

Expert Workshop

‘The role of credit transfer systems in opening access, admission and exemption between VET and HE’

22– 23 May 2014, Thessaloniki
Cedefop
Montessori room

Permeability Between VET and HE: a Way of Enabling Learners to Move Across Different Education and Training Sectors



**Presentation at the
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Montessori room**

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Permeability – a General Understanding

Focus of permeability

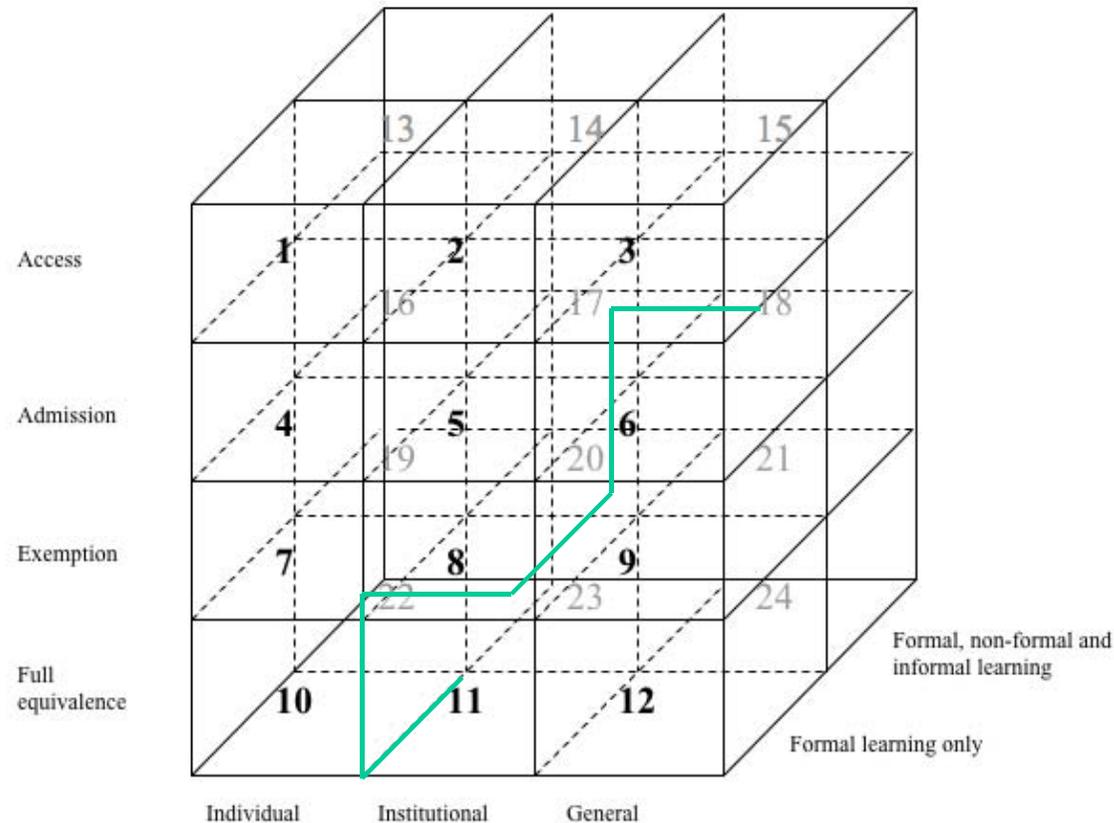
Permeability in education and training is mainly being discussed under the vertical aspect. But

- it is excluded to understand permeability as a simple mechanism,
- permeability includes norms and standards, curricula and the context of a discipline;
- permeability is a characteristic feature of education and training as well as of economics and sociology as a socio-economic phenomenon.

Cedefop 2011/12:“ It is important to notice that the reference to the systemic and intitutional context is part of the definition of permeability ...“

What about social & educational aspects?

Typology of permeability mechanisms



Source: Final Report "From credit systems to permeability in education and training", December 2011

Definition of Permeability

Permeability in education ...

... describes the opportunity for a learner to transfer from one educational system, educational programme, educational sub-system or learning path to another.

The rationale of “permeability”

“Permeability” shall support

- to overcome the separation of general and vocational education paths,
- to accredit VET graduations as university entrance qualifications (upgrading of VET),
- to upgrade practice and experience-based learning.

The role of “permeability” in the current European process

“Permeability”

- has a prominent political significance, it implies
 - mobility,
 - equal opportunity,
 - social integration,
 - career advancement,
- ... is valued positively both nationally and internationally,
- ... is supported by social partners, teachers, learners,
- ... must be implemented (political actors, educational planners ...).

Main direction of permeability: Transition from VET/CVT to the academic strand of higher education

But ...

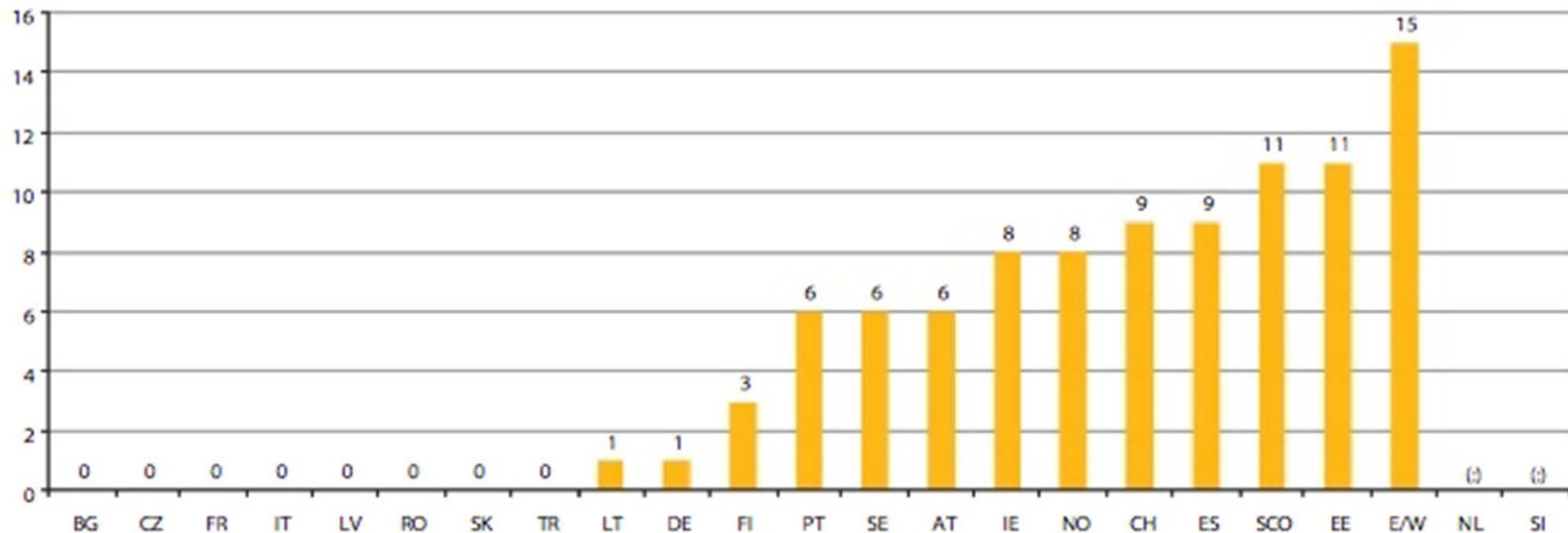
- University education is essentially distinguished from other types of education and training by the scientific work and scientific expertise in a discipline
- Primary goal of university education is the understanding of the theoretical and methodological structures of a discipline.

Vocational education and training does not provide the basis for a seamless transition to university studies, because there is not necessarily a scientific basis for it.

Permeability – Non-Traditional Students at Universities

VET-Sector is small – with less of a problem of access to higher education

Figure A.3a: Students with non-traditional routes to higher education as a share of all ISCED 5A students (%), narrow definition — 2006



Note: Year 2006 or last year available (2005-2007).

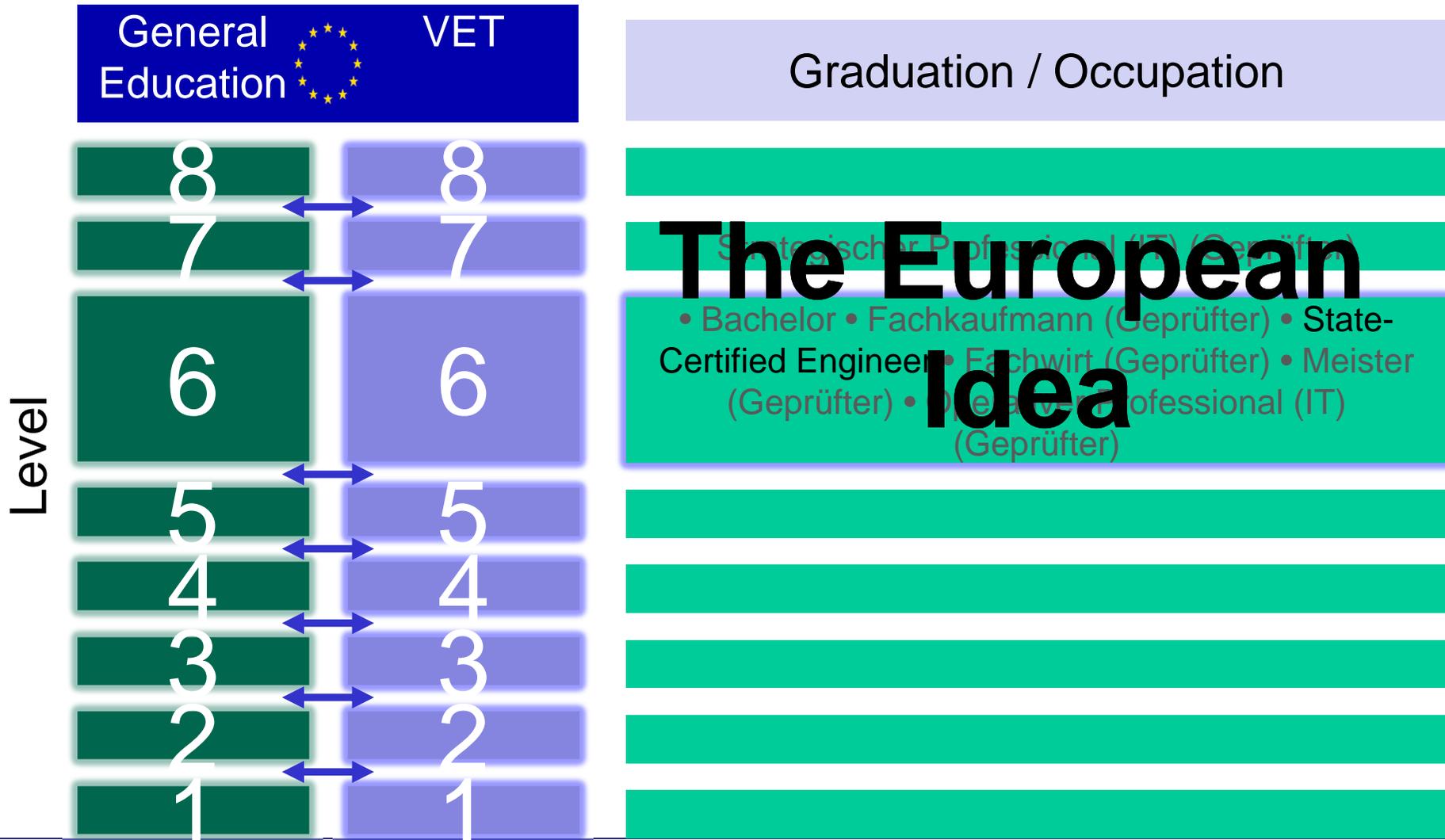
Source: Eurostudent III.

Barriers of Permeability: Higher & Vocational Education

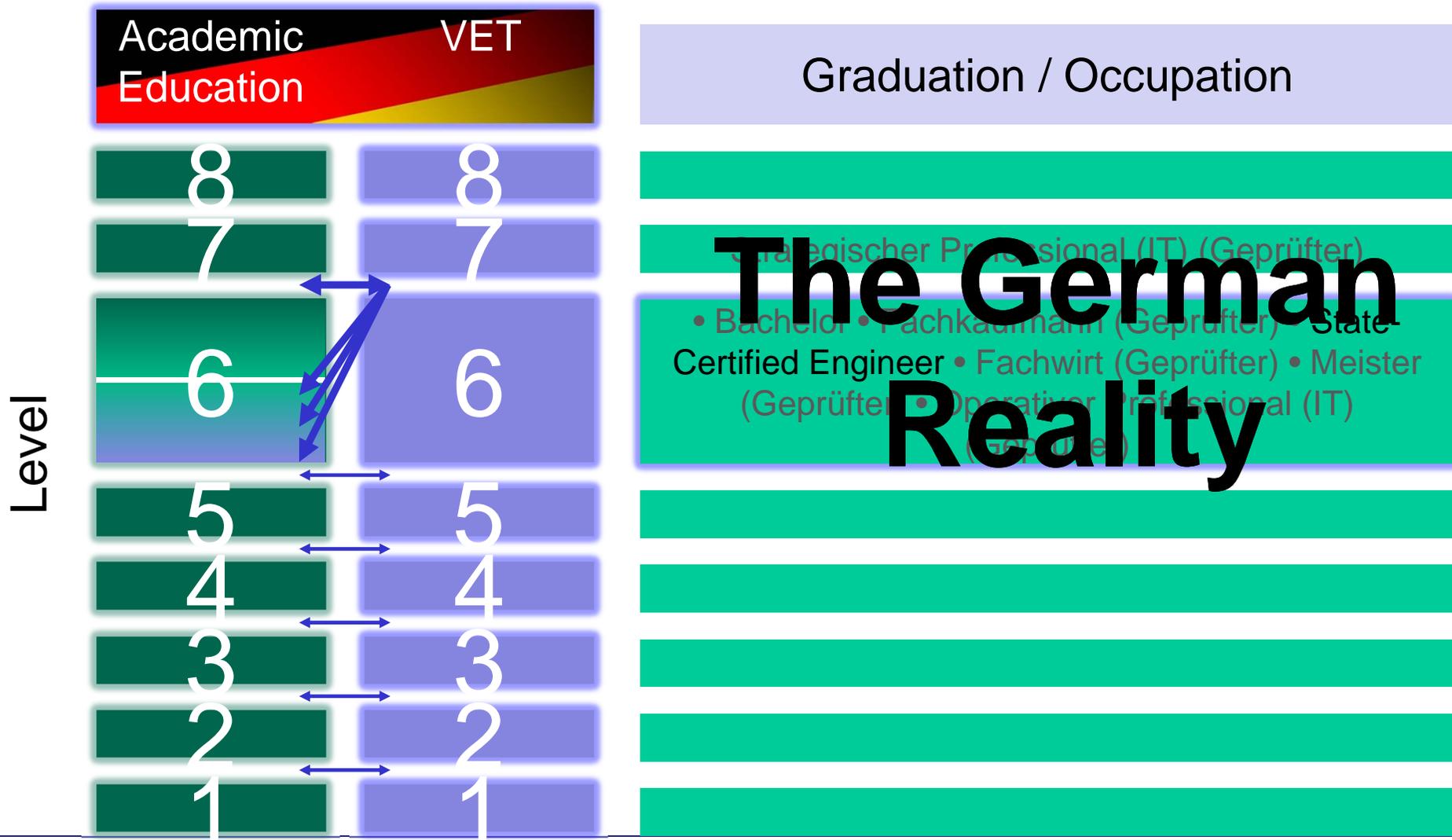
Hope of governments: ...using learning outcomes opens up possibilities for credit accumulation and transfer of learning credits between qualifications ...

Example: German State-Certified Engineer/ Master-Craftsperson

		Graduation / Occupation	
Level			
	8	8	
	7	7	Strategischer Professional (IT) (Geprüfter)
	6	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bachelor • Fachkaufmann (Geprüfter) • State-Certified Engineer • Fachwirt (Geprüfter) • Meister (Geprüfter) • Operativer Professional (IT) (Geprüfter)
	5	5	
	4	4	
	3	3	
	2	2	
1	1		



Assignment to the GQF: Equality of Bachelor (level 6) and Highly Qualified Practitioners



What does this mean for the careers of State-Certified Engineers?

Continuing vocational training is mainly capped by

- Framework Act for Higher Education
- Resolutions by the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (KMK)
- Further training ordinances of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBWF)
- Ordinances on higher education.

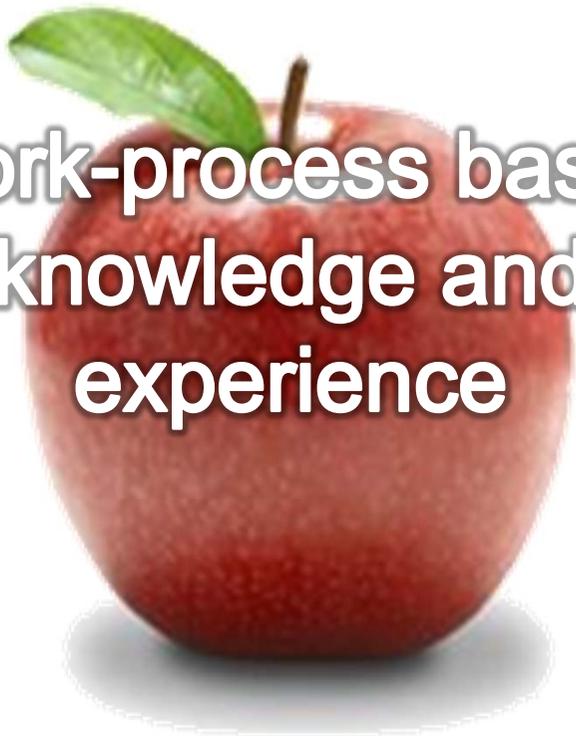
In spite of its aspirations for the equality of vocational and general education, it does not pave the way for equal vocational careers for all occupations on all competence levels.

Categories	Vocational education and training (VET)	Academic Education
Guiding objectives	Vocational practical employability	Scientific employability
Competence orientation	Specialist, human and social competences; Methodological, learning and communication competences	Knowledge, understanding, ability to analyse, skills (systematic, communicative, instrumental competences)
Work process orientation	Access to concrete processes with corporate means of work	Systems and abstract processes
Curricular structures	Structured according to traditional subjects or work tasks	Modular structure according to scientific systematics
Curricular principle	Structured according to work requirements, work processes, tasks	Specialist systematics according to scientific disciplines
Knowledge systematics	- none -	Context of disciplines
Subject	Work-oriented and informal access (experience)	Specialist scientific access

Table 1: Qualitative differences between VET and university education (selection).

Schneeberger: „The question of correspondence of formal qualifications and occupational positions“ is largely a ´terra incognita´ of comparative educational research“ (2006: 6)

Work-process based
knowledge and
experience



Scientific approach,
scientific disciplines,
scientific knowledge



The Idea

- The promotion of equality and permeability with the aid of a description of learning results is a clever approach!
- However, it does not take into consideration that learning processes, learning contents, the quality of learning, the disciplines etc. are differing significantly!
- Conflicts regarding the acceptance of learning results in different educational pathways in different institutions and can therefore not be resolved (see Calleja). There is only little evidence for the acceptance of the transfer of learning credits between qualifications.

To Succeed with Permeability Further Efforts are Required! – Examples & Research! –

Construction principles of a permeability typology

- the access mode (access, admission, exemption, full equivalence),
- learning mode (formal learning, all learning),
- recognition scope (individual, institutional, general).

Frequencies of Permeability types

Permeability between VET and Higher Education is frequently following either the exemption type or the access type (building either an individual recognition of all learning forms or general/blanket recognition of formal learning only).

Source: Wittig 2012

Permeability in practice: the idea of a ternary study path for “practitioners”

- 1st cycle degree: Bachelor Vocational Pedagogue with the technological subject fields metal/automotive or electrical/IT,
- “ternary study” concept i.e. studying at three learning sites: at university, at educational providers (chambers of industry and commerce etc.) and at companies (i.e. at workplaces),
- extra occupational oriented study programmes (i.e. the “students” work during the day and go to classes in the evening or weekends),
- the studies can be interrupted,
- the addressed audience: master craftsmen, certified engineers/technicians, and certified vocational pedagogues (Chamber of Industry and Commerce).

Methodology of acknowledging qualifications and certificates

➤ **Equivalency check:**

- comparing the provided teaching and learning materials (including the exams/tests) through experts;
- developing a tentative equivalency matrix;
- additionally conducting workshops using the prepared equivalency matrix and ask participants to discuss and conclude the equivalency (workshop participants: experts of the certificate courses, experts of the Bachelor, professors, and students of bachelor as well as of the courses to be acknowledged);
- check the equivalency of levels (e.g. on the basis of NQF levels).

Conclusions

1. permeability is questioning the demarcations of educational sub-systems and the inflexible path-dependencies of vocational and general education;
2. legal entitlement to university access with VET certificates **is not enough**;
3. focus on “learning outcomes” is not enough;
4. accreditation must create incentives to start higher education programmes;
5. reluctance of universities must be overcome;
6. flexible transitions between VET and HE (and vice versa) and differentiated recognition procedures are needed.

Outlook

Desideratum: Develop a new architecture of education in Europe

- Moulding an educational system ensuring equal opportunity building on an “equal” evaluation between VET and general education with close interlinking.
- Overall structure of such an architecture relying on integration and permeability.
- Establishing a networking across the established institutions to overcome the mutual institutional delimitations.
- Establishing hybrids: E.g. dual study programmes, a hybrid between vocational training and tertiary education, ternary study pathes.

Selected Research Topics are:

1. Structural difference between vocational and higher education;
2. Compatibility of the contents between vocational and higher education;
3. Compatibility of the curricula between vocational and higher education;
4. Access and restriction on admission to Higher Education for VET graduates;
5. Assessment of learning outcomes acquired in VET institutions by Higher Education institutions;
6. Role and acceptance of equivalent procedures for the accreditation of VET profiles or parts thereof;
7. Acceptance of formally, non-formally and informally acquired learning outcomes at the transition between different educational systems;
8. Assessment of the otherness of competencies acquired in different institutions;
9. Different learning behaviour of the target groups (skilled workers, experienced workers, high school graduates etc.).



Thank you very much for your attention!

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