

PANORAMA

AGORA X **Social and vocational** **guidance**

Thessaloniki, 19-20 October, 2000

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Foreword

The Agora project is a forum inviting the participation of very diverse groups – academics, social partners, policy-makers, practitioners – with an aim to help them create a common language and bring together points of view that often diverge sharply.

Social and vocational guidance may not, at first glance, seem an appropriate Agora theme; it could be considered a simple technical question on which the various partners could not possibly have different opinions. A large majority of guidance professionals would perhaps agree with the definition of guidance offered by Jean Guichard in the French contribution to a study coordinated by Glenys Watts for the European Commission in 1993:

‘As a practice, guidance defines itself as aid offered to an individual to allow him or her to define himself or herself. Guidance covers activities for individuals (information, interviews, evaluation, counselling, etc...), groups (information, coordinations, evaluation, counselling, etc...), and institutions (setting up workshops and procedures to aid guidance with teams of teachers or trainers, updating evaluation procedures which all actors in an institution must apply). The principle which underlies these actions is that of developing the individual’s autonomy. It is the person concerned who chooses; the aim of guidance is to allow the individual to make informed choices’ ⁽¹⁾.

By the same token it is difficult not to agree with Sylvie Boursier when she writes that:

‘Vocational guidance is concerned with how a person stands with relation to work at a specific moment in time within a specific socioeconomic context’. ⁽²⁾

The general definition of what orientation is and what it deals with are an area of consensus.

However, as Serge Blanchard writes in his introduction to the special issue of *L’orientation scolaire et professionnelle on Counselling in Orientation*:

‘... the fundamental question of guidance counselling is what it aims at. Should we aim to help certain individuals to create themselves within certain, well-defined, forms of identification? Or should we help them question the identities on the basis of which the person creates him/herself and perceives others? These questions are linked to whether we retain or transform the structure of social relations.

⁽¹⁾ Guichard, Jean; Forner, Y.; Danvers, F. Les services d’orientation scolaire et professionnelle en France. In Watts, A.G. et al. (eds) *Orientation scolaire et professionnelle dans la Communauté Européenne: rapport de synthèse d’une étude effectuée à la demande de la Commission des Communautés européennes (Task-force ‘ressources humaines, éducation, formation, jeunesse’)*. Luxembourg: Office for official publications of the European Communities, 1994.

⁽²⁾ Boursier, Sylvie. Du bilan de compétences à l’orientation professionnelle. *Actualité de la formation permanente*, 1996, No 144.

The question of guidance counselling leads us therefore inevitably to ask questions of a political, philosophical and ethical nature.'

This is where unanimity ends and the debate can begin.

Guidance is based on an fundamental contradiction: it attempts to place individuals on the right track, without in any way limiting them. This is what Josette Zarka calls: 'the fundamental paradox of guidance counselling (influencing – allowing freedom)'. ⁽³⁾

For young people trying to find their way, however, vocational or educational guidance whether really functions as choice by default – depending on school results. It is of course true that guidance, while accompanying or encouraging aspirations, must also be in touch with real-world constraints and not try to achieve the impossible. As Jacques Limoges says, '*guiding and being guided means that a person takes his place, makes his mark and attains his existential project; that he takes shape in the world as it is here and now*'. ⁽⁴⁾ This implies both the ability to dream and the ability to mourn. But what place does each of these processes really have?

As Jean Guichard shows 'school can be described as a structured mirror which offers the adolescent a certain reflection of himself in which he (or she) recognises himself in a certain way. Thus, the structure also becomes a means to structure. Here, what principally informs one's idea of self and others is the concept of excellence as produced and defined in the school system'. ⁽⁵⁾ However, as 'a school system is at once a system of distinct scholarly disciplines and a system of creating distinctions between individuals', it 'creates both the self-image of students and their way of imagining themselves in the future. One's reflexion in the school system's mirror becomes a powerful factor in training for a profession.'

As individual autonomy is largely contained and constrained by the social and institutional context in which the individual evolves, guidance contributes to the process of internalising this context. People are led to admit and accept that they are a product of their own strengths and weaknesses, rather than of the socioeconomic constraints they face.

We might say that this is exactly the issue on which orientation and guidance comes face-to-face with contemporary realities. Guidance by default – meaning of course that the successful need no guidance, as Sylvie Boursier points out ⁽⁶⁾ – is less and less in tune with our present mode of production, which has changed profoundly since the sixties. Until the

⁽³⁾ Zarka, Josette. Conseils et limites: limite du conseil, au-delà des limites: l'appel sans espace, l'espace des appels. In *L'orientation scolaire et professionnelle: numéro spécial: le conseil en orientation*, 2000, vol. 29, No 1, p. 141-169.

⁽⁴⁾ Limoges, Jacques. À l'aube du 21^e siècle: le conseil d'orientation scolaire et professionnelle. *Revue internationale de carriéologie*, 2000.

⁽⁵⁾ Guichard, Jean. Cadres et formes identitaires vicariantes et pratiques en orientation. *L'orientation scolaire et professionnelle: numéro spécial: le conseil en orientation*, 2000, vol. 29, No 1, p. 181-212.

⁽⁶⁾ Boursier, Sylvie. Du bilan de compétences à l'orientation professionnelle. *Actualité de la formation permanente*, 1996, No 144.

sixties skills remained relatively stable and easy to describe and inventory; qualifications acquired in the school system were easily matched to the needs of the economy. But the technical and organisational shake-up of the last 30 years has made any prediction about future skills needs and about linkages between jobs and skills much more difficult. Moreover, there is clearly much less need for non-qualified or low-qualified workers. In fact, the skills which are today in the highest demand (or at least are more highly appreciated) are of a transversal or generic kind, such as organisational ability, sense of responsibility, ability to work in a team, ability to deal with extraordinary or urgent situations, flexibility, capacity to learn, etc. This is not to say that specific knowledge, specialised technical qualifications or operational skills are no longer important – far from it. It is simply that the need for such knowledge, technical qualifications or specialised skills is much more short-term than in the past. For example, Jean-François Germe and François Pottier, who studied the careers and professional projects of a group of salaried employees planning to train at the CNAM found that:

‘People do not make choices [...] on the basis of a priori long-term plans but, on the contrary, make stage-by-stage decisions, which function as short-term adjustments to training paths. People are less interested in training for a specific profession for which they expect to find outlets than to find jobs with the most opportunities for development.’ ⁽⁷⁾

The simple question we could still ask in the sixties and seventies, i.e., which training for which job, has become a real puzzle. It is on this question – whether we can still connect training to employment – that session I of the Agora will open.

This development has considerable consequences for the entire educational system: initial training, continuing training, general training, vocational training. It equally affects the role and methods of guidance. The more difficult it becomes to see the way forward, the less we can limit ourselves to providing guidance to those who want it; in fact, we have to teach them to orient themselves. As the connection between training and employment weakens we can assume that training never ends; it becomes a permanent process, what the White paper of the European Commission *‘Teaching and learning: towards the learning society’* ⁽⁸⁾ names lifelong learning. In this way, guidance, which used to be an important decision taken in a particular moment, becomes a permanent link to the training process. As Jacques Limoges says, it becomes *‘a fundamentally educational and preventative act’* ⁽⁹⁾.

For Sylvie Chiousse and Patrick Werquin:

⁽⁷⁾ Germe, Jean-François; Pottier, François. Trajectoires professionnelles et formation, se préparer à une profession ou s’adapter au marché? In Dupuy, Yves; Mallet, Louis (ed.) *Mélanges en l’honneur du professeur Jean Vincens*. Toulouse: Presses de l’Université des Sciences Sociales de Toulouse, 1998.

⁽⁸⁾ European Commission, DG XXII. *Teaching and learning: towards the learning society: white Paper on education and training*. Luxembourg: Office for official publications of the European Communities, 1995.

⁽⁹⁾ Limoges, Jacques. À l’aube du 21^e siècle: le conseil d’orientation scolaire et professionnelle. *Revue internationale de carriérologie*, 2000.

‘Future trends on the labour market, indicating greater flexibility and demand for an ever higher level of skills confirm the need to provide fir counselling services throughout life, so that people can cope better with the transition between school and employment and with periods of unemployment.

To avoid unemployment thought should be given to new forms of career guidance during working life. Just as there should be lifelong learning, counselling services through life are also needed to help people deal with the complexities of the working world and training. (¹⁰)

This change in the role and time-scale of guidance counselling, i.e. the transformation of what used to be a well-defined activity coming at the end of initial training into a permanent accompaniment, widens the scope of orientation and guidance. Guidance now involves more than work: it deals with the wider social arena and the individual as citizen. It thus becomes a far-reaching, continuous process aimed not just at work but at life in general. This is what Sylvie Chioussse and Patrick Werquin express as follows:

‘Besides thinking in terms of life as a whole, which brings us to the concept of lifelong learning, we must consider the idea that advice and vocational guidance make sense only if the individual’s broader needs are taken into account and strategies developed, taking the holistic approach to each person’s problems. (¹¹)

Session II of the Agora will deal with this radical transformation in the character of guidance and orientation, i.e. the passage from vocational guidance to social and vocational guidance.

Besides the aim and character of guidance counselling we must also question the methods and tools it employs; in any case these are not always unanimously accepted. For example, in the United States there seems to exist a natural continuum between professional guidance, social orientation and therapy; in Europe, the fields of orientation and guidance are kept distinct from therapy. Josette Zarka expresses this by stating: *‘Guidance can only go beyond its limits by respecting them’ (¹²)*.

However, a certain number of tools seem unarguably useful and efficient in lifelong social and vocational guidance. The third session of the Agora will analyse practices and/or tools such as the skills balance sheet, the Euro ruta, local missions and other guidance and follow-up schemes, tutoring, philosophical guidance, etc. The session will attempt to identify, on the

(¹⁰) Chioussse, Sylvie; Werquin, Patrick. *Lifelong Vocational Guidance: European Case Studies: Synthesis report published by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions*. (Cedefop Panorama series; 5079). Luxembourg: Office for official publications of the European Communities, 1998, p. 61

(¹¹) Chioussse, Sylvie; Werquin, Patrick. *Lifelong Vocational Guidance: European Case Studies: Synthesis report published by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions*. (Cedefop Panorama series; 5079). Luxembourg: Office for official publications of the European Communities, 1998, p. 56

(¹²) Zarka, Josette. *Conseils et limites: limite du conseil, au-delà des limites: l’appel sans espace, l’espace des appels*. In *L’orientation scolaire et professionnelle: numéro spécial: le conseil en orientation*, 2000, vol. 29, No 1, p. 167

basis of experience, the decisive element which makes of social and vocational guidance a good practice, in the sense in which we use this term in the European institutions.

The session of the Agora will be the following:

Session I : Links between training and employment

Session II : A holistic approach to guidance

Session III : Good practices in guidance

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Agenda of the meeting

Thursday 19 October 2000

- 09.00 Welcome and opening of the Agora: Johan van Rens, Director, Cedefop
- 09.15 The issue: Guidance as educational process: Éric Fries Guggenheim, Agora Thessaloniki project manager

Session I Training and employment: what kind of connection?

- 09.30 The new approaches of the connection between training and employment: Philippe Trouvé, Commercial High School of Clermont-Ferrand (France)
- 10.00 Training for a specific profession or adapting to market evolution: Jean-François Germe, Director of the Centre for Employment Studies (France)
- 11.00 Round-table discussion of the Actors in Initial and Continuing Vocational Education and Training
- The notion of professional career in 21st century
- Augusto Praça, General Confederation of Portuguese Workers – National Trade Union Group CGTP-IN (Portugal)
 - Tarja Tuominen, Adviser in Educational Affair, Finnish Employers' Confederation of Service Industries (Finland)
 - Laura Cassio, Directorate General for Education and Culture (European Commission)
- 11.45 General discussion on the connection between employment and training

Session II Towards a holistic approach to guidance

- 14.30 Aims and functions of guidance practices: Jean Guichard, Director of the National Institute for studies on labour and vocational guidance, INETOP, CNAM (France)
- 15.00 Adults pedagogy as existential guidance: Finn Thorbjørn Hansen, Research Centre on adult education, Danish University of Pedagogy (Denmark)
- 16.00 For a social and vocational integration to achieve a life project: Jacques Limoges, Sherbrooke University (Quebec)

- 16.30 The passage from Vocational Guidance to Social and Vocational Guidance; Help people overcome their fear of autonomy: Charalambos Michailidis, Technical Director in a private enterprise, Thessaloniki (Greece)
- 17.00 Debate on the contributions/interventions

Friday 20 October 2000

Session III Some guidance practices

A – Youngsters guidance

- 09.00 Career coaching / tutoring: Erwin Kämmerer, Pädagogisches Institut des Bundes für Steiermark (Austria)
- 09.20 Improving vocational guidance for youngsters with learning disabilities – report on a project aiming to provide young people with the competences necessary for lifelong learning: Gerlinde Hammer, Bremen university (Germany)
- 09.40 Integrating guidance approaches into the everyday teaching: Vibeke Nørgaard, Technical College in Frederiksberg (Denmark)
- 10.00 Discussion on youngsters' guidance practices

B – Adults guidance

- 11.00 Information centres for the unemployed: Piero Pirotto, Formazione 80 (Italy)
- 11.20 Euro Ruta: A trade union's e-guidance initiative – Marta del Castillo, Coordinator of the guidance network of the Foundation for training and employment (FOREM) of the CC.OO Trade union congress (Spain)
- 11.40 The skills balance sheet (le Bilan de compétences): Sylvie Boursier, Unit in charge of guidance and recognition of prior learning and experience, General delegation for employment and vocational education and training – DGEFP (France)
- 12.00 Discussion on adult's guidance practices

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1. New approaches to the relationship between training and employment in Europe ⁽¹³⁾

Philippe Trouvé

1.1. Introduction

When considering the relationship between training and employment it is important to avoid two serious errors.

- (a) The first is to assume that the labour market is governed solely by market forces and functions as a perfect market. While it is true that this approach has been modified and amended to varying degrees over many years – witness the theory of contracts or incentives, the transaction or wage-efficiency economy, etc. – most orthodox neo-classical economists still accept the assumptions of the underlying economic theory.
- (b) The second error, widespread and long-established in France since it gave birth to Céreq ⁽¹⁴⁾ during the 1970s, is to overestimate the potential regulatory effect of government planning that seeks to achieve a match between the education, training and employment systems, particularly at a macro level.

These two errors are only apparently contradictory since the former, by stressing the role of market forces, also assumes the existence of an ideal equilibrium between employers' stated present and future manpower requirements in terms of both quantity and quality, and the output of the education system. Similarly, while the second emphasises the potential effectiveness of employment and training policy, it nonetheless remains based on a philosophy of supply and demand, and the dream of labour market transparency and sound reasoning among employers when they formulate their manpower and skills requirements at any given time.

In reality the relationship between training and employment is a dynamic, complex and fragmented process. While it is to some extent undoubtedly governed by market mechanisms such as prices, wages and the availability of human capital, as well as by deliberately chosen training and employment policies, it is also shaped by enterprises (which do not function like black boxes since their recruitment and training behaviour can actually be studied), by labour market intermediaries, which play a decisive regulatory role, and even by young people themselves, who also play an active part and whose intentions and strategies influence the relationship between training and employment to a greater or lesser degree.

⁽¹³⁾ Revised and updated version of a paper presented in Thessaloniki on 19 October 2000.

⁽¹⁴⁾ Centre d'Etudes et de Recherches sur les Qualifications, 10 Place de la Joliette, F-13567 Marseille Cedex 02, www.cereq.fr

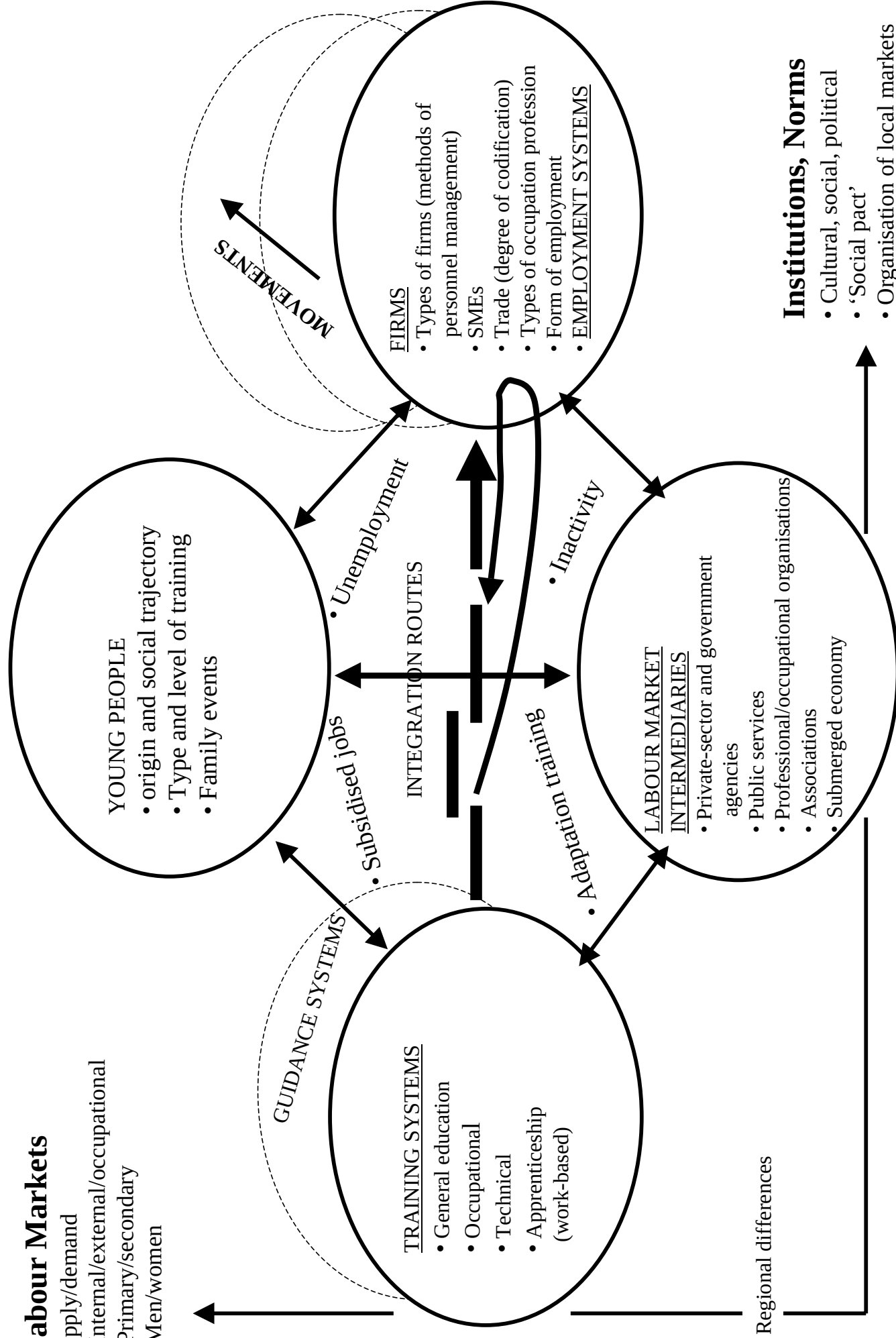
Unlike previous analyses, it is the simultaneous and systemic consideration of all these elements which in the present author's view essentially characterises the new approach to the relationship between training and employment that is represented diagrammatically below. ⁽¹⁵⁾

⁽¹⁵⁾ This diagram is to some extent a simplification. Why, for instance, make a distinction between enterprises as such and other kinds of productive organisations (voluntary associations, public and employment agencies or small-scale urban manufacturers) which, just like intermediaries, offer jobs that may be temporary or permanent. In the same way, there is no reason to interpret the diagram as showing education and training as preceding the production system, since the latter, by helping to define the use made of vocational training, strongly influences the former (on this point see the articles by J.J. Silvestre dating as far back as 1987)

Labour Markets

supply/demand

- Internal/external/occupational
- Primary/secondary
- Men/women



The training/employment relationship: a dynamic complex and fragmented process...

While stressing the interaction between the various elements of the model, we shall for the sake of clarity look at each of them in turn. I would add that, given the limitations of this paper, I shall not attempt to address either questions connected with social integration – which is known to be closely linked to finding and keeping a job – or the queries raised elsewhere concerning vocational guidance counselling proper. I shall also steer clear of the wider-ranging question of occupational transitions, which involves not just the passage from education to employment, but all types of transition, mobility, and coming and going between jobs, as well as adult employment and inactivity, in order to concentrate on the ways in which young people leaving the education and vocational training system enter the labour market and find jobs.

1.2. How employment markets function in Europe: government regulation and social change

One cannot address the new relationship between training and employment without first looking more closely at how the labour market, which to some extent provides the backdrop, actually functions. Although use of the term ‘market’, especially in its orthodox neo-classical meaning, is objected to or played down in this connection, I shall use ‘labour market’ to mean all the ways in which labour is coordinated, allocated and mobilised within the production system.

1.2.1. Performance generally mediocre in employment terms

As we are all aware, the countries of the European Union have over the past two decades witnessed a rapid transformation in the employment situation, with service activities expanding, an increase in the number of women in work, reflected particularly in the proportion of women to be found in the net number of new jobs created over the past few years⁽¹⁶⁾, and a growing demand for higher qualifications⁽¹⁷⁾. But for all these indicators, as with unemployment (particularly long term), the employment rate and job creation, the performance of the EU countries is generally mediocre compared with that of the United States and Japan (Table 1).

⁽¹⁶⁾ By way of example, the proportion has now reached 85 % in the case of Italy, where the female employment rate is still one of the lowest in the EU, just 38 % in 1998 (European Commission, 2000).

⁽¹⁷⁾ According to the European Commission (2001, p. 36), it is in highly skilled non-manual occupations in high-tech sectors requiring higher education that jobs have increased most rapidly over the period 1995-2000.

Table 1: Comparative performance of the European and US labour markets

	EU		US	
	1990	1998	1990	1998
Unemployment rate (number of jobless in the active population)	7,8 %	10,1 %	5,6 %	4,2 %
Job creation (annual average 1990 to 1998)	+ 0,6 %		+ 1,3 %	
Employment rate (percentage of the total population of working age (15 to 64) in employment)	59,7 %		74 %	

Leaving averages aside, the actual figures for the EU vary widely. Youth unemployment is still twice as high as in the United States and Japan, around 16 % for the 15 to 24 age group in 2000, compared with 8 %. But alongside countries such as Italy and Greece in which youth unemployment is still high, almost one in three being without a job, there are others such as Austria and the Netherlands where the figure is only just over 5 %. Moreover, while in France⁽¹⁸⁾, Spain, Finland and the United Kingdom the percentage of young people out of work is structurally higher than for the population as a whole, it is close to that for the population at large in other countries such as the Netherlands, Denmark, Portugal, Ireland and Austria (European Commission, 2001, p. 26).

The same is true for the employment rate, which is a good indicator of an economy's ability to create jobs. While in the EU the figure tends to hover around 76 % in the most active 25-54 age group, the differences between countries persist and even become more marked in the case of the youngest and oldest age groups (European Commission, 2001, p. 21). Some countries, such as Spain, Portugal, Sweden, Finland and especially the Netherlands, have seen youth employment surge, whereas others, such as Germany and Austria, are registering a sharp fall, no doubt due to the increased percentage of young people going on to higher education. The differences are equally marked in the case of older workers. While 69 % of the 55-64 age group in Sweden are still active, in Belgium the figure is only 27 %. Austria, France, Italy and Luxembourg fall between these two extremes, with very low activity rates of between 28 % and 32 % for the older age group (European Commission, 2001, p. 40). Developments over time are also very marked. Between 1983 and 1997, for example, Finland saw a record fall in the employment rate for older people, whereas Denmark and the Netherlands managed to hold steady and even slightly increase their proportion in the active population compared with the United States (Table 2).

⁽¹⁸⁾ In France, '70 % of the 15 to 24 age group are attending school or university and hence not in the labour market, while one in four of the remaining 30 % is unemployed' (Mazuy and Guitton, 1999).

Table 2: Rates of employment for different age groups 1983-1997 (in %)

		DK	D	E	FIN	F	I	NL	S	UK	USA
Young people (15-24)	1983	52,9	51,6	35,9	51,1	36,7	31,0	38,7	60,2	-	55,6
	1997	68,2	46,9	27,0**	37,1	20,1	25,2	56,9	39,6	61,0**	68,0
Men (55-64)	1983	63,1	57,4	65,2	51,4	50,4	-	46,1	73,9	-	65,2
	1997	61,0	47,3	50,5	37,8	38,4	41,5	43,0	64,7	58,6	65,5

Source: OCDE, employment forecasts.

** : 16-24 years.

One should draw attention in this connection to the particular case of France, whose activity and employment rates are among the lowest at both ends of the age scale, as though these play a particular role in regulating the size of the labour market. Thus only 34 % of those under 25 are active and only 25 % in work, compared with 32 % and 29.3 % respectively for older people in the 55 to 64 age group in 2000 (Eurostat: Labour Market Survey).

1.2.2. Increased flexibility and a looser relationship with work

Moreover, despite the traditionally strict government regulation that has long characterised much of continental Europe, the past ten years have seen a serious erosion of the standard (and no doubt the quality) of employment in most countries. We have witnessed the emergence of fixed-term employment contracts⁽¹⁹⁾, part-time jobs, temporary work (except in Spain, Denmark, Ireland and the UK) and various types of subsidised jobs, to the point where what in France are known as 'special forms of employment' now account for almost 30 % of paid employment. Of these it would seem to be part-time working that has made the greatest progress in Europe, where it currently accounts for 18 % of jobs. This is no doubt linked to the substantial influx of female workers into the labour market, as one third of women in employment work part-time compared with only 6 % of men (European Commission, 2001, p. 17). But it can be said that as in the case of the various flexibility arrangements built into employment contracts, the actual evolution and the way in which this is socially perceived differ from country to country. Whereas in northern Europe – the Netherlands, Germany and the UK – voluntary part-time working seems to be the rule and responsible for a large slice of

⁽¹⁹⁾ Spain is a particularly interesting example. In 1996, 95 % of the eight million employment contracts signed were temporary contracts and in 65 % of cases were for less than three months (Ires, 2000, p. 87).

job creation⁽²⁰⁾, compulsory part-time working accounts for most of the cases in Spain and Belgium (European Commission, 2001, Chapter 4).

It would be mistaken simply to view the increase in these so-called ‘special forms of employment’ as a clear sign of job destabilisation⁽²¹⁾. While some of them lead to a growth in ‘secondary’ labour markets, they are not all equally unstable and in some circumstances may even fit with a new attitude towards occupational careers. It is, moreover, this ambivalent interpretation that is generally used today to account for the growing proportion of young people whose first job is part-time. While in a good many cases this illustrates the difficulty encountered in finding a conventional job (as in France) or the obligation to accept a less good job when nothing better is available (as in the United Kingdom), it may also reflect a generalised tendency to pursue initial training (as is undoubtedly evident in the case of Germany).

1.2.3. The great diversity in government regulation

It is evident, therefore, that in addition to the structural macro-trends referred to above, the European labour markets are notable for their very great functional diversity. As we have already seen, market mechanisms are not the only factors governing the management of work and jobs. According to the institutional point of view adopted here, they form part of socially and historically constructed sets of rules and regulations that govern the terms and conditions of trade. It is these institutional arrangements, which may be more or less coherent, that account not only for much of the diversity of labour market structures, that is, for the different ways in which the market is divided up, but also for their specific national development from the point of view of legislation and active employment policy, methods of negotiation and agreements enabling compromises to be reached between productivity, pay, jobs and unemployment in industrial relations.

The complexity of the variables that need to be taken into account nowadays makes it particularly difficult to establish a clear causal connection between the type of institutional framework – especially the strictness of regulation – and the result in job terms. Thus, of the five countries that have seen the most marked decrease in unemployment over the last ten years, some – notably the United Kingdom – have kept to a very flexible or a moderately flexible (Ireland, Denmark) form of regulation, while others, such as the Netherlands among EU countries and Norway in the EEA, are restricted by a fairly tight regulatory corset. Hence the need to refer, *faute de mieux*, to comparative national monographs (Ires, 2000) and medium-term forecasts (Garonna and Rayan, 1989), which set observation of the labour

⁽²⁰⁾ More than 40 % of workers are employed under this type of contract in the Netherlands, and between 20 and 25 % in the United Kingdom, Sweden and Denmark. In Greece, Spain and Italy the proportion of part-time workers is still below 10 % (European Commission, 2001, p. 19).

⁽²¹⁾ I follow Deneuve (2001, p. 21) in defining job instability as ‘a degree of exposure to the risk of unemployment’ but not entirely, as being in work may go hand in hand with a fear of losing one’s job or job dissatisfaction, since ‘when it is non-standard, employment resembles a temporary solution’.

markets in the context of industrial systems (Boyer, 1986; Brunhes, 1988; Bernard Bruhes Consultants, 1994) or industrial relations (Kaisergruber, 1997; Supiot, 1999). At the end of the day, even if these are insufficiently detailed or needlessly general in their scope, they no less informative, particularly for decision-makers, than broad statistical overviews that fail to distinguish adequately between categories, or weak econometric models that turn somersaults and contradict each other (cf. on this point the critical analyses by Ires, 2000).

On the other hand, although achieving a high level of employment was put high on the European Union's agenda when the treaty of Amsterdam was signed in 1997, this has not yet produced any convergence in terms of labour market organisation, which is at best a common political horizon that implicitly recognises the multiplicity of approaches currently illustrated by annual national employment action programmes.

1.2.4. The special situation of young people in the labour market

No other sector of the employment system so clearly combines common European features with equally marked national peculiarities as does the youth employment market, particularly as regards the time taken and the means used to find employment. In terms of general trends, young people are increasingly finding it harder to get a job than older people with experience: there is recurrent rather than long-term⁽²²⁾ high unemployment and greater mobility between employers and sectors. Moreover, young people tend to find themselves in less secure jobs with temporary or fixed-term contracts (in Spain, for example, these account for 80 % of jobs among younger people, compared with 30 % among older people), to be obliged to work part-time, particularly in the case of young women and young people with few skills, and generally to receive lower pay, except for those with higher education qualifications (Cedefop/Eurostat, 2001). All these factors support the notion of segmentation and selectivity in the special forms of employment available to labour market entrants.

These various factors are particularly noticeable in the case of France, causing Rose (1998) to say that young people are generally over-represented in the secondary market, which is mainly governed by commercial mechanisms and thus subject to instability, as well as being 'heavily concentrated in a limited number of jobs, many of which require few skills'. As outsiders, young people are also for all practical purposes excluded from internal markets. Verdier (1996) has frequently described this phenomenon as 'job queue unemployment', with reference to France.

We must beware, however, of concluding too hastily that there is a clear split, with young people regularly occupying just one segment of the market. Firstly, because while young people everywhere in Europe are found in specific types of activity, either in the external market or in more 'institutionalised' sectors of the market, where there is greater government control, some of those with higher qualifications have better jobs at professional level (except

⁽²²⁾ This explains why it is generally thought that young people starting out on their careers combine a high degree of vulnerability with greater employability than that of older job-seekers.

in the case of Greece and Italy). There is therefore some selectivity even within the labour market for young people, and Rose is right in stating that ‘the prime factor reducing job instability is age’ because unemployment and unstable employment fall considerably among young people between the ages of 18 and 24 (Rose, 1998, p. 169) ⁽²³⁾. Labour market experience, level of education, and the nature of the first job gained also have an influence, as Eurostat and Céreq’s ‘Génération’ surveys show.

We thus need to revise the polarisation hypothesis and to regard the labour market for young first-time job-seekers as a continuum of special situations that contribute to their occupational socialisation just as much as do the internal markets (Fondeur and Lefresne, 1999). Moreover, the latter have not always contributed to young people’s integration to the degree customarily claimed (Nicole-Drancourt and Roulleau-Berger, 2001, p. 102). And this is regardless of the fact that despite convergence in industrial reorganisation within Europe, special forms of employment and the time taken and means used to find employment may vary considerably in structure and significance from one country to another (Cedefop/Eurostat, 2001, pp. 50-80).

The situation of young people entering the job market is not dependent solely on the workings of the employment system and the labour market generally. It is also a matter of the level and content of their initial education and training, the relative weight given to experience (Couppié and Mansuy, 2000) and the organisation of national education systems (Section 2). At the same time, one must bear in mind company job structures (Section 3), young people’s own attitudes and sociological development (Section 4), and government assistance with finding employment (Section 5). We shall look at these various points in more detail.

1.3. Vocational training systems

Over the past 20 years or so most EU countries have seen initial education extended, with an increasing number of young people with university qualifications coming onto the labour market and an upward shift in the level of academic qualifications. However, it would be wrong to regard the first of these phenomena as attributable solely to government measures, since it is undoubtedly a consequence of the ‘prolongation of youth’ that can be seen in more or less all EU countries (see Section 4 below). Moreover, although young Europeans are compelled to remain at school or in training for periods of between eight and twelve years, ‘shorter periods [of compulsory education] do not necessarily mean fewer remaining in education after the compulsory period has ended’ (Cavalli and Galland, 1993, pp. 188-189) since the proportion of the 15 to 19 age group still in education is not a reflection of the period laid down by law. In the late 1980s, for example, the majority of young Germans or Danes of 19 years of age were still in full or part-time education, even though compulsory schooling ended at 16. On the other hand, in the United Kingdom and Portugal a large number of young people leave school at an early age. It is therefore also necessary to take into account society’s

⁽²³⁾ In France the percentage of young people in non-standard jobs falls from 80 % at age 18 to 15 % at 24.

view of education and school attendance just as much as the system's intrinsic philosophy of selection and retention.

1.3.1. Growing numbers of young people with higher qualifications

If one looks at the breakdown of young people with higher qualifications in terms of occupation rather than by employer or sector of activity, the rise in the level of qualifications can be seen to be general and homogeneous. It is even noticeable in unskilled occupations and among first-time job-seekers. How this phenomenon is to be interpreted is a subject of frequent debate. For some theoreticians the rise in educational level cannot be explained so much in terms of a response to industry's demand for higher skills as by the ever-increasing output of the education system. This is the famous 'supply-side effect' referred to by the French Lirhe researchers (Mallet in Planas, 1998; Béduwé and Giret, 1999). This easily gives rise to the idea of over-education, with young people possessing higher qualifications than those needed for a given job. Green et al. (2000) found this to be the situation among 30 % of the British labour force and showed that it is all the more worrying in that over-educated people do not manage to obtain better jobs in the medium term and that their pay is regularly lower than others with the same educational level who are in a job more in line with their qualifications.

Other situations are, however, also possible, such as that which tends to predominate in the European institutions and reveals the strong demand for people with ever higher qualifications in a knowledge-based economy (European Commission, 2000, p. 56-66). Not only is the percentage of the active population aged 25 to 64 in employment with at least upper secondary education higher in the more advanced countries, but it is also the high-tech industries and those requiring the highest levels of qualifications, such as teaching, information technology, general business services, health and social services, etc., that are actually creating the most jobs at present (60 % of all jobs created between 1995 and 2000). Moreover, according to the European Commission (2001), while employment is expanding particularly in highly skilled non-manual occupations, these rapidly growing sectors have also been alone in generating jobs for the less well-qualified. Furthermore, a university qualification is considered to offer sound protection against unemployment and is gradually becoming a necessary – though not in itself sufficient – condition for gaining stable employment.

We are left with the conclusion that the social significance of university qualifications can vary considerably from one country to another. The French model of employment, in which higher qualifications serve as a form of filter (Verdier, 1996), is frequently contrasted with the German dual model, which is regarded as contributing to genuine occupational identity. Then again, perhaps we should not adopt a purely positive view of education and disregard its ability to lead to exclusion as well as edification. But that is another story.

1.3.2. Training and experience – contradictory or complementary?

We are all aware that young people leaving the education system with the same levels of qualifications may pursue different career paths – a fact shown by the ‘typical pathways’ research carried out by Espinasse (1994), Beduwé and Espinasse (1995) and Degenne et al. (1944). Even for young newcomers to the labour market, it is not just their level of education and training but also their experience that plays an important role in determining the type of job that they obtain (Espinasse, 1999). This paradox is inherent in the steadily rising level of education and can be explained by employers’ growing uncertainty when confronted with increasing numbers of people possessing formal qualifications at a time when jobs are in short supply. As a result, they raise their selection criteria, notably by taking into account ‘practical experience gained prior to employment’ (Vincens, 1999). Hence the need to differentiate between young people in work and those starting out, whose status in the labour market is only provisional. Experience, moreover, can include not only technical skills but also social skills or socialisation in a working context – in other words, accumulated human capital and indicators of employability in the absence of previous actual job experience.

From this point of view experience may be considered a genuine complement to training (what Vincens calls ‘integrating experience’) rather than an alternative to it, given that outsiders necessarily lack seniority (Grasser and Rose, 2000). Its role must therefore be seen as ‘indissolubly linked to formal qualifications’ (Dauty, 1999, p. 80). Conversely, the importance generally accorded to formal qualifications – even the supreme importance, as in France – does not preclude increasing attention being given to experience. Moreover, it has become increasingly common in most European countries over the last few years for beginners’ skills to be ‘the joint product of the education system and industry’ (Béduwé et al., 2000, pp. 21-22). As Béduwé and Giret (1999) show, the inclusion of work experience in its various forms – regular or frequent employment, occasional or seasonal work, practical training or holiday jobs – in a course of study makes a useful contribution, influencing the speed with which a young person finds work and the wages or salary attached to it, and affords a degree of protection against initial long-term unemployment.

1.3.3. General effect of vocational training and an increase in training that includes a work-based element

For all these reasons, European decision-makers have sought to use vocational training for some years now as a major weapon in combating youth unemployment. And indeed, in most countries of the European Union this has been found to be effective. Almost a third (29 %) of young people in Europe aged between 15 and 19 today take part in an initial vocational training programme. However, this encouraging fact conceals marked differences from one country to another. Thus, whereas the figure is very high in Austria (55 %) and Belgium (45 %), it is not so good in Ireland (17 %) or Portugal (12 %). In other countries the figure varies between 20 % and 40 %.

The combination of general education and vocational training similarly varies considerably from country to country. Sometimes it is vocational training that predominates, as in the case of Germany and Austria, where 78 % of pupils undergo ISCED level 3 vocational training, Italy (73 %) and the Netherlands (70 %), while elsewhere it is general education that predominates. In Spain, for example, ISCED level 3 vocational training accounts for only 41 % of young people, in Greece 33 % and in Ireland and Portugal 23 %. Between these two extremes lie France with 53 %, Denmark and Finland with 54 % and the United Kingdom with 58 % (European Commission, Eurostat, Cedefop, 1997).

Box 1: International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED)

ISCED 0 (pre-school)	
ISCED 1 (primary)	Starts at between age 4 and 7, always compulsory and lasts 5 or 6 years.
ISCED 2 (lower secondary)	Compulsory in all EU countries and often lasts until the end of compulsory education.
ISCED 3 (upper secondary)	Starts at age 14 or 15, may be either general, vocational or technical. Required for access to higher education or final school certificate.
ISCED 5,6,7 (higher education)	Non-degree courses (5) First degree (6) Post-graduate courses (7)

Finally, given the same level of initial education, vocational training is found to be more likely to lead to employment than general education alone⁽²⁴⁾. While 23.5 % of young people in Europe who have only completed ISCED 0, 1 or 2 general education are unemployed, the figure is halved to 11.5 % for those who have also undergone vocational training. Vocational training would thus seem to facilitate job-finding, especially in the case of young people with a lower level of education. It also improves their chances of finding a better, more stable job, except in the case of Greece, Portugal and Spain, where the highest percentage of young people in general education is at ISCED level 3, which follows immediately on compulsory education.

⁽²⁴⁾ With the sole exception of Sweden, where vocational training is formally independent of industry and schools alone are therefore responsible for young people's successful job placement.

1.3.4. Malfunctions leading to changes

Nonetheless, one cannot ignore the fact that however they function at national level⁽²⁵⁾, apprenticeship and vocational training systems are currently in a state of crisis with a thorough review either planned or already under way. In France, where manual trades and technical training have traditionally been looked down upon, initial training leading to the lowest level of qualification (CAP or BP) and partially work-based training are invariably concentrated in sectors with a high density of very small enterprises (VSEs)⁽²⁶⁾, which are particularly notable for their high rate of staff turnover (20 % to 30 % a year, i.e. one person in four), generally substandard working conditions and relatively unattractive pay. And even though these levels of training still account for 80 % of learners, they are now in a process of inexorable decline compared with vocational secondary education (the recently created *baccalauréats professionnels*), as a result of which they are losing out to new, short higher-education training courses (BTS, DUT), which generally call for longer general education. In short, they are encountering difficulties in fulfilling the role officially assigned to them (Trouvé, 1996). The training schemes recently introduced that include work placements (training, retraining or orientation contracts) are mainly targeted at young people who have difficulty finding a job and are likely to keep them ‘trapped’ in the secondary market (Léné, 2000: 24). One may, therefore, doubt their true efficacy as a route to qualification or even as ‘a first stage on the road to integration into the labour market’.

While, as we shall see in Section 3, I do not share Léné’s deeply rooted pessimism (‘finding a job in sectors of what is known as the “external market” with rapid turnover does not lead to sectors with an internal market which recruit fewer people’, *idem*, p. 19), such a finding has wide-ranging implications for France and most other EU countries. Even in Germany, the bastion of the dual system, the efficacy of the apprenticeship system would today, according to several authors, appear to be seriously in question. This is confirmed by three surveys conducted by BIBB and IAB quoted by Kucera (1997, p. 71), which show not only a decline in the numbers of those taking part in initial training but also a widening gap between the content of apprenticeship courses and employers’ actual requirements. Moreover, there is now a difference between apprentices who train with larger companies and those who do so in small, traditional firms.

Apart from a heavy concentration on a small number of occupations – which are not the same in every EU country – we also appear to be witnessing a trend by larger employers to look for people with higher educational qualifications, thereby reducing apprentices’ chances of finding a job and generating uncertainty among skilled workers who served an apprenticeship

⁽²⁵⁾ The countries of Europe may be divided into two categories so far as initial vocational training is concerned, namely those in which it was for long looked down upon socially, such as France and the United Kingdom, Italy and Spain, and others in which it has been highly structured and become a centre-piece of the education and training system as a whole, such as Germany, Austria and the Netherlands.

⁽²⁶⁾ This explains why companies and other organisations with fewer than 10 employees take on 45 % of young people undergoing work-based training even though they represent only 25 % of the total payroll. This phenomenon is even more marked in the case of apprenticeship, where such small enterprises account for 70 % of this type of contract, remaining the main users.

and who are now increasingly required to switch to another trade at the start of their careers (40 % of them according to Hennings, 1994), or to migrate from traditional craft trades and small employers to larger ones. In short we would seem to have here all the ingredients of a 'selective drift' (Léné, 200, p. 22) and of discrimination against apprenticeship (Kucera, 1997, p. 69).

1.3.5. The strengthening link between employment and training policy

It is this dysfunctional situation that partly explains the various reforms recently carried out in the training field in France and Germany, as well as in the United Kingdom, Spain and Italy (Aventur and Möbus, 1999). Generally we find that the distinction between training and employment policy is becoming increasingly blurred, causing Léné to remark that 'training that includes work placements would appear to be a non-standard form of employment used to create short-term jobs for people' (2000, p. 23). At the same time, initial jobs for young people increasingly go hand in hand with more flexible contracts of employment, as in Ireland and Denmark (Lefresne, 1999). In the midst of this upheaval, while training policies endeavour to manage the transition from training to work by bringing schools and employers closer together, employment policies oblige employers to train young people in order to qualify for government job subsidies. This is why it is we need to look closely at employers' attitudes towards young people, since their recruiting methods are only one aspect of their employment and training behaviour and, more generally, of the way in which they use their labour force (Trouvé, 2001). That said, I shall not go into the links between initial and continuing training (which young people starting out in the world of work are able to pursue through 'second chance' provision), or the links between continuing training and the occupational transitions referred to in a European comparative summary (Aventur and Möbus, 1999).

1.4. The influence of sectors of industry and enterprises on job structure

We shall now look more closely at employers' attitudes and behaviour, and their structural impact on the labour market and youth employment. Too determinist or macro-economic a 'labour market' approach would indeed risk overlooking the fact that enterprises are not simple black boxes or places where human capital is made use of, but active players, defining jobs and classifying labour according to the characteristics that they impose on it. First, however, we should remember the many studies that have pointed to the importance of sectoral effects (Le Minez et al., 1998; Mansuy and Thireau, 1999) and of sectors of industry defined by activity and size of company (Moncel, 2001), have examined the integration of young people in terms of occupation (Jeger-Madiot and Ponthieux, 1996; Cedefop/Eurostat, 2001, p. 74), and have examined how employers recruit young people (Lochet, 1997). These studies have either ranged very widely and looked at how labour is used in all types of enterprise (Moncel, 1996; Gazier, 1993), or focused only on small (Trouvé, 1999; Michun,

2002) or very small enterprises (Bentabet et al., 2001), which are the main sources of jobs for young people all over Europe.

I shall not attempt here a detailed discussion of these studies but merely extract a few of the principal ideas that they contain, pointing out in particular the current main gaps in European comparisons.

1.4.1. The relevance of sectors of activity for labour market regulation

A large number of publications have shown the relative impact of different sectors of activity according to their propensity or capacity to absorb young people completing training courses, to select some at the expense of others, to employ them temporarily or to place them in stable employment for the long term. In France, Moncel (2001) uses the result of Céreq's 'Génération' surveys to show, as many others have done (Clémenceau and Géhin, 1983; Amat and Géhin, 1987) that young people often find their first job in externally controlled sectors of activity, that is to say, in sectors of industry with a very high turnover of first-time workers (21.6 %), chiefly small enterprises ⁽²⁷⁾. This is the case, for instance, with jobs in the hotel and catering industry and manual jobs. But there are also introductory jobs that provide stability – these account for 37.5 % of first-time jobs, mainly in enterprises with more than 50 employees, such as medium-sized manufacturers, financial and real estate firms, management consultants, education, health and social services, and public administration – and introductory jobs which lead on to others – these account for over 40 % of first-time jobs and are either unstable, for relatively highly skilled female workers (personal services, education, health and social work), or in a broad swathe of commercial fields, where stable employment follows initial periods of pronounced job mobility (21.2 % of first-time jobs).

In previous publications Moncel (1996: 59) pointed out that generally speaking service activities offered the most employment opportunities for young people. Services break down into three groups – technical and administrative, commercial and personal, and industrial. They make considerable use of special forms of employment and 'their methods of classifying personnel are very different from those of industry', which have withstood twenty years of economic crisis and organisational upheaval.

Still in France, the work of Lochet (1997) also stands out. His typology of labour management practice by sector of activity, size of employing organisation and form of employment show that the same kind of employment contract may be used in very different ways. In some sectors access to companies' internal markets and permanent contracts of employment is via a slow and rigorous selection process starting with an initial fixed-term contract. This is true in the case of sectors in which large industrial or service companies such as telecommunications

⁽²⁷⁾ The distinction between internal and external markets refers to two contrasting methods of labour management: 'labour stability and internal access to skilled posts are typical of internal markets, whereas rapid turnover and hiring and firing of personnel in unskilled jobs is typical of external markets' (Moncel, 2001, p. 44).

and insurance predominate, but there are also sectors which make considerable use of unstable forms of employment such as subsidised jobs, or fixed-term and part-time contracts. This is the case in service enterprises, major retailers, the construction industry and small and medium-sized transport companies. 'These are the main recruiters and hence those whose employment practices have the greatest influence on types of jobs and how they change' (1997: 105). Finally, the author finds 'clear use of all forms of indefinite contracts (in the short term)' especially in very small enterprises in industry, craft trades and the hotel and catering sector, which hire and fire youngsters starting out with great rapidity. There are, therefore, sectors which are quick to take on young people but employ them in unstable, precarious jobs and others that are slower to recruit but then offer more lasting employment.

These findings are confirmed by Mansuy and Thireau (1999), who examine intersectoral mobility in terms of the formal qualifications and pay trends of young people starting out in work. Having identified the principal sectors that recruit young people in France – 10.4 % public administration, 9 % teaching, 6 % construction industry, 5.3 % non-food selling, 5.1 % health sector and 4.7 % hotel and catering – they differentiate between routes of what they call 'upward mobility' ⁽²⁸⁾, with marked intersectoral mobility in the transport, automobile and computer sectors, rising or level routes with high intersectoral mobility in wholesaling, operational services, and the chemical and plastics industries, and routes with moderate or weak intersectoral mobility (teaching, hotels and major retailers). Strictly speaking there may, therefore, be sectors in which mobility is high but mainly intrasectoral, as in the case of hotels and catering, and others with a highly stable workforce of young people arriving by the intersectoral route (the construction, automobile and pharmaceutical industries, counselling and support services, etc.): sectors may therefore be either 'in', 'out', 'from' or 'to', depending on the circumstances of labour market entry, the particular field, and the young person's level of education and training.

At the level of European comparisons, some progress has recently been made by Cedefop and Eurostat (2001). Although these studies do not produce descriptive typologies that are sufficiently discriminating and stable and offer few totally convincing lines of interpretation, they show nonetheless that in the EU as a whole there is a relatively high concentration of young people (almost everywhere) in certain types of personal service, such as the hotel and catering industry, and retail, and in business services (probably personnel agencies) (p. 77) ⁽²⁹⁾. But these similarities go hand in hand with differences. Thus, while industry provides more employment for younger than older people in Ireland, Italy, Portugal and Finland, the contrary is true in most other countries. While in Portugal the construction sector employs more younger than older people, the reverse is true in Denmark, France, Ireland, Sweden and the United Kingdom (p. 77).

⁽²⁸⁾ In the case of the 'upwardly mobile', the monthly pay in the last job held is more than EUR 150 higher than in the first.

⁽²⁹⁾ In order to neutralise the structural effects of national job distribution, the 'concentration of juniors' is measured by comparing the weight of young people in a given sector with that for all sectors taken together.

1.4.2. Young people concentrated in a small number of occupations

While the chances of first-time job-seekers actually finding employment certainly depend on the structural situation which, as we know, differs considerably from one country to another, employers' decisions and preferences for younger or older people are nonetheless influenced by the type of occupation. This, according to Jeger-Madiot and Ponthieux (1996), explains why young people are often found concentrated in a restricted number of occupations. There would thus seem to be a polarisation of occupations, with some 'open to young people and others closed to them' ⁽³⁰⁾. Two fields in which young labour market entrants are concentrated 'stand out in a number of [EU] countries', namely retail and personal services, and administrative jobs. At the same time, three types of occupation are fairly closed to young people, namely managerial and executive jobs, manual jobs in industry, and farming (Cedefop and Eurostat, 2001, p. 76), the second of these probably due to reductions in the labour force in the course of repeated restructuring, but also because young people find industry less attractive. But, here again, national differences exist alongside common trends.

1.4.3. SMEs as prime employers of first-time job-seekers

A direct study of personnel management practice in enterprises is no more illuminating than an indirect study through statistics relating to specific sectors or occupations. And since the majority of young people starting out in the world of work are employed in a certain type of occupation or apprenticed in small enterprises with fewer than 50 employees or very small enterprises with fewer than 10 employees, particularly in retail trade and the hotel and catering industry (European Commission, 1997, pp. 102-103) ⁽³¹⁾, these have been the subject of particular attention in recent years through a study of employers' behaviour (Trouvé, 2001) and of young people's routes to employment (Michun, 2002).

In France, for instance, SMEs – taken as enterprises with fewer than 200 employees – absorb more than three quarters of young job-seekers under 25 years of age (73.5 % according to the French Employment Ministry's DMMO and EMMO surveys) ⁽³²⁾. There is, however, a difference between categories of young people, and between enterprises, in that the proportion of those with lower formal qualifications is higher in small, and especially very small enterprises, while those holding higher education qualifications (especially vocational) more easily find jobs with SMEs with more than 50 employees and with larger enterprises with more than 500. However, regardless of initial level of training, the flow of young workers towards smaller employers has been increasing over several years; 30 % of those completing higher education in 1992 were in 1994 employed in enterprises with between 1 and 49

⁽³⁰⁾ Here the concentration is calculated by comparing the weight of juniors in a given occupation with that in all occupations taken together.

⁽³¹⁾ In France, for example, 22 % of young people in very small enterprises are apprentices, compared with only 3.4 % in large enterprises with more than 500 employees. Moreover, small enterprises in the craft trades in Germany currently take on twice as many apprentices as large enterprises (IAB panel).

⁽³²⁾ DMMO = monthly record of labour movements (for enterprises with 50 or more employees). EMMO = survey of labour movements (for enterprises with between 10 and 49 employees).

employees, 13 % of them in VSEs (ONEVA-Céreq data quoted by Bentabet et al., 1999, pp. 45-46). Is this upward trend perhaps linked to sectoral factors such as the growth of high value-added services and a decline in the status of smaller enterprises, VSEs being increasingly assimilated into larger groups as a result of franchising and the creation of branches and subsidiaries, or to the emergence of a new class of entrepreneur and a greater tendency in the labour market to downgrade young people with formal qualifications?

Other earlier findings in France, such as those of Bruand (1991), need to be confirmed by means of European comparisons. Bruand claims that a significant proportion – a third – of young people starting work in VSEs direct their efforts in the first five years of their career to finding a job with a larger employer. This finding would agree with those of the DMMO and EMMO surveys already referred to, where 18.5 % of under-25s gave as their ‘reason for leaving’ the desire to get out of a small enterprise, but only 8.5 % in the case of enterprises with over 200 employees. It also accords with the comparison of first job stability recorded by Céreq, namely 17 % for VSEs and 47 % for large enterprises.

Small enterprises would therefore seem to be as much a temporary stopping point for young people starting out in work as a place of first-time employment. Hence it is said that in France, as elsewhere, they are a transitional market in the sense that we shall use the term later, in other words a ‘managed market’ between training and employment or unemployment and employment (³³), and even between running a home and employment (cf.. the level of family assistance in private businesses), and this can be explained among other reasons by their considerable use of incentives for the employment of young people or re-employment of groups in difficulty.

1.4.4. Enterprise models, recruitment systems and approaches to personnel management

It would not be possible to come to a scientific and methodical understanding of the styles of personnel management used in small and medium-sized enterprises merely on the basis of an analysis of what they assert to be their skill requirements. This is the lesson to be drawn from the criticisms of the skills matching approach to the relationship between training and employment. Indeed, when employers are questioned concerning their recruitment plans, the answers are simply a repetition of a certain number of familiar comments that bear little relation to actual practice. Because of this a number of recent studies have sought to include the subject of young people’s employment within a broader analysis of personnel management and training practice, constructing enterprise models or configurations in a national context. This has been done in France, for example, in studies by the Céreq network (Bentabet et al., 1999) and by Eymard-Duvernay and Marchal (1997) on recruitment systems, both inspired by the Ecole des Conventions.

(³³) Leicht (1997: 50) points out that three quarters of jobs found by unemployed people in Germany in 1994 were with enterprises with fewer than 50 employees.

At international level one finds critical reviews of these typologies that are more or less exhaustive and deal with all categories of enterprise, as in the case of the thought-provoking work of Pichault and Nizet (2000) and Nizet and Pichault (2001) that follows in the footsteps of Mintzberg but leaves aside SMEs, which are dismissed as simple or arbitrary structures. Others choose to focus on small or very small enterprises, such as Julien (1997) or the very detailed synthesis of Garand (1993). Apart from the fact that enterprise models are a very fruitful area for theoretical, interdisciplinary research – ‘getting it all together’ as Mintzberg puts it – they may prove very useful for practical decision-making by virtue of their adaptability and ability to stylise complex organisational phenomena.

These various approaches have led to a contingent view of personnel management, whose most frequently occurring variables at least deserve brief mention – entry and exit modes, corporate culture, training, promotion, remuneration, working hours, working relationships, communication, and degree of functional structuring – for all kinds of enterprise (Pichault and Nizet, 2000) and, in the case of SMEs naturally the size, sector of activity and financial strength of the company, but also the career and sociological profile of managers, the market, strategic orientation and geographical basis, not forgetting the tightness of the external labour market, segmentation, institutional regime, urban or rural character, etc. (Atkinson and Meager, 1994, p. 37).

I shall not go into questions concerning the comparison of young people’s mobility and the occupational transitions of adults in the course of their working careers. However, it should be borne in mind that labour market mobility in the case of young people starting out in working life differs from that of their elders. While the former are more often in special forms of employment, with periods of unemployment alternating with periods in work, the latter are in a more stable situation (Martin-Houssart, 2001).

1.5. New contributions from youth sociology

In a theoretical framework based on institutionalism, the relationship between training and employment cannot be boiled down to a problem of adjusting labour supply and demand solely on the basis of cost and salaries. The conditions governing young people’s access to employment are a matter of institutionalised social relations and depend largely upon the place accorded them in each society. At the same time, their capacity for integration is not merely a matter of structural position, which would equate with substituting institutional determinism for the law of the market. Just as ‘youth’ does not exist as a homogeneous subject for sociological study, there are many different types of young people, who cannot be reduced to simple statistical variables. They act strategically in their own right, though subject to constraints and an unequal distribution of resources, displaying the ability to seize opportunities relatively independently, and they continually adjust, ‘making it up as they go along’ rather than falling in with external rules or having these thrust upon them.

That is why an examination of the relationship between training and employment cannot do without a sociology of youth that takes account both of structural labour market conditions and of an analysis of individual career paths and experiences. Hence the empirical importance of further longitudinal analyses (cf. the revised methodology of Céreq's latest 'Génération' surveys in France) and the current emergence of new *theoretical* models of identity construction⁽³⁴⁾. These various changes in approach have resulted in the emergence of two major ideas from the main corpus of European research. These are that in the majority of countries we are witnessing a 'prolongation of youth' and a desynchronisation of the principal phases of transition experienced by young people. Almost everywhere the approaches proposed go beyond mere entry into the world of work and focus increasingly on routes to adulthood.

1.5.1. New structural conditions and the crisis in occupational socialisation

We have already seen (Sections 1 and 2) that changes in the way the employment market functions and in the way in which both general education and vocational training have evolved have radically affected the employment of young people. As a recent publication (Nicole-Drancourt and Roulleau-Berger, 2001) has shown very clearly, in France many young people with the best formal qualifications are either obliged to postpone their entry to the world of work and remain within the education system, or suffer the disappointment of downgrading. Italy provides an extreme example of this; there, those with the highest qualifications find it more difficult to obtain employment than the less well qualified. For young workers, serving an apprenticeship in a traditional trade, which used to bring with it a sense of belonging to a given occupational field, is now regarded as a setback because it separates them from their schoolmates at an early stage of their education. However, the possession or lack of an occupational qualification generally leads to one of two attitudes; while the better qualified aim for occupational mobility, generally within a large company, the less well qualified, according to the two authors mentioned above, find their contact with the company a negative experience which leads to a sense of resignation and loss of interest (*idem*, p. 197). They then have to settle for unstable jobs or even a succession of intermediate stages before achieving the ideal of paid employment. Moreover, the enterprises that employ them are mostly small firms which are nowadays exposed to competitive pressure that precludes their offering training that is not directly work-related (Campinos-Dubernet, 2000).

In many European countries, most of the areas in which young people typically find their first jobs – construction, craft trades, small shops and small industries – have in recent decades entered on a period of crisis in which they are no longer able to function as they did. While other areas of employment, such as commercial and non-commercial services, temporary work, a variety of small jobs and government-sponsored measures have taken over, their true role in the socialisation of young people is still unclear. This leads Nicole-Drancourt and

⁽³⁴⁾ See in this connection, in the case of France, Dubet's (1994) theory of 'social experience' or Lahire's (1998) theory of the 'plural actor', which are in our opinion at least in part the result of the recognition that young people are 'not fully socialised'.

Rouleau-Berger to state that henceforth ‘poorly prepared by school (which almost always vacillates between education and training), employers⁽³⁵⁾ or the social and family fabric, young people are left to cope on their own with the vital task of finding employment’ (2001, p. 110). Without adopting quite such a radical position, it has to be acknowledged that the construction of identity is at least as important as structural effects in any consideration of young people’s entry into work.

1.5.2. Redesigning methods of constructing identity

Because of this shift in standpoint, recent analyses of the relationship between training and employment increasingly emphasise the contribution made by young people themselves in devising their route to occupational and social integration. As a consequence they have come to see their slow and tortuous road to stable employment, punctuated by periods of practical experience, subsidised jobs, small selling jobs, unemployment, moving from one conventional type of job to another, etc., as a form of active experimentation (Galland, 2000, p. 73), of mobilisation, and of constantly putting themselves to the test at different levels of job availability (Nicole-Drancourt and Rouleau-Berger, 2001) in order ultimately to recreate the conditions for stable, lasting employment. And these trends in job-seeking are structural. Two texts dating from the beginning and end of the last decade complement each other. According to Chisholm (1993, p. 193) ‘The emphasis on the *constraints* surrounding young people’s transitions in an institutional context, which has dominated thinking in research on youth since the 1970s, has gradually given way to the predominance of the *choices* awaiting young people as they negotiate their transition to adulthood. Hence the growing attention being paid to the informal private sphere as a driver of change.’ And Galland states, ‘Identity is constructed more often than it is inherited, and the moratorium occurring on completion of a course of study constitutes a period of experimentation during which a young person, by dint of trial and error and a series of near-misses, gradually constructs his or her social and occupational identity and seeks to make it correspond to a credible status’ (Galland, 2000, p. 74).

Socialisation and the construction of identity therefore go together, all the more so because we are dealing with ‘contexts in which the possibility of defining oneself by identifying with parents and elders is seriously impaired’, as Gamba-Nassica (1999, pp. 18-19) points out in a retrospective survey of young men six years after they had left vocational training, stressing that in this particular case their experience is to be understood as ‘a process and a result of a process whereby an individual makes what happens to him his own’ (*idem*, p. 34).

⁽³⁵⁾ Indeed, while large enterprises with their internal job markets have difficulty dealing with the issue of employment for young people, traditional sectors are increasingly reliant on and influenced by government youth employment schemes simply in order to save wage costs.

1.5.3. Prolongation of youth and desynchronisation of transitions

Even so, the social constraints still exist and no doubt carry more or less weight depending on social grouping, gender, geographical location and the national links between the training system and industry. For example, the mixture of post-school activities varies in both length and direction, depending on the cultural and social resources of the individuals concerned. Girls and boys do not use the same educational or family resources in planning their careers. Similarly, young people in southern Italy do not acquire vocational training in the same way as those in the north. Moreover, the institutionally determined overlap of initial training and employment varies considerably from one country to another, with France showing a more marked break between the two than Germany, Denmark or the United Kingdom (Welters and Wolbers, 1999). However, these constraints must be viewed more and more as interacting with the *choices* and *strategies* for navigating the system, which relate to profound sociological changes, not only in the ways in which the younger generation ‘makes a commitment to work’ (Nicole-Drancourt and Roulleau-Berger, 2001) but also in their affirmation of their own right to take decisions and their aspirations for their personal life. This would explain why, despite the persistence of specifically national characteristics, young people’s transition to adulthood has almost everywhere become longer, more diverse and more complex.

At this point we should remind ourselves of how fragile the concepts of transition and integration are in theoretical terms (Rose, 1984) and of the reductive effect of integration conceived solely as a process of entry into working life (Nicole-Drancourt and Roulleau-Berger, 1995, pp. 40-49). That is why those interested in the subject of entry to the world of work and employment now suggest combining the study of occupational integration and biographical pathways to adulthood – ‘access to work’ and ‘access to social existence’. This is an important issue, involving as it does the restoration of complexity and multi-dimensionality to young people’s process of work integration (Nicole-Drancourt and Roulleau-Berger, *idem*) in a historical context in which employment does not play so essential a role in reaching adulthood.

This has led to a series of studies looking not only at the transition from the education and training system to working life, but also at the period of leaving one’s family and forming a stable relationship with a partner, as in the French studies by Galland (1997; 2000, p. 52). Galland shows, among other things, that the links between these events are currently a subject of radical review. To put it more simply, while in the traditional model of entry to adulthood, leaving the world of education and entering that of work and leaving one’s family and forming a stable relationship with a partner used to more or less coincide, these events have gradually become *desynchronised*. First of all, as we have seen, the period of education and the period of transition to the world of work have grown longer. Entering the world of work has become a slow, chaotic process instead of a brief one. At the same time, young people remain dependent on their parents for longer, because they are studying or for other reasons. Then again, we are witnessing a postponement in the age at which young people form stable relationships and marry. Generally speaking, the change in the way in which people reach

adulthood takes the form of a kind of socialised waiting that affects all aspects of work and family life. Youth has become a ‘moratorium’ (Cavalli and Galland, 1993).

But despite all these common elements there are still differences in these various events and their hierarchical importance according to social group (forming a stable relationship tends to take place after finding a job in middle-class or wealthier groups and before doing so in the case of the lower classes) and gender. Thus girls tend to leave their families earlier, the delaying effect of unemployment affecting boys more than girls, while the average age at which boys form stable relationships varies little by level of education, whereas this plays an important role in the case of girls. Furthermore, while youth is a time of learning, the process takes place ‘under varying degrees of close protection by the family or the state, depending on national circumstances. Thus, in the countries of southern Europe it is the family that provides essential support on the road to adulthood, whereas in the north of the continent cultural models such as institutional systems give the public authorities a decisive role in helping young people to become independent’ (Galland, 2001, p. 636). Moreover, other factors such as the educational level and age of the father, family events such as divorce or death, and the stability of the family also play their part. These call for increasingly close longitudinal study relating not just to the level and type of education and training received but also to the nature and content of jobs, pay, social origin, family events, time budgets and social networks brought into play in the matching of individuals to employers (Granovetter, 1974) ⁽³⁶⁾.

We should also not forget that the ‘prolongation of youth’, which is to be found more or less in all EU countries (Cavalli and Galland, 1993), is in line with the present structure of gaps between leaving school and settling into a stable job, especially in the case of less well qualified first-time job-seekers. The agents of transition, such as official or semi-official employment services, training bodies, assisted employment schemes, voluntary associations and intermediary or commercial companies ⁽³⁷⁾, have an input into these gaps, which are relatively self-contained and experienced by a growing number of increasingly varied individuals – not only young people – and try to match the transition to the social organisation of the external market. We shall now look at this aspect in more detail.

⁽³⁶⁾ By distinguishing between strong and weak ties according to frequency of contact, emotional content, scale of services rendered and degree of intimacy, Granovetter (1983) shows there to be a positive correlation between success in finding a job and the scale of weak ties (short-term relationships and occupational contacts), rather than strong ties with family and friends. What matters is to have a broad range of information in a variety of fields rather than in-depth knowledge of a limited field. If the theory of networking is applied to young people, the weakness of their strong ties becomes apparent rather than the strength of their weak ones as the jobs obtained through strong family ties in the case of young people with few qualifications are generally of a poorer quality than those found through weaker ties such as school or advertisements.

⁽³⁷⁾ Not to mention the possible involvement of job sectors in implementing government policy, which may not necessarily be targeted at young people but has hitherto been neglected in research.

1.6. Transitional markets and intermediary employment institutions

Since the early 1980s, the term ‘intermediary’ has been used increasingly in connection with training and employment (Rose, 1984; Méhaut et al., 1987). But this term covers a multiplicity of situations, agencies, organisations and, especially, questions in urgent need of clarification (Lecoutre, 2002). Essentially it refers to those who in one way or another assist people during phases of occupational transition, intervening or interposing themselves between those offering and those seeking employment. Attention has often been called to their increasingly institutional role in placing young people in employment, supplementing the labour management methods adopted by employers (see Section 3). According to Giret et al. (1996), there is thus ‘a relationship between the type of mediation chosen by a job-seeker and an employer, and the quality of the contract of employment in earnings terms.’ However, these authors also differentiate between intermediaries ‘according to their degree of intervention in the process of matching labour supply and demand’. They distinguish, for example, between purely market-based mediation such as spontaneous applications and small advertisements, and the use of networks based on social contacts with varying degrees of involvement, or the intervention of official agencies and practical training schemes. They also reveal the multiplicity of variables that play a part in influencing young people’s choice of intermediary. Thus a high level of education coupled with an aspiration to work in the service sector would in the French context argue for the use of commercial intermediaries, whereas official agencies tend to be used more for jobs sought by the lower-skilled, often part-time and linked to government schemes targeted particularly at young people.

In this section we shall first set out the whole situation of transitional markets and the problems associated with them, and then look at the public structures concerned with employment and youth employment policies. These are societal structures which it is still extremely difficult to compare ⁽³⁸⁾ one with another. It would, however, be wrong to regard intermediary action as restricted to the work of governmental or quasi-governmental bodies. While this has long been the case in France and has thus been almost the only area of study ⁽³⁹⁾, we should not forget that other agencies and forums exist alongside government bodies and even cooperate with them. There are, for example, voluntary bodies and employment services, private employment agencies such as temporary employment agencies and small-scale, sometimes more or less hidden, manufacturing operations growing up in towns and cities, not forgetting the traditional small firms which still take on the great majority of young people completing their education, all of which are behind the expansion of what are referred to as transitional markets.

⁽³⁸⁾ Leaving aside official employment structures, policies aimed at placing young people in employment are also associated with their particular situation in the job market (see Section 1) and with the occupational transition model observed in the various countries (see Conclusion).

⁽³⁹⁾ The reductive nature of such a one-dimensional tendency is illustrated by the publications of the Centre d’Etudes de l’Emploi (1995), which largely ignore the possible emergence of other forms of intermediary activity in addition to that of the public sector.

1.6.1. The emergence of transitional markets: unstable job traps or new areas for regulation?

Although only a recent subject of theoretical discussion, transitional markets have already been the subject of a vast EU-financed programme of socioeconomic research (notably the TRANSLAM Programme). The term is used to describe sectors of the market that are in the main government-regulated and provide a specific framework⁽⁴⁰⁾ for transition, mobility, job placement and re-employment that complements external, internal and occupational employment markets (Schmid, 1995, 1998; Gazier, 1998, Schmid and Auer, 2000). These markets, which have been expanding rapidly since the late 1970s, are seen as offering individuals opportunities to adapt in societies in which changes in social and occupational circumstances are now more frequent and go hand in hand with growing instability of employment, 'which is not or is no longer sufficient for social integration' (Gautié, 1998). Five transitional routes are generally talked of, namely from one position to another within an enterprise, from work to retirement, from training to work, from unemployment to employment, and from employment to useful social activities or the reverse, the last three being related directly or indirectly to youth employment.

These transitional markets are generally understood as operating in two ways. Some authors, such as Schmid and Gazier, regard them as a genuine alternative way of intentionally controlling the labour market through a collection of deliberate institutional arrangements offering minimum 'guarantees and prospects for workers at critical stages of their path through the labour market – unemployment, retraining, first-time job-seeking etc.' (Gazier, 1998: 341). Given the excessive degree of both deregulation and government intervention, they represent a search for new methods for dealing with supply and demand in relation to new 'merchandise' in the form of new temporary forms of activity (*idem*, p. 340). Most authors sharing this optimistic view consider it an important element in any potential European policy that also included specific means of reconciling employers' demand for flexibility with job security for employees: strengthening the ability of individuals in transition to act through shared responsibility and empowerment, and cooperation between private-sector partners and public services, particularly at local level, prioritising active expenditure, breaking the link between jobs and income, reactivating collective bargaining concerning mobility and first-time employment, etc.

Other authors who place more stress on the predominance of labour demand and the spread of flexibility requirements see transitional markets as merely diversifying forms of transition and amounting to nothing more than a new way of splitting off unstable employment, in other words as an unemployability trap (Benarrosh, 2000). There are certainly arguments in favour of this less idyllic approach: by putting their clients in boxes and stigmatising those furthest

⁽⁴⁰⁾ Fondeur and Lefresne (1999, p. 9) point out the relative autonomy of the rules governing these 'spaces between'. In particular, they cannot be expressed merely in terms of the 'educational relationship', 'organisational relationship' and 'industrial relationship' familiar from social analysis. These authors note that social analysis does little to explain the passage from external market to internal or occupational market, and has tended to disregard this phenomenon.

removed from conventional paid employment, public and private intermediaries could well end up helping to aggravate the unequal distribution of work and employment. After all, although they remain on the periphery of traditional labour markets, transitional markets are nonetheless places of fierce competition and labour selection. Indeed, does not public policy itself help to blur the demarcation between employment, training, unemployment, activity and inactivity by multiplying temporary work schemes for young people in Germany and France, special forms of job placement in France and the United Kingdom, and subsidised employment contracts in Spain and Germany?

1.6.2. Government employment schemes – the French model

I shall now show how employment policies are at least partly dependent on the structure and operation of government employment schemes. In a report prepared for the ILO in 1999, Mazuy and Guitton suggested that a general distinction should be made between the French system, centralised but oddly diffuse by virtue of its marked compartmentalisation, and a decentralised, regionally focused but nonetheless fairly integrated system on German, British or Swedish lines. And indeed it has often been thought that the density of the French government network could be explained by the predominance of a model that Gaude (1997) describes as ‘out-of-phase transition’, in which the density of government employment schemes seeks to counter the structural mismatch between the education and employment systems. But the omnipresence of the public sector in France is also reflected in a division and even fragmentation of responsibilities between bodies whose roles are sometimes undoubtedly complementary, but at the same time overlap and conflict, both in the management of training and support programmes and in the placement of job-seekers and allocation of funding.

Five core pillars and myriad other bodies form the framework of the French model. The centre-piece is a tripartite administrative agency, ANPE. This is the national employment agency, whose main function is to register job vacancies and to place job-seekers in employment, as well as to offer training guidance⁽⁴¹⁾. At the same time AFPA – a private-sector association for adult vocational training – is responsible, on behalf of the government and under its supervision, for training, certification and employment of adults, as well as for employees undergoing retraining and young people without qualifications. More recently, ASSEDICs (associations for employment in industry and commerce), which hitherto were responsible solely for the payment of unemployment benefit (and some funding of training) have been made responsible for registering job-seekers. Mention should also be made of the decentralised labour, employment and training bodies that control the allocation to employers of job and training contract subsidies and the like, as well as the interministerial committees that seek to coordinate government initiatives, particularly those concerned with

⁽⁴¹⁾ I shall show later how despite the size of its organisation and the increase in the number of job vacancies recorded, ANPE accounted in 1994 for only 32.5 % of total job vacancies, 30 % of which, as Mazuy and Guitton (1999) point out, were subsidised and hence constituted a captive market. Since it fails to find employment for the majority of young people, it will therefore be necessary also to consider the role of other intermediary structures and processes. Unfortunately no comparable data is available for other EU countries.

young people, such as the DIJ – the interministerial directorate concerned with the work and social integration of young people – and even the DIV – the interministerial urban committee. These large national structures have been joined by local and regional organisations whose roles in directing and coordinating vocational training for young people have expanded in recent years owing to decentralisation. But the advent of these new agencies means in principle a multiplicity of measures and collaboration with the state, ranging from ‘interpartner cooperation’ (through regional youth employment programmes from the mid-1990s, for instance) to a ‘face to face’ approach (Mazuy and Guitton, 1999). On the other hand, the transfer of responsibility from central government to regional and local authorities has not yet been completed. As a consequence, some programmes designed to assist labour market entry or foster training escape the control of regional bodies. The same is true of the structuring of higher education at a time when the number of those dropping out of university after the first couple of years is steadily rising.

Other intermediaries have appeared on the scene since the beginning of the 1980s and are playing an increasingly important role in assisting young people in difficulty to find jobs and avoid exclusion, not just from the world of work but in social terms also. One of these is the network of ‘Local Employment Missions’ and the ‘Reception, Information and Orientation Offices’ (PAIO) which mainly target the 16 to 26 age group. These are associations or public interest groups funded by central and local government of which there are currently 667 (271 Local Missions and 395 PAIOs (Mazuy and Guitton, 1999). To these should be added some 300 youth centres created since 1993 which are based on agreements between central and regional government and ANPE. In the course of time such a proliferation, aggravated by institutional compartmentalisation, has made for a lack of transparency and a growing need for coordination and assessment, leading to the creation of new structures that are in danger, paradoxically, of neglecting those very young people furthest removed from the education and employment systems and whose integration therefore poses the most problems.

By contrast with the complex French system, in which a marked centralisation of employment schemes goes hand in hand with diffusion of ANPE local placement agencies⁽⁴²⁾, other countries provide examples of simpler systems in which governmental or quasi-governmental employment agencies are more closely integrated and the client workload is higher (around 500 job-seekers per staff member)⁽⁴³⁾. This applies to the German Federal employment service, which is responsible for job placements, payment of unemployment benefit, allocation of job subsidies, and vocational training guidance. In the United Kingdom the adoption of a market-oriented supply-side policy requires a high degree of individualisation that paradoxically makes for a heavy involvement of the government employment service

⁽⁴²⁾ For example, the funds allocated to decentralised government agencies are higher in Sweden and Germany, thus making it possible to take greater account of local needs, the proportion of employment staff appointed to local offices is higher in Germany and the United Kingdom than in France, Italy and Spain (91 % and 82 % compared with only 75 %, 63 % and 54 %), and the number of staff working in local offices is appreciably higher in the United Kingdom, Germany and Sweden than in France. Their geographical fields of activity and their powers are also wider than in France.

⁽⁴³⁾ Attempting a strict comparison here would, however, still seem somewhat risky.

with, according to Mazuy and Guitton (1999), a single staff member responsible on average for 50 unemployed people. It also necessitates a stricter control of effectiveness in implementing government policy. Hence the efforts to achieve greater regional liaison between the public employment service and the Training and Enterprise Councils – private bodies, two thirds composed of employers to whom training is subcontracted and who guarantee certification and funding based on formally agreed objectives. The operation of the Youth Training Programme in training young people without skills to enable them to find employment perfectly illustrates the tendency of government to exert strong pressure on bodies responsible for the management of training, and particularly its financing, to ensure that the objectives set are attained within a fixed time (Bouder, 1999, p. 376).

The Swedish model reveals a very high degree of government regulation of the youth labour market because training has been made the responsibility of the public employment service. This does not inhibit either a certain tendency to decentralise or an internal separation of the payment of unemployment benefit from job placement and training operations. But, ‘in a country that traditionally entrusts responsibility for vocational education entirely to schools and which to date has tended to consider that employers could not be made responsible for young people’s initial training’ (Benedetto, 1999, p. 409), apprenticeship still plays a very modest role in the scheme of things and the state remains the principal agent in finding jobs for young people.

1.6.3. From employment systems to policies concerned with the relationship between training and employment: the current trend towards active rather than passive expenditure

As we are all aware, attempting to analyse government action in the matter of employment regularly raises problems of methodology and there is not even unanimity as to the meaning of the term ‘employment policy’ (Barbier, 1998, p. 390). The difficulties are even greater in international comparisons and when seeking to focus on the special measures regulating the relationship between training and employment in the case of young job-seekers since, depending on the country concerned, such measures tend to be closely linked to macro-economic and social policy. To start with it is difficult to divorce young workers as a group from other populations under the various labour market regimes and employment policy generally. Consequently the most successful comparative approaches relate less to the specific details of youth-related policy than to the particular place that young people occupy in the labour market (Fondeur and Lefresne, 1999; Couppié and Masnuy, 2000). In France, as we have already seen, the macro-economic management of employment is characterised by a weakness in the activity rates at the two extremes of the active population and ‘the problem of youth employment may be compared with that of the exclusion of older workers’ (Elbaum and Marchand, 1994). Similarly, it is particularly difficult to pick out from among the manifold forms of government intervention the measures concerned with different types of activity, employers, jobs or specific groups and to identify their underlying aims clearly – whether job placement, socialisation, training or combating job instability and exclusion.

Generally speaking, public expenditure is measured using a standard grid produced by the OECD which makes a rough distinction between *passive and active expenditure* expressed as a percentage of GDP. The former (chiefly made up of unemployment benefit and retirement incentives) is deemed to influence labour supply while the latter is aimed at influencing labour demand through vocational training, employment promotion and job creation schemes, exemptions, job maintenance, work incentives and subsidised jobs, even if this classic distinction appears in many ways too abrupt and artificial ⁽⁴⁴⁾. However, even though these categories have been widely adopted, a number of differences appear between the countries studied. A general distinction could be made between ‘activist’ countries that choose to focus more on labour demand and social investment (Esping-Andersen, 1990) and show either a high level of expenditure on government employment policy (over 5 % of GDP in the case of Denmark) or increased expenditure when the unemployment situation shows signs of deteriorating (this applies to Germany and Sweden, for example), and ‘less activist’ countries, such as the United States, Japan and Greece (Table 3) which, for various reasons, devote less expenditure to regulating the labour market, and concentrate more on the supply side (employability, developing a spirit of enterprise, discouraging unemployment, workfare etc.).

Table 3: Expenditure on youth employment measures and unemployment rates (1997)

	DK	D	E	FIN	F*	I*	NL	S	UK	USA
Total spending as % of GDP	5,80	3,79	2,37	4,79	3,13	1,96	4,86	4,25	1,47	0,43
Youth employment measures	0,10	0,07	0,07	0,22	0,24	0,42	0,10	0,02	0,13	0,03
Unemployment	5,4	9,8	20,9	14,5	12,2	12,3	5,6	8,0	7,1**	5,00**

Source: Based on OECD employment forecasts for 1998

*, 1996

**, 16-64 years

Countries such as the United Kingdom and France fall midway between these two extremes so far as level of public expenditure and the degree of focus on national situations and needs are concerned (Eydoux et al., 1996, pp. 337-338). Allocations for passive and active expenditure vary not just from country to country but also from one period to another in a single country. Thus, whereas Sweden maintained a high level of active expenditure between 1985 and 1993 (2.11 % and 2.56 % of GDP) with a drop to 1.69 % in 1990, in France it was passive expenditure that tended to increase up to the mid-1980s (from 34 % in 1973 to 68 % in 1983) before active expenditure took over and from 1994 onwards markedly exceeded passive expenditure (50.8 % against 49.2 % in 1997).

⁽⁴⁴⁾ Cf. the excellent description of the nine major categories of active and passive policy by Barbier (1999).

One could refine the analysis by calculating, country by country, the relative share of each measure individually within the two categories. Thus in France in 1997 unemployment benefit represented about 80 % of passive and 46 % of total expenditure on employment, while vocational training accounted for 51 % of active and about a quarter of total expenditure. One might also point out that Italy, which devotes 0.42 % of GDP to youth-related measures, spends fourteen times more in this area than the United States and almost twice as much as France, four times more than Denmark and seven times more than Germany and Spain (Gautié, 1998, pp. 421-422). It is not absolutely clear how this data should be interpreted. Should it be seen as reflecting the youth-related investment agreed by national governments? Or does it underscore the role played by government policy in reducing labour market imbalances and malfunctioning linked specifically to youth employment?

Then again, an examination of expenditure and its allocation to different measures only provides a partial picture of government employment policies (Eydoux et al., 1996, p. 333). The most useful comparative approaches, therefore, now adopt a systemic perspective aiming to show the social coherence and dynamics underlying them (Gautié, 1998, p. 413) ⁽⁴⁵⁾. It is clear that the place of youth-related measures is only one element in employment policy. This is the view taken by Gautié (1998) in proposing that 'employment policy regimes' should be linked to 'employment regimes' along the lines of the old Esping-Andersen (1990) typology.

He first identifies a *liberal model* in the United States and the United Kingdom, typified by relatively modest expenditure (less than 2 % of GDP) and an emphasis on passive policies, notably unemployment benefit. This is followed by a *social democrat model* in Germany, Sweden, Finland, Denmark and probably the Netherlands. In this case global spending on market regulation is substantial and diversified (between 4.5 % and 6 % of GDP) except for measures targeting young people, whose integration poses fewer problems than in other EU countries. Here the emphasis tends to be placed on vocational training for adults and temporary government-created employment. Finally, France and Italy are seen as representing a *conservative corporatist model* characterised by lower overall expenditure, a high number of early retirements and a high level of expenditure directed to young people's social and occupational integration, even though the youth employment rate remains very low.

The author accepts that these categories are not clearly demarcated and do not permit all countries to be clearly categorised. Spain, for example, with its employment support in the form of subsidies and temporary government-created jobs, would tend to fall under the social democrat heading but, given its modest overall spending and the substantial proportion accounted for by passive measures, also under the liberal one. Similarly, Denmark and Finland, which are classed as social democrat, diverge from the model through their substantial use of early retirement typical of the corporatist model. The fact, however, that all these models have been radically reworked in recent years does not make analysis any easier.

⁽⁴⁵⁾ Barbier (1998, pp. 394-400) draws together the five main dimensions of the societal structures to which public employment policy is linked, viz. the social security system, 'political cultures', industrial relations ('the collectively agreed rules governing employment in enterprises'), macro-economic policy and 'activity or employment regimes'

There is currently much speculation as to the possibility of a large proportion of EU countries converging on the liberal paradigm of ‘workfare’ or ‘welfare to work’, which involves a shift from passive to active expenditure and a tying of access to social security benefits to the obligation to work (Box 2). However, although there may be a marked emphasis on individualisation and supply-side policies to the detriment of stimulating labour demand, the only steps taken to move from passive to active expenditure in many countries have been governmental or quasi-governmental job creation schemes. In addition, the drift towards the dominant workfare model may result in either some forms of sanction, or the contractual decision to maintain a ‘balance between the needs of the individual and those of society’ (Berbier, 1998, p. 392; 2001). Furthermore, the corporatist regime nowadays undoubtedly allows for greater flexibility in the labour market, and even the Swedish or Finnish social democrat model has been obliged to abandon a strictly regulated Fordist concept of work and policies based exclusively on social investment. Employment policies in Europe, therefore, are tending to become more varied and unstable rather than to converge towards a single model (Gautié, 1998).

Box 2: The US workfare and British welfare to work systems

Although the approaches adopted in Britain and America (two countries whose employment dynamics are in the final analysis not comparable) should not be lumped together too hastily, Anglo-American workfare policies derive from a similar liberal philosophy and tie the receipt of social security payments, particularly unemployment benefit, to an obligation to accept job offers or to take part actively in job-seeking programmes and training courses. The job-seeker’s allowance (JSA) introduced in the United Kingdom in 1998 is an example of this. Such policies focused on job offers also go hand in hand with stricter controls and technical support aimed both at avoiding the disincentive effect of unconditional payments and at stimulating job-seekers to act while bringing their expectations into line with market realities.

In such a scheme ‘it is above all the characteristics of individuals which explain their difficulty in finding employment and not the malfunctioning of the economic and social system’ (Gautié, 1998). Hence ‘the strong revival of the concept of employability’ that places responsibility for the future firmly on the shoulders of the individual.

In a critical assessment of the British reform, Lefresne (1998, p. 20) points out that the workfare strategy is far from having achieved its principal objective, namely that of doing away with the unemployment trap. ‘It tends to open the door of the poverty trap even wider since many of the jobs available are short-term, part-time jobs in the service sector...’, and it helps to create a new category of underemployed (unemployed people who have become disheartened, ‘people with disabilities’ applying for social security, people counted among the active employed population under action policy programmes but with no real contract of employment etc.) who, the author reckons, totalled 5.5 million in 1997 (*idem*, pp. 18-19).

1.6.4. The expanding role of private intermediaries

For a very long time and for ideological or ethical reasons the role of private-sector profit or non-profit employment agencies was in many countries neglected in favour of government

services. It was mainly from the 1990s onwards that attitudes began to change and that such activities started to be regarded as legitimate, helped, of course, by doubts about the effectiveness of government schemes, given the rise in mass unemployment at a time when liberal ideology was becoming more widespread (⁴⁶).

According to the EEC, ‘the term “private employment agency” means any physical or moral person independent of government that intervenes in the labour market in order to provide an employment service. Any physical or moral person is to be understood to include enterprises, institutions, voluntary associations and companies’ (Sansier, Boutonnat, 1998). The best known form of such agencies and that most studied is temporary employment agencies which have flourished in most EU countries over the past 20 years or so, despite a certain resistance, particularly in the countries of southern Europe – Spain, France, Greece and Italy – where the government system in many cases enjoys a monopoly so far as employment is concerned. But even in the countries mentioned, and in some cases for a considerable time, temporary employment agencies have been successfully established and have expanded by evading the prohibition on running commercial employment agencies contained in ILO Convention 96 (adopted in 1949) by describing themselves not so much as intermediaries or employment operatives in the strict sense but as ‘suppliers of skills’, in other words legal employers who recruit their employees and second them to client firms (Caire and Karchevsky, 2000, p. 198).

One could discuss at length the semantic subtleties that have resulted not only from international regulations but also from a variety of deregulatory measures and have led many countries to expose their public employment services to a degree of competition. Others have found elegant solutions by using successive typologies proposed jointly by the European Community and the International Labour Organisation from a study of 12 national monographs (Caire, 1991; Caire and Karchevsky, 2000, pp. 15-50 and 196-228; Sansier and Boutonnat, 1998, para. 2.2).

One could also embark on a lengthy discussion of the complex legal and economic forms of mediation adopted nationally, and on international comparisons. Whether they take the form of temporary employment agencies, recruitment or outplacement consultants, training organisations which also undertake job placement, ‘job enterprises’ (whose principal purpose is to train staff and to find them work with a view to stable employment) or private-sector non-profit intermediary associations, skills auditing centres, or whatever, it has to be concluded that (in the European Union) ‘the market share of the public employment service ranges from 5 % to 30 % with an average of 16.4 %, which means that 85 % of placements are effected by other means’ (Caire and Karchevsky, 2000, p. 200).

(⁴⁶) Caire and Karchevsky (2000, pp. 198-199), for example, show clearly that whereas between 1973 and 1987 the question of temporary work regularly figured on the agenda of the Governing Board of the International Labour Organisation and of its international conferences, it was never factually studied. Not until 1997 did a new convention (181) and a new recommendation (188) come into being, recognising the emergence of new types of private-sector intermediaries and seeking to regulate them by updating international regulations on the subject.

Let us restrict ourselves to the subject of temporary employment agencies and those which deal mainly with young people who have recently left school and not yet found permanent employment (Faure-Guichard, 1998) ⁽⁴⁷⁾. It should be said first of all that in France at least temporary work generally accounts for the employment of a growing proportion of the active and gainfully employed population, particularly in industry (almost 50 % of posts), the construction industry, transport and telecommunications, and represents between 300 000 and 500 000 full-time job equivalents, each year providing more than a million people with work. Moreover, despite the very recent rise in temporary jobs among executives and engineers, this sector of activity mainly concerns men who have few if any formal qualifications (73 % in 1996) and young people (in 1996 33 % of those in temporary employment were between 15 and 24 years of age and 48 % between 25 and 39). In the latter case, even though this is not its express primary purpose, temporary work functions very much as an intermediary institution, providing initial jobs, training and socialisation for young people. As an intermediary between the market and employers, it is situated between labour supply and demand and thus plays a part in selecting staff for employers as well as in gathering information on the labour market for employees; as an institution it plays a role in the organisation of the labour market (Belkacem, 1997).

However, as Faure-Guichard suggests (1998, p. 358), this intermediary function has ‘complex, ambivalent consequences for the functioning of the labour market’. While it makes provision for occupational transition and experimentation at a point where the public service proves less effective, it might also be argued that it encourages a degree of secondary market institutionalisation through its concentration on specific categories of the active population such as young people without qualifications, and in so doing underpins the existence of a youth labour market (as in the case of France), as well as helping, indirectly to some extent, to undermine the sense of identity of those concerned by introducing discontinuity into paid employment.

Many questions need to be answered concerning both traditional employers and subsidised employment schemes. I shall not discuss here the by no means negligible role played by what may be termed ‘ordinary’ companies in taking on young people and re-employing other job-seekers (cf. Section 3). This is true, for example, of SMEs and especially of smaller enterprises which, given the use they make of subsidised jobs (Gubian and Holcblat, 1999), might be considered a transitional market themselves. That at least is a theory that I have previously advanced (Trouvé, 2001, pp. 164-165). But one might also mention all the various types of social economy enterprise combining a market approach with solidarity, such as intermediary associations, job-finding enterprises and even temporary job-finding enterprises, which in France account for 2 150 subsidised employment schemes (Céalis, 2001), or social cooperatives in Italy (Borzaga and Santuari, 2000a and 2000b; Borzaga, 2001). The results

⁽⁴⁷⁾ The author contrasts such temporary working, which ‘is evidence of the current manner of entering the labour market’, with series of ‘transitional gaps’ in people’s working careers after periods spent in fairly stable employment in the primary market, and with ‘job gaps’, the deliberate choice of temporary employment.

achieved by these intermediary structures are admittedly modest in numerical terms (⁴⁸), but their role in combating exclusion is nonetheless valuable.

One should also not disregard profit-making ‘citizens’ enterprises’ and those which undertake sustained development work and contribute to the socialisation of unskilled young people. These still somewhat scattered experiments certainly merit further study.

1.6.5. In between the cracks of urban socialisation

This account of intermediary activities should not end without mentioning the recent work of Roulleau-Berger et al. (1997) on the pattern of unstable employment among young people in the urban environment and industrial production. When examining the current fragmentation of large French cities the authors discovered enclaves of small industries in which young people are finding unstable employment, organising and developing a variety of skills offering a new route into the labour market.

Given the current deterioration in job quality and employment conditions in the main economy, other patterns have evolved based on ephemeral, discontinuous or unstable activities, temporary small jobs, work-based training contracts and the informal economy. How these are to be interpreted is very unclear. On the one hand they reflect the powerlessness of young people in difficulty to find traditional types of work and employment, but at the same time they could also demonstrate the reluctance of some young people to embark on a job that they consider less than worthwhile. Hence the tendency of the less well qualified among them to distance themselves from, if not actually to reject, public employment institutions and policies, paralleling the cynicism developed by the better qualified with regard to the career promises made by companies with strong internal markets.

According to Roulleau-Berger et al. (1997) it would be mistaken to believe that these non-standard routes, which are the product of both choice and circumstance, lead inevitably to social withdrawal, since they are the birthplaces of a risk culture – that is to say, of a marked ability to improvise in situations of emergency or hostility – which engenders individual and collective skills that are theoretically transferable to the main economy. Moreover, while they presuppose a withdrawal from previous socialisation models, they nonetheless demand other forms of commitment based on networking with others in the community which, although often fragile, allows young people to combine together to some degree and is a prerequisite for social recognition and at least partial restructuring of their identity.

Despite their subordinate status, the intermediary opportunities afforded by small urban industries thus offer a possibility of traditional socialisation that includes a form of negotiated

(⁴⁸) A Crédoc survey conducted in France in 1996 and covering 452 people who had previously spent three years in a subsidised employment scheme showed that 40 % were still taking one unstable job after another. The remainder fell into two categories: one half were in stable employment while the others were excluded from the labour market (Dubéchet et al., 1997). These findings are confirmed by other wide-ranging studies (Céalis, 1997).

cooperation with militants and others involved in the social, cultural and voluntary sectors. Here we find again the idea of ‘adaptive instability’ discussed in sociological studies dealing with young people. On the other hand, these opportunities do not always directly lead to employment and integration, since while young people in unstable employment may be the co-authors of their socialisation they remain no less influenced by their previous social, family and school careers and the environment in which they develop.

In summary, therefore, the current development of transitional markets is the expression of a crisis, or at least of a radical transformation of the relationship between training and employment in most countries in Europe. The actual situation of young people in the labour market and the way in which initial training is linked to first-time employment differs considerably in the various national contexts, particularly between countries such as Sweden, France, Italy and Spain, where vocational training historically forms part of the education system, and others such as Germany and the United Kingdom where it exists outside it. But these institutional arrangements have been greatly affected by the combined impact of relatively widespread, common factors such as job rationing, employers’ new requirements in terms of both formal and behavioural skills, the general lengthening of formal education, young people’s changing aspirations and the creation of ever more and varied government employment structures (La revue de l’Ires, 1995, pp. 5-11).

At the same time, these transitional markets underline the reductive nature of the very concept of occupational integration perceived solely in terms of entry into standard forms of employment, and they open the way to experimentation with new patterns of employment and training.

1.7. Conclusion

What, in the final analysis, emerges from this examination of new approaches to the relationship between training and employment, and in what way is this analysis new? The recent plethora of comparative studies on the process of occupational integration, particularly at EU level, already provides a partial answer to the second question by offering the possibility of a shift away from national models hitherto automatically assumed to be quasi-universal. It is not simply a case of looking again at the dogma of fitting people to the labour market ⁽⁴⁹⁾, the limitations of which have long been criticised (cf. for example, Tanguy, 1986): so far as training and employment are concerned the education and training system is far from being the sole area in which young people, many of whom are in jobs that bear little relation to their initial training, develop skills and achieve occupational socialisation (Dumartin, 1997). For their part, employers (sectors of the economy, companies and organisations) do not offer homogeneous or transparent job structures. Knowledge of them

⁽⁴⁹⁾ The term should be understood as meaning any one-dimensional approach seeking to match the type of skills produced by the education system with the requirements of industry and assuming that education precedes employment in the transition to work.

alone, therefore, is not sufficient for making forecasts of labour requirements. I suggest that many other structuring factors play a part and, in various combinations, create regimes of integration which vary greatly from one country to another. Moreover, since they are currently undergoing radical revision these combinations must be seen as dynamic.

I have chosen to disregard here certain aspects which are nonetheless essential to this re-interpretation of the relationship between training and employment. This is undoubtedly where research is now needed in order to inform international comparison. I refer to systems of employment benefit (level and duration of payments), labour market legislation (regulations governing employment and dismissal), and remuneration systems (for instance the relative pay level for young people, its degree of flexibility and its incentive effect in terms of adult employees) as well as the socioeconomic dimensions that enter into the definition of an occupational integration regime (Bourdout and Persson, 1995, p. 166).

The present analysis nevertheless yields a number of findings. The current changes in the relationship between training and employment call into question the various traditional notions of integration into the labour market, and the implicit division between education/training and work as the points of entry and arrival in the integration process, not to mention the frequently ethnocentric predominance of educational qualifications in explaining occupational socialisation.

From the theoretical point of view, the notion of integration has never acquired a truly operational status, with the result that it is today, according to Nicole-Drancourt and Roulleau-Berger, 'a black box, much looked at but little studied' (1995, p. 41). Two main obstacles explain this inadequate epistemological base, namely the difficulties of measuring increasingly longitudinal phenomena and the absence of a real framework for analysis. At the empirical level, the capacity for generalisation is restricted due to the marked historical and national heterogeneity of transition from school to work (La revue de l'Ires, 1995; Cedefop/Eurostat, 2001). In France, for example (Guyennot, 1998), where transition is seen as an area for government action initially directed to groups in difficulty – young people, the poor, the disabled, the long-term unemployed, etc. – it was for a long time marked by thinking solely in terms of occupational adaptation and of a single moment in the life of the individual. Now, as I have shown, the whole tendency is to rethink the concept of integration and to replace it with that of *occupational transition* and *experimentation*, which take more account of the prolongation and complexity of the period required to achieve stable employment. In a particularly unstable context this may be achieved either by remaining in a single job or by progressing through a series of temporary or seasonal jobs interspersed with periods of unemployment, training, leisure or practical training that have helped to make young people's transition to the world of work a veritable labyrinth (Nicole-Drancourt, 1991).

If, therefore, young people do find their place in the labour market, this is increasingly becoming a dynamic process rather than a single moment in time. It is 'gradual, uncertain, diverse and relatively open' (Rose, 1998; 1999). That is why the frontiers between training and work as they previously existed have become more blurred. A multiplicity of intermediate

situations which may be more or less informal or institutionalised intervene between inactivity and employment. Just as certain unstable jobs may furnish experience that young people theoretically lack and thus constitute a form of training, some forms of training, work-based or otherwise, can contribute towards socialisation in the working environment ⁽⁵⁰⁾.

As for the young people themselves, whether we regard them as actors or products, the type and level of their academic qualifications and their gender are still crucial in determining their careers. However, a study of the social and occupational transition of young people entering the world of work increasingly suggests the existence of links between it and other social indicators, such as background and family environment (Nimal et al., 2001), family events during childhood and perception of the world of work (Degenne et al., 2001).

These are all elements that we should take into account in future in our new approaches to the relationship between training and employment. As Galland (2000, p. 59) summarises it so well, 'it is a set of new modes of behaviour on the part of employers, the training system, government policy and young people themselves, which have gradually crystallised into a new period of transition between school and the world of work.'

⁽⁵⁰⁾ Many studies of relatively recent date show that some vocational training is possible while studying – see Céreq et al., 1996; Grasser and Rose 2000, p. 23.

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2. Training for a specific occupation or to adapt to market changes?

Jean-François Germe

I should like to put forward three ideas.

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

The second is that current trends in the labour market, careers and job changes ⁽⁵¹⁾ run contrary to certain concepts implicitly or explicitly inherent in vocational training.

The third is that the notion of medium to long-term vocational planning that underlies certain approaches in vocational training is not always the most appropriate strategy for people to adopt or the strategy that is best adapted to the present labour market.

2.1. Is rational vocational guidance the answer?

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

Let us take an imaginary concept of vocational guidance counselling, which we should like to think of as soundly based and providing the norm for guidance counselling in practice. It might be based on the following three elements:

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

How are these three elements linked?

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

⁽⁵¹⁾ This paper contains certain elements of an article already published.

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

- (a) individuals must have a career plan, that is to say, they must draw up a set of goals and a schedule for putting into effect the various means, mainly training, by which they intend to achieve these. The existence of such a plan or project is one of the requirements of soundly based vocational guidance, while scheduling the various means establishes a normative relationship between the individual, training and work;
- (b) the project is necessarily long term since the process of training and finding a job takes time;
- (c) there is a continuity between the elements that go to make up individual career paths – continuity between the goals set and the project, between training and the type of occupation involved, and even between the various jobs held within a working career;
- (d) information is obviously another key factor for soundly based guidance counselling, since it is the basis for the choices that an individual is called upon to make.

This concept of vocational guidance is, of course, unrealistic. As we all know, reality is far more complex and constantly changing. It also differs from one country to another because systems of training and employment vary. But it is not entirely theoretical. It may have a normative value in the sense that it guides action. Helping individuals to devise a project, improving their knowledge as to what occupations involve and what their own abilities are, are in today's world vital aspects of the provision of vocational guidance.

2.2. The emergence of new occupational pathways

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

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

The argument I would put to you is a simple one, namely that the notions of project, continuity, and long term do nothing to explain some of the mobility taking place in the market. It might even seem impossible or not very relevant for people to plan long-term career projects. I am talking now about the job mobility of adults in France, but some points will no doubt also apply to young people starting their first job.

Let us begin with three facts regarding the evolution of job mobility which seem to suggest a new pattern of occupational pathways and new links between them and training:

- (a) the external inter-company market for jobs is becoming more active – witness the growing number of people who switch from one employer to another;
- (b) nowadays job changes go hand in hand with career advancement less often than in the past, probably because they are less often voluntary;
- (c) the link between training and job movements is becoming more tenuous. Training less frequently goes hand in hand with promotion within a company. It tends to be the employees in the most stable jobs that benefit from it most.

These trends bring with them a number of consequences.

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

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

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

2.3. Discontinuity, short-term employment and individual strategies

2.3.1. The declining significance of the notion of a trade or profession, and career discontinuity

The present job and labour market situation results in a pronounced discontinuity in terms of special skills between people's current jobs and their initial training and intended occupations.

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

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

Contrary to the findings of a number of studies which assume areas of occupation that are relatively homogeneous, clearly defined and closed to outsiders, the proportion of the population whose career does not follow a logical course of progression or mobility within a

specific occupational field thus appears to be very high. Although the findings of our survey did not make a distinction between the internal and external labour markets, the number of cases of discontinuity shows the effect of a market in which formal rules linking training and jobs are little heeded in either individual behaviour or company organisation.

2.3.2. A short time horizon and new individual strategies

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

There is no discernible consistency between individuals' training plans on the one hand and the typology of the population that we have described, in terms of career path and training project, on the other. To put it more simply, there appears to be no link between intended career and plans for training in terms of duration and acquisition or non-acquisition of a formal qualification. Whatever the advice given in vocational guidance, the training which individuals say that they are looking for would seem to bear no relation to their plans for a career. One might, for example, expect people thinking of retraining to devise a project for the longer term, so as to give them time to acquire a formal qualification, but this is not the case. Moreover, people with no career plans are the very ones whose training plans are clearest in terms of the qualifications aimed at. It is therefore tempting to think that training plans are taking the place of career plans.

It would be mistaken to view people's pathways and projects as following a logically structured sequence of an intended career path giving rise to a career plan, and thereafter to a training plan. This sequential approach would mean people acting in accordance with some long-term 'action plan' that brought together and gave coherence to their day-by-day decisions. It would seem, however, that a large proportion of people constantly adopt a short-term view and adjust their training decisions in line with the information that they possess about the labour market, their perceptions of available training, and progress with their career plans. Their actions would seem to be directed far more to seizing opportunities than to building and pursuing a project whose purpose, organisation and duration are fixed in advance and enshrined in a plan of action. Hence, people seem to build up their career paths bit by bit and to be on the look-out for training courses that will enable them to keep their career options open and to alter course in their careers.

2.4. Training for the market rather than a trade or profession

It would seem nowadays that a great many job changes are not caused by progression within a precise area of work, and hence within a given occupation. Training may, of course, sometimes be seen as an attempt to gain career advancement in a specific field, but only some job changes can be explained in these terms.

With a little exaggeration, it is tempting to say that a proportion of the active workforce and of young people undertake training not so much with a view to preparing for a given occupation

(because of a need for retraining or a lack of initial vocational training) or to gaining a higher-level job in their existing occupation, but rather in order to anticipate the labour market by accumulating 'resources' that will enhance their chances of promotion and of moving to other jobs, with their current or a different employer. These resources vary, training only being one of them: degrees and certificates, knowledge of disciplines and fields that can be variously combined, networking and contacts with employers. Individuals finalise their choices as late as possible so as to leave as wide a range of options open as possible in the labour market or with the existing employer. Choices made by individuals in order to accumulate such resources are not based on long-term planning but rather on a series of decisions representing short-term adjustments in their career and training paths. It is less a case of training for a specific occupation in which they think they might find a job than of positioning themselves to maximise the chances of benefiting from opportunities as they arise.

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

An examination of career paths thus reveals a shift in attitudes towards the relationship between employment and training, from an approach based on the need for skilled labour for 'rigid specialisms for specific jobs', to a more market-oriented approach (Plassard and Pluchard, 1997) in which specialist training loses its relevance as a criterion for analysis. Viewed from this perspective, a person's lack of a career project – the 'wait and see' approach – can be regarded as indicating adjustment to the market. Another way of looking at it might be from the standpoint of eligibility (Espinasse and Vincens, 1996). According to Espinasse and Vincens, the expansion of 'eligibility zones' leads individuals to seek and find, by a process of trial and error, what renders them eligible for a certain kind of job, specialist training and formal qualifications being only one element among many others, such as experience, unusual qualifications or combinations of skills, and so on. Analyses of employment and job mobility based largely on examination of deskilling, links between specialist training and specialist jobs would then lose some of their relevance.

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3. The Euroguidance Centres

Laura Giulia Cassio

The resource centres for vocational guidance were established in 1992-93 within the Petra programme, (section III). This section of the programme provided Community support for national systems of vocational guidance and information and promoted Community cooperation in the field of guidance, in order to ensure that all young people and their families could access to suitable information — particularly on training opportunities – and rely upon practical advice and guidance as concerning their professional opportunities, project and development. In this framework, the national resource centres for vocational guidance were created in order to support exchanges of data and of information on the national training systems and training opportunities within the Union, particularly in the perspective of mobility. It should be stressed, in fact, that the Centres have a specific mission, that tells them apart from ordinary guidance services: they promote transnational mobility of people in education and training by providing information on training opportunities in Europe, and at the same time they work to strengthen the European dimension in the activities of guidance themselves.

After the conclusion of the Petra programme, the Centres were supported as ‘accompanying structures’ within the first phase of the Leonardo da Vinci programme which started in 1994. The mission of the Centres was complementary to the other activities funded within the programme, such as the pilot projects, which were dealing also with the theme of guidance, and above all the mobility measures. During the first phase of the programme, the organisation and activities of the centres were defined, according to the specific needs of the MS and of the publics whom they were led to answer and, more generally, according to the socioeconomic circumstances which affected their environments. The designation and the implementation of the NRCVG are in fact responsibilities of the national authorities, and often they involve an agreement between the Ministry responsible for vocational training and the Ministry of Education, in order to assure them a strong institutional anchoring. The choice to organise the activities around one or several structures in each country also belongs to the national authorities.

The LdV programme was progressively opened to countries out of the UE (the EEA and CEE countries) and consequently new centres were progressively associated with the network.

As the network widened, the need emerged for a more formal status of the Centres and for a clearer definition of their role within the Community policy of vocational training.

The Community support to the NRCVG network was therefore mentioned explicitly in the decision which establishes the second phase of the Leonardo da Vinci programme, covering the period 2000-06.

For the future, the network of the Centres – which has recently adopted, for a better visibility, the name ‘Euroguidance’ – will be able to play a relevant role in some key actions the Commission is envisaging.

The conclusions of the extraordinary European Council of Lisbon ask in fact the Commission and the Member States to take further and coordinated action as concerning mobility in education and training and the transparency of qualifications.

First, they ask the Commission and the Member States to define by the end of this year the means making it possible to encourage the mobility of the students, of the teachers, trainers and research workers by an optimal use of the existing programmes, by a removal of the obstacles and by increasing the transparency of qualifications and fostering the recognition of training periods abroad.

The Member States and the Commission have already begun to identify and remove the obstacles to the mobility of students, of young people undergoing training, of teachers and trainers, in the view of an adoption by the end of this year of a recommendation of the European Parliament and the Council in this field. In order to implement this recommendation, Member States must be in a position to shun these obstacles and to develop mobility to a significant degree. Thus the French presidency will propose the adoption of an ‘action plan’ which concretely identifies the actions and the actors who may allow a development of mobility. In this framework, the Centres will be indicated as a valuable building block of the global strategy to improve mobility.

Another important target indicated by the Lisbon conclusions is to increase the transparency of qualifications. Last year the Commission and the Cedefop created a Forum on Transparency in order to facilitate the cooperation of MS on the theme. The Forum has presented at the beginning of this year the conclusions of its work; the main proposal concerns the creation of a Certificate Supplement, with a common format at European level, which will accompany the qualification certificates. The certificate will contain precise information on the content of the qualification (duration of training etc.). Such information will have to be elaborated by ad hoc centres (Reference Points) disposing of the necessary expertise on qualifications. The NRCVG were invited to present their experience to the Forum, as the work they carry out shares some significant features with what the Reference Points on qualifications will be supposed to do. Even if it is not certain whether some NRCVGs might be appointed as National reference points on qualifications (this decision is of course up to MS only), their experience has certainly proved valuable in helping the Forum to define the model and the working methods of the reference points.

The Lisbon conclusions also ask the Commission to ‘provide employment services with a Europe-wide data base on jobs and learning opportunities’. DG EAC is now exploring (in cooperation with EURES) the options available to establish such information system. It is expected that the Centres – who already gained a relevant experience contributing to the creation of the ESTIA web-site – will be able to positively cooperate with the Commission in carrying out this important task.

4. Aims and problems in guidance counselling ⁽⁵²⁾

Jean Guichard

4.1. Introduction: background, context and aims of guidance counselling

Guidance counselling came into being at the beginning of the 20th century. At that time guidance was based on psychological analysis and its purpose was to assist the transition from school to work. The predominant model was that of establishing a relationship between a young person and a type of occupation, based essentially on considerations of aptitude. Counsellors were experts in the techniques of psychology who sought to convince the client of the soundness of their advice.

Nowadays the practice of guidance counselling is very different and far more varied:

- (a) in the first place it no longer confines itself to coping with the passage from school to the world of work. Lifelong guidance counselling is the byword. It begins while a young person is still at school and operates in two ways – through the allocation of pupils to different streams within the school system and through various educational activities designed to prepare pupils for choosing a career and mapping out their lives. At the same time, guidance is seen as a collection of ways and means of assisting adults to cope with the various transitions occurring throughout their lives;
- (b) secondly, current guidance practice tends to have a broader focus than merely choosing and finding a job and coping with transitions. Nowadays the emphasis is on what Donald Super refers to as '*life space career development*' and hence on creating a dynamic link between different social roles;
- (c) thirdly, guidance counsellors generally tend to adopt a less directive stance than before. The underlying principle is that clients have to decide for themselves, and the aim is to help them to address the task of choosing which occupational route to follow as thoroughly as possible and to define priorities for their personal development;
- (d) fourthly, clients are seen as individuals who go on developing throughout their lives and are capable of acquiring new skills from personal experience. We now talk of 'training organisations', 'validation of learning' and 'skills auditing';
- (e) fifthly, the demarcation between vocational training and guidance has become blurred. Guidance in its various forms is accorded increasing space in school curricula in the richer countries and is delivered as often by teachers as by counsellors trained in

⁽⁵²⁾ This paper includes a number of points discussed in Guichard, J. and Huteau, M. *Psychologie de l'Orientation*. Paris: Dunod, 2000.

psychology. There are some who think that normal classes provide an opportunity for career guidance. Kenneth Hoyt (1977) refers to this procedure as ‘infusion’. Some continuing training courses combine the provision of general education or instruction in occupational skills with activities designed to help trainees to formulate their personal or career objectives.

These changes in guidance counselling practice would seem to have been triggered by the evolving context in which it is given. Understanding how this has come about, assessing the relevance of each at a given moment, and attempting to predict their further development, requires that they be placed in their appropriate societal context.

An analysis of this kind can take place at three levels:

- (a) the general ideological background that determines how we formulate certain problems;
- (b) the contributory influence of the economic, technical, social and scientific context;
- (c) the aims and objectives that implicitly or explicitly underlie counselling practice.

4.2. The general ideological background

Four factors of an ideological nature help to determine our current concept of how guidance should be conducted in practice:

- (a) a client-centred approach;
- (b) clients assuming responsibility for their own development;
- (c) the central role of work in establishing people’s identity and enabling them to become socially integrated;
- (d) the perception of the future as uncertain and unstable.

4.2.1. The client-centred approach

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

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

4.2.2. Clarifying aspirations and pursuing self-development

Nowadays we tend to look on people rather as autonomous, responsible individuals capable of acting independently of the specific circumstances in which they find themselves caught up. This leads us to see personal development as a kind of basic moral imperative: ‘Develop yourself’.

4.2.3. Achieving self-fulfilment and social integration through work

We also consider engaging in some kind of work to be a particularly effective way of achieving self-development. ‘Development through self-fulfilment in one’s work’ would appear to have been the chief way of viewing existence in the rich countries in the 20th century.

Of course this principle is not unanimously accepted. In the first half of the century it referred particularly to men and boys. Today high unemployment in many of the wealthier countries and the emergence of new forms of poverty have led to some people becoming ‘excluded’ and to mistrust of employability, casting doubt on the principle of individuals’ being identified in terms of their occupation.

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

However, even given the changes to which work is subject, we can hardly consider it just another form of activity destined to become of minor importance. Despite the findings of Dominique Méda and others, Yves Clot considers that what makes work fundamentally different from non-work activities is that it is structurally impersonal and to a degree impartial. Work, he suggests, represents a break between an individual’s personal ‘pre-occupations’ and the ‘occupations’ required of him in a social context. ‘These alone enable him to participate in an exchange whose location and function are defined independently of the participating individuals at any given moment’ (Clot, 1999, p. 71). In Clot’s view it is precisely because work no longer more or less occupies people’s entire lives and is no longer an obligatory activity resulting from circumstances of birth – as in rural societies, where sons succeed fathers as a matter of course – that it now holds a more central

place in our existence, ‘the object of a new need for self-realisation drawing much of its vitality from non-work considerations’ (Clot, 1999, p. 71).

4.2.4. An unstable future

Our manner of perceiving guidance counselling and what it involves is also determined by our view of likely future developments. We see the future as uncertain and unstable. A number of contemporary authors, such as Boutinet (1998) and Dubar (2000), stress that from now on working patterns will show not so much career development as occupational chaos and less continuity in the sense, say, of progress towards increasingly skilled jobs with a single employer or sector of industry. People are now more often faced with breaks in their careers that are paralleled by events in their personal lives: families are becoming less stable, and moving to other districts has become more frequent. Such breaks in people’s lives have generally been termed ‘transitions’.

Henceforth, therefore, as Denis Pelletier and Bernadette Dumora (1984, p. 28) point out, vocational guidance counselling will necessarily involve teaching clients short-term strategies and ways of coping with successive adjustments.

4.3. The contexts

While ideology influences the design of guidance counselling, the social context also plays a part.

Three such contexts seem to me to play a fundamental role here, namely the way in which work and training are organised, and the scientific considerations that influence the way in which they are modelled.

4.3.1. The organisation of work, training design and guidance

In an article published in 1995 that has lost none of its relevance, Alain Touraine describes three forms of work organisation that emerged in the course of the 20th century, to each of which corresponds a particular conception of vocational training that has strongly influenced guidance counselling. In consequence, guidance counselling can be classified under three main headings. For some years there has been a fourth type of guidance counselling, linked to growing job insecurity.

Occupationally focused work organisation and guidance counselling

At the beginning of the century, work organisation was mainly occupationally based. Production was generally along the line of craft trades: workers needed to have the right know-how. They possessed a fund of knowledge and skills that could be acquired by a

generally lengthy and systematic apprenticeship. Their skills were specific, so that a worker could be identified as a mechanic or a joiner, just as at the professional level a person was a lawyer or a doctor. A craft trade was a major constituent of an individual's identity.

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

Fordism and job-directed guidance counselling

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

Under the Fordist form of work organisation 'the hard core of competence was training on the job' (Dubar, 1998, p. 166). Workers were no longer able to identify themselves solely in terms of their craft or trade. At best they were production hands or machine operators. If they changed employer, their qualifications would be in doubt. In this case, according to Dubar, the main identifying factor was the bond between the individual and his (or her) fellow workers, who constituted a real occupational community having its own jargon and own informal standards.

In this context counselling no longer followed the occupationally focused model. Personal aptitude was no longer the central point of interest. What was important was to ascertain whether young people were likely to adapt well to the working environment. whether they would see themselves as part of the working team and whether they already shared the values of their fellow workers or could be brought to do so.

Although guidance counsellors do not appear to have thought the subject through systematically, the Fordist form of work organisation appreciably weakened the link between individuals and occupations, by comparison with the occupationally focused system that formed the basis for the tools developed for guidance counselling (mainly questionnaires about interests). It would appear that these tools were only as important in counselling practice as counsellors themselves allowed (since they saw themselves as providing vocational guidance). The focus on jobs in fact placed more emphasis on people's social characteristics as workers. The interests questionnaire drawn up by Edward Strong in the late 1920s may be

regarded as the prototype for this form of approach. As is generally known, those completing the questionnaire were asked to state their preferences in various fields of activity and for their favourite celebrities. The aim was to ascertain whether individuals had the same tastes as those with whom they would be working.

The skills model and counselling for occupational functions

Over the past 20 or 30 years progress in computer technology has probably been one of the chief factors influencing industrial production. It has also had a major impact on work organisation. Touraine notes that automation marked the introduction of a new form of work organisation that he terms 'technical'. In this case, training is related to a recognised status in a social production system. This 'technical working system' calls for a number of specific skills on the part of employees different from those required for jobs in the occupationally focused system.

These skills are linked to the interactions that from now on typify the working situation. Work becomes a function performed in the context of a network. In such a context, as Laurent and Huteau (1997) and Zarifian (1988) point out, certain skills are essential, among them sociability, the ability to communicate, adaptability, the capacity for coping with unexpected events by developing new skills, and the readiness to accept responsibility for results.

This model differs fundamentally from the two previous models in two ways. First, workers are seen as possessing a fund of skills, which the Fordist operative is not. Secondly, they are regarded as capable of evolving new skills, particularly as their work situation develops. Such terms as 'training organisation' and 'lifelong learning' begin to be used. However, unlike the aptitude model, these skills tend to be closely linked to the context in which they are displayed. It is not so much the person performing the tasks who is the central focus here as the interaction in a work context-actions, discussions, roles and so on.

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

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

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

For a growing number of employed people the increase in job instability results in repeated changes of job which do not represent career advancement – in fact quite the opposite. In their case guidance counselling has the less ambitious objective of helping them to make the best of what are often very difficult situations.

Eclectic guidance counselling

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

4.3.2. Organisation of training and the problems of career guidance in schools

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

It is interesting to compare Germany and France in this connection. The school systems in these two countries are very different. In France there is just one type of secondary school which also provides technical and vocational training. In Germany, on the other hand, there are three kinds of school, and responsibility for technical and vocational training lies largely with employers. The result is that vocational guidance counselling in France and Germany differs radically.

Under the French system, as Henri Eckert (1993, p.272) points out, ‘control over occupational mobility between the generations lies with the schools, counselling services being the losers’. Counsellors are no longer decision-makers but supporting mentors. The question that arises here is whether counsellors should confine themselves to providing information or whether they should seek to educate their clients in decision-making strategies or even become psychologists concerned with personality development.

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

4.3.3. Scientific models of guidance counselling: the psychology of guidance

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

Differential psychology and the match between individual and occupation

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

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

René Davis and Lloyd Lofquist's theory of work adjustment probably constitutes the prototype for a differential approach to vocational guidance counselling. John Holland's questionnaires are paradigms in the more specific field of youth counselling.

Developmental, cognitive and social questions of lifelong guidance counselling

Since the 1950s, research into guidance psychology has had other concerns, such as how plans for the future and the desire of young people to pursue a given career evolve, and the development of personality and occupational careers over a lifetime. These questions have been modelled in a variety of ways. Examples are the model of John Krumboltz and colleagues, inspired by Albert Bandura, the cognitive chart model of Linda Gottfredson, and the model of Fred Vondracek and colleagues, inspired by Urie Bronfenbrenner's ecology of human development. Some approaches merely offer general frameworks, while others, such as that of Bernadette Dumora, are based on broad-ranging empirical observations. Donald

Super's very general 'life space, life span career development' model is in a way a synthesis of previous analyses.

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

Carl Rogers and counselling psychology

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

Link between psychological research and practical guidance counselling

While most theoretical guidance models result from addressing societal questions using one or other of the different psychological approaches (behaviourism, neobehaviourism, cognitivism, dynamic psychology, psychoanalysis etc.), developments in psychology have in turn certainly played a role in the very conception of guidance counselling. Nonetheless the gap between psychological research and counselling practice has now widened. This is borne out by four phenomena:

- (a) the first is a certain apathy with regard to theoretical counselling models on the part of many practitioners, in whose opinion 'theory bears little relation to what actually happens in counselling in practice, particularly during an interview' (Fielding, 2000, p. 80);
- (b) secondly, one hears criticisms from theoreticians – often severe – of guidance counselling as it is practised. Claude Chabrol (2000, p. 174) wonders whether the interview is not a soft technique that encourages counsellors to favour explanations in terms of an individual's character ('that's how he/she is') rather than in terms of situational, social or other factors. In vocational guidance counselling certain notions such as employability sometimes lead to such accusations;
- (c) a third indication of the current gap between theory and practice in vocational guidance counselling lies in the marked differences in perception of the human subject underlying

the tools used by practitioners and those constituting the principal paradigm in social science. The tools used in practice, such as John Holland's 'types', generally see the individual as possessing a stable personality. Recently, psychologists and sociologists have postulated a less stable model than hitherto, which I see as having three main characteristics (see Guichard 2000):

- (i) firstly, individuals structure themselves in a number of subjective identities that are interchangeable according to the context in which they interact and which constitute a unified system of subjective identity. One cannot, therefore, address individuals' concepts of self, that is the various identities that they have constructed for themselves, without allowing for their perception of the structure of the various social environments constituting the society in which they live;
- (ii) secondly, human subjectivity is relatively malleable, as such concepts as the 'working self concept' seek to convey. By 'relatively' malleable I mean that the stability or malleability of the self is governed basically by three factors, namely:
 - the degree of complexity of society;
 - the degree of integration of the various areas of social relations within that society;
 - the range of the individual's interactions;
- (iii) thirdly, confronted with a world in change, individuals are constantly seeking identities in which they can 'crystallise' without actually deciding on any particular crystallisation of themselves. Apparently they are driven by a primordial impetus that leads them to seek some form of identity or other, while never making a final commitment to those identities.

Such a concept of the individual renders the subject-matter of vocational guidance counselling more complex. The idea of a client whose principal personality characteristics are definable is gradually giving way to that of a 'multivocal' subject (to use Bakhtine's terminology, cf. Wertsch, 1990 and Häyrynen, 1995), whose identity is never finally structured.

Should the counsellor's objective therefore be to assist the client in becoming stabilised in certain identities as is postulated, for example, by the model of John Holland? Or should the counsellor rather seek to help the client to diversify his or her subjective system of identities, as the political philosophy of Michel Foucault would suggest?

One last indication of the growing distance between theoretical research and vocational guidance counselling as it is practised lies in the fact that certain problems encountered by counsellors in the course of their work have not been the subject of major research projects by psychologists even though they would be suitable. Little attention is paid, for example, to the measuring and validation of skills, which are essential for counselling practice ('In what circumstances is a skill transferable or can be made so?'). If practitioners have distanced themselves from theoreticians, the reverse is also true.

4.4. Aims and objectives of guidance counselling in practice

The steadily widening gap over time between guidance counselling in practice and psychological research may be due to the failure of science to provide answers to practitioners' chief problems. Academic studies tend to be concerned with throwing light on the process itself, on how things happen, and do not ask the question 'What should be done?'. Instead they ask 'How?' but not 'To what end?'. Theoretical research seeks to know and to describe phenomena as they are. It is not interested in practicalities and does not tell us what action should be taken to achieve a given end (⁵³).

This should not lead us to conclude that the scientific approach holds no interest for practitioners (⁵⁴). In fact, it is of interest in two ways. On the one hand it can contribute to greater effectiveness by, for instance, helping practitioners to understand the processes involved in their activity. At the same time it can turn up hitherto unsuspected ethical problems, as by asking the question whether 'benevolent neutrality' is not, perhaps, a very subtle form of manipulation.

Nonetheless, only by establishing the ethical, economic and social objectives is it possible to define the practical objectives of vocational guidance counselling. For Binet these were obvious: in his view the mission of vocational guidance counselling was to achieve a harmonious society based on the recognition by each member that he was in the situation merited by his aptitudes. The counsellor's objective was a simple one: to define accurately the aptitudes required for a specific occupation and those possessed by each individual. The purpose and the operational objectives were intrinsically linked.

The current situation is different. First, the operational objectives of counselling are more diverse than they were at the beginning of the century. Secondly, it would seem that the purposes of counselling are rarely questioned, particularly in ethical and social terms. And thirdly, the question of the link between purpose and objectives would seem to be somewhat complex.

4.4.1. Objectives

The objectives of vocational guidance today are manifold, and because of their institutional position counsellors find themselves defining them in response to the more or less explicit expectations of their clients, which again may vary considerably. Sometimes, for example, it may be a case of helping clients to consider what they wish to become and the identities that they wish to construct for themselves. In this case, the objective is to help them to take a more detached view of their different identities.

(⁵³) The difference can be illustrated by an example: neurobiology has shown that Ecstasy tablets can result in irreversible brain lesions. This finding does not lead to the conclusion that the use of the drug should be forbidden. That would involve action. The decision to allow or forbid it is the result of ethical and policy considerations as to what is good for the individual and for society, on the basis of research findings.

(⁵⁴) If this were so there would be no point in producing this book!

Sometimes the problem is that of taking a decision. Its nature may vary, calling for different measures to be applied. In cognitive terms, it may result in the objective of assisting the client to a better perception of the problem. Conversely, in terms of personal development, helping someone to decide may mean allowing that person to crystallise one particular identity. It often happens that the problem to be confronted is how to cope with a transition. This can be a very complex matter that involves defining a number of intermediate objectives.

4.4.2. Purpose

If the objectives of practical counselling are generally clear, the same cannot be said of the overall purpose. It would seem as if, since Parsons, there has been some kind of consensus to the effect that the focus is on the individual and his or her capacity to deal with transitions. When a client requests help, the counsellor's task is to help him or her to make the best of his or her advantages, while bearing in mind the constraints imposed by the context involved.

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

Others, though remaining client-centred, see the aims of vocational guidance counselling from a less economy-based point of view. This is the case, for example, of Claude Pair, who in a paper presented in reply to the above assertion stated that 'school has to develop and anchor the personality so as to enable every young person to establish his or her own identity, pursue objectives and be creative. In fact, this is what is called education by choice' (Pair, 1997, p. 251).

It seems to me, however, that one could conceive of other aims for vocational guidance counselling. In 1970 a Unesco committee of experts proposed a definition of vocational guidance that opened the way for less individualistic considerations by stating that guidance counselling consisted in enabling people to become aware of the features of their personality and to develop them with a view to choosing their course of study and work in every situation of their lives with a concomitant concern to serve society and extend the scope of their responsibilities (Danvers, 1992, p. 190).

This definition puts the stress on an individual's social and moral development (serving society and assuming more responsibility).

From this standpoint one might perhaps suggest that with four-fifths of mankind living in growing poverty, vocational guidance counselling might be used to prepare young people to

contribute to creating a world in which the gap between the ‘haves’ and ‘have-nots’ was narrower. One might also consider that it should endeavour – at a time when questions of identity are so crucial, as the multiplication of identity-motivated conflicts would indicate – to help each individual to realise the limits of the identity framework that makes up his or her little world.

4.4.3. The link between purpose and objectives

The question of how the purpose and objectives of guidance counselling tie in with one another also requires investigation, since a single objective may be associated with opposing purposes. Thus activities designed to distance individuals from their current identities may very well have the aim both of encouraging flexibility in future workers and of leading young people to reconsider their identity stereotypes and to realise the dangers that these involve.

Similarly, a given activity – such as a local development project, in which adolescents from different environments work together as a team – may result in their acquiring skills that will serve them well in careers either in the world of commercial competition or in that of useful social work.

4.5. Guidance aimed at establishing a personality

One final remark. There are two aspects to most of the approaches to choice of occupation and to planning for life or periods of transition:

- (a) they do not concern the person as a whole but concentrate – to differing degrees – on only one aspect: training, guidance or finding a job;
- (b) they are based on a positive or irenic conception of human beings: they may be interpreted as secular versions of the notion of man occupied in doing God’s work on Earth. Consequently they disregard what are frequently the negative consequences of the crystallisation of identity, which humanity has demonstrated throughout the 20th century.

While they explain quite well how to become an engineer, they say nothing about what that engineer will do – helping to develop a deprived region or designing a device to be used for the destruction of whole sections of the population.

One might ask, therefore, whether the primary purpose of guidance counselling at the beginning of the 21st century might not be defined as offering clients the opportunity to re-create themselves as people (Jacques, 1982; cf. Guichard, 2001), that is as ternary products (I – you – he) of a dialogical relationship with others, a relationship which establishes who they are and leads them, on each occasion, to distance themselves from their crystallised identity.

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5. Existential adult guidance – when lifelong learning becomes philosophical practice

Finn Thorbjørn Hansen

What I wish to show in this article is why *philosophical practice* – i.e. the method underlying the *Socratic dialogue group* and *philosophical guidance practice* – is relevant to research in the field of lifelong learning. The principal point of view in the article is that the idea of lifelong learning must be viewed as an *existential* matter for the adult. There is a tendency today to look at lifelong learning either with a narrow business and labour-market focus, where the aim is, as it were, to create eternally flexible and competitive people who are able to make themselves useful in relation to the new international knowledge-based society. Or else a democratic aspect is added, where lifelong learning is linked to the idea of a European citizenship.

But as Richard Sennett makes clear in *Det fleksible menneske* (1999), the talk about lifelong learning and competence-developing education is not devoid of problems. When the term competence is used, there is a tendency to consider people in a social function perspective, and in this way people are, as it were, turned into functionaries in the service of development or progress. They are not allowed to set the agenda themselves. What is therefore easily overlooked in the current debate on lifelong learning is that if the individual person is not to be tossed hither and hither like a feather on the winds of change from the knowledge-based society, he must build up an ‘existential keel’ in order to be able to set a course chosen by himself. The adult in the self-directed learning processes does not just have to clarify learning needs, learning resources and learning style. What is becoming essential in the ever more complex and pluralistic knowledge-based society is the ability to clarify what fundamental *values* and *ideals of education* one wishes to be trained through. This necessitates a more ethical and philosophical approach to the didactics behind self-directed learning, the idea of lifelong learning and lastly adult guidance. Or, it could also be said, it necessitates not just thinking in terms of competences but also *thinking in terms of education* (dannelse – Bildung).

This point of view can be regarded as a partial result of a major research project, *Enlightenment, Democracy and Adult Education*, on which the Research Centre for Adult Education at the Danish University of Education has been working on since 1997 and which has now been completed. The overall focus in this project was on the significance of the changed relationship between enlightenment, democracy and adult education viewed in the light of individualisation and globalisation. The purpose of my research project in this connection was to examine in philosophical terms how it might be possible against the background of the increased interest in individualisation and self-creation and on the basis of a new German-Dutch phenomenon of ‘*Philosophical Counselling and Practice*’ to re-think a

new concept of responsibility and citizenship and in that way a new form of ‘*existential adult pedagogy*’ (Hansen 1998, 1999, 2001).

In 1999 this work culminated in a specific development project directed by the Danish Ministry of Education, in which one of the methods behind existential adult pedagogy – *the Socratic dialogue group* – was tried out and later recommended as a tool for clarifying value in the area of adult education. Today a description of this project and the method underlying it can be found in *Den sokratiske dialog-gruppe – et værktøj til værdiafklaring* (Gyldendal, 2000) by the undersigned.

I wish in this article to present a short overview of the philosophical background to thinking about adult education and adult guidance as a philosophical practice and what sociological, political and adult-pedagogical factors have fostered the putting into practice of existential adult pedagogy and adult guidance.

I shall also focus on the use by English-language writers of the terms ‘self-directed learning’ and ‘lifelong learning’, and why there is a need to include the existential dimension in the self-directed learning process.

The article ends with a brief presentation of the methods behind the Socratic dialogue group and philosophical guidance, and attention is drawn to the need for development work in this area.

5.1. Philosophical life as an ideal of education for adult guidance

At the philosophical level, we are at present witnessing a softening and reconstruction of the idea of enlightenment in the direction of a more post-modern and pluralistic framework of understanding. This change demands a fundamental paradigm shift in the present way in which we understand the relationship between enlightenment (oplysning), education (dannelse) and democracy.

200 years after Emmanuel Kant asked what enlightenment is, the French philosopher Michel Foucault replies (1984, 1986, 1988) that if we today are to retain the concept of enlightenment, it must be linked to a concept of self-creation and to the philosophical ethos. This means philosophy understood as a life form or rather as a life art. As Foucault says: ‘We have to create ourselves as a way of art’. And the tool for this self-creation is philosophical praxis. If the self-creation is not driven by a philosophical ethos (i.e. a love of wisdom and striving for self-perfection), there is a risk of this self-creation project ending in aestheticism or narcissism. The endeavour to live the philosophical life – where one has one’s values and basic assumptions under constant examination, and where one attempts, like Socrates, to create a balance, a composition between bios and logos, between one’s life experiences and life view – is the goal of the existential practitioner, Foucault claims. The ethical concern for oneself with which the Stoics were occupied, where one’s concern is firstly to live a life in

beauty and meaningfulness and secondly with respect for the right of others to self-creation, has become a highly topical exercise for the modern and culturally liberated European citizen. Without this ethical self-concern and Socratic Eros, the work of enlightenment and adult education declines, ending merely as utility-oriented 'repainting institutions, where qualifications are adjusted' Dupont & Hansen 1998).

What we therefore see inside the world of philosophy is a pragmatic turn, where philosophising to an ever greater extent is regarded as a practical means of education, as a practical exercise in presence (Hadot 1995; Schanz 1991, 1993). It is a more *life-aesthetic and existential* concept of enlightenment, where the right argument is not necessarily the most rational argument, but the argument which can make our life more beautiful and wise. The Stoic Epicurus writes: 'Empty is the philosophical argument which does not treat human suffering. For just as medical practice is of no benefit if it cannot remedy bodily diseases, so philosophical practice is unusable unless it can remedy spiritual suffering.' (Nussbaum, 1995, p. 13)

Philosophical practice and the form of guidance are closed linked to this form of enlightenment thinking.

5.2. Individualisation is not necessarily an expression of egoism

At the socio-cultural level we are today witnessing radical globalisation and individualisation in western societies. Sociologists such as Anthony Giddens, Thomas Ziehe, Ulrich Beck and Zigmunt Bauman point to these new conditions and emphasise the new forms of identity and community which are emerging. The single individual today is no longer bound by national or ethnic traditions, cultures and customs but, as mentioned above, has become free (or forced) to invent or invent himself or herself. When Foucault at the beginning of the 1980s said 'we have to create ourselves as a work of art', he was therefore in many ways describing the situation which exists today. Encountering and cooperating with other cultures has opened people's eyes to the diversity of possible forms of life and ways of thinking and practising 'the good life'. It has become more and more difficult to believe in a particular culture, civilisation or truth which we can all use as an authority and guide in our search for what 'the good life' is. It has become an existential task, which to an ever greater degree is put on the shoulders of late modern man. Some perceive it as a liberation, others as a burden and source of frustration. But questions such as 'what are my fundamental values?', 'what is the meaning of life?', 'what IS the good life, is there not something common to all mankind?' are no longer questions which occupy an intellectual elite. Today the existential issues have become a matter of popular concern.

5.3. Life politics, clarification of values and requirements of meaning competence in education policy

Giddens (1997) talks in this connection about the shift from emancipation policy to life politics. Where the political agenda in the 20th century was principally concerned with issues of distribution policy, of reducing exploitation, inequality and suppression, life politics according to Giddens is concerned with what has to happen when the liberation has largely taken place. It is no longer a case to the same degree of liberation from something but liberation to something. The question then arises as to how the good life can be positively determined on the political agenda. Or, as Foucault already asked with this new problem in mind: 'How do we practise liberty?'

One of the ways in which it is possible to learn to practise liberty is to make one's basis of values clear.

This is how the message from the Danish Ministry of Education reads. In a pluralistic time, where it is considered patronising on the part of the State to become involved in determining the content of what is to be taught, it is today left to the schools themselves to fix their basis of values and from this undertake their self-evaluation. However, it is now a statutory requirement *that* each individual school undertakes a clarification of values and self-creation. In this connection a pressing need has naturally arisen to develop practical tools for clarifications of values in the schools. The Socratic dialogue group is offered as such a tool.

Another education policy measure which confirms the growing interest in the existential aspect of adult education and adult guidance is a proposal by the Danish government from 2000 in which there was a desire for orientation to be based on the knowledge-based and competence-based society of tomorrow. In the Danish Competence Account it is stated in line with other European education programmes that in the knowledge-based society of tomorrow it will be important to focus on the idea of lifelong learning.

In this connection, four core competences are set up in particular which are considered essential in order to be able to live in the new knowledge-based society. These are:

- (a) Learning competence,
- (b) change competence,
- (c) relational competence and
- (d) meaning competence.

The first three competences are what we generally understand by 'personal and soft qualifications'. These are characteristics such as ability to learn, flexibility, ability to work in teams etc. Qualifications which clearly differ from the traditional and technical qualifications, which were primarily in focus in the industrial society. But in the report of the Danish National Council for Competence there is also, as mentioned, a fourth competence, *meaning competence*.

The Council believes that there is a great need for an ability to handle values and identity not just at the individual level but at the institutional level too. As they say: 'Without meaning competence, it will not be possible to find either the position reached or direction in the knowledge-based economy' (1999, p. 2)

In the knowledge-based society, the individual can choose between a diversity of information, memberships, lifestyles, goals and even nations. Our ability to create meaning and make choices determines our personal and social development. The success or failure of a company is therefore dependent on its ability to be managed by values. 'Value-based management' in the learning organisation is therefore a keyword in current management parlance. But what form of education can create the individual's and organisations' meaning competence? What teaching methods are applied? Existential adult pedagogy is a potential answer to these questions.

5.4. The new adult culture

A shift is visible today in the adult education sector within adult education policy and adult pedagogical research. Above all, a growing group has been registered of adults with a medium or high level of education, who to an increasing extent arrive in the adult education system. Whereas adult education programmes for many years have been focused on a special group of people with low levels of education or with weak resources, who have found it difficult to enter the labour market, we are also seeing increasing interest within educational research today in the new adults with ample resources. What primarily drives these adults is a need for a job or an opportunity for advancement and associated higher pay. What motivates them is an existential need to obtain a more *meaningful* job and *life* in general. They are, as it were, concerned just as much with what to live *from* as what to live *for*. These adults in reality desire what the American educational researcher Jack Mezirow calls a 'perspective transformation'. And this need for a meaningful shift of perspective in their life and work can be explained among other things on the basis of adult psychological factors.

The Danish cultural researcher Johan Fjord Jensen writes:

Adult pedagogy accordingly is not just pedagogy for the acquisition of further vocational experience, possibly as an element in lifelong education, nor it is merely pedagogy to temporarily fill leisure time with all the provisions and interests which separately belong to it. It is pedagogy which takes the person's second change of track seriously as an existential basic problem which affects everyone when they are freed to be able to develop as adults. Understanding the adulthood existentially is to understand the processes which take place during the course of childhood and during turning of the young person into an adult at the first change of track (p. 65).

What these adults want is a form of 'free space', a moratorium, from the instrumental and utility-oriented thinking and practice which dominate the labour market. They want an

opportunity to develop new thoughts and perspectives. And the interesting thing, as Fjord Jensen points out, is that although their primary interest is existence, a break from the requirements of the labour market the second time around will become an advantage for the labour market. A break of this kind from the pragmatically oriented culture of work might make possible the development of different procedures and bring about creativity and new thinking, which the labour market will be able to benefit from.

It could therefore be said that if we in the knowledge-based society wish to develop competences such as flexibility, creativity, capability for new thinking etc., then we must take the old Greek idea of the school as a free space for free men to heart again. Or as the American educational philosopher Michael Oakeshott writes in *The Voice of Liberal Learning* (1989): 'The invitation of liberal learning...is the invitation to disentangle oneself, for a time, from the urgencies of the here and now and listen to the conversation in which human beings forever seek to understand themselves.' It will thus be possible, through this Socratic conversation on the eternal existential questions, to develop the longed-for meaning competence, but in my opinion this requires in the training policy of the future not just advocating a raising of competences within the adult education system but also a raising of education!

5.5. Lifelong learning as self-directed learning

What we can therefore conclude firstly is that in the philosophical, sociological, political and adult pedagogical areas there are movements which point towards the importance of including the more existential dimension in the teaching and guidance of adults.

Let us next look more closely at the concept of lifelong learning and see in what sense it has existential aspects attached to it.

According to Unesco (Candy 1991), lifelong learning is characterised by five things: 1) that it is linked to the individual's *whole* life, 2) leads to systematic and continued upgrading of skills, knowledge and attitudes related to the variable requirements of the surrounding society, 3) has as its ultimate goal to promote the self-realisation of the individual, 4) is dependent on the extent to which the individual is able to commit himself to self-directed learning, and 5) that formal, non-formal and informal forms of learning are all included.

Philip Candy in *Self-direction for Lifelong Learning* (1991) emphasises items 1, 3 and 4 in particular as essential to the idea of lifelong learning. Without involving the person's *whole life* (not just working life), the person's ability for *self-directed learning* and a *self-realisation goal*, there is mention instead of more *forced* lifelong learning. If the focus is not on these three factors, there will be a tendency for the single individual to be directed more by external social demands and expectations than the individual's own learning goals and ideal of education (cf. Sennett's critique).

I shall therefore give an account below of what is meant by self-directed learning and how this can be linked to the person's whole life and self-creation.

The term 'self-directed learning' is found for the first time in 1957, when it was used by Paul Sheats. He writes that the ideal role for adult education must be to create an adult participant who as a 'self-reliant and self-directing individual learner who knows what his educational goals are and proceeds to attain them, using institutional resources of adult education as they may be appropriate to his purpose' (Ibid, p. 232). But it was not until Malcom Knowles and his andragogy (1975, 1984) that the term seriously strikes a chord in the English-speaking world. Knowles defines self-directed learning as follows: 'In its broadest meaning 'self-directed learning' describes a process in which individuals take the initiative, with or without the help of others, in diagnosing their learning needs, formulating learning goals, identifying human and material resources for learning, choosing and implementing appropriate learning strategies, and evaluating learning outcomes.' (p. 18).

This definition is highly characteristic of the *psychologically oriented* approach to self-directed learning, where self-directed learning is viewed exclusively as a *process* and a means of attaining a specific and individual learning goal (Long 1991). Others of a more philosophical persuasion (Brookfield 1996, Mezirow 1995) describe self-directed learning both as a process and as a goal in itself.

Brookfield, for example, criticises the widespread understanding of self-directed learning of making self-directed learning merely a question of techniques and revealing of the individual's learning needs, learning resources and learning style – something on which psychology can undertake studies but which does not cover what to Brookfield is the most essential characteristic feature of self-directed learning. It is the ability not merely to choose the means but also to reflect critically on and become aware of the ideal of education which is fundamentally to direct the choice the person concerned makes of learning goals, learning needs and learning strategy. To cover the individual's fundamental ideal of education, he asserts, a more *philosophical* approach is required. Or as the German pedagogical thinker Johann Friedrich Herbart once put it so simply: pedagogy is made up of two things, ethics and psychology. The former shows the goal, the latter shows us the path to follow, the means and the obstacles (Herbart, 1835).

Brookfield specifically draws attention in *Understanding and Facilitating Adult Learning* (1996) to these two levels in adult pedagogy and in particular in connection with self-directed learning. What is lacking in the extended adult learning theory is this more philosophical approach. According to Brookfield it is an illusion to believe that adult guidance and adult education can be regarded and exercised as a value-free activity, as a technique which exists merely to facilitate in a neutral manner the adult participant taking responsibility for his or her own learning. Self-directed learning at a higher level is also focusing critically on the fundamental assumptions and values of the participants and their view of education and humanity. A large proportion of experience-based adult education and adult guidance, Brookfield asserts, has almost had as an axiom that adult learning takes place best when the

teaching is based on and relates to the participants' *own* life experiences, and that the choice of form and content of teaching are fundamentally directed by the participants. The slogan, roughly speaking is: adults have learnt enough, they are sitting on a wealth of experience and opinions. The aim of adult education and adult guidance must therefore be to help the adults to structure their experiences and opinions to make them competent for action in relation to those functions in working life and society they wish to enter. The role of the teacher and guide therefore becomes to facilitate these learning processes.

Such an approach may be excellent if there is a wish to

- (a) practise democratic learning processes,
- (b) help the participants to verbalise their personal emotional lives, or
- (c) guide the participants' experiences and skills along paths which may be usable in the labour market.

In the last case, self-directed learning becomes a question of planning, direction and evaluation of one's own learning processes in relation to specific learning goals, and such an approach is appropriate where more goal-oriented and work-oriented learning goals or 'learning contracts' are concerned.

But, Brookfield continues, a distinction should be made between 'training' and 'education'.

While 'training' is related to a form of teaching and guidance where there are some clearly defined goals to which the students are to be trained, 'education' is a form of 'Bildung' intended to sharpen the students' critical awareness and autonomy. Generality and constant knowledge of the instruction and guidance are probably also to be associated, but the primary goal of 'education' is to be a place where adults meet to follow their desire for recognition and where they critically question the basic assumptions they have in their daily activities and which their everyday awareness is directed by.

This critical reflection on one's own basis and the presentation of alternative points of view, which can raise the participants into new horizons and make them ready for new experiences is, according to Brookfield, the leading role of adult education and adult guidance. 'In education, by contrast, learners are encouraged to examine the assumptions underlying the acquisition of skills, to consider alternative purposes, and to place skill acquisition in some broader context.' (ibid, p. 17).

He divides these assumptions up into the paradigmatic, prescriptive and causal assumptions (Brookfield, 1995). The paradigmatic assumptions are fundamental assumptions about how the world should be or what goals the learning should have. These assumptions in other words have a normative content. The causal assumptions are assumptions about causes and connections in the world around, which have arisen in the measurable and calculable world. The prescriptive assumptions are a patchwork of what on the one hand one aspires to and considers to be correct and on the other the specific acquired knowledge on *how* this can be

achieved. The prescriptive assumptions are thus the specific rules and limitations for what is to be done to attain the pedagogic goals.

What are of interest to Brookfield are the paradigmatic assumptions. Only when one reaches down to them is one capable, according to Brookfield, of becoming self-directing. But it is not enough to have one's fundamental assumptions revealed. One does not actually become adult in the proper sense until one appreciates the *contingency* of these basic assumptions. That everything in principle could be different, that our view of what learning is, what humanity is and what 'the good life' is, viewed most deeply, is man-made, one perspective among many other possible perspectives on the world. It is only in encountering this contingency experience (as it is not just a cognitive recognition but also an emotional experience) that we understand that responsibility for life and conduct rests on man's own decisions and choices, at both the social and individual levels. Adult education and adult guidance must therefore regard it as an ideal to help the student and the person seeking guidance in relation to this contingency. 'It is in analysing and reflecting upon the contingency of the world that adults realise their adulthood. Teaching that is centered on prompting an awareness of the contextuality and contingency of belief and behavior is, therefore, a uniquely adult form of teaching.' (p. 126). Being adult is therefore not a final stage but a step in development, which one can stay at once it has been reached. Being adult in this sense means being constantly on the move and dealing critically with the premises and assumptions one is presently living on. Brookfield therefore ends by saying that the most essential element in self-directed learning is the ability of the person concerned to reflect critically on 'philosophical rationale' and basic assumptions. Questions such as 'What is fundamentally my view of life and of human nature? How do I create greater meaning and coherence in my existence? What values do I live by at present, and what values do I wish live by in future?' are therefore questions which the 'self-directed learner' must focus on. 'The most complete form of self-directed learning occurs when process and reflection are married in the adult's pursuit of meaning' (p. 58).

5.6. Existential adult guidance

At the Cedefop conference on *Social and Vocational Guidance* in October 2000, the focus among other things was on the 'holistic aspect' of vocational guidance. As stated in the Conference proposal: ... the fundamental question of guidance counselling is what it aims at. Should we aim to help certain individuals to create themselves within certain, well-defined, forms of identification? Or should we help them question the identities on the basis of which the person creates him/herself and perceives others? These questions are linked to whether we retain or transform the structure of social relations. The question of guidance counselling leads us therefore inevitably to ask questions of a political, philosophical and ethical nature.'

At the Conference I drew attention as something new to 'philosophical guidance' as an alternative measure to promote self-directed learning and adult guidance of a more holistic and value-related nature.

I argued that if the person's whole life is to be included in the adult guidance and what goals for self-realisation the person concerned has in general, one is obliged as an adult guidance counsellor to look more closely at the person's fundamental values. But not just through practising critical awareness as Brookfield advocates, but also a sharpening of the *existential attention* to what the person seeking guidance considers valuable in existence. In brief, a great deal can be achieved with rational and critical awareness. But where the existential layer is concerned, another form of silent listening must also enter at a particular time, where one pays attention to what one holds dear. And this level is often linked to a more aesthetic and unpredictable dimension. Or as the Danish poet and philosopher N.F.S. Grundtvig put it so beautifully in verse: 'And he has never lived/who has not become wise/to what he first did not hold dear'. Jim Garrison had a similar point of view in *Dewey and Eros* (1997): 'We become what we love – that is how we grow'.

If we therefore wish to foster the individual's ability for lifelong learning, we must help the person seeking guidance to have clarified what it is that he or she deep down has as his or her fundamental values.

One way is obviously to proceed through psychotherapy to reach down to this existential layer. The problem is merely that adult guidance is not or should not be therapy. If one is to handle and shed light on this dimension as an adult *guidance counsellor*, it is my thesis that this must proceed via philosophy and not psychology.

It is not pathological patterns or the establishment of inadequate self-esteem that often concern the adult guidance counsellor when he encounters the adult in the educational sector. The ordinary adult with strong resources of whom we will see more in the light of the idea of lifelong learning and who wishes to practise ability for self-directed learning is not a patient. He is *a visitor*, who desires a qualified discussion with a person who can help him to clarify and not least discuss the present basis of values according to which he thinks and lives. Or as the Dean of the Danish University of Education, Lars-Henrik Schmidt, once said under the heading *Psykologi og sociologi har spillet fallit* ('Psychology and sociology have gone bust') (Schmidt 1995):

People are no longer able to have their problems pathologised. Pathology turned people into patients. Those who now turn to philosophy instead are healthy, adult people who themselves want to process the experiences they have had and are having with the aid of philosophy. The philosophers do not become wise from your circumstances, they try to make you wise yourself from your own circumstances.

In contrast to the psychologists it is not 'expert knowledge' about human nature and psyche that the philosophers possess. What the philosophers have a keen eye for and can help the individual with is creating oneself on one's own terms. Today one is oneself an expert in one's own life but one would like to have a conversation partner in the philosophers to *qualify* one's self-reflection. Philosophy today – in contrast to psychology and sociology – has given up being exact, being founded on a 'scientific' basis.

It does not profess to tell truths. It does not say: the world is such, we can see the world in this or that way. It does not offer one overall explanation of the world or ideology, but help towards an individual ideology or ethics.

Existential adult education and adult guidance must be understood as such a philosophical practice for existential self-creation. The methods, as mentioned, are philosophical guidance practice and the Socratic dialogue group.

5.7. The philosophical guidance practice:

In contrast to psychology and psychotherapy, which focus on the life-biographical dimension of the person's existence or cognitive structures in the person's consciousness, the philosophical guidance counsellor is engaged in a Socratic dialogue with the visitor to help the person concerned study the visitor's *philosophical self-understanding* as well as the *mysteriousness of existence* in general (Lahav 1995, Schuster 1999). The Israeli philosopher and guidance counsellor Ran Lahav writes: 'While psychotherapy aims mostly at modifying the person's current psychic forces and processes, Philosophical Counseling attempts to take him to new ideational landscapes outside himself. In this sense, philosophising in Philosophical Counseling is not a solipsistic endeavor, it does not limit itself to the domain of humanly generated ideas, but rather a dialogue between human life and the broader horizons in which it is embedded.'

Take, for example, a beautiful work of art or a piece of classical music. Experiencing this will often carry us beyond our everyday consciousness and into unknown regions and horizons, albeit for a short time. In such experiences we transcend ourselves. And this is precisely what the philosopher may experience in a Socratic conversation. The Socratic eros is concerned with listening for a higher calling, which exceeds what the person's present world picture and the feelings and belief systems linked to this world picture say to him.

Think about an art critic or chess master. When the painter is in a dialogue with the art critic on a picture, the art critic is rarely (if at all) interested in what *psychological* mechanisms and feelings the artist had when he created the picture. Correspondingly, neither will the chess master consider it relevant to ask what feelings or psychological structures might have lain behind the chess pupil's moves. What the art critic and chess master are primarily interested in is the art and the game of chess *in themselves*. An inexperienced artist or chess player will in all probability be able to learn something from the meeting and dialogue with these, because the art critic and the chess master have a greater range of possible ways of looking at the world and the game of chess.

The sample applies to philosophical guidance practice. The philosophical guidance counsellor is primarily interested in and good at *philosophising*. He is not particularly concerned with the possible and non-possible psychological forces and defence mechanisms which the visitor might have. He is – like Socrates – interested in philosophising with the visitor on existential,

ethical and philosophical subjects. Not from a specialised philosophical or academic point of view, but on the basis of a life-aesthetic and existential point of view. ‘Can I become wiser through this conversation about what man and the good life are?’ the philosophical guidance counsellor asks himself. What the philosophical guidance counsellor and the visitor have in common is passion for the common third: namely the question of what the good life is. On this point as on so many other existential questions, there is no expert knowledge. Here the philosophical guidance counsellor and the visitor thus meet in a common and equal wonder. Certainly, the philosophical guidance counsellor has greater experience in moving around in the ideational landscapes which other thinkers have developed when they faced the mysterious questions of existence. And he therefore also wants to some extent to be able to act as a ‘travel guide’ and broaden the visitor’s horizon with new ‘routes’ and ‘paths’. But if the philosophical guidance counsellor is able to ask in a Socratic manner (and on the basis of the Socratic spirit), he will also sooner or later find himself in new regions together with the visitor in a joint investigation. Because, as mentioned, there are no authoritative ways into the question of the good life, and even if the philosophical guidance counsellor has been in a particular area even several times before, it will occur to him time after time – and readily helped by the questions and wonder of the visitor – that in reality he did not look properly when he was last there.

At the beginning of the philosophical guidance session, the guidance counsellor will ask so that he can understand better and see the world from the perspective the visitor thinks from. It is also, as the philosopher Hannah Arendt tell us about Socrates, the way in which he started his dialogues. Seeing the world from the unique particular perspective with which the visitor arrives and from there wandering with him into the ideational landscapes which surround the topic being examined. The philosophical guidance counsellor often does this by asking the visitor to examine the concepts and ideas which the person in question makes use of in the argumentation for the topic. He asks the visitor to describe and deepen his understanding of the concepts and ideas used (in indirect use of concept analysis, phenomenological and hermeneutic questioning techniques), but when the philosophical guidance counsellor after some time has wandered around in the visitor’s ideational landscape and here and there has come across mutual contradictions, lack of clarity and inadequate coherence, a new phase in the guidance begins. He now begins asking critical questions about what has been said. Could it be different? Are you completely sure about it? Why do you assume it, etc. The philosophical guidance counsellor in other words is merely a reflection of what the visitor thinks and experiences here and now, as for example the cognitivistically oriented psychotherapists (Cohen, 1995) and guidance (Peavy, 1998) will often be in order to in that way help to clarify the client’s *personal* values and belief systems. Socrates and the philosophical guidance counsellor are not particularly interested in the visitor’s private-personal view of the good life. He is interested in how we can talk about the good life in general. He helps the visitor by asking about the topic not on his own behalf but on behalf of humanity. Not ‘What are *my* values? Or the meaning of *my* life? But ‘What ARE values, and what IS the meaning of life?’ Questions are asked *from* the visitor’s personal and specific life experiences, but the focus is directed *towards* ‘the always retreating horizon of the general’. It is therefore an existential-personal view of the good life for which exercising is

sought in the visitor. Continued wonder which the whole time acts in an open and generally searching manner in order to in that way surpass the world picture which the person concerned at present looks through. The guidance counsellor and the visitor together therefore hope that by exchanging ideas and different perspectives they can achieve slightly greater insight into and outlook over how the good life can be thought and lived. Knowing well – like Socrates – that this truth moves like the horizon for the walker. Philosophising is, as the existential philosopher Karl Jaspers says, being on the move the whole time. It is the actual search for the truth, not the possession of the truth, that is the essence of the philosopher.

The classicist Pierre Hadot (1995) calls this fundamental questioning a practical exercise in presence. By constantly questioning our most basic assumptions and presumptions we are stimulated to look at the world and the people we have before us. We learn through the philosophising attitude to look at the world anew. The philosophical guidance counsellor therefore spends considerable time critically questioning the presumptions of guidance. And later, when the perspective or ideational landscape of the visitor is examined in all directions and a possible consensus is arising, the philosophical guidance counsellor begins offering alternative ways of looking at the world, which once again can set the visitor in motion.

Philosophical guidance can also be described as a process in three phases. In the first phase the philosophical guidance counsellor guides the visitor to examine his ‘logos’, i.e. life and world view, and the consistency of this. In addition, there is more in-depth questioning of ‘bios’, his ‘lived understanding’, that is to say the person’s concretely lived life and life history, and whether there is cohesion and agreement between logos and bios. Does he or she also *live* his or her philosophy?

Thirdly and finally this now ‘lived philosophy’ is confronted with other alternative life views and ways of living. Could it be otherwise? Can one improve one’s life view and life form? That is to say, a challenge to lasting philosophising and self-transcendence. Or as Ran Lahav (1996b) writes:

As I see it, Philosophical Counseling aims at helping individuals to philosophically examine their predicaments and life, develop their philosophical understanding of themselves and their world, and go beyond their narrow, self-contained personal perspective, reaching towards edification or wisdom.

5.8. The Socratic dialogue group:

For adult guidance counsellors who do not wish to act as professional philosophical guides but would like to become better at bringing existential dialogue and dimension into the guidance situation, the Socratic dialogue is a good means of doing so (Nelson 1949; Heckmann 1993; Boele 1997; Kessel 1997; Hansen 2000). By meeting other colleagues in the guidance profession, it is possible to help one another through this group method to become better at philosophising and questioning in an *existential* manner.

The method is simple in its basic structure. On the basis of an overall topic, a key concept and a key question are chosen which one wishes to deal with in depth (e.g. ‘What is good adult guidance?’).

In addition, the participants in the Socratic dialogue group have to each separately find an example from their own life which they feel (intuitively) can answer this question.

The group then has to reflect jointly on which of these examples is the best/most inspirational in illustrating/working further on the key question.

As a result of this dialogue more perspectives and points of view on the question concerned arise, but as the goal is to achieve agreement on which of the examples given is to be used, it also promotes an *investigative community* and an *ethical conversational culture*, which goes further than the mere exchange of opinions and marking of opinions.

When the example has been chosen, the next phase is to come up with a joint main statement which against the background of this specific example can answer the question.

When the main statement is there, it is the task of the group to act critically and in a *philosophising* manner in relation to the argumentation and the concepts which have been used hitherto in defence of the main statement. In this critical examination of the arguments, one reaches down to the silent assumptions, presumptions and premises underlying the argumentation.

In this philosophising, the participants’ more fundamental assumptions (human view, perception of reality), what may be referred to in brief as the basis of values of the participants, are revealed step by step.

The Socratic dialogue group then ends the process, finally acting towards these basic assumptions and on this basis revising and developing further the main statement. As with Socrates, it is often here that ‘confusion at a higher level’ arises, instigating new questions, new philosophising.

It is best when the *Socratic silence* presents itself. This happens when the participants often with surprised or embarrassed laughter at their basic assumptions have to acknowledge what they had never thought about. We have then reached down to the ‘stony ground’ for the present conception of reality of the person concerned. Many people afterwards speak enthusiastically about this moment as a moment with existential vigour. Something was put at stake here, here they were ‘moved’ or experienced genuine wonder. Which can be quite a joyful experience.

Simple in its basic structure, but execution necessitates holding certain *Socratic virtues and rules*. These can be briefly summarised in seven items:

- (a) Each participant must put forward his or her own thoughts. Referring to an authority is not counted as an argument.

- (b) The topic has to be taken from actual life and afterwards has to be examined on the basis of a general human level of abstraction. And it must come from the participants' own life and be *existentially pertinent* for the participants.
- (c) The actual understanding and dialogue between the participants on the matter has greater priority than arriving at a result as quickly as possible.
- (d) The process proceeds step by step with the participation of as many participants as possible.
- (e) All the participants strive for reasoning which everyone can agree on.
- (f) Assertions, suppositions and questions are always to be tested through the course of dialogue.
- (g) If you are in doubt, say so! This is the fuel for serious philosophising.

After a Socratic dialogue group, the participants will often have obtained

- (a) a *deeper insight* into the selected question,
- (b) insight into the *fundamental views of their colleagues* on the topic and the values and basic assumptions on the basis of which they think,
- (c) an experience of what it means to philosophise and *think together* in a qualified manner (the creation of an ethical conversation culture for clarification of values)
- (d) a greater consensus and clarification on what values and key concepts they wish to have in their work as a common basis (*team-building* linked to value-based management)

The method, as mentioned, has been used with great success in Denmark as a value clarification method for the value-based adult education programmes and will probably in future also be found to be used within general adult pedagogy, when topics of a more ethical and existential nature are on the agenda.

5.9. Vocational guidance as a calling – a conclusion

With this article, I have aimed to invite readers to look at employment and vocational guidance from an existential point of view. Our employment is normally described as our career, our work or perhaps merely as a job which pays our bills. Many people regard this employment as something which is separate from the rest of their lives. This is due in part to work in the industrial society having lost its creative, aesthetic and ethical qualities. In the industrial society, the worker rarely regarded himself as a creator of something, and the work was rarely something in which one's thoughts, feelings and skills were invested. Few saw their work as a meaningful calling. Instead, they by and large turned towards the diverting amusement of leisure and the consumer society. And many of them still do so.

Work and life were once regarded as a meaningful whole. Jim Garrison (2001) points out that the word 'vocation' comes from the Latin 'vocare', meaning 'to call'. Today the old idea of

wholeness is in the process of gaining a foothold again in the new knowledge-based society. More people than in the industrial society look on their work as an expression of self-realisation, but they are still in small minority. Or to be more correct, a large proportion *have* made their work their life, but the question remains whether this life is self-chosen and from the existential point of view meaningful, or whether people merely comply with the demands which society makes on the individual to upgrade his or her qualifications and become more efficient. In brief, one is merely a functionary in the service of development or progress, or one is a self-directed individual, who works to live out one's deepest values. A perhaps unattainable ideal, indeed, but nonetheless an important ideal to have within adult education and guidance, if the idea of lifelong learning is not to end up being a lifelong *compulsion* to learning. If it is to become meaningful and desirable to talk about lifelong learning, we as adult guidance counsellors are therefore obliged to help the person seeking guidance to 'find his calling'. Without a deeper feeling of meaning with the work one undertakes, neither will one be able to talk of self-directed learning, but of society-directed learning.

When the person seeking guidance comes to visit, a practical start could be made on the basis of this approach by asking him to consider three existential questions:

- (a) What is life?
- (b) How ought I to live? and
- (c) What is the meaning of my life?

Every adult person must answer these questions. And they obviously also do so – either consciously or indirectly in the way in which they live their life. The next questions which the person seeking guidance then has to ask himself are:

- (a) But *what* am I occupied with?
- (b) How does it *occupy me*? and
- (c) How am *I* occupied by it?

With these simple questions it may be hoped that the individual begins to take 'his life in his own hands'.

But above all we as adult guidance counsellors (and teachers) must have ourselves considered these questions. If we have not started on this existential clarification of values ourselves, if we have not fundamentally asked ourselves these questions, neither will be able to help the person seeking guidance. We merely continue with our utility-oriented and instrumental vocational guidance. Which, of course, has very little to do with lifelong learning.

Continuing training programmes in and development work on existential adult guidance are becoming an important goal for the adult guidance counsellors and researchers of tomorrow – and the Socratic dialogue groups and philosophical guidance will be relevant options here for usable methods.

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6. Career guidance and planning for life

Jacques Limoges

Since I am, I believe, the only outsider invited to present a paper to Agora 10 ⁽⁵⁵⁾ – the only one, in other words, who being neither a citizen of the European Community nor of Switzerland, was obliged to pass through customs control on arrival at Athens airport – and bearing in mind the keynote text provided in advance of the meeting by Éric Fries Guggenheim, what has been said at this meeting so far – especially by Jean Guichard – the fact that the Agora is taking place at one of the major institutions concerned with vocational training and that the subject is social and vocational guidance, plus the fact that in the final programme my contribution appears under the heading ‘Global approach’, I shall be departing somewhat from the printed text, not because I no longer agree with the contents but because I prefer to follow the line of the fruitful debate thus far.

6.1. Developments in the career situation over the past half-century

Continuing the historical analysis begun by Jean Guichard, I would suggest that over the past 50 years we have progressed from the concept of a career for life to one of several careers. Prior to the sixties most people’s mindset and experience led them to think of their occupation, trade or profession as being a direct extension of the training they had received. Embarking on a type of employment was more or less automatic after, for instance, a series of work experience placements that reduced the transition from school to work to a minimum. Moreover there was every likelihood that they would remain in this first job for the whole of their working life – witness such everyday expressions as ‘Once a lawyer, always a lawyer’ or the ‘nursing vocation’. As a result, the theories on the stages of occupational development put forward at the time, by authors such as Super (1957), dealt in detail with the early stages preceding and accompanying first-time employment and much less with later periods of life, when they all too often confined themselves to vague statements.

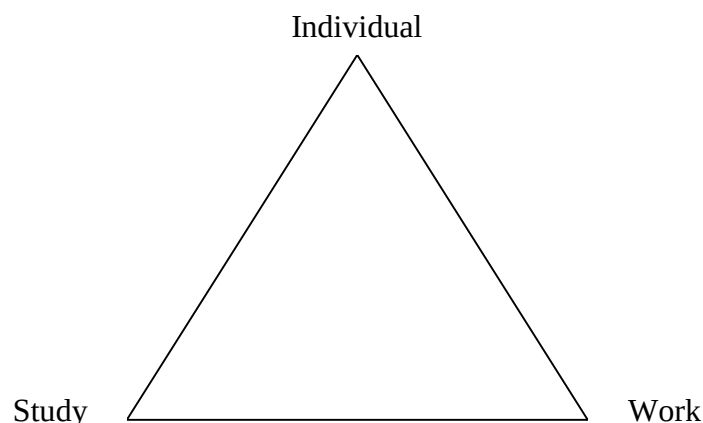
Increasingly nowadays, one needs to talk of one of several careers in a person’s life. Some thirty years ago the author just mentioned, who is regarded as the father of vocational guidance in North America, was already talking in terms of seven major changes in the course of a person’s working life (Super, 1973). Nowadays it would be more appropriate to talk of dozens of changes, including periods of preparatory training and upgrading courses, further training and retraining, whether voluntary or obligatory, and hence of a constant switching between social and occupational inclusion and exclusion. These developments are largely the

⁽⁵⁵⁾ I am grateful for this privilege. In order to enrich the discussions I shall, as often as possible refer to publications by Canadian authors.

result of social and political decisions in our different countries but have a considerable personal impact on those affected. Thus, when the minimum wage was introduced in France, using a ten-point scale as a basis, we regularly saw people in permanent, full-time employment opting determinedly for exclusion, in order to make clear, for example, that their present job offered little scope for developing their potential. At the same time, the long-term unemployed and people temporarily out of work by reason of accident, maternity leave or a return to education, argued publicly that they were on the fringe of inclusion on the grounds that their present absence from the workplace was only one stage in their career.

This change from a career for life to one career of several represented a break with the former concept, with a career becoming interactional rather than developmental and, consequently, giving rise to what I have termed 'events'. These may or may not occur in the course of an active working life and when they do so may occur in or out of sequence and sometimes reoccur several times. All these various events are related to the Individual-Study-Work dynamic that summarises the whole vocational field and can be represented by the equilateral triangle shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: The individual-study-work dynamic: field specific to educational and career guidance



These events, which are six in number, cover all the movements on this triangle with the Individual angle always remaining constant. They are:

- (a) Taking a decision linked to the Individual-Study-Work dynamic,
- (b) putting such a decision into effect,
- (c) standing by such a decision,
- (d) reviewing the decision,
- (e) taking a new decision linked to the Individual-Study-Work dynamic,
- (f) cancelling any such decision.

Secondly, particularly when it becomes an area for scientific and practical research at both the personal and occupational level, educational and vocational guidance takes on a broader meaning so as to include aspects such as finding a job and adapting to work, making progress and steering a career through employment crises and transitions. The aim is to ensure that guidance covers all the risks attaching to an active working life, beforehand, during and subsequently (Limoges, 1988, 1999). From this point of view it is imperative that studies extend beyond the simple case-by-case approach and take account of the various time-horizons involved – short, medium and long-term. While short-term-oriented guidance aims particularly to meet a client's immediate needs, that with a longer time horizon takes account of, and updates, previous developmental understanding. With all the changes work and the employment market have been undergoing, the effort is more than ever worthwhile – in the concept of guidance mere direction is increasingly being replaced by action. Moreover, looked at this way each career becomes another step forward in an individual's hierarchy of specific work-related values such as income, status, management of space and time, interpersonal relationships, achievements, key role and meaning of life. Indeed, allowing for social and cultural differences, attributable to geographical situation, there is in none of our societies any human activity apart from work that is capable constantly and simultaneously of influencing these seven factors. And contrary to widespread popular belief it would appear from a number of recent studies, including that of Desmarais (1990), Fournier et al. (1995) and Bujold et al. (1996), that this vision remains essentially unchanged in the case of young people today. Thirdly, because of the impact of a person's career, guidance – and more specifically job placement and career management – must in their own way systemically meet all a person's basic needs – to be, to love, to have and to be able – with the more or less temporally and spatially formalised subprojects deriving from them (Goguelin and Krau, 1982; Boutinet, 1996; Limoges and Lahaie, 1998). These needs and subprojects add a definite spatial dimension to guidance, interacting with the temporal dimension that is already allowed for. In summary, therefore, as the title of this paper suggests, guidance should be firmly directed towards the creation of an occupational plan for life, which may mean that occupational planning is subordinated to other existential projects such as that linked to the need to be. What a long way we have come in a very short space of time! At the beginning of the eighties the various studies of Fahmy et Veillette (1982) on women and work could be summarised simply as planning a career or planning for life. In parallel with this, but in this case following a report on couples producing their first child, their colleagues Spain and Bédard (1983) concluded their report in more or less the same words, namely planning a career and planning one's life with 'and' replacing the 'or', which signified irreconcilability. Soon afterwards Goguelin et Krau's book was published in Europe using the same turn of phrase but with the conjunction replaced by a simply comma which, as the dictionary tells us, indicates a short pause for breath when reading! We have thus passed from 'or' to 'and' and from 'and' to silence. Pursuing the historical trail, a few years ago it seemed to me that the time had come to foster the idea of a lifetime career plan and consequently to emphasise still more that educational and vocational guidance should aim firmly to guarantee this existential megaproject (Limoges, 1995).

To make a final point: we have just seen that one of the seven areas on which work has an impact is that of ensuring a person a key and even benchmark role, which serves, as Vaillant's impressive long-term study (1977) demonstrated, as a support and reference for other existential roles. The publications of Demarais and Bujold already referred to, as also the contribution of Laura Cassio, helped to reaffirm this finding; even after decades of far-reaching changes, work in our society remains the principal vector in the development of a person's identity. Consequently, for no reason and certainly not for economic ones, work cannot be reduced simply to a human activity designed to fill time, nor to an activity like any other. Employment remains both a personal and social priority.

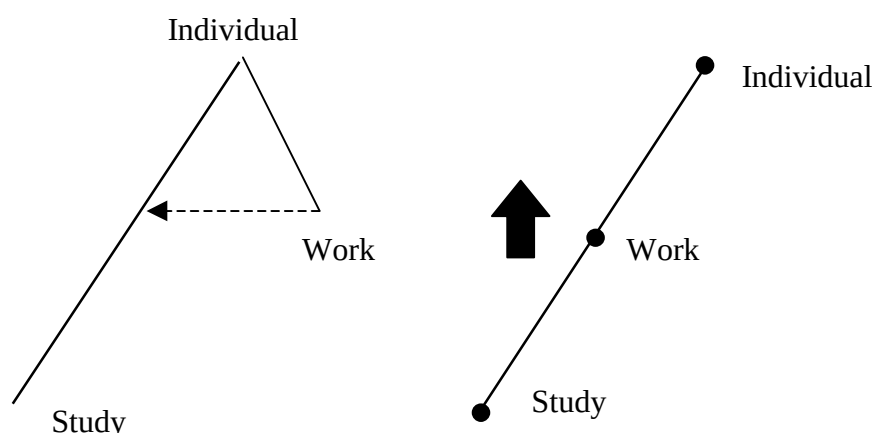
6.2. Training must allow for three lives

To ensure that employment is capable of supporting a lifelong plan, the training that precedes it must to some extent take into account three lives – in the sense of simultaneously being a living environment, being in the midst of life, and becoming another living environment.

6.2.1. A living environment

First of all the school or training centre – the Study angle of the Individual-Study-Work dynamic – needs to constitute a living environment. This is possible when the plan of study or training becomes coherent and intrinsically motivating for the person concerned. For this to be so and contrary to current practice, skills auditing should start as soon as a person embarks upon a course of qualifying training and should continue throughout life, somewhat on the lines of the guidance school concept currently being promoted in Quebec. By becoming a living environment the school or training centre thus satisfies a short-term search for meaning. If one is to judge by the success rate and the number of those staying on at school, this type of environment works particularly well for women (Bouchard et al., 1997). If, however, the school or training centre were to confine itself to providing a living environment, there will sooner or later be a risk of its degenerating into the blind alley that I some time ago described as *academist* (Limoges, 1992). As Figure 2 shows, for all practical purposes this boils down to saying that the Study angle – particularly where a school or training centre is concerned – would become an end in itself and, what is even worse, that work would become completely subordinated, as happens with periods of work experience during training. It proves to be a blind alley through its failure to lead clients to a grasp of realities and an understanding of labour market culture, and thus to a great extent inhibits the school-to-work transition; also because it would transform the school or training centre into a disembodied intellectual ghetto worthy of Molière's *Femmes Savantes*, who knew everything and gave their opinion on everything but their social, economic and political impact was nil. Following this line of thought it is in my view indicative that in Quebec the highest school-leaving rates – with boys in the majority – coincided with a period when the Ministry of Education was using the slogan 'School, an environment for life!'.

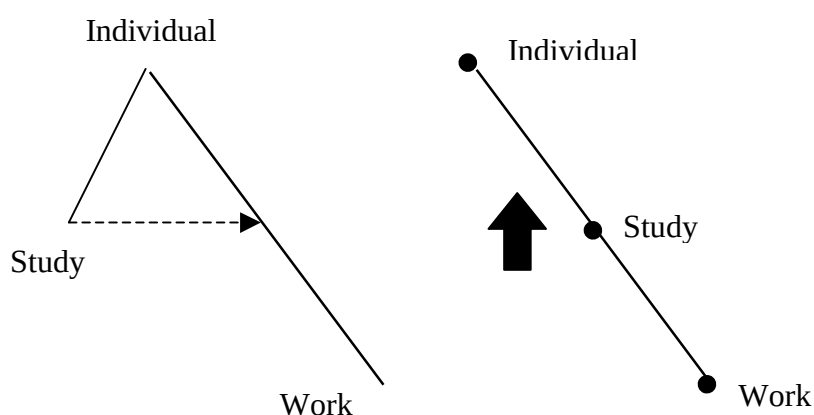
Figure 2: *The academist blind alley*



6.2.2. In the midst of life

In order, therefore, to attain the ideal for employment as I have described it, a school or training centre should also be set in the midst of daily life and the remarks made by Jean-François Germe seem to me to be tending in this direction. A school or training centre should be strategically located at the centre of day-to-day social, economic and political life, hence the life that engenders and steers the various types of working activity. This is the primary objective of the guidance school concept. In other words, time allocated to training must constitute an opportunity for sensitising trainees to the realities of working life by gradually stepping up their degree of interaction with that world in order in the medium term to encourage them to plan their career and in the shorter term to devise a plan for finding employment. The training period should enable trainees to get used to the world of work., so different from that of school. This second life or second option for the school or training centre enables clients to get to grips with the medium-term future, which young men are keen to do. All the studies carried out on initial learning difficulties and abandonment of school – which in Canada at least again mainly involves boys (Bouchard et al., 1997) – point to one of the principal causes being the absence of any study or career planning. However, if only this second alternative were to be adopted, this would mean concentrating only on the Work angle and a second, careerist blind alley would open up, rapidly reducing Study, especially the school or training centre, to a shabby antichamber of the labour market – shabby because it would probably only emphasise the more negative aspects of that other world! Paradoxically, this second alternative is currently much advocated, largely because it is accepted as neoliberalism. However, it has several times been demonstrated, and this is well illustrated in Figure 3, that by reducing the Individual to a mere cog in the machine of economic production one impoverishes him by killing off his intrinsic power of self-motivation. An Individual cannot be reduced to behaving like a bee or an ant, even if these insects are in many ways more efficient and productive when tackling certain tasks (Limoges, 1992).

Figure 3: *The careerist blind alley*

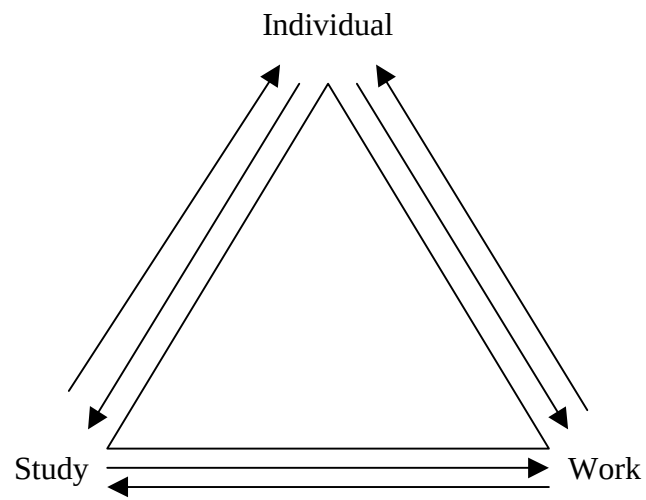


6.2.3. Another living environment

Finally it will be impossible to achieve such an job placement objective if the school or training centre is not also another environment, a kind of interspace represented by the area of the triangle in which one can pass from one angle to another either in order to take a breather, make good some shortcoming or reduce an excess; but especially to take another look at other possibilities. To do this the school or training centre needs to optimise relations between the generations, inter alia between students and the administrative and teaching bodies. It is in this interspace that an individual's system of roles is formed with, as I stressed earlier, the worker role – be it present or future – as the benchmark.

As Figure 4 shows, a school or training centre seeking to stimulate these three lives or what I have termed the career option, avoids the various blind alleys referred to, thanks among other things to the mix of people and generations in which one group makes good the shortcomings of the other and vice versa. Thus, by encouraging and demonstrating the feasibility of school becoming a living environment, girls satisfy their basic need to belong while helping the boys not to fall into the error of reducing school to being merely in the midst of life. In return, through their contact with older people, the girls discover that school is not everything, and that other environments exist, and so on. By ensuring the three living environments a school or training centre substantially enhances the chances of finding employment aimed at a career for life.

Figure 4: The career option



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7. The transition from vocational training to social vocational training: helping people overcome their fear of independent action and autonomy

Charalambos D. Michailidis

This is an era of momentous, ongoing changes in the economic, social and international political environment, an era during which the only certainty is uncertainty. In this new world, firms evolve, in a cycle of continuous change which obliges them constantly to redefine their strategy, adapt their organisational structures, enhance their creativity, adopt innovative ideas, diversify their products and services, and so much more.

However, although modernisation and the reformation it entails is a reality that more and more companies are coming to accept, these often lack a clear understanding of the reasons that make modernisation imperative. As a result, they are unable to precisely determine the nature, extent and depth of the changes required. A brief glance at early business management is therefore worthwhile. It will help us determine the nature of these changes and the philosophy behind them, as well as the role to be played by vocational training, and education in general, in order to help all social partners develop more efficiently.

At the start of the 20th century, a form of management and organisation new to the era made its appearance, known as ‘scientific management’. The idea of a number of people working under the same roof, methodically, in a disciplined and efficient manner in order to produce complex and uniform products, now became a reality. Work became highly specialised, standardised and hierarchically structured. Moreover, it had been previously designed and researched by ‘specialists’ and employees selected and trained in a ‘scientific’ manner and who, desiring higher wages that depended on their work output, were hesitant to disobey their expert superiors. Given that the work was organised according to the managers’ ‘scientific’ planning and programming, the only thing left for everyone else to do was be good and obedient executors.

‘Scientific’ management hence conditioned us to believe, among other things, that it is the job of the executive to think, plan and control, while other employees must simply carry out orders. This is supposedly one of the main reasons why firms are hierarchically organised. Being the head of a team, or perhaps a department, implies that you know more, can see the big picture, are better educated than your subordinates (those much-talked-about qualifications!) and are more experienced. You are thus in a position to control the system you are in charge of, to direct it towards a path you believe to be worthwhile and to adapt it to new situations.

Today, however, the amount of knowledge available is vast, and with the support provided by information technology, it is rendered practically limitless. The modern-day firm is 'learning', in other words it is becoming involved in the process of collecting, disseminating, processing, interpreting and using information as required in order to respond to needs as quickly as possible. Within the firm there is free access to knowledge; furthermore this knowledge is scattered. Hence, the body of knowledge that a superior would be expected, according to the traditional view, to possess, can hardly all be retained in his mind.

In fact, knowledge is scattered throughout the workplace. Each and every employee is a potential source of innovations and initiatives. Today's firm is a system of distributed knowledge possessed by no one in its entirety and requiring cooperation between different people if it is to be turned to any advantage. This cooperation resembles that of computers in a distributed network. Independent action, which traditional 'scientific' management tried so hard to eliminate, is everywhere to be seen – and when not, its absence is blatantly obvious.

Contemporary management gurus view the firm as 'spontaneous order', that is, an organisation which is able to provide innovative responses to new stimuli without receiving orders from some central body. An enterprise's work practices are not planned in total beforehand, as championed by traditional 'scientific' management, but come about as the result of interaction between the regulations that of necessity exist in every workplace and independent action undertaken by employees in dealing with particular issues. Self-organisation has today become unavoidable in every workplace. A firm that aims for continuous improvement must necessarily rely on the independent action and self-organisation of its employees. The ability to mobilise and use the knowledge of all available human resources constitutes the vital competitive advantage for 21st century enterprise.

We are thus led to one of the most powerful concepts of modern management developed in recent years, namely empowerment. Empowerment enables the firm to upgrade its efficiency through greater decentralisation of responsibilities and the transfer of authority. It is a management method in which employees are encouraged to make decisions and to take on more responsibilities, under less guidance and control. Ensuring ongoing improvement is not a question of motivating employees to set and reach increasingly difficult goals. The real issue is how to assist them, how to empower them, so that they continue to improve by acquiring greater authority and participating in creating knowledge and vision.

Everyone agrees that employees, executives and firms benefit by creating a culture in which people are empowered. A culture of empowerment enables employees to use their knowledge, experience and personal motivation to achieve results for the company. Employees become team members that are accountable for results benefiting the company, in both tangible and intangible ways. They acquire a sense of ownership, enthusiasm and pride in their work. Executives become team leaders that encourage participation of all members. They realise that results are more easily achieved this way than within a hierarchical culture. They hence develop a new sense of pride in creating empowered teams, teams able to achieve much more than we believed possible.

Who could deny the final results produced by empowerment? Ask the managers of a company if they want employees who take on responsibilities, show an interest in the firm as if it were their own and want to work hard for the good of the company, and, of course, the answer is yes. Ask employees if they want to feel valuable, if they want to find their work interesting and take pride in it, and once more the answer is yes. In fact, employees and management both want the same thing. So why is it so difficult to achieve empowerment?

The difficulty lies in the fact that it is much easier to talk about empowerment than to create a culture in which it can prosper. The transition from hierarchy to empowerment is not easy. Announcing it, desiring it and momentarily attempting it is simply not enough. It is not easy to abandon the convictions, behaviours and systems (policies and procedures) that functioned in a satisfactory manner in a hierarchical culture in order to replace them with the convictions, behaviours and systems that support empowerment. Creating a real culture of empowerment is a complicated task. It requires from people inner strength to face adversities and the ability to strike a delicate balance between responsibility and freedom.

Empowerment involves liberating the power of the people. It is linked to employees' participation in the firm's operation, a sense of ownership over their work, responsibility, a proprietary interest in the company and pride. Empowerment is a vital element for firms that want to be competitive in today's business world. In order for firms to be able to succeed in this new environment, employees must literally feel as if they own their work and that they play a vital role in the firm. And this is something that many of the world's most successful and respected companies agree with.

The problem does not lie in the concept of empowerment, but in a lack of understanding on how we can progress from a traditional hierarchical way of thinking to one of empowerment. Many more firms talk about empowerment than implement it. A great number of leaders believe that if they and their workers want empowerment then it 'will happen on its own'. In reality, the change is fundamental, requiring that many old habits be replaced with new ones. This is why we must understand what empowerment really is, know the basic steps we need to take and be persistent in our efforts.

The main reason why empowerment is not so easy is that often executives think that the only thing they need to do in order to empower employees is to 'give team members the authority to make decisions or to order a change in behaviour'. The leaders believe that they are granting employees freedom of action. At the same time, they detect unwillingness on the part of the team members to take responsibility for the decisions they make. Team members, meanwhile, say that they do want control of decision making and greater participation, but believe that leaders restrict their effort to take on responsibilities. Evidently employees are not automatically prepared to deal with the challenges of empowerment. They often believe that they want empowerment, until they learn what this actually entails for them as team members. There is a need for leaders and team members to change radically their way of thinking. Empowerment challenges many basic beliefs that leaders and team members have accepted as indisputable fact. The type of thinking that in the past had led to success on both a personal

and company level may no longer be valid in the world of empowerment. In order for the company and its employees and executives to be empowered, stances, behaviours, practices and relationships will all have to change.

This, therefore, is the key problem. This is also a challenge for vocational training: it is called upon to play a new role – to help employees and companies in this direction.

The point when an employee embarks on the procedure of extracting himself from the 'primary ties' that bind him to his traditional business environment – an environment that saw him as a passive performer and executor of orders – marks the beginning of individualisation. At this point the employee is faced with a new duty: to orient himself and become acquainted with a new and uncertain environment while attempting to develop independent action and a sense of responsibility. However, in order to see what the outcome of this endeavour will be, we must examine the process of increasing individualisation. There are two facets to this process ⁽⁵⁶⁾:

- (a) One is that the individual is empowered all the more, both emotionally and mentally, and develops initiative.
- (b) The other facet of individualisation is the increasing isolation that the individual gradually comes to feel.

Yet while the individualisation process develops automatically, the ascent of the self is impeded by numerous personal and social burdens. This gap in the two rates of development leads to the creation of a crushing feeling of isolation and loneliness, which in turn triggers mental flight mechanisms.

Primary ties provide a sense of security and oneness with the external environment. Once the individual begins to extract himself from this world, he begins to realise that he is alone, an entity apart from others. This separation from a world which, when compared with the individual's solitary existence, is unshakeable and mighty, and often menacing and dangerous, causes the individual to feel weak and anxious. For as long as the individual was an integral part of that world and ignorant of the potential and responsibilities of individual action there was no need to fear it. But from the moment that he becomes an individual, he feels alone and confronted with this world of danger and overpowering manifestations. This increasing alienation results in isolation, which gives rise to a sense of abandonment and intense feelings of insecurity.

So, the only way out is for him to retreat, to abandon the freedom of self-action and to attempt to overcome his loneliness by bridging the gap between his individual 'self' and the world. By doing this he flees from a situation that would make his life intolerable if it were to continue. This path of flight is thus characterised by the total surrender of the individuality and integrity of the self and as a solution does not lead to efficiency, creativity, or independent action. What it does is provide relief from a difficult and stressful situation and make working life possible

⁽⁵⁶⁾ Erich, Fromm. *Fear of Freedom*. London: Routledge, 1960.

by avoiding panic. However, it doesn't solve the deeper problem and results in a type of work irresponsibility, where work is seen to comprise only mechanical and obligatory activities.

Hence, there develops a tendency to abandon the independence of the individual self in favour of merging it with someone or something else outside it from which it seeks to obtain the strength it lacks. To put it differently, there begins a search for 'secondary ties' to replace the 'primary ties' that have been severed. The most common manifestations of this submissive tendency are feelings of inferiority, weakness and individual insignificance. The employee demonstrates a tendency to underestimate himself, to appear weak and not to dominate situations. As a rule, such a person will demonstrate a profound dependence on forces outside himself, on other employees, business institutions or bureaucratic procedures, essentially searching for an alibi in his efforts to shake off the feeling of personal responsibility. He will convince himself not to do what he wants to do, but to submit to the real or imagined orders of these external forces. He is unable to experiencing what he wants, can do or is. Life becomes something imposingly powerful that he or she cannot dominate or bring under control.

The loss of the self reinforces the need for submission and marks the beginning of intense doubts about the individual's identity. This loss of identity makes the need to conform imperative. It means that one can only feel self-assured if one lives according to others' expectations. If the individual's life does not fit this image, not only does he risk facing disapproval and experiencing even greater isolation, but is also in danger of losing his own identity, which means placing his mental health at risk. By conforming to others' expectations, by not being different from that which suits others, the doubts the individual is faced with regarding his identity are laid to rest and the individual gains a certain degree of confidence. This self-deception regarding the self acts as a much-needed crutch for those who cannot walk on their own. However, this has its price – any opportunity for creativity and initiative is lost.

Particular notice must be paid to the fact that this feeling is not a conscious one. It is often concealed by a contrasting sense of self-assertion and perfection, because under certain conditions these masochistic tendencies prove to be relatively successful. If the individual finds business models that satisfy these masochistic tendencies – and he most certainly will – he becomes confident, begins to assert himself and becomes suffused by a sense of perfection and success. If we should however penetrate the unconscious dynamics of such an employee we will discover that he may have succeeded in obliterating any visible anguish, but not the deeper conflict and silent misery within him. On a conscious level the individual may feel confident, may feel that he 'belongs somewhere'; in essence he remains an impotent individual that suffers from the submergence of the self. Despite the feigned optimism and initiative, the employee remains crushed under a profound sense of weakness and fear.

Should we conclude from this analysis that there is a cycle which inevitably leads from freedom to another form of dependence? Does freedom from all primary ties render an individual so isolated as to search for new ties that bind? Are independence and autonomy hence synonymous with isolation and fear? Or is there a condition of positive freedom in

which the individual can exist as an independent self – not isolated from, but united with the world, forming an harmonious constituent of the business environment as a whole?

Fortunately, the answer is yes. The process of increasing freedom does not necessarily lead to a vicious circle. Human beings can be free without being alone; they can possess critical faculties without being suffused with doubts and can be independent while remaining constituent members of the organisation. To obtain this freedom one needs to integrate the self, become one's own person. Our greatest strength is found in achieving an integrated personality. But how? Integrating the self cannot come about only by mental processes, but must include the entire personality, in other words by the active expression of one's spiritual and emotional capacities. Every person possesses these capacities. And these only become real to the extent that they are expressed. In other words, positive freedom involves the spontaneous activity of the integrated personality.

Spontaneous activity is not the same as the compulsory activity to which the individual resorts as a result of his isolation and weakness. Neither is it the activity of an automaton that unquestioningly adopts the rules and models prescribed by the business environment. Spontaneous activity is the free and unsolicited activity of the self. By activity we do not mean simply 'doing something' but engaging in creative and responsible action which reveals the person's emotional, spiritual and sensual experience. In this way, the individual self not only is left intact but becomes stronger, because the more creatively active the self is, the stronger it becomes. The authentic development of the self is an organic development. It is the unfolding of the nucleus of distinctive features that only belong to a particular person and no other.

Feelings of inferiority and weakness stem from an inability to act spontaneously, to express one's true thoughts and feelings and from the consequent need to present a fake self to oneself and others. There is nothing that makes us feel more ashamed than not being ourselves; there is nothing that gives us greater satisfaction or makes us prouder than to think, feel and express that which lies within us.

If an individual integrates the self through spontaneous activity, and thus becomes associated with the world, his isolation is broken. The world and he become part of an organised whole. The individual then claims his or her rightful position within this whole and thus doubts concerning oneself and the meaning of life disappear. One can then conquer one's principal doubts about oneself and one's place in life; one gains strength and confidence as an individual, and a feeling of being secure. This new confidence cannot be attained by means of the protection provided by a superior external force. It is a dynamic sense that can only be attained through freedom; a freedom which has no need for self-deception because it has eliminated all conditions requiring self-deception.

The educational process must therefore ensure that all workers, irrespective of age, receive an education preparing them for an active life and for the development of an autonomous and independent personality. It must acknowledge, openly and in practice, that every person is unique and that education must help people develop by understanding themselves that is, their

own potential, limits and limitations. 'Know thyself' is a fundamental principle that aspires to make people strong and happy. For this reason it should be the main imperative of the education and training system.

Unfortunately, to date, vocational training has solely focussed on teach a special trade or occupation. Thus, instead of awakening an individual's intelligence, it has encouraged the individual to conform to a specific model. In this way, it prevents the individual from understanding his or her own itinerary. But of what value is an employee's knowledge, if he or she continues to live in confusion? What does it matter if he possesses technical and industrial skills, if he cannot express these effectively or communicate with the other employees? Such a form of education cannot but inevitably lead to confusion in the work environment: it creates in every person psychological barriers that distance that person from the others.

That which we name education today is merely an accumulation of information and knowledge from books – something that anyone who knows how to read can do. Such education provides an escape from an integrated self and, like all other escapes, inevitably leads to more problems. Conflict and confusion is the result of misguided relationships between people and between work and survival. If these relationships are not perceived and transformed, the simple accumulation of information and acquisition of certain skills will only push both companies and workers to the fringe of today's global changes.

The educational process must not only be a matter of exercising the mind; though this may contribute to efficiency it does not bring about completeness. A mind that has only been exercised in this manner is merely a continuation of the past, and such a mind can never discover that which is new. Knowledge and specialisation are certainly necessary, but placing the emphasis only on these leads to a blind alley. The role of education is to create human beings that are whole, and hence intelligent. The mere acquisition of degrees and diplomas may increase mechanistic skills but does not guarantee intelligence. Intelligence is not simply information; it cannot be acquired from books, nor does it consist of clever self-protective reactions or aggressive assertions. After all, someone who has never studied can be more intelligent than one who is learned. In measuring intelligence by the yardstick of examinations and grades we have only succeeded in developing a devious mindset that avoids the vital human issues.

The new criterion

A new dimension to intelligence gradually began to emerge in the contemporary business world – one that is no longer restricted to cognitive skills or knowledge acquired through studies, education and technical specialisation. This other dimension to intelligence has clearly demonstrated that success in life and, of course work, is not necessarily linked to a

high IQ and specialisation, but is rather interwoven with another facet of human competence, namely emotional intelligence (⁵⁷):

By emotional intelligence (EI) we mean the skill to develop self-awareness, self-control and self-examination, conscientiousness and ability to empathise with others and understand them, to listen carefully and influence others, to communicate essentially and cooperate with others.

To a certain extent EI describes a new way of perceiving truths that are already known to us. But in essence it sheds new light on professional success, on conflict in the workplace, on teamwork, on the factors that make some people shine by their high performance, and on the prerequisites of personal excellence, which also ensure prosperity and growth for the firm.

This new perspective is not useful only to an enterprise's directors, high-level executives and leaders, but also to each and every worker, irrespective of level, whose work contributes to the firm's efficiency, profitability and prosperity. By emphasising the power of real teamwork possesses it supplies the tools and guidelines that individuals and firms can use to maximise their capacities, but also to achieve higher standards.

The business world has perhaps not yet understood the importance of emotional competence, both on a personal and organisational level. Yet this competence is the top priority in a workplace which is constantly changing, revealing a new landscape in which no one be able to survive and excel without Emotional Intelligence.

The rules in the workplace are changing. We are now judged with new criteria: how clever we are or what our education and experience we possess are no longer the only things that count; the way we handle others and ourselves are also taken into account. This criterion is being applied more and more in recruitment and promotion processes and in determining which employees should be retained.

The new rules predict who has a greater chance of reaching the top and who will probably be derailed along the way. Irrespective of the sector in which one is currently employed, the new rules determine which features will play a decisive role in our future 'marketability' in the labour market. These rules have practically nothing to do with what we were taught to believe was important at school: academic achievement is a far cry from the new standards. The new criterion takes it for granted that we are sufficiently intelligent and trained to do our job.

What it does emphasise is personal qualities such as initiative, empathy, adaptability and the ability to convince others.

This is neither a transient craze nor just current conventional thinking on management. The data supporting the view that we need to take this new criterion seriously are based on surveys conducted on thousands of employees with all sorts of job descriptions. This research pinpoints with unprecedented precision the qualities a person with outstanding performance is

(⁵⁷) Daniel, Goleman. *Working with emotional intelligence*. Bantam, 1998.

likely to possess. It also shows which human competences play a decisive role in professional excellence, particularly in leadership positions.

In an era when job security cannot be guaranteed, where the concept of 'work' is rapidly being replaced by 'transferable skills', these skills are of major importance and guarantee employment now and in the future. For decades we have been talking of talents using terms ranging from 'character' and 'personality' to 'competence' and 'soft skills'. Today, these qualities have at last become clearer and have a new name: Emotional Intelligence.

Intelligence is the ability to perceive the essential. Vocational training will have to aim at awakening this ability in ourselves and others. This awakening is the responsibility of all of us who are involved in this sensitive field of vocational education and training. It can only be achieved if we help people know themselves, overcoming the fear of independent action and autonomy.

8. Career coaching counsellors. A brief description of an innovative career coaching project for young people

Erwin Kämmerer

8.1. Point of departure

The world of work is undergoing a radical process of transformation. Dynamic changes in the world of work are producing new opportunities but also greater difficulties at the transition points between school and work. Effective counselling and preparation of young people at the interfaces between school and the world of work are becoming increasingly important. All the more so because, as a rule, changes occur much faster in economic and industrial fields than in education, which leads to the inherent danger that the gaps at the transition points will become wider.

By comparison with other countries, Austria has a high level of employment, low youth unemployment and a differentiated range of upper secondary education opportunities. The availability of full-time schools, vocational training routes (higher vocational, technical and commercial colleges) and a multi-faceted system of dual training means that a high percentage of young people participate in vocational education and training. However, the decline in the number of apprenticeships available in the last few years has had a negative effect on transition from education to work. At the same time, changes in the field of training – e.g. the development of training courses for about 70 new occupations in the last three years – have led to a greater need for information and counselling.

8.2. Schemes and provision

The first step towards career guidance is taken within the education system itself. Early targeted guidance and preparation for future training and career paths are offered in many fields. This is the case in many lower secondary schools – in particular the polytechnic schools, which have made vocational counselling, vocational preparation and basic vocational education one of their core tasks. Recent surveys have shown that they have thus been able to increase their rates of successful transition.

In other fields there are many young people who, having finished compulsory education or dropped out of subsequent training, face what is for them a relatively complicated and confusing training and employment market without any structured counselling and preparation. This is the target group for which fall-back schemes, in the form of training

courses and foundations, have been developed within the framework of the National Action Plan for Employment. However, these schemes are relatively costly and of limited effectiveness, because of varying success in finding participants sustainable training places; moreover, they force young people to undergo long preliminary periods of searching and waiting. This is good neither for their employability nor for their self-confidence.

8.3. STAP – Styrian Action Plan for Employment

In Styria, the *Land* Ministry of Economics has developed a Styrian Action Plan for Employment (*Steirischer Aktionsplan für Beschäftigung*, STAP). Providing an alternative to reactive compensatory measures, it is designed to function as a series of active preventive measures and projects aiming to strengthen both individuals and the economy. One of the main projects involves an innovative regional plan for ‘career coaching counsellors’, developed by the Styrian Economic Society (*Steirische Volkswirtschaftliche Gesellschaft*).

8.4. Career coaching counsellors

Career coaching counsellors are regional network agents whose job it is to contact young people approaching the end of their full-time school careers and who have not yet received adequate vocational guidance and preparation.

The project has the following basic principles and features:

- (a) The best way of avoiding youth unemployment is not to let young people become unemployed in the first place. Timely, process-based preparation of young people is the basis for a successful transition between education/training and the labour market.
- (b) Counselling, preparation and transition can never be handled exclusively by one system alone, as many players are always involved: schools and the education system, employers, the training and employment market, the environment shaping the young person’s attitudes, family, peer groups, institutions and finally, the young person himself or herself.
- (c) Timely action and process-based counselling and preparation of young people should be undertaken while they are still within the education or training system. This is a major factor in successful integration into working life, but also in further development. Gaps and long waiting or searching periods erode self-confidence, reduce placement chances and may generate a feeling of failure. This can be prevented by achieving a seamless transition.
- (d) Career coaching counsellors offer young people process-based support for their career choice before they leave the school system. To this end, the following steps are taken:

- (i) communication and cooperation with the regional school and education system, in order to reach youngsters who are approaching the end of their compulsory education in good time;
 - (ii) individual support for small groups or individuals adapted to personal needs;
 - (iii) encouragement to start thinking about their future lives and careers at an early stage;
 - (iv) encouragement to think about their strengths and potential with regard to future training and career paths;
 - (v) information on regional and supra-regional training provision and job offers;
 - (vi) organisational assistance with finding practical training places, work familiarisation weeks, and encounters with the world of work for personal orientation;
 - (vii) support for the development of strategies to seek training courses or jobs and intensive preparation and training for applications and interviews;
 - (viii) communication and cooperation with personal and learning environments – family, school, regional activities, institutions;
 - (ix) support and information about courses for new occupations, training requirements, entrance tests for colleges, etc.
- (e) The career coaching counsellors do not have the task of creating new structures, nor do they compete with existing institutions. They work at a network and development-oriented level with all relevant institutions and actors, e.g. labour market services, the social partners, socio-educational establishments, schools, information centres etc. Their process-based activity is intended to complement the work of these institutions.
- (f) Furthermore, through ongoing information and communication and through their personal relations with employers, employees, young people, opinion-makers and others, career coaching counsellors have an ongoing and lasting effect on the training and labour market. In doing so, they seek to exploit and expand the skills and competence of regional institutions and activists.

8.5. The first 10 months of the project

Since 1 November 1999, career coaching counsellors have been working in four regions of Styria (four full-time posts), and they achieved the following results up to August 2000:

- (a) support, counselling and provision of information to a total of 270 young people (including new entrants who had just completed compulsory education);
- (b) of these, about 240 received long-term or process-based support. About three quarters of them were found places in both individual and small-group schemes. About one quarter received support only in small groups of three to eight participants;

- (c) some 30 youngsters sought 'last-minute support' after June/July 2000 (the end of the school year) and were given 'intensive coaching' so that they could still find a training place in the autumn;
- (d) of the 240 young people who received long-term support, about two thirds (168) continued with further training, and of these almost half gained an apprenticeship (80), one third continued in full-time education, and the rest were transferred to other schemes;
- (e) 112 events were held in schools for the promotion of in-school career counselling (information meetings and seminars).

In addition to this, there were 160 events, PR activities, about 200 personal contacts with employers and more than 4 000 contacts with enterprises through written questionnaires and surveys.

Thus, the success rate of the project was considerably higher than that of the National Action Plan schemes (about 30 %).

All in all, while this project was being prepared and implemented, youth unemployment in Styria fell by about one third (-27 %) and the number of young people who failed to gain apprenticeships was reduced by about two thirds (-60 %). These trends naturally cannot be attributed to one cause, but the 'career coaching' project did play an important part in achieving these results in the regions concerned. What is more, the cost of this project was considerably lower than that of the 'compensatory' measures.

But what is really of importance is the fact that the young people succeeded in taking a successful step towards their own future without disruptive breaks and gaps. Self-esteem and self-confidence are one of the decisive prerequisites for a successful career, and the course is often set during the first steps.

8.6. Criteria for the success of the project

The following factors seem to have been particularly important to the success of the project.

- (a) providing early, process-based individual support for choosing an occupation;
- (b) addressing and strengthening basic personal and vocational skills and potential;
- (c) arousing interest and enthusiasm for future tasks;
- (d) enabling insight, encounters and active participation in the real world of work;
- (e) enhancing self-confidence and self-assurance through active 'reinforcement of strengths';
- (f) open regional networking, linking the interfaces between school, the world of work, institutions, families, etc.;
- (g) flexibility in organisation, and a clear grasp of the responsibilities and basic functions of the work of career coaching counsellors.

8.7. Academic evaluation

The first year of the project, which should be viewed as the pilot phase, has already shown a high level of performance and effectiveness; it is now up to all those involved to collect, structure and analyse the experience gained in all the regions, and to use it for future action and development potential. Prof. Mag. Dr Erwin Kämmerer, of the Styrian Federal Institute of Education, is responsible for the academic evaluation of the project; under his supervision, feedback surveys covering the clients (young people and their families), companies and enterprises were conducted in all regions, and moderated workshops on qualitative evaluation were held.

Comprehensive documentation is being prepared on the first stage of the project (which ended on 31 August 2000); on the whole, the initial results show very positive feedback. At the beginning of the second stage of the project, starting 1 September 2000, special emphasis is being put on dissemination of the results of the first stage so that the foundations may be laid for the optimal development and implementation of further action.

9. Improving vocational guidance for disadvantaged young people – report on a project aiming to provide young people with the skills needed for lifelong learning

Gerlinde Hammer, Gisela Grzembke

9.1. The LeiLa pilot project

9.1.1. Promoting lifelong learning in vocational guidance and training for disadvantaged young people and young adults

The LeiLa project is being conducted over a four-and-a-half year period as part of a pilot programme to foster lifelong learning sponsored by the Bund-Länder Commission for Educational Planning and Research Promotion. It is concerned with three transitional situations affecting vocational education and is concerned with young people and young adults:

- (a) young people who have left general education and are taking part in a course of vocational guidance and training (first transition);
- (b) young people taking part in government-sponsored non-workplace-based training (second transition);
- (c) young people undergoing retraining and further training courses with a view to a change of occupation (third transition).

9.1.2. Training in traditional occupations

The LeiLa project is concerned with pre-apprenticeship vocational training for the metalworking and painting and decorating trades, which are still largely based on traditional craft concepts and which the young people concerned tend to view in traditional career terms.

The overall objective of the project is to optimise existing courses of this type in the light of employers' constantly changing skill requirements, and to introduce new elements into teaching aimed at encouraging young people to shed their inherited perceptions of a particular working career and to be prepared, throughout their working lives, constantly to reorient their thinking and to reposition themselves by acquiring new skills, in the awareness that, with occupational and career profiles constantly being revised, the long-accepted model of a trade once learnt remaining unchanged for life is becoming obsolete.

‘In reality it has been found that a skilled occupation as a means of earning one’s living for life or acquiring skills leading to a related activity or career, is becoming rarer in Germany as elsewhere. Research into career histories has shown that such traditional career concepts are gradually disappearing and that a decision to embark on acquiring a skilled trade or on a course of study is now very rarely a choice made for life.’⁽⁵⁸⁾

9.1.3. Career readjustment – a lifelong task

Against this background the LeiLa project seeks to equip the target groups of young people with key skills that will enable and motivate them to direct their efforts to the flexible acquisition of skills that are in demand and to self-directed enhancement of existing skills. As time goes by, institutional counselling will not be able to relieve individuals of the task of adjusting flexibly to a labour market in which skills profiles are constantly changing. The project activities therefore aim to accompany young people throughout the three transitional periods of vocational training mentioned above in order gradually to enhance their ability to take career decisions and undertake self-directed learning.

9.2. Target groups

The target groups for the LeiLa project are disadvantaged young people taking part in government-sponsored vocational training courses, who are then helped to reach sound decisions as to their future occupations and to acquire basic and specialist vocational skills.

Responsibility for programmes to encourage the provision of vocational training for young people has since 1988 lain with the Federal Labour Office⁽⁵⁹⁾. Different measures are employed to assist the various groups of young people to acquire educational and vocational qualifications and/or to (re-)integrate into society. The programmes offer a range of government-sponsored courses designed to assist disadvantaged young people who have not gained a *Hauptschule* leaving certificate to do so, to learn German, to decide what career they wish to pursue and to find a training place in a recognised skilled trade or occupation.

⁽⁵⁸⁾ Karen Schober: Verändertes Berufswahlverhalten vor dem Hintergrund des Strukturwandels auf dem Ausbildungs- und Arbeitsmarkt. *ibv* No 222, 28 May 1997, p. 1669.

⁽⁵⁹⁾ In 1995 Bernard Jagoda, then head of the Federal Labour Office, summarised assistance for the disadvantaged as follows: ‘The programme to assist the disadvantaged was started 15 years ago with just on 500 apprenticeship vacancies. When this assistance was enshrined in the Employment Promotion Act in 1988 there were some 15 000 apprenticeship vacancies available in joint training centres run by a number of companies and 11 500 in vocational schools. By September 1995 almost 65 000 apprentices were attending vocational schools and almost 32 000 were being trained in joint training centres. This growth in the number of trainees shows that assistance for the disadvantaged is widely recognised as a vital element in the dual vocational training system.’ In *Berufliche und soziale Integration benachteiligter Jugendlicher in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern*. Frankfurt am Main: INBAS, 1997, p. 7.

9.2.1. Young people undergoing vocational guidance and training

The LeiLa project is concerned firstly with young people taking part in initial vocational guidance and training courses. The target groups in this case are ‘young people of working age and young adults regardless of educational level

- (a) who in the course of guidance counselling seek to obtain an apprenticeship place but are unsuccessful. They also include those who have abandoned a course of training;
- (b) who wish to undertake a course of vocational training but have not yet decided on the career that they wish to pursue.’⁽⁶⁰⁾

The second target group comprises young people who ‘are trainees with learning difficulties or who are socially disadvantaged... and who, for some personal reason, cannot without assistance

- (a) begin, continue or successfully complete a course of vocational training, or
- (b) having dropped out of one training course, join another, or
- (c) having successfully completed a course of training, obtain or settle in a job.’⁽⁶¹⁾

These groups are regarded as disadvantaged and may take part in government-sponsored vocational training courses

9.2.2. What does disadvantaged mean?

The concept of disadvantage has several aspects and is used to express a whole series of factors operating to a young person’s disadvantage⁽⁶²⁾ and likely to jeopardise their chances of successfully obtaining a qualification, or their career opportunities. It therefore applies to:

- (a) young people who have not obtained a *Hauptschule* leaving certificate and are thus deemed not to have attained a ‘minimum level of education’⁽⁶³⁾. This educational disadvantage constitutes a major ‘barrier to access to the vocational training market’⁽⁶⁴⁾;
- (b) young people who, owing to their social circumstances, have drug addiction, behavioural or motivational problems and lack purpose and direction, and are therefore socially disadvantaged;
- (c) young people who, owing to their nationality or national origin, have language problems and are therefore at a disadvantage by comparison with those of German mother tongue;

⁽⁶⁰⁾ Federal Labour Office Circular. No 42/96, p. 20.

⁽⁶¹⁾ Social Security Code (SGB) III, Art. 242.

⁽⁶²⁾ A distinction must be made between disadvantage and disability (*Berufliche Qualifizierung benachteiligter Jugendlicher*, Bonn: BMBF, 1998, p. 21). The term disadvantage covers a far larger group of persons than does the term mental or physical disability strictly applied.

⁽⁶³⁾ *Berufliche Qualifizierung benachteiligter Jugendlicher*. Bonn: BMBF, 1998, p. 17.

⁽⁶⁴⁾ *Berufliche Qualifizierung benachteiligter Jugendlicher*. Bonn: BMBF, 1998, p. 18.

- (d) young people who, owing to the situation in the training and labour market, have not obtained a training place and are therefore considered to be disadvantaged in employment terms.

9.3. Why do disadvantaged people need lifelong learning?

As has already been indicated, the aim of equipping people who are disadvantaged in terms of training and employment for lifelong learning is based on the realisation that vocational retraining and further training are becoming indispensable, particularly for this section of the population, bearing in mind the transformations taking place in social and working conditions as a result of new information and communications technology. Continual changes in social and working life require constant readjustment in everyday patterns of behaviour and, in the labour market, call for a redefinition of occupational and skills profiles. This means that people need constantly to readjust their established strategies for coping with the situations that occur in life and to reorient their vocational aims and skills to the labour market – a task of which the individual cannot be relieved by any counselling organisation.

9.3.1. Risk of further exclusion

Rather, the subjective willingness and ability to reorient oneself and to embark on self-directed learning, is a necessity, particularly for disadvantaged people with learning and working difficulties if they are to become socially integrated and to find their place in the world of gainful employment. Otherwise there is a risk that these young people will steadily lose touch with the trend of rising skills and find themselves not just unemployed initially but also in the long term.

9.3.2. Increasing demands

This risk is especially great in the case of young people who, having completed their general education, do not possess the behavioural patterns or qualifications required in the dual system training market. They find themselves, when seeking training, confronted with constantly growing demands in terms of preliminary qualifications and abilities. The number of vacancies available for applicants who reveal a lack of qualifications is on the decline. The same is true of jobs. A growing need for candidates possessing middle or higher-level qualifications goes hand in hand with a ‘dramatic decline in job opportunities for the semi-skilled or unskilled’⁽⁶⁵⁾, a situation which in the state of Bremen is underscored by industrial restructuring away from problem sectors and towards a broad spectrum of service enterprises. Not least, the demands of new occupational profiles in the computer technology

⁽⁶⁵⁾ *Forum Bildung*, Working paper No 3, 3 February 2000.

sector and elsewhere demonstrate clearly that disadvantaged people risk becoming decoupled from the trend towards increasing qualifications.

9.3.3. Growing discouragement

The effect of all this is to discourage disadvantaged young people, who see the gulf between their performance potential and what the training and labour markets demand of them steadily widening.

If, faced with the demands of the training and employment system, these young people are not to throw in the towel, they must be assisted in two ways. Firstly they must be equipped to reposition themselves constantly in their social environment and to use self-directed forms of learning in order successfully to make good their personal lack of skills. At the same time, they must be motivated to work at their skills and to overcome individual shortcomings in order to keep pace in qualification terms with the growth of the information society. If young people are not afforded this opportunity, there is a risk of what we might call an 'information proletariat' coming into being in the midst of the information society and losing touch with the rest of society ⁽⁶⁶⁾, in the long term becoming socially excluded and unemployable.

9.3.4. The relevance of computer-related skills

The great importance of the whole complex of computer-related skills is something that must be borne in mind. Computers are fast becoming a vital tool for all kinds of work, and the ability to use the computer a necessary condition for any job. Inability to use the Internet systematically, in particular, will in future represent a 'disadvantage in skill terms for both training and job applications' and, moreover, bring with it the risk of 'being excluded from many services only available through the Internet' ⁽⁶⁷⁾. The steady advance of the Internet in all areas of work and life therefore involves a danger for society of becoming split into 'users and non-users' ⁽⁶⁸⁾. Only those actively able to share in Internet-based multimedia working and social intercourse will be able to share also in the information and communication processes of modern society. Activities designed to enhance the self-directed, net-based learning skills of disadvantaged young people are therefore necessary in the interest of equal opportunities, as well as being relevant in social and employment terms.

⁽⁶⁶⁾ German Federal President Johannes Rau, quoted in *Internet World*, September 2000, p. 76.

⁽⁶⁷⁾ *Forum Bildung*, Newsletter 27, zur Studie der Initiative.

⁽⁶⁸⁾ Chancellor Schröder in the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* of 19 September 2000, p. 5.

9.4. Fields of activity for the LeiLa project

Out of the whole range of assistance for the disadvantaged that exists in Germany, the LeiLa project has opted to focus its innovations on three specific fields of activity that follow one another both logically and chronologically.

- (a) In the first phase, the project focuses on what are known as open initial training courses as one specific means of assisting disadvantaged young people who have not received any training since leaving school. Such open courses are provided in Bremen by the *Arbeiter-Bildungs-Centrum der Arbeiterkammer Bremen GmbH* (ABC) – a regional organisation concerned with continuing and further training – and financed by the public employment service. The courses are chiefly aimed at providing vocational guidance and preparing young people for work.
- (b) In the second phase, LeiLa targets young people who are taking part in an ABC training course and combining this with attendance at a vocational school, the aim being to enable them not only to acquire basic and specialist vocational skills, but also metaskills that will equip and motivate them to adapt flexibly to market trends and to develop further skills to keep pace with changing requirements.
- (c) In the third phase, LeiLa assists disadvantaged young people who, on completion of training or because they have no skills, are unable to find a job or are at risk of unemployment. They attend further training courses in order to acquire skills that they can use in the labour market to improve their job situation. The aim in this case is to provide these people with multimedia learning skills which they can use to raise and maintain the level of their vocational qualifications both in institutional training courses and outside them, and thus avoid the risk of joblessness.

9.5. Open initial training courses as an area of project activity

The open initial training courses referred to have certain structural features rendering them particularly suitable for an innovative teaching approach in the LeiLa project.

9.5.1. Training-related guidance

The courses target young people who are seeking vocational training after completing general education or who have not obtained a training place for one of a variety of reasons, whether because an insufficient number of vacancies have been made available, because they have not received the necessary vocational guidance, because of inadequate school performance or because of language difficulties. These young people all have one thing in common: they have been prevented by personal or external difficulties from making a successful transition from general education to vocational training, even though they want to be trained. They are, in other words, disadvantaged in training terms. There are no other requirements for access to

these open courses, which are thus available to a broad range of young people wishing to embark on a course of vocational training.

9.5.2. Flexible choice of occupation

Open initial training courses enable young people to gain some theoretical and practical knowledge of jobs in commerce and industry. ABC offers such courses in a variety of fields, mainly technical and industrial. Young people can choose from among metalworking, painting and decorating, woodworking, electricity, interior design and nutrition, and can obtain a preliminary vocational qualification in the field concerned. The courses help young people to decide on their future occupation and to begin to train for it without as yet committing themselves

The initial choice of occupation is not regarded as final. Those who wish to do so can, if necessary, switch from one occupation to another throughout the range – an option of which as many of 20 % of students on the last course took advantage.

9.5.3. Linking theory and practice

The cognitive style of teaching often used in schools is frequently a major obstacle to learning in the case of disadvantaged young people. Moreover, they feel the school emphasis on achievement and getting good marks to be demotivating, since they have generally failed to make the grade. To give these young people a second chance with another method of learning, the open training courses link the theoretical content of instruction with practice in the workshop.

In addition, individual periods of work experience in companies are arranged to broaden the young people's horizons and to help to ensure that the choice made as to training for a skilled trade is a sound one.

9.5.4. Flexible entry and exit

All the training courses cover a period of 12 months, but students can start at any time they wish. They can also leave a course as soon as they have reached a decision and have found a training place. The chief objective of the courses is to launch young people on a practicable form of training, with priority given to helping them to find a training place in the private sector, which offers the best chance of subsequent skilled employment. When a place cannot be found, consideration is given to other training options with regional training bodies or in vocational schools.

9.6. Initial innovations in open training courses

In autumn 2000, ABC started a new cycle of open courses with 70 students. The LeiLa project is working with these students to test and develop innovative learning models aimed at equipping and motivating young people to make career decisions and to find out what actions to take on their own account.

9.6.1. Analysing needs

In order to determine what needs to be taught, the first step in the project was to draw up a series of questionnaires aimed at ascertaining young people's attitudes to learning generally and to vocational training in particular, how they themselves assessed their learning deficits, their expectations of the course, and their knowledge of careers.

These questionnaires were tested in August 2000 on a control group of 25 young people who had just completed their open training course, and they were amended on the basis of discussions with these young people. They were then issued to the actual target group – young people starting out on the new cycle of courses in September – and the respondents themselves were involved in assessing the results. This was done in groups, taking typical replies so that students could decide for themselves the conclusions to be drawn and the actions to be taken.

This participative form of analysis was designed to give young people the opportunity of appreciating their own learning problems and those of the group, their indecision as to future careers, their own mistaken perceptions, etc. Although the process of evaluating questionnaires has not yet been completed, the group discussions usefully highlight the ideas that young people have about work:

- (a) following a course of vocational training is one of the young people's principal aims;
- (b) they believe that vocational training will assure them of long-term stable employment in the occupation concerned;
- (c) they frequently think in terms of a stereotyped, gender-specific occupation;
- (d) their knowledge of the range of skilled trades open to them tends to be limited;
- (e) they generally have little idea of the possible need to rethink their careers and retrain over time.

There is, therefore, a clear mismatch between how young people picture their future careers and actual employment trends. This needs to be addressed.

9.6.2. Expert interviews

Questioning of young people was supplemented by open interviews with a number of experts familiar with the such groups and, among other things, with the particular learning difficulties

and needs of the intended target group. Experts included job counsellors at the regional employment centres, teachers and training instructors who had worked with such groups for years, academic experts, people responsible for organising periods of work experience and training in industry, and people responsible for planning and designing schemes to help disadvantaged groups. On the basis of the information obtained and with the agreement of the ABC teaching staff responsible for the open courses, two points of emphasis for the LeiLa project were conceived:

- (a) the first was the delivery of basic computer skills using the Internet;
- (b) the second was the provision of occupational and commercial information in cooperation with industrial employers in the region.

9.6.3. The delivery of basic computer skills using the Internet....

The emphasis placed on this aspect reflects the important role played by modern information and communications technology in industry and society at large.

9.6.4. ... makes new demands on trainees

Computer literacy (⁶⁹) is rapidly becoming, together with reading, writing and arithmetic, a basic skill against which an individual's abilities are measured. The extension of computerisation therefore confronts disadvantaged young people with a new challenge. Modern means of information and communication are increasingly used in every area of cultural, business and social life, whether in business or in dealings with public authorities, via the Internet and Intranet.

9.6.5. ... but offers new learning opportunities

The new media, however, also offer disadvantaged young people a new chance of taking their personal and career development partly into their own hands. Those young people who leave school with a resistance to learning and who as a rule associate traditional teaching methods with failure are offered a new means of accessing learning in which their shortcomings in reading, writing and arithmetic are of subsidiary importance. Modern information and communications technology also enables individuals to plug in to the social process of information exchange and dialogue independently in order to obtain the information that they need without recourse to institutional educational provision.

(⁶⁹) As Karin Kühlwetter points out, computer literacy has several dimensions. These include manipulative skills, and the ability to judge, select, differentiate and analyse. Cf. *Neue Qualifikationsforderungen für Multimediaberufe*. In: *Medienkompetenz – ein Schlüssel für den Medienstandort Bremen*. Symposium: 1998 conference proceedings, Bremen, 4 March 1998.

9.6.6. Using the Internet in making career decisions

The LeiLa project aims to enable young people in open training courses to take advantage of the learning opportunities offered by the Internet, and to motivate them to do so. This calls for more than a mere Internet connection. The vast mass of information on the Internet requires that disadvantaged groups be first equipped with media, methodological, personal and social skills enabling them to select and structure information so as to make progress in learning. The important question in this connection is how the Internet can be used to obtain and communicate information in order to arrive at a realistic career decision.

9.6.7. Learning at the workplace

The second point of emphasis has the same objective. In order to enhance young people's commercial skills, learning processes are to be initiated in cooperation with employers, using the workplace as the learning location. This plan accords with the aim of practical work orientation. At the same time, young people's knowledge and experience of commercial operations will be broadened, further enhancing the likelihood of their reaching a sound decision as to their future career based on an accurate assessment of employment trends.

9.6.8. Project learning combining Internet and workplace practice

A teaching model currently being implemented provides basic teaching on using the Internet and on the regional structure of industry and the labour market. On this basis young people are able to benefit from a workplace environment and to use the Internet in order to work independently and interactively on their learning projects.

- (a) Following an introduction to the Internet, the sending and receiving of e-mails, search techniques and the efficient use of search engines, lists etc., the young people apply their Internet know-how to a project about the economy. They work as a team to undertake specific research concerned, for example, with the structure of industry in the Bremen region, branches of industry and companies with a presence there, available career options, skilled trades, and so on. To do this they use the Internet search skills that they have acquired and learn to select and structure the mass of information available in accordance with the questions that they are required to answer.
- (b) The teams gather the information found and organise it, exchange it via e-mail and thus become routinely proficient in using the Internet whilst at the same time improving their ability to organise and communicate.
- (c) Given this commercial know-how, individuals use the Internet as a source of information, in conjunction with other more traditional sources, to perform another task, namely to find an employer who will offer them a period of work experience useful in helping them to make their own career choice.

- (d) To this end they communicate with potential host companies, again using the Internet, in order to discover more details about placement conditions and to reach a definite agreement with an employer. But this is not to be work experience in the traditional sense.
- (e) It has been agreed that the work the young people will be assigned during their time with an employer will be aimed not merely at enabling them to carry out practical production work but also to process a number of very specific research projects. The young people use their practical relationship with the workplace and training location to discover specific aspects of the company by putting questions that they themselves have framed. Subjects for research, according to the interests of the young person involved, may concern the company's products, relationships with suppliers and customers, the types of occupation and job involved in the company's operations, its hierarchical structure, the terms of employment, the role of the works council and unions, and so on.
- (f) Mentors appointed by the company assist the young people in locating the information and at the same time ensure that the projects entrusted to them serve a useful learning purpose.
- (g) During the period of practical work experience the young people communicate regularly with their teachers via the Internet, thus further enhancing their communication skills.
- (h) The young people process the results of the research project on their PCs with the whole group in mind. Finally they organise a presentation to demonstrate to the group what they have learnt and the experience gained during their time with the company. In so doing they develop skills in presenting information and reporting experience, and contribute to a general broadening of horizons.

This first innovative project has been designed with the aim of addressing as wide as possible a range of methodological, media, personal and social skills that combine together to form a 'self-directed learning skill'. Improving young people's ability to take career decisions in their own occupational environment, using modern means of information and communication, is regarded as particularly important.

10. ‘Good advice’ for young people experiencing difficulties during vocational training. The need for personalised assistance from trainers

Jørgen Mork

10.1. The starting point

Under the Leonardo da Vinci programme we are carrying out transnational research into the impact of educational guidance counselling for young people already undergoing training who are showing the first signs of difficulty. More specifically, the aim is to enhance the quality of this work at what might be considered its most elementary level, namely the advice given by trainers in direct response to an emerging problem. The scope of our research, therefore, is restricted to the practical support and assistance that is given to young people daily in vocational training centres.

Since the project is still under way we cannot yet present our results but can only report a number of observations that have led to the identification of the problems faced by trainers in their new role. Although the actual cases to which we refer are drawn from French, German and Danish contexts, we are not concerned with particular national aspects since the same questions about the quality of the advice that trainers give to young people in difficulty arise everywhere. The time has come to initiate a discussion that recognises the hitherto often underestimated efforts of those trainers who, out of professional commitment, interest in their trainees or simple human concern, are ready to offer an opinion in reply to students’ urgent questioning at a moment of crisis.

10.2. The modern educator

The trainer is always the first person to notice the difficulties that a trainee is encountering and is therefore, perhaps without even realising it, a prime agent in the matter of individual guidance. Trainers have not only inherited traditional methods of educational guidance but they also devise ad hoc new approaches appropriate to each situation as it arises. Since they are not generally trained to take responsibility for the fate of young people who are looking for responses to their questions that are both reliable and confidential, it is hardly surprising that they find themselves on occasion caught between the demands of acting as both educator and family member.

Generally speaking our project is based on the observation that although the profession of teacher or trainer carries with it a certain responsibility for advising learners, this does not

automatically mean that the requisite knowledge and skills are in place. And although trainers invariably seem to accept their role as on-the-spot counsellors, they nonetheless ask themselves how far this function is to extend. Since they wish to retain their role as trainers, they are looking for a clearer, more explicit demarcation between that role and the role of professional guidance counsellors. And in so doing they reveal the essence of the problem we are considering, namely that no one knows the real effect of the various types of ‘good advice’ given by trainers to trainees in difficulty.

10.3. Need to redefine the trainer’s professional role

When we consider the role of trainers today we must ask ourselves two series of fundamental questions which tend to provoke lively staff-room discussion but will remain unanswered until the subject is researched in depth. To simplify matters and encourage discussion we shall try to distinguish between the negative and positive aspects of trainers’ future role, even though they are generally closely linked, and we shall illustrate our remarks by reference to actual cases.

10.4. The negative aspect

It is hardly necessary to point out that trainers need to be qualified in the subject-matter about which they are giving advice, in the sense that they must possess the basic knowledge and skills needed to manage their classes, but also in the sense that they must be capable of involving themselves in more sensitive cases and be ‘authorised’ to do so. Our research has shown that a system of work-sharing, whereby more complex cases are handled solely by professional counsellors, is not feasible in reality. Three specific examples will make this clear:

- (a) Trainee A is very sensitive, and even aggressive in the way she speaks, and the woman trainer decides to ask for an explanation after class. Without any previous indication of the gravity of the situation the trainee confesses that she is the victim of an incestuous relationship and that the trainer is the only person she has told.
- (b) Rendered curious by the fact that trainee B attends school regularly but never does his homework and is thus unable to follow the teaching given in class, the trainer asks for an explanation. It turns out that the trainee is beaten by his father when he comes home from school and the punishment is more severe if he attempts to open a textbook.
- (c) The trainer lives in the same neighbourhood as trainee C and regularly sees him dealing in cannabis, so that he need look no further for an explanation for his trainee’s tiredness and lack of concentration. However, he does not disclose his knowledge for fear of the possible consequences for himself if he were to make the facts known to colleagues.

No warning bell sounds to prepare trainers for the different kinds of sensitive information to which they may be made privy nor, once they find themselves in such a situation, is there is a way out. The trainee creates, more or less deliberately, a relationship of complicity based on mutual liking and understanding. In the worst managed cases the trainer becomes a kind of hostage, but more usually the trainee simply makes him or her the recipient of intimate confidences in the quest for an appropriate answer to the problem, rather than being sent to join the queue at the guidance counsellor's office.

One might say that the trainer's only mistake was to have been present at the time the revelations were made, but there are those in the teaching profession who assert that one must never become so open and friendly as to risk finding oneself in a delicate situation by virtue of the sensitive information received. The problem for the trainer is how to react. Can one involve oneself in such cases without compromising one's status as trainer? It needs very little for what is intended as good advice to turn into a risky form of therapy that can prove harmful to the young person concerned, particularly when compared with what might have been achieved by an outside psychologist or other expert.

Hence our first series of questions as to the trainer's role:

Let us assume that trainers acquire the skills to counsel young people in difficulty but that they are also assured of a way out in cases where they find themselves overstretched. What then becomes of the relationship of trust?	Ambiguous?
Is the decision to refer a sensitive case to the experts merely a question of skills or is it perhaps not also a sign that the trainer lacks the courage to become as involved as the trainee in difficulty would like?	Overcautious?
Can the function of counsellor be defined in absolute professional terms in precisely those problem cases which need to be treated sensitively by the counsellor?	Heartless?
How, when confronted with a sensitive situation can one refuse to act and do so in a professional manner without negative consequences for one's status as trainer, reliability, personal integrity etc.?	Exposed to risk?
How far can one regulate trainers' counselling activity without the danger of traumatising them or discouraging them from spontaneously taking action to improve a trainee's situation?	Resigned?

10.5. The positive aspect

Trainers may indeed do a great deal to help young people in difficulty. They are in a privileged position, being the first to detect problems and, because of their involvement, able

to act without incurring heavy responsibility. Trainers are not professional educational counsellors but experts in their subjects, and the affinity with a particular skilled occupation that is shared between them and their trainees is often the basis for a unique relationship of trust and one of the reasons why trainers' value as counsellors should be recognised and exploited.

What they say carries a great deal of weight, and their position as oracles brings with it a responsibility of which they need to be aware, even in cases that do not appear especially serious. Indeed, when we talk of redefining the trainer's professional role we are thinking particularly of developing criteria for what constitutes 'good' advice. This process meets with a degree of resistance since it involves questioning the judgmental ability of each trainer. An open discussion of less serious cases is an ideal way of setting the process in train, and of systematically including the expertise of professional counsellors. A few examples will illustrate this point:

- (a) D is a trainee in the building industry. He is much on a par with the others, the only exception being that he has the habit of putting his fingers in his mouth when he speaks, which makes it more difficult to find him a placement for practical training. He is finally found a place as a tiler, which he refuses. The trainer then explains that unless he changes his behaviour this is his only chance and that he should face up to reality and reconsider his decision.
- (b) E is a brilliant decorative arts student but always at a loss when required to take the initiative. She claims to lack the ideas which are vital in her field. It emerges in the course of an interview that she is not used to facing personal challenges, having always followed set programmes. The trainer decides to do more to encourage her positive aspects in the hope that this will give her more self-confidence in the longer term.
- (c) F will undoubtedly have to repeat his training course but nonetheless constantly complains of the slow pace of teaching. During an interview he explains that his parents wanted him to study to be a doctor, which is what he would prefer. Not only does he feel out of place in the plastics industry, where he is at present, but feels that he has been forced to follow the course. Realising that this is a complex case, the trainer refers him for counselling.

In our terminology, any reaction that is relevant to a particular problem can be accounted good advice. We could discuss this central point at length but it is clear that the responsibility for the advice given cannot lie with a single person. Thus when redefining the trainer's professional role we must abandon the idea that teachers do nothing but teach in isolation within a compartmentalised organisation.

Trainers today have to rely on the supervision and experience of their colleagues, as well as on the synergy of the whole range of expertise within an organisation that recognises the complexity of the role of *paidagogos*. In our research we have found that considerable effort is being devoted to what we might term revitalising the academic institutions involved. It

would seem that this effort has been largely rewarded with results which, though as yet only provisional, reveal the importance of the challenges faced.

Hence our second series of questions as to the trainer's role:

If trainers need training in order to be able to give 'good advice' to trainees in difficulty, should we not accept in advance that there is nothing suspicious when they display an obvious interest in the educational attainments of their trainees? Will trainers not always question their own judgment, even when their intuition of the first signs of difficulty is correct? How can we justify intervening solely on the basis of intuition? Equity in the trainer/trainee relationship is based, among other things, on open dialogue. Does redefining the trainer's professional role not risk producing a 'dialogue technician' when it would be better to have a 'noble savage'? What right do we have to question the courage of trainers who involve themselves in difficult cases? Even a very minor problem needs a solution, although such cases may require them to exceed their role as trainers. Can human concern be codified, and at what price? How much freedom can we allow trainers in their search for counselling approaches in specific cases and how can we link this role to that of trainer? What lines of demarcation should be drawn between trainers and professional counsellors?	Interested? Observant? Open to dialogue? Courageous? Professional?
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10.6. The grey area of trainers' counselling skills

It has to be admitted that when it comes to developing trainers' counselling skills we are in a grey area typified by individual efforts in particular cases, and that these cannot be controlled. It is tempting to describe these efforts as a kind of 'paternal concern', whereas the goal of defining their role in professional terms is the exact opposite.

The partners in our research project do not see how we can make progress in combating failure in vocational training without far more active cooperation on the part of trainers. How much simpler things would be if we could agree on a method of work-sharing by isolating initial career guidance and combining it with free access to a counsellor! But the trainer's new role is dictated by the trainee, who sees himself or herself as involved in an increasingly democratic relationship with the training centre, the trainer, the social environment etc. Trainers do not interfere in trainees' affairs as trainers but as adults who are confronted with young people hoping to apply their skills and to overcome some critical situation. When seeking to define their professional role we end up wondering whether the trainee would have to be exemplary for a trainer to be able to impart good advice.

10.7. The fatal downward path to systematic observation

In the course of our research we were horrified to find that the mass of information concerning trainees who are potentially in difficulty is constantly increasing. Information about their past performance within the education system is made available not only to the vocational training centre, the director and the guidance counsellor, but also to the training staff at large. From the moment they enter the centre, young people are subjected to diagnosis. They are watched as if people were afraid of being accused of neglect or of not having been able to anticipate a problem if one arises. There is general discussion of the young people in the staff room, and everything is done to encourage trainers to comment on any changes that they may notice.

10.8. The disregard of trainers' efforts to provide support

There is no doubt that trainers are more inclined to devote themselves unsparingly to helping young people in difficulty than are guidance counsellors. We have already referred to the unique relationship of trust based on the sharing of a skilled occupation. However, nothing as yet enables us to judge how effective counselling by trainers actually is. Redefining the trainer's professional role would appear necessary. But if this is to be done, one last question should be borne in mind:

**Who but the trainer can give
a young person in difficulty a second chance?**

11. Vocational guidance as an instrument of social inclusion. The theoretical evaluation of a practical experiment.

Piero Pirotto

Introduction

Work has always been one of the main ways of integrating into society those who for financial, social or health reasons or due to their life experience, have suffered social exclusion. Together with other factors such as health, housing and social relationships, work is the main means of achieving new start, of reordering and piecing a life together. The value of work is not just financial: it helps to build up one's personality and relationships and recognise one's own capabilities and potential. The job integration systems aimed at vulnerable groups on the labour market (such as drug addicts and former addicts, the disabled, prisoners, young people at risk of social exclusion, the long-term and low-skilled adult unemployed) have always clearly perceived the value of work as a step on the road to social inclusion. However, due either to inadequate financial resources or to the urgency that often characterises these situations (whether financial, housing or health-related) the guiding principle has increasingly become 'any job as long as it's a job'. In the immediate term this has always been considered an adequate response. However, a more searching look at the practice of placing people in jobs without careful thought shows that, in the medium and longer term, such a response is not merely inadequate but possibly harmful. To integrate a individual into the working world without taking into account his or her level of preparation or life history (in terms of work but also of one's own experience of exclusion) may well prove not just pointless but harmful. In preparing an individual for work, whether for the first time or after a lengthy period of unemployment, it is necessary to assess his or her ability to cope with a working activity in a particular working context and at a particular phase in life. A setback at this juncture may well prove irremediable or adversely affect the more long-term prospects that individual and his or her advisers are working on.

Given this premise, integration into the working world without mapping out an appropriate course of occupational guidance and constructing a personal working project, closely related to the context of social integration, will never be sufficient. In fact, a course of action embarked upon without forethought and without a proper foundation is bound to fail.

The experience acquired over the past few years in and around the city of Turin, by a work group that already existed within the Turin CGIL (the local seat of the largest Italian trade union federation) – much of which has subsequently been incorporated into the experience of 'Formazione 80' Association – is the first systematically organised experiment in guidance

support aiming to promote job integration and a return to vocational training for the socially excluded.

In the paper that follows we draw on the practical experience of the past few years in an attempt to summarise the method and experience of this work group. We highlight the key instruments of this work, which is undertaken in close cooperation with the private sector and the public authorities in the area of Turin and is aimed at a widely varying target group (albeit one that displays all the main characteristics of social exclusion to be found in recent years in an area of major industrial decline such as in Turin). The kind of people discussed are drug addicts; former addicts; prisoners in jail; prisoners on parole or those allowed access to schemes other than imprisonment; the long-term unemployed; young people in search of their first jobs; adults with a low level of vocational skills; the physically and mentally disabled; those suffering from disorders such as HIV/AIDS (which render them particularly vulnerable to discrimination); and women over 40 who are heads of families, have been unemployed for a long time and have suffered from the process of industrial decline.

11.1. Guidance within a network

The general aim of returning a person to work or training is always directed towards an individual leading a specific life. To provide guidance to this individual it is necessary to take into account his or her background, past life and current life experience. When dealing with the background, a close personal relationship must be established between the guidance professional and the individual involved in the reintegration process. When dealing with the present, on the other hand, what is needed is to build up good interaction with the agencies and people who are working to promote the person's full reintegration into society. The phase of guidance and support for a return to work cannot be detached from the overall route that the individual is taking. Networking also calls for certain parts of the guidance work to be conducted in close cooperation with other services that may be working with the person at the time. Let us take the example of a drug addict who is undergoing detoxification. In such a case, collaboration with the national health service and the body involved in the detoxification process is vitally important, both in terms of the guidance counsellor's interaction with his or her charge and for ensuring that the individual could cope with certain jobs. Job integration must be realistic in the light of the person's health and mental state. In such cases networking creates synergy in dealing with the individual and the sharing of information, especially on that person's reactions, in order to build up true cooperation among the various agencies. Thus, the guidance phase must be part of a broader process; synergy becomes a key instrument for achieving the best possible results. If the conduct of guidance is unrelated to individual's general situation at that moment, it could become an element of exclusion rather than inclusion, an obstacle rather than a support. The individual might use the guidance phase preceding job integration as a means of evading the awkward processes entailed by the struggle to emerge from social exclusion. Because of this, the set of measures adopted must never be uncoordinated or in conflict, as this might prevent any progress towards inclusion or

even lead to regression. The guidance professional must not be the link merely with the individual directly involved but also one shared with all the other people participating at that juncture. An ability to network must therefore be part of the guidance professional's set of skills. Cooperation, moreover, affects not only the relations with other bodies or institutions but also the various people involved both in the group phase and in the individual advisory phase of the overall process of job integration – in other words, with the entire guidance project team. In short, networking above all helps to economise on the analytical phases and to place in better perspective the complex situation in which the individual is involved. The purpose of all this is to provide guidance that is truly related to the individual's personal position and less influenced by the particular economic and social context within which guidance work is being provided. '... therefore, guidance must not be simply a path helping a person emerge from a difficult situation, but an instrument in itself, an instrument of the future. It must be backed up by work and by deeper relations among all the agencies working with these groups of people. When dealing with a specific case there should be a stable relationship, rather than the ad hoc relationship needed for dealing with an urgent case. Emergency situations sometimes give rise to conflicts of space, trust, interference, etc.' ⁽⁷⁰⁾

11.2. The group guidance phase. Social skills.

This form of intervention initially calls for guidance that does not take the form of individual advice but is conducted within a group. The opportunity to recognise oneself and one's own condition in other people (who may not have the same background but who are experiencing the same situation of social exclusion) allows the individual to acquire those elements of self-analysis that one needs in order to assess one's own occupational past, present and future. The group, perhaps paradoxically, becomes a place of self-recognition, where looking at oneself through the mirror of other people helps one to begin to understand one's own potential.

The first phase of group guidance is structured in the form of four basic processes, which can be summarised as the formation of a group, communication, motivation and active job search. Let us briefly analyse these phases ⁽⁷¹⁾:

- (a) Forming a group: the group helps develop an ability to observe and listen to oneself and others. Analysing other people means understanding how and in what ways they are seen as an asset and resource, or as competition and an enemy. To achieve this awareness we must be able to recognise some of our own features in other people; this allows us to reformulate, understand and assimilate them. The group becomes a forum where we can learn to recognise our behavioural patterns, to perhaps modify them or to make them more acceptable to the people with whom we have to interact. The method used in this phase consists of games and simulation. Through play, people may learn to see their own

⁽⁷⁰⁾ Ramos, E. *Dalla prigionia all'inserimento*. Barcelona: SURT, 1999

⁽⁷¹⁾ Gorini, G. Various authors – DG V C. E. action – RIM40, 1998.

limits realistically; they may also be able to make better use of their individual and collective resources. This process allows them to increase their ability to relate to their surroundings while moving towards greater awareness and emancipation.

- (b) Communication: in the group relationship, this phase includes an analysis of communication systems and recognition of information and the media via which the information may be conveyed. Group interaction helps individuals understand the importance of communication and identify its instruments. This phase of the work group allows an analysis of how to come across to others – in other words how to convey to others a recognition of one's skills and abilities and how to recognise other people's underlying needs and demands.
- (c) Self-esteem: part of the guidance process involves mapping out a route. This helps build up self-esteem in the group participants. Often this type of intervention runs through all group work. The aim here is to stimulate a more dynamic attitude towards mapping out the participant's own pathways and creating motivation for active participation in the relationship between the individual and others – not only in defining one's working and training itinerary but also, more generally, in one's social relationships. The method is to construct a path to self-recognition, working on the person's self-esteem and self-perception by exploring his or her interests, motivations, attitudes and personal values with regard to work, and what roles he or she attaches – and wishes to attach – to work.
- (d) Active search for work: in group guidance, this is the information phase. It includes a description of labour market laws and regulations and methods to deploy in order to activate one's own job search. Here too, various situations are simulated to provide practical information on methods of interaction when searching and applying for jobs.

Based on the experience acquired, this group guidance must allow the individual – whose starting point is a combination of subjective conditions and conditions dictated by the surroundings – acquire new skills and a capacity for social relationships. Overcoming isolation also means reinforcing the individual's tools for interaction with others through self-recognition, especially when these tools are used in seeking employment or defining a training route that will lead to actual work in the near future.

11.3. Individual guidance

In situations that pose real demands – such as in the cases of people belonging to any of the groups listed above – guidance helps to clarify the gap between the dwindling significance of school education and the ever broader knowledge required for genuine social integration. To sum up the meaning, purpose and methods of individual guidance – which, in this descriptive philosophy of guidance, is part of the method used by our work group – we can state the following definition: 'it is a personalised path, monitored by an expert practitioner, designed to investigate the resources (competences and abilities, attitudes and values, interests and

motivation, etc.) that can productively be channelled towards formulating a vocational project. The aim is to make the person aware of his or her own knowledge (cognitive and operative) and, through recognising his or her own potential, to promote an investment in the planning of action' (⁷²).

Starting with this comprehensive definition, which helps to give an full understanding of the content of the individual guidance phase, it should be pointed out that the main instrument for its implementation is the extended individual relationship between the guidance professional and the person involved in the process of social reintegration. The instruments deployed are often derived from the advisory phase traditionally used in the French model of the 'skills audit'. However, because of the type of target groups with which the work is being conducted here, fresh thought must be given to the abilities and knowledge that need to be analysed. In such cases, personal life experience becomes a basic element for analysis and thought, together with the path that has led to the individual's social exclusion. Any individual who has lived or is still living through a troubled period will have acquired many skills, especially informal skills. The recognition and understanding of such skills on the part of the individual taking the path of guidance and job integration and their inclusion in his or her assets must be an integral part of his or her itinerary toward the construction of a personal vocational project.

11.4. The intervention philosophy

This summary description of the intervention as a whole outlines the series of steps to be taken in an agreed networked process; however, it should also be emphasised that underlying this system there is a philosophy free of all prejudice. The phases of guidance for a target group such as those described call for a great capacity to look beyond the context in which knowledge has been developed. 'The basic hypothesis is that guidance must be the outcome of a process of formulating knowledge and experience that has been acquired and implemented in various ways. Knowledge is acquired in any social situation in which a person accumulates information, skills and abilities associated with everyday life or with more or less formal scientific search, and which to a varying extent is founded on the presumption of logical correctness' (⁷³). In a typical intervention in this module, before one can adopt an appropriate approach to defining the set of abilities acquired by people in their working, personal and social lives there must be an effort to analyse how they have experienced social exclusion. This is a vital need in any good guidance, and it calls for the guidance professional to be completely free of prejudice. It matters little what path has been taken by the person with whom one is working; what does matter is to investigate which aspects of his or her past life are formative from the personal and possibly occupational viewpoint. For this to be successful, the guidance practitioner must make no judgements and certainly harbour no prejudices. The route that social exclusion has taken (drug dependency, for instance, prison,

(⁷²) Pombeni, M.-L. *Orientamento scolastico e professionale*. Bologna: Il Mulino, 1996.

(⁷³) Meghnagi, Saul. Istituto Superiore di Formazione (ISF). Confederazione Generale Italiana del Lavoro (CGIL)

prostitution or any other) is not neutral – indeed, it is the foundation of the person’s current existence – but it should not be seen as either positive or negative. It simply exists, and is thus a factor that needs to be analysed. For this reason, the choice of a practitioner to work with a given target group cannot be based on professional skills alone; account must be taken of his or her ability to relate to the condition that individuals have experienced or are experiencing. This is also very relevant to training guidance counsellors: if they are to adopt a proper approach to constructive dialogue with the people they work with they have to be sufficiently aware of the various aspects of the routes to social exclusion. Such awareness is very important for cooperative work as well (i.e. in cooperation with the person involved in the guidance process), which involves constructing a project for acquiring working skills and entering the working world. Without a sound understanding of the factors associated with the individual’s state of physical and mental health and of the life experience of the individual, one may build up an occupational project which is feasible in terms of skills but not practicable in fact. Let us take a concrete example: a person suffering from HIV/AIDS, or from a disorder such as a serious form of hepatitis-C, may have the vocational and social skills for a particular job but only have access to this job if the conditions are compatible with his state of health. It would be useless in such a case to think about opening a route to job integration without paying due heed to the ambient conditions. Another example: a drug user on methadone will never acquire or retain a job that calls for a high level of concentration nor one that does not fit in with the opening hours of the methadone distribution authority. These factors are not subsequent to guidance – they are an integral part of it. It is the task of the guidance practitioner or the guidance team working with the group to bear constantly in mind which of the factors are of primary importance in the process of social reintegration through work.

11.5. No limits to abilities

This experiment was launched about eight years ago; is still experimental in many important ways and it is changing and expanding over time in the light of practice. To conclude our brief presentation, we should point out that the support offered is absolutely unaffected by generic, predefined values: it is tailor-made to the individual with the aim of always offering to that individual alone the prerequisites for personal growth and relations with society.

In brief, the individual alone decides how to use the self-analysis acquired through the guidance process and how to deploy the personal occupational project resulting from this work. The guidance counsellor’s aim must be to give the person the tools he or she can use to improve his or her own lot. This means developing, highlighting and recognising abilities and competences wherever and however these have been acquired, in a manner that is completely detached from how those abilities and competences will be partly or fully used in the future. During the training for trainers one significant example is often cited: a prisoner or former prisoner who has embarked on a guidance path will demonstrate its usefulness or fruitfulness

if he no longer commits any offences, if he obtains and retains a job and learns to use his own skills in an occupation, but also – to take an extreme case – if he becomes a better thief.

In emphasising the importance and central nature of the individual, with all his or her characteristics and special features in work and life, it is important to repeat that what is being described here is a general methodological framework. This needs to be adapted, restructured and refined in the light of the individual needs of people involved in the guidance process. Guidance, especially in its applications, cannot be regarded as a single infallible catch-all solution; it is merely an indication, a track to be followed, in a process of continuous experiment and critical observation of what is happening. Guidance must be seen as a route to individual and collective growth that also involves the person acting as the counsellor. Except in certain key points, in implementing this method the team is responsible for deciding on each occasion which action should be taken – one factor being the inherent nature of the target group. According to this philosophy, guidance should be seen by the trainer as a continuous process of self-training, too. Guidance allows the trainer to continuously update personal knowledge: it helps trainers improve their ability to gather, organise and use information for analysing problems and proposing solutions, and their ability to communicate, to relate to other people and to form part of a working group ⁽⁷⁴⁾.

⁽⁷⁴⁾ Lavorare in Europa: Petra Project: AA.VV. 1995.

12. Euro Ruta: a trade union e-guidance initiative

Marta del Castillo Cobra

12.1. The ADAPT EURO RUTA project

One of industry's greatest needs at the moment is for a skilled workforce. This explains the growing tendency to focus on human resources as central to companies' success and on continuing training as the most appropriate means of delivering and maintaining skills and hence of ensuring steady employment, which in turn is a factor in self-realisation, career development, social integration and citizens' rights.

Continuing training – understood as a permanent readiness to adapt vocational qualifications to constantly changing needs and circumstances, with training as the instrument – has therefore become an indispensable means of coping successfully with recent labour market developments.

The first step in the training process must be taken with an awareness and understanding of local social and economic realities, primary among which is the labour market. And the changes taking place in the labour market are more easily grasped in local terms than by looking at national statistics.

The aim of the Euro Ruta project was:

- (a) to construct a system for monitoring the local market and providing direct access to up-to-date information concerning its particular features and trends, new occupational profiles, necessary qualifications and so on;
- (b) to produce a model for designing training pathways making it possible to determine each person's training requirements,

thereby making sure that training provided subsequent to employment genuinely meets the actual and specific needs for skilling or re-skilling of both individuals and employers.

The general objectives set and achieved by the project were:

- (a) to provide the country with a practical and flexible system of vocational information and guidance to be used by workers as a means of avoiding joblessness and consequent social exclusion and of promoting solidarity and equality of opportunity;
- (b) to establish a working relationship with other information and guidance services so as to improve the transparency and functioning of the labour market;
- (c) to render the tools being used to build the information society universally available and democratic.

The partners collaborating on the project were:

- (a) the National University of Distance Learning (UNED), a public institution responsible, through its Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering and Control, for the Technical School of Industrial Engineering;
- (b) the Autonomous University of Madrid (UAM);
- (c) ALEPH IA, a private firm that develops and produces educational software;
- (d) the National Workers' Commission of Catalonia (CONC);
- (e) the FOREM foundation (Fundación Formación y Empleo Miguel Escalera), the project promoter. This foundation is funded by the workers' commissions and has many years' experience of vocational training and guidance as a means of fostering employment and social development of Spanish workers.

The European organisations taking part in the project on a transnational basis were:

- (a) the French ISERES institute;
- (b) the Italian IRES institute;
- (c) the Belgian IWERF institute,

the first two of which are concerned with social and economic and the third with training research.

12.2. An information and vocational guidance server

One of the main purposes of the project was to design, develop and test a computerised information service available on the web pages of a server connected to the Internet (<http://forem2.ccoo.es/euroruta>) to be accessed through networks for consultation by workers and by training, guidance and other professionals.

The information it contains is organised in six sections:

12.2.1. Training

Information on the regulated, occupational and continuing training available, together with the courses and centres that run them.

The information may be accessed by selecting:

- (a) type of course (regulated, non-regulated, other);
- (b) level (primary education, intermediate training courses, diploma courses etc.);
- (c) occupational field (agriculture, health, hotel and catering/tourism etc.);

- (d) major occupational groups (administrative employees, unskilled workers etc.);
- (e) FOREM centres (Aragón, Murcia, Ceuta, etc.).

All the information provided in this section is directly linked to the EMPLOYMENT section, with each course showing the type of occupation or job one can obtain with the qualification obtained.

12.2.2. Employment

Detailed information on the various occupations and the employers offering them.

Information is accessed by selecting:

- (a) occupational field (agriculture, health, hotel and catering/tourism etc.);
- (b) level (primary education, middle level training cycles, diploma courses etc.);
- (c) major occupational groups (administrative employees, unskilled workers etc.).

This section is directly linked to the TRAINING section, which shows the courses for each specific type of occupation.

12.2.3. Self-employment

Detailed, useful information on how one or more people can set up in business to market an idea they consider viable.

12.2.4. Job availability

Information on jobs available in the public sector through links to the websites of public bodies providing such information, and lists of companies in the private sector employing people in the occupational categories shown under Employment, so that those interested can submit their own job applications.

12.2.5. Resources

General information on services available at local, provincial, regional and national level to people in employment or those who have recently lost their job that provide guidance and information on training, jobs and setting up on one's own account.

Information on scholarships and grants through a direct link with the websites of various public- and private-sector organisations.

12.2.6. Designing pathways

This section aims to guide people in their search for information. It contains detailed information on the content of each of the search options given in the previous sections in order to help people to choose between the various possibilities offered on each screen and so to clarify their vocational objectives having regard to their current situation and needs, as well as the most suitable pathway for them to follow.

All the information required for the system is regularly compiled and updated at provincial level using a standard procedure specifically designed for the purpose, by

- (a) job researchers on the staff of the centres;
- (b) support technicians at the workers' commission FOREM centres;
- (c) public- and private-sector bodies cooperating in the scheme, such as universities, local employers and the social partners.

12.3. Vocational information and guidance centres for workers

The project has enabled the workers' commissions through FOREM to provide information and advice to 229 workers, assisting them in reaching decisions as to type of training, keeping their job, changing their type of occupation or employer, undergoing training and making progress in their careers.

Three information and guidance centres were established, in Santiago de Compostela (Galicia), Seville (Andalusia) and Badajoz (Extremadura). The FOREM branch in the Canary Islands also set up a centre in Tenerife and another in Las Palmas. The methodology used for analysing the local market and designing pathways was in all cases that previously developed for the project; this is outlined below.

People approaching these centres were able to access the server to obtain information and guidance concerning training and jobs and to receive individual advice.

The staff of the centres were trained by a guidance counsellor, who works with the client to devise the most appropriate occupational route to follow, and a labour market observer responsible for carrying out the relevant local labour market analyses.

- (a) The function of guidance counsellors was as follows:
 - (i) to introduce the service during continuing training courses;
 - (ii) to collect and input the data on workers using the service;
 - (iii) to carry out assessments and determine the best path for each individual to follow;
 - (iv) to study and follow up clients' progress
 - (v) to coordinate efforts with the rest of the Euro Ruta team;

- (vi) to prepare a final report on the centre's activity.
- (b) The labour market observers were responsible for:
 - (i) making and maintaining contact with the different bodies and organisations able to supply useful information concerning the local labour market;
 - (ii) making contact with and interviewing employers or heads of personnel departments, workers, and workers' representatives in order to ascertain the actual situation in local industry directly;
 - (iii) making in-depth studies of the local labour market;
 - (iv) assisting counsellors in their work by providing the necessary documentation and information;
 - (v) inputting data and testing the workers' commission FOREM database on the server;
 - (vi) coordinating operations with the rest of the Euro Ruta team;
 - (vii) preparing a final report on the centre's activity.

Those approaching the centres for advice were in employment. Most came from courses under the intersectoral continuing training plans operated by the workers' commissions. Others had learnt of the existence of the service through friends and fellow workers who had benefited from it.

12.4. Designing a methodology for labour market analysis

Analysing the local labour market with particular reference to those social groups most affected by its problems is a necessary task in order to provide a basis for any action aimed at improving the job outlook for more disadvantaged workers. Familiarity with the immediate situation of these workers and how it is developing, as well as with the requirements of industry, and analysing job prospects in the geographical area concerned, presuppose possession of certain key elements if the information and guidance service offered is to be of good quality.

To permit this information to be analysed and communicated, a method of gathering and analysing data was designed which can be used to prepare reports on the local market for use specifically in vocational counselling.

This method is based firstly on the various primary and secondary sources of information available to labour market researchers in order to determine the situation in their immediate area. Secondly, consideration was given to aspects of interest to guidance counsellors in their work, and to the method of processing and utilising data. Finally, a series of guidelines were drawn up for preparing reports so as to make them easy for counsellors to use.

- (a) Information from primary sources is gathered and collated using four methods:

- (i) surveys of workers, heads of personnel departments and workers' representatives;
 - (ii) in-depth interviewing of union officials and employers;
 - (iii) discussion groups that include the social partners;
 - (iv) the databases used by clients of the service.
- (b) Secondary information sources provide data, documentation and other material produced by various bodies, organisations and institutions considered useful for vocational guidance.
- (c) All this information is used to work out a series of quantitative and qualitative indicators of employment trends:
- (i) job availability rates by category of economic activity and occupational group;
 - (ii) job stability in the various occupations;
 - (iii) factors given greatest weight by employers in deciding whether to take on or promote a particular worker;
 - (iv) ways of accessing the labour market;
 - (v) occupations and occupational profiles in expansion or decline;
 - (vi) the impact of new technologies;
 - (vii) workers' training needs.
- (d) The recommended form for labour market reports are summary notes that can be easily updated and are easy for counsellors with little time to use.

This methodology has been set out in a reference handbook for the labour market observers responsible for gathering and analysing labour market data,

12.5. Designing pathways

Workers attending for their first interview with a counsellor may be steered towards a range of occupational routes or pathways:

12.5.1. Training route

The client is given information concerning an occupation which he or she thinks of pursuing but which basically bears no relation to his or her working career.

12.5.2. Basic route for gaining employment

The client has a clear and well-defined objective and fulfils all the requirements for the occupational profile concerned, that is to say the appropriate level of training, the necessary

experience, and the basic skills required for the job, and lacks only the strategies and means for finding employment.

12.5.3. Suitability route

Besides lacking the strategies or other means for finding employment, the client does not fulfil other occupational requirements such as training, experience or basic skills. In this case:

- (a) the client's vocational objective may be redefined (guidance route), or
- (b) an assessment process may be used to help the person to find a (better) job (achievement route).

12.5.4. Guidance route

This is the route adopted when:

- (a) a client cannot see his or her future career clearly. In this case work is directed to identifying and analysing the attitudes, aptitudes, skills, values, motivations and interests of the person concerned in order to map out a personal vocational pathway;
- (b) the plan put forward by the client involves so many obstacles or is so confused that it is best abandoned and a more practicable alternative adopted.

12.6. Evaluation

Data obtained by interviewing clients attending the centres was processed and the software evaluated by means of a questionnaire put on the server. A global evaluation of the project was also made together with an assessment of the participating institutions' experience of using it.

So far as using the server is concerned, people proved to have some difficulty in getting from one screen to another and generally using the system. Assessment of ease of use varied with the respondent's level of qualifications.

The most positive evaluation related to the speed with which information was found and its usefulness. Here again, clients' educational level played a role.

Bearing in mind that the sample selected to evaluate the server were persons who had never before received any kind of individualised guidance, it may be concluded that the system is useful for finding information, particularly for those with a higher educational level. In the case of workers with less education its use needs to go hand in hand with personalised vocational information and guidance.

In the evaluation of the information and guidance service provided by the pilot centres, clients' opinions of the care taken and the explanations provided by counsellors, the information received compared with what they had expected, and its usefulness, were remarkably favourable. The quality of the guidance service was rated very positively and on most counts was higher than 4 out of 5.

Those using the guidance centres were young people of both genders. Marked statistical differences emerged in the evaluation of the care taken and the explanations given, depending on family situation, those with family responsibilities rating them higher. The same differences were found to exist according to gender, with women always giving a more favourable assessment.

From this experience it may be concluded that information and guidance services for workers should set out to provide personal, individual advice because of the wide variety of different concerns, taking care to maintain standards and to allocate sufficient time.

12.7. OSPRACT: a transnational project

The transnational OSPRACT ('Observatorio Sindical del Teletrabajo') project is aimed at the creation of a trade union observatory of the practice and consequences of teleworking at a European level in order to provide their organisations with data and appraisals concerning its development.

The partners in the project, which are responsible for proposing subjects for study and making sure that information is objective and sound, are:

- (a) Trade Union Institute of Economic and Social Research, ISERES, France;
- (b) Institute of Economic and Social Research, IRES, Italy;
- (c) Walloon Institute for Research and Training, IWERF, Belgium;
- (d) Fundación Formación y Empleo Miguel Escalera, FOREM, Spain.

The results and products hoped for from this partnership project are:

- (a) the creation of a database, accessible via the Internet (www.ospract.org), concerned with macro and micro-economic, legal and regulatory aspects of the expansion of teleworking in Europe;
- (b) identification of activities suitable for teleworking in Europe;
- (c) preparation of qualitative studies of significant experiences;
- (d) publication of trade union guides for those in employment dealing with the various technical and social aspects of teleworking.

12.8. Why do workers need vocational guidance?

In a labour market particularly noted for job instability and flexibility, high unemployment, temporary jobs and job switching, there is an increasingly obvious need for support in coping with the process of leaving one job and taking on another, changing occupations, periods of unemployment and continuing training.

The growing call for an active employment policy in the form of vocational guidance and advice concerning jobs, whether from job-seekers or those anxious to enhance their careers, or from people wishing continually to upgrade their skills in order to keep their job, demands that action be taken.

Aware of this situation, the workers' commissions have opted for a two-pronged approach:

- (a) firstly, to support and to continue emphasising the main points of the inter-union agreement on job stability, namely working towards permanent employment with appropriate incentives for employers, negotiating a reduction and reorganisation of working hours, social protection for employees, regulation of part-time working, identification of sectors in which women are under-represented, an active policy of job creation, reduction and control of overtime, and regulation of temporary staff agencies;
- (b) secondly, to put in place an integrated system of information and guidance open to all, whether employed or unemployed, in accordance with the second national vocational training plan, so as to ensure that each worker has the information and training needed to progress socially and occupationally and find a job and keep it.

The workers' commissions, therefore, view vocational guidance as a continuing form of support for people throughout their life, enabling them to formulate and achieve their own personal and occupational plans, to clarify their aspirations and skills by realistic analysis on the basis of information and advice about the actual labour market situation, the evolution of trades and professions, the economic situation, and job availability.

To achieve this, an information and guidance service will need to articulate vocational pathways which, if suitably structured, will foster the development of all those who need it when they need it.

All workers must therefore be assured of thorough personal attention of high quality in vocational matters so that they have a better chance of finding a job and of keeping and/or improving upon it. The identification, organisation and meeting of workers' information and guidance needs will enable them to cope successfully with the risks inherent in industrial change, technological innovation and market globalisation.

12.9. The workers' commissions' experience of counselling the unemployed

Conscious of the situation in which many unemployed people find themselves –especially young people, women, the disabled and immigrants who are at a disadvantage when it comes to finding jobs and achieving social integration – the workers' commissions have for years been working to improve the employment opportunities for such people through their employment advisory services, one of whose objectives is to provide unemployed people with information, vocational guidance and assistance with self-employment. The activities provided by the services, which are of varying duration and directed both to individuals and groups, are organised in cooperation with public-sector bodies, particularly the National Institute of Employment (INEM).

Between 1996 and 1999 these advisory services recorded a total of 477 889 different activities aimed at meeting the need of job-seekers for information and guidance. This puts us at the head of the national league for the number of people helped.

In order to cope with the work involved, mobile teams composed of some 300 specialists, organised activities in different places in order to extend the services available beyond the provincial capitals. Every effort was made to offer a service of quality with highly qualified technical personnel, and the programme of activities was strictly adhered to.

Recent surveys conducted by our organisation among unemployed people making use of the advisory services, whose offer ranges from the provision of information about available resources to assistance with personal career planning, developing job-seeking techniques and advice on self-employment, yielded the following results:

- (a) a total of 90 % would recommend the service to friends or family members in a similar situation;
- (b) the main reasons for recommending the service were the information provided, what had been learned during the various sessions and the advice received, in that order.
- (c) the overall rating was very favourable, a score of 7 points on a scale of 1 to 10, 10 being the highest. The evaluation was influenced to a degree by clients' educational level, with the rating awarded increasing as the educational level declined. Thus the average rating of those with a university qualification was 6.5, rising to 7.4 for those who had at best completed primary school.

Our experience makes quite clear that vocational guidance aimed at job placement is a useful means of improving employability for people encountering the greatest difficulties in entering the labour market.

12.10. Employed workers' need for guidance

The objectives of the ADAPT EURO RUTA project sponsored through FOREM by the workers' commissions have been compared with the opinions of workers in stable employment following one of the training courses provided under the workers' commissions' intersectoral plan. A survey of those covered by the plan in 1996 showed that a project concerned with guidance for the employed should bear in mind that:

- (a) people in employment are seriously lacking in information and guidance;
- (b) their decisions concerning work, particularly when it comes to changing employer or taking part in training, are seldom based on regular professional advice;
- (c) employers are mainly interested in providing training and counselling for their managers; other employees are more or less ignored and are urgently in need for assistance.

In 1998 we interviewed a sample of 4 131 workers covered by the 1997 intersectoral plan on the subject of vocational information and guidance. The main points and conclusions that emerged confirm the need for information and guidance.

- (a) The following question was asked about training pathways: 'Do you know what training you are going to need in the next two or three years?'

Some 62 % of answers were in the negative, with 38 % in the affirmative. Age did not result in significant differences. Educational level, however, did. The lower the educational level the greater the ignorance as to what training would be necessary. Of those with a middle level or higher education, 52 % answered the question in the negative.

Unskilled workers were especially poorly informed with regard to their future training needs.

This shows that training pathways should be primarily aimed at less skilled workers, without, of course, disregarding those in other categories who also displayed a lack of knowledge on which to base continuing training decisions.

- (b) The question 'Have you received any advice as to what training would be appropriate for your career development?' was answered as follows:

Some 82 % of respondents said they had not. Only 17 % answered positively. In 10 % of cases the counselling had been given by the firm and in 5 % by the workers' commissions.

Here again, the answers show a serious lack of counselling, even that concerned with the training needed for a person's own job. The various occupational categories showed little difference here.

- (c) Another question asked was 'Would you take advantage of a free vocational guidance service which informed you of your training needs and helped you work out a plan of education and training?'

This question, which made clear what a vocational guidance service could offer, was answered by 92 % in the affirmative.

- (d) On the other hand, the start-up of the Spanish national qualifications system will call for an enormous effort when it comes to accrediting and certifying the occupational experience of workers who do not possess any official certificate of qualification for their current job.

We looked at this question in the same survey and found that 52.3 % of respondents held some form of certificate or qualification for their current job, while 47.7 % did not.

Those possessing such a qualification were spread unevenly over the various educational levels, again indicating that special attention should be paid to certification for less skilled workers.

- (e) In answer to the question whether they would be willing to demonstrate by either test or interview that their current job skills merited certification, 77 % of those with no certificate said they would. The remaining 23 % said they would not be willing to do so.

13. Skills auditing

Sylvie Boursier

Given the short time at my disposal I have decided to look at the subject of skills auditing from a political and institutional point of view rather than a strictly technical one. I shall deal with two points:

- (a) what conclusions can be drawn after 10 years of the legal right to a skills audit?
- (b) what are the prospects for a vocational guidance policy given the 'collectively guaranteed individual right to training throughout life' now being developed in France?

13.1. A few figures to indicate the economic scale of the activity

Figures for 1999 were:

- (a) 900 centres performing skills audits;
- (b) 81 000 audits conducted in accordance with the regulations, i.e.:
 - (i) lasting on average 15 to 18 hours, spread over one to two months;
 - (ii) composed of three stages (a preliminary stage to determine the need for an audit and the client's willingness, the assessment itself, and a conclusion stage in which a summary of findings is handed to the client and becomes his or her property);
 - (iii) signature of an agreement between the client, the auditor and the funding body.
- (c) a total turnover of FRF 314 million or EUR 48 million;
- (d) 72 % of audits performed for jobseekers.

Since 1993 the proportions of employed and unemployed people undergoing an audit have remained approximately stable at 3/4 jobseekers and 1/4 employed.

The main qualification of 43 % of auditors is in psychology.

What do the figures tell us?

In 1992 the advocates of skills auditing reckoned on 200 000 audits within five years.

13.2. A success or a failure for vocational guidance? What has been holding things back?

13.2.1. The political and social context

Conceived as it was at a time (1991/92) when the economy was flourishing and forward-looking management of jobs and skills was the order of the day, skills auditing is based on the idea of anticipatory management of employee mobility, of preventive and proactive guidance, a kind of education for mobility and management of occupational transition.

For 10 years government policy has been in the main prescriptive and curative, in other words focused on helping people to cope with unemployment and short-term employability.

People are officially summoned and offered, or rather prescribed, a certain number of suitable courses, their attendance at which is checked.

In the first place, therefore, it is the request from the institution and budgetary flows that structure and trigger vocational guidance counselling.

Against this background skills auditing based on the idea that any person wishing to do so may enter an auditing centre and undergo an audit sometimes appears something of a luxury in a period of crisis.

13.2.2. Cultural inhibitors

Skills auditing embodies the concept of responsibility, vocational maturity, with career development responsibility shared between employee and employer.

For employers this gives rise to certain apprehensions. Some aspects of their employees escape their control (the results are the property of the persons concerned and may only be communicated with their consent); the result of the audit will give rise to expectations that cannot be met.

For employees a skills audit also smacks of incompetence. A skills audit presupposes the capacity to question, and touches on one's self-image and self-respect, and real or supposed shortcomings. From this point of view, 10 years is a very short time in which to digest changes involving levels of individual and collective maturity.

13.2.3. Inhibitors associated with the conduct of auditing

In practice, skills auditing is often thought to be too psychologically biased with too little attention to practicalities and the solutions to be adopted.

In other words it is too concerned with ‘Who am I?’ and not enough with ‘What is to be done? What can I change in the coming three, six or twelve months?’

A great deal of progress has been made in this regard. A quality approach has been pursued in order to standardise very diversified provision and to render skills audits more interactive, more concerned with interpersonal relationships and the socioeconomic environment.

This has been achieved using a quality benchmark composed of 10 criteria, regional evaluation teams, progress charts and quality charters.

Currently the DGEFP – the Employment and Vocational Training Department – is involved in a project to make the communications issued after auditing more easily understood by third parties. This involves the preparation of interdepartmental memos, a user’s guide, and guidelines of recommendations for course advisers.

Despite these hindrances, skills audits have become part of the institutional landscape, firmly establishing the concept of an individual right as a kind of drawing right, a line of credit for people whatever their status, age or situation, which they can use at any time during their working lives.

The right to a skills audit is an innovative right, anticipating the moment when all those involved in assessment agree that systems are far too compartmentalised and that preference must be given to thinking in terms of the client rather than always starting from what is available (in medical terms, prescribing ‘what is good for them’).

13.3. What, then, are the prospects for vocational guidance in the medium term?

13.3.1. Gradual awareness of the mentoring function

- (a) We shall witness increased use of validation of knowledge and skills acquired through experience;
- (b) Available continuing training will have to become more flexible and less like standardised products ordered out of a catalogue.

All the findings show that preparation and follow-up are of strategic importance if one wants an individual to use the means available and not merely to accept them passively to no effect in career development terms.

This argues in favour of recognising a function of mentoring, with counselling seen as a means of helping individuals to find their bearings within systems and to use them strategically.

Consequently, counselling must be recognised and funded as an integral part of a quality procedure.

This would take us in the direction of a more general right than a mere skills audit, towards a right to the maintenance and development of skills throughout life, which would include the financing of training, validation and counselling.

To give an example, in some pilot regions the effects of skills auditing on training take-up have been studied and it has been found that of 500 people audited half undergo a course of training approximately right for their initial level, 20 % drop out of the course and find other solutions inside or outside the company, and 30 % postpone the course and switch to training that is more specifically targeted. Skills auditing genuinely does make for human and social economies.

This issue is now a matter of social debate, thanks to the discussions taking place on vocational training and the likelihood of legislation opening the way to validation of skills acquired through experience.

13.3.2. Networking and standardisation of information and vocational counselling

Information and counselling bodies operate at present in too isolated a manner, resulting in a multiplicity of providers. Institutional fragmentation is compounded by the effects of competition in an environment which baffles the intended beneficiaries.

This is not a plea for a single centre, but for networking between information and counselling services.

Networking is currently being tried out in several regions using Internet technologies and the creation of a website and online services to enable people to access better-quality information and guidance from wherever they happen to be.

If people are referred to the agencies and professionals most appropriate to their needs, they can be offered a regional service that is more global and less fragmented.

Networking in this way can play a major part in the development of practices based on an emerging common culture. Initial professional diagnosis will become a cornerstone of such a system.

This calls for a greater professionalisation of those concerned.

In the medium term, going beyond the actual skills audit, the development of guidance is an indispensable corollary to the right to training throughout life for everyone, regardless of their status, job situation or place of residence.

This means a break with the conventional prescriptive approach to guidance, along the lines of the classical tragedy with its unity of time, place and action.

Time, first of all: although guidance may not be likened to a decision taken for life, nor may it only follow a straight, predictable line.

Greater attention needs to be paid to the full range of opportunities currently available, and to those that are unforeseen.

We live in a particular time, we act in a particular time, and events, sometimes crucial, occur at a particular time and may be unique.

As Denis Pelletier points out: 'The art of grasping an opportunity is also that of preparing for an event that is about to happen, but is unforeseeable'.

Place: the only way forward is to explore all opportunities in an effort to escape repetition, disruption and interaction between internal and external reality. We are a long way from the traditional closed-door approach, the only aim of which is to get results, to find solutions.

Lastly, action, because the classical approach has put the emphasis too much on thought at the expense of action. Deciding to pursue a project, making choices, is not essentially a matter of thinking about it. Intentions often emerge from action.

In such a scheme of things, the professional is a generator of action and of experiences to be lived (?), and a mentor providing support in dealing with these.

Providing successful guidance does not mean giving out some kind of essence of oneself.

One discovers oneself through action, by going and looking and touching with one's fingers.

These considerations imply a broad shift in direction in the counselling profession in the medium term, greater flexibility on the part of professionals, and greater openness to socioeconomic factors and experiences of the here and now.

14. Summary of discussions

Volker Köditz

Johan van Rems, Director of Cedefop, began his opening remarks by comparing Cedefop's range of activities and clients with those of the French vocational guidance centres (Centres d'information et orientation – CIO).

Whereas the purpose of the French centres was to provide advice and information for the public at large, Cedefop as an institution was primarily concerned with vocational training research. Since its material and human resources did not really permit it to undertake research projects on its own account, it regarded itself as a 'research arena', acting mainly as a forum for vocational training research carried out at national level. Other activities of importance included collating documentation, analysing data, coordinating research projects, and processing and disseminating information. Cedefop's core function was thus to provide advice and guidance for all those involved in vocational training from a European perspective.

Cedefop was essentially concerned with promoting research, interpreting results, and identifying innovative approaches, particularly those in which:

- (a) vocational and general education and training complemented one another;
- (b) initial and continuing training were combined in a process of lifelong learning;
- (c) employees were also viewed as citizens whose cultural development, education and training and guidance counselling required a holistic approach.

Éric Fries Guggenheim of Cedefop, who chaired the meeting, likened his organisation's function to that of an Aladdin's lamp, from which a helpful genie could be summoned to fulfil clients' wishes.

He went on to define the purpose of the Thessaloniki Agora. Its aim was to act as a bridge between academic research into vocational training and others directly involved in initial and continuing training, such as practitioners, the social partners and government representatives.

14.1. Paper by Philippe Trouvé

Philippe Trouvé warned delegates against harbouring three illusions:

- (a) that the relationship between training and employment was governed solely by market mechanisms;
- (b) that it could be institutionally regulated;

- (c) that there was a predetermined and rational correspondence between training received and the work in which a person was employed. (In his view employers had no clear idea what kind of training a person needed for a given job).

Generally speaking, Europe had seen an improvement in both the quantity and quality of training provision and, as Cedefop studies showed, training was also becoming more effective, though not always to the same extent. Training incorporating a work-based element was on the increase while the link between employment and training policy was becoming more systematic. Substantial differences continued to exist in the design and role of vocational qualifications. While in France social preference tended to play an important role, in Germany the main concern was to establish an occupational identity.

The neoclassical concept of a competitive labour market was losing ground and giving way to a dualism or segmentation of the market, with a growth in what might be termed 'transitional markets' or 'intermediary' areas that have become a favourite field of government employment policy.

At the same time, employers had devised new methods and instruments of human resource management. The task of absorbing young people with low qualifications into the world of work tended to fall to small enterprises in sectors such as the hotel and catering industry, the wholesale and retail trades and the construction industry, which had not yet been consolidated and whose internal personnel management structures were not well developed.

Young people were witnessing a trend towards longer periods spent in education and training and a growing rivalry between different types of qualification. There were clear signs of 'frictional unemployment' on the threshold of working life, 'job queues' and 'waiting loops', a tendency to favour 'internal' over 'external' labour markets, and hence selective exclusion operating to the detriment of young people. Another factor working to their disadvantage was the phenomenon Philippe Trouvé referred to as 'desynchronisation' of the various stages of life. Leaving school, starting a job, leaving home, founding a family and becoming a parent could often no longer be placed in any rational order. These problems of vital importance to young people had attracted the increasing attention of sociologists who had, however, not always been able to come up with clear answers. Must young people learn to live with exclusion and find ways and means of adjusting to job insecurity? Did employment nowadays mean getting settled in an occupation or simply finding some kind of steady job? The situation was further complicated by the fact that the chances of finding a job were not the same for both genders.

Government measures aimed at combating these problems had given rise to intermediate labour market structures sponsored by either the public or the private sector, by trade associations and various non-profit organisations, such as the German Jugendhilfe, with the picture in urban areas further confused by the grey economy, temporary work and, of course, small firms.

Highly developed observation tools, especially longitudinal studies, showed that transition to work was becoming longer and above all more complex (unstable and 'multisequenced') and

less linear. The upshot was a confusing sequence of periods in and out of work, casual work and retraining during which young people became conditioned to waiting and experimenting.

14.2. Paper by Jean-François Germe

Jean-François Germe of CNAM wondered how some people managed to end up in a given career. He himself hated economics but had nonetheless become an economist.

The starting point for a rational career planning model was a goal or project and a long time-horizon. Then, once a person had made a choice of career it should be final.

He wondered, however, whether these assumptions were truly realistic. He and his colleagues at CNAM had investigated the matter as a research project and studied people who, after taking their baccalaureate, had pursued a two-year course of training (BAC+2). They distinguished between:

- (a) those who were either obliged or had decided to change their occupation, and
- (b) those who were remaining in the same job or occupation, where they were seeking career or social advancement.

Forty-seven per cent of this population were changing occupation. The lack of continuity was sometimes due to the situation in a particular sector of industry. Some of those concerned were trying to anticipate the need for adjustment by taking retraining or further training. In this case the time-horizon was relatively short.

Midway between those changing occupation and those remaining where they were was a group undergoing vocational guidance. These people had no specific goal in terms of job or occupation but were primarily interested in training. They were the opportunists.

Taking responsibility for one's fate into one's own hands was accorded considerable social value. Jean-François Germe, however, was not sure whether job-seekers actually behaved in this way and whether this mirrored the reality of transition. Frequently, the strategy seemed rather to be, 'If I do this or that I may have a chance of finding a job'.

The ensuing discussion chaired by Éric Fries Guggenheim centred on the question of systematic personnel management in companies and what the European Union was doing to promote vocational guidance.

Tarja Tuominen, the Finnish employers' representative, said that SMEs in particular often found it difficult to predict skill requirements. Large companies found the task much easier. A union representative, Augusto Praça (P) referred to the problem of recruiting people with no vocational qualifications. If employers did not provide training systematically through an apprenticeship scheme or the like, their employees had little scope for planning future careers. The problem was particularly acute in small firms with no careers management system. Large

multinationals, on the other hand, possessed definite structures for this purpose which enabled employees to acquire new qualifications and skills. Planning a career was rendered additionally difficult by the fact that nowadays a growing number of companies were outsourcing certain types of activity. Instead of investing in training or offering internal opportunities for skills development, they preferred to buy in the skills they needed from outside. In most cases there was no question of any long-term career management.

Laura Cassio, representing the European Commission, referred to the summit meeting in Biarritz where it was planned to issue a special statement on vocational guidance. This represented the first stage of a European vocational guidance policy.

In the Commission's view vocational guidance did much to enhance employability. The scope and range of guidance counselling was changing. It no longer took employment as the sole point of reference but also sought to make people aware of ongoing change in accordance with the principle of lifelong learning. Since change presented both occupational and social obstacles, guidance counselling took on a vocational and a social dimension. Counselling covered a whole series of transition situations such as school-based training and on-the-job training and needed to be accessible throughout a person's working life. It should be available locally and be designed holistically.

Commitment on the part of both the public and private sectors was vital. It was essential for skills auditing to be financed by employers.

There was a lack of standards for the training of vocational counsellors, which Laura Cassio felt should be set at European level. Referring to the role of new types of information technology in vocational guidance she considered that while they could not replace individual counselling they did perform an important function as a source of information. Public funding could help to ensure that the information provided was reliable.

What had the Commission done so far regarding vocational guidance? In the first place it had advocated and supported inclusion of relevant measures in the various EU programmes. In addition it had created a working party charged with drawing up European guidelines for vocational guidance counsellors, thereby setting quality standards for vocational guidance services. It was also working to enhance the relevance attributed to vocational guidance within the European Social Fund and to anchor it more firmly within the EURES network. Progress had also been achieved in linking European resource centres for vocational guidance into what was now the Euroguidance network.

Tarja Tuominen drew attention to a Finnish study on future skill and qualification requirements which laid down not only the desired level of final qualifications for the various branches of industry but also the desirable cross-sector (key) skills. The tables showed both an increase and a decrease in cross-sector (key) skills, indicating that product- and job-specific skills were gaining in importance over non-job-specific skills such as negotiating, management and international skills. In her view it was important that employers should take demographic trends more into account in their recruiting practices.

Franco Frigo (I), representing the ISFOL Institute in Rome, considered the term 'career' in any case irrelevant to most employees. Most SMEs found it difficult to undertake long-term human resource planning. Moreover, in larger companies the internal job market was usually more important than the external market. In Italy it was reckoned that of 20 million employees, 5 million were in insecure jobs, reflected in the fact that people who took an 11-month sabbatical all had contracts of more than five years.

Jean Guichard of INETOP (Paris) was representing the oldest vocational guidance institution in the world. He drew attention *inter alia* to the growing deprofessionalisation of counselling services. In France there were some 3200 counsellors in the CIO centres but more than 7000 people in other counselling bodies for disadvantaged young people, such as PAIOs and '*missions locales*'. The same trend was noticeable in other countries as well. The quality control in the case of these services was less than adequate. The United States and Canada were exceptions to the rule, showing that deprofessionalisation and quality management could be combined. The multiplicity of counselling services available with different approaches and quality control was also a matter of concern for Sylvie Boursier of the Délégation générale à l'emploi et à la formation professionnelle (DGEPP) of the French Ministry of Employment.

Paul Cotton, head of a Belgian counselling centre, made a distinction between the various points requiring discussion in this connection. Basically these concerned differences in quality and differing degrees of professionalisation. There was also the question of the right to counselling. And if such a right existed, to whom did the counsellor feel he or she was responsible – to the family, the individual concerned, or the state? And then again, what exactly should counselling cover? Should it not extend beyond choice of career and training and suitability for a given type of occupation to such matters as how to negotiate a salary?

Maria José Muniozguren Lazcano of the Spanish Ministry of Education said that she was actively involved in the reform of vocational training in Spain. She drew attention to the fact that families used to try to ensure that their children were as financially well placed as possible. But nowadays a job was no guarantee of a career.

Gerlinde Hammer (D) reported on a regional survey of skills and qualifications conducted in Bremen that involved asking employers about the kind of skills they looked for when recruiting. The findings contradicted the theory that employers failed to foresee what qualifications would be needed in future. On the other hand, they did not give much thought to what staff they would be requiring. Vocational counsellors should perhaps be encouraged to extend their activities to advising employers as well.

14.3. Paper by Jean Guichard

Jean Guichard stressed that vocational guidance had its origins in the industrialised countries of Europe. Initially it had been targeted at young working-class people who were taken on as apprentices at an early age.

Subsequently vocational guidance became seen as something that should be extended to providing help at crucial moments of transition throughout a person's life (Donald Super's 'life space, life span career development'). The thinking behind this was that counsellors should determine their own professional role and that individuals were willing and able to go on developing throughout their lives (so that instruments such as skills auditing came into play). This had blurred the frontiers between vocational training and guidance and counselling.

Jean Guichard analysed the changes that had taken place in vocational counselling at three levels – general ideology, economic context, and aims and purpose.

At the level of general ideology, counselling focused on the individual (the client-centred approach). People's occupations were their means of self-fulfilment and were also important in their non-working lives. This assumed an image of the individual as autonomous, responsible and capable of acting independently of the context.

Against these ideological premises must be set new developments. The future was becoming less and less certain or susceptible to planning. Some careers were not so much an orderly progression as an occupational chaos.

Jean Guichard dealt in detail with the various contextual dimensions of vocational counselling, which he saw in practice as very dependent upon developments in work organisation. He made a chronological distinction between five forms of work organisation.

- (a) The occupationally focused system of work organisation and guidance counselling for a specific occupation: this system was based on the view that an occupation helped to define a person's identity. The vocational counsellor was an expert trained in psychological techniques. The main consideration was aptitude for the job. The task was to foresee as objectively as possible the occupation for which a young person should be trained and in which he (or she) would work for the rest of his (or her) life.
- (b) Fordism and job-directed guidance counselling: here the main focus was on the job. Skills were no longer determined by the abilities of the employees but by what the job demanded of them. The main identifying factor was the bond between the individual and his or her fellow workers, who constituted a real occupational community having its own jargon and own informal standards. What the counsellor had to ask was whether young people were likely to adapt well to the working environment, and whether they would see themselves as part of the working team. The Fordist type of work organisation appreciably weakened the link between individuals and occupations, by comparison with the occupationally focused system. Vocational counselling sought more to penetrate the social personality of a worker and to a certain extent to ascertain whether individuals had the same values as those with whom they would be working.
- (c) The skills model and counselling for occupational functions: the 'technical working system' called for a number of specific skills on the part of employees different from those required for jobs in the occupationally focused system. There were some essential skills, among them sociability, the ability to communicate, adaptability, the capacity for

coping with unexpected events, and the readiness to accept responsibility for results, etc. These skills were closely linked to the context in which they arose. Such terms as 'training organisation' and 'lifelong learning' began to be used. Skills auditing techniques and validation and recognition of knowledge and skills were paradigmatic for counselling under the technical system of work organisation.

- (d) Globalisation and 'occupational chaos' – counselling as an aid in making transitions: a growing number of people were experiencing several occupational transitions, which did not constitute career advancement. Current vocational counselling provided help in dealing with this situation, which some people found very difficult to cope with.
- (e) Eclectic vocational counselling: nowadays vocational counselling was confronted with a variety of widely differing questions and problems. To cope with them it used tools and methods evolved at different evolutionary stages of vocational guidance counselling.

Counselling, and particularly career guidance at school level, was much influenced by the organisation of education and educational institutions. France still had a unified secondary school system of which the technical and vocational training systems formed an integral part. Germany had three kinds of secondary school, and responsibility for vocational and technical training lay largely with employers. There was thus a great difference between vocational counselling as practised in France and in Germany. Henri Eckert had pointed out in a comparative study that under the French system control over occupational mobility between the generations lay with the schools, counselling services being the losers. Counsellors were no longer decision-makers but supporting mentors.

In Germany, in Eckert's opinion, vocational guidance was situated at the point of transition between general school education and the vocational training provided by employers. Its task is to coordinate supply and demand in the training market. The counsellor, therefore, exercised a controlling function in terms of young people's social mobility.

The basic questions of vocational counselling could be defined in terms of psychological approach:

- (a) Differential psychology and the match between individual and occupation: this had been studied from the point of view of differential psychology, which regarded the individual as having a stable personality definable in terms of intellectual functioning and general features of personality. René Davis and Lloyd Lofquist's theory of work adjustment and John Holland's questionnaires constituted the prototype for the differential approach to vocational guidance counselling.
- (b) Developmental, cognitive and social questions of lifelong guidance counselling: since the 1950s, researchers had been concerned with the way in which plans for the future and the desire to pursue a given career evolved, and with personal and occupational development over the lifetime. Donald Super's very general model of life space, life span career development was a kind of synthesis of several previous analyses.

More recent research had been concerned particularly with describing the process of socialisation and studying personal and occupational transitions.

- Carl Rogers and counselling psychology: Carl Rogers defined counselling as a non-directive interview conducted by a counsellor whose attitude was one of empathy and understanding, permitting the person being counselled to 'restructure' his or her personality.

Currently the gap between psychological research and practical counselling had widened, as was illustrated by the fact that many practitioners showed no interest in theoretical counselling models while certain questions dealt with by counsellors in practice were not investigated by psychological research, although they would have been suitable subjects. There were noticeable differences between the image of the individual underlying the tools used by practitioners and the dominant paradigm in social science. Lately psychologists and sociologists had proposed less 'stable' models of the individual than those previously postulated.

Having set out the context, Jean Guichard then went on to address the aims and objectives of counselling in practice. Academic studies tended to be concerned with throwing light on the process itself and not on what was to be achieved. But only by determining the ethical, economic and social objectives would it be possible to define the practical aims of vocational guidance counselling.

The dominant model of vocational counselling was to help the individual to adjust to the world as it actually was. But what did that mean? There was a variety of answers on offer. Did it, for instance, against a background of globalisation, mean preparing young people to be flexible (de Calan 1997) or developing and anchoring the personality so as to enable every young person to establish his or her own identity, pursue objectives and be creative (Pair 1997)? UNESCO's proposed definition was: to enable people to become aware of the features of their personality and to develop them in every situation of their lives, with a variety of ends in view.

Most approaches to the choice of career and the planning of life failed to consider a person holistically and were based on a positive, idealistic view of people. In Guichard's view the main question to be asked at the beginning of the 21st century was whether the person seeking advice should not once again be given an opportunity to participate in the counselling process as a whole person.

14.4. Paper by Finn Thorbjørn Hansen

Finn Thorbjørn Hansen presented a guidance counselling model that drew on existential adult psychology (EAP). Against the background of a post-modern concept of enlightenment, globalisation and individualisation and the move towards a knowledge-based society, there was a need for a new form of adult pedagogy focused on clarification of values and able to equip individuals with the appropriate psychological resources and knowledge.

This pedagogy had five characteristics:

- (a) it was concerned with self-directed, not teacher-dominated learning;

- (b) it was concerned with learning that did not aim to meet external requirements, whether set by the teacher or needed to gain a qualification, but was an invitation to the free individual to follow his or her Eros, passions and concept of life;
- (c) it proposed a 'moratorium' on the practical requirements of life and that we should devote ourselves to philosophy and the fine arts;
- (d) it invited us to ponder questions such as 'What is man?', 'What is the good life?' and 'What is the meaning of life?'
- (e) it further invited us to enter upon a Socratic dialogue and to use it as an instrument for group and individual counselling.

This Socratic dialogue was used as an instrument for guidance counselling in groups using specific examples from their own lives and discussing what would be the best choices or decisions for people to make. As the dialogue proceeded those taking part recognised their own patterns of values and their consequent future options and decisions.

14.5. Paper by Jacques Limoges

Jacques Limoges of the University of Sherbrooke in Canada dealt first with the evolving concept of 'career'. The original idea of training leading to an occupation was questioned as long as 25 years ago by Donald Super, who spoke of some five to seven job changes. Today careers were subject to many more changes and often involved switching between inclusion (employment) and exclusion (unemployment, maternity leave, etc.).

As a consequence he advocated an 'interactionist' model of vocational guidance counselling in which career development and planning took place in the complex context of people's self-realisation in contact with themselves and others (partners, children) and with every area of life. Below the two categories of 'the other' and 'I, myself', subcategories such as possessing (being able, having), giving (loving), being aware of oneself (being) were associated with the corresponding aspects of planning one's life (socially and economically, and in terms of family and self-realisation).

For Jacques Limoges there was an urgent need for change in schools. Schools needed to take greater account of the needs of the individual and to be enjoyable. Schools could help to relax the existing triangle of tension that existed between the individual, training and work, particularly by becoming more open to the world of work. They would then make a positive contribution to the socialisation of young people, who identified themselves more through their work. Previously girls were at an advantage in that they established their identity more through school.

Preparing well for old age involved acquiring visions and values outside the world of work. This might have the effect of altering relations between the generations and it was important

to afford people an opportunity of withdrawing partly or temporarily from their employment in order to achieve stability.

14.6. Paper by Charalambos Michailidis

Charalambos Michailidis described counselling activities from the standpoint of a Greek company. For him a major obstacle to people's social integration was their lack of self-knowledge. This situation needed to be remedied by social counselling. Such aspects had been taken up by modern management theory, the main problem being to free individuals from their passive role and to enable them to adapt actively to new circumstances.

In the ensuing plenary discussion Volker Köditz (Berlin) commented on the new tasks facing those involved in vocational guidance counselling, pointing out that existing structures were inadequate even for coping with their present tasks and were even less able to cope with the new demands which, as the French audit centres showed, were far more costly. Many of the traditional tasks of advising on careers and training could now be carried out using electronic media, thereby freeing capacity for the new tasks involved in counselling and for attending to those genuinely in need of it.

For Sylvie Boursier, work was the linchpin of social existence because acquire an identity by working with others. She suggested to Jean Guichard that all practitioners were implicitly reliant on theoretical assumptions, even though not necessarily scientifically based. Thus counsellors often found themselves under pressure because of the tendency to burden them with political objectives such as young people's personal development or urgent aspects of employment policy.

The Danish speaker drew attention to the significance newly acquired by vocational guidance counselling in the light of the discussion on lifelong learning. Given the gradual de-professionalisation of counselling work it was important to establish a new occupational profile for counsellors, making them organisers of occupationally oriented learning processes.

A number of delegates argued in favour of more in-depth and extensive school career guidance with a view to preparing and encouraging pupils to plan their lives. This was also in accord with the efforts being made by the European Commission to promote lifelong learning. When its activities in this area were evaluated, stress was constantly placed on the role of vocational guidance counselling. The Commission advocated a more holistic approach embracing the planning of both career and personal life while seeking out new approaches for adults with their different roles and greater responsibilities than young people. Finally there was a need to evolve a European quality standard for vocational guidance counselling.

Franco Frigo (I), representing ISFOL, referred to the role of vocational guidance counselling in remedying the shortage of skilled workers in certain branches of industry which had been constantly referred to at both national and Community level.

The final discussion on the first day of Agora X ranged over questions of competitiveness in the Community and social cohesion. While the Commission saw no contradiction here, the union representatives did. A UK representative took the view that there was no alternative to a strategy of competitiveness but that it might be a matter of considering how work could be differently organised and not regarded as the be all and end all of living.

14.7. Paper by Erwin Kämmerer

The session of 20 October 2000 began with a paper by Erwin Kämmerer. In the four regions of Styria, the Steirische Volkswirtschaftliche Gesellschaft (Styrian Economic Society) had developed the concept of a 'career coaching counsellor' who contacted young people and advised them on career planning and training. The purpose of the initiative was to reduce youth unemployment and to assist young people at the point of transition between school, training and employment.

Kämmerer began by outlining the economic development of Styria and its education and training system, describing the kind of young people in particular need of help against the backdrop of the generally very efficient system of job placement for young people in Austria as a whole. Those requiring help were mainly those who left school early, had to repeat school years, or had not received any kind of systematic career guidance during their school education or training.

Career coaching counsellors tried to solve young people's problems using such means as training in communication, work with individuals or in small groups, individual discussion of careers, and information about training opportunities. They were assisted in their work by cooperation arrangements with employers, openings for work experience, etc. These measures were complemented by a variety of sessions organised to provide information about careers and training run by schools for young people and their parents. The project had proved very successful and was being adopted by other Austrian provinces.

14.8. Paper by Gerlinde Hammer

Gerlinde Hammer, of Bremen University's Research Transfer Unit, had been responsible for running the 'LeiLa' project in cooperation with non-employer training centres and vocational schools over a period of four and a half years. The project was concerned with investigating the problems encountered by young people at the moment of transition from school to vocational training and work. Particular causes of disadvantage in Germany were found to be lack of a school-leaving certificate, drug addiction and behavioural and motivational problems, language difficulties in the case of foreign youngsters and consequent inequality in the labour market because of the shortage of training places in enterprises.

The project was aimed at devising a new training and guidance programme to prepare young people for initial job training. The principal guidelines were: training guidance, free choice of occupational field, a combination of specialist theory and practice, and flexible entry and exit to and from the programme.

The outcome of the project was an ‘integrated learning’ curriculum to offer young people preparation and guidance for their search for work. It comprised a number of elements, viz. the acquisition of basic Internet skills (participants were issued with tokens enabling them to use an Internet café and attend computer courses), a basic knowledge of the economy of the region as a prerequisite for career guidance, location and selection of a company training place, an individualised combination of productive work and learning about companies using prepared sets of questions, and a net-based exchange of experience between learners and educators.

14.9. Paper by Vibeke Nøgaard

Vibeke Nøgaard began her paper with a general description of the Danish vocational training system. This occupied an intermediate position between the dual system and full-time education and also led to general educational qualifications. It was substantially influenced by the social partners at both national and regional level. In January 2001 a reform was introduced under which all trainees were required to design their training on the basis of a personalised modular plan. The new law also provided for more intensive counselling with the aim of ensuring a more realistic choice of career. One of the new law’s objectives was to reduce the high number of young people in Denmark who currently failed to complete their training.

A major project in this connection was what was known as the ‘electronic logbook’, a computer program that tracked trainees’ progress and signalled the need for counselling at any given time.

14.10. Paper by Piero Pirotto

Piero Pirotto presented the ‘Formazione 80’ project concerned with enhancing the employability of people faced with particular problems, such as drug addicts, ex-prisoners and other disadvantaged people by, for instance, improving their ability to communicate through role-play. The aim was to develop a personalised, social plan of life. Particularly important in this connection was the support given by a tutor or counsellor during a period of practical work experience. The organisation of the system was complex, involving cooperation between the companies providing work experience, the social partners, independent bodies, etc.

14.11. Paper by Marta Del Castillo Cobra

Marta Del Castillo Cobra introduced the 'Euro Ruta' project, sponsored by the trade union FOREM foundation (Fundación Formación y Empleo Miguel Escalera) and supported by the Community ADAPT programme. The project, which aimed to create a vocational guidance and information network, involved a large number of Spanish institutions, including universities, and partner organisations in France, Italy and Belgium. The Spanish network was composed of some 300 model centres throughout the country offering up-to-date information on employment opportunities, careers and specific regional problems, as well as a career counselling service.

The work of the project broke down into five phases covering such aspects as developing and testing an electronic information service (website) with information on training, job availability, setting up in business, the job market, local sources of information and career choice and planning, labour market analysis, help and support in opening and running centres, and evaluation of their activities.

14.12. Paper by Sylvie Boursier

The final contribution from Sylvie Boursier of the Délégation générale à l'emploi et à la formation professionnelle (DGEFP), of the French Ministry of Employment, dealt with skills auditing. She began by outlining the political and institutional background. An agreement with the social partners concluded in 1991 recognised the right of employees to have their personal and occupational skills audited. This involved a procedure which normally took 24 hours, spread over a number of counselling sessions. The regulations ensured that information was treated as confidential, and employees had to give their consent. In 1999, 900 centres conducted a total of 41 000 audits.

The counselling procedure was designed in three stages – analysis, evaluation and conclusion. The procedure was based on agreement between the person concerned, the centre doing the audit and the body providing the funds.

The expansion of this innovative counselling system was hampered in France by three factors. Firstly, the high level of unemployment led the government to concentrate on subsidising direct employment. Secondly, the idea of taking responsibility for one's job and career proved a culturally inhibiting factor, while employers tended to be afraid that their employees might become too demanding in terms of career objectives and pay. The third factor related to the actual conduct of the skills audit. Counselling sessions were frequently too psychologically biased while too little attention was paid to practicalities; 80 % of counsellors were psychologists who tended to give the question 'Who am I?' more importance than 'What is to be done?'.

Some progress had been made in France in recent years. There had in particular been a general improvement in standardising the quality of what was on offer. Quality control instruments

had been developed – making audit documents more easily understandable, selecting centres to conduct the procedure, and producing guidelines for counsellors.

In the ensuing discussion Gerhard Orth of the Austrian Ministry of Education expressed the opinion that the Internet was not a suitable substitute for counselling, though a useful source of information. Jean Guichard (F) argued that vocational counselling was often used simply to provide information. He was critical of teachers' counselling abilities. In his view they tended to judge pupils on the basis of school performance and found it difficult to see and advise them more holistically. Moreover, effective vocational counselling was time-consuming and costly. Paul Cotton (B) added that it was time to distinguish between measures and structures for vocational guidance and remedial measures for particularly disadvantaged groups. Finally Volker Köditz (D) suggested that vocational guidance should be anchored in all school and training curricula in a European programme similar to the Canadian project.

Phil Williams of Careers Europe (UK) pointed to important changes that had taken place in the United Kingdom. As things were developing there, the professional vocational counsellor was no longer the only source of career guidance. Young people still at school and the disadvantaged required more attention at an earlier stage than hitherto. All others could be provided with a great deal of information through the electronic media, with the counsellor becoming a kind of facilitator of 'vocational guidance activities'.

Vibeke Nørgaard (DK) argued that teachers were not keen to undertake career guidance counselling and were definitely averse to becoming involved in their pupils' domestic problems. Steffen Svendsen (DK) saw the role played by teachers as more complicated. We tended to lump together a variety of things under the heading of guidance counselling (counselling for the disabled as well as that for more fortunate young people). In Denmark counselling took place at two levels, that of the contact teacher – that is, a normal teacher with additional responsibilities – and that of the specialist vocational guidance counsellor.

Jacques Limoges (CND) added that institutions tended to justify their own existence. A number of schemes to enhance employability existed in Canada despite the very favourable employment situation there. In Canada, too, attempts to make schools responsible for career guidance often failed because of the teachers' unwillingness to undertake it.

In her closing remarks Laura Cassio, representing the European Commission, said that the personal qualities of counsellors were very important. Those of her mathematics teachers had certainly not been adequate. Moreover, many counsellors were out of touch with the real world.

15. Participants list

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The Agora X demonstrated that in a world characterised by constant change in the fields of technology and labour organisation, it is an illusion to seek a strict match between training and employment. As a consequence, the approach to guidance and the profession of information and guidance counsellor have completely changed. The traditional model – to find for each citizen the career best matching his/her capacities and preferences – is gradually giving way to a model of guidance which seeks to help individuals best adapt to the existing structures in the real world. People must now be able to seize any interesting job opportunity in a fluctuating and unforeseeable labour market.

In a society affirming the absolute need for lifelong learning individuals must learn to obtain guidance on an ongoing basis. This is changing the nature of guidance: it has become a fully-fledged educational act in which the vocational guidance counsellor has become both a trainer and a tutor, as was demonstrated by a number of case studies presented to the Agora.

AGORA X Social and vocational guidance

Thessaloniki, 19-20 October, 2000

PANORAMA



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