June 2000

### Session III Which actors for which education and training

- 09.00 The logic of ‘New Qualifications’ project – stakeholders’ role: Paul Rué, former head of the ‘New Qualifications’ project, Association Europe and Society (France)
- 09.30 About the relationship between decentralised and centralised education forms in the vocational education and training: Thomas Vogel, *Universität der Bundeswehr*, Hamburg (Germany)
- 10.00 Company role and responsibility in education and training: Heikki Suomalainen (Confederation of Finnish Industry and Employers – TT and President of UNICE’s Education and labour market Committee)
- 10.30 The role of local authorities for the integration of disadvantaged young people in Germany, Wolfgang Schlegel, *Institut für berufliche Bildung, Arbeitsmarkt- und Sozialpolitik GmbH*, Brussels office
- 11.30 Round-table discussion of the Actors in Initial and Continuing Vocational Education and Training (ICVET) on alternative education and training processes:
- Caroline Jones, Newport County Borough Council (United Kingdom)
  - Régis Regnault, General Confederation of Labour (France)
  - Lise Skanting, Danish Employer’s Confederation (Denmark)
  - Edward Tersmette, Second chance schools evaluation group, General Direction Education and Culture (European Commission)
- 12.30 General discussion on ‘alternative education and training processes’

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# 1. Integration of migrant pupils in the Danish education system

*Johannes Bang*

Let me first give a very short introduction to the Danish education system.

About 75 % of all mothers in Denmark are active in the labour market. Therefore, most children spend their time first in a day nursery and later in a kindergarten until the age of six, where they start in a preschool class. Although it is optional, 98 % of children take part in this preschool class. Nine years of compulsory education start from the age of seven.

It is possible to take an optional 10<sup>th</sup> school year. Afterwards, it is possible to continue either in general upper secondary education aiming at entrance to higher education or continue in vocational upper secondary education. The aim of the government is that 95 % of all shall complete one or the other type of upper secondary education.

We also have a very well developed adult education system, in which about one third of all adults take part each year.

The most important elements of the education system are more difficult to see in figures and graphs. First of all, the *Folkeskole* – which is what we call our basic school with nine years of compulsory education – is a school for all. The school is inclusive. There is no streaming so pupils go in the same class with the same classmates from the first to the ninth grade, and no marks are given until the seventh grade. We have a class teacher system which is very important. The class teacher – normally the Danish teacher – follows the children for several years, sometimes for the entire nine-year period. This teacher is responsible for the children as well as their education and welfare. For example, if there are any social problems, the class teacher is responsible for informing the social authorities so they can contact the home and see what they can do to help the family. If children have problems at school, they very often have social problems at home.

The class teacher is also responsible for cooperation with parents, and there are several meetings with parents each year. As mentioned, there are no marks until seventh grade, but it is an obligation for the class teacher to inform parents of the level of attainment of their children twice a year.

This close cooperation with parents is very important. As the class teacher usually has very good relations with parents, they call each other if there are any problems before they turn into bigger problems.

With no streaming, we try to make teaching as individual as possible. There is a well developed system of special education in all schools so children can get help, if they are

falling behind their classmates. This can either be done in the classroom with an extra teacher supporting the child for some hours a week or outside the classroom. Normally, the class teacher takes the initiative to give the child help, but it is becoming more and more common that parents ask for this help. It is very often necessary to repeat this support after some time and some children need support most of their school time. Children usually like it and are eager to get help. It is now accepted and no longer a disgrace as it was when I went to school many years ago.

Another important characteristic of the Danish school is the freedom of teachers to choose their own teaching methods and use the teaching materials they find relevant. We have very little control, and we have no inspections, but we have many excellent teachers who are very responsible and committed to their teaching – which I think is the most important aspect of any education system.

We have a good system of in-service training to help teachers keep up with their skills and introduce new methods, etc.

Sometimes, when I give an introduction to the Danish education system to groups from other countries, they ask me if we have any bad teachers. We do of course, and it is always a disaster for a class to have a bad teacher. But I think we only have a few, and if there is one, parents complain to the head of the school who will try to help and support this teacher.

One of the big challenges all European countries face today, is integration of migrant pupils into our education systems. If we succeed, we will have intercultural societies, where people of different origin will be living in harmony and everybody irrespective of origin will participate in the development of society. I have used the term intercultural society on purpose, because the term intercultural means that different cultures interact with each other, whereas in a multicultural society, people just live in the same society with no or very little interaction.

Perhaps we will not succeed and we will have groups of young migrants who do not see any future for themselves in our societies, who have dropped out of school or have left school with such poor results that they are not able to continue their education or get a job. You can read about this in the papers: gangs of young people involved in violence and crime, thus starting a vicious circle, because people who read about this or see pictures of it in the media will not open their firms to young migrants, so more young migrants will not get a job and will be left to the streets.

The best way of avoiding this vicious circle is to ensure that everybody gets a good education according to their abilities. It sounds very simple, but we all know that it is not that easy in practice. So let me start from the beginning.

About 10 years ago, we received more and more reports in the Ministry of Education of migrant children born in Denmark who started school without knowing one word of Danish and – even worse – teachers told us that their vocabulary in their mother tongue was very

much behind their age group. They were placed in reception classes where they were given an intensive Danish course, but after two years their results were still poor. They lacked so many concepts in their own language that they had great difficulties in learning them in another language. Although a lot of effort was made to improve their situation, they fell behind their Danish peer group, and it became a great problem to see if they would ever catch up with them.

Some children went to daycare institutions, but after some time their mothers took them out again. As a Turkish mother said, 'I want a Turkish child and you are making my child Danish'.

But why were their language skills in their mother tongue so far behind those of their age group?

The families all came from villages. Most of them were illiterate or with only a few years of school attendance. In a village, a boy follows his father as soon as he can walk and be of any help, so he learns the language from all the practical situations they are in. Girls follow their mothers and learn their skills. There are usually grandparents around who have time to talk with the children. In many ways, it is a good education. Children develop language skills necessary for life in the village where they live. In Denmark their situation was quite different. The boys could not follow their fathers to work. The girls could follow their mothers in the kitchen, but none of the children were allowed to go outside the flat. Their grandparents were in the country of origin, so they could not talk with the children and tell them stories and fairytales. The video machine took over, but this just makes children passive and does not develop any skills.

To avert this situation, we started a pilot project for preschool children and their mothers with support from the EU. The staff were Danish preschool and bilingual teachers. This was very important, as it was our aim to develop the children's language skills in their mother tongues and teach them Danish. Later, we discovered that we had to deal with not only a bilingual but also a trilingual situation: Turkish, Kurdish and Danish. So we found some good trilingual teachers and – as you all know – the success of all educational projects depends of the commitment and qualifications of the staff.

It was very important to make the mothers participate, so we could run a parallel development with child and mother. At the beginning, the mothers sat in a circle around the children and watched their activities. As the children loved the activities and developed very fast, the mothers relaxed and could go to a room next door, where they were given a language course in Danish and learned about Danish society in their own language. Any time the mothers wished to do so, they could go next door and see what their children were doing.

Because we believe that the most important thing in education is to win the confidence of both parents and children, we placed this project in a day-care institution for Danish children so all children had access to the same playground. Our idea was that Turkish and Danish children should play together and that playing would help the Turkish children to develop their language skills in Danish. But the children played in two groups with very little interaction and they only started playing together after two years. These children are now finishing their compulsory education, and they are doing as well in school as their Danish schoolmates. The

mothers are very active in cooperation with the school, because they have been followed the education of their children so closely and have had a lot of talks with the teachers that they have become very conscious of education and interested in the development of their children.

It was possible to bring guests to the project during its last year. It was very important for me to bring politicians and other decision-makers to see the project with their own eyes, because they normally have very little time to read long reports. In addition, what they see with their own eyes they must believe, and they also remember it. At the same time, I went around the country and spread the message.

I am very happy to tell you that the Danish Parliament passed an act making it compulsory for all local authorities to offer 15 hours of language stimulation to migrant children from the age of four until they start school at the age of six. This is also applicable to children in daycare institutions, where about 70 % of all migrant children spend their days. This percentage is going up every year as an adult education act has been introduced which makes it compulsory for all new migrants and refugees to follow courses in Danish to enable them to take part in education and get a job.

In daycare institutions, there is a language stimulation programme for 30 minutes a day for children. This programme has been very significant because even children who spent three or four years in a daycare institution in the past, did not learn sufficient Danish to be able to follow a normal class. But children who have followed the language stimulation programme are now able to follow the teaching in a normal class.

Even with language stimulation for small children, all problems are not solved. Because demand for language skills at school is going up all the time, indigenous people do not notice that education is gradually becoming more and more influenced by the culture of the country they live in. In all subjects, teachers make reference to society and culture – understood in the broadest sense of this word.

It is possible for migrant pupils to get extra hours of Danish as a second language throughout their school career. But there is little understanding of the importance of those extra hours of Danish as a second language among politicians and administrators, because they think that if a child has learned a language, it will have learned it for ever. This is not the case – a language is a living thing which we develop throughout our lives, and we all know that if we do not keep up our language skills by using it, reading books, etc., it might disappear.

During school, many children ask their parents for help with their school work, and many parents help their children. Very often it is just a question of discussing a paper they are going to write and showing them a book where they can find relevant information. But most migrant pupils do not have this possibility, and I could add that this also applies to a number of Danish children.

Therefore, we have initiated pilot projects at schools where, for an hour every afternoon, a teacher is available to help children with their homework. They discuss different solutions

with children and help them find relevant books in the school library where they can get the information they need to write a paper or solve a problem.

This help with homework has proved to be of crucial importance to pupils. It has given them a chance to go to school well prepared with all their papers ready to hand over to the teacher. It is wonderful to go to school feeling you have done a good job of work and are well prepared. And success stimulates further success.

Those without this possibility might give up writing papers and realise that there are many things they do not understand at school. It is no surprise that many of these children do not like going to school, they become school-weary, and in the worst cases they drop out. In Denmark, we are privileged to have an excellent system of adult education, so in many ways you may say that it is never too late to enrol in education. True, but those who have suffered too many defeats at school may also have learned that school is not a place for them so they stay away from all these excellent programmes. Therefore, it is vital that children experience successes at school so they have the courage to continue their education later in life.

It is my great hope that it will be possible to introduce programmes in all schools, so children can get help with their homework.

From 1992 to 1998, the Danish Government spent about DKK 100 million or about EUR 14 million to improve the education of migrant children. The outcome can be summarised as follows:

- (a) The whole school should take responsibility for education of the children.
- (b) There has to be good cooperation between bilingual and Danish teachers.
- (c) There has to be coordination between mother tongue lessons and teaching of Danish.
- (d) There has to be good cooperation with parents.
- (e) The culture of migrant pupils has to play an active part at school.

At the end of compulsory education, pupils get a lot of information about possibilities for further education and vocational education and training.

It is often very difficult for Danish parents to find their children a way through the education system after nine years of compulsory education. In schools, we advise pupils of their educational possibilities on which we have a lot of written material they can read. For the last two years of compulsory education, we send children to firms and workshops to get some practical experience. Of course migrant pupils get the same information and possibilities on practical work as their Danish peers. But their situation is quite different.

First of all, they come from countries with other educational traditions. Many types of education we have do not exist in their country of origin, so it is not a question of simply translating brochures and providing information material, which anyway is very difficult and costly, as the material has to be updated after a short period of time.

We have to understand that the education of a young boy or girl is a family decision in many cultures. It is therefore crucial that parents have the right information to make the right decisions, but how do we do that?

We found the best solution was to train mother tongue teachers to become school advisers. It is not only a question of providing parents with information about different educational possibilities, it is also very important who provides parents with this information. Mother tongue teachers are very highly estimated by parents, so they listen to them and follow their advice, they can ask questions in their own language which makes things easier. For example, a female Arab mother tongue teacher visited mothers at home and helped them decide on the future for their daughters. In this way, the ice was broken, and the girls started on a course of education with good success. Of course these results have spread very fast among the different groups of migrants and refugees and stimulated other parents to let their young boys or girls go into education after compulsory school years.

Over the years, we have seen that not only the number but also the percentage of migrant pupils who continue in the education system have risen each year, and for some groups they have reached the average of their Danish peer group. Indeed, they are overrepresented at universities' medical faculties, because the programme offered is very highly estimated by migrant parents, whereas the number of migrant students in humanities study programmes is far behind the average number in this age group.

But we still face problems – especially among late arriving young people with no or very little education from the country of origin. Some boys and girls who have been in Danish schools for a number of years, but for some reason or other have not obtained sufficient qualifications, are not able to complete a course of education. We have just started a project for these young people, where different school forms cooperate to create a course of education for young people on an individual basis, so the education can be created individually with a combination of language schools and practical training aiming at a vocational education qualification. But this project has just started so we have not yet seen the results.

The greatest challenge is the education of Romi children. We do not have many in Denmark, but a number of them came to Elsinore about 25 years ago from the former Yugoslavia. Romi people belong to the most underprivileged group in Europe, and today they may even be more underprivileged than before, because all our societies demand more and more education, unskilled jobs are disappearing and so are most traditional jobs the Romi people used to have.

The group who came to Denmark had no tradition of attending school, and it was a great challenge just to bring the children to school, but thanks to some very committed persons in both the education and the social welfare systems, they succeeded in bringing the children to school and into education. It was a great help that some families could see the necessity of education and supported their children.

Today, 25 years after the group arrived, we have seen that a number of them passed their general upper secondary school leaving examinations, and many managed school as well as

their Danish peers, but there are still problems with one third of the group. The social authorities have lost patience, and social allowances are now reduced, if parents do not bring their children to school every day. This method has proved to be very efficient as parents now bring their children to school which is the first step to start education. The children like going to school so there might be hope for the last third as well. Of course, it also has an influence when they see that many of their group are doing well, and that it is also possible for Romis to climb the social ladder.

But as already mentioned, this would not have been possible without strong support from a lot of committed people who have made a tremendous effort to help this group. These efforts also showed good cooperation between the school and social welfare systems. They have been very constructive in applying the different laws and regulations to the benefit of Romi children and their families.



## 2. Support services for inclusive education

*Annet De Vroey* <sup>(1)</sup>

*To prevent academic failure of children with any disability, learning problem or special educational need, we believe that inclusive education can be useful. In the Flemish education system, inclusive education brings a counterweight to long established special education. It encourages discussion on the effectiveness of special education and forces policy-makers to look for different ways and alternatives of dealing with children with disabilities or learning problems. Special needs education (instead of special education) will have to be reinvented, within the classroom, in an inclusive setting, and wherever necessary with the help of support services.*

### 2.1. The social stigma of special schools

Academic failure is still a large problem, even though many measures have been taken in all European countries to prevent or to reduce it. According to Joaquim Casal, reviewing many of these measures and the progress in education in general, this might even be called ‘the paradox of success’. Schooling for everybody creates more failure (Casal, J. et al.). In Flanders, we have compulsory schooling until the age of 18. Many youngsters of 16 and 17 years have lost all motivation for school and need alternatives for vocational training, because school programmes do not respond enough to their needs. Especially students who failed earlier in their school careers – and many have – or those who missed help or support at crucial moments, have lost all interest, and worse, all self-esteem.

The paradox not only lies in the number of failures, but also in the value connected with ‘failure’: the more important schooling is, the worse failure is. This means non-participation or exclusion from the school system immediately creates a social stigma. Being part of a group of classmates or students is an important value. Taking part in a school programme is positively valued. Getting certification is a necessary step towards getting a job or any social role in the future.

This is the main reason the system of separate special education for children with learning problems or with disabilities is no longer accepted as the only possible solution. However, in Flanders, despite integration measures, most children with serious learning problems or physical or sensory disabilities are still referred to special schools. Although the situation in Europe is diverse, Belgium is only at the beginning of a slow transition stage on special needs models.

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Many parents feel they have no fair choice with the future of their children: when a child has learning risks or problems because of a disability, it is almost automatically referred to a special school. Even if offered the choice, they only see the inconsistency between the options: special schools get all the means for special education, while mainstream schools have to work without extra budgets. Parents know they have no real choice, but at the same time they feel social devaluation has already started. The system already carries a social stigma. Parents fear their children will not get rid of this 'label' or devaluation when they finish school. They favour inclusion as a more natural and social solution for dealing with special needs (Lebeer, Jo. & De Vroey, Annet).

But not only parents favour inclusion. In the past, parents who dared to criticise the referral of their child to a special school were seen as parents with a serious psychological problem – they could not accept their child's problems and therefore needed help themselves. Now, at least, they are taken more seriously and their requests are supported by sociologists and educationalists studying new models and theories on disability and social stigma (Priestley, M.; Hall, J. T.; Fougeyrollas, P.)

## **2.2. Differences are no longer 'simple' categories**

Why did we invent special schools?

The existence of special schools implicitly means that mainstream schools are not responsible for all groups of pupils. Schools cannot or should not deal with all problems or differences. In the past, we thought we could classify all sorts of differences and send children to a special place dealing only with one category of pupils. Now, we have to admit that even if we can base our educational programmes on these categories, every school is still confronted with many sorts of differences, such as cultural, linguistic, social and religious. These are differences that also account for special educational needs. We cannot go on pretending that we can wipe away all the differences in a normal classroom. The opposite is true: every teacher has to admit that all children differ from one another in 'talents, tempo and temperament' (Stevens, L. M.). Even when we look at disability, resulting educational needs and academic achievements which always seemed to be too big a difference to handle in a normal classroom, we can define their differences according to this same simple model.

A teacher cannot expect all pupils to reach the same goals by the same means and at the same time. The differences in every 'normal' classroom increase (Ramsey, P.), not only and not in the least because of a changing world, but also because society demands more individuality and keeping an eye on everyone's individual needs. If every classroom is confronted with this changing reality, where do we stop? Can we go on designing special schools for more different groups and thus classify every child?

About 10 to 15 years ago when the first integration measures started in Belgium, special schools paradoxically got a new role: schools for children with learning disorders were often

seen as much more professional places to prevent more serious learning problems. People believed if children were referred to these schools at an early stage, the beginning of primary school, their chances for reintegration would be much better. This model is still practised, but children do not get a fair chance to go back to mainstream schools everywhere. Even if sent back, they will have lost their former classmates in the meantime. If they are not, it's because they are even more behind and are not able to catch up with children of the mainstream school, even in a class group of one year below their age. Further, the mainstream school had not learned how to handle the problem, because it was not prepared for it or asked to take a part in the integration process. Despite first integration measures and beliefs of reintegration, fundamentally nothing had changed. Views on disabilities, learning problems and even behavioural and social problems, were still the same.

The idea of special schools was based on a 'medical' or rather 'individualistic' model of disability (Priestley, M.) Children with a certain disability or learning difficulty were seen as totally different from other children, carrying the problems within them. In other words, academic or school problems were almost inevitable, because of the psychological or medical problem identified. Therefore diagnosis of a certain disability or learning problem was enough to send a child to a special school.

According to this view the differences in academic achievement were all caused by the disorder. Having a disability was overemphasised and overgeneralised: it was almost seen as the only and main feature of the child and at the same time every child with a certain disability or learning problem was thought to have the same special needs. Even today special schools provide the same 'total' answer for children with a certain disposition; suddenly they all have the same (often low) intellectual needs, the same social needs, the same emotional needs, etc. According to this individualistic (or often still medical) view the cause of academic failure lies in the child. The disorder itself justifies different and separate treatment.

### **2.3. Towards positive ideas and ecological thinking**

In more recent definitions of disability, emphasis is on the role of the environment as well (Luckasson, R.; Fougeyrollas, P.). We not forget that children with the same disability or the same learning problems, will also differ in their development, according to their daily situation and opportunities they get. In other words: we need to look at the whole context of the child, not only as an answer to the differences we are dealing with, but mainly as part of the diagnosis of the problem. A good diagnosis not only consists of a description of disabilities because of certain impairments, disorders or social context, but also describes the abilities of the person and context. It has to provide an analysis of strengths and weaknesses.

In a certain context, under certain conditions, the same disability will perhaps not lead to a 'handicap' or social stigma. Maybe this context provides the right conditions for future full participation in society. On the other hand another context, with more inhibitive conditions, will create a 'handicap situation'. The quality of participation is a result of the interaction

between the person's disposition and environment (Fougeyrollas, P.). The handicap-creation model of Professor Patrick Fougeyrollas, although less radical than the social model, gives an important role to the environment. It is an interactive model, that still accounts for the ecological thinking in diagnosis of children with disability. Also, it provides a new classification, based on positive concepts and detailed taxonomies, both for intrinsic characteristics belonging to the person and extrinsic elements belonging to environmental factors and specific life situations. Working with these taxonomies and given a certain context, one can identify certain conditions either as a barrier for participation or as a facilitator. A facilitating condition for future participation is expected to be – among others – mainstream education for all and legislation that underlines this right and provides necessary special care in mainstream schools. In other words inclusion can prevent social stigma, because it provides a better context for full social participation (Lammertijn, F. et al.).

In this way, the arguments for inclusion brought along by parents and based on intuition, beliefs and expectations for a better future, are getting strong support from more partners in special education. At the same time this tendency is appearing in an international context. There is at least a growing awareness of the inadequacy of the so-called 'categories' of special education and the need for more diversification in mainstream education.

## **2.4. Inclusion versus integration**

Before looking at the ways of dealing with differences in an inclusive setting, it is important to stress the meaning of this rather new word for what we used to call integration. Why is it called 'inclusion'?

Inclusion is a process that starts with respect for diversity. This educational process is based on the belief that everyone belongs to the community and can make a contribution to it, however impaired or disabled they may be. Everyone has certain abilities and talents. In this process, the label 'disabled' is getting less important, because the person behind it is appearing. Inclusion is also a fundamental right based on belonging and connectedness (Bayliss, P.)

It is about citizenship for everyone in a democratic society. It is a reciprocal and active process, where many participants are involved. It is essentially a relational concept: it deals with relations and friendships between people. It is essentially about caring for one another. Therefore it is sometimes called a 'matter of the heart'. Without fighting the former concept of 'integration' (which was probably meant as inclusion by the self-advocating groups of disabled people), 'inclusion' grabs this deeper meaning much better. 'Integration' has, compared to inclusion, a more limited meaning, describing the structural process of providing measures for participation, without the necessary relational involvement.

While now in discussions about special education the meaning of 'inclusion' narrows to the group of disabled people, in its full meaning it refers to all differences. In fact, defining

'handicap' as a handicap situation, meaning loss of participation, and being created by an interaction between personal and social components, also views a larger group. Inclusion also refers to low-skilled people, underprivileged groups, and so on.

## **2.5. Differentiation in the classroom**

Respect for diversity does not in itself prevent academic failure or even social stigma in the long run. All children have to be challenged in their own way, motivated and stimulated to develop academic skills, social skills and – to a certain degree – independence. How is this possible when a teacher deals with one curriculum for a whole classroom? The magic word is differentiation of the curriculum and differentiation of standards. Not every child has to follow the same programme or be evaluated in the same way. But differentiation in the classroom not only has its own limits in realising good education for all, it also creates the risk of losing valuable moments of group activities and connectedness of a whole class. The word is 'magic', because now everyone talks of differentiation as the only solution for problems in the classroom. But, despite this high interest, it is far from a simple 'method'. It demands much creativity, experience and wisdom to realise good differentiated education. While involving all pupils in the same learning activities, dealing with the same theme or subject and preferably the same materials, teachers will have to try to adapt this material to the needs of every pupil. They will have to translate questions in a challenging way for all. In doing this, the class will become an enriching environment, where gifted children and slow learning children can at the same time benefit from the learning process brought about by teachers and one another.

A useful model of this kind of differentiation is called the concentric model for differentiation (Lorenz, S.) in which for each topic or lesson the key concepts are prepared for all, and if required modified for some. These items are placed in the centre of the model. The next circle consists of items which most of the class will hopefully understand or be able to complete successfully by the end of the lesson. Further circles are meant for children who work faster and can already reach more advanced skills. At the same time children can help one another to master the basic skills. Rather than designing a series of separate parallel activities around the same topic to accommodate students of different ability or aptitude, this concentric model allows the teacher to teach the class a whole. This way children with learning problems will turn out to be capable, when motivated by the desire to keep up with the rest of the class. On the other hand, a student who is struggling, can take the whole lesson to consolidate the items in the centre of the circle, without feeling a failure or having to be taken out of the group. This concentric model not only provides a useful basic model for differentiation of the curriculum, but also helps at the same time to change or modify the standards for evaluation.

## 2.6. Different models for inclusion

It is still a difficult task to succeed in good differentiation. It will surely not be realised in a few years in all mainstream classes. It will always depend on teachers' talents, continuing support for teachers and a positive attitude towards innovative processes, flexibility and diversification of models of instruction.

Therefore differentiation cannot be the only magic word for inclusive education. Different models for improving full social participation for all are open. We must not make the same mistakes as before: organising and structuring every special need, as if we can categorise the needs again. Neither can we wipe away all good experiences and examples created in special classes. When a certain model of inclusion does not work, it is because the specific school culture, the child's background, the teacher's beliefs, or any other feature of the whole context is different. In a way, every demand for special need adaptations in the classroom asks for a new model. But of course we can learn from other experiences. For instance in the example of the Danish *Folkeskole*, we saw a creative diversification of the full inclusion model. While Denmark has a long tradition and experience of inclusion, sometimes the choice was made for a temporary and partially separated group of pupils, because of language differences (Bang, J.). Working with the direct social environment and improving language in a temporary separate class, the process of inclusion is still supported. By gaining the confidence and support of parents, better conditions for language development are created as well as for social relations, friendships, citizenship.

This is comparable with the doubts of parents of deaf children in the debate on inclusive education in Flanders. Many deaf parents do not support inclusive education. They have often a stronger feeling of connectedness with other deaf people than with hearing people. The importance of language as a means of expressing personality and the culture of a group, should not be underestimated. It is probably more natural for a child to belong to a group that speaks the same language, especially when the 'new' language is almost impossible to learn and to master because of impairment. In providing, for instance, temporary and partially separate groups for language instruction, including own language's instruction, and preparing other children for sign language, a process of inclusion can be started.

The same model exists for blind children, who learn to read and write in a separate group (and unfortunately in a separate school), to be better prepared for a further school career in mainstream education. This kind of model, if proved to be more successful than immediate integration measures, could be adapted to a more inclusive model and might be an intermittent stage towards full inclusion.

Inclusive education is not a methodological reform or a new educational model. It is an awareness, an attitude, a prepossession for dealing with differences.

## **2.7. Another paradox**

Although we believe that special schools, based on medical or personal ‘labels’, lead to a lower quality of participation, some secondary special schools currently provide good vocational training for students with serious learning problems, mostly because of a poor socio-economic background. Not only certification at the end of the school career is gained, but also a high rate of job placement in an inclusive setting is reached. This paradoxically is a result of the ‘impasse’ vocational training in mainstream education has reached. Alternatives of part-time learning programmes do not always improve the motivation of students, because of the lack of good jobs open to the schools.

On the other hand, special secondary schools may have smaller class groups, good materials and special programmes. They provide individual support for students. Being aware of the risk of the label of special education, they put emphasis on higher vocational qualities. In fact, these secondary special schools were not based on traditional categories first (although they use the same ‘labels’ of disability in practice); they were designed as four different models for preparing towards a certain participation level. The training model that prepares for a vocational qualification and job inclusion, is successful, or ‘successful enough’. The labelling is still a risk, especially for those students who have learned to use the label themselves and have lost all confidence in full participation.

Until now there is little experience of full inclusive vocational training programmes in Flanders. The context of these special schools is currently a more facilitating condition for further job participation than the context of mainstream vocational training classes. It would be worthwhile to bring more individual support and challenges, smaller class groups and positive attitudes into mainstream vocational classes.

Looking at this model, we come close to the alternatives for vocational training for low-skilled people created in many countries in different ways. If these schools would be able to get rid of their ‘special school’ label, they might be a good alternative and even provide support to mainstream vocational classes.

## **2.8. Support services**

One of the questions in dealing with academic failure is whether the school can be responsible for all children. The ideal differentiated answer cannot always be found in the classroom. And even if possible, teachers cannot find all these answers by themselves. They need a team of teachers and maybe other partners to help them find solutions for special cases or to find challenging ways to involve a slow learning pupil in the learning process of the classroom. They may need specialists to improve a learning process by remedial teaching. They may need local services to provide assistance in the classroom, during excursions, or during in-service training. Advice and assistance services, as well as support services for individual or group

activities, are essential. We believe schools have a responsibility for all children, but they cannot face every problem on their own.

The role of external services is increasing. This is probably a good evolution. It means that from outside education independent partners are observing, studying, evaluating, and experimenting with different education models. They can at the same time play a role in education without losing an independent view.

The roles of these services can be diverse. In an inclusive context, they can, for instance, select the material teachers need to be informed about a certain learning problem, play a modelling role for dealing with a certain problem in the classroom, give advice on teaching style, individual instruction, adaptations, etc. Other support services might provide special therapies for group activities or special meetings important for identifying and recognising problems, as a way of self-help and self-advocacy; the role of these services will only be to provide a sporadic meeting point, instead of a basis for social interaction.

Whether existing special schools can modify their services and play an important role in supporting inclusive education, remains to be seen. It is often suggested that they should, but there might be some risks if they did. It would mean the classified system of special needs education would remain unchanged. Services would still base their help on the same beliefs about disability and learning ‘disorders’. Only if services can be created – or special needs education reinvented – without these labels, and based on educational needs, challenges and abilities, can they help the inclusion process and therefore full participation. Currently, a few independent services are trying to support inclusive education, such as parent associations and therapeutic centres (Lebeer, J. & De Vroey, A.). Their experiences can offer useful models for inclusion as an innovating process in mainstream schools.

Different models of school-linked services are being created as a new approach to address the complex problems children and families are facing. It is too early to grab the conditions for ‘good’ services or for ‘good’ cooperative arrangements with schools, because there is no long-term evaluation of these services (Horsch, K.). While evaluation starts, growth of these services can be seen as a promising answer to the need for innovation and the request of schools to (re)integrate all children.

This is the main challenge for the success of inclusive education. Schools will have to be more open and innovative first, but they will certainly need the expertise and effective support of consulting and advice centres, providing them with help and assistance in adapting the curriculum and responding to the special educational needs of students in the whole context of the school.

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### 3. Single sex schooling or coeducation?

*Heidi Schrodt* <sup>(2)</sup>

As a practitioner and not a scientist my presentation on the pros and cons of coeducation and possible alternatives can only give glimpses of the theoretical discussion. I will try to outline the insights gained through more than 20 years research and also give you an idea of the gender focus we have developed in our school.

Our school, commonly known as *Gymnasium Rahlgasse*, is a secondary school, covering the 10 to 18 age group. It has been known for its work in the field of emancipation for women since its foundation. It was the first school that granted girls admission to university and was founded by suffragettes in 1892, after a 22-year struggle! It became a State school in 1947 and went coeducational in 1979. It is still run as a coeducational school, although it has been experimenting with single-sex classes. The focus now is on gender, i.e. equal opportunities at school with regard to gender.

When I took over the school in 1992, I had been involved with feminist pedagogics as well as the coeducation crisis for more than 10 years, theoretically as well as practically. *Rahlgasse* has a long tradition as a reform school, and when I arrived, I met several teachers who were interested in girls support schemes.

Before I talk about the development of our gender focus over the past eight years and describe a few activities connected with it, I would like to address some of the most important shortcomings of coeducation as it is practised in most European countries, indeed in the countries of the western world (where we have most research data). At this conference, I only have time for the briefest of surveys.

When compulsory coeducation was introduced in Austria in 1975, high hopes were placed on equal opportunities for both sexes. The underlying assumption was 'natural' growing up together at school would automatically lead to better understanding and mutual respect between the sexes. We know 25 years later that these expectations have not been fulfilled. Research on coeducation has shown that, in its commonly practised form, it tends to reinforce rather than diminish gender stereotypes. For several years studies concentrated on girls and only during the past seven years or so the focus has shifted to boys. All in all, coeducation has proved to be a great disadvantage for both sexes.

Some of the most common disadvantages for girls are:

- (a) in coeducational classes and schools, girls have less space at their disposal – literally as well as symbolically;

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- (b) girls get only a fraction of the teachers' attention compared to boys, whether teachers are male or female;
- (c) girls are abused as 'social workers', according to the motto 'seat a well-behaved girl next to a disruptive boy', to create an orderly working situation in the classroom;
- (d) girls' achievements at school (which are better than boys' everywhere) are – discriminatingly – attributed to their diligence – versus boys' intelligence;
- (e) disruptive girls are treated much more severely than disruptive boys;
- (f) boys are given more speaking time during lessons;
- (g) cooperative behaviour by girls is labelled as 'conformity', whereas boys' competitive attitudes are usually admired and seen positively by teachers;
- (h) girls' contributions to lessons are often pulled to pieces by their male classmates;
- (i) girls are exposed to sexual harassment – physically and verbally – by their male classmates.

They are also humiliated, degraded and ridiculed. Even today, girls are little motivated for science and mathematics and still opt for traditional female subjects, such as languages and humanities. The same applies to the choice of schools – girls tend to attend schools traditionally associated with female education and shun technical schools. Recent US studies show, however, that patterns have been changing throughout the past decade, and girls are catching up in scientific subjects (contrary to boys with humanities and choice of traditionally female vocations).

Girls' strengths are often not seen as such: cooperative behaviour, high commitment at school, social intelligence, high achievements, good performances, to name but a few.

During the early years of research on gender and school (from the late 1970s onwards), most studies dealt with girls. Programmes to strengthen girls were developed and practised. As a result – and also because of the crisis of the male in the western world in general – boys seem to have become even more disruptive and difficult. And so it became evident that coeducation cannot be improved without working with both sexes. So the focus of researchers (to a very high degree female!!) turned to boys, particularly boys up to the age of 14/15. There was also a change approach: in the early days of gender-conscious work in schools (notably with girls), girls were seen as having deficits compared to boys. From the late 1980s onwards, the approach was based on a concept of difference, with the vision of a school that offered equal opportunities to both boys and girls, reinforcing non-traditional gender stereotypes rather than perpetuating the traditional ones.

So what are the disadvantages of coeducation for boys?

These are the most obvious:

- (a) boys have great problems in social competence;

- (b) cooperative methods of work are difficult for them ( group and teamwork, for example) – whereas, vice versa, girls find competitive methods more difficult;
- (c) boys tend to ‘solve’ conflicts with physical and verbal aggression;
- (d) they lag behind in language learning, achieving far worse results;
- (e) in general, male pupils have worse results in school, fail more often and have a higher dropout rate. (Interestingly, this trend is reversed in higher education, e.g. at university).

We have been able to develop quite effective programmes for girls in schools, but the same cannot be said for boys. The reasons are manifold and cannot be dealt with here. If a school wants to concentrate on the gender aspect and develop schemes, a thorough theoretical background is indispensable. Contrary to what we tolerate from girls, boys' lack of social competence and their deficiencies in emotional intelligence are accepted ‘with a wink’, thereby reinforcing them all the time. This attitude has fatal consequences for both sexes: for boys, for whom breaking limits is an important factor of – traditional – ‘maleness’, they are encouraged to continue with this behaviour and test more and more limits and go to more and more extremes. It is fatal for girls, as they go on suffering from this sort of behaviour. The latter also applies to those boys who do not conform to the ‘mainstream’ male behaviour.

As a consequence, for non-sexist work at school the following two priorities are indispensable:

- (a) draw limits;
- (b) educate boys to sensitivity and introspection, values not present in the concept of the traditional western male.

### **3.1. How schools can react to this situation – the example of *Gymnasium Rahlgasse* in Vienna**

During the last eight years, the school has devoted its developmental work to improving coeducation for both sexes and has developed a set of programmes and activities, with the goal of creating a school that offers equal opportunities for both girls and boys. From 1992 to 1996, the focus was on girls, and later the socialisation of boys, as it became obvious that methods successful for girls did not work for boys. Consequently, teachers had to develop a whole new set of teaching methods.

As mentioned before, the history of the school has a long reform tradition, going back to the foundation years. To introduce the girls' focus (later gender focus) met with considerable resistance from the staff (such resistance has to be taken into account when dealing with gender questions, though!). This was to change at a later stage, however. The experiment with the girls-only class disrupted the apparent harmony of the staff. There were both strong opponents and strong supporters of the project. The reason why it turned out to be so controversial (unexpectedly!) was that it had to do with not just any single-sex class, but a single-sex class run on feminist principles. It caused an even bigger uproar outside the school,

within the Educational Board of Vienna, the educational community and also sparked off an intensive, controversial debate in the media. I cannot go into further details here, but the experiment has been scientifically evaluated, and the study is available at the Austrian Ministry of Science and Education.

### **3.2. What do we offer / where are we in 2000?**

We have counsellors for girls only, with regular consulting hours.

We also have counsellors for boys only. The concept of consulting hours has not been accepted by boys, however. We have to find a different approach.

Both 'confidantes' are also spokespersons for girls and boys, defending their interests. They provide active support in their socialisation.

We had a girls-only class for two years, run on feminist principles. We are thinking of regularly offering such classes in future, as soon as we have succeeded in developing a satisfactory alternative for boys.

We have courses for young girls (10 to 12) called 'girls in motion', which deal with body awareness and self-assertion.

Girls take self-defence courses during physical education lessons. The object is for them to experience a self-defence process rather than confrontation.

Sewing and technology lessons are obligatory for both boys and girls. In fact, a new curriculum has been developed by the teachers.

At the start of the 1997/98 schoolyear a new scientific and interdisciplinary course was introduced to the curriculum. This course, called *Lernwerkstatt*, focuses on 13 year-old students and is orientated towards practical demonstrations and individually chosen research. The only teaching role is that of coordinator and expert in research skills. Such an approach can make girls interested in scientific subjects and methods of research. The subjects included in the new courses are maths, physics, chemistry, biology, geometry and manual vocations. Many more girls than before the introduction of this subject now choose the scientific branch of our school.

Each year, we have a day on which there are workshops for boys and girls only, with the aim of having them experience non-traditional aspects of being male/female (boys work in kindergartens, girls repair cars, boys have to shop and look after babies at the same time, etc.). There are about 50 workshops altogether. These so-called 'girls and boys' days' have become a great success.

We take part in an EU Comenius project called 'equal opportunities in schools' together with a secondary school in Hamburg and another in Stockholm.

In autumn 2000 we started with the experimental stage of a 'mediation' project, training students as mediators in conflicts, paying special attention to gender-specific aspects.

We take part in a project 'Girls' power – Boys' power', a pilot project in cooperation with sociologist Edit Schlaffer from the Ludwig Boltzmann research centre in Vienna, in which a curriculum for a self-assertiveness-course will be developed, that shall train girls as well as boys in acquiring non-traditional roles and qualities.

It is our conviction that it is nowadays essential for both sexes to develop skills and qualities that transgress the traditional gender boundaries. To attain this goal, however, we have to deal with strongly ingrained stereotypes that are still transported from generation to generation, though a change of paradigm has been taking place during past decades, leaving especially young males disoriented. Coeducation in our school reflects the differences between girls and boys due to socialisation and makes use of this difference to enlarge the possibilities and chances for both sexes. Students shall be made aware of patterns of behaviour and gender stereotypes, and both will be made transparent.

Summing up I would say: Much has been done at *Gymnasium Rahlgasse* during the past eight years, but in many respects (especially with regard to boys), we are still at the beginning of a long road.



## **4. Serving the needs of gifted individuals: the optimal match model**

*Franz J. Mönks*

### **4.1. Human development and the gifted**

All human beings are born into a social world. They all try to become part of this social environment and realise their potential. Most parents consider it their major task to educate their children to fit into the prevailing society, and to develop acceptable behaviour. In addition to these more socially defined goals, many, but not all, parents try to bring their children up in such a way, that they can develop according to their abilities and needs. From the very beginning, newborns have predispositions that will influence the development of their personalities. Newborn babies differ with regard to the following predispositions: motor activity, general irritability and responsiveness. These dispositions form the basis for social interaction and relationships and for rich or poor communication with the environment.

Developmental psychology makes a distinction between cognitive, social emotional and personality development. Personality is often regarded as the displayed verbal, cognitive, and emotional behaviour in a social context. It is possible to make a distinction between cognitive and social development but it is impossible to separate them. It is evident that cognitive development plays a particular central role in the child's overall development. A good example is attachment behaviour – attachment seen as the primary social bond that develops between an infant and its caretaker. For development of attachment behaviour, children have to be able to distinguish their mother's face from other faces, and to recognise the mother as the same person they saw yesterday and many days before. This example demonstrates that cognitive development (discrimination and recognition) is not the cause for social-emotional development but a necessary precondition. There are much more links between cognitive skills and children's social and emotional development. It is also true that the children's interactions with others are to a certain extent limited or facilitated by their cognitive abilities at a given moment. Change and growth of cognitive skills will transform their social and emotional interactions with others.

Already 60 years ago the Dutch psychologist Dr Luning Prak (1936) criticised the lack of understanding demonstrated by schools and teachers regarding gifted pupils. He uses the phrase: 'The nonsense of the calendar dogma', referring to the 'myth of egalitarianism', the treatment of children of the same age as if they were equals. It is undemocratic and unjust to educate and teach children in schools to make them 'average', i.e. the level of outcome should be more or less the same. This was in 1936!

Is it different today? Are children in our schools taught according to their abilities?

Before we focus on the social-emotional development of gifted children we have to take a closer look at what developmental psychology as a science means and what giftedness means.

## **4.2. Focus on developmental psychology**

The object of developmental psychology is unique within the total field of psychology. Developmental psychologists focus on and study the change or transformation of motives and behaviour over time. They concentrate on three central questions:

- (a) what is psychological development: the question of definition, and theories on development. An answer to this question implies a description of the next question;
- (b) why does it happen, what are the causes of development, what is internally and what is externally caused (endogenous versus exogenous);
- (c) how can developmental processes be studied.

We will elaborate on the first two questions.

The four most important theories are the following:

- (a) learning theory, also called mechanical mirror viewpoint;
- (b) maturational theory, also called organismic lamp viewpoint;
- (c) cognitive theory; and
- (d) psychoanalytic theory.

The learning theory regards all behaviour as learned behaviour. Behaviour is governed by laws of learning. If we know these laws we know how to influence and how to evoke appropriate behaviour. Observational learning and conditioning effects are the basic explanatory principles.

The maturational theory emphasises that maturationally determined development, in its pure form, occurs regardless of practice and training.

The cognitive theory focuses on mental/cognitive development and on similarities between children. According to Piaget, the central person of this theory, the child's development results from explorations of and interactions with the environment, i.e. that a rich environment provides more material and possibilities to work with and will thus help the child develop more rapidly. Because of the emphasis on interaction, this theory is also called the interactionistic theory.

The psychoanalytic theory sees development of the personality as the central process; development of language, perception and cognition are side issues. Freud's focus was on the interactions between the child's needs and wishes and the treatment of the child by caregivers.

All theories emphasise that development, seen as change, is a result of interaction. The difference lies in the explanation of how changes occur: what are the factors which determine the interaction. For learning theorists, interactions are externally determined, whereas maturational theorists have the contrary position: interaction is internally determined. For both, the psychoanalytic and the cognitive proponents, maturation plays an important role, as well as the environment. Both can be seen as interactionistic approaches. For Freud, the environment is important for the development of the ego and superego. For Piaget, mental development depends on maturation and external influences.

Development as a process of change occurs through interaction of individuals with their environment. All theories agree upon this viewpoint. It is important to see that no theory exists in a pure form. In our opinion, the different theories are complementary. We define psychological development as follows:

Psychological development is a dynamic and lifelong process. The interaction between the nature of the individual and the environment determines what kind of behaviour and which behavioural motives emerge and become manifest.

Each individual lives in a specific historical period, a certain socio-cultural situation and a given family. All these environmental variables may influence the individual's development in both positive and negative directions. It depends essentially on the creativity and energy of parents, for example, whether a musical prodigy or a highly intellectual child will produce outstanding achievements. They must find good teachers, provide an enriching environment, and educate the child to maintain his or her motivation to exercise and perform. Each gift needs a supportive and stimulating environment for its development! This is a very general statement, and it is always true. But the question for gifted children is: do they have – compared to average children – different social-emotional needs, and how can educators meet these needs?

Before we can answer this question, we have to know what giftedness is.

### **4.3. What is giftedness: four different models**

According to Hany (1987) there are dozens of different concepts and models of giftedness. This makes it difficult to arrive at a balanced and useful theory.

If we group the different definitions into four main categories we come to the following models. A model is a simplified way to demonstrate the main lines of the object of study. It is necessarily a simplification of reality.

#### 4.3.1. Trait-oriented models

Representatives of this orientation consider giftedness as a relatively stable trait, independent of culture, historical period and environment. The most well known representative is the American scientist and psychologist Lewis M. Terman (1877-1956). In 1905, he already showed a scientific interest in research about giftedness when he defended his dissertation at Cornell University about seven 'stupid' and seven 'clever' boys. He is actually the pioneer of studying the life span of gifted people. His longitudinal research with more than 1 500 gifted students (age range 6 to12) started in 1921/22, and is still going on.

The official definition in the United States reflects the trait orientation. This definition was first published in the Marland Report, and is therefore called Marland definition:

*'Gifted and talented children are those identified by professionally qualified persons who by virtue of outstanding abilities are capable of high performance. These are children who require differentiated educational programs and/or services beyond those normally provided by the regular school program in order to realise their contribution to self and society. Children capable of high performance include those with demonstrated achievement and/or potential ability in any of the following areas, single or in combination:*

- (a) general intellectual ability*
- (b) specific academic aptitude*
- (c) creative or productive thinking*
- (d) leadership ability*
- (e) visual and performing arts*
- (f) psychomotor ability' (Marland, 1972, p. IX).*

Although this definition has great value in giving direction to many gifted programmes throughout the US, it is limited because important factors like motivation or social environment are not included. But of great value the distinction made between potential and realised capacities. Underachievers are often students with a great potential and a low outcome.

According to Gardner (1983), there is more than one kind of intelligence. This modern approach to intelligence seems to be very productive and helpful. Some children demonstrate sometimes extraordinary talent in a particular area. He makes a distinction between the following seven intelligences: (a) linguistic, (b) logical-mathematical, (c) visual-spatial, (d) musical, (e) bodily-kinaesthetic, (f) intrapersonal, and (g) interpersonal. In his book *Creating Minds* (1993) he elaborates the seven intelligences with analysis of the lives of seven extremely creative persons and relates these creative individuals in the following order to the different forms of intelligence described above: T. S. Elliot, Albert Einstein, Pablo Picasso, Igor Strawinsky, Martha Graham, Sigmund Freud, and Mahatma Gandhi (see Mönks, 1995).

#### **4.3.2. Cognitive components models**

Cognition is a general concept for information processing: acquirement, storage and application of knowledge. Representatives of this orientation want to know how gifted children distinguish from average children in the quality of information processing. For instance, does metacognitive thinking (thinking about thinking) start at an earlier age in gifted children. Since this process is the base for 'intelligent' actions, many propose to call this QI instead of IQ, where QI stands for quality of information processing.

#### **4.3.3. Achievement-oriented models**

Authors of this orientation consider achievements as observable output of giftedness. However, they also make a distinction between potential and realised giftedness. The underachiever might have a high intellectual potential but it is not showed in exceptional achievements. We do know that not all talented and gifted people are able to develop their inborn gifts, since development is an interactive process. Where the environment is not supportive or even a hindrance, gifted potential might not develop fully. Early detection and encouragement of gifted children is important, because many gifted children do not like to show their giftedness and their talents. This model is in accordance with our own view.

#### **4.3.4. Sociocultural/psychosocial oriented models**

Representatives of this view believe that talent development is dependent on policy-makers, the historical period, a general positive attitude against the gifted. If public opinion and policy-makers are not in favour of the study of giftedness and of gifted education, the individual gifted child may not develop according to his/her developmental and intellectual needs. It is extremely important that a supportive attitude towards the gifted exists on the macro level.

These four models do not exclude each other, but partly they complement each other or they accentuate certain aspects. The third and fourth opinion are not only theoretical, they also have relevance for school and education. Theory and practice come together and our own view can be situated here.

### **4.4. Giftedness: a multi-factor model**

Renzulli (1978; 1981) developed the three-ring concept of giftedness. He states the following: 'Giftedness consists of an interaction among three basic clusters of human traits – these clusters being above average abilities, high levels of task commitment, and high levels of creativity. Children who manifest or are capable of developing an interaction among the three clusters require a wide variety of educational opportunities and services that are not ordinarily provided through regular instructional programs' (Renzulli, 1978, p. 182). It is important to

note that Renzulli's definition not only describes the elements for identification, but also emphasises what kind of instructional and educational support gifted children need. He was the first who linked identification and appropriate stimulation.

However, this concept neglects the interactive nature of human development and the dynamic interplay of developmental processes. Therefore, we modified and extended Renzulli's model from a developmental perspective. We include three personality factors: exceptional abilities, motivation, and creativity; and environmental factors: family, school, and friends/peers.

We define giftedness as follows: Giftedness as performed in outstanding (intellectual) achievements is the result of a supportive interaction between three personality characteristics creativity, motivation and high intellectual ability, and the social settings of family, school, and peers (see Fig. 1).

We focus on intellectual giftedness, knowing that there are more forms of high ability. We emphasised the performed achievement. But we know that not all individuals are able and/or willing to demonstrate potential in performance.

In Figure 1, the social settings of family, school, and peers form the most important social learning environments for a child. It is therefore extremely important that these environments are supportive and responsive. The personality characteristics can be described as follows: high (intellectual) abilities include good ability to learn, high memory achievements, spatial-abstract ability, to cope in a variety of domains with new tasks and assignments, i.e. creative productivity.

This high ability is often indicated by an intelligence quotient (IQ). As global cut-off line there is often an IQ score of 130 and higher or an equivalent achievement. This cut-off point is global because interpretation of the scores of a test depends on the standardisation of a test and on the qualitative analysis of the test scores. It is difficult to interpret test scores, especially underachievers. IQ scores give the impression of 'hard figures', because of the numbers. At the Centre for the Study of Giftedness (Nijmegen) we never give IQ scores but profiles.

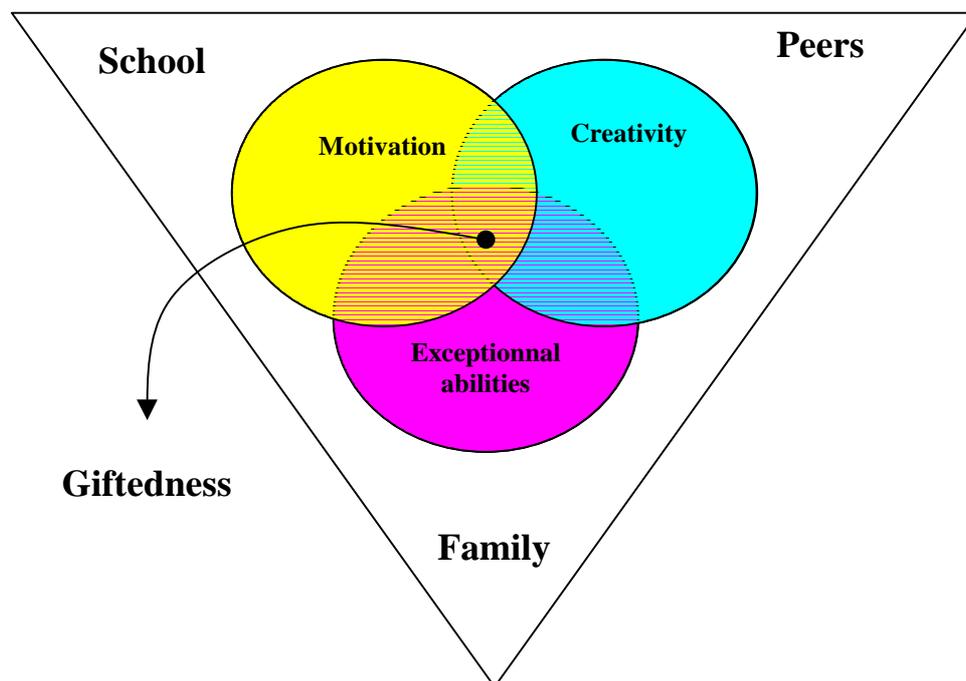
Creativity expresses itself in pleasure to solve problems, productive thinking, the originality of solutions, flexibility of thinking. Creativity is not seen as a domain specific ability as Gardner (1993) regards it, but rather as a general ability to find solutions and use new ways to approach problems.

Motivation is the motor of human behaviour. All activities and all our behaviour has a motivational origin. If task motivation is strong enough it is possible to overcome difficulties and hindrances, i.e. risks and uncertainties can be taken into account; this is an important aspect of future time perspective. Motivation also means that an individual feels attracted to a certain task or objective, that it is a pleasure to work on it, that one loves it; this is the emotional component. Moreover, motivation means that an individual can make short-term

and long-term planning; this is the cognitive component. Motivation is an umbrella concept and as such it includes 'Renzulli's task commitment'.

High (intellectual) ability is a potential for outstanding or extraordinary achievements in one or more domains. This potential will only become manifest where there is strong motivation and where there is a supportive environment. Potential and social environment must be interlinked in a positive way.

Figure 1: Multi factor-model of giftedness



This interactionistic view on giftedness is the guideline for research and consultation at the Centre for the Study of Giftedness (CGS) at the University of Nijmegen. For consultation, for example, it is important to have a 'holistic view' on the child or adolescent: a thorough diagnosis of the individual and his/her social environment are needed to give good consultation. The need for consultation is growing. In the period between March 1988 (opening of the CSG) and March 1993 there were 581 children examined and advice was given to their parents and partly to teachers. In addition, there were some hundreds of phone and brief consultations. The main age group of the thoroughly examined children was between 4 and 12 year of age. There were 171 girls and 410 boys in the group. What does this (dis)proportion mean?

## 4.5. Cognitive make-up and social-emotional needs of gifted children

As was said earlier, the level of cognitive skills will influence social and emotional behaviour. It was also said that from the very beginning newborn babies show different behaviour in three basic domains: activity, irritability and responsiveness. Many studies have documented that in these behaviour domains early personality differences exist among babies. But there are no studies that focus on early behaviour of gifted children. Many case studies and reports by parents indicate, however, that many, but not all, gifted children demonstrate high levels of activity and irritability. Irritability means: certain babies cry a lot, but others do not; certain babies are restless sleepers and tend to have no time to sleep, but others are good sleepers; certain babies are always busy ‘observing’ the environment, but others seem to be not interested in what is happening in their environment.

It is extremely important for the social-emotional development of each child and for the gifted child, in particular, that educators and parents meet these personality characteristics from the very beginning in an appropriate way. How can we identify the characteristic (cognitive) strengths of gifted children and what kind of problems might be associated with those strengths? High level of energy in the newborn can create big problems if parents are unable to cope with this individual strength. If parents are unable or unwilling to meet the specific needs of such a baby, the child may become ‘difficult’ to handle and may become insecure. Webb (1993), tried to categorise the characteristic strengths of gifted children and the possible problems associated with these.

Characteristics	Possible problems
Acquires and retains information quickly	Impatient with slowness of others; dislikes routine and drill; may resist mastering foundation skills; may make concepts unduly complex
Inquisitive attitude, intellectual curiosity; intrinsic motivation; searching for significance	Asks embarrassing questions; strong-willed; resists direction; seems excessive in interests; expects same of others
Ability to conceptualise, abstract, synthesise; enjoys problem-solving and intellectual activity	Rejects or omits details; resists practice or drill; questions teaching procedures
Enjoys organising things and people into structure and order; seeks to systematise.	Constructs complicated rules or systems; may be seen as bossy, rude or domineering
Large vocabulary and facile verbal proficiency; broad information in advanced areas	May use words to escape or avoid situations; becomes bored with school and age-mates; seen by others as a ‘know it all’
Creative and inventive; likes new ways of doing things	May disrupt plans or reject what is already known; seen by others as different and out of step

Characteristics	Possible problems
Intense concentration; long attention span in areas of interest; goal-directed behaviour; persistence	Resists interruption; neglects duties or people during period of focused interests; stubbornness
Sensitivity, empathy for others; desire to be accepted by others	Sensitivity to criticism or peer rejection; expects others to have similar values; need for success and recognition; may feel different and alienated
High energy, alertness, eagerness; periods of intense efforts	Frustration with inactivity; eagerness may disrupt others; schedules; needs continual stimulation; may be seen as hyperactive
Independent; prefers individualised work; reliant on self	May reject parent or peer input; non-conformity; may be unconventional
Strong sense of humor	Sees absurdities of situations; humor may not be understood by peers; may become the 'class clown' to gain attention.

Source: Adapted from Webb [1993].

The most significant characteristics that are primarily internal by nature but that can have external consequences are:

- (a) drive to use own abilities (eager to learn);
- (b) drive to understand thoroughly (perfectionism);
- (c) ability to see different possibilities and alternatives (creativity);
- (d) emotional intensity (personal involvement);
- (e) concern with social and moral issues (idealism).

Especially the ability to find creative solutions in combination with emotional intensity leads many gifted children to have unrealistic high expectations of themselves. For 15 to 20 % of gifted individuals, at some point of their academic career perfectionism is a handicap. Another handicap is often the avoidance of risk-taking: they see potential problems and tend to avoid any risk.

It is not the cognitive make-up as such which leads to social-emotional problems. There are gifted children who develop smoothly and without any problems. But it often occurs that the specific combination of emotional intensity, idealistic attitude and the ability to see possibilities and alternatives, creates problems if the social environment (especially parents and teachers) is unable to respond appropriately to the gifted individual. Generally speaking: identified gifted children in gifted school programme are less at risk for certain emotional and social problems than unidentified pupils. But it is also possible that unidentified and unserved gifted pupils function quite well. This means that identification and appropriate programmes are not always a guarantee that there will be no problems. It is even possible that identified

gifted students are more at risk than unidentified, because almost all cultures have ambivalence about individuals with unusually high cognitive abilities. Such individuals are observed with suspicion.

#### **4.6. Some research findings on gifted children and adolescents**

As emphasised before, the process of development is always a mutual affair, affecting the behaviour of participants on each side of the interaction. Striving for competence increases during infancy. It is important that children get space for independence or autonomy. This is especially important for the self-concept of children. If children have the possibility to experience that they control their actions they can develop what is called an internal locus of control as opposed to an external locus of control, i.e. children experience and believe that their lives are controlled by forces outside themselves. This example shows that development is essentially a process of discovery through social interaction on the part of children. Meeting their needs will help them to develop the belief that they can control their lives – a basic feeling for a positive self-concept.

As growing children experience a variety of situations, they discover much about themselves, about others, and about the world at large. They must always find solutions for their individual needs and wishes, and for the demands and requirements of the environment. Among the most visible elements of their behaviour are prosocial (altruism) and antisocial behaviour (aggression) and dependence. The question is, whether gifted children are different, whether their exceptional cognitive skills influence their behaviour.

In an event-sampling study on temper tantrums, Kemmler (1957) observed about 488 cases of temper tantrum during 71 days. She visited homes, day care centres and pre-school institutions. One of the main conclusions is that temper tantrum has to be seen as a reaction, a reaction of children against an adult person who ‘disturbs’ their activity, i.e. the child is involved in an activity and it has to stop. The core seems to be that there is a discrepancy between children's intentions and what they are able to do intellectually. Kemmler found that the gifted children in her sample did not show signs of temper tantrum. Her interpretation is that gifted children know what they are able to do and they are able to judge their situation quite well. There is no gap between personal intention and social demand.

As in the case of attachment, here is another example of the influence of cognitive skills on social behaviour. Kemmler also found that there are individual behaviour patterns, that irritable children tend to react non-reflectively, but more in an impulsive way – whether gifted or non-gifted.

This shows that there are gifted children who do not express uncontrolled behaviour, but not all gifted children behave in the same way.

The development of aggression and dependency is in many ways influenced by peer interaction. A peer is a developmentally equal person. A friend is mostly a peer, but not all peers are friends. Friendship exists on the basis of mutual interests, exchange of ideas, loyalty and absence of competition and dishonesty. All individuals need peer and friendship relationships for their social and emotional development. Adolescence is the period to establish close friendships. This is also true for gifted adolescents. Unfortunately, gifted individuals do not always fit into the age-graded school system, they are often far ahead of their age group. Availability of possible friends and intellectual peers is often a problem for young gifted individuals. Since human beings are not only born into a social world, but also try to belong to and become integrated into a social world, we often see that gifted children conform to the rules and dominant and accepted behaviour patterns in a given social environment. Their desire to belong to a group is often stronger than their will to develop according to their own needs.

The urge to belong to a group can inhibit gifted children's and adolescents' 'normal social behaviour'. On the psychosocial development of gifted adolescents, Mönks (1992) came to the following findings.

In his model of psychosocial development he describes universal conditions and behaviour domains. During adolescence, basic changes take place in individuals' biological states, cognitive capacities, and social position(s). Further, a thorough review of literature suggests that there are six behaviour domains which can be regarded as universal: attachment, friendship, sexuality, achievement, autonomy, and identity. Transformations in these behaviour domains are not regarded as unique for the adolescent period; they exist throughout the lifespan. Research, however, tells us that changes in these behaviour domains during adolescence are often very specific and typical and without any precedent before or after the adolescent period. While we can distinguish between these six behaviour domains, we can never separate them: transformations in each domain are related, in a reciprocally interactive fashion, to transformations in other domains.

If we review the literature with regard to differences between gifted and non-gifted adolescents, we find striking differences in only two behaviour domains, namely identity, and more particularly, achievement. Individuals' identity derives from experiences of their capacities, an idea of who they are, and the self-concept. There are differences between gifted and non-gifted adolescents, if a distinction is made between general, social and academic self-concepts. Compared to non-gifted adolescents, gifted achieving adolescents have a strong academic self-concept. Underachieving gifted adolescents have a low academic self-concept, which in turn has an impact on their general and social self-concept. These adolescents' negative feelings about their capacities contribute to an inferior concept of identity and have an impact on their social functioning.

The most striking finding of research is the difference in the cognitive domain and the consequences of this difference. Gifted adolescents are known to have high standards of excellence. To meet the standards of excellence sought by adults may constitute a negative

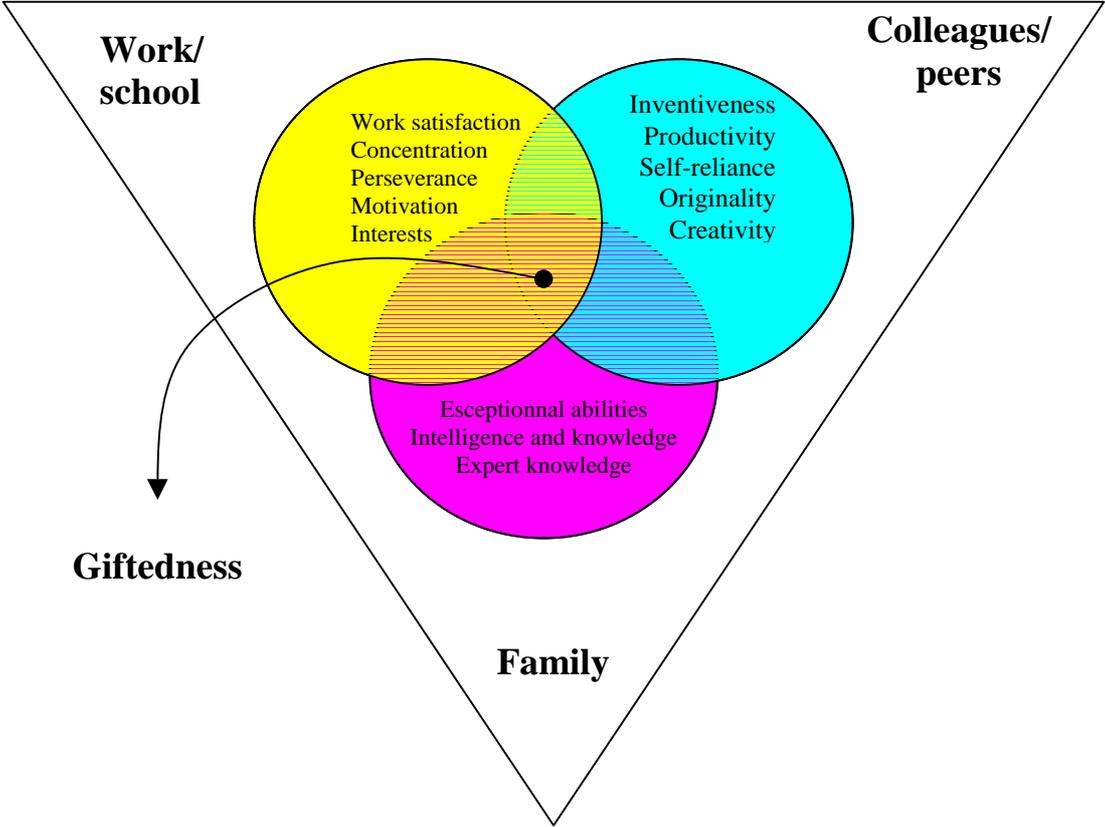
qualification for peer-group acceptance. Therefore, this behaviour domain is a source of conflict for gifted adolescents: between social acceptance and achievement.

Generally, there are big differences between gifted and non-gifted adolescents in the cognitive domain. After all, it is precisely in this domain that the (intellectually) gifted are defined. Gifted pre-adolescents are already able to produce formal operations and to think on an abstract level, which according to literature is 'normal' from the adolescent period on. As a consequence of the gap in cognitive differences, there may be social differences in development between gifted and non-gifted adolescents. The gifted may not be as advanced in social behaviour as they might be in social reasoning. The gap between their adult thinking and the boundaries set by age-related restrictions is a major concern for parents and teachers. Thus, as would be expected in the general model of adolescent development, these advanced reasoning capacities do have an influence on what we have termed the universal behaviour domain. As was said earlier, transformations in each domain are related, in a reciprocally interactive fashion, to transformations in other domains.

## **Summary**

- (a) Psychological development is basically an interactive process and the result of interaction between individuals and their environment.
- (b) New-born babies are different in three distinctive behaviour domains: activity, irritability, and responsiveness.
- (c) Many gifted new-borns demonstrate higher levels of activity, irritability and responsiveness.
- (d) Parents and educators have a high responsibility in providing appropriate education and instruction to meet the specific needs of gifted children.
- (e) The adolescent period is characterised by decisive transformations in social-emotional development. Striving for social acceptance often inhibits the personality development of gifted individuals.
- (f) The goodness-of-fit model provides an optimal frame for individual development: i.e. interaction between individual and environment is mutually reinforcing, stimulating, and enriching.
- (g) Giftedness as a multifactor model means that there is always an interaction between developmental needs and environmental conditions and situations.
- (h) Education at home and at school is well balanced if the intentions are to achieve an optimal match!

Figure 2: Diagnostic categories of the multifactor model of giftedness



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## **5. The common culture needed for the democratic transformation of schools**

*Jean-Yves Rochex*

I propose to discuss some questions and suggestions, some basic principles, concerning the relationship between the aim of democratising schools, access to knowledge and the critical exercise of knowledge, and the issues raised by the (re)definition of a common culture that is guaranteed to all. I shall take as my starting point the situation and the debate in France, and the ideas and uncertainties surrounding the issue there.

### **5.1. Why this issue keeps recurring, and its snares and pitfalls**

To start with, we should ask ourselves why this issue frequently keeps raising its head like a sea monster in the debate about education in France, as it has in each of the many general reports that have appeared in recent years on one sector or another of the education system; and why the various policy-makers still – wisely perhaps – gingerly avoid it. At least three reasons can be identified for this periodical resurgence of the question of a common culture.

In the first place, there are obvious links between this issue and both the longer time spent in initial education, 85 % of the new generation now remaining in education beyond the age of 18 years, and the fact that practically all pupils now complete the whole of the first stage of secondary education (*collège* – up to the age of 16 – or lower secondary school, as it is known in other countries). Primary and lower secondary schools have thus become the common experience for all pupils now enrolled, which raises questions about the subject-matter taught both in primary and lower secondary education, and about the ways in which schools select, process and transmit that subject-matter. It also raises the sensitive issue of the relationship between this foundation and experience that are common to all, and the differences between pupils outside the classroom.

Secondly, the issue of a common culture is also tied to that of social and gender inequalities in knowledge, upbringing and guidance, and to that of so-called school failure. Universal access to the second stage of secondary education (between 60 and 65 % of each age cohort now complete the general or technological *baccalauréat*) has not had the effect of removing inequalities; although ‘absolute’ school failure may have declined (leaving school with no recognised qualifications) it has not disappeared, any more than the socio-educational factors, the processes of selection and differentiation or the feelings of failure and disqualification which accompany them and make school failure, whether absolute or relative, more than mere unfinished learning. Not all pupils come close to learning the subject-matter specified in the syllabuses and learning objectives which make up the common curriculum. This is hardly a new observation, but it does oblige us to re-examine this subject-matter and these objectives by going beyond the

conventional simplistic argument that the curriculum is overloaded and needs to be reduced, which currently dominates the debate. The content of the curriculum and the culture of schools, which were already being questioned by the critical spirit of the 1960s and 1970s, have once more been called into question by changes in school populations and in their relationships with knowledge, and by the problems, real or imaginary, associated with longer initial education for pupils from the working class and/or various migrant backgrounds. The various polemical arguments about the culture of schools and the content of education demonstrate that these are no longer self-evident, and that there are no easy answers – for anyone from the Ministry and government policy-makers to classroom teachers in the ground – to the questions ‘What must we and can we teach, and how?’ These questions obviously arise not merely in relation to defining the content of the official prescribed curriculum, but also to teaching, which is always a matter of interpreting the prescribed curriculum and (often unconsciously) turning it into the curriculum that is actually taught; it is indeed suggested that the most usual way in which teachers tend to work in areas, contexts and schools with the greatest social problems is to adapt the curriculum to the real or supposed circumstances of their pupils is by simplifying demands in terms of content and intellectual activity. This clearly causes problems in the relationship between schooling and the acquisition of a culture, between the curriculum followed and the real learning of knowledge and intellectual techniques.

Lastly, the unprecedentedly steep and extremely rapid rise in the level of education of the younger generations automatically leads to greater differentiation and specialisation of courses, and to a faster turnover in knowledge and techniques, and in the ways in which these are disseminated and communicated. Today, more than yesterday, it is impossible to teach everything, to share everything with everyone, to include everything in the common culture which we should be able to guarantee to all, or to cover all those things which everyone should know and be able to do by the time they finish compulsory education. The need to think about the relationship between a common curriculum and differences brought in from outside points to the inadequacy of the ‘survival kit’ approach to the common culture, which offers a limited, circumscribed set of narrowly instrumental and behavioural skills that are deemed self-sufficient; this was Jules Ferry’s idea for primary schools, and it is still fashionable among some experts such as Roger Fauroux. In response to such a notion, we should think of the common culture which is to be redefined and fostered as aiming and needing to provide a foundation which will enable individuals to deal with present and future changes in working processes and lifestyles, and will ensure that necessary specialisation does not lead to insurmountable barriers between different types of specialised activity (3). The common culture, seen in this light, must aim to ensure that all pupils have the knowledge and skills to access what cannot be shared by all. It must not only target and include what amounts to a minimum foundation that is common to later specialisations, but also anything that might permit and encourage contact, dialogue and movement between the different forms of culture (and its opposite) represented by the various specialisations. In other words, the adoption and implementation of a policy of lifelong

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(<sup>3</sup>) See Claude Lelièvre, *L’École ‘à la française’ en danger?* (Paris, Nathan, 1996), for a rewarding discussion of the argument between the survival kit and foundation views of common culture.

education and training must not lead to a diminution of the social and personal range of common education and culture, nor to its reduction to a minimum, but to its ambitious and democratic expansion instead. The striving for knowledge and culture cannot be divorced from the need for democratisation.

There are, however, other snares and pitfalls on the path thus sketched out. One of the most important is the real danger that what is the floor for some – the minimum objectives actually achieved – may become the ceiling for others, a maximum which is difficult or even impossible to reach, so that the only option is to look at where they fall short and to cut down on the range of possibilities and requirements. If we are aware of this danger, which is attested again and again in the history of the French education system, we must in my view move away from the principle of prescription, of the accumulation of factual knowledge and skills, and must see the issues of how these are interpreted and transmitted, and of the epistemological and socio-educational obstacles which they encounter as indissolubly linked. This broader view cannot take effect unless we rid ourselves of the subject-expert approach and focus on what has been learnt from teaching experience and educational research.

The task of redefining a common culture of schools that is guaranteed to all faces another twofold danger, the double stumbling-block of legitimism on the one hand, with its elitist and ethnocentric temptations (social and/or ethnic ethnocentrism), and radical relativism on the other. If we are to make a start on this task, we must listen to the findings and queries raised in sociological criticism of the culture of education, without dismissing the entire culture of schools and the entire content of that culture as fortuitous and as a veil for the arbitrariness of social domination. In its popular manifestations, that position often goes hand in hand with a tendency to substantiate, naturalise and reify cultures and identities, with the risk of encouraging the belief that individuals and social groups can be assigned to particular cultural and personal stereotypes<sup>(4)</sup>. And this clearly means thinking of cultures, whether based on ethnicity, nationality or class – which are supposedly standardised and homogeneous – or of cultural objects purely in terms of technical, bodily, linguistic, discursive, aesthetic and other practices.

## 5.2. Educating the mind in the order of reasons

I should now like to propose to you a few principles which I believe will provide a framework and guidelines for theoretical and pragmatic discussion of the issue before us.

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<sup>(4)</sup> We should remember in this context the salutary warning given to us over 60 years ago by the psychologist Henri Wallon: 'In former times, when a European people arrived in a new country, it put everything to fire and the sword and converted the indigenous inhabitants to its ideas and civilisation. Now, we do exactly the opposite. We build temples to it, we encourage its priests and monarchs, anything that represents tradition, anything that can re-attach the people to its past, and anything that can prevent its competing with us in the field of technology and material power. We observe this culture of the peoples whom we colonise so that we may better make them different from us. It is therefore still a divisive culture.' (Henri Wallon, *Culture générale et orientation professionnelle* paper given at the 1932 conference of the League for New Education, re-issued in Hélène Gratiot-Alphandéry, *Lecture d'Henri Wallon. Choix de textes*, Paris, Éd. sociales, 1976).

The first of these principles was formulated by Condorcet when he stated that the task of education was to ‘educate the mind in the order of reasons’. The plural ‘reasons’ is significant, indicating that these cannot be reduced to a single conceptual or discursive reason, and that they extend beyond the field of rationality as classically defined. Hence it is necessary to list the different orders of reasons which schools must seek to elaborate and use in educating minds (5).

The second of these principles is that, in each of these orders of reasons, there is a plural inheritance. This is made up of material and symbolic works, concepts and tools, and of techniques and experiences, which have been produced and developed under specific cultural and socio-historical conditions, but which may nonetheless be current and have a validity far outside the conditions in which they came about. This was the view taken by Marx in respect of historicist or economist relativism (later borrowed from him and misused by numerous supposed Marxists) when he wrote in 1859, in his *Contribution to the Criticism of Political Economy*, that ‘the difficulty lies not in appreciating that Greek art and epic poetry are associated with certain types of development. The difficulty lies in the fact that they still give us aesthetic pleasure and that they retain for us, in certain respects, the value of norms and inaccessible models.’ In response to the temptations of ethnocentrism and its relativist opposite, both of which lead to a conception of culture that is divisive, we must seek to link common culture with its plural inheritance, and this calls for closer examination of the manner in which each culture has a share of culture, and hence for a refusal to choose between the singular and the plural of the word culture. Here too, thinking of things in terms of cultural, technical, bodily, linguistic, discursive, aesthetic and other practices may not help us to avoid false oppositions and reach any certainties.

The third principle reflects the argument between the survival kit and the foundation view of common culture to which I referred earlier. It requires us to break down these different orders of reasons into their constituent elements, a task which must necessarily form part of the countering of the synoptic approach (Lakanal said long ago that synopsis means the opposite of elementality). The term ‘element’ must be understood here as having the two meanings which the word enjoys in French, both as a component, a basic unit, and as a specific medium or order (water, etc.). The elements of common culture must therefore be valid outside themselves, and must lead on to an order of reason which extends beyond them. Hence the importance of focusing in the discussion on the question: what human works, knowledge and concepts, tools, instruments and intellectual techniques are most likely, if learnt and applied, to open minds to things other than themselves and, similarly, most likely to beckon learners outside themselves and their experience and to initiate them into grammars of activity which may lead them where they never knew that they wished or were able to go? Hence, also, the need to break with the dogmatic and museological tradition and

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(<sup>5</sup>) I shall come back to this question later, but let us say at once how important it is that technical order, manufacturing order, should enjoy its full place and be of equal dignity with others in this order of reasons. This means breaking with the way in which our education system works, and with the perceptions on which it rests which, in fact, present technology and manufacturing as of less worth and consideration than other activities, as to some extent debasing, and reserved for those who would fail in spheres held to be ‘nobler’.

inheritance of those works and instruments, which separate their transmission from the contexts in which they make sense, in which they reveal their *raison d'être* and can be used productively.

More generally perhaps, I believe that we should base our discussion on the anthropological fact that school (*skolé*) is intrinsically associated with writing, with graphic reason in the sense of the term literacy, as used in English, which is at work in each of the orders of reasons in which minds should be educated. 'Writing leads to a difference not only in how thought is expressed, but primarily in the way thought develops,' writes Jack Goody<sup>(6)</sup>. Because writing is an objectivisation, an externalisation of language, it obliges the independent writer (or the learner-writer) to frame language – which had previously been an action tool that could be forgotten and ignored once it had been used and was hence largely unconscious – in the form of questions, reflection and thought, the functioning and grammar of which have to be spelt out, viewed from a distance and specifically explicated. This process also obliges the individual to turn himself or herself into the place where this thinking is done, which both requires and permits linguistic activity to be reflexive. It is therefore only possible to enter into literacy, into the world of the written word, if one breaks with the obvious, the immediate, the transparent world, and with worldly objects and the experience one has of them, and if one changes the way in which one sees the world, language and oneself. It is this change, which clearly does not occur once and for all and which extends far beyond the narrow concept of learning to read and write, that is the stumbling block for pupils in greatest difficulty at each stage of schooling. They frequently give the illusion of transparent, immediate reality in the words and language, concepts and theories of life, in the anecdotes and even in the first-hand experience used in their style of language, discussion and artistic expression, etc., which enable them to make sense of these and to question them, and the illusion of pertinence, effectiveness and intelligent action so that these appear intelligible and reflexive. On this last point, and on technical and manufacturing activities, I find Bertrand Schwartz's remarks on what he calls the pedagogy of dysfunction or the pedagogy of breakdown very stimulating since dysfunction obliges us to go outside, to distance ourselves from action and immediate doing, so that we think and question, making action either possible or impossible, and to adopt in respect of action a position of what linguists call *exotopy*, using Bakhtine's term, towards immediate, unconscious practice.

The elements which make up common culture should therefore not be thought of solely in terms of knowledge and skills. They must also target and include the development of viewpoints, relationships with the world, with language and oneself, breaking away from this illusion of transparency and immediacy. I believe that this twofold aim (content and viewpoints, intellectual techniques and cognitive dispositions) must be pursued in respect of seven major orders of reasons, seven major fields of human activity, in which we must hence

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<sup>(6)</sup> Jack Goody, *The interface between the written and the oral*, 1987, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1987. On this question, see also Jack Goody, *La raison graphique*. 1977, French translation, Paris, Minuit, 1979, and David R. Olson, *The World on Paper: The Conceptual and Cognitive Implications of Writing and Reading*, Cambridge University Press, 1994.

think indissolubly in terms of works <sup>(7)</sup>, practices and viewpoints. These seven major orders of reasons which must, in my opinion, make up common culture, are as follows:

- (a) graphic and discursive reason, which aims at mastery and exercise of various linguistic practices, oral and written, and of genres and functions of discourse;
- (b) mathematical reason;
- (c) scientific reason, proper to the physical and life sciences;
- (d) technical and technological reason, linked with the arts and methods of manufacture and processing;
- (e) ‘social’ reason, proper to the various fields of the human and social sciences;
- (f) aesthetic and artistic reason, which is exercised in the fields of literature, the plastic arts and music;
- (g) ‘sports’ or physical reason, proper not only to the various techniques of the body, but also to the use, even the risking, of the body in our relations with the physical world, with others and with ourselves.

Given the extraordinary diversity of human activities and achievements, and the fact that school curricula need to be inter-related and clarified to the greatest possible extent, it is obvious that each of these seven orders of reasons needs to be much more fully developed so that their internal specifications and their possible relations with each other – of mutual complementarity, contradiction, enrichment and questioning – can be explored.

In conclusion, I should like to say how indispensable I feel to be the task of redefining a common culture guaranteed to all, not only in an attempt to make the experience of school more relevant and varied for pupils facing the greatest difficulties, but also to improve the lot of everyone. It is common knowledge that the success and high levels of achievement of very many pupils at school in many fields does not prevent their being culturally disabled in other fields and orders of reasons. To aim to change this state of affairs means seeking to implement a concept of democratisation of the education system that does not consist in trying to ‘adapt’ the most deprived to academic institutions and a school culture which may remain essentially unchanged or only marginally modified or, worse, in adopting an implicit or explicit principle of revising cognitive and cultural demands downwards in the name of the real or supposed characteristics of so-called disadvantaged pupils and populations. This different concept of democratisation must seek to reshape our education system and the practices of the professionals working in it for everyone, to remould its received notions and types of knowledge, its culture and school activities, and its values and ways of operating, so that they can withstand handling by pupils and various metamorphoses.

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<sup>(7)</sup> I use this term in the sense of the French psychologist Ignace Meyerson, who employed the word *oeuvres* to mean not merely cultural works in the fields of ‘received’ literature and arts, but the full range of objectivised, transmittable products of the human mind. Cf. Ignace Meyerson, *Les fonctions psychologiques et les œuvres*, Paris, Vrin, 1948, republished by Albin Michel, 1995, and *Écrits 1920-1983. Pour une psychologie historique*, Paris, PUF, 1987; also Françoise Parot (ed.), *Pour une psychologie historique. Écrits en hommage à Ignace Meyerson*, Paris, PUF, 1996.

## 6. Danish production schools

### *Verner Ljung*

Danish production schools are flexible institutions which young people under the age of 25 without formal educational qualifications may enter and leave at any time, irrespective of whether they are unemployed or not; the annual number of students is around 12 000, and students spend an average of four months at a school.

Over half of those who attend these schools do so after trying another youth training programme, while the rest go to a production school straight from basic schooling (the *Folkeskole*).

The schools are open around 48 weeks a year and employ staff with widely differing backgrounds, including many who have not undergone teacher training, but who are all on the same pay scale.

They organise the students' learning individually rather than forcing them to fit into a standard pattern.

They are private institutions governed by independent boards.

The number of students per teacher is low – approximately six to one.

Their organisation and administration therefore differ sharply from those of ordinary schools.

### 6.1. The background to production schools and their position in society

Production schools grew out of a special Ministry of Education initiative to combat unemployment in the late 1970s, and have since developed into an independent type of school, the special profile of which was first described in a Ministry white paper in 1984, and was first enshrined in separate legislation in 1985.

Legislation in the area has subsequently been amended a number of times, most recently in 1999 <sup>(8)</sup>, and in 2000 there are a total of 105 production schools spread around the country.

The background to the creation of production schools was the wish to establish a different educational option for the large groups of young people who, after leaving basic schooling, are unemployed and have no educational qualifications, and are therefore particularly at risk of long-term unemployment and ultimately of being rejected by society.

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<sup>(8)</sup> Law No 1124 of 29 December 1999 on Production Schools.

With the latest amendments to the law, it has been established that production schools are part of the overall social strategy of giving priority to the aim of education for all young people, including in particular the groups of young people most at risk, who have been rejected by or are about to be rejected by the education system.

An annual cohort of young people in Denmark at present numbers just over 50 000, and despite a massive commitment to education on the part of society, just under 20 % of a youth cohort even today either do not start or do not complete an educational programme beyond the level of basic schooling.

These are young people whom the traditional education system cannot motivate or retain. They therefore search for other paths to adult and working life. For some of these young people, who for many different reasons do not have the will, ability or opportunity to make use of the more normal provisions on offer in society, production schools represent an alternative educational option.

## **6.2. Production schools are half-way houses intended to (re-)motivate young people for education**

Under the legislation, production schools are educational provision based on the idea of combining participation in production with theoretical instruction and personal and social development in order to prepare young people for further education and work.

The production schools see themselves as half-way houses intended to re-motivate young people who have experienced failure rather than success, and to persuade them to return to general education courses so that they can obtain further qualifications. The schools' objectives are therefore just as much social and cultural as educational and work-related.

All teaching of students in principle takes place through workshop instruction, in which the teaching is adapted through production to the student's needs. Guidance and advice are integral elements of the teaching and personal development. The students can work individually, but most work in teams.

Tasks are always practical and geared towards accomplishing something that makes a difference, either by achieving something for the society of which the school forms part, or by contributing something to the school's own operation. The 'learning by doing' method is applied.

Theory is associated with practice – according to what students demand. General education is combined with social and cultural activities. The legislation governing the schools requires them to use the making of products and supply of services as part of the training methods in such a way that unfair competition with the local business community is avoided.

The local area is heavily involved in the schools. Employers, trade unions, local authorities and the local population are represented on the school boards, and local residents' associations, for example, make considerable use of the school facilities. The school staff maintain close contact with the local business community and local associations.

A production school is established as a private institution at the local initiative of one or more local authorities, which approve its bye-laws and pay a modest basic subsidy laid down in law. Since 1996, most of the financing of production schools has come from activity-based state subsidies, although with effect from 2000 the municipality of residence of the young person is also obliged to pay a contribution corresponding to 15-20 % of the total state subsidy, including the maintenance grant paid to the school for the young person. In addition to this there is the revenue that the schools receive from the sale of the products made in the specialist workshops.

The number of student places at each individual production school is typically between 30 and 100, some individual schools having slightly higher or lower capacity.

The legislative framework provides a broad description of the overall requirements for the school's activities. Within this framework, and against the background of the particular practices and profile that this type of school has developed over the years, each individual school has considerable freedom in arranging its activities in a way which best fits in with local conditions.

### **6.3. Relationship with free schools and roots in the Danish tradition of *folkeoplysning* (popular enlightenment)**

In terms of type of institution, production schools are related to free schools in Denmark and therefore have roots in the Danish tradition of popular enlightenment (*folkeoplysning*), which has grown up since the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The great man of ideas and theoretician behind this tradition of popular enlightenment was N. F. S. Grundtvig (1783-1872). Grundtvig was opposed to the 'black school' or 'school of death', where 'dullness' flourished and the people walking about only seemed to be alive.

He advocated a school of life for all people – a school based on the individual and the particular historical context into which each person is born – and a school where pupils realise from experience that spiritual life and community are both a possibility and a reality.

In his vision for a school of life – the folk high school (*folkehøjskole*) – Grundtvig was anxious not to prescribe for the future. He wanted life itself to show how things might develop, and he was prepared to accept differences if the core of the work was correct.

As in the case of Grundtvig's instructions for the organisation of folk high schools, any search for a highly detailed and fixed programme for the arrangement and instruction of production schools would be in vain.

#### **6.4. The goal is development of young people's life skills**

In practice, the training activities of production schools respond to the total situation of each individual participant (the whole person), and they see it as their overall objective to help young people to become better able to take responsibility for their own lives, and to develop their life skills <sup>(9)</sup>.

Adults as a rule know from their own experience that the skill that forms the basis of 'being able to feed yourself' consists of many different components. They are well aware that their basic school knowledge, their familiarity with a particular field and their specialist/technical qualifications are not worth much in practical everyday life if they are not accompanied by self-confidence, ability to work with others and social, physical and attitude-related skills.

Life skills are not a fixed quantity which we acquire once and for all. Rather, they are an ideal, which we aim towards throughout our lives. We acquire them in two ways:

- (a) firstly through lifelong learning, which is the internal mental acquisition and processing of the social norms, values and experiences that we go through. This is often an unpredictable and hidden process, which cannot be directly observed;
- (b) secondly through the far more visible and controllable training process: the acquisition of knowledge, know-how and abilities.

It is a feature of these that while it is difficult to formulate learning for life in terms of specific teaching goals (how does a young person, for example, learn a spirit of get-up-and-go?), the training process can be arranged extremely effectively in the form of learning provision which, for example, corrects observed deficiencies.

Learning for life and training may take place simultaneously, but they need not necessarily do so.

This duality in the way know-how is acquired has great significance for our understanding of and attitude to what happens with our young students during their stay.

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<sup>(9)</sup> The section on life skills is largely based on the presentation by Lise Thøisens in her book *Hva' ska' vi ku'?* from 1990. Published by the the *Udviklingscentret for Folkeoplysning og Voksenundervisning* [Development Centre for Popular Enlightenment and Adult Education] in Copenhagen. Also available in English.

## **6.5. A type of school with an extremely flexible framework and options**

We live in a changeable world, which means that it may be difficult – not least as a young person – to keep track, to find one's bearings and to keep up with the situation. It is not just specialist technical skills that are wanted. It is also social orientation, belief in one's own ability to manoeuvre and basic navigational capability.

The task for production schools has therefore been from the start to invent – or re-invent – and develop a type of school with an extremely flexible framework and options, where the two forms of acquisition of knowledge can take place simultaneously in a fruitful context, and where young people can (re-)discover the desire to learn and can start to learn and take charge of their own lives, without the schools, it should be noted, becoming institutions of educational social work or treatment.

What special framework and options are there?

It is the only educational institution in Denmark to have continuous entry and leaving, which means that the educational curriculum at a production school can fit in with young people's own programme whenever they want it and need it. Young people can be admitted any day all the year round, and there are no prior limits to how long the stay at the school can last.

Under the most recently amended legislation governing production schools, open admission was introduced from 1996, so that all young people below the age of 25 who have not already completed youth education (upper secondary school or vocational education, etc.) can be freely admitted to a production school anywhere in the country. There is no longer a need for the young person to be unemployed to be admitted. However, alongside this open admission the local authorities still have the option of referring unemployed young people to production schools. Around a fifth of young people are referred by the local authorities, while the remainder are admitted freely.

The young people have the right to a new chance, to enter a production school without baggage, i.e. without our requiring or perhaps even secretly collecting all possible information from public authorities about how they have previously behaved towards the system. We are free schools and independent institutions and as such not part of the system.

All young people admitted to production schools are paid a taxable school grant, DKK 445 a week for young people below the age of 18. For young people aged 18 or over, the school grant is DKK 1 105 a week and therefore of such a size that the young person will not normally need to apply for supplementary social assistance.

The whole guidance side is integrated into the educational programme, as both teacher and guide (often one and the same person) are part of the immediate everyday world.

As this type of school is not geared towards examinations, the schools provide scope for the individual to investigate both his or her strong and weak sides.

## **6.6. Teaching focused on workshops**

The teaching is focused on workshops, where young people can take part in a broad range of actual production of goods to be either sold or used by the school itself. The workshops are generally small units with five to seven participants per teacher.

The production workshops range from general manufacturing activities (wood, metals, textiles, etc.) to various forms of service (IT, printing, video, canteen, music, drama, etc.) and specialist fields such as fish rearing, nature regeneration, agriculture and animal husbandry, sailing, etc.

The principle underlying the teaching methods at production schools is that young people learn by working, i.e. by acting themselves. The workshop activities are therefore intended to fulfil several important functions, to provide a basis, for example, for participants to try out their own abilities and interests in the workshop area – providing the participants with an opportunity to develop personally, through a strong social and work-related community at the workshop, and giving the participants clear experience of their technical progress, so that they gain self-confidence and want to learn more.

## **6.7. The young people have to feel a necessity**

The particular educational means employed in this type of school are to a very large extent based on practical tasks of producing goods to be either sold or used by the school itself.

Working correctly means carrying out a number of things that just have to be done, i.e. a procedural obligation. This procedural obligation forms part of the educational agenda of the workshops. The procedural obligation also accommodates something that can be called necessity values: things have to be done because they are necessary. They are both the source and the centre of the good learning environment which we practise. This gives the young people uncomplicated meaning and a challenge.

Necessity is the only human form of compulsion. Necessity is a particular aspect of compulsion in which we do not think at all about whether what we have to do is hard, unbearable or tiring, nor do we therefore need to be motivated.

When the young people are seized by this necessity, they gain new opportunities of developing and acquiring abilities – even young people in the most difficult situations. The procedural compulsion in carrying out working tasks correctly, which the young people are

burning to get to grips with, holds within itself some rare experiences of inner necessity, which can provide a stimulus and lead to a desire to go further.

This occurs in such an impractical way that knowledge and interest generally follow and strengthen each other. But we cannot assume in advance that the young people will be interested in learning something particular. To ensure that they actually experience this inner necessity, we must therefore put a kind of teacher control on the selection and arrangement of tasks.

At production schools this takes place when we specify the tasks, and then it is the participants' own commitment – in solving the tasks – that is intended to give them the desire to learn more.

In this sense the role of teacher at production schools is quite special, and how it works depends on what work tasks we have at our disposal, how they are arranged, whether they really provide an opportunity to take account of the differing backgrounds of the young people, and whether they offer opportunities for new challenges.

As far as the students on the courses are concerned, as already mentioned they may not be interested in anything in particular. But from the first day they are keen to tackle broad working tasks, which they regard as a challenge. These tasks should not be like project learning. They must be something that simply has to be accomplished, allowing the young people to acquire skills and knowledge in the area for themselves. The goal in this phase is for the participant to take on responsibility for carrying out the task allocated.

In this way the first stepping stone is laid, and the world begins to open up. A development starts here which at some time may make it meaningful for the young person to take part in a development task or in some other way to take up new challenges.

The goal in this phase is for the participant to undertake responsibility for learning as much as possible from what he or she is doing – for example solving a task as well as possible, both alone and in cooperation with others.

## **6.8. From the inner to the outer circle**

The workshop work can be viewed as two concentric circles, the inner circle containing the specially organised tasks, which will always be available. There is a progression from elementary beginners' tasks to a broad range of widely differing tasks, which can ensure broad and versatile technical knowledge of the workshop work.

Participants build the foundations on which they will be able where appropriate to join in work and development tasks in the outer circle, which consists of tasks requiring discussion and theoretical teaching. And when teaching is asked for, this is due to a challenge in the task, which is experienced as an inner necessity: 'I need to be here in order go further!' This

obviously produces a completely different attitude to teaching, and therefore also a far greater yield from it.

The workshop leader's interaction with the participants in the inner and the outer circle is fundamentally different, and each has its own particular educational options.

In the inner circle, teacher control is assumed through the ready availability of the specially arranged work tasks, so that students immediately get started on carrying out correct work independently. This means that even young people with very problematic behaviour are given a kind of 'free pass' to perceiving an adult (the workshop leader) in a completely different light – and to showing themselves from a new side.

## **6.9. Learning linked to development in young people's own lives**

The urge to emerge from childhood cannot be met by a desire for education – this would merely prolong puberty. Learning is linked instead to developments in the student's own life, and the teacher/pupil role is not perpetuated. The individual who is seeking to develop his or her character as a person nonetheless has someone to identify with – an opportunity to meet adults who are worth imitating, and therefore an opportunity to choose to be someone.

There is no shadow of a teacher with a piece of homework saying between the lines, 'You are nothing until you have learnt this and have received an education.'

When the students on the course find that they can independently carry out work tasks correctly, this gives them not just a feeling of self-esteem (this could perhaps have been obtained by talking), but also the self-respect which can only be achieved by acting and showing that they possess real abilities. They have an opportunity to forget themselves and their own insecurity (and therefore to become a new 'self') – in relation to the other sex, social status, etc.

The workshop culture offers a social community and an immediate comradeship which have very great significance for participants' sense of what they find meaningful at the production school.

In practice, all the work which the student on a course takes part in contains learning as a necessary by-product, when a task is performed independently. It also means that we create situations of 'natural learning' every day, with a definite learning impact.

At the same time, we can do this in such a way that it is their desire that drives the work – and that this desire is also linked to the discipline contained in the necessary work. In this way we also relate to the culture of craftspeople,

- (a) which is not learnt through theory, but through specific occasions,
- (b) which solves problems when they are encountered,
- (c) which is geared towards looking for immediately applicable knowledge, and

- (d) which does not necessarily ‘buy’ knowledge that is detached from real problems – there simply is no motivation for that in this culture.

## **6.10. Students’ participation in other teaching activities**

As they find that they are doing things for themselves in one or more practical areas, they also regain confidence in being able to learn new things. They recapture their own capabilities, and this at the same time provides motivation to make use of the general teaching offered by the schools, which is primarily aimed at plugging gaps in participants’ book skills. The schools therefore have to offer teaching in subjects such as Danish, mathematics, foreign languages, IT, etc.

It is part of the purpose and task of production schools to provide their students with an insight into social and cultural conditions. To fulfil this purpose, the schools arrange a number of activities: joint events in the school, excursions and stays at camp schools in Denmark and abroad, as well as longer periods of work experience abroad. The schools also have to ensure that the young people influence the framework and activities of their own schools.

## **6.11. Educational attitudes and methods**

The attitudes and methods used in production schools are not newly invented. Rather, educational attitudes and methods which have been described and practised in various ways since antiquity are re-invented and tested in a new framework and a new era.

Socrates, for example, may well be said to have been the first educationalist in our common European culture, and he hit the mark straight away. Beginner’s luck!

For Socrates, people are good enough but their opportunities remain blocked. The task is to release these. Socrates compared his educational task with that of the midwife. The task is not to make improvements to humble human beings – to pour knowledge down a funnel into the ignorant, to give determination to the weak, to make the listless effective, and so on.

The students are good enough. The students already possess all the abilities and opportunities that it is worth possessing, and we must not poach on God’s preserves by wanting – or trying – to remake Creation.

There is just something that blocks these abilities and opportunities for some of them. The task is to release these. Not to push students, or to hurry them along like cows being taken to market, but to find out what is the best route for them to follow with the stupid fetters that they have around their legs, and so to clear the way a little and point it out to them.

And they must find out how to cast off the fetters for themselves when they discover how constricting they are and how much they interfere with walking.

The task is not to put a leaf on a nettle, but remove the lid that has been put on the flower pot, so that the flower can rise up, unfurl its leaves and blossom.

It is therefore not entirely correct to speak of a particular educational direction at production schools. Instead, the teaching method in large part emerges from common sense, including obviously the significance of the attitudes with which we approach the young people at the school and the workshops: teachers' credibility often stands and falls by their own example.

The point of departure for the development of educational activities at production schools has therefore been a recognition that actual learning takes place in a completely different place than many people thought.

It is a recognition that:

- (a) the most important thing we can teach the students who listen to us is to listen, to receive, instead of – like ourselves the whole time – producing a mass of thoughts;
- (b) if we take responsibility away from them, we teach them irresponsibility, as a sense of responsibility is something that only arises in those who have responsibility; and
- (c) if we maintain the distance between teacher and student, we tell them that we do not credit them with any ability to do things for themselves.

And that fundamentally we cannot teach the young people anything at all, but that what we can do, our task and responsibility, is arrange frameworks and circumstances so that the young people can learn something!

It is therefore also a feature of this type of school that the individual does not form part of an entirely fixed programme of instruction. The individual programme is fluid, and is shaped gradually. Chance occurrences are allowed to dictate in many ways and to create unforeseen links.

The schools endeavour to be constantly in a state of change and to develop their workshop provision and other activities so as to ensure that all groups of students can be offered the programme that best strengthens the individual course participants' personal and technical skills.

It is not, however, done simply by saying: Go ahead and do what you like! It is often a terribly short step from the daring that is needed to a situation in which a student is tempted into something – or is not dissuaded from something – which we ought to know is beyond his or her capability.

When is it a rock which the young person really cannot lift and must therefore leave rather than risking a back injury in the attempt – and when is it a case of fortune favouring the

brave? This difficult assessment, this difficult responsibility is something the teacher can never escape, in either theoretical or practical teaching.

## **6.12. Heavy demands on staff**

The work therefore makes great demands on the abilities of the staff at many levels: technical, educational and human skills, commitment and continuous development of these. And above all, the teachers have to be committed to the young people.

The diversified composition of the staff, with everything from the semi-skilled without formal – but masses of real – qualifications, to skilled craftspeople and highly educated academics, is one of the most important factors in the relative success achieved by production schools in their work with young people.

It is also a feature of the staff of production schools that they are all employed on the same terms and work according to the same pay agreement and contract of employment – regardless of their educational background.

## **6.13. Where do the young people go when they leave?**

When the impact of the activities of production schools is analysed, it is generally to be seen principally in where students go afterwards. These analyses show that of the students who leave production schools in a given calendar year, on average:

- (a) 40 % go on to further education;
- (b) 20-25 % go on to non-subsidised work;
- (c) 10 % go on to subsidised projects (job creation schemes, etc.);
- (d) 15 % go on to other types of activities (compulsory military service, stays abroad, rehabilitation, pregnancy, etc.); and
- (e) 10-15 % go on to unemployment.

These results far exceed the effects of traditional public schemes to combat youth unemployment.

## 6.14. Assessment by the OECD of production schools

An educational committee of foreign assessors from the international organisation OECD made a study of the youth training system in Denmark in 1998-99. <sup>(10)</sup>

It is apparent from the remarks made by the assessors on production schools that Danish production schools have been successful in motivating and challenging students whom the traditional education system was unable to engage in discussion, let alone to enable to achieve reasonable results or to enthuse.

The assessors write: 'One of the reasons for this success may perhaps be that these programmes receive solid financial backing in Denmark in contrast to many other countries, and that they are also used by those seeking education who have not suffered defeat but who regard them as an attractive alternative to the conventional system. The circumstance that they are for everyone, rather than just for those who suffered defeat, perhaps creates the circumstances that make them a success for those who would otherwise suffer defeat.'

At another point, the assessors' report says: 'The small number of students per teacher makes the production schools seem expensive. But the costs should be looked at in relation to the results achieved. And savings are made in other areas, for example not having office staff with specialist training and advice, as ordinary schools have. Nor is it obvious how far the principles which define them can be transferred to ordinary educational institutions. They appear to be free of the rules and regulations which apply to most other institutions we visited, and this freedom is a major reason for their success.'

It is the assessors' opinion that it is 'unlikely that the different interest groups involved will encourage or permit this freedom in public general institutions. The lack of a formal pattern; a plan of action which to a large extent is deployed on the student's terms, and which to a great extent is attuned to the local community and the local labour market; teachers who do not necessarily have teacher training – all this is possible because of the special circumstances that characterise the production schools.

'This is possible because of the flexibility in the Danish education system, which does not seek universal solutions which can be used on all young people regardless of their personal situation and needs. They therefore work precisely at the production schools, because they are an intermediate station on the way back to the established rather than an alternative to the established.'

Finally, the assessors emphasise that the targets Denmark has set for itself (95 % of young people to undergo training) are very ambitious and perhaps not attainable without a powerful effort and add: 'If the norm is not lowered to encompass the present level of the weakest and

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<sup>(10)</sup> The report is entitled: Thematic Review of the transition from initial education to working life. Country note: Denmark. OECD, January 1999.

least motivated, greater changes will have to be made in the way in which the education system treats such students. The type of inspiring educational methods we saw at the production schools and at the Aalborg University Centre should in future be the norm throughout the youth training system.'

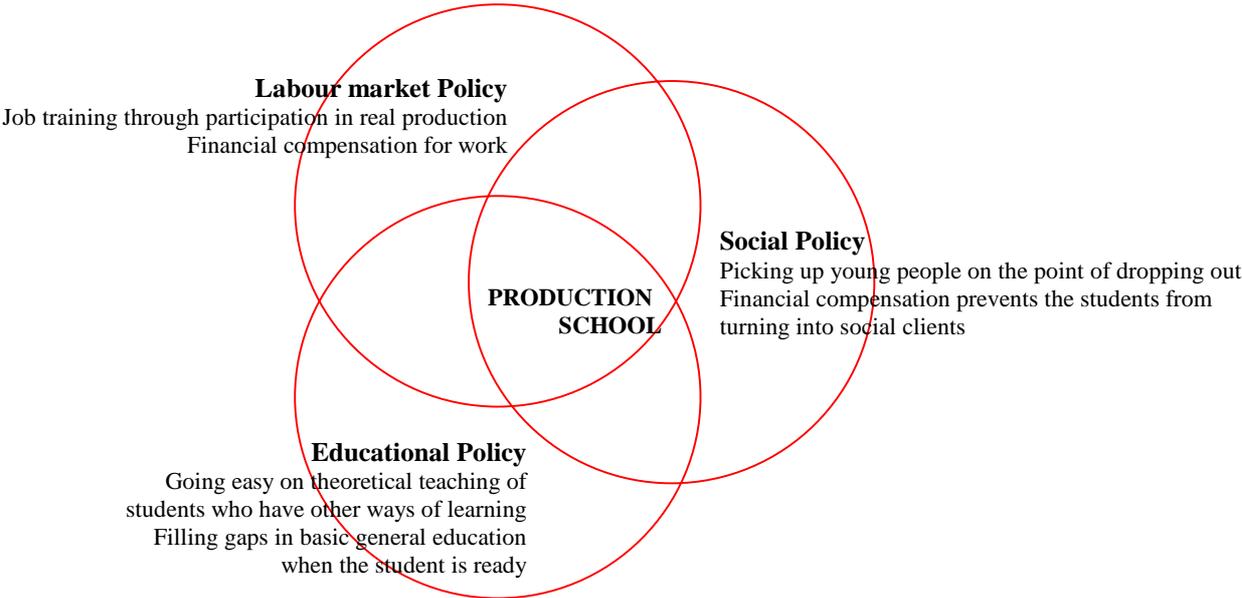
### 6.15. A school with many opportunities

The special combination of craft skills, integrated theoretical teaching, personal and social development and cultural enlightenment has made the production schools a cohesive and innovative form of school, a type of school which to a particular degree offers an opportunity to provide a broad range of education for a diverse group of young people with different prior experience and backgrounds.

One requirement for this is that the production schools can act freely in the areas of labour market policy, education policy and social policy, and can utilise the opportunities presented in all three areas. Over a period of just under 20 years there have been several political attempts to typecast this type of school and therefore to restrict its opportunities for manoeuvre.

The present closer connection with the area of education is definitely to be welcomed, but it remains extremely important that the opportunities for close cooperation with the authorities in the area of the labour market and the social area are preserved and expanded.

The production schools in this way remain a hybrid – situated at the point where social, labour market and education policy cross. This type of school can also be compared to a three-legged milking stool, where none of the legs can be dispensed with if the balance is to be preserved. And that is how it has to be, because the schools simply cannot fulfil their task without tackling it from all sides.



While most other schools offer highly controlled and targeted provision, production schools offer something entirely different: ‘deep-water’ navigator training, which at the same time is both individually adapted and oriented towards making the individual capable and part of a larger community.

If we were to look closely at the day-to-day work of a production school, the diversity encountered would become increasingly apparent during the course of the process. Although the many impressions and statements at first might appear chaotic, they form a pattern – a whole with many variations, with sliding transitions between work tasks and roles – a school with many opportunities.

In any case it is our experience that the mixture works: young people experience doing something, gain in self-confidence and begin to acquire self-respect, which points the way forward towards life as active citizens in society.

## 7. A review of the training workshops and craft training centres in Extremadura

*José Carlos Herrero Lucas*

I initially trained as a geographer, but my intense interest in alternative education, the environment and the cultures of the mountain regions has led me in the last few years to work in the area of regional and local development through European programmes, and to deal with alternative education in the rural region of Extremadura (an Objective I peripheral region of Spain with average income well below the European mean).

Before that I had the pleasure of working in a ‘People’s High School’ (folkehøjskol) or adult education centre in Denmark as a teacher of Spanish and gained practical familiarity with Grundtvig’s national theory of integrated education for the people. As a result, I wrote a short article on the historical parallels between national avant-garde educational movements – on this Danish example and on the movement known in Spain as the Institution of Free Teaching (Institución Libre de Enseñanza), which was based on Krause’s philosophical school of thought. This was an important source of inspiration for the generation of intellectuals and politicians that emerged during the Second Spanish Republic (<sup>11</sup>).

At present, I still have some teaching functions in an enterprise providing training and technical studies related to rural development, and I work occasionally as a teacher in the National Vocational Training and Employment Plan (the FIP plan) of the Government of Extremadura. This consists of training programmes financed by the European Social Fund and implemented by the Autonomous Communities of the Spanish State (to which responsibility for vocational education and training is now being transferred), which provide vocational training courses of fixed length in various fields and specialisms for unemployed persons of all kinds.

### 7.1. Introduction

This paper for the Agora IX forum organised by Cedefop, devoted to alternative forms of education, is in three parts.

The first assesses critically various aspects of the functioning and aims of training workshops (*Escuelas Taller*) and craft training centres (*Casas de oficio*) in the light of personal experience of managing and teaching in these and of monitoring their development in the Province of Cáceres (Spain) in recent years, especially since 1993.

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(<sup>11</sup>) Cf. N. F. S. Grundtvig y las escuelas populares versus Krausismo español e institución libre de enseñanza (explanatory memorandum, postgraduate research award, 1992), Universidad Complutense de Madrid.

The second focuses on the factors affecting the training of the trainees taking part and the teaching methodology used, in order to illustrate the peculiarities of this type of alternative education.

And the third argues for a renewal of the programme and its use as a way of integrating young people into society and employment in the rural environment, where it may play a very constructive part in local development. With this as the essential aim, the paper also calls attention to the potential provided by new sources of local employment, especially training programmes on the environment and the development of tourism.

## **7.2. Definition and evaluation of training workshops and craft training centres**

Training workshops (TWs) and craft training centres (CTCs) are part of a pilot programme of vocational training launched by the national institute of employment (INEM) in 1985; in other words, they are part of an institutional programme set up by Central Government under the Ministry of Labour and Social Security (not the Ministry of Education) with the aim of meeting targets for youth employment and training. As stated above, responsibility for vocational training is currently being transferred to the Autonomous Communities, which will presumably make it easier to reform vocational training and to match the programme to local concerns.

INEM defines these schemes as ‘public employment and training programmes ... which aim to help unemployed persons under the age of 25 years to find jobs through block release training and work experience in jobs associated with reviving and promoting the artistic, historical, cultural and natural inheritance, and with the rehabilitation of urban milieux and the environment: improving living conditions in towns and cities, and any other activity of public benefit or general and social interest which encourages integration [into the labour market] by providing participants with vocational development and experience’ (most recent ministerial order, 1997).

There is no significant difference between the training structures of the two schemes. In each there is an initial training stage lasting six months, for which trainees receive a grant. In the following stage, the duration of which varies according to whether it is a training workshop (from one to two years) or a craft training centre (six months), the trainee becomes a trainee-worker under a training contract, the purpose of which is training and acquisition of work experience.

The particularity of the CTCs, which were introduced as a modest adjunct to the TWs in the 1990s, is that they seek to match the needs of unemployed young people in rural areas. The majority of the participants have to be covered by the special agricultural social security scheme (for unemployed agricultural workers), whereas most of those in the TWs are covered by the general scheme. The period of work placement is shorter and fewer resources are generally available than in the TWs.

### **7.2.1. Functioning**

Two agencies are responsible for the functioning of the TWs and CTCs through a franchise system:

- (a) So-called sponsoring bodies employ the staff of the TWs and CTCs. These are usually local bodies (local government authorities or associations of such authorities), although they may also be other state agencies, foundations or non-profit-making bodies.
- (b) The provincial INEM funds the TW/CTC programme and controls youth unemployment policy.

The system rests largely on requests made by local government authorities to the provincial body, which decides on the franchises to be awarded to them and gives them the relevant funding. The sponsoring bodies thus become legally liable for the TWs and CTCs, and INEM for their funding.

The initiative must come from the sponsoring body, and the process may be repeated successively, whenever there are sufficient indications of youth unemployment in an area, provided that the launch of a new TW or CTC does not immediately follow on from a previous franchise. In this way, there is a kind of 'broken line' in the Extremadura region, whereby a number of programmes may be held in the same locality, but always interspersed with periods of inactivity.

An INEM franchise may in some cases seem like a heaven-sent opportunity to the recipient rural local government, given the lack of resources from which these proverbially suffer. Local government staff, who have little knowledge of training and employment assistance but are acutely aware of the need to improve the services provided for the public on whom their power rests, may share that feeling, although training contracts may also have the unwanted effect of increasing hidden reliance on benefit payments.

The director of a TW or CTC has to achieve a delicate balance between the two bodies with the power, between achieving the aims of the programme (which is funded by INEM) and complying with the instructions of the sponsoring body, which has a contractual relationship with both him and the trainee-workers, and therefore enjoys *de facto* supremacy. Furthermore, the fact that centres are governed by outside factors and are temporary, lasting only for the duration of the intended operation, seriously compromises the delivery of a well thought-out programme of social and employment integration by the human resources available, so that it becomes little more than a palliative.

### **7.2.2. The objectives**

At the beginning, the programme was distinctly experimental in nature and had two main objectives, which were stated in the regulating order of 1989 and have not changed over the decade:

- (a) integrating and finding jobs for young persons without work (strangely enough the term ‘unemployed‘ (*desempleado*) was not used, but instead a passive term [Spanish] *en paro* was used),
- (b) providing works and services of public benefit through sponsoring bodies, which derive considerable benefit from the TWs and CTCs.

### *Finding jobs for the unemployed*

The characteristics of the trainee-workers attending TWs and CTCs in rural areas are suggestive of why they have found it difficult to get a job, as we shall see in this section. They come straight from failure in the formal education system, and have been excluded from the outset from the social and labour system precisely because they lack adequate training and/or vocational qualifications. They also find themselves in a somewhat restricted labour market that is less diversified than that in urban areas. The second chance provided by the TW/CTC programme is not taken up by everyone, the most common outlook for participants being, unfortunately, a return to the unemployment from which they came. The investment in their training is therefore not truly cost-effective because there is no scheme for finding them jobs.

The 1998 report on TWs/CTCs in the Province of Cáceres (Extremadura), compiled by the ‘Pedro de Ibarra’ Promotion and Development Unit for the provincial INEM, illustrates the problems identified with entry into employment. Some of it reads as follows.

It recognises that ‘the numbers of young people who find employment through the programme still vary and, in most cases ... depend on local factors, which usually relate to the capacity of the local labour market to absorb labour at the given time.’ It comments further that ‘... little or nothing comes of the TW/CTC programme: in villages or rural areas with fewer than a couple of thousand inhabitants, how are local programmes going to find work for fifteen bricklayers, fifteen carpenters, fifteen locksmiths, and so on?’

And given the relatively rigid and standardised form taken by the programme, it notes the need to ‘make the current TW/CTC model more flexible and to move towards coexistence with other types of TW/CTC, which would be more closely tied to the local pattern of production and current trends in the labour market (new sources of employment, marketing initiatives, etc.).’

Finally, it makes two suggestions: 1) to widen the age range covered to include the long-term unemployed who have dropped out of the labour market because they cannot update their knowledge to match employment requirements: this is a reference to Employment Workshops (cf. regulatory order of 1999); and 2) to turn TWs/CTCs themselves into so-called Business Initiative Centres as a way of promoting self-employment.

### *Providing works and services of public benefit*

In a local government authority there are always occasions and opportunities for carrying out works and services of benefit to the public, since this is ultimately one of its purposes, and sponsoring bodies take advantage of the TW/CTC programme to fund these. Projects submitted to the provincial INEM reveal some common features: the training modules are modified in accordance with the works and services to be carried out; between 10 and 15 trainee-workers are enrolled in each module, and the number of teachers and administrative staff is constant (one director, one administrator, one coordinator or provider of teaching support, and as many tutors as there are training modules); the anticipated needs in terms of materials and equipment are stated, and a schedule is set out which complies with regulatory norms. Basically, INEM funds cover the bulk of TW/CTC expenditure, except for infrastructural and fixed teaching equipment, and materials and equipment regarded as not fungible, which must be provided by the sponsoring body.

### **7.2.3. Final conclusions**

- (a) The predominance of ad-hocism and utilitarianism in the implementation of the programme, as part of a policy to combat youth employment that has little resemblance to a stable alternative training system

Without a fundamental revision of both its educational and its employment aspects, the TW/CTC programme will go on removing young people for a while from unemployment and/or marginality (for social purposes) but this will not be enough to remedy or correct the burden of academic failure that they carry with them. It was not until 1994 that the new ministerial order gave greater emphasis to the educational aspects of vocational training, but at the same time it cut the length of TWs from three to two years, and that of CTCs to one year. This action meant a reduction in educational resources and budgets and, as a result, in the quality of the programme.

It was no accident that the cut in the programme budget coincided with the transfer of responsibilities to the Autonomous Communities, which fell over each other drawing up new FIP plans, each more ambitious than the last. The immediate future of the TW programme, which is already in regional hands, is unclear. It is uncertain whether it will be relaunched and will continue alongside other plans, such as the FIP plan for Employment Workshops for those aged over 25 years of age.

- (b) Hidden benefit payments

INEM targets unemployed young people, who may in theory not reject the training offered. Furthermore, the culture of benefits is so well-rooted in rural areas that the main reason for an unemployed person's decision whether to join a TW/CTC (for 7-8 hours a day) is financial rather than educational. This applies both to those who join in response to the promise of a training contract after the first six months of training, and to those who decide not to join because they are unwilling to wait that long. Young people find the first stage particularly burdensome (grants have been reduced) because they see no

financial return, and because it is generally incompatible with seasonal family agricultural work (which is especially important to the family economy) and with the community work provided by the local authorities for unemployed agricultural workers. In Extremadura and Andalucia, where there is a special agricultural scheme for rural workers, 60 days a year entitle unemployed workers to unemployment benefit.

(c) The absence of a realistic and objective policy on vocational training

In the TWs/CTSs, which have turned into an end in themselves, vocational training has become a mere tool rather than a way of helping people to find work. In order to avoid this, various methods might be used concurrently within the programme: finding a stable framework for cooperation between TWs/CTCs and local businesses, adopting measures to encourage self-employment, attempting to sell products and services, provided that these do not amount to unlawful competition, etc.

(d) The inbreeding of the staff appointed

While a TW/CTC project is being carried out, the staff appointed may well be preparing a new project for the sponsoring body for which they are working. This also serves their own interest (their next job) as it may, after the appropriate wait, be approved by the provincial INEM in its periodic funding rounds. This leads to inbreeding among technical and managerial staff (who are also hostages to their situation), and encourages a pattern of activity/inactivity, since TWs/CTCs may not be renewed consecutively, and being unemployed is a compulsory requirement for recruitment. The provincial INEM has chosen to create a so-called bank of TW/CTC experts, but this effectively rules out the recruitment of new staff and rewards fidelity to unemployment (a curious phenomenon).

### **7.3. Analysis of teaching experience**

Two aspects will be examined, those relating to the factors affecting the training of trainee-workers, and the principles of a proposed teaching methodology.

#### **7.3.1. Factors affecting the training of the trainee-workers**

*Difficulties with participants' academic qualifications:*

The academic qualifications of the participants in this training scheme vary between:

- (a) the Certificate of Primary Studies, for those who have not gained the final School-leaving Certificate: it relates to initial compulsory schooling which, until the implementation of the 1995 reform, extended up to the age of 14,
- (b) the School-leaving Certificate, for those who have completed their basic education but gone no further,

- (c) Compulsory Secondary Education: after the reform of secondary education in 1995, compulsory schooling was extended up to the age of 16,
- (d) Bachillerato – two further years of optional education and transition to the world of work or to further or higher education (diploma and/or degree): after the reform, formal vocational training was included in this level, and
- (e) incomplete higher education.

*Great differences in level of education:*

The training process is heavily influenced by the foregoing. In the same workshop or course, the trainer can find himself or herself confronted with trainee profiles ranging from functional illiteracy (remember we are speaking about deprived rural areas in Extremadura) up to the other extreme, i.e. students who have dropped out of higher education and, not having much of an occupational choice in the rural environment, are taking advantage of the financial benefits of a training contract.

*Differences in age and in social and family background:*

In the 16-25 age group, the trainer will still find adolescent trainees with absolutely no experience of the world of work, coming directly from school failure, and young participants with family responsibilities, with different types of work experience and a more or less forgotten educational background. Both, being job-seekers, are eligible for the TWs/CTCs, even though they may themselves have no real interest in it. However, they can be required by INEM to present themselves for selection as trainee-workers, especially if they are receiving any type of unemployment benefit or allowance.

*Diverse training interests:*

The training interests of the participants are certainly varied but, unfortunately, they are not the outcome of proper vocational guidance or educational support. My personal experience suggests that there is little genuine interest from the outset in the proposed training, so that one has to work hard to overcome resistance.

*A high level of rejection of traditional school education, and of education and training in general:*

This calls for a change of mentality and a genuine attempt at innovation on the part of teachers, so that they connect with the needs of the trainee-workers and the requirements of specialised integrated training, with the aim of developing the best possible vocational skills.

### **7.3.2. Principles of teaching methodology**

The theoretical/practical classes should be held in an active and participatory manner, with special attention directed to the development of creative attitudes and personal autonomy that will build up self-esteem; the notion that trainees should accumulate abstract knowledge that is disconnected from reality must be put to one side.

It is necessary to break with the paternalism built up in the last generation of unemployed young people, who are trapped in a benefit dependency which has paralysed their capacity for initiative, including the ability to delegate tasks, assume responsibility and take decisions.

In the workshops and practical activities which are a part of the training, demonstration and discovery methods should be used which will facilitate effective learning, and a system of personalised and continuous assessment should be set up.

The theoretical part of training should be centred on practical work in the workshops, on the development possibilities of the region concerned and on the natural resources available there.

Teaching units should be designed on the basis of the real experience gained from the work done and of the basic subject-matter of the occupation to be learned.

The trainee-workers should gradually adapt to the real situation at the workplace, to means of production and working hours, and to productivity.

The element of self-esteem should be stressed as the most important factor in the training of these young persons as it can help to achieve the objectives of social and community integration. Specific programmes should be intensified for trainee-workers who have not completed compulsory secondary education in order to give them the basic education and vocational training that they need to enter working life.

## **7.4. Vocational training in local integrated development activities**

The inclusion of vocational training programmes in local integrated development activities is a key step in updating the human resources in an area. Local integrated development activities have shown great capacity for creating and diversifying jobs in rural areas of Extremadura, bringing previously unknown opportunities for paid employment. New sources of employment such as the environment, rural tourism, social work and domestic help call for increased vocational skills, which do not currently meet the requirements of the labour market.

The TWs/CTCs and other vocational training programmes may meet this need. They may prove to be of practical benefit for social integration and entry into employment, and may also help to keep people in the area, creating the necessary stimuli and jobs by developing new types of training in environmental and tourism activities, which are currently in great demand in rural areas. The following activities might be singled out as examples:

- (a) afforestation programmes in agricultural areas, and tree-care,
- (b) hydrological forest recovery programmes, combating erosion, fire and desertification,
- (c) programmes to develop ecological agricultural methods that are environmentally compatible,
- (d) programmes to recover urban and agricultural wasteland,
- (e) programmes to restore livestock trails for environmental and tourism purposes,
- (f) programmes to train environmental and nature guides,
- (g) management programmes for small tourism enterprises,
- (h) and generally any other so-called complementary activities in the field of tourism relating to cultural pastimes, the outdoors, etc.



## **8. Combating social and economic exclusion**

### ***Barbara Brodigan***

The Second Chance School concept was the brainchild of Madame Edith Cresson in 1997 the then European Commissioner for Science, Research & Development, Human Resources, Education, Training and Youth. She recognised that there was a vast body of disaffected young people across Europe whom existing education and training initiatives were not reaching. Lack of education and qualifications created a barrier to employment and the inevitable economic and social exclusion from mainstream society meant huge costs to Governments in welfare benefits. It was only a short step to realise that social exclusion was not only a waste of personal potential but also of the financial resources spent on the healthcare, social care, police, prison and probation services which are frequently used by the socially excluded.

A pilot project of 10 schools was funded directly by the European Commission for two years from 1997 to 1999, with the view to combat social exclusion through education and training. The Leeds Second Chance School was the UK pilot project and was opened in March 1998 by Madame Cresson and David Blunkett the UK Secretary of State for Education. Other pilots were established in Cologne and Halle (Germany), Bilbao and Barcelona (Spain), Heerlen (Netherlands), Marseille (France), Norrköping (Sweden), Hameelinna (Finland), Catania (Sicily) and Athens (Greece). Each school was to be autonomous with the aim of establishing, designing and delivering a programme which would meet the needs of the local market. This has meant that each school, although having a common philosophy, ethos and clientele profile, has developed its own curriculum, and teaching methodology within the relevant education system of the country.

The project in Leeds was developed by the Department of Training of Leeds City Council who subcontracted Thomas Danby College of Further Education to design and deliver the core curriculum. Partnerships were also formed with Leeds college of Art & Design and Leeds College of Technology to deliver certain areas of expertise. The Association of Cities for Second Chance Schools was established in 1998 to develop and enhance links between the network of schools.

At the same time that the Second Chance School network was being established the UK Government, in its Green Paper 'The Learning Age: a renaissance for a new Britain,' was sending a clear and comprehensive message of its commitment to the achievement of a lifelong learning society. In his keynote speech David Blunkett said 'to achieve stable and sustainable growth, we will need a well-educated, well-equipped and adaptable labour force'. The Governments vision of a learning age recognised the benefits to individuals, communities, businesses and the nation as a whole. Initiatives included setting up a University of industry and Individual Learning Accounts, extending the New Deal offer under the

Welfare to work scheme for over 25's and increasing the number of people who needed basic skills help, (one in five adults in the UK has poor literacy and numeracy skills). The New Deal full-time education and training option (FTET) for 16-24 year olds was set up for those unemployed for over six months to access education and training for up to a year and to continue drawing welfare benefit (Jobseekers Allowance).

The school targets 16-24 year olds who are non-traditional participants in education or training, those who are socially and economically excluded and who do not fit into any other provision. Disaffection with the school education system has led to drop-out, exclusion or low-level achievement, while some have experienced further disaffection with education and training provision in the post 16 system leading to further drop-out, non-achievement and long term unemployment. The UK has a plethora of programmes targeting disaffected youth and we are constantly being asked what makes Second Chance School different. For many we are not their Second chance, but their last chance. Traditionally, school is the constant, offering a curriculum and a system into which the pupil has to fit. The pupil is therefore the variable.

At Second Chance we have turned this philosophy on its head. Students have told us that this is the first time that anyone has listened to them. By offering a student centred approach where the student decides what they want to learn and when, where negotiation is the keyword, the student has ownership of their learning and feels empowered. The individual is the constant, by listening to, and provided for, their needs, by being adaptable and flexible, the school is the variable. That is the difference.

The young people have been excluded or have excluded themselves from mainstream education. The project offers them a Second Chance to obtain a successful future and prevent them being caught in the irreversible downward spiral of marginalisation and exclusion. All have no qualifications or a few low-level qualifications. Poor experiences of education have left them with low levels of basic skills in literacy, numeracy and IT, resulting in limited access to the job market. Geographically, their environment, on one of the city's largest council housing estates to the east of the city, has isolated the beneficiaries in terms of knowledge of, and access to, the changing world of work and the job market. Many are 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> generation unemployed in a benefit dependent culture. The key aim of the Second Chance project is to break the cycle of benefit dependency and to equip these young adults with transferable skills to enhance their employability.

Disaffection has many causes and consequences. The student cohort at Leeds Second Chance School have educational, social, economic, environmental and personal barriers to learning. Some have learning disabilities such as dyslexia or scotopic sensitive syndrome, others have overcome alcohol or drug dependency, some have experienced homelessness, violence or sexual abuse, while others are trying to rebuild their lives after a period of imprisonment. Economically all experience some degree of poverty, particularly those who live independently (a high proportion have broken family relationships). The curriculum offer and teaching methodology must therefore address and remove these barriers if effective learning is to take place. The school takes a holistic view of the students development, this is reflected in

the support which is offered, both for learning and personal issues. A major barrier to learning is the lack of self-confidence and the low self-esteem which all the beneficiaries experience. The Easy Start programme accessed in the 1<sup>st</sup> four weeks of entry offers confidence building sessions to counter this.

The curriculum is innovative in both design and delivery, recognising that giving young people 'more of the same' will re-enforce not diminish disaffection. Provision is totally student centred, each beneficiary has his/ her individual learning plan which is tailored to the individuals needs. Each student has a personal tutor who advises and guides the student in his/her choices. Qualifications are modularised to facilitate a rolling programme (each module is repeated three times a year) and to enable students to learn at their own pace. This means that qualifications can be part or fully achieved, and in smaller achievable 'chunks'. Repeating modules every 15 weeks enables students to repeat work they have difficulties with or to access modules which they have missed. The rolling programme also makes access to the school easier, students can enrol every Monday and do not have to wait until a new term or new programme starts. This recruitment policy means that we can 'strike while the iron is hot'.

On entry students are assessed in literacy and numeracy to determine the level they are to study at, and to identify any additional learning support needs. A students learning style is also identified. This comes as a novel revelation to many, who realise that maybe they have not been academically successful because of inappropriate or underdeveloped learning styles, rather than a result of being 'thick'. The most effective learners use all four learning styles (activist, pragmatist, reflector, theorist) while 70 % of the population only use one or two learning styles. Therefore it's in the students own interests to enhance their strong learning style and to develop their weak learning style. The Easy Start programme, which all the students enter during the 1<sup>st</sup> four weeks of school, offers study skills and learning style development. The teaching staff have also undertaken a learning style assessment, because their teaching style will reflect their learning style. Tutors are therefore aware that their teaching methods must meet the learning needs of all the students and lessons or workshop plans reflect this.

Teaching and learning takes place in small groups of 4-6 students. In addition every student is offered 1 to 1 support.

The school is ideally placed in a Family Learning Centre where the partnership between the city council and the colleges of further education enables a broad curriculum to be offered. Students can access a wide range of vocational courses, including NVQ's in hairdressing, beauty therapy, retail, business administration, catering and childcare basic skills. Qualifications in English, maths and IT are offered as well as GCSE maths and English. A Key Skills unit offers key skills in communications and numeracy. The core curriculum of Second Chance School supports IT, numeracy and literacy achievement, offering unit by unit accreditation. Assessment is on-going so students can monitor their own progress and most qualifications are achieved by a collection of evidence in a portfolio, rather than by examination which can be a barrier to many. All student portfolios are internally verified then

externally verified by the awarding body. Jobskills are an important part of the curriculum. Every student receives Careers guidance, alongside CV production, help with letters of application and interview skills. The jobclub promotes jobsearch using the media and the internet and helps to move students into employment as they near the end of their time in Second Chance School.

The focus on improving employability also includes ‘soft’ skills such as attendance, punctuality, personal appearance etc ensuring beneficiaries not only access a job, but keep a job. Experience of the world of work is gained through work placement. Students are prepared for this through workshops offering health and safety at work, customer service, personal effectiveness and teamwork. Competence in these employability skills is assessed through tutor observation of performance, witness testimonials, students personal statements and supervisors reports. Students can gain a nationally recognised level 2 qualification ‘The Employment Award’. The School has an extensive database of work placement providers, which has been developed by the Department of Training. Links with employers are important, not only as placement providers, but to exchange information. The School curriculum needs to match the needs of the employers also.

To broaden horizons and offer access to otherwise inaccessible cultural experiences the school has a ‘Pleasure Zone’ programme within which students can learn a foreign language, play chess, learn a craft, join a quiz team, improve health and fitness, learn to cook on a budget, take part in activity weekends. The school finances trips to the theatre, visits to museums, sport and outdoor activities.

A thematic approach enables key skills to be achieved through project work. A series of projects are offered throughout the year and students can participate in as many or as few as they wish. Past projects have included setting up and running a French Café for three days during the city’s European Week. Students researched on the internet the menus and prices of cafes in Paris. French language lessons were offered, students planned and prepared food and drink, others produced menus and advertising posters using IT. An area was decorated with information on France, French newspapers were on display and students learnt customer service and business skills while running the café. They also gained evidence for the Vocational Multi -Skills certificate in the following units: personal health, safety and hygiene, numeracy, communications, information technology.

A more recent project called ‘Seacroft Village’ involved students tracing the history and development of the community where they live. Students accessed information from the Leeds website on the internet, they interviewed elderly residents who remembered the area as a village before it became one of the largest council housing estates in the UK. Other groups took photographic and video evidence of the area, particularly highlighting the remnants of the village – the church, the village green, lodge gates to the hall, alms cottages and the windmill. This work will be compiled in a video and used for marketing and recruitment. The students will have a role in the compilation and editing of the film.

A tutorial programme enables students to monitor their progress on a weekly basis with their personal tutor. Students have the opportunity to comment on their progress and tutors feedback the staff teams view of the students progress. Together an action plan is developed for the student to work to the next week, with agreed target dates for achievement. The action plan can be used by other tutors as a checklist to ensure students are using their study time productively. Additional support tutorials address personal issues which may prevent students from learning effectively. These are accessed either by request from the student or recommendation from the tutor.

The school is brought together once a week during 'Lifeskills'. This involves all the students and the whole staff team and takes the form of small-group discussions and open debate. The session is non-judgemental, students can express opinions freely, while tutors merely act as facilitators. Students have identified topics which they would like to address – including sexual health, relationships, mental health and drug abuse. Previous sessions have included coping with stress, marriage and divorce, being unemployed and xenophobia. Lifeskills has the multi-purpose of developing communication skills at the same to time as addressing issues which are barriers to learning.

The School has also developed a mentoring scheme with a local employer, Elida Faberge. This is in recognition that it is difficult to access a job without transferable skills and yet difficult to prove competence without a job. Employees of Elida Faberge are matched up with Second Chance School students to provide information, guidance and knowledge about the world of work. This provides students with an insight into employer expectations, especially in terms of soft skills, basic skills and key skills.

Another employer, Tesco Stores, are currently investing in the community by building a flagship store in Seacroft with the offer of 200 jobs to the local community. They operated a guaranteed interview scheme which also assessed the training needs of potential employees. Successful applications were offered six weeks intensive training which included basic skills as well as job knowledge. Those less successful but with potential were offered basic skills training prior to re-interview. All training was offered at the East Leeds Family Learning Centre where the Second Chance School is based as part of the partnership between the retailer and the city councils Department of Training. So far two Second Chance School students have successfully passed through the training and recruitment process and been offered employment. Two more are currently waiting for interviews.

Quality work placements are essential for students to have a valuable experience, achieve relevant employability skills and also meet the criteria for continuing to receive welfare benefits under the Governments New Deal scheme. The emphasis for this education and training option is to move students into sustainable employment. The job market in Leeds is changing rapidly to meet the needs of the hi-tech society. Traditional heavy manufacturing industries in coal and engineering have disappeared to be replaced by computer-based service industries, particularly in finance, banking and insurance. Other growth areas include retail, business administration and hospitality. The curriculum must therefore reflect these changes

and so students not only work towards qualifications and skills in IT, but also use IT as a study tool in research and production of work. The school is well resourced with computers and software, which facilitates independent learning. All computers have internet access.

Partnerships are an important aspect of the Second Chance School network, both in the home country and across Europe. Leeds Second Chance School has been able to access European funding for mobility of trainers and students. The benefits of the networking are many, tutors can share good practice, students can broaden horizons. Groups of students have visited schools in Cologne,(Germany) Hameenlinna (Finland) and Catania (Sicily) where they have participated in cultural and sporting events aimed at breaking down barriers and promoting the citizenship of Europe. The effect is astounding in terms of personal development and the growth in self-confidence of a group who have had no opportunity to travel, to experience other cultures.

Tutors have benefited from exchanges to Finland, Sweden and Germany, and participated in seminars and conferences to discuss issues common to all schools dealing with young disaffected people. Joint projects are underway to develop resources and share practice around such issues as psychological and physical barriers to learning, health, dealing with violence. Career guidance and counselling. The Employment Service and Leeds Careers Service have also joined the network to develop resources for a project being led by Norrkopping school in Sweden.

Naturally we are constantly asked about our success rate. Does it work? The simple answer is yes for some and no for others. This hard-to-reach group often need more than one chance to re- enter education, to overcome the barriers. It will work when the student is ready, and so we operate an open-door policy, resulting in some students now on their 3<sup>rd</sup> attempt at having a 'second chance'.

Success is often judged by examining statistics, by looking at measurable outcomes, but often the greatest success when working with disaffected young people is intangible and therefore difficult to measure. How do you measure an increase in self-confidence or a rise in self-esteem? We do student surveys before and after to determine these improvements, and our students will tell you themselves that they feel more confident in jobsearch and ready to face new challenges. It is often attitude which is the barrier to employment, and the change in attitude which enables access to employment.

Statistically however, all our students who complete their programme leave the school with a qualification, some have a portfolio of qualifications. Twenty young people have now moved into employment in a variety of jobs in retail, healthcare, social care, leisure industry and business administration. Six have moved on to further education, while 42 remain at the school to complete qualifications or to progress to the next level of study. However, our best testimonials come from the beneficiaries themselves. One student who has just begun a full-time job with Tesco Stores said 'I have learnt more here than I ever did at school. It has given me confidence.

## 9. The Irish leaving certificate applied: Trojan horse or contrived equilibrium?

*Jim Gleeson*

### 9.1. Irish Context

The current population of Ireland is 3.75 million. The OECD Examiners (1991, 13) pointed out that Ireland 'is characterised by its youthfulness. Over half the population is under 25, and 30.5 % is under 15. Apart from Australia and Turkey, Ireland is the only OECD country to have experienced a rising birth-rate until very recently... thus as school enrolments were on the decrease almost everywhere else, enrolments in Ireland were swiftly increasing, and the pressure on resources was almost unsustainable'.

Heavily influenced by Ireland's participation in the OECD's Washington Conference of 1961 and the ensuing Investment in Education Report of 1966, and supported by World Bank funding, Irish education gradually came to be viewed in terms of Human Capital production. The expansion of our education system has been remarkable, with numbers in second level education growing from 132 000 in 1965 to 368 160 in 1997/98 <sup>(12)</sup> and with retention rates (up to the end of second level schooling) rising from 20 % in 1960 to approximately 83 % at present <sup>(13)</sup> – higher than the OECD average. The 1995 Education White Paper set a target of at least a 90 % completion rate by the end of the 1990s (Ireland: 1995, 50). The number of students in higher education has grown from 18 500 in 1965 to 112 182 in 1997/98 with more than 40 % of the school leaving age cohort now progressing to third level education (see NESC: 1996, 8). As the size of the age cohort falls and more college places are provided, this proportion is likely to be more than 50 % in the near future.

During the eighties unemployment rose steadily in Ireland, reaching in excess of 19 % (300 000) in 1988. Within the EU this was second only to Spain (see Commission of the European Communities: 1989, 14), giving Ireland the lowest working population (in percentage terms) in the EU. Over the past ten years the unemployment rate has dropped dramatically, with the official unemployment rate standing at 5.6 % for 1999, representing 81 500 unemployed and has dropped below 5 % in the current year.

Up to 1965, Ireland had a dual or bi-partite post-primary system of education. The main element was the traditional, privately owned secondary school, offering an academic, humanistic curriculum leading on to higher education and employment in the public service.

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<sup>(12)</sup> Based on the Department of Education's annual statistical reports.

<sup>(13)</sup> They are higher for young women.

Such schools were attended primarily by upper and middle class students and enjoyed much higher status than the alternative system of locally controlled vocational education which was of two years duration and which lead to technical education, apprenticeships and entry to the general workforce. With the new emphasis on investment in education in the mid-sixties, the government allowed the vocational schools to offer the full range of subjects and examinations previously offered in secondary schools only. Comprehensive and community schools were established in the seventies, with provision for greater local involvement in school management. Consequently, despite its size, Ireland has a complex system of post-primary schools, falling into three main types: secondary (attended by some 60 % of students), vocational schools/community colleges (which are attended by some 25 %) and the community/comprehensive schools with the remaining 15 %. All schools offer a comprehensive curriculum, though there is less emphasis on vocational subjects in secondary schools than in the other two sectors while most of the Post leaving certificate courses (PLC's) are provided in the vocational school sector.

## **9.2. VET provision in Ireland**

Certain aspects of the Irish situation are of particular relevance to Vocational education and training (VET).

- (a) Irish students finish second level schooling at 17, which is some two years younger than in most member states, and many complete university at 20 having taken three year degree courses.
- (b) Up until recently Irish employers had the option of hiring workers home from the traditional migratory destination in neighbouring Britain, with the result that we have not experienced specific skill shortages.
- (c) Levels of educational attainment on the part of young Irish adults (25-34 years of age) were significantly less than the OECD average for 1991 but these figures do not reflect the improvements in educational attainments that have taken place recently.
- (d) The opportunities for education are very unevenly distributed across Irish society (see, for example, Clancy: 1995; Clancy and Wall: 2000). Hannan et al (1995, 336) have drawn attention to the 'sharp contrast between the returns to taking or not taking qualifications in Ireland and the UK. These differences in returns are consistent with the rapid increase in qualification levels in Ireland and the slow advance of qualifications in the UK during the 1980s... It seems most likely that the differences come from the side of the labour market'.
- (e) Education expenditure rose from 16 % of total government expenditure in 1965 to 20 % in 1993 and from 3.2 % of GNP in 1965 to 6.5 % in 1992. While these figures are around the OECD average, Irish expenditure per pupil is much lower than in other member countries (see OECD: 1995, 73).

The OECD (1984) review of youth employment opportunities in Ireland stressed the need for special attention to under-educated and disadvantaged young people and expressed concerns about the career guidance service, gender stereo-typing and the limited scale of pre-employment courses on offer. Not surprisingly, the promotion of vocational education emerged as a major issue in the Ireland of the eighties, based on the belief that high levels of skill would make for more rapid economic growth. Lewis and Kellaghan (1987, 12) point out that policy statements of the time (<sup>14</sup>) were directed more to ‘the need to develop alternative curricula in post-compulsory education than to the reform of traditional curricula, as earlier statements had been. They showed a greater concern for the education-work nexus and for students who were performing poorly in the system and had poor employment prospects’.

Vocational Education and Training in Ireland is primarily the responsibility of two Departments (<sup>15</sup>) – Education and Science on the one hand and Enterprise, Trade and Employment (formerly Labour) on the other. FÁS, the industrial training and employment agency, (under the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment) provides a myriad of programmes ranging from apprenticeships to Community Training Workshops for under-25’s to Community Education Programmes for the long-term unemployed. It also has a placement and guidance function for those who have left education. CERT, the training agency for the Hotel, Catering and Tourism authority and TEAGASC, the advisory and training agency of the agricultural and food sectors, provide training programmes in their own specific areas.

NESC (1993, Chapter 4) considered the adequacy of current vocational education and training policy in Ireland in comparison with countries employing the dual system such as Denmark and the Netherlands. This study found that, while Ireland lags behind many European countries, particularly Denmark and the Netherlands, in its vocational education provision, ‘this situation may also confer advantages if the opportunity is taken to draw on the experiences of other countries... in building a system that is comprehensive and flexible’ (ibid, 128). The report concluded that one of the most strikingly distinctive features of the Irish vocational education and training system from an international comparative perspective is the ‘limited amount of structured training which occurs in the workplace and the peripheral role of employers in the education and training system’. (ibid, 222)

During the nineties there has been a proliferation of policy statements in relation to Education and Training. The European Commission’s (1994) White Paper identified the essential skills for integration into society and working life in terms of: ‘a mastery of basic knowledge (linguistic, scientific and other knowledge) and skills of a technological and social nature, that is to say the ability to develop and act in a complex and highly technological environment, characterised in particular by the importance of information technologies; the ability to

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(<sup>14</sup>) Such as the Programme for Action in Education (1984-1987) and Building on Reality, the Fine Gael/Labour Programme for Government (1984)

(<sup>15</sup>) The Departments of Agriculture and Food, Tourism, Sport and Recreation, Justice, Equality and Law Reform, Health and Children and the Marine and Natural Resources are responsible for vocational training in their sectors.

communicate, make contacts and organise etc. These skills include, in particular, the fundamental ability to acquire new knowledge and new skills – "to learn how to learn" throughout one's life.'

Three relevant White Papers have been produced in Ireland. The Education White Paper, *Charting Our Education Future* (Ireland: 1995a) highlighted the importance of vocational education and training in the promotion of national economic growth and development. In October 1996 the Department of Enterprise and Employment published its White Paper, *Science, Technology and Innovation*, (Ireland, 1996a) against the background of the Tierney Report, (STIAC), which was entitled *Making Knowledge Work for Us* <sup>(16)</sup> (Ireland, 1995b). It identifies a list of desirable skills which mirrors those identified in the 1994 EU White Paper, with particular emphasis on 'the need for citizens and companies to engage in continuous and life-long learning.' (ibid, 120). The third part of this Irish trilogy of White Papers, Human Resource Development (Ireland: 1997), was also prepared by the Department of Enterprise and Employment. Concern is expressed there in relation to the weak tradition of vocational education in Irish secondary schools (ibid, 45). It is suggested that the relatively high proportion of early leavers results in an enforced emphasis on remedial education and initial reintegration and training which 'diverts a high proportion of national training resources from providing for the high-level skill requirements needed to help Irish firms to be more competitive' resulting in lower levels of employment creation.

Stokes and Watters (1997, 11) identify the key principles of current vocational training in Ireland as access for diverse target groups, provision for recognition of their achievement through a comprehensive national framework of certification, provision for progression through the system, the establishment of national standards of achievement quality, relevance and partnership, the location of the learner at the centre of the education and training process and an emphasis on lifelong learning.

### **9.3. The Impact of the European Social Fund (ESF) on VET in Ireland**

'It is clear that, without the support of the ESF, IVET in Ireland would be a pale shade of what it actually is' (O'Connor: 1998, 66). During the sixties and seventies increasing rates of unemployment resulted in the restructuring of the ESF, with the result that over 90 % of the total funding went on vocational training measures aimed at specific categories of workers and at tackling structural unemployment (Hantrais, 1995). By 1977 the enlarged Community found it necessary to broaden the targeting of the ESF – with particular reference to the most

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<sup>(16)</sup> One notes the emphasis on the economic significance of knowledge and on information as a commodity in the context of the Information Society (see Office for Official Publications of the European Communities: 1995, 4ff). This same mentality is reflected for example in the title of the Report of the Science Technology and Innovation Advisory Council, *Making knowledge work for us* (Ireland;1995).

at-risk groups such as unemployed young people under 25, especially first job seekers. Ireland's response was to develop Pre-Employment Courses (PEC's) in vocational, community and comprehensive schools and certain courses in Regional Technical Colleges (RTC's) were also given ESF support.<sup>(17)</sup> It was at this time also that certain regions of the European Community, including both parts of Ireland, were designated as Category 1 disadvantaged.

As it became clear that youth unemployment across Europe was not a transitory phenomenon and that transition from school to work was a complex matter, the personal development of young people became the major concern. The emphasis shifted from providing discrete job-specific skills towards a broad approach to training in general skills, reflecting the need for young people to be adaptable at a time when traditional categories of jobs and skills were disappearing. In this context, the European Commission's Transition from School to Work Projects<sup>(18)</sup>, were to exercise enormous influence on the Irish post-primary curriculum. These initiatives were targeted at early school leavers and at those for whom the academic senior cycle was unsuitable (see, for example, Granville: 1982; Crooks: 1990; Gleeson: 1990).

The introduction by the EU of the Social Guarantee in 1982, to provide a training guarantee for all young people and a dynamic response to the problem of youth unemployment, meant that at least 75 % of the European Social Fund (ESF)<sup>(19)</sup> was ear-marked for spending on schemes which would enhance the employability of young people under 18 by providing a combination of vocational training and work experience and of unemployed persons in the 18 to 25 age bracket. Vocational Preparation and Training Programmes (VPT) – replacing the earlier PEC's and along very similar curriculum lines – were introduced to Irish second level schools in the summer of 1984<sup>(20)</sup>. These were particularly significant in Ireland because the 'academic' secondary schools were permitted to introduce the new VPT programme for the first time in September 1984 as a result of the extension of ESF aid<sup>(21)</sup>.

Following the adoption of the Single European Act in 1987, the Commission had discretion over approximately one third of the allocation to the Member States and European funding increasingly began to shape Irish education policy. Because Ireland enjoyed Objective 1 status, its level of ESF funding doubled between 1989 and 1993 to ECU 1.5 billion – almost 8 % of the total amount available from the ESF. The adoption of the principle of additionality

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<sup>(17)</sup> One notes the emphasis on the economic significance of knowledge and on information as a commodity in the context of the Information Society (see Office for Official Publications of the European Communities: 1995, 4ff). This same mentality is reflected for example in the title of the Report of the Science Technology and Innovation Advisory Council, Making Knowledge Work for Us (Ireland; 1995).

<sup>(18)</sup> Transition 1 ran from 1978-1982 and Transition 2 from 1983-87.

<sup>(19)</sup> Which was part of the European Structural Fund budget. Two of the five objectives of the Structural Fund were the sole responsibility of the ESF – combating long term unemployment and ensuring a start for young people in working life.

<sup>(20)</sup> Young people taking Middle Level Technician (MLT) courses in Regional Technical Colleges (RTC's) were the beneficiaries in the 18-25 age range.

<sup>(21)</sup> Of the 380 schools (out of some 800) that offered VPT programmes in the first year, 118 (out of some 550) were secondary schools.

meant that the European Structural Funds could not be used merely to replace national funds and that there should be an equivalent increase in overall national spending on relevant activities. On top of the Structural Funds, some 15 % of the total budget was retained to fund Community vocational education and training initiatives such as Euroform, NOW, Horizon, PETRA. Many of these initiatives resulted in the development of alternative forms of VET provision as well as facilitating transnational work experience for VET participants (see, for example, Gleeson and McCarthy, 1996).

An important change in the eligibility rules for ESF, introduced in 1988, was of great significance for Ireland because it meant that young people above the age of compulsory schooling who were being trained within the formal education system qualified for ESF support. O'Connor (1998, 62) comments that 'this effectively finally abolished the "ancient dichotomy" <sup>(22)</sup> between education and training'.

On foot of the key principles of the EU White Paper of 1994, ESF aid to Ireland for the period 1992-99 was doubled again, with the result that Ireland was granted some ECU 930 million for programmes in second and third level education. This enabled a cash-strapped ministry, still in the throes of having to cope with rising numbers in post-primary, to support the introduction of vocationally oriented initiatives such as the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) and the Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP) at senior cycle (15-18). The Minister for Education, Micheál Martin, indicated in a radio interview in 1998 that he was aiming at a target of 30 % participation by all senior cycle students in these vocational alternatives in 2000.

#### **9.4. Social partnership at the national level**

Partnership has been an absolutely central plank of Irish policy making during the past twelve years (Gleeson: 1998). For example, during President Clinton's September 1998 visit to Ireland, the slogan 'Celebrating the Success of Partnership in Ireland' was displayed prominently behind the speakers on the platform when he addressed the Business Community in Dublin. The Tánaiste, <sup>(23)</sup> Mary Harney, Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment, speaking on September 24<sup>th</sup> 1998 at a Conference on EU Venture and Seed Capital Measure, referred to the Irish system of social partnership as 'unique in Europe and unthinkable in America', adding that 'it has now been virtually built into the fabric of our system of government. The Taoiseach <sup>(24)</sup>, Bertie Ahern, asserted in an article in the Irish Times (20<sup>th</sup> March, 2000) that social partnership has 'made us the envy of Europe'.

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<sup>(22)</sup> This remark should be seen in the light of the *Ages for Learning* policy proposal prepared by the Department of Education in 1984 which displayed a prominent black line between Post-Primary Education on the one hand and Vocational Preparation and Training (VPT1 and 2) on the other hand.

<sup>(23)</sup> Deputy Prime Minister.

<sup>(24)</sup> Prime Minister.

The partnership approach to ‘managing’ Ireland was adopted in 1987 in a context of ‘deep despair in Irish society, the social partners...hammered out an agreed strategy to escape from the vicious circle of real stagnation, rising taxes and exploding debt’ (O’Donnell and Thomas: 1998, 122). Along with the elected Government of the day, there were essentially three main parties to the first agreement – Business and Industry, Trade Unions and the farming sector. These have been joined by the Community and Voluntary sector which now constitutes the ‘fourth pillar’ of our social partnership strategy. Five partnership agreements have been negotiated to date, all of them following a broadly similar form, involving the setting out of agreed pay increases for the period in question, commitments to social equity and tax reform as well as introducing certain policy initiatives such as ‘local pay bargaining’, the establishment of partnership companies to tackle long-term unemployment and the development of the Strategic Management Initiative for the modernisation of the public service. The emphasis on greater social inclusion has resulted in the development of a National Anti-Poverty Strategy (NAPS) where the intention is to poverty-proof new policy and where Education and Training are seen to play a particularly important role.

The results have been dramatic insofar as Irish GDP grew by an average of 4.9 % a year compared to an OECD average of 2.4 % during the period 1986-96, while employment grew by 1.8 % per year compared to an OECD average of 1.0 % and an EU average of 0.3 %. The debt/GDP ratio fell from 117 % in 1986 to 76 % in 1996 with growth accelerating especially during 1993-96 when GDP reached 7.5 % per year and employment rose by 4.0 % each year.

The strategy of consensus through partnership, based on extensive consultation, was also used in the preparation of both of our most recent national plans – The national development plan: 1994-99 (Ireland: 1994, 9), submitted to the European Community as ‘a plan for employment’ and Ireland: National development plan: 2000-06 (Ireland; undated). Five key strategies are proposed in the more recent plan, including ‘the promotion of education and employment training policies attuned to the needs of the labour market and a special focus on those most at risk of unemployment.... targeted interventions aimed at areas and groups affected by poverty and social exclusion’ (ibid, 8). The Plan contains a long chapter devoted to ‘Employment and human resources development operational programme’ where addressing skills shortages in the economy and the promotion of lifelong learning are listed as key objectives. The only reference to the formal post-primary curriculum is to recognise the role of the Leaving certificate applies (LCA), Leaving certificate vocational programme (LCVP) and Junior Certificate schools programme (JCSP) in providing ‘ a wider range of subject choices to young people who continue in the education system... enabling pupils to break the cycle of disadvantage and to avoid the problems of early school-leaving, to develop to their full potential and to participate fully as citizens in society, and to maximise benefit from the education system and equip them with the skill necessary for lifelong learning’ (ibid, 103).

The partnership approach has been adopted enthusiastically as a strategy for consensus seeking in education, epitomised by the National Education Convention, which involved some 42 national bodies, and was held over ten days during October 1994. As discussed elsewhere

by the author (Gleeson, 1998), little consideration was given to VET at this important convention.

## **9.5. Some relevant aspects of Irish post-primary curriculum**

Ireland provides an interesting combination of the Classical Humanist and Reconstructionist ideologies. The OECD (1991, 57) described it as a ‘derivation from Classical Humanism with an overlay of technical and a leavening of the curriculum projects.’ But the technical bias of developments over the past twenty years (Lynch, 1989) and the belief of successive governments in the power of education to promote national economic welfare have challenged that position.

Gleeson and Hodkinson (1999, 169) advert to a similar dilemma in the UK: ‘the tension within a policy which encourages prescriptive pedagogical discourse and at the same time demands a pedagogy of empowered self-learning has been a major obstacle to progress.. the challenge is to generate a new ‘third education settlement’ which combines conceptions of social unity with competitiveness and productivity... The difference lies in the determination and transition from an instructional pedagogy to a learner oriented pedagogy which, though still circumscribed by economic rationalism radically redefines the relationship between learning, earning and competitiveness’. They go on to argue that ‘missing in current policy discoursed in England and Wales is any broader vision of citizenship and learning.’

### **9.5.1. The dominance of economic and technical interests**

Ever since the publication of *Investment in education* (1967) Irish education has been characterised by tension<sup>(25)</sup> between the uneasy bedfellows of human capital production and equality of educational opportunity in Ireland. O’Sullivan (1989, 243) argues that ‘equal opportunity, despite its frequent citation as an ideal, was never confronted as a concept demanding analysis and elaboration... This failure lead to a crude understanding of its implications for planning’. For example, it took some twenty years before there was a curriculum response to the raising of the school leaving age in 1967. O’Sullivan (1992, 464) found that the Irish frame of education and social discourse was becoming increasingly ‘coterminous with the theme of education and the economy’ and that ‘cultural identity, language, civic competence and moral development were excluded as themes’. The central focus of Irish educational discourse according to Fuller (1990: 175-6) has been ‘the perceived relationship between applied schooling and the needs of the economy’. This is reflected in many ways, including: the increased concern with school retention rates; the technical bias evident in the introduction of ‘new subjects’, the growing involvement of the Irish Business and Employers Confederation (IBEC) in education policy making, the name change from Department of Education to

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<sup>(25)</sup> Well exemplified in the treatment of education in the various partnership programmes for government.

Department of Education and Science (DES) in 1997 and the appointment at that time of a Minister of State with special responsibility for Science and Technology.

Habermas believes that knowledge results from human activity, motivated by natural needs and interests which he calls knowledge-constitutive interests. These may be technical, practical or emancipatory (critical) <sup>(26)</sup>. Within the technical paradigm abstract knowledge is packaged as subjects which contain unquestionable truths. The emphasis is on instrumental knowledge in the form of scientific explanations, presented in terms of outcomes or product and with little attention to process. This corresponds closely to the Irish post-primary curriculum as characterised by the OECD (1991). Within the paradigm of the practical interest, the emphasis is on meaning making and interpretation. The school based action research work based at the Marino Institute of Education offers a rare enough example of an Irish post-primary initiative based on the practical interest. Reading McNiff and Collins (1994), it would appear that teachers involved in this initiative chose the early years of post-primary schooling rather than Leaving Certificate teaching – where the academic stakes are higher – as their area of research. Within the emancipatory interest, the dominant concern is with the distribution of power and with the emancipation of the student through the process of learning. The Conference of Religious in Ireland (CORI) <sup>(27)</sup> are the main proponents of this paradigm in Ireland <sup>(28)</sup>.

Callan <sup>(29)</sup> (1995, 100ff) argues that the main concern of various political forces has been ‘with fitting people into a society that is allowed to remain unproblematic’. As a result, fundamental curriculum issues have been avoided ‘in the pursuit of piecemeal adjustments or alignments to a host of social and cultural issues ... leading to an enlargement of curriculum contents with resultant pressures on schools to respond.’ This echoes the conclusion reached by the OECD (1991, 76) that ‘the basic goals and values of the education system have tended to be tacit rather than explicit during a period when the major transformations in the society, economy and culture have been occurring; curriculum, assessment and examination changes have been continual but piecemeal’. It also echoes the widely accepted belief (e.g. McGlynn: 1995; Gleeson: 2000) that curriculum overload is one of the most widely recognised problems in Irish education.

Irish educational discourse contains many examples of the technical paradigm – ‘delivery’ mechanisms, used in relation to INSET and curriculum; frequent references to the ‘products of our system’; the use of ‘teacher training’ rather than teacher education; the concern with

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<sup>(26)</sup> Applied to curriculum by Carr and Kemmis (1986), Grundy (1987), Cornbleth (1990) and others.

<sup>(27)</sup> CORI, along with Combat Poverty, (e.g., O’Neill: 1992) are probably the best example of a counter-hegemonic trend in Ireland. McCormack explained the political role of CORI: ‘we fight our corner as one of many partners out there whereas the institutional church does it on the basis of their authority.. we have to bring the light of the gospel to bear on the system, whereas the Managers have a vested interest to maintain the system.’

<sup>(28)</sup> For example the CORI response to the Green Paper on Adult Education of 1999 is called ‘Education for Transformation.’

<sup>(29)</sup> See also O’Sullivan (1989, 243ff)

‘covering the course’; other common give-away phrases include reference to ‘targets’, ‘strategies’ and ‘overhaul’. Based on the preeminence of considerations of ‘human capital’, Lynch (1989), OECD (1991) and others have commented on the dominance of the technical emphasis in recent curriculum developments. Technical aspects of curriculum and assessment receive enormous attention at post-primary e.g. the introduction of additional levels<sup>(30)</sup> and of a wider range of grades<sup>(31)</sup>; the publication of Examiners’ reports; the inclusion in the Education Act (1998) of legislation to do with grade appeals; the inclusion of assessment objectives in syllabus documents, the establishment of the Points Commission to consider the influence of third level entry on the Leaving Certificate. The Irish system then displays all the characteristics of a system where technical interests as outlined by Grundy (1987) predominate:

- (a) the sub-culture of subjects is dominant;
- (b) the curriculum and the learning environments are strongly controlled from the centre;
- (c) insofar as teachers value ‘theory’ at all, they do so to the extent that they find it ‘practical’;
- (d) there is a strong emphasis on the external measurement of the product;
- (e) classroom management and discipline are major concerns;
- (f) teachers implement designs handed down from above;
- (g) Leaving Certificate grades have no meaning apart from the points which they gain for third level entry.

### **9.5.2. IVET at the post-compulsory stage – the case of the Leaving Certificate Applied**

Influenced by the desire to improve retention rates at the post-compulsory education stage, senior cycle curricula were diversified in the mid nineties. Students were offered the option of taking an initial Transition Year Programme, whose primary objective is to enrich the school experience, before proceeding to choose one of three Leaving Certificate programmes – the traditional Established Leaving Certificate, the Leaving certificate vocational programme (LCVP), a variation on the traditional Leaving Certificate and the significantly different Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA). Both the LCA and the LCVP owe their existence to European funding and the LCA is firmly based on curriculum development activities supported by the EU during the eighties.

Students taking the established Leaving Certificate select some seven subjects from a menu of more than thirty. The intention is to offer students a broad, balanced education while

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<sup>(30)</sup> The introduction of Junior Certificate in 1989 resulted in the replacement of Common Level Intermediate Certificate with two levels in subjects other than Irish, English and Mathematics which now have three levels. The author believes that this development constitutes an invitation for further differentiation.

<sup>(31)</sup> Introduced on grounds of administrative convenience in order to enable greater differentiation within the CAO points system. As a result we now have some fourteen possible grades at each level for each subject. The meaning of these grades are undefined, other than (in the case of Leaving Certificate subjects) in terms of CAO points.

incorporating the demands of career specialisation. Student performance in the Leaving Certificate examination is used for selection into further and higher education.

The LCVP is a vocational intervention in the Leaving Certificate (established) to prepare students for further education and for the world of work. Students are encouraged to take greater responsibility for their own learning, become innovative and enterprising, develop effective communication, work in teams and to access and use information and communications technology. While participants take the Leaving Certificate (established) in the usual way, participants they must choose two of their subjects from a vocational subject grouping (e.g. Engineering and Physics or Engineering and Accounting) and they must study a continental language and take three special modules in Enterprise Education, Preparation for Work and Work Experience. The LCVP was introduced in its present format in 1994. It was offered in approximately 480 of the 770 post-primary schools in 1999 when almost 30 000 students took the programme.

The LCA, introduced in 1995, is based on two of the products of EU funded IVET programmes, VPT and Senior Certificate programmes (developed by the Shannon Curriculum Centre's SPIRAL2 Project). It is a discrete, ring-fenced programme which provides young people with an alternative to the established Leaving Certificate. In the school year 1999-00, 209 post-primary schools (27 %) and other educational/training centres are participating in the programme with approximately 7 000 participants (approximately 6.5 % of the relevant cohort of upper secondary students).

Unusually in an Irish context, the programme has been designed on a modular basis, organised in half-year blocks or sessions, around a common curriculum framework. It is clearly pre-vocational in character and is aimed primarily at those students who do not wish to proceed directly to third level education and those whose aptitudes, needs and abilities are not adequately catered for by the established Leaving Certificate. The pre-vocational nature of the programme facilitates a focus on preparation for adult and working life and for continuing and further education and the student activities are practical and task-based in orientation. The courses and modules followed offer a broad, balanced curriculum leading to personal and social development and vocational orientation of participants. Perhaps the most distinguishing feature of the Leaving Certificate Applied is its emphasis on participants learning by doing, applying knowledge and skills to undertaking tasks and solving problems in an integrated way in the real world. In doing so, there are significant levels of interaction with the local community, particularly employers.

The LCA is structured around three elements – Vocational Preparation, Vocational Education and General Education. In an Irish context, this is an innovative programme in terms of teaching and learning methodologies and the ways in which student achievement is assessed. On completion of the programme, participants generally proceed to Post-Leaving Certificate VET courses or directly to the labour market.

The Programme Statement outlines the main features of the programme (DES/NCCA: 2000). Importance is attached to its status as a two-year 'Leaving Certificate' programme – those

who complete the programme receive a certificate which has the same name as that awarded those who follow the traditional and more ‘academic’ route. The Programme Statement espouses a number of underlying principles that serve to elucidate the programme’s key emphases and concerns (ibid, 8). These include the personal and social development of participants, the provision of integrated learning experiences incorporating active teaching and learning strategies, out of school learning sites, and encouraging students to evaluate and reflect on the experiences gained. When questioned about the aspects of the programme they have found most meaningful, participants invariably refer to student tasks and their assessment, experience of the world of work, and the more flexible learning environments involving ‘different’ relationships with teachers (Ó Donnabháin: 1999; Boldt: 1998).

Student achievement is rewarded on an incremental basis using three modes with credit being awarded for

- (a) module completion (31 % of credits) based on key assignments for which students claim credits themselves
- (b) student tasks (35 % of credits) where students have the opportunity to pursue particular learning interests through developing tasks
- (c) terminal examinations (34 % of credits)

The difference between this programme and the Established Leaving Certificate, as revealed in Figure 1, is revealing.

*Table 1: Curriculum Comparison*

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Established Leaving Certificate</b>	<b>Leaving Certificate Applied</b>
Breadth and balance	Participants take any seven subjects (31)	Common curriculum framework for all.
Curriculum integration	Discrete subjects	Student Task; Team Approach
Organisation	Subject courses of two years duration	Experiential learning
Pedagogy	Examination and text-book focus	Cumulative
Assessment	Summative	Group Award
Certification	Subject by subject	Short term goals
Participants’ motivation	Deferred gratification	Intrinsic motivation
Community involvement	Minimal	Significant
Work Experience	Only in LCVP	CORE
Curriculum focus	PRODUCT	PROCESS

### 9.5.3. The student task

This, the most innovative aspect of the LCA, deserves special attention. It involves participating students in practical activities through which learning is applied to the development of a product, the investigation of an issue or the provision of a service. The task acts as a vehicle for curriculum integration, encouraging participants to direct their learning across different parts of the programme, drawing from the various modules they have completed at the time and pursuing their own learning interests in a loosely structured way.

Tasks take students a minimum of ten hours (usually considerably more) to complete and may be undertaken on an individual or group basis. Completion of the task incorporates the stages of planning, gathering, processing, presenting a report, evaluating. Assessment of tasks is based on:

- (a) performance criteria: quality, evidence of enterprise and initiative, creativity, participation, practical application;
- (b) criteria for assessment of the report: clarity of statement of purpose, effectiveness of action plan and communication, extent of integration achieved, understanding of concepts, self evaluation.

35 % of programme credits are awarded for tasks. Assessment of tasks also incorporates an interview with the participant on the task. Over the course of the two-year programme, participants undertake seven tasks. These include:

- (a) one task in the area of general education;
- (b) one task in the area of vocational preparation;
- (c) two tasks in the area of vocational education;
- (d) a contemporary issues task;
- (e) a practical achievement task;
- (f) a personal reflection task.

Examples of Tasks completed to to date include career investigations, 'Effects of Part-time Work on Full-time Students', safety audits in the school, 'An Investigation of Joyriding', catering for events, the erection of a greenhouse, production of a variety of artefacts, operation of a range of mini companies, provision of leisure services, and provision of a hair care service.

The response of participants to tasks as a vehicle for learning and for personal development has been noteworthy (Ó Donnabháin, 1999). In particular, participants refer to their increased self-confidence and interest in learning as a result of being involved in directing their own learning. Equally, they highlight the relevance of the task to their own situations in life – to the experiences of young adulthood, to the challenges of family life, to the challenge of choosing an appropriate path of further education and employment. When discussing the operation of tasks, participants are clearly conscious of how the nature of the learning

experience and their relationship with the teacher has altered. Indeed, some express impatience with teachers who inhibit the freedom of participants to pursue learning interests. The value participants derive from undertaking is summarised by the following typical comments: *'It's the way this course is done.. you get to meet people.. you have to go out and make yourself do things.. it's not teachers jumping on your back to get your homework done.. you actually get a chance to investigate what you like.'* *'Everything we have done is very interesting dealing with life.'*

#### **9.5.4. Education for the world of work**

Preparation for work, including work experience, is included in Vocational Preparation and Guidance which is allocated some 240 hours over two years – up to half this time may be spent on work experience. The format and nature of this experience varies from school to school and includes work placement, work simulations and career investigations operated on the basis of block release or release for one day per week. Many participants undertake Student Tasks which are based on their work experience.

From the perspective of the participants work experience has proved an essential aspect of the programme. Ó Donnabháin's interview data (1999) suggests that students testify to their enjoyment of the experience, resultant growth in self-esteem and self-confidence, increased awareness of different aspects of working life and of future job opportunities, the development of new skills and the enhancement of existing skills and to the development of student motivation and maturity. The performance of teachers and schools in the provision of this aspect of the programme varies dramatically in quality.

The LCA experience suggests that teachers involved in this and other aspects of the programme experience difficulty in engaging to maximum effect with learning out-of-school learning experiences which do not conform to the well-trodden paths of classroom-based subject disciplines. Nonetheless, participants are very positive about the work experience dimension of the programme. For example: *'What I have learned.. changes in work life.. how to deal with work life.. everything to do with when you are finished school and you are working and even if you are unemployed.. how to deal with life after school.. the most important thing for you in life after school is to get a job and make a go of yourself... stick with something you want to do.'*

#### **9.5.5. Destinations of LCA students**

The results of the 1999 destination survey confirm that 88 % of Leaving Certificate Applied graduates proceeded to work or further education on completion of the programme. This continues the high levels of placement in 1997 and 1998. Approximately the same percentage of graduates entered employment in each year. The number of graduates still seeking work has risen slightly.

Table 2: Destinations of students completing the LCA

<b>Destination</b>	<b>1999 Graduates</b>	<b>1998 Graduates</b>	<b>1997 Graduates</b>
Employment	38 %	38 %	39 %
Post Leaving Certificate Courses (PLC)	22 %	22 %	32 %
Apprenticeships	17 %	19 %	11 %
CERT Courses (Catering)	4.5 %	5 %	1 %
Teagasc Courses (Agriculture)	2 %	3 %	3 %
FAS Courses (Training)	3.5 %	2 %	1 %
Other non-PLC courses	2 %	2 %	1 %
Seeking Employment	4 %	4 %	6 %
No further information/ Unavailable for work	7 %	5 %	6 %

The table below outlines the top 10 destinations of graduates in 1999 and provides an insight into the areas of employment and further education and training into which the majority of participants proceed. The 1999 survey also provides information on destinations of graduates based on their level of achievement on the programme. Of those who achieved a distinction (the highest award), 25 % proceeded to employment while 68 % advanced to further education and training. Of those who did not achieve a full award a higher percentage, 54 % have proceeded into employment with 24 % pursuing further education and training.

Table 3: Top ten destinations of LCA graduates

<b>NO.</b>	<b>Destination</b>	<b>%</b>
1	Employment in services and sales	11.85 %
2	Apprenticeship in construction industry	9.38 %
3	Employment in manufacturing	8.04 %
4	Business and secretarial PLC	7.73 %
5	Employment in catering	4.12 %
6	PLC course in Information Technology	3.91 %
7	PLC course in Childcare	3.91 %
8	Employment in building and construction	3.70 %
9	Teagasc – apprenticeship in Agriculture	2.26 %
10	Employment in agriculture/horticulture	1.75 %

Overall, the results of the destination surveys would seem to indicate that the programme has proved successful in terms of its brief as an IVET programme. Participants, some of whom would in the past have left school early without qualifications are now gaining a qualification and making vocational choices regarding employment and the pursuit of further education and training successfully. However, the basic data presented here conceals findings regarding the rising number of participants who do not complete the programme which give rise to some concerns and issues which we will return to later.

## **9.6. Issues arising**

The case of the LCA highlights many key issues in Irish education policy and practice. Five such issues; partnership, fragmentation, inflexibility, parity of esteem and the use of 'third place' situations for teaching and learning will be considered in this section.

### **9.6.1. Partnership**

The education sector has been to the forefront in the development of the social partnership model of consensus seeking which is one of the most significant aspects of Irish policy making in general. But the rhetoric of partnership doesn't always transfer into the reality of implementation and the LCA raises some interesting questions about partnership in practice. While the 'ring fenced' nature of the programme allows considerable freedom for innovation on the one hand (Gleeson and Granville, 1996), it increases the fear of stigmatisation on the other hand. Fears that the participants in alternative, less academic school programmes are in danger of being 'ghettoised', have been voiced, for example, at the National Education Convention – 'since the course will not lead to formal vocational qualifications and the course's certificands may only progress to limited courses of post-secondary education, there is a distinct danger that it will be seen as a 'soft-option' track and of limited value by students' <sup>(32)</sup> (Coolahan ed: 1994, 76).

Recognition of the new award by employers and Further Education agencies (Gleeson and Granville: 1996) puts the implementation of the partnership model to the test. While LCA students wishing to progress to further education and training may do so via a Post-Leaving Certificate course (NCVA Level 2) which opens up certain possibilities in the non-university third level sector, the primary concern of the typical LCA participant is with the acceptability of her/his qualification to employers, including the State itself. NESC (1993, 211ff) suggested that 'the prospects for success of alternatives to the present general Leaving Certificate would be enhanced by linking such programmes, through structured and possibly exclusive routes, to further training and into the labour force'. This proposal for preferential treatment asks a real

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<sup>(32)</sup> Similar sentiments are expressed in the White Paper on Human Resource Development (Ireland: 1997, 48): 'A critical test of relevance for these new vocationally oriented programmes...is that they achieve the same acceptance and status as the more traditional and conventional programmes'.

question of the partnership approach as applied to VET. Notwithstanding the rhetoric of the Partnership agreements in relation to the ending of social exclusion, the partners have not shown any inclination to implement the NESC suggestion to date.

The LCA throws up a second critical issue in relation to the partnership approach to national policy making. The largest Teacher Union at post-primary level has refused to implement the school-based assessment proposals which were an integral part of the programme as designed. This refusal is seriously curtailing the effectiveness of the programme. While the Irish Congress of Trade Unions has played a most responsible and strategically important role in the achievement of a partnership approach to government at the macro level, here we find one of its strongest constituent Unions refusing to cooperate with a vital aspect of an initiative developed to address the needs of those most likely to experience the worst effects of inequality.

### **9.6.2. Fragmentation**

Irish education is characterised by fragmentation at a variety of levels while relations between the separate Departments responsible for Education and Training have always been problematic (Gleeson, 2000). The LCA offers an interesting example of this fragmentation. It was developed by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment and the Department of Education and Science then assumed responsibility for its implementation and assessment. In this context it is very difficult to ensure that the underlying principles of the programme are consistently implemented and that due credit is given them at the assessment stage.

The LCA offers an excellent example of the piecemeal nature of Irish curriculum reform in that it has been added on to the existing Leaving Certificate programme. Ironically, the best things, as ever with Irish education, are happening at the margins in that the LCA exemplifies significant developments such as a task oriented approach, reflection, active learning and students engagement in research.

### **9.6.3. Inflexibility**

Hannan et al (1998, 127), in their analysis of what they refer to as the ‘overeducation’ of the Irish youth market, concluded that ‘one of the most pronounced characteristics of the Irish educational system, despite its obvious successes, is its inflexibility... Most of the limited flexibility present is in curricular/certification areas, rather than in instructional/course pacing, in part-time provision or in mixed education/training cumulative credit arrangements. Rigidities also in progression/access rules to further education limit access mainly to those who successfully complete the full-time system in general education, with few rewards for vocational/technical specialisation’.

#### **9.6.4. Parity of esteem**

The 'ring-fenced' nature of the LCA provides a further example of inflexibility. While there are many advantages to this approach, as argued by Gleeson and Granville (1996), the resulting isolation has implications for the parity of esteem of the programme and delays progression to third-level education. This is particularly unfortunate at a time when there is considerable national disquiet about the proportion of third level entrants from working class backgrounds and when entry to Certificate and Diploma programmes is possible for those achieving five passing grades in the Established Leaving Certificate.

Ring-fencing must be seen in the historical context of Irish post-primary education. There is every likelihood that, as the declining birth-rate impacts on senior cycle numbers and third level places become more available, the LCA will not remain ring-fenced indefinitely. A further and related problem is now manifesting itself – the high dropout and failure rates in third level courses entered by academically weaker students. This inflexibility is also reflected in the reluctance of the Department of Education and Science to allow LCA students to accumulate credit over a period of more than two years and to allow providing institutions to offer modules designed at school level.

#### **9.6.5. Education in a 'third place'**

One of the most interesting aspects of the LCA is that a programme which is part of the Leaving Certificate family and is the responsibility of the Department of Education and Science is being implemented in a range of out-of-school settings such as Youthreach. McNamara (2000), who was ideally placed to compare and contrast the school and out-of-school settings, concluded that 'there is no reason why the Leaving Certificate Applied may not be implemented in an out of school setting. The argument that you must have qualified teachers to successfully apply this programme does not hold up to scrutiny... The mainstream school was ahead of Youthreach [the out of school setting] as regards the organisation of the Leaving Certificate Applied.. but the management of the Youthreach programme was more flexible. The teachers were more at the level of the students than in the mainstream. So which system worked better? For overall management of the programme, and for administrative reasons, the mainstream approach was better. However, as the aim of the Leaving Certificate Applied is to prepare young people for transition to adult and working life, I found the Youthreach approach better suited to the needs of the young people'.

### **9.7. Conclusion**

Hord (1995) has identified four stages of curriculum reform:

- (a) Fix the parts
- (b) Fix the people

- (c) Fix the schools
- (d) Fix the system

In the light of the piecemeal nature of Irish curriculum reform, it is hardly surprising that the concentration has been on ‘fixing the parts’ – and more recently, on fixing the system through the introduction of unprecedented levels of legislation. The input into teacher development has been low, though the resource provision for the in-career development of LCA providers has been good. Until very recently, the role of the school factor in successful reform has been totally ignored (cf. OECD, 1991; Callan, 1998) and its treatment in the implementation of the LCA leaves a great deal to be desired.

The LCA represents a further example of ‘fixing the parts’ by tinkering around at the margins by developing an excellent pre-vocational training programme which is ‘ring-fenced’ so as to avoid contamination of the sacrosanct established Leaving Certificate. This approach is entirely consistent with the Irish emphasis on technical and legal approaches to change, to the neglect of cultural and pedagogical issues. Seen from this perspective, the LCA reform is about the achievement of ‘contrived equilibrium’ in response to the demands of the economy for increased retention rates, rather than a critical appraisal of our established education system. On the other hand, many regard the LCA as a valuable development whose membership of the extended Leaving Certificate family makes it hugely significant. It is because of this official recognition that it was chosen for presentation at this Agora ahead of some of the more radical alternatives which exist in Ireland. Now that the programme has achieved recognition, it has the potential, Trojan horse style, to revolutionise Irish post-primary curriculum policy and practice from the inside. But this observer is not holding his breath!

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## **10. Contribution of Mr Manfred Schneider from the BBJ-Unternehmensgruppe**

### *Manfred Schneider*

Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for allowing me to present our programme at this Agora. Before I do so, I should like to make a few preliminary remarks. Our theme is how to give young people, who for whatever reason have not gained access to the regular education system or have dropped out of it, a second chance of gaining a vocational qualification. This second chance, which may in fact be a third or fourth chance, finds expression in Europe in a variety of programmes, projects and schemes. I shall describe one of these. We also help coordinate a Europe-wide programme, the Commission Second Chance Programme, which Mr Tersmette will presumably report on. This wide variety of programmes does of course give the young people concerned a chance, but its existence is also a scandal: the need of such a comprehensive overhaul of the regular training system must raise doubts as to how well it operates. In Germany, the regular vocational training system and other areas of education are under considerable pressure to reform and to respond to new economic and social challenges. The key words are modularisation and lifelong learning. The sudden rush to equip schools with the Internet is one sign of an as yet ineffectual desire for action. It is not just that the education system itself is finding it so difficult to reform; the sectors allied with education and training are actually putting up the greatest resistance, such as the interests of teachers as a class, and the wage and salary scales in the economy that closely reflect educational qualifications, to name but a few. This situation co-exists with the rapid Europeanisation of the economy, and the declaration by the European Commission and Council that achieving the Single Market is its highest policy goal, and that the knowledge society will be the future basis for Europe in the global market. The schemes described here cannot of course remedy these shortcomings, and indeed they help in their way to perpetuate them. This should be borne in mind, as these so-called alternatives become part of the regular system. But they do of course provide opportunities for experimentation with new methods and approaches, which will be of far greater benefit if they can be transferred from specific projects to dealing with the system as a whole.

In our programme, which I shall now describe, we have attempted to start with young people's economic situation. This programme is over 10 years old and needs to be revised in line with what I have said above. We are thinking of further expanding the use of modules and are considering turning wage supplements into a loan system, perhaps of funding the whole scheme out of an overall ESF grant. We are aware that this restructuring will be appreciably easier than the more far-ranging reform I refer to above.

## **10.1. The BBJ Programme 501/301**

Jobs in small and medium-sized enterprises for long-term unemployed young people, accompanied by modular training packages

Programme 501/301 is addressed to the long-term unemployed aged between 18 and 27 years, who generally have no formal training qualifications and little chance of finding a conventional job, given their life histories and low levels of skills. The proportion of young people from foreign backgrounds has been constantly rising since the early 1990s and is now over 50 %.

The young unemployed are given the opportunity to look for a job of their choice in small and medium-sized Berlin enterprises in all fields. For each new job created, enterprises receive a proportion of wage and ancillary costs out of public funds. This subsidy may be given for up to three years and diminishes over time.

In this way, the youth service is tied in with labour market policy and the promotion of the economy. Programme 501/301 is not in competition with initial training, since the vast majority of those taking part in the programme would, when they enter the programme, stand no chance of obtaining a training place, given their low skills, earlier drop-out from education, and/or age (over 18 years).

The aim is to enable these young people to gain a foothold in the labour market, and to give them stability and skills, until their level of productivity is sufficient to keep a job in the longer term without public subsidy.

501/301 has been planned and run by BBJ since 1988 on behalf of the youth service. The programme is funded by the Senate Department for Labour, Social Affairs and Women, of the Land of Berlin, and by the European Social Fund. Until 1997, the programme also received financial support from the Federal Ministry for the Family, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth as a model project. Since 1995, the Federal Ministry of Education and Research has funded 75 % of the excess cost of running the programme as a model project model in collaboration with the Federal Institute of Vocational Training (BIBB).

## **10.2. The principles of ‘Programme 501/301’**

BBJ, which manages Programme 501/301, provides monitoring and support for both programme participants and enterprises. As part of the participants’ individual training and career plans, enterprises offer in-house training, and additional external training is also provided.

The basic principle underlying the programme is to stress mobilising long-term unemployed young people’s own initiative. The orientation stage focuses on participants developing their own career wishes and identifying their own skills. The unemployed young people may

choose for themselves the field in which they wish to work in future. This greatly increases motivation.

The concept of linking training with employment is an important element of Programme 501/301 since it is intended considerably to enhance the chances of being taken on and the general usefulness of the skills acquired in the labour market. Employers undertake to release programme participants for up to 20 % of working hours to take part in outside courses.

Training provision, which has been developed systematically:

- (a) is guided by the interests of programme participants;
- (b) is specific to the job and the needs of the employer;
- (c) teaches broader vocational skills, corresponding to real workplace requirements;
- (d) teaches key skills;
- (e) is arranged as far as possible in modules;
- (f) leads wherever possible to recognised qualifications and certification;
- (g) and is recorded in a skills record.

#### *The model project for second chance vocational qualifications*

The model project which forms part of Programme 501/301, conducted since 1995 in collaboration with BIBB under the title *Second chance opportunities for vocational qualifications*, is a carefully planned further development of the approach to training adopted in Programme 501/301. Programme participants are prepared for the external examinations of the Chamber of Trade and Industry under §40.2 of the Vocational Training Act (BBiG), qualifying them as office clerical assistants (*Bürokauffrau/kaufmann*). Great attention is given in the model project to the close link between theory and practice; in other words, the training is guided both by the office skills outline curriculum and by the training process within the 'learning enterprise'. The training is divided into modules, which are structured in accordance with specific induction and examination needs, and with actual departmental working needs at the place of employment.

In order to document and eventually to certificate the knowledge acquired by individual participants, a skills record has been developed, based on the idea of the training record and designed for those intending to acquire a vocational qualification by means of an occupational profile. The skills record, which accompanies the entire training process, contains the certificates for the individual modules, the employer's testimonials and further information and documentation about the participant's employment experience and knowledge. The skills record can also be presented to the Chambers of Trade and Industry for admission to external examinations.

### 10.3. Outcomes

- (a) The conception of Programme 501/301 has proved successful: each year, 60 to 70 % of participants are kept on by their employers or find another job, about 5 % become self-employed or work freelance, and about 5 % go on to a vocational retraining scheme.
- (b) The prospect of being kept on by their employer if they work well strengthens the willingness to work. For many, Programme 501/301 is the last chance to enter the labour market. It is often participants' first experience of continuous work and of discovering their own occupational and personal skills, and this gives them considerable self-confidence. The skills acquired open up prospects of employment which had previously been quite unattainable. Direct employment in an enterprise greatly increases motivation.
- (c) Several groups of participants in the model project have by now had three years of this 'second chance route to vocational qualifications', and have successfully passed the external examinations of the Chambers of Trade and Industry. This form of training has hence become a permanent part of training provision.

The decision to try belatedly for a vocational qualification is largely driven by the desire 'to get a qualification of some sort after all'. But this personal admission needs the constant positive support provided through the special arrangements offered by Programme 501/301, such as the opportunity to take part in normal training while earning a wage from a job that provides entitlement to social security benefits. This is a crucial consideration for those who need a regular income because of their personal circumstances (e.g. as single parents) and/or are sceptical or 'nervous' about more 'academic' schemes.

It can be said in summary that Programme 501/301 is a particularly good way of helping long-term unemployed young adults to enter the labour market, and that the modular second-chance training developed and tested in the programme is an outstanding way of training those with few or no previous skills, who are its target group.

## **11. Strategies to combat failure at school: a comparison of Italian and European experiences**

*Claudia Montedoro*

There is little awareness in Italian society of the issues surrounding education. In a 1996 Censis survey of Italians' values and aspirations, culture was felt to be an indispensable asset by 5.7 % of interviewees while education, considered essential by only 6.8 % of the population, received much the same treatment. There is obviously not enough weight of public opinion in general to bring about an overhaul of our education system, even though this is needed. There has been rapid growth in Italy but the emphasis has been more on quantity than quality: although the value of human capital has now increased considerably, the speed of events has meant that awareness of change has not spread as rapidly. All this is having an impact on the education system and the problem of school drop-out, which is reaching disturbing levels in many areas of Italy. Data from Istat and the provincial units monitoring school enrolment reveal a worrying picture of this problem, which includes falling behind, failure, withdrawal, transfer and drop-out. The numbers dropping out of school, i.e. leaving school without completing the course they have started, are particularly high in the first two years of upper secondary education.

An analysis of the situation of young people with problems provides data which are just as disturbing: in the European Union, 15 % of young people aged between 15 and 24 are not in employment or attending education; even under optimum conditions, 45 % of this age group leave the education system immediately after completing lower secondary education.

As regards employment, only 56 % of those dropping out from school with low-level qualifications manage to find a job, while the percentage of young people with suitable qualifications who find employment is higher (74 %). In this age group, it is estimated that 39 % of young people who have low-level qualifications, i.e. some 3.3 million, are at risk of labour market marginalisation according to Eurostat criteria. This leads to precarious employment, forced part-time working and unemployment. This percentage, already fairly high, does not include all those young people who, although employed, are also at risk chiefly because of their lack of qualifications.

It is important to bear in mind that there is often a strong feeling of exclusion: 3 million young people feel completely excluded, while 41 million feel excluded to some extent. Surveys conducted among young people themselves show that they tend to see the poverty of their families of origin as the primary cause of this social exclusion, and consider education to be the best way of combating the hardships that they are experiencing.

While the quantitative data may be eloquent, they are not enough on their own to provide a complete picture of the situation: the statistics need to be read in conjunction with what young

people actually say about their hopes and disappointments, about a society which seems unwilling to give them a place and the resulting problems that they have in planning for the future.

In other words what is lacking is meta-education, i.e. learning about the true market value attached to the training of human capital. This observation becomes even more evident if we look at educational and social policies for disadvantaged people. Thus, young people experiencing problems at school are frequently at risk of social exclusion, especially as the economic situation is characterised by the long-term contraction of the demand for labour and an increase in the time taken to find a job. Another result of this predicament is a lack of independence and of a life plan. The disadvantaged situation which such young people are likely to face for long periods is thus marked by growing difficulty in gaining or regaining a foothold in the labour market, and hence by a substantial growth in work that is hidden or irregular in some way.

In the cultural and political debate, growing importance is therefore attached to the fight against social exclusion and the reform of education systems. It is particularly necessary to focus on models of labour market integration that are realistic because they take young people's resources and aspirations as their starting point. The experiences discussed at Agora IX, organised by Cedefop last 26 and 27 June, show that the debate on this issue is proceeding apace throughout Europe and that new social policies, by taking a shared and proactive approach to the problems of education and social exclusion, are now directly involving a whole range of stakeholders and actors.

At the conference, the discussion by delegates of the issues of 'alternative schools' or 'alternatives to school' was of particular interest. It became evident during the day that was devoted to finding alternative and efficient ways of combating failure at school that there were interesting points of contact between various experiments conducted in different EU Member States. The feeling was that ongoing international comparison could help to improve respective national systems, particularly through the creation of new synergies and the mutual adoption of resources and strategies already tried and tested in specific contexts but transferable to others.

In other words, discussion of the issue of school drop-out and the possible ways in which it can be combated is more productive if those concerned look at and apply best practice. 'Best practice is an empirical distillation of developments and experiences which produce effective results, are intrinsically of high quality and help to resolve particular problems, thereby fulfilling the overall expectations of vocational training' and of education and training at school.

Best practice reflects the idea that the potential exists to improve training quality and to make changes, and that these goals can be achieved, implemented and therefore shared. No experience or model may, however, be regarded as providing a complete answer to the complex range of different needs, aspirations and requirements, which are shaped by the quality of organisation and teaching, among other factors. However, positive aspects, on which there is a large degree of consensus, can be pinpointed in any experiment, and there can therefore be general agreement on projects and initiatives likely to lead to best practice.

The experiences discussed at Agora IX make an interesting contribution to a new approach to the problem and move in the above-mentioned direction. Vocational education and training systems are increasingly having to supply not just education and training but also guidance services and employment support, in places where occupational integration is, especially in cases of school failure, a valid alternative to traditional types of education. This prospect not only means a broadening of services and outlooks, but also changes the reference framework on which the system is built. It is no longer the classroom lesson or the training course that takes centre stage, but the user who, especially in cases of disadvantage or marginalisation, needs to enter working life and may therefore also need targeted training (in a variety of forms: classroom teaching, distance learning, work experience, tutoring), work guidance (in the twofold sense of remotivation and awareness of opportunities), guidance/mentoring for integration into work, financial assistance (for employers) to offset the lack of productivity during initial employment and, lastly, financial assistance for enterprise and job creation. Pathways are being tried out using instruments such as training, work experience and mentoring that may help to tackle the highly disadvantaged educational, and hence occupational, situations experienced by many European citizens. Introduction of these various measures (guidance, training and mentoring measures) makes it necessary in practice to integrate educational, social, training and occupational policies. The fact that the individual takes centre stage rather than the institution helps to promote an integrated and coherent vision of:

- (a) social policies (concerning recovery and rehabilitation, resocialisation and remotivation; these include, for instance, the programmes being tried out in this context by the host communities);
- (b) training policies (aiming at the acquisition of occupational skills that can be put to use in the labour market);
- (c) occupational policies (aiming at socio-economic integration);
- (d) implementation and recasting of the legislative support framework.

The European Commission's White Paper *Teaching and learning. Towards the learning society*, adopted in November 1995, is also a step in this direction since it suggests five Europe-wide macro-objectives for action to combat failure at school and therefore the resulting risks of social exclusion. Firstly, people need to be encouraged to acquire new skills, secondly, closer links need to be forged between the world of school and the world of employment and, thirdly, mastery of at least three Community languages is essential. A fourth suggestion is to give equal weight to investment in tangible resources and in training. The last objective, no less important for that, is to combat exclusion.

What solutions can be found and what resources are needed effectively to achieve these five macro-objectives? Teachers, operators and others concerned with employment obviously need to pay greater attention to young pupils, even while they are still in compulsory education.

It is this period of education and training that is the first important step in forming young people's personalities. In some areas such as the suburbs of major cities or other marginalised areas of southern Italy, compulsory education is a crucial and often critical time in the

socialisation of young people, who otherwise risk being attracted into other areas, including the extremely dangerous area of organised crime. Many decades of traditional teaching have to some extent inhibited the capacity and potential of schools, which have very often been limited to the promulgation of teaching units that have little to do with the surrounding reality and in any case make use of instruments that are not ideal, from either the professional or the cultural point of view.

Those head teachers who are nowadays, with the reform of school autonomy, required to take on a new role as managers able to steer schools from a public to a private approach, are faced with the need to rethink the role and identity of their school as well as its dynamics in the local context in which it operates, and its capacity to network with other local actors. A new identity, and new organisational solutions and objectives, therefore need to be thought out and placed on a practical footing. New potential also needs to be developed in a concrete way by mutual agreement and networking with the different kinds of players with differing functions working in the same area.

As regards the first aspect, giving schools a new identity means introducing new organisational solutions, which should include the second chance schools presented at Agora IX for young people with no qualifications who are no longer required to attend compulsory education and are in search of jobs and social integration. The main purpose of these second chance schools, now operating in various European countries and often working together to achieve common objectives and goals, is to integrate young people into social and working life by offering a wide range of training opportunities geared to people's individual needs.

Projects are taking place chiefly in those areas and districts of major cities suffering from serious social and economic problems, where many young people are experiencing marginalisation and hardship and where there are strong feelings of pessimism and indifference towards institutions which are felt to be too remote from their actual situations.

Second chance schools are based on a number of fundamental principles such as flexibility, an integrated approach and technological innovation.

These schools should help every young person to build his or her own learning pathway with the help of a tutor and in conjunction with local employers. These pathways should be based on young people's needs, aspirations and competences, with a view to making the most of the competences that they already possess and helping them to rebuild a positive image of themselves.

One of the particular features of second chance schools is that they tackle these situations of disadvantage by taking an integrated approach: these schools should not in practice be merely one more organisation providing qualifications for those needing them, but should also provide for young people's whole range of needs: education, training, health, accommodation, administrative situation, etc.

It is therefore necessary to set up a multidisciplinary team bringing together qualified and motivated people, as well as a firm partnership between the various local stakeholders (social services, voluntary associations, etc.). From this point of view, employers have a key role to play: they can make available tutors and training posts within their own organisations so that, when they finish training, the young people can be permanently employed in their enterprises.

The new technologies are the final aspect: second chance schools are able to mobilise high-quality educational resources, provide innovation and employ experienced teachers, educators and tutors. We should not, however, forget other important aspects such as, primarily, the ongoing attention that these schools need to pay to the local context. Any project in practice adopts the profile that is best geared to its surrounding political, social, economic and cultural context: the institutional nature of the school, its size, the methods by which it recruits young people and teachers, and the strategies adopted by employers, certainly differ from one place to another. Another aspect that needs to be borne in mind is the propensity to stimulate quality and to be open to innovation: the diversity of European education systems and of the experiments promoted and conducted is an asset that needs to be built on to improve the quality of education and training, and of existing projects.

Evaluation of the projects conducted by second chance schools shows that they are able to offer a practical and effective answer to the problem of young people dropping out of school by offering them the chance to work and be trained at one and the same time. It is important for there to be a direct link between teaching and the labour market. To achieve this objective, the work of second chance schools is structured around a number of guidelines: firstly, participants should be selected by employment offices; it is then necessary to design training that is closely linked to the local economy, to run training schemes in institutions close to the world of employment, and lastly to monitor the quality of training in enterprises, bearing in mind that young people should not be asked to perform general work that has no links with their training.

The opportunities offered by the 'third' sector should not be neglected, since this sector includes a whole range of contexts (voluntary associations, social cooperatives, NGOs, foundations) in which a social economy can be generated by combining a social and an economic approach.

The goal of increasing young people's integration, providing the work that they perform with a social value, and improving the national heritage, may be pursued and achieved through schemes and opportunities for work geared to local development and therefore focusing on the historic heritage, the environment and the craft sector.

The opportunities provided by 'second chance' schools should not be seen as 'last chances'. It is essential to step up publicity campaigns to foster better perceptions of these schools.

It is particularly important for young unemployed people to be able to attend courses free of charge. Finland is a good example here: in order to encourage young people to enter training, those who fail to attend training schemes may have their unemployment benefit discontinued.

Offering financial incentives to employers may be another way of promoting the success of projects, although we need to ask in this case who is likely to benefit most.

From the point of view of consistent strategies and resources, i.e. the best means of achieving the project goals, we need at this point to separate strategy analysis from resource analysis.

In the case of strategies it is important for young people to be treated on a par with their trainers. Failure is inevitable if trainers take a 'them-and-us' attitude. A holistic, continuous and non-traditional approach needs to be adopted in dealing with the young people, focusing solely on occupational values and the relationship between the individual and the job.

It is also important to strengthen young people's belief in themselves, their ability to manage personal and occupational conflicts and to extend their network of friends, and to make it easier for them to achieve their personal goals.

For this reason it is also necessary to help young people to draw up personal plans in order to decide on their careers and to allow them to make their own choices and control their own training.

Priority may also be given to assisted self-learning in order to facilitate a learning process that respects trainees' own pace and enthusiasm.

The overall line that has to be taken is one in which the dynamics of work and interpersonal relations are among the factors that help with rehabilitation and social integration. For the same reason, it is particularly important to take away the drama of dropping out and returning to a course that has already been completed without success.

As regards actual organisation, it may be useful to conduct initial individual interviews with young people so that they can discuss their problems, and then to work out an adequate support plan. Numbers are also important: groups should not be too large, at most fifteen to sixteen people. The time factor is equally important: schemes should be long enough for goals actually to be achievable. There are no universal criteria, but one year seems to be an ideal length.

It is also important to build a high degree of flexibility into schemes in order to avoid the problems of conventional schooling: programmes need therefore to be tailored to the personal needs of the young people themselves as well as of their families. From the point of view of teaching methods, priority should be given to work in small groups, with individual work on particular problems and the organisation of such seminars as may be necessary.

The success of a project involves a whole range of resources: in the first place, entry conditions need to be studied in detail so as not to exclude certain groups of young people. Effective cooperation between trainers is also a must to ensure consistent teaching strategies and therefore to make the most of trainees' personalities. Again as regards trainers, it is essential for teachers to possess the necessary socio-educational skills such as adaptability, group dynamics and programme management.

A final, but no less important, resource that is felt to be essential is the place in which training is given: premises have to be as pleasant as possible, in order to make the young people feel at home, while preventing intentional damage. School premises should be avoided where possible in order to back up young people's feeling of breaking away from school.

As regards the possibility of developing new potential, as stressed on many occasions at Agora IX and elsewhere, people's level of socialisation can also be developed and improved by cooperation between schools and employers in the area. Employers in particular, as already seen in the context of the actions planned by the regional networks set up by second chance schools, have a key role to play in the socialisation of each individual trainee.

The experiments being run in Italy (in the Apulia region) by the Dioguardi group and in Germany by BBJ are moving in precisely this direction.

In the first case, for instance, as described in detail in the report presented at Agora IX, the adoption of the Lombardi lower secondary school by a construction company has produced significant results in two years: truancy levels have fallen from 30 % to 3 % and enrolment has increased. The Dioguardi group initiative has in particular involved computer literacy and multimedia schemes.

As mentioned above, the Dioguardi group project is an interesting example of cooperation between employers and schools, and could also be transferred as a best practice to other decaying urban areas in order to set up an interconnected network of employers and schools working together to foster a new interest in school among young people.

In the second case, the 501/301 programme (so called as a result of the number of subsidised jobs planned at the time) set up by BBJ Consult in conjunction with the Department of Social Affairs of the Berlin Senate in 1988, achieved the significant result of getting many disadvantaged young people into work by helping the unemployed to take an active approach to looking for a job. The initiative had two strands: young people were initially offered a job, generally lasting three years, in keeping with their employment aspirations, and vocational training focusing on specific targets was then offered to increase the likelihood of their finding permanent work. From the vocational training point of view, the 501/301 programme took two routes: allowing the young people themselves to choose the work that they felt was most in keeping with their aspirations and attitudes, thus making the most of their motivation and personal initiative, and at the same time protecting employers from the potential problem of the financial burden of taking on young people in their enterprises (most wage costs were paid by the institutions in this case).

The 501/301 programme made it possible to build up 'entrepreneurial niches' in highly innovative activities. In the third sector in particular, new enterprise strategies were linked to specific social obligations such as the recruitment of young people who had spent three years working under the programme.



## 12. Nightriders – tailoring training to young people's lifestyles <sup>(33)</sup>

*Jane Lavelle* <sup>(34)</sup>

To introduce myself briefly, I started teaching in 1975, moving to community education in 1983 managing adult education, youth work and recreation. In 1998, I became the youth and community officer in Newport managing a developing youth service which was quiet unusual because many UK authorities were cutting back their youth work at the time. We have grown so much that we now have 80 part-time youth workers who work from 4 to 30 hours per week. And we are about to appoint some new staff, so we will be 10 full-time staff as well.

The youth service works with young people aged 11 to 24 in Newport, in various projects. Much of our work is with young people not attending school, either in tuition or having been excluded. We work in partnership with schools to support these young people. Some schools now employ youth workers to support their-post school work.

Programmes are designed for these young people, with particular emphasis on personal development and support. Curricula are often redesigned to meet the needs of individuals.

The emphasis is on adapting the system for reintegration and inclusion. Again, identifying personal mentors to support young people on their way back into education is key to the success of projects.

An extension to the school-based project we have been working on is the 'nightriders' or 'youth growth' project which has European funding at the moment. We work with young people of 16 to 24 years old who have finished school without any formal qualification. This year we have worked with about 400, 75 % of whom have returned to education, training or employment.

The County Borough Council received European funding four years ago, in 1997, through the tertiary college, as it was then in the area. We now have funding from the local Borough Council, obviously much of the funding comes from the Council. We are part of and based at the education department, alongside schools. We have partnerships with many agencies in Newport, as schools are one of them.

Who do we work for? Young people, 16 to 24 years old, as we have said earlier, with low education attainment, unemployed, low personal self-esteem, and perceived as environmentally, socially and culturally disadvantaged.

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<sup>(33)</sup> This text is a transcription of a recording of Jane Lavelle, 26 June 2002.

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How does the project work? It works when and where there are young people. Youth workers work on the streets, meeting young people where they hang out. They encourage these young people back into education. Many 16 year-olds we are working with have not attended school for two, three and even four years, so they have missed all the opportunities along the way. They even manage at times to miss the government's new deal, by avoiding the various gaps. They often disappear. So, we go out to meet them where they are and give them support to decide about their lives.

The project aims to build trust by providing someone who will listen to them and not let them down, because many of them, as you are well aware, have had bad experience at school, have poor home backgrounds and have no role models. The youth workers are often the only positive relationship they have been able to form.

The project provides young people with encouragement and support. How can they move forward, unless we address where they are in their lives and the problems they face. If they cannot get back into education, they cannot fit in.

How does this work? We meet young people, on a one-to-one basis, so a youth worker forms a relationship with a young person. The youth worker hopes to encourage the young person, when they get to know them on the streets, to get back into education, and to start talking about an individual learning plan and agenda. We also get referrals from other agencies, so it's not only street work. We work with them to identify their needs, and what they are doing with their lives now. So, we start at the beginning. What are they doing? What do they want to do? To establish a personal agenda, we look at training, we look at work with other agencies and continuing support. We work with the health authority, we work with the drugs unit, so we can provide support in whatever area they need before we look at the educational agenda.

With training: when we started this project, we looked at it as a vehicle. We would meet young people on the streets, bring them in and pass them on to other agencies. But in fact, training was not out there. It was not available to them. And it was certainly not available to them at a level they could access. So, we began to look at training we could provide ourselves within our own base to make them feel comfortable with youth workers and teachers alongside. And we came to the conclusion that communication and training must be suitable, interesting, valued as successful, and recognised as OK by young people.

Suitable is within the competence of those involved because we must not forget that these young people have not attended schools, often with basic skills requirements, often with social skill requirements and they can understand that training is added value and it has street credibility if they do it.

It's achievable, because for the first time, for many young people we have worked with, they have a certificate after missing opportunities at school, things we take for granted. The process has as much value as the qualification. So from meeting to working together and developing work is important to the qualification. In fact, two years ago, some young people went to

France to a music festival, many of whom had never been out of the estate they live on in Newport.

We have tried to provide as wide opportunities as possible. It must be fun. This picture is of a cafe we have developed. It is a round building, right in the middle of a community, painted and decorated by young people who gained an accreditation for the work. Here they built a mosaic for the inside wall for which they received a certificate and an accreditation. They can put these into their record of achievement, so they too have something to show employers.

It needs to be interactive. We work with young people on a one-to-one basis but much tuition and many subjects could be cookery art. Anything relevant for them will be done in small working groups.

It needs to be valued. This young man is on an employment initiative scheme where they work three days a week, doing placement on a local estate: painting, gardening, and learning skills, and two days of training with us. So, with basic skills they will be able to relate to the work they are doing, measuring the paint, measuring the wallpaper. So all training is relevant to their needs.

There must be an outcome, a good one or they will not come back. Because we are voluntary at the moment, we do not force them to come. Our success depends on how much they enjoy themselves.

And it needs to be recognised. We have many young people, including mums and dads, and we need to be able to put that into context and provide a crèche and for other needs. It needs to be recognised by their peers and parents, and potential employers. Many workshops we organise look at job search skills as we said earlier, and the skills they need to be employable.

## **In summary:**

In working with Nightriders for the past four years, we have developed a much younger age range. We have a project in schools with 14 to 16 year-olds where we work with youth workers on personal development programmes on the school site. In one school, for example, we work with a programme called 'training tracks' which exchanges the curriculum for a particular group of young people. Instead of bringing them out of school to a youth service base, we go to work with them in the school. There is a constant exchange which appears to be working. Of this group of 22 young people, 20 have attended regularly this year. These are young people who did not attend at all last year, so it has had some success. The partnership and agencies working together have made this work. If we can look at this problem at a much earlier age and drop below 14 again, perhaps to the primary into secondary transition from 11 to 12 year-olds, there might not be a need for a Nightrider in about 10 years.



### **13. Comprehensive education or removal of pupils: the dilemma facing education systems in responding to school failure**

*Joaquim Casal* <sup>(35)</sup>

Over the last few decades, EU governments have developed education policies which, while preserving the distinct identity of each particular education system, have had the common denominator of extending initial education and promoting quality in schooling (through policies on enrolment and quality of teaching).

There are three factors underlying this common denominator (of longer schooling and the emphasis on quality). These are, first, the economic approach to education, which draws on human capital theory and embodies both a firm belief in raising commercial competitiveness through more education and a tendency to encourage more 'efficient' use of educational resources. The second is the policy debate about the importance of schooling as a tool for creating equality of opportunities and social mobility, i.e., the welfare state approach to education, which is an expression of the state's commitment and obligation to its citizens to promote policies of equality or equity through public education, and to encourage compensatory education for social disadvantaged families as a way of fostering 'social cohesion'. The third is the approach to education based on comprehensive, meaningful learning. This was a key tool, underpinning the educational reform and quality enhancement policies of the 1980s and 1990s, and recognising that no improvement is possible in education systems without improvements in the educational environment (in teaching materials, pedagogical discourse, educational innovativeness or teacher training, for example).

In short, the common education policy of the last few decades acknowledges that Europe has advanced education systems and that these systems aim at making mass education far more comprehensive. However, while there may be broad agreement on compulsory education (ten years of schooling), the same cannot be said of the comprehensive principle, over which there is wide disagreement and disparity between European education systems. Three models of comprehensive education can be identified: the Nordic 'fully comprehensive' model, which is an example at the top end; the Mediterranean model, which is extremely comprehensive in general intention but varies widely in the extent to which it is compulsory, and the Germanic

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<sup>(35)</sup> This paper contains the argument presented at Agora 9 (Cedefop) under the title 'Reforming and experimenting education and training: the paradox of success'. The oral presentation, and this paper, were based on the research carried out by GRET-ICE-UAB (Jordi Planas, M. García and Joaquim Casal) and 12 other teams under the Socrates programme 'The Reforms in the Education Systems to Combat School and Social Failure in Europe'. A summary of the synthesis report has been published in French (in the journal *Formation-Emploi* 64, 1998) and in Spanish (*Revista de Educación* 317, 1998); there is also a mimeo version in English (Agora-Cedefop 2000).

model, which is the best example of ‘low-level comprehensive education’ or early division between different paths of education.

It could be said in respect of government education policies in recent years that these three models of an education system both aim at and are fearful of comprehensiveness. In countries with education systems that are not very comprehensive, there is a tendency to argue for comprehensive education as a way of enhancing social progress and greater equality of opportunities; in countries with very comprehensive systems, there is a trend towards diversification of the single path of education as a way of responding to pupils’ diversity of interests; and in countries with intermediate comprehensive systems, there is growing polarisation between those in favour and those against comprehensive education. Essentially, the pendulum has been swinging back and forth between the contradictory principles of equality and social cohesion on the one hand, and competition and social differentiation on the other.

In the light of ‘lack of education’ or school failure, this inconsistent approach to the comprehensive principle clearly affects the future of education policies and the quest for alternatives. The principle which appears gradually to be gaining ground among educational providers is that of introducing some way of removing school failure from the specifically school environment, that is, of diverting pupils who fall behind at school into forms of education outside school. It would seem, in consequence, that the theory or goal of comprehensive education is likely to be reinforced while educational policy and providers will in actual practice favour sending obvious cases of school failure elsewhere. We propose to explore this hypothesis more deeply and to identify the various potential consequences; that is the purpose of this paper.

### **13.1. The achievements of policies on educational enrolment and quality**

European governments’ education policies on promoting mass enrolment and raising the quality of schooling have had a very significant positive impact on the ‘lack of education’ which had affected a sizeable proportion of young people over the years. The expansion of the public commitment to school education has been both widespread and effective in reducing the number of young people arriving on the labour market with no vocational training and with inadequate basic education.

Three factors have helped substantially to reduce the proportion of young people giving up initial education because of evident school failure (going no further than basic education, undertaking no recognised vocational training, dropping out early, etc.). First, public investment in schools has appreciably improved both the quantity and quality of educational provision: infrastructures and staff resources have been allocated to meet the demand for education in working-class areas, schools have been given more teaching support (advisers, educational psychologists, educational social workers, etc.), schemes for the continuing training of teachers have been introduced, and so on. Secondly, working-class families

became very aware of education in the 1980s and 1990s and found ways of supporting and enhancing the education of their children (seeking educational support, checking attendance and results, monitoring progress, following the guidelines set by teachers, etc.), so that now it is only families displaying a high degree of social breakdown and cultural isolation that tend to take no interest in their children's education. Thirdly, also over the last few decades, there has been a definite process of matching schools to social demands and requirements: schools have developed wide-ranging provision for leisure and sports, most textbooks and educational materials have been replaced, the curriculum has become broader, teaching has become more motivated, relations between schools and their educational environment have been strengthened, interaction between schools and families has improved, etc.

To sum up, it can be said that European education systems have made undoubted advances in the struggle for broader and longer schooling during childhood and adolescence, in terms of both family demand for education, material conditions and teaching support. Moreover, the educational policy of quality enhancement and compensation for inequalities has meant a substantial reduction in the proportion of young people dropping out of education altogether. From this it can be concluded that education policies have helped significantly to raise the level of education of the younger generations and, albeit through mere inertia, to reduce the proportion of young people dropping out of education and displaying obvious signs of lack of education.

## **13.2. Stagnation and the stigma of new school failure**

However, from the mid-1980s it would appear that European education systems and the education policies associated with them have not succeeded in reducing the percentage of young people completing compulsory education as 'failures', having rejected or resisted education, given up and failed to obtain minimum vocational qualifications. Between 10 and 20 % of each cohort of young people currently appear to show no positive results from education, and arrive on the labour market with very few qualifications to show for themselves<sup>(36)</sup>. It appears therefore that the educational policy of extending enrolment and raising quality referred to above is not capable of making significant inroads into the current level of school failure. Furthermore, at a time when education is widely available and taken up, when young people are spending longer in school, and when a broader range of qualifications is available, those who find themselves among the proportion of young people failing at school must presumably be suffering from a greater social stigma.

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<sup>(36)</sup> This round figure of 10 to 20 % for school failure is merely approximate and is based on an ad hoc estimate produced by the teams taking part in the research referred to above. This research shows that it is not possible to prove the exact proportion across all EU countries because of differences between the bases used in the various education systems, differences in interpretation of the common terms used, and differences in the methods of recording and selecting indicators of 'school failure'

Although it may seem paradoxical, the greater the success of mass enrolment in education, the greater is the stigma of school failure<sup>(37)</sup>: where there is relatively low enrolment, anyone without formal qualifications may face difficulties in the labour market and in achieving social mobility, but where there is high enrolment, as at present, to be among the young people with ‘manifest school failure’ may be an irreversible stigma; where there is an abundance of qualifications available at the end of extended vocational and general education, ‘failure in basic education’ may be a key indicator of ‘the beginnings of social exclusion’. The more narrowly defined and the smaller the proportion of young people without basic education, the more inward-looking and socially significant will be that group. This really is a paradox.

The mass high-quality education achieved by the EU after years of heavy public investment in schools is faced with limitations and complex situations: mass education is affected by rapid, turbulent social change. Many different factors are contributing to the critical situation of social unease, uncertainty and disillusionment in which mass education presently finds itself.

European education systems have been affected by the arrival of *information-based capitalism*<sup>(38)</sup>, the new form of society which is taking over from the monopolist capital of the previous state. In the 1980s and 1990s, education systems were faced with the challenge of responding to the emergence of the new information paradigm, and more particularly to the creation of new demands and requirements, with the result that the social pressure on the education system increased. Two examples will provide a simple illustration: the restructuring of the labour market brought about a crisis in sub-systems of vocational training, calling for their redesign, and the average age of the teaching force rose along with the difficulty of understanding the new younger generation.

Models of family socialisation have also been subject to increasingly rapid change and upheaval. Certain very traditional models of family socialisation have lost out in favour of models based more on negotiation. Essentially, numerous family norms have become more vulnerable (or less stable), causing uncertainties and dangers in children’s socialisation. Moreover, information-based capitalism generates new types of poverty and structural breakdown in some social groupings, with serious implications for education.

While changes in family socialisation and in information-based capitalism are altering the context of schooling for children and young people, other internal factors within education systems have also been instrumental in limiting the success of the education policies described in the opening lines.

First, education systems have become far more rigid in structure, and this has a very negative effect on their capacity to respond flexibly and innovatively to the changes referred to above:

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<sup>(37)</sup> Many of these statements are explored and reasoned more fully in the text referred to and in the report cited.

<sup>(38)</sup> The term *information-based capitalism* and its meaning as a new socio-economic and political paradigm is discussed in the studies by M. Castells published in the extensive work *La era de la Información* (Alianza-Madrid, in the Spanish version) or *La société réseaux* (French version), which originally appeared in English.

education systems are responding to the creation of rapidly changing demands in vocational education with slow and ineffectual structural reforms; to the creation of needs for educational innovation with an entrenched bureaucratic attitude; to the concept of anticipatory education with corporate answers via the teaching bodies, with ossified forms of continuing education, etc.

Secondly, the changing social context has brought about a crisis in the perception of the authority of teachers in mass schools. Generally, mass schooling has been strengthened by the ability to impose their own authority which teachers have enjoyed for many years, but this ability has very probably been considerably reduced (partly by changes in the model of socialisation mentioned above). This has caused some commentators to refer to a 'crisis in the teaching profession'. It is not so much a crisis in their role (teachers will presumably continue to act on their own authority in the Durkheimian manner as they have done for ages) as in the way in which they are perceived and accepted by some pupils. The reduction in school drop-out (more reluctant adolescents staying in school for longer), together with the crisis in the perception of the teaching profession, is said to be strengthening resistance to education and/or demotivation, seriously undermining the achievement targets set as part of educational reform and innovation.

If there are links between the arrival of a new form of society (information-based capitalism) and the fragility of family socialisation on the one hand and, on the other, the institutional rigidity and bureaucracy of the educational apparatus, and the crisis in the perception of the teaching profession, it is understandable that the efforts of education policy to combat school failure will not succeed in bringing down the proportion of children and young people failing at school to a minimal level. However, it would seem that educational policy-makers have already taken these limitations into account and have decided to shift the problem elsewhere. This is, in my view, the crucial concern.

### **13.3. The approach of shifting the problem elsewhere, and of removing responsibility from the education system**

If we look at the dominant trends in education systems and the education policies associated with them, we can detect a tendency to shift the treatment of failure in basic education outside schools, thereby removing responsibility from the school system for those young people who express some form of resistance to education. On the one hand, it would seem that education systems have convinced themselves that they cannot increase their effectiveness so that they can eliminate the stubborn percentage of 'school failures'; governments, believing that they have already given the education system substantial financial and human resources, are in turn convinced that a good part of public expenditure on 'remedial work with young people who have failed at school' should be directed to channels outside schools (non-school vocational training, schemes combining work with training, guidance and job-finding schemes, etc.). On the other hand, a good proportion of the teaching force, equally convinced that schools are making efforts to provide follow-up and a second chance of education (assessment and

treatment centres, educational support, teaching projects, etc.), would be willing to see some young people showing clear signs of rejecting education sent elsewhere (para-school schemes, social services for young people at risk, special educational provision, etc.).

Essentially, then, European education systems and policies appear to be adopting a strategy of treating and remedying ‘failure in basic education’ which aims, first, at removing responsibility from schools (‘some pupils cannot be enrolled in general schools’) and, secondly, shifting treatment of school failure elsewhere (‘pseudo-school for pupils who show clear symptoms of rejecting education and of antisocial behaviour’). This is therefore a European dilemma relating to the comprehensive principle: either the education system becomes more comprehensive (and a proportion of resistant pupils inhibit the normal course of school life), or pupils who resist teaching are sent elsewhere, to the detriment of the comprehensive principle. More than a problem, this is a true dilemma<sup>(39)</sup>: a problem can be resolved (by one or more solutions); but a dilemma cannot be resolved because it contains a contradiction within itself (there are no solutions, even though it calls for a decision).

Most of the decisions taken by governments and educators in response to the dilemma of comprehensive education suggest that responsibility for young people who are anti-education is being removed from schools and that these young people are being referred to educational resources outside that are theoretically more suited to their profile of resistance to education: that is, to less academic educational provision which is better matched to the social profile of pupils who resist or are in conflict with school.

The majority of the strategies adopted in government education policies can be grouped into two trends: the diversification of the school curriculum into several different pathways, and the development of various types of ‘second-chance school’.

#### **13.4. Diversification of the school curriculum and different pathways**

The comprehensive model has always admitted the social and cultural diversity of pupils: the comprehensive approach to education has been absolutely clear on this, and any interpretation of comprehensive education in terms of curricular uniformity is a distortion of its principles. The structure of the curriculum has always been based on individual adaptation and flexibility as a way of responding to pupils’ social and cultural diversity within a unified plan of education.

Even so, the notion of ‘responding to pupils’ differences’ has not been enough to dispel uncertainty among teachers or to provide clear guidelines for individual treatment in the classroom. For this reason, a section of the teaching force, a proportion of educational

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<sup>(39)</sup> A problem can always have one or more solutions (even though these may sometimes be purely notional or unrealisable); a dilemma, by its very definition, does not have one or more solutions. A dilemma can be resolved (by the adoption of a particular strategy) but not solved (by removing what makes it a dilemma, for example).

commentators, and a number of planners and politicians are concentrating on diversifying the curriculum as a matter of priority by providing for different pathways within one and the same comprehensive school: a clearly academic pathway for young people who are easily taught and respond to the institutional demands of school; a clearly vocational or technological pathway for young people who can be taught but are more interested in the requirements of the labour market than extended education ('getting a job'); and lastly, a pathway which is academically undemanding and is very instrumental or manual, for young people who react poorly to teaching and, more generally, to education.

To a certain extent, vocational education has itself come to fall into three types: heavily technological vocational education which is akin to continuing education (in higher polytechnical institutions, for example), non-higher education vocational training (intermediate-level training), and occupational or job training for young people who clearly lack basic education (low-skilled vocational training).

This strategy of splitting the curriculum into three channels in accordance with pupils' social profiles (and their adaptability and ability to respond to demands) has obviously been adopted for specific policy purposes in countries with highly comprehensive education systems, while those with less comprehensive systems have given a more traditional reason for doing so<sup>(40)</sup>. Many of the latter tend to believe that the last phase of compulsory education should make three sorts of provision, thereby responding to the demands and interests of pupils, and allowing the teaching force to work more effectively. These two or three different pathways aim at enhancing academic, occupational and vocational education, and basic skills respectively.

### **13.5. Second-chance education**

Although the model of second-chance education has theoretically been developed to make special provision for the young people who drop out of school and cannot find satisfactory employment, it has in practice also been used as a way of removing young people who prove unteachable because of their social behaviour. There are three basic ways in which they can be enabled to leave school early: through the establishment of a parallel school sub-system specifically for pupils with 'special educational needs'; through special arrangements for pupils of compulsory school age who have been expelled or excluded from school; and finally, through second-chance education for those who either cannot or will not continue with post-compulsory education. Each of the three types is an educational channel for young people of compulsory school age<sup>(41)</sup>.

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<sup>(40)</sup> The research reported tellingly reveals that countries with highly comprehensive education systems are tending to modify these in the direction of diversified pathways, while countries with education systems that are far from comprehensive are tending to foster some type of comprehensive link between sub-systems.

<sup>(41)</sup> It should be remembered that 'second chance' was intended as a route for those young people who have dropped out of formal education and have no luck in the labour market. It is thus a 'post-compulsory'

If pupils who reject education but have no obvious incapacities are diverted into a different special sub-system (such as exists in many countries), this is clearly a flagrant case of shifting the problem elsewhere and of complete removal of responsibility from schools. A far more usual non-school alternative for pupils who reject school or behave antisocially is for them to be diverted into workshop classes or special provision involving local social services. Where these alternatives exist, there is a strong tendency for the number of cases referred to them to rise: it is known that where special courses exist, teachers and schools tend to fill the places available, with the result that many young people who could have pursued normal schooling are sent elsewhere, so that they finish their education outside schools.

Something similar occurs with second-chance education: where courses exist, schools breed their own candidates for it, so that the last few months of schooling are regarded more as a time for dragging feet than as a time for attempting to make genuine remedial provision.

In short, where out-of-school educational arrangements and courses exist (within the physical environs of the school), there is a certain propensity to remove the pupils who are creating disciplinary problems in the school. This presupposes some rejection on the part of teachers and acquiescence on that of the educational authorities. Where this is so, second-chance education becomes more a way of removing individuals than a way of making special provision for young people who are definitely in danger of dropping out.

### **13.6. Three different alternatives for basic education failure**

There are three 'ideal' alternatives for education systems in dealing with the dilemma of 'comprehensive education versus outside provision' <sup>(42)</sup>. These alternatives are of considerable social and political importance, as they may seriously harm the principles of comprehensive education and equity. They are not merely technical options but carry a political burden, being not 'politically neutral' but very much the opposite: the decision to choose one policy or the other has implications for educational budgeting, for the ideological and political concept of schooling, and for the organisation of educational administration.

#### **13.6.1. Option 1: Deregulation and commercialisation of the education system**

The first alternative presupposes a major renunciation of the European tradition of the state's commitment to equality and social cohesion in its education policies. In line with the argument that current education systems are unable to adapt to new requirements and social

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option. Sometimes, however, out-of-school education schemes during the period of compulsory education are also called 'second chance', contradicting its basic definition.

<sup>(42)</sup> Only three types are described, as though they were 'ideals'. The political action programmes actually implemented may be far more eclectic and less clearly differentiated. However, I find it useful to distinguish between them in order to illustrate how each option is based on a particular theory and a political choice.

demands (because of higher social costs, greater bureaucracy, social paralysis, etc.), far-reaching liberalisation of the education system is proposed, opening up many of its features to the education market.

This approach of courses implies a clear abandonment of the European preference for comprehensive and compensatory education. It assumes acceptance of the fact that families differ in educational profile and interests, and hence of a clear diversification of educational pathways during the final phases of compulsory education.

Under this approach, the education system has to respond to families in widely varying ways, according to the interests, abilities and behaviour of pupils and, in extreme cases (rejection of education, for example), it may even exclude pupils from the normal pattern of schooling. In these extreme cases pupils may be released from compulsory education and provided with a parallel route as a form of social rehabilitation. Some form of second-chance education may therefore be used during the period of compulsory education and provide special channels for young people at 'social risk'.

Its proponents argue that this alternative has two obvious advantages: it gives back to schools their function of education by identifying and providing a special pathway suited to those young people who have 'problems'. This option has two socio-political implications: first, education systems that are less comprehensive (or provide greater differentiation between educational pathways during compulsory education) and, secondly, social policies of deregulating and commercialising education as a market product in order to emphasise its monetary value. Many teachers and families would support this notion because it essentially reaffirms the defensive nature of social classes and groupings as a protection against social breakdown and violence: it gives families greater freedom to choose a pathway and guarantees that the teaching force can concentrate on teaching in schools. It essentially excludes from schools those whose behaviour is regarded as incorrigible or harmful (resistance to institutions, classroom violence, recurrent absenteeism, obvious lack of motivation, etc.).

This first alternative even leads to some modification of the very notion of 'compulsory school attendance', which becomes more a moral than an actual obligation, given that some pupils with a highly antisocial profile may not develop positively in the normal school context. Out-of-school education will supposedly prove better suited to these more complex or less easily accommodated social profiles.

### **13.6.2. Option 2: Modification of the comprehensive principle and encouragement of second-chance education**

The previous alternative clearly abandons the comprehensive model in favour of greater internal differentiation between educational pathways and academic qualifications. It therefore runs counter to some of the criteria that have long been emphasised in the educational discourse, and presupposes adopting a more Darwinian approach to education. It is therefore highly likely that such an extreme position will not receive the approbation of those involved

in education: it is certain that educational reform movements, teaching unions, parents' associations, etc., will not support principles or proposals that follow the first option <sup>(43)</sup>.

The position might be very different, however, with an alternative that does not directly attack the principles of equity and comprehensive education but does allow for modification of the principles of uniformity and unity in the education system: an alternative that combines a desire to reduce comprehensiveness with encouragement of the notion of second-chance education. Although such an alternative might meet resistance from voluntary associations, reform movements and unions, it would probably gain wide support among individual teachers, parents and pupils, and among educational administration and support staff. This second alternative is in fact gaining the most ground in practice, being pursued by education authorities, approved by groups of teachers and more or less accepted by educationists, although it is not openly spelt out or manifest <sup>(44)</sup>.

Modification of the comprehensive principle essentially means keeping to the theoretical foundations of educational discourse, but introducing certain forms of curricular differentiation during the final phases of compulsory education. Some European education systems that are broadly comprehensive do in fact provide different pathways during the last year of compulsory education (generally called 'orientation' courses), with the aim of preparing pupils to choose between academic and vocational options.

On the other hand, modification of the comprehensive principle presupposes accepting that the education system cannot succeed in giving all the pupils enrolled a minimum level of education. This alternative therefore looks to second-chance education as the arrangement best suited to solving the problems of exclusion from school and basic education failure. Second-chance education is therefore intended to have its own specific content and methods so that these pupils can achieve within a brief space of time what they have not been able to achieve at school over many years.

This second alternative consists in guaranteeing the generally accepted theoretical principles of comprehensive education, while safeguarding arrangements to 'recognise diversity' that go further than merely 'recognising individual needs' or matching the curriculum and the objectives of learning to individual students. The second alternative regards the 'flexible curriculum' rather as a way of diversifying educational provision in order to create a better match between schools and educational requirements: for example, amendments to the curriculum in order to make better use of the Internet, improvements in third-language learning, more focuses of interest in learning, flexible groups that are more responsive to

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<sup>(43)</sup> Although teachers as a whole tend to approve of the comprehensive principle, many of them are closer in everyday practice to more Darwinian and differentiationist beliefs.

<sup>(44)</sup> Conflicts at school between pupils and teachers or pupils and classmates are often resolved in ways that are unspoken or shameful: for example, expulsions from school are disguised as reports recommending a different type of school, flexible groups are set up to conceal the arrangement of classes by level of achievement, special support or repeater groups are created for pupils less suited to education, etc.

teaching requirements, etc. Flexibility in the curriculum would, it is argued, lead to improvements in quality and enhanced education.

In this way, the treatment of school failure would in fact gradually cease to be tied to a flexible, modified curriculum and would adopt a more individualised approach on the fringes of what happens in the classroom itself: longitudinal follow-up tutorials, flexible groups for different levels of achievement, parallel educational support, manual or workshop activities, etc. Essentially, there would be a downward renegotiation of the strict comprehensive principle, permitting highly individualised intermediate arrangements which, where absolutely necessary, would allow for subtle types of out-of-school provision: special classes for pupils with low achievement, duplication of groups by level of achievement, out-of-school support, etc.

This second alternative may easily lead to two developments: the consolidation of two channels, with direct and indirect effects on what happens next (determining whether pupils pursue academic or vocational studies at post-secondary level), and the consolidation of certain forms of out-of-school provision of compulsory education by means of parallel education ('second-chance education' for groups within the age range of compulsory education).

Moreover, the second alternative clearly does shift the problem elsewhere, albeit in a camouflaged manner: comprehensive education is retained for the vast majority, and a smaller proportion of young people who are difficult to socialise (because of antisocial behaviour, general lack of motivation, rejection of education, etc.) are removed elsewhere. It is the 'camouflaged' nature of the out-of-school arrangements which make this second alternative easily acceptable<sup>(45)</sup>: teachers' associations may adopt it precisely because it both accepts and modifies the comprehensive principle; for many families it provides a way of removing from school certain pupils who behave violently; for educational social workers it provides an opportunity of professional consolidation; for administrators it is a way of reducing tension within the school community, and so on. It would appear therefore that this second option will prove very attractive to the majority (of pupils, families, teachers and managers).

### **13.6.3. Option 3: Support for first-chance schools**

There is no doubt that the second alternative may not only meet with majority approval, but also generate unintended negative effects in the medium term. The mere existence of less comprehensive arrangements will obviously stimulate the shifting of the problem outside schools, and the removal of responsibility from the school system. The mere existence of second-chance schemes may lessen the potential effect of support within 'first-chance' education.

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<sup>(45)</sup> See previous note.

The third alternative is probably favoured by a small minority and likely to have little influence among teachers and families: it consists in accepting second-chance arrangements only on condition that these do not turn into a clandestine way of removing responsibility from first-chance schools. The third alternative regards compulsory education as the social and community instrument best suited to compensating for problems with primary socialisation. Schools are the resource best able to detect and remedy inadequacies at home among those of compulsory school age (detection, prevention and treatment); compulsory primary school, precisely because it is compulsory, is the social instrument best suited for social intervention in cases of inadequate family support; compulsory secondary school, for its part, may be a means of fostering the psychosocial development of young people where families cannot help.

Moreover, the division of society into two will lead to a ghettoisation of schools in some urban areas: many families will opt to move in order to enrol their children in particular schools, and this will have a direct negative impact on certain schools. Educational administration will be inhibited, and teachers will tend to move away, so that the future of these schools will be under threat. In such cases, the 'Pygmalion' effect will obviously be strengthened.

The third alternative suggests an approach to this problem that is very different from what usually happens: where there is more social exclusion and poor educational development from childhood, the education authorities should allocate more financial and human resources and encourage greater innovation. The principle that has long applied in the health services should be applied to the education system: the worse the diagnosis, the more medical and nursing resources are committed. Furthermore, some educational initiatives of particular note (such as 'accelerated schools') are really 'first chance' initiatives.

Historically, European policy has been based on the principle of equality of opportunities, which has enabled the state to meet the educational demands of disadvantaged areas and social groups. The third alternative perhaps reveals the inadequacy of this approach: it suggests moving to an educational policy of opportunities for equality, which is not the same and has far-reaching implications<sup>(46)</sup>.

If education systems, and the policies associated with them, move towards this third alternative, there will at least be some chance of avoiding the very likely drift towards removing from schools the responsibility to respond to the school failure generated by social exclusion, by difficulties with socialisation, or by problems in adolescence. Unfortunately, however, this third alternative does not usually receive the political support of the majority, and the commitment of a good number of educators remains underused.

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<sup>(46)</sup> A shift from a focus on *equality of opportunities* to a focus on *opportunities for equality* implies a change in education policies: from the principle of equal treatment regardless of skill to that of positive discrimination, i.e. a true policy of compensation. But it should be noted that 'compensatory education' implies a complete overhaul of arrangements: true compensation does not mean teachers providing extra support for pupils who fall behind at school or have a 'cultural handicap', but the establishment of global, integrated educational projects in socially disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

## **14. The ‘New Skills’ approach – the roles of those involved**

*Paul Rué*

The ‘New Skills’ approach was initiated by Bertrand Schwartz in the early 1980s. It had two objectives:

- (a) firstly, to provide a credible answer to the problem of unskilled young people who were unemployed and rejected by the labour market;
- (b) secondly, to satisfy employers’ needs for modernisation and increased competitiveness, without this automatically leading to exclusion.

In other words, the aim was to show that economic interests were not incompatible with social concerns.

In order to achieve this, two kinds of scheme were proposed: getting young people into work, and providing retraining for those already employed.

My paper is in three parts:

- (a) the background to the ‘New Skills’ Mission, and its role and status;
- (b) the scheme, that is to say, the approach adopted;
- (c) the parts played by those involved.

### **14.1. The ‘New Skills’ Mission**

The Mission was launched in 1989 by the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Vocational Training. It built on an initial experimental stage carried out by Bertrand Schwartz from 1985.

At that time, many businesses faced with uncertainties over future skills and jobs raised their recruitment thresholds and appointed people with higher qualifications. Each year, 100 000 young people were leaving school with no formal qualifications, having in many cases failed at school, and were joining the 8 million workers with no recognised qualifications. These people with low levels of skills were becoming increasingly marginalised in the labour market. They accounted for nearly all of the long-term unemployed, although unskilled workers only represented 40 % of the active population. The Government regarded this situation as so explosive that it took the decision to launch the ‘New Skills’ scheme to provide workplace training for those who were low-skilled and were either in employment or seeking work, so as to demonstrate that they were capable of learning the new skills that employers required.

The 'New Skills' Mission was therefore charged with drawing up the administrative, legal, financial, educational, methodological and organisational requirements for expansion of the initiative, which was still experimental. At its greatest extent, the Mission comprised just under 100 staff, including a national office and regional and local organisers. Their role was to take a significant number of steps to ensure that the scheme actually met employers' requirements for new skills, and that the teaching methods used were suitable for a low-skilled public, and to make arrangements for the general adoption of the scheme.

## **14.2. The 'New Skills' approach**

It is necessary to have a grasp of the details of the scheme in order to understand the roles played by those involved.

So what is the 'New Skills' approach?

It is an interactive process totally unlike traditional training schemes. The purpose of this type of activity is not to lay down a model that is then to be reproduced but gradually to decide on skills and training that are based on actual experience of working, and on the expectations of both the employer and the trainees. Each 'New Skills' initiative is therefore unique and cannot be reproduced identically.

The 'New Skills' approach thus differs from traditional training:

- (a) in the outcome (i.e. skills), which is not laid down or even known at the start, except in outline, while in a traditional approach the skills expected are specified in theoretical terms in advance;
- (b) in the content of the training, which is also not predetermined and is not based on set requirements. It depends on how the initiative progresses and on the circumstances of those involved;
- (c) in the teaching methods used, which are also the opposite of the usual approach, since they are always subservient to practical abilities, which are themselves subservient to practical knowledge;
- (d) in the status of the various participants in the initiative, since they control it rather than being controlled by it;
- (e) in the overall aim, which is not simply to provide training but also to transform employment and the organisation of work.

The 'New Skills' approach thus means agreeing to work differently, to learn for oneself, to experience genuine change, and ultimately to do something about the uncertainty that is the chief feature of the world of today.

All those involved in putting the approach into practice therefore have to accept the following ten principles:

- (a) the approach applies only to those who are unskilled or low-skilled;
- (b) the approach operates through the real projects of one or more enterprises, the aims of which are defined jointly by all partners;
- (c) the approach is long-term and excludes all short-term and one-off operations;
- (d) the approach has a collective dimension, and is addressed to a group;
- (e) the approach requires involvement on the part of the enterprise;
- (f) the approach lays down no training content in advance but develops this as it progresses;
- (g) the approach starts from the existing working situation, which becomes a medium for training;
- (h) the approach leads to evolution in the nature of employment;
- (i) the approach may bring about changes in the employment of other staff in the enterprise;
- (j) the approach transforms the way in which work is organised in the enterprise.

On the basis of this approach, two kinds of activity have been developed:

- (a) Getting young people without recognised vocational training into work. These activities, lasting between 18 and 24 months, comprise an initial stage of between 2 and 6 months of total immersion in one or more jobs in an enterprise, allowing each young person to carry out a certain number of tasks, and then a flexible block release stage, during which the young person divides his or her time between work in the enterprise and periods spent in a training centre.
- (b) Retraining for those in employment who need to improve their skills in order to cope individually and collectively with changes at work. At one-day sessions every fortnight, a homogeneous group of workers examines and resolves a problem, with the help of trainers, while training themselves. They reinvest what they learn in their work.

### **14.3. The roles of those involved**

Who are they? What do they do?

- (a) The enterprise: managers, supervisor and skilled staff.
- (b) The institutions: the public employment service, voluntary associations, the Mission.
- (c) The training organisation: coordinator, trainers.
- (d) The young people and/or adults involved in the initiative.
- (e) The coordinator is the pillar of each initiative to get people into work. He or she may have a background in training, voluntary or social work, and will be familiar both with the world of young people in difficulties and with the world of training and business. His or her role is to coordinate the input of the other parties involved in accordance with the

objectives set by the various partners. He or she is the pivotal point of the scheme, meeting the young people at the workplace and in the training centre regularly, assessing progress and the difficulties encountered, and talking to the tutors.

- (f) It is also the coordinator who works with the trainers to ensure that they make full use of the working situation as a medium for training, and who monitors the overall progress and proper functioning of the scheme. The greatest innovation of a 'New Skills' initiative is that a coordinator is appointed full-time as one of the persons involved.
- (g) The tutor is a volunteer working for the enterprise in the job where the young person will work. He or she must not have a supervisory position with other responsibilities, but must have the practical abilities that will be needed to decide on the skills to be learnt. Since these skills are not fully known at the start, several tutors with different areas of practical ability may have a tutorial function in the course of an initiative, but one of the tutors will be the young person's point of reference. The role of the tutor(s) is to pass on practical skills.
- (h) The young person must play an active part in the operation of the scheme. Through the practical skills and abilities gradually learnt, he or she must actively enter into a dialogue with the others involved, especially the tutors, the coordinator and the trainers, in order to identify his or her weaknesses and expectations.
- (i) The supervisor of the tutor(s) is responsible for sorting out the problems encountered by the tutor(s) and the young person related to the functioning of the enterprise.
- (j) The trainers, who will be from a public or private body, have the task of passing on the range of knowledge needed to learn the skills specified in the course of the initiative, and of ensuring that the young person obtains a qualification.
- (k) The managers of the enterprise and the various institutions concerned are responsible for establishing the objectives of the scheme at the start, dealing with financial matters, regularly monitoring the operation of the scheme, and ruling on matters within their remits.

In view of the specific nature of any 'New Skills' initiative, two forums have been devised for dialogue between those involved:

- (a) The 'action' group brings together the tutors and trainers under the leadership of the coordinator and uses a formalised system of questioning the young person, the tutor, the trainers and the coordinator. It decides step by step on future skills and the teaching tools suited to the progression of the initiative. It allows for the effective involvement of the tutors in decisions on skills and relevant training. The 'action' group meets every four to six weeks.
- (b) The 'sponsor' group periodically brings together the various partners, the initiators of the scheme, and the managers of the enterprise and the institutions concerned. It establishes the initial objectives for the initiative and monitors its satisfactory progress.

## **14.4. Conclusion**

In conclusion, the 'New Skills' approach casts those involved in roles which they do not necessarily play in traditional schemes:

- (a) the young people, who play an active part in decisions on skills and training;
- (b) the tutors, who learn new skills themselves and thus undergo their own professional development;
- (c) the trainers, who have to match the knowledge taught to the working situations experienced and in so doing, learn about the enterprise and hence create new teaching tools;
- (d) the coordinator, who creates a completely new role as he or she goes along and thereby acquires a new professionalism.

In short, a 'New Skills' initiative, by the nature of its approach, obliges all those involved to modify their roles, to experience genuine change and hence to become competent at handling change.



## **15. The relationship between centralised and decentralised learning in vocational training**

*Thomas Vogel*

Ivan Illich (1972) called for the ‘deschooling of society’ in the early 1970s. He argued that people in the industrialised countries were valued largely in terms of how many hours of schooling they had consumed. He believed that schools, as the reproductive organs of modern societies, were the tools that most effectively prepared people for an alienating life of pressure to perform and consume, and the primary cause of the spread of social inequality. The alternative was the revolutionary cultural concept of ‘deschooling society’. This was to begin by replacing the manipulative ‘funnel’, that is, compulsory schooling, by a progressive curriculum and a ‘network’ of communicative institutions enabling all to learn freely and creatively at any age. Illich regarded such an institutional revolution not only as more humane than political and economic revolution, but also as the only revolution likely to achieve its goals.

Now, thirty years on, we are discussing the creation of learning networks and the development of complex learning structures. In recent years, the European Union has increasingly been supporting ‘learning region’ projects, which have focused on investigating and influencing the growing interconnections between institutionalised learning, learning at work, and learning in the social environment. Existing regional structures and networks have been and are being strengthened, and new ones created.

If present developments are compared with the ideas of Ivan Illich, parallels will be found in the criticism of institutionalised forms of learning and in the call for decentralisation of learning. Hence, the question arises whether the deschooling and decentralisation of learning that are currently discernible are also acquiring the potential which Illich hoped for as tools for countering alienation and reducing social equality. Or in other words, how is the process of deschooling to be managed so that it acquires such potential and helps to combat school failure, so that those who are disadvantaged can be integrated into the world of work? How is the relationship between centralised and decentralised learning to be managed – assuming that deschooling and decentralisation are not taken to mean the radical abolition of institutional learning – so that as many people as possible have the best chance to develop the full range of their skills in a humane society?

### **15.1. Centralised and decentralised learning in vocational education: clarifying the concepts**

The introduction of information and communications technologies in industrial production in the 1980s led to changes in how work was structured and organised. Many routine activities

became automated. At the same time, the new technologies made manufacturing more flexible so that, for example, several different variants of a model could be produced on one production line. The new production methods were accompanied by more flexible working hours, team work, reintegration of repetitive and non-routine operations, and flatter hierarchies in company organisation (Klauder 1998, 37). Computer-aided production methods such as ‘production cells’ and ‘flexible production systems’ led to in-house decentralisation (Dehnbostel 1991, 17).

These changes in industrial production and organisation meant that what was required of staff also changed. One consequence of restructuring was that responsibility and skills were transferred or restored from planning and design departments to the actual production process. Since individual functions that were previously separate were drawn together, such as production scheduling, economic use of materials and quality control, staff were now increasingly required to be able to plan, carry out and monitor complete, holistic production tasks.

Business and occupational training responded to changes in the methods and organisation of industrial production, and to the concomitant changes in what is required of the industrial work force by decentralising learning. The centralised training in training and technology centres which predominated in industry in the late 1980s, and which is still widespread, was not able to deliver the skills that workers required to resolve holistic problems largely independently.

The industrial training principles underlying decentralised learning were developed, tested and monitored in the Federal Republic of Germany by researchers from the Federal Institute for Vocational Training through a series of pilot projects between 1990 and 1996. They started from the proposition that integrated methods, linking work and learning and using new learning strategies, were possible and indeed necessary in modern, technologically demanding work processes in order to respond to changes. The decentralisation of production brought about by technology was reflected in increasing decentralisation of vocational training. The new business and training concept of ‘learning cells’ was developed, for example, by analogy with the new production concept of ‘production cells’.

Decentralisation meant that work and learning were organised more closely together. Places of learning which linked work and learning, such as learning cells, learning stations, skills resource centres, learning shop models and learning factories were newly introduced or further developed. The concept of decentralised learning can be illustrated by the example of learning cells.

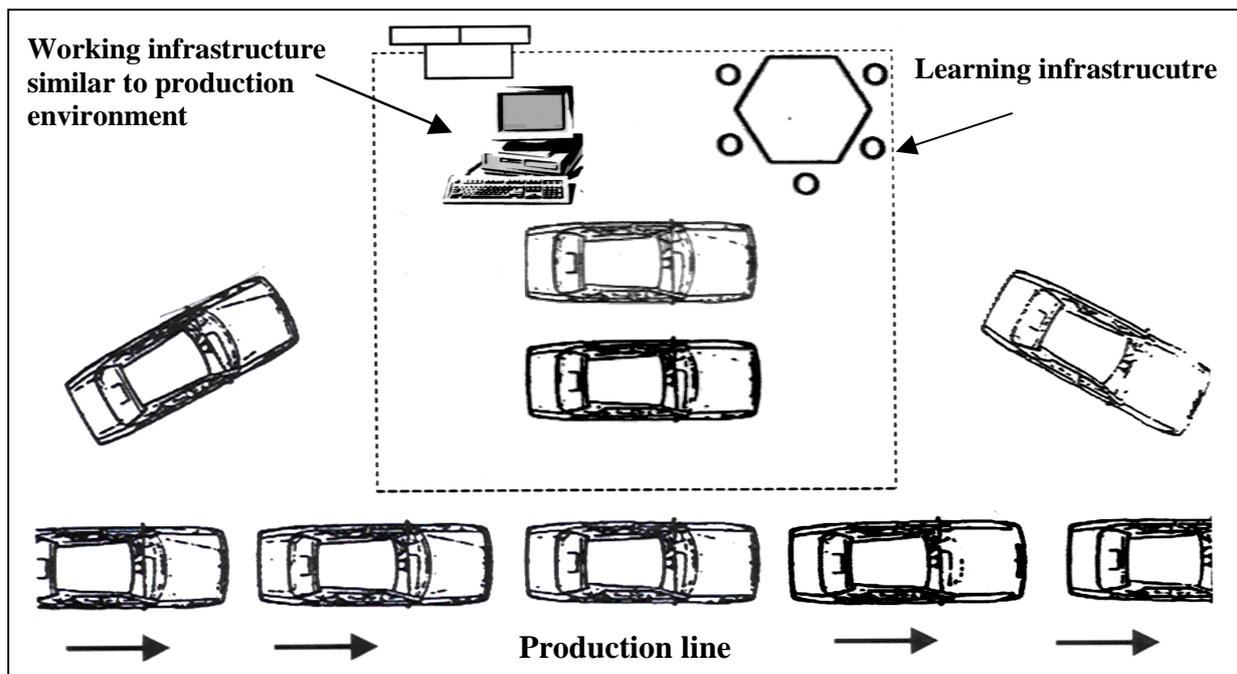
Learning cells are places of learning close to, and if possible right in the middle of, the production process (see Fig. 1). Learners handle real working tasks, largely on their own initiative, through group work, and these are the same working tasks carried out in the learning environment, in the real production process (Dehnbostel, 1999). Dehnbostel describes the features of learning cells as follows (*ibid.*, p. 1 f.):

- (a) learning cells are workplaces additionally equipped for learning, at which real working tasks are carried out and skills are learnt;

- (b) the working tasks satisfy the criteria of holistic work, providing good opportunities for learning by being complex, presenting problems and varying widely;
- (c) work is done in groups in learning cells, and is organised according to the principles of partially autonomous group work;
- (d) learning cells are under the supervision of a specialist from the relevant department, whose main role is to monitor the process and development, and who is a skilled worker and trainer.

Decentralised learning thus attempts to support learning under conditions that are as real as possible. Decentralised learning in industrial companies links real work infrastructures with a learning infrastructure (see Fig. 1), thereby making it possible to handle real objects against a background of meaningful theoretical learning, and in the immediate social context of employment.

Figure 1: Arrangement of a learning cell in motor vehicle production



(cf. Novak in Dehnbostel 1991, 59)

Centralised learning may be defined – unlike decentralised learning – as learning controlled from above. It is therefore learning of which the aims and circumstances are decided not by the learner but by some superior authority (the state, the company or the instructor). This control and regulation may determine a variety of aspects of the learning environment and the organisation of the learning process, such as the length of the learning process, the place of learning, forms of interaction, the content, methods and media of learning, and much else besides.

Particular features of centralised learning are separation between work and real life, on the one hand, and learning on the other, and the fact that learners come together in a common place of learning in order to learn the same skills. The separation between the places of work and learning, and the forming of groups of learners, mean that teaching has to be planned in specific steps so that the material to be learnt is arranged in the form of secondary experiences which will best promote learning. In order to set up these secondary experiences, use is made of artificial teaching techniques (using particular social methods, media, etc.) which have been found on scientific investigation to promote learning effectively. Centralised, institutionalised learning frequently features:

- (a) ritualised communication between teachers and learners;
- (b) the predominance of the teacher;
- (c) a narrow definition of the learning situation in terms of place and time;
- (d) goals imposed from outside;
- (e) a teaching and learning situation that is remote from practice (Loser and Terhart 1986, 126).

Among the centralised places of learning in vocational training are teaching workshops, in-house and external training centres, and vocational colleges.

## **15.2. Centralised and decentralised learning in the history of education**

The integration of work and learning are nothing new from a historical point of view. The relationship between work and real life, on the one hand, and learning situations on the other, can be divided historically into four phases (see Fig. 2).

During the first phase of human history there was practically no division between work, life and learning. People learnt what they needed by taking part in activities alongside those with experience. Robert Alt, for example, has shown convincingly that in archaic societies (between approx. 2 and 1.8 million years ago), children ‘were involved from an early age in nearly all processes of social life’, and indeed had to ‘take part through force of circumstance’, thus learning ‘the requisite skills by taking part in the activity itself’ (Alt 1956, 42). Participation by children and young people in adult life, and especially in adult work, was often the starting point for specifically pedagogical actions: children not only witnessed nearly all the working activities which occurred in archaic societies, but were also ‘required very early on to help and to carry out the work themselves’ (ibid., 45). This very experiential learning was widespread in our cultures until well into the 19<sup>th</sup> century, is still met with in craft work, and has been rediscovered in ‘alternative’ communities – and in industrial working processes.

Figure 2: Centralised and decentralised learning in the history of education

Phase	Characteristics	Type of learning/ Trend of development
Phase 1 (Archaic societies, approx. 2-1.8 million years ago)	No distinction between work, life and learning	Decentralised
Phase 2 (Advanced civilisations, from 5 000 years ago)	Increasing removal of learning from life and work  ↓  Schools	Decentralised → Centralised
Phase 3 (Modern age, from 400 to 200 years ago)	Re-integration of 'real life and work' in institutionalised learning  ↓  Action-based and project-based learning	Centralised → Decentralised
Phase 4 (Postmodern age)	Opening up of institutionalised learning – creation of networks to promote learning	Decentralised ↔ Centralised

In the second historical phase, that of so-called advanced civilisations (from around 5 000 years ago), certain situations in which people could learn particularly well were separated from those in which it was necessary to act with particular skill and decisiveness; when the young men went hunting, for example, the children and old men could not keep pace. The old therefore stayed at home and made weapons (which they understood because they had often been hunting), showing the youngsters sitting around them how to make and use them; they simulated hunting, making the children practise and providing criticism. Work and learning were thus kept separate in this field.

At an advanced stage of this development, learning became an activity which took place largely in institutions specially created for the purpose, i.e. schools, which were also reserved for a particular period of people's lives.

In the third phase, the so-called modern age (from around 400 to 200 years ago), institutionalised teaching and learning became increasingly centralised and professionalised.

In the light of growing social differentiation and complexity, it became ever clearer that intentional teaching and learning in centralised institutions was less educationally effective if activities – hunting, employment or work – were only simulated or described. Learning that was isolated from life and work could no longer keep pace with rapid changes in these. One area in which this problem was evident related to changes in industrial production methods and the associated changes in company training in the 1980s.

As a general response to this problem, elements of real life were reintroduced into institutionalised learning; action-based, project-based and decentralised learning are the names given to some of the ways of re-incorporating ‘real life and work’ into learning that was separated from life and work.

The fourth phase, which is now beginning – sociologists speak of the ‘postmodern age’ – is marked by an increasingly complex and changing world. Our roles have become too specialised, and our expectations of life too individualised for preparation to be given for ‘life’ and ‘work’ in centralised institutions by staff specially trained to teach; centralised teaching institutions are having to restore large parts of learning to life, in the form of learning through experience. But there has been little discussion of what should remain in the hands of these institutions, what might become general practice, and what experiences all should have acquired. The issue is still unresolved (v. Hentig 1972, 127).

This historical outline demonstrates that there have in the past been various phases in the relationship between centralised and decentralised learning. At first, all learning was decentralised and associated with work, and only later did centralised types of teaching and learning come about. In the respective historical phases, specific relationships developed between these two types of learning.

### **15.3. Specific disadvantages and advantages of centralised and decentralised learning in relation to school failure**

Before we start worrying about the future shape of the relationship between centralised and decentralised learning, we should reflect on the specific advantages and disadvantages of these types of learning. Some of them are apparent from the historical outline.

Teaching and learning were first separated out from work (i.e., centralised) because teaching and learning hindered the normal conduct of work – hunting, for example, but also Taylorian industrial production. It was therefore in order to make most efficient use of time that people divided real working processes and learning one from the other. At first, it was the old who were employed as teachers, both because they could no longer perform normal work adequately, and because they had acquired wide experience during their working lives, which they were now able to pass on to the young.

In continuation of this development, learning became increasingly specialised, rationalised and institutionalised. The increasing move towards schools as places for learning had certain limitations, however: it became noticeable that simulated reality was not adequate for competent performance in everyday work, and that the changes in real working life were so rapid that learning which was isolated from it could not keep pace. Young people who went through institutionalised, centralised learning were often unprepared for living and working situations about which they knew nothing. They had increasingly to acquire the knowledge and skills to cope with living and working situations by other means, outside institutions.

The disadvantages of centralised learning indicated above are exacerbated by the fact that they are generally based on inappropriate principles of learning theory.

- (a) In centralised learning, learning objectives are usually determined by others, with no consultation with the learners. It is known that learners' motivation and attention are only aroused if they can at all times see for themselves the value and significance of what they are asked to learn (Vester, 1999).
- (b) Learning is primarily cognitive. It is known that the more areas of perception in the brain are involved, the better people learn; deeper understanding is achieved by the potential creation of more associations (ibid.).
- (c) Learners remain mostly passive and receptive. Since Pestalozzi it has been known that better learning results are obtained by learning with head, heart and hand than when the learner is taught through frontal tuition.
- (d) Learners are assessed by the teacher (as an observer). Observations and assessments may hinder learning, however, rather than encouraging it. People are certainly able to dissemble learning for the purposes of assessment and observation without actually having learnt the subject-matter in question.

These principles of the learning theory underlying centralised learning favour a particular type of learner. Such learning disadvantages people

- (a) whose manner of thinking is inductive and heuristic rather than deductive and theory-based;
- (b) whose pace of learning is erratic;
- (c) who have little capacity for abstraction and need to see what they are learning;
- (d) learn in short bursts of motivation;
- (e) tend to react negatively to centrally organised learning (Stötzel and Schneider 1991, 141).

From this angle, school failure is not failure on the part of the learner, but on that of the system, which hinders and helps particular types of learner by pursuing certain basic assumptions of learning theory.

It will readily be appreciated that decentralised learning is more appropriate for the type of learner described above

- (a) because it opens up greater space for action;

- (b) because it allows more choice in the timing of learning and can thus accommodate different speeds of learning;
- (c) because it makes possible holistic sensual experiences and does not rely purely on theoretical learning;
- (d) because it involves a wide range of physical activities;
- (e) because it deals with real objects in almost real surroundings;
- (f) because there is a direct relationship with social conditions.

Decentralised learning in vocational training is thus far better suited to the integration of the disadvantaged into the world of work than institutionalised, centralised learning. It opens up new opportunities for exploring the mutual interactions of learning and action, personality and organisation, subjective predispositions and objective working tasks – interactions that have been known about for a long time but have remained hidden.

However, the more closely the learning process is tied to actual life and work, the more it will be restricted to repetitive knowledge and skills. That is, it will only teach such knowledge and skills as are required to repeat the same action in the same situation. Reflection and critical distance are made more difficult by learning at work, if not completely prevented. People generally need to stand back from a situation experienced at first hand in order to place it in a wider context, to recognise links between actions, interests and goals, and to think theoretically in terms of alternatives, i.e., to imagine replacing a situation actually experienced by a different action. Such thinking in alternatives can only come about if there is a certain distance in time, and if possible in space, between work and learning. This argues rather for centralised learning.

There is a possibility, nonetheless, that centralised learning will also predetermine developments by, as Hartmut von Hentig has suggested, ‘attaching [people] to the world as it is, by programming them with the perceptions and procedures of the present; by exactly preplanning the first quarter or third of individuals’ potentially changeable futures by turning them into the present; and by allowing of no alternatives because it knows of none itself’ (v. Hentig 1972, 121).

In an increasingly complex world, there is therefore a need for both types of learning, both decentralised and centralised, and indeed for interconnections between different types of learning. ‘Learning for the future’ must overcome the division of the education process into theoretical and practical learning, the split between vocational education training centres for basic theory and work placements for specialist practical training.

## **15.4. Ways of shaping the relationship between centralised and decentralised learning**

How, then, can the division between theoretical and practical learning, centralised and decentralised learning, be overcome, and what arrangements can be made so that vocational training takes place in conditions conducive to learning?

Promising key words in this field are ‘networking’ and ‘learning culture’. A new learning culture means above all expanding, and sometimes replacing, traditional instruction-based teaching by the adoption of constructivist, experiential learning focusing on the learner as an active and reflective individual. Individual learning and experience will be the path to reality through the individual’s own actions and self-determination. Such learning and experience may start by looking at the learning tasks derived from real actions (Zimmer 1998). In his ‘Proposal for task-oriented teaching’, Gerhard Zimmer puts forward the argument for new training methods to bring about a new learning culture, in which learners develop holistic action skills. These will be based on working tasks widely embedded in social practice, or learning tasks derived from these, from which learners will, in a cooperative culture of work and learning, develop action skills that are as far as possible self-organised (*ibid.*, 132). In future, the overall principles for encouraging learning and transferability to be applied in every action and learning situation will be authenticity, exemplariness, situatedness and social embeddedness.

In the case of centralised learning it is therefore important that action skills and knowledge should be set in the context of real life, work and organisational structures. Concepts of action-orientation and modern simulation methods, from planning games to learning factories and junior companies, will certainly help. But they cannot replace first-hand experience in an increasingly complex world. Key skills and vocational action skills can only be acquired under conditions that are ‘for real’. However, only limited knowledge of theory and action can be learnt and taught in real working situations. Learning at work must therefore be networked with centralised learning, leading to a new culture of learning. Or to put it another way, the ‘funnel’ of centralised, formal learning must give way to an interwoven pattern – of interconnections, stopping points, cross-roads and market places (von Hentig in Illich 1972, 8).

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## **16. Company role and responsibility in education and training**

*Heikki Suomalainen*

The competitiveness of Europe, and the companies in Europe depends in large measure on development of a society of knowledge and innovation. To remain competitive in the world market place companies need a quality work force with high level of qualifications and skills that meet their needs. Qualifications, skills and competencies are of fundamental and social importance.

The world around us is changing rapidly. By 2005, 80 % of new technologies will be less than ten years old whereas 80 % of education and training will have been received more than ten years ago. While the unemployment continues to affect 10 % of the EU's active population, some sectors are facing severe labour shortages. So the number of jobs vacant in information and communication technologies is expected to triple and exceed 1.6 million by the year 2002. The skills shortages are emerging also in traditional branches of industry.

Education and training are at the heart of the policies needed to help the economic and social challenges faced by Europe. They can foster economic growth, productivity and personal and social development. In order to meet these challenges it is necessary to put in place life-long learning strategies. In this framework of life-long learning emphasis must be put on promoting links between the world of education and training and the world of work. A high level of education and the provision of quality education and training have proved a valuable means of maintaining employment and alleviating unemployment. This is now all the more important because persons with low levels of attainment find themselves at a distinct disadvantage on the labour market.

The discussions in Agora IX have been very interesting and open. In these discussions came up the term of 'academic failure'. Considering the background of this term it in fact means the failure of the system more than the failure of an individual, be it the teacher or the pupil. That's why it is more important to pay attention first to the quality of the schools themselves, because there lies the answer to this problem. By improving the quality of teaching and learning in schools there will be less need for second-chance schools. And in many countries the second chance schools are incorporated cooperated in the schools.

The importance of quality is obvious everywhere in the society now, most strikingly in the business environment. The customers are expecting impeccable quality whether it concerns products or services. Failure in quality is directly reflected in the results of the company in question. This strive to high quality should apply to the education and training system everywhere. If 10 % or 20 % of the products are not satisfactory, as was the case in 'academic failure', you really can ask if the quality is acceptable or is there some quality at all. Our

concern about quality is much more serious because it is generally known that in many countries the level of knowledge of those who have come out of the first level of the education system is not exactly what is expected. And so in many cases the vocational education and training has to fulfil the tasks of the previous level of education.

That's why the European business world wished a very warm welcome to the project of the Member States and the Commission on quality in schools. The working group which was set up by the Member States and the Commission has come up with 16 indicators to measure the quality of the education. We hope that this kind of benchmarking will improve the quality and the functioning of the education system in all member states. However, we deeply regret that those indicators do not contain any indicators, not even a single one linked with the working life. We would like to emphasise the need for close cooperation and close links between the education and training and the working life and this should be reflected in measuring the quality of schools, too. We hope that the future project of the Commission to prepare the quality indicators of vocational training will include more indicators directly linked with the working life.

Sometimes you can hear allegations that companies are not or only slightly interested in education and training. This is not at all the situation. The availability of scientific and technical skills is critical to the development of many high-tech companies while management skills are an important determinant of entrepreneurial activity. Unfortunately the European Union has fewer scientific or management graduates than its main competitors. According to the UNICE 1999 Benchmarking Report, there are three times more researchers working in business and nearly five times more new MBA graduates in the US than in the European Union.

There might of course be some companies who aren't interested in education and training, but the huge amount of companies do deeply know that the skilled and competent labour force which they all need comes from the well functioning education and training system and it is for them of high importance that the education system functions well. And they also are aware of the fact that the companies are also very important for the schools, too.

UNICE, speaking on behalf of the companies, has given it's contribution to the preparation of the new social policy agenda to be decided under the French Presidency in the summit of Nice in December 2000. UNICE has stated that education and training would deserve a section on it's own in this communication, notably to recall the conclusions of Lisbon summit on this subject. The Lisbon summit agreed to set a new strategic goal to turn the Union in to the most competitive and dynamic knowledge based economy in the world, capable of economic growth with more and better jobs and of social cohesion. In order to reach this goal it is absolutely necessary to have an excellence education and training system in every Member State.

UNICE has participated in this discussion, as was previously mentioned, by publishing it's position document called 'For Education and Training Policies which Foster Competitiveness and Employment'. In this publication we have given our ideas how to build the competencies needed now and in near future. At the same time we are ready to go on with the discussion on the educational and training issues with open mind.

Education and vocational training has many players in its field. Some of those are key players, and one of them is companies. This is due to the fact that the main aim of the education and training is to give young people the abilities to work and earn their living as an adult. Even though companies are key players, their role varies very much in different EU member states. This depends largely on tradition and in some cases on recent developments.

E.g. in Nordic countries it has been a tradition that the vocational training takes place in vocational schools. But in many other countries like in Germany and in the Netherlands the vocational training has taken place for a long time in companies with the help of training centres.

Now it is evident almost everywhere in the European Union that there is a clear trend towards job-related training or on-the-job learning. This trend will take different forms, or different methods and ways but it still is growing. Even in many of those countries with the tradition of vocational schools the companies have been asked in recent years to participate in making the curriculum or presenting what the working life needs in competencies. This trend has also been increasing.

As an example of the new trend of job-related training can be Finland where the vocational training used to take place mostly in vocational schools. The training included some practical training in companies, but this was quite short and insignificant. This is now changing because the government has taken the decision that vocational training, now lasting at least three years, will include six months of on-the-job learning in companies. This is a paramount challenge to the companies to offer enough places for young people for their on-the-job learning, and also even bigger challenge to give young people adequate training on the workplace. For the teachers it is also a huge challenge because they must plan and prepare the curriculum and the teaching so that it fits with the on-the-job learning. But at the same time it is also a magnificent opportunity for the companies to train young people and get to know them and for the teachers to start close and fertile cooperation with the companies.

We now know that because of the fast pace of continuous changes taking place in companies and in the world it is not possible to learn in schools at one time enough for the whole life. So it is absolutely necessary to learn during the whole working life, and even longer in order to be active during the retirement age. One of the main goals for young people in schools is to learn to learn. Life-long learning represents in this sense an opportunity for everybody, even for the society and it has many benefits for individuals and companies alike. It makes it possible for individual to maintain his/hers employability, to progress in work, to keep up with a changing job and job environment, and to transfer to new jobs. All companies as a part of the labour market will benefit from a more employable and adaptable workforce, thereby contributing to higher profitability and productivity.

Life-long learning requires a good and well functioning partnership between all stakeholders, despite putting great responsibility on the individual to keep up with technological and organisational changes in the working life. The most important of these stakeholders are: employers, individuals, government, education and training providers. There must be good a

cooperation at all stages and at all levels of the educational process and between all the parties involved.

The main responsibility always remains on every single person himself, because of the simple fact that nobody can learn for someone else.

The new situation poses challenges for all stakeholders, government and public authorities, individuals and companies. They must cooperate in organising life-long learning and combine it with a good vocational guidance, and the stakeholders must bear responsibility for it. The responsibility for it will vary from one country to another, depending on the different traditions, and legal and fiscal contexts in each Member State.

UNICE has worked over this issue for some time and has come to the following conclusions.

Foundation learning must always be the primary responsibility of governments. Member States' foundation learning system must meet the highest standards and give young people a solid basis for their working life. In particular, emphasis must be placed on new skills: languages and communication skills and ability to use the tools of the information society. In this context, it is of great importance to instil a culture of change, starting in basic education. This is where it is now very much needed. Particular attention should be paid to the changing roles and needs of teachers and trainers. Life-long learning will only become a reality when a culture of life-long learning has spread in schools, in universities and in training institutions, and in companies, too. This means that learning environments must be open and interactive, and it must include the use of new ICT.

Employers have a central role to play in the development of life-long learning strategies. However, they can only take financial responsibility for the part of life-long learning, which is directly job-related, in accordance with the existing national legislation and practices. The task of the management is to formulate objectives for competence development within the workforce and offer good opportunities for learning. Each individual has a responsibility for his or her competence development in working life.

Improvement of the levels of Europe's workforce depends not only on companies' investment but also on governments' outlays on education and training. The key objective must be to target government spending more effectively on meeting the requirements of a changing world of work. In this context, it is important to strengthen cooperation between business and educational institutions.

As a necessary part of life-long learning the development of vocational guidance and counselling should become a priority, starting in schools and throughout working life. Individuals should take responsibility for seeking guidance, when necessary. This would reduce the existing skills gap and make individuals more employable. Employers should be closely involved in vocational guidance, among other things by providing information on companies' needs.

Because companies are driven by change, they try to look for new flexible ways for work organisation, and in fact introduce it in daily working life. This same principle applies to the training, so it must be done in the same flexible way, integrating different forms of training (on-the-job learning, informal learning) and using new technology. The priority must be to target training investment on the needs of the company within the framework of a comprehensive strategy. In addition, there are ways other than traditional provision of training for the acquisition of skills and competence. Companies seek to maximise and develop skills and competence within their workforce. Investment in training should therefore not only be measured in terms of inputs (expenses) but also in terms of outputs (increased performance of the company). The development of benchmarks could be a valuable tool in this respect. Specific problems faced by small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) also need to be addressed. Because of their size, they often encounter greater difficulties in providing in-house training. New ways need to be defined to cater for their needs, including the use of new ICT.

To summarise we would like to put the responsibility on stakeholders as follows:

- (a) Member States are responsible of foundation learning.
- (b) Employers are responsible for directly job related training.
- (c) Individuals are responsible for their own learning as a whole because no one can learn for other people. They shall have responsibility for their own motivation but also for time and in some cases for money.
- (d) In order to organise this all it is necessary to have a good cooperation between all the key players: individuals, governments and employers at the national level, and when possible even at the European level.
- (e) Lifelong learning needs a very well functioning vocational guidance for adults. This has not been developed enough and it is now necessary to make this possible with the help of new ICT.
- (f) The circumstances and the possibilities vary very much in each Member States and this must be taken into account when speaking about responsibilities in lifelong learning.



## 17. The role of local authorities in the integration of disadvantaged young people in Germany

*Wolfgang Schlegel* <sup>(47)</sup>

At the moment the word most frequently used in the European employment debate is 'local'. The European employment strategy is paying increasing attention to local actors. Political decision-makers expect the magic formula, 'acting locally', to play a decisive role in the successful implementation of employment guidelines.

On 7 April 2000, the European Commission sent a Communication to the Council, the European Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, listing a series of key points which underscore the importance of local authorities in employment policy <sup>(48)</sup>:

- (a) There are over 80 000 local authorities in the EU, with extensive responsibilities (including social services, education, health, housing, environmental protection, local public transport, water and energy, waste disposal, infrastructure maintenance, and cultural and leisure activities).
- (b) Local authorities account for a considerable proportion of public spending, ranging from 3.8 % of GDP in Portugal to 33.3 % in Denmark.
- (c) Local government employees represent a substantial share of people in paid employment (over 20 % in the Scandinavian countries). Local authorities are major employers everywhere.
- (d) A DG Employment research programme has shown that local authorities have a considerable influence on local employment.

The Commission therefore concludes that local authorities are key partners in the European employment strategy and that their role should be strengthened still, so that they can make an effective contribution.

The Commission points out that:

- (a) local authorities can play an important role in bringing together, and encouraging networking between, the various local public and private agencies;
- (b) they can help stimulate the local employment market, and hence create new jobs;

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<sup>(48)</sup> Commission Communication to the Council, the European Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: 'Promoting local employment – a local dimension for the European Employment Strategy', 7.4.2000.

- (c) as employers they can help implement employment policy guidelines;
- (d) they can give citizens better access to new technical and social skills, and to information and communications technologies.

All of this relates primarily to employment strategy in general; but it is highly relevant to the employment of disadvantaged young people as well. No group is as dependent on the state of the local labour market, or on local advisory and training provision, as those young people who find it impossible to move seamlessly from school to vocational training and on to a job matching their training. Wide experience in Germany shows how important the local authorities can be for these groups, and therefore how vital it is to recognise and strengthen the role of these authorities within the European employment strategy.

## **17.1. Looking back**

Already in the 1980s many local government authorities in Germany had developed activities to combat youth unemployment. The decline in work-based training places and the concurrent fall in the demand for unskilled staff led to an enormous rise in unemployment, especially among young people who had not completed vocational training. Local authorities were particularly affected by this problem: first, because they took the brunt of the social consequences (political and social disintegration, delinquency, etc.); and secondly, because the unskilled have no entitlement to unemployment or social security benefits and thus very quickly fall back on emergency social assistance, for which local government is responsible. The dramatic rise in social assistance payments, which sent the budgets of many towns and cities in the red during the second half of the 1980s, was largely due to unskilled, unemployed young people and young adults.

Local authority job schemes were set up in many towns and cities, often with the aid of supplementary Land or ESF funding, to offer the unemployed fixed-term jobs in community work. It was intended that at the end of this period participants would be entitled to national unemployment benefits, on the grounds that they had been paying social security contributions. They would thus become less dependent on social assistance.

These schemes generally found limited success. They provided little systematic training, with the result that the status of the unskilled did not change. In addition, the scheme lacked a clear connection to the primary labour market. The heavy emphasis on work for the public good bore little relation to the situation in the labour market. As a result, there was seldom any chance of transferring to unsubsidised paid employment. Whenever projects attempted to escape from the ghetto of community work and to enter commercial markets they encountered heavy resistance from the chambers of trade and industry and from business. Nevertheless, a number of such projects were set up that markedly influenced the labour market policy debate and were instrumental in encouraging the development of relevant legislation.

Another important initiative of the 1980s, largely funded by local government, involved setting up advice centres for unemployed young people in many Federal Länder within various programmes. Although these centres were unable to do anything about the shortage of training places and jobs, they were important in raising social and economic awareness and giving substantial individual assistance to the young people concerned. One of the important tasks of these agencies is reaching out to unemployed young people who are not registered with employment offices and whose misgivings about institutions in general are difficult to overcome. In this way, many young people seeking advice can at least be offered transitional help, which will allow them to move on to the more far-reaching scheme run by the Federal Labour Office. Advice centres thus fulfil a significant bridging function. Their success depends, however, on the existence of an interlocking network of training provision in the relevant local authority area, to which they can refer their clients.

Youth workshops are a third type of local government activity geared to combating youth unemployment. Their task is to provide unemployed young people with guidance and initial vocational training. Unlike the schemes run by the Federal Labour Office, youth workshops are low-level provision, usually demanding no previous knowledge and no formal minimum requirements for entry. Youth workshops have also frequently offered general education, allowing young people belatedly to acquire school qualifications. In other words, youth workshops take on youngsters who have given up on school or are still of school age, thus offering a 'second chance' to young people who have failed at school.

The youth workshops face two problems: they are often considered competitors to the Federal Labour Office and they do not offer participants any clear prospects because they lack any integral follow-up. Entry into a youth workshop is often the start of several years of 'being in schemes' rather than a purposeful process of advancement and integration.

In summary, local government schemes to combat youth unemployment in the 1980s faced the following main problems:

- (a) a lack of coordination, and sometimes outright competition, with other, better funded agencies in this field, especially the Federal Labour Office;
- (b) a lack of long-term prospects: the issue of youth unemployment was regarded for a long time as a short-term economic phenomenon, and more effort was devoted to shifting the costs to another funding body than to building up a local system of integration into work;
- (c) inadequate attention to the primary labour market: the way in which help for young people was viewed and provided generally failed to take this into consideration.

Nevertheless, numerous interesting initiatives did develop, experience was acquired, and local know-how and institutions were built up. In the early 1990s, a legal framework was established through the new Children's and Young Persons' Assistance Act (*Kinder- und Jugendhilfegesetz, KJHG*). This law gave local authorities far-reaching responsibility for public assistance for young people by requiring the harmonious cooperation of local agencies

in providing disadvantaged young people with vocational training and with opportunities to enter the labour market.

However, efforts to meet the Maastricht criteria, the unexpectedly high demands on the public purse in the wake of German unification, and rapidly rising unemployment – with the effects on local government budgets that have already been mentioned – led to stagnation, and in some cases, to cutbacks in local government activities assisting young people. At this stage, all agencies tried to concentrate expenditure, as far as possible, on their key tasks. As a result, and despite the opportunities opened up by the KJHG and the obligations it imposed, many local authorities, even the larger ones, lacked permanent full-time staff in the field of assistance for young people.

## **17.2. The enforced move towards cooperation: the current trend**

Nevertheless, in many places a virtue was made out of necessity. The shortage of funds forced all agencies to reach an understanding about the potential division of labour, in the interest of saving money and working efficiently together. This led, for example, to a recommendation for collaboration between the Youth Assistance Committee and the Federal Labour Office in 1995<sup>(49)</sup> and, at the beginning of that year, after long discussions and negotiations, to an agreement between the Association of German Municipalities and the Federal Labour Office.<sup>(50)</sup>

The main impetus behind these cooperation agreements was improved coordination of local activities for the young people concerned, such as had already been introduced in numerous local initiatives.

Successful local initiatives in this field nearly always feature a range of training provided by the local authority, frequently for specific target groups, which complements the training provided by schools and colleges and by the employment service. This may include:

- (a) low-level pre-vocational provision at the stage of the transfer between school and employment: contact, advice, guidance, motivation of particular target groups (e.g. foreign girls), outreach, street work, etc.;

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<sup>(49)</sup> See *Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Jugendhilfe / Bundesanstalt für Arbeit: Empfehlungen der Bundesanstalt für Arbeit und der Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Jugendhilfe für die Zusammenarbeit der Dienststellen der Bundesanstalt für Arbeit und der Träger der Jugendhilfe* (Youth Assistance Committee / Federal Labour Office: Recommendations of the Federal Labour Office concerning co-operation between Federal Labour Office centres and bodies providing youth assistance). Nuremberg/Bonn, 1995.

<sup>(50)</sup> See *Bundesanstalt für Arbeit* (Federal Labour Office): circular 14/2000, 24 March 2000 – *Empfehlungen zur Zusammenarbeit der Arbeitsämter mit den Kommunen bei der beruflichen und sozialen Integration junger Menschen* (Recommendations on co-operation between employment offices and local authorities on the occupational and social integration of young people). Nuremberg, 2000.

- (b) complementary activities during participation in training (individual help and support, educational social work, supervised accommodation, etc.);
- (c) help with finding a job on completion of training (advice and follow-up until first employment in local authority employment projects).

Ideally, all the actors concerned are guided in their activities by an Individual Development Plan or integration plan, i.e., an agreement between the individual and the network of institutions involved in the process of (re)integration.

This is illustrated in the following example.

### **17.3. An example: the Offenbach Training Agency**

The Offenbach Training Agency is a joint venture between the town of Offenbach and the Federal Labour Office, i.e., the local employment office. Through a tendering procedure the two partners appointed a local body to develop and run a training agency, to which they have seconded some of their own staff.

The main task of the agency is to coordinate local services aimed at helping young people find work, with the aim of greater efficiency. The agency is targeted at unemployed young people and young adults aged up to 27 years who:

- (a) have become unemployed after leaving compulsory secondary general education, with or without a formal leaving qualification;
- (b) are attending a basic vocational college either full-time or part-time;
- (c) have not completed any vocational training;
- (d) are unwilling or unable to make use of the existing training system.

In accordance with the agreement between the employment office and the town of Offenbach, the agency provides the following services and activities:

- (a) outreach work to contact young people who cannot be reached by existing institutional advice and job-finding services;
- (b) advising young people how to use the existing system of occupational guidance and employment assistance;
- (c) promoting occupational guidance and choice of career (e.g. through careers advice, assessments, individual career path planning, clarification of personal circumstances, and the involvement of other support systems);
- (d) developing contacts with employers and a database of work placements, especially with enterprises in the primary labour market, in order to offer (initial) trial employment and provide help in finding work during training;

- (e) providing help with finding, and applying for, training places;
- (f) helping young people who are not interested in training to find jobs, in collaboration with the employment service of the Federal Labour Office;
- (g) accompanying young people throughout the entire process of employment advice up until entry into training or employment or a suitable scheme of occupational guidance or youth assistance;
- (h) evaluating the work, and developing proposals for additional services to support lasting integration into employment.

#### **17.4. Local authorities as coordinators: future prospects**

According to this model the role of local authorities in helping disadvantaged young people enter work can be summarised as follows.

They are not the primary sources of funding; ideally, they design and coordinate a local network of measures allowing an integration plan to be worked out for every young person – with his or her active involvement – and implemented efficiently.

Within this network they also offer or finance (or both) complementary measures to add value to regular services or to plug gaps in service provision. Such measures may include:

- (a) low-threshold outreach activities (e.g. street work) to attract specific target groups of young people into regular provision in the first place;
- (b) a mentoring system helping young people to implement their individual employment integration plans, offering related services under one roof;
- (c) personal assistance, e.g. supervised housing or debt and substance abuse counselling.

Local authorities may also take on the task of acting as a bridge between activities for disadvantaged young people and local employers, establishing contacts and supporting cooperation. Ideally, they will succeed in involving local employers as permanent partners in local networks, through chambers of trade or guilds.

Last, they are responsible for linking the work of local networks concerned with vocational training for disadvantaged young people with the local government policy on promoting the local economy, and with the local development strategy. In this way, this target group will no longer be regarded as a problem but as a local resource that is well worth developing and using.

## **18. Round table of initial and continuing vocational training (ICVT) experts on ‘alternative training methods’**

### **18.1. ‘Equitable access to training’ versus ‘ways of taking account of the specific features of different groups’.**

**Éric Fries Guggenheim** <sup>(51)</sup>

Our socio-economic environment is becoming increasingly differentiated. Paradoxically, however, a set of moulds is tending to unify the landscape with the result that unification and differentiation are in opposition. It is essential, from the point of view of differentiation, to ensure that all citizens have equal access to training opportunities. Training schemes and training approaches that meet the needs of different groups need to be introduced. Too much differentiation might well, however, weaken and fragment training schemes. The question that I would therefore ask of my colleagues here today is: ultimately, can we be equitable in the training opportunities that we offer people and at the same time meet people’s individual needs?

**Edward Tersmette** <sup>(52)</sup>

It would obviously be impossible to answer all the questions raised. Equity versus differentiation: this is the old dilemma of the efficiency versus the equity of education, of socio-economic imperatives versus social issues. We clearly need to take account of both.

We live in a society in which technological advances and changes in the system come thick and fast; to be left behind by the education system now is much more serious now than it was ten years ago. It is very difficult to cling on to a moving education system, which is travelling away from you. To put it simply, I do not understand why an education system cannot work in the same way as a road system: if you can travel at different speeds on a motorway, why can you not learn at different speeds and with different styles in an education system?

This obviously requires investment in the education system, resources, teaching innovations, etc. I should also like to say, and this was to some extent the guiding thread of the Agora, that if we are talking about lifelong learning, from birth to death, from the cradle to the grave, etc., we are all to some extent failures at school.

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In his talk, our Spanish colleague stressed the definition of failure at school: he felt that failure at school was the same as incomplete education/training. In the context of LLL, however, all our education is incomplete. If education continues until we die the issues are very different. Either nobody is a failure at school or we all are.

This now needs to be put into practice – we have been talking about it for long enough. If, however, we introduce a genuine system of lifelong learning, the whole issue of failure at school to some extent disappears. Failure at school becomes, to return to the example of the motorway, no more than a break in our journey. It is therefore absolutely essential that we manage to introduce lifelong learning as it radically transforms the whole issue of failure at school.

### **Lise Skanting** <sup>(53)</sup>

The profile that Éric Fries Guggenheim has sketched out during the various sessions of this Agora is one of uniformity and it is true that our society is moving towards the uniform. This society is, however, based largely on globalisation and information technology. We all know where that will lead. While it will undoubtedly lead to integration, it will also lead to diversification. The environment in which we have to act is both integrated and diversified. When this is applied to vocational training systems we need to be aware that policies are being integrated in new ways and that they are taking shape now. Uniformity means that our policies share a common goal and differentiation means that the differences of each kind of policy and of each person need to be respected. I should therefore like to turn your question on its head and say that it may perhaps not be a question of equal chances of access to training, but more a question of equal interest in training. The fact that most people are not at all interested in education and training as a means or a tool for personal development is one of the major problems from the point of view of managing this new society of lifelong learning.

The goal of our system must be to work towards employability and this involves adaptability.

Employability is obviously what is produced by the school system and the education system, whereas adaptability is the product of our working life; we need therefore to be aware that we learn while we work. We do not necessarily learn in an institution or by attending a course. We learn new things every day of our life. While this might not provide us with the ability to generalise or distance ourselves that was mentioned earlier, the fact is that we learn something in the workplace and this is why it is important for people to have jobs. My feeling is therefore that some other questions need to be included on the agenda, some warning signals to education systems, since the agenda is not drawn up by training agencies but by consistent policies promoting the development of society(ies).

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<sup>(53)</sup> Danish Employers' Association – Denmark

Secondly, initial education can take place just as well outside as inside institutions. Information and communication technologies mean that knowledge is no longer to be found in any particular institution – it may be found anywhere.

Thirdly, learning, as I have already said, is linked to work and not just to books and classes. It is this which is characteristic of our society and it is for this reason that the issue of equal interest in education is important. A study on forty-year-old men was conducted some years ago in Denmark. It found that forty-year-old Danish men were not interested in educating themselves because they had had bad experiences at school. This is the problem: you can take a horse to water, but you cannot make it drink.

### **Régis Renault** <sup>(54)</sup>

At the risk of disappointing you, it is somewhat frustrating to have to tackle such a vast issue in only a few minutes, especially when the question that you have put to some extent sidesteps the real issue. My initial reaction, when you ask me to think about specificity and equity, is that I should like to change the terms. Listening to the debate yesterday morning, but also in the light of our own thinking, I feel the real question has more to do with equality than equity and with the relationship between the individual and the collective. If you will allow me, moreover, and because this is also linked to the question, I should like to answer a comment made this morning by the UNICE official. I agree with the formula that he used when he said that individuals have sole responsibility for their education, but I would take pains to supplement it as, on its own, it is wrong. Individuals may well be responsible for their own education but the community, i.e. schools as well as enterprises, are responsible for the conditions in which they can acquire this education.

This is the key question: what is the purpose of school? Schools are obviously there to train future employees. The representative of a trade union could not say otherwise. They nevertheless have a wider purpose. The question is then: how can we collectively provide the means that each person needs to achieve this threefold, but single, goal of developing themselves and taking their place in society as citizens, human beings and employees? This is nowadays an ambitious goal as our society has changed and is no longer what it was when our education systems were created. In saying this, I am to some extent taking up what was said yesterday about the current limits of our system. I believe that the system, or at least the French system, with which I am most familiar, has demonstrated that it is in fact very capable of meeting the new challenges. It is not the schools but our society that is now placing a barrier in the way of change. Nowadays, for instance, the old divide between general education and vocational education – which meant that for years general education was there to train an elite and initial vocational education was there to catch people who had failed elsewhere – no longer applies.

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<sup>(54)</sup> Confédération générale du travail – France

The education of doctors and skilled workers is now similar in terms of capacity and occupational competence, and also in terms of citizenship, democracy and general culture.

What resources are we therefore calling on, what diversified routes are we introducing, what experiments are we trying out?

I am very pleased to have heard about a number of experiments during this Agora.

What expertise are we using to make the most of, and build on, the experiments that are being conducted? What systems are we using to implement a range of pathways that are diversified but do not represent relegation to a second tier – that are positive pathways through which everyone’s qualifications and training can be raised to the required level? This is how I tend to perceive the problem. Unity does not mean uniformity.

**Caroline Jones <sup>(55)</sup>**

I am a grass-roots practitioner, a field worker. My feeling, and this was the foundation of Wolfgang Schlegel’s talk, is basically that the local authorities have an important role to play in integrating people who are excluded. In Newport, we are moving towards setting up a department covering all those people who are excluded or who are facing exclusion in our area.

While school has a great deal of merit, my feeling is that it is often not very suited to the people with whom we work. While school education is obviously very important, we work with that group of young people who are on the borderline, who run the risk of being excluded from school, and who already feel that school is an irrelevance. We work with teachers in schools in order to run programmes such as ‘Training Tracks’ or with young people with problems such as a lack of motivation, a lack of self-esteem, a lack of qualifications and a complete lack of discipline. Through our work we manage to highlight issues which are not tackled at school and to place them centre stage. We do our utmost to ensure that they are taken into account, which should make it possible, or so we hope, to stop young people from being excluded from school and to return them to the school road. We also work with another group in order to encourage them to return to school, or even to go to school for the first time and attend school in a regular and monitored way.

Alternative ways of gaining access to new training opportunities are, in my view, essential. This is the aim of the ‘Nightriders – tailoring training to young lifestyles’ project which is targeted on young people aged between 16 and 24. In essence, this is a project aimed at assisting access to education. Individuals, especially young people, are our starting point. Our approach is holistic: starting from the point that young people have reached, we try to pinpoint the problems that have affected their lives. We work together with other organisations within the community, such as careers guidance offices, and with other training programmes that

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<sup>(55)</sup> Newport District Council – United Kingdom

they can enter. Our main task is to offer them guidance, to monitor them as they progress through their training course and to offer alternative types of training. Whatever the outcome, building bridges with the education department is what matters.

To sum up, we are genuinely aware of the value of school but we are also aware of its inherent weaknesses.

## **18.2. Remedial and short-term versus preventive training schemes**

### **Éric Fries Guggenheim**

You are starting to answer the second question that I should now like to put to all the participants in this round table.

In what way should curative and remedial schemes, i.e. short-term schemes of immediate necessity, be linked to long-term schemes of a preventive type? How can we move from partial solutions to practical problems, such as those that Caroline Jones has just discussed, to more comprehensive action by education and training systems that enables us to eliminate these practical problems? First, is it possible to envisage a society in which these practical problems have been genuinely eradicated? Mr Tersmette undoubtedly provided part of the answer: the question takes a different form in a 'lifelong learning' society as education and training take place in stages and this is part of the answer. The question that I would put is: what role should the various players take in a process that should ultimately lead to the preventive resolution of the problems that people face? What role should the enterprise play, what role should schools play (which we started to talk about just now)? Lastly, is it not the case that schools are only part of the education system? The education system surely has a broader range. The question is therefore: what links should be created between short term and long term aims?

### **Régis Régnault**

I am again going to ask you to excuse me as my answer to a question that we could spend hours discussing will necessarily have to be somewhat succinct.

As I mentioned to some extent in my answer to the first question: there is a concrete problem. Links between the education system and the working world, and in particular enterprise, are often perceived from the point of view of the problems raised by the fight against failure at school or remedial education. I think that there are several levels of reflection that should not be confused.

The use of alternance as a method of remedying failure at school is the first level. We need to accept that it works. French figures show that the earlier students go into vocational education, rather than repeating years or entering other remedial schemes, the better their chances of succeeding in this stream. This is borne out by a ministerial report published during this academic year.

Why? There are several explanations. The key issue for schools is the way in which they perceive their own role in the relationship between knowledge, the transmission of knowledge, the appropriation of knowledge by young people and all such issues. It seems to me that the necessary link between learning and production is lacking in our education system. If we managed to make all the people involved in education aware that people learn much better when they are seeking their own knowledge and when they are producing at the same time as they receiving, I think that we would have made a major step forward.

Our teaching has never functioned in this way. Orienting people by default into initial vocational education had the advantage of reconciling a number of young people with education. I would strongly refute the theory that some young people are not suited to education. Is setting them to work more in keeping with their personality? This is very narrow-minded thinking and we need to go beyond it. The real lesson that we can draw from the success of vocational education in France is that vocational education reconciles young people with education by offering them a type of teaching which rightly combines theory and practice, the concrete and the abstract, learning and production. Putting it in this way is more accurate. This could be an interesting input into somewhat broader thinking about the necessary cooperation between all social forces. The question is therefore, as you said implicitly in your introduction, the isolation of the education system in carrying out a task for which it is not solely responsible, and for which it would be impossible for others to take responsibility on their own. We need, in my view, to think about ways of forging a type of cooperation in which the education system has a central role. This is necessary because of the requirements for considerable professionalism but also because of the need for high-level cooperation with the world surrounding the school: enterprises, culture, the local community, or any number of forces. (As we have seen, Wolfgang Schlegel's talk offered a very good example of cooperation with local authorities.) These players should not just divide up tasks, as somebody said earlier, but also work together.

### **Lise Skanting**

I agree completely with Éric Fries Guggenheim that education is much more than the school system. The starting point for this analysis has to be the pressures exerted by our new society. One of the elements we need to clarify is who is an expert and who is not? We tend to speak of experts in contrast to the other players involved; in my view, however, we are all experts because we all bring knowledge and this knowledge is needed for the production of qualifications and competences that are of use in the labour market.

I do not know what you said in French but it was translated into English as ‘social players’. Obviously, the social partners are not ‘social players’ because we are not on a playing field. The task in which we are participating is a serious one. The social partners are important as experts, because we offer a fairly realistic picture of what is happening in the labour market and what we can expect from both young people and adults.

We also consider that school systems – whatever their form and right down to basic school systems – fail to take account of what happens after school. There is a kind of failure of comprehension of our society and of what our society should be; this is the reason why young people are frightened by the transition from education to the labour market: they have to cope with something which they know nothing about.

I feel that it is important to distinguish between employability and adaptability. You cannot be adaptable unless you are employable. We need therefore to work on people’s employability whether this is within first or second chance school systems.

Employability is what you acquire or obtain in the school system. Adaptability is what you gain from your daily experience, your daily work, your thoughts about the working day when it is over, what you learn for the purposes of your next task in your job.

As employers, we are obviously interested in a high level of adaptability, because a high level of adaptability is the best way of ensuring compatibility between social cohesion and competition.

As regards the educational method that starts with the specific and moves towards the more general, it has to be said that it is part of the very nature of second chance schools. Perhaps we should also try to turn systems on their heads and teach young men and women about the pleasure of learning. As long as people are unaware of the pleasure of learning, they will never be adaptable or even employable in the labour market.

While we share this objective as players in the field of initial and continuing vocational training, there may be varying solutions and different models. When I say that we are all experts, it has to be admitted that none of us has practical and ready-made answers to questions about the ultimate purposes of education systems or the types of competence and qualification that we will need tomorrow or even that we need today.

None of us knows exactly what will happen in future. We all have to navigate through a sea of uncertainty and this, in my view, is what can be termed a challenge. But it also offers us an opening.

### **Edward Tersmette**

As regards the question of prevention/remedial action, I suppose that if we want to answer this question we need to ask ourselves whether it is possible to prevent any kind of failure at school. I fear that this is impossible, particularly in the imperfect world in which we live.

When, as I mentioned before, there is a real change of paradigm and we live in a world of lifelong learning, matters will be different. I feel, and this is borne out by various studies, that there will always be some young people who will fail at school and drop out prematurely. Failure at school takes place in all the European school systems.

It is important for second chances to be genuine chances. To be 'chances' of quality and of excellence.

A second chance should not be a second choice, a second-hand or bargain-basement chance, it should not be something that assists young people, but rather something that confirms or consolidates the fact that they are on the main street of life. It should be a second first chance.

Éric Fries Guggenheim has raised some interesting questions. Who should the players be? What Wolfgang Schlegel said was very relevant. We can see the growing commitment of local authorities. It would nevertheless be rather risky to reach a situation where national education systems took responsibility for young first-chancers and local authorities for young second-chancers. All the players, including enterprises, need to take responsibility not just for young first-chancers but also for young second-chancers. This is the case in some Member States where enterprises are not just involved in the training of young disadvantaged people, but also in normal education systems. This link with real life and real work is something people often find very motivating.

From the point of view of the link between prevention and remedial action, this is not a real distinction at present. In some cases prevention takes the form of a kind of prior or ex ante rehabilitation. In Ireland and the English-speaking countries, for instance, we speak of early action strategies. I feel that this is very important. We sometimes hear teachers say that students arrive in class with a sort of weariness on their faces. These young people have been brought up in disadvantaged cultural environments, in broken family situations, in abandoned districts of towns, with certain very particular types of friend, all of which has made them into what they are and channelled them in a certain direction.

Parents have a key role to play. They are the main educators, the primary educators. In some cases, prevention is a form of very early rehabilitation and it is for this reason that it may be useful to work with young people from the age of three, four or five to try to improve their educational situation.

It is a commonplace that young people's brains are more flexible when they are younger (four or five). It is undoubtedly important to work with young people at a much earlier stage than we currently do.

From the point of view of the link between first and second chances, I should also like to note that in the second chance schools movement we have always been very wary of what we call pernicious effects.

If you introduce a second chance process too early, if you get people at too early an age when they are still in compulsory education, you run the risk of giving the education system the wrong message. In our view, in compulsory education, it is not just compulsory for the young person to go to school but also for the school system to look for the young person – to see that he or she is not in class and to make that person come back.

If you construct second chance tools in parallel with the school system, you quite simply risk making things easier for the school system, by giving the message that the second chance system will always be there to deal with some types of young people and that the school system can therefore concentrate on the others, i.e. those worth the bother.

In the Commission's second chance schools programme, our view has always been that young people can make progress in a second chance programme only if they have passed the age of compulsory education.

Lastly, from the point of view of this comparison of first and second chance schools, I should like to point out that the former can offer a wide range of recognition and certification that many second chance initiatives cannot. There are excellent second chance initiatives which cannot award the formal qualifications that first chance schools award. This is a real problem. If we try to return someone to a normal pathway, to the mainstream, we should also be able to certify, as in the formal system, that this person has mainstream recognition. We should have the same qualifications and the same certificates.

In some countries this is possible. Barbara Brodigan, for instance, showed us that when working with NVQs it was possible formally to accredit competences of this type. In the many countries where this is not the case, accreditation is a major problem.

In the USA, for example, there is a parallel system. You can obtain your high school diploma in a high school, but at the same time there is also what is called a 'general equivalent diploma' which is an examination that can be taken at local authority offices, libraries, etc. Various bodies can organise these tests. The award of this diploma places you on more or less the same level as someone with a high school diploma. This is very important and requires the cooperation of the education system. Precisely because of this question of certification, we feel it would be best to place second chance school initiatives within the education system.

The issue of feasibility and financing is a further reason for this integration: many of these projects depend on European financing, local funding, grants, etc. They consequently have a short timescale and are very often forced to fight for their survival. They are, in a sense, initiatives that have survived, directed to young people who have survived – a strange combination. But if the second-chance initiative is integrated into the formal system, it can then benefit from the same formal funding as other initiatives.

There is always a risk, however, that this will lead to the usual tragedy: formalising an informal process usually causes it to take on the same vices as the formal system (i.e. it becomes bureaucratic, inflexible, etc.). There is a danger that it may ultimately become little

more than another first-chance initiative. As long as we can prevent this pernicious effect, however, it is obviously better for these initiatives to be integrated into the formal system.

### **Caroline Jones**

Prevention and efforts to re-integrate young people into the formal system are starting to take place in the United Kingdom. We have projects underway, such as ‘Young citizens’, where we work with children from a very early age in primary schools in order to help them to find out about their role in society and what they have to offer. If they think about what they have to offer, they are less likely to drop out of or abandon the system.

Looking at this opposition between first and second chances, we should ask ourselves what will happen if young people fail in the second chance system. Instead of chances, we really ought to talk about new opportunities or alternative opportunities.

I feel that it is vital for all the players in the system to work together and to pool the competences that we all have to offer, that we can all mobilise, instead of setting them against one another. We have much to offer within an education system and we must help schools to make the best possible use of the resources that they have available to prevent exclusion and to prevent young people from excluding themselves from education. Keeping them involved is important.

We also need to work with the community. Developing the community is an essential prerequisite if we want to work with families and people in the community, identify the community’s needs and problems and find remedies. For instance, if young people are at risk of exclusion, we suggest ways of gaining qualifications that are alternatives to formal training. It is therefore vital for us all to work together.

## **18.3. The new technologies as an instrument of integration and socialisation versus the potential risks of increased exclusion**

### **Éric Fries Guggenheim**

At the risk of opening up a new Agora within this Agora, I should like to put a third question which relates to something that I am personally not that keen to talk about because I am old fashioned: the new technologies (i.e., the new information and communication technologies – NICT).

These new technologies are very fashionable – we talk of almost nothing else. Even I have started working almost entirely with the Internet.

Can the new technologies be an instrument of integration and socialisation or do they, in contrast, bring a risk of increased exclusion? I was very struck by what Jean Yves Rochex said yesterday about the key role of writing and written culture. Do the NT have anything to do with written culture? As Jean-Yves Rochex said yesterday, everything is already decided; there are people who will use them in a written culture and then there are others who will use them for goodness only knows what purpose, for star wars and so on.

This is the question: can the NT be used to develop lifelong learning and to interest, and perhaps motivate, a different public in a different way? Is it not risky, however, to give new instruments to those who can gain access to them because they live in the countries where these technologies have been developed or because they have the necessary resources, while in contrast, to deprive people elsewhere of this kind of access because they lack the material resources to purchase this type of equipment? Is this a new opportunity or is there a new risk of exclusion?

### **Régis Régnault**

This is a very good question. The ‘N’ for ‘new, could, however, be removed in some sectors. In France we also have the TICE – information and communication technologies for education. This is yet another approach.

In practice, not all young people, not all men, not all women, are equal before information and communication technologies – and not just in terms of equipment. These technologies raise the same problem as any new tool: in the language of Aesop, it is the best and the worst of things. I am also a teacher and the initial experiments that we conducted in higher vocational education in languages are undoubtedly significant. People come face to face with realities that they might well not have discerned before and are immediately brought up against the inequality between their students and their own shortcomings in handling a tool. Their own jobs may even be called into question.

It is not just for this reason that we need to think about the job of today’s teacher or trainer. With the information technologies, however, the problems are in front of us and are evident.

This is a first level, concerning which the talk by Jean-Yves Rochex was very relevant; I shall not return to it. I should like to take this opportunity, however, to look at the other side of the new technologies, which concerns the previously discussed issue of the link between the education system and the working world. I would suggest we need to take a much broader view, focusing not just on remedial action, but of necessary cooperation between the two worlds that in turn entails wider-ranging cooperation between schools and their surrounding worlds.

Very paradoxical phenomena can be seen in our society, particularly in the working world. While the new technologies promise an increase in the knowledge, competences and qualifications of every employee and member of the labour collective, at the same time these

technologies lead to a division of labour that exacerbates inequalities. In some sectors NICTs are not necessarily synonymous with improved qualifications and competences and do not necessarily modernise work. In fact, the opposite may be true. In the cleaning sector, for instance, the introduction of the NICTs has led to a very dramatic downgrading of employees' working conditions and occupational situations.

There is a division of labour between people from whom increasing tool handling competences, as well as the general cultural competences needed to be able to use these tools in their work, are being demanded. At the other extreme, work is organised in a way that ties menial workers to their machines and forces them carry out activities that do not have a great deal to do with qualification and training needs.

This is changing the social landscape in a major way. We think it is a shame because we tend to believe in the role enterprises can play, not just in remedial action but in training overall. When I talk about enterprises, I obviously mean the labour collective and employees who are its main players. This is not to detract from employers' prerogatives, but we do tend to think of enterprises as employers. In reality it is its employees that make an enterprise. It seems to me that we need to look at enterprises at three levels:

- (a) as places of production;
- (b) as places of training and of the formulation of training content;
- (c) as places of work.

In practice in today's society, and this a point that has not been brought up much over the last two days, schools no longer have a monopoly on knowledge from the point of view of its formulation or transmission. They will necessarily have to open up and enterprises may be places where training content can be formulated in connection, obviously, with qualifications and employment. Through their employees, enterprises can then help the community to benefit from their expertise and intelligence.

As regards the very rich potential that we have in our enterprises, I agree with Mr Tersmette that the same qualifications and diplomas are needed for our very different training routes. It is important for the objectives to be the same whatever the training route. This raises the question of how to achieve this goal and how everyone can be persuaded. We need to pose the question in terms of public service. Not a state public service as might have been conceived in previous times – certainly not! A democratic and open public service where networking and cooperation are important, a public service of education, training and guidance. France is currently looking at ways of forging closer links between two worlds which unfortunately no longer had anything to do with one another: school guidance and vocational guidance. What we need to think about, in my view, is a public service of general guidance covering schools, employment and continuing training. Enterprises have a very interesting role to play here as well.

Unfortunately, the way in which our society is developing is making it impossible for this potential to be exploited; in fact, the reverse is the case. At present, the Ministry of Education

in France and the deputy minister for vocational education are thinking about adopting a protocol to be signed by enterprises and the Ministry, which would guide and regulate every period of work experience by young people in enterprises. Abuses have arisen in practice, not just because of the profit motives that Heikki Suomalainen, the UNICE representative, mentioned earlier, but because of the current constraints facing SMEs. While they are obviously interested in recruiting young trainees, they do not always have the resources to take on the necessary educational and teaching role. As a result, some forms of young people's alternance between school and enterprise are exploitative and therefore unacceptable. There are fortunately other cases in which the recruitment of a young person into an enterprise leads to genuine training and a genuine qualification. Every case of abuse, of training in enterprise that offers no training, of young people who are mobilised for production without any return for themselves or for the community must obviously be combated.

At this level, I therefore think – in relation to what I was saying before at the beginning of my reply about the dual nature of the NICTs, which make it possible to do everything and nothing – that basic political question that we have to ask concerns the use of this tool. Within what framework can we bring about this necessary cooperation?

### **Lise Skanting**

I do not fear, like Éric Fries Guggenheim, that people are spending their time playing 'star wars' on the Internet. We need to be aware that all these games have been invented in order to develop the strategic thinking of their young users. This strategic thinking is what the labour market needs. Teachers should not therefore be frightened by the fact that young people are playing star wars or whatever on the Internet or with games consoles. I have often talked to teachers who are never aware of what is happening. In general, they say that they do not want anything to do with this kind of 'war' game. Certainly, they are war games and we are all against war, but the way of thinking that they develop, i.e. rapid thinking, making a choice between different possibilities or objectives, is so important in our daily lives when we are faced with new challenges: we need to find new solutions, we cannot go backwards, we have to base our solutions on what we tried out yesterday, but we cannot apply the same solution as yesterday!

The challenge of the NICTs also takes us back to what has been said previously, to the opposition between diversity and unity. The Internet is a kind of unified system. It is open to everyone and while everyone uses the same tools and methods, it is not uniform because the amount of information is so colossal that everyone can find different solutions.

The Danish law on schools, the *Folkeskole*, states that the NICTs should be integrated into the training imparted throughout the school system. While we have not as yet fully achieved this, I think that it is a good way of taking account of what will follow after school for young people.

In reality, I think that the NICTs have already had a major impact on our young people. Some days ago, I discovered a Danish study which said that girls no longer wanted to play with dolls. What a tragedy! And that boys no longer wanted to play with cars! An even greater tragedy!

Toy manufacturers have realised that the age of their customers falls by one year every year, as girls stop playing with dolls when they are six and boys stop playing with cars a little later. For them, this is symptomatic of a lack of originality among children.

I do not understand this. For all those of us who remember, was it not boring to play with dolls? It was, however, the only option that we had. Children can nowadays log onto the Internet, gain access to mountains of information, surf around mountains of new things and do much more interesting things than they could in the past. I think that this is a very good sign for the next generation.

I also think that the Internet and the NICTs are an instrument of democracy. They support democracy. It is enough to be able to read and write (the goal of all school systems) to be able to use the NICTs. We must therefore place the emphasis on the ability to read and write. It is true that this is not as well developed as one might hope, as many studies have shown, and this is a real shame.

The NICTs are a tool of democracy and this also applies to enterprises. We are all today's employees, including employers who are themselves employees. We have a shared interest in ensuring the best possible use of human resources. We have different tasks to carry out, but it is in all our interests for the tasks that we carry out to be performed as well as possible. Obviously, employers take decisions and employees implement them, but good employees are also able to propose good solutions that will be accepted by employers.

The picture is not black and white and it is for this reason that it is so important for people to play games like 'star wars'. Because the skills that they provide are what employers and employees need in the workplace to be able to discover new solutions, take decisions quickly and draw on all their skilfulness to find solutions to practical problems.

When I say that the NICTs strengthen what makes our societies into democratic societies, this takes me back to the competences needed from the very outset in the school system and then throughout life. It is paramount to have bases, to be capable of doing something or you will never achieve anything, as I once heard a researcher say. You have to have occupational competences, built on the foundations of your personal competences and on your ability to use what you have learnt. When you are able to use what you have learnt you are able to undertake other tasks with other people, who are also able to put what they have learnt to use.

As you will be aware, it is not enough merely to advocate social competences, as account also needs to be taken of personal competences and occupational competences. These three types of competence are of equal importance and this applies to both employability and adaptability.

To return to the NICTs, we should perhaps stop talking about NICT tools. The NICTs are a new world, a new way of thinking, a new way of living. They are not an instrument for society but are in themselves a new and emerging society. We can obviously choose to oppose this society, but we can also choose to anticipate it and paddle in difficult waters. This is the prospect that I prefer.

## **Edward Tersmette**

I am very worried about the future of Danish children. I feel that we will very soon adopt a Directive on this issue as well, obliging them to start to play with cars and dolls again.

There is no doubt that new technologies are magic words. Looking, however, at all the problems that our colleague Éric Fries Guggenheim has had with the overhead projector, it is also obvious that their importance should not be exaggerated.

This leads me to what the British writer, Charles Leadbeater, wrote in his book 'Living on Thin Air'. This is a book on lifelong learning. In it he talks about his grandparents. When they looked around them in their room or their house, they could explain how the smallest device worked: how their watches worked, how to wash clothes, etc. Nowadays, when we look around our rooms, we are completely unable to explain how anything works. We can turn the television on, but nobody can really explain how it works: how does an invisible wave in your room connect you to the European football championships? How does an equally invisible wave cook your chicken? We know how to work with machines, but we do not in practice know how they work. We cannot explain them and if these machines break down, we do not know how to repair them.

We cannot therefore talk about a knowledge-based society and should instead talk about an ignorance-based society. We are completely ignorant and we have to put our faith in experts who come to our room to help us whenever necessary.

Moreover, and this is my first point, over and above the affirmation that the new technologies free us and personalise us, and allow us to plan our educational pathways and do everything ourselves through our computers, it is important to remember that we are nevertheless in the rather laughable situation of being highly dependent on that small handful of people who can repair machines when they break down, and that we do not really understand the instruments on which we work. I feel that this raises a very important philosophical problem.

There are also some negative dimensions to work with the new information and communication technologies (NICTs). Education should, for instance, also include dialogue, interaction, exchanges of experiences and ideas and so on. We do not, however, normally talk to our computers. Actually some people do, when they lose their nerve and tend to shout and even resort to physical abuse, but this is perhaps a bad sign. We should therefore be concerned by the fact that computers are basically a passive way of consuming information. Education should, however, also be about dialogue and interaction.

This leads me to my second point; i.e. that education should develop a critical spirit and prepare for citizenship.

We talk about the information society when we talk about the Internet. However, and I admit I am being provocative here, what do we talk about in the Internet pages devoted to the projects that we are carrying out and the institutions that we represent? Our society is more one of

propaganda and publicity than of information, assuming the Internet is a major provider of information. Very few students are able to make the distinction between what is fact, what is embellishment and what lies in the realms of wishful or magical thinking.

Thirdly, I think that the NICTs also raise problems from the point of view of the interaction between teachers and students. If some students are much better at using the NICTs than their teachers, this raises major problems for teachers when they have to represent authority in the classroom and be the person who teaches, instructs and guides students. A problem arises when students are much more up to date with this technology than their teachers and when this invades the classroom. Training for teachers is obviously what is needed here.

In the USA, already are much more advanced than we are in the use of the NICTs (which are almost old technologies there) studies have shown that virtual contacts were replacing real contacts. A large number of teenagers spend a great deal of time alone in their rooms, avoiding contact with real life.

There is also a whole range of positive elements. We talked about 'star wars' just now. This makes learning entertaining. I think that this is really important. Multimedia technologies make it possible to forge a genuine link between learning and play which is not possible in traditional education. This may help to gain the attention of students and motivate them to study.

In the context of our work today, it is very important to bear in mind that the computer allows people to learn at their own pace, with their own style of learning. You can, for instance, make mistakes behind your computer without anyone seeing. We learn from our mistakes. You can make a mistake two, three or four times on a computer until you understand and learn why you were making this mistake without ever having your work marked in red pen or feeling inferior to other people or being punished for your mistake. When we talk about second chances, I feel that the new technologies offer a real potential by providing an instrument that can be adapted to different paces and different styles of learning in a class.

Ultimately, if we weigh up the pros and cons, we come back to the question of whether or not we trust the ability of humanity to manage these technologies. Nuclear technologies and genetic manipulation raise exactly the same question. As long as we are aware that we are responsible for the technologies that we have developed, I feel that the pros will outweigh the cons and that we ought to be able to control what is negative. Your own view of this will depend, however, on whether you are an optimist or a pessimist.

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Agora IX cast a critical eye on the paradoxes of the successes achieved by alternative modes of training. Through this success they help filter out more and more young people (and less young people) who have experienced school failure and help create a hard core of those who are left by the wayside. How are we to fight school failure and allow every citizen access to the key skills considered indispensable in our society? Agora IX may not have found a miracle cure but it did stress the need to mobilise all 'intervention partners' (rather than actors), considering that the educational system now obviously goes beyond the school system. Lifelong learning should allow everyone to learn at their own speed. What remains to be done is to create the conditions for this learning and find the means to motivate citizens to pursue it.

## **Agora IX** **Alternative education** **and training processes**

Thessaloniki, 26 – 27 June 2000



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