

New Perspectives for Learning

Insights from European Union funded Research on Education and Training

Issue Two
December 2001



Lifelong Learning Issue

This newsletter is the second in a series of occasional issues highlighting for policy and decision makers, some of the key conclusions and recommendations of projects conducted under the EU "Targeted Socio-Economic Research" (TSER) FP4 Programme and under the Key Action "Improving the Socio-economic Knowledge Base" of FP5.

Newsletter published by pjb Associates with funding from the European Commission DG for Research



ISSN 1475-6595

European research supports Lifelong Learning Initiative

The recently published communication from the European Commission on Lifelong Learning has called for additional research to support the development of this initiative. This is likely to be forthcoming under the new EU 6th Framework Programme which has an important objective to support the development of a European Knowledge society – with lifelong learning having an important role.

In addition, the new lifelong learning initiative "Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality" can call upon more than fifty-five completed and ongoing research projects that can provide valuable insights for the development of lifelong learning.

The "Targeted Socio-Economic Research" (TSER) Programme of the Fourth Framework Programme and the Key Action "Improving the Socio-Economic Knowledge Base" of the Fifth Framework Programme support European researchers in the social sciences and humanities including research on education and training issues. The EC Communication identified six "tools" or "areas of action" which can better integrate the various learning environments: -

- Building partnerships
- Learning requirements for the knowledge-based society
- Investment in learning
- Making learning more accessible
- Developing a culture of learning
- Quality assurance for learning

Research work has covered all these areas and provides some valuable insights and recommendations.

The EC Communication defines lifelong learning as: -

"all learning activity undertaken throughout life, with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competences within a personal, civic, social and/or employment-related perspective"

It considers that in the context of globalisation of our economies, demographic ageing in Europe and the arrival of the new information and communication technologies, it is essential for the European Union, that the people of Europe are in a position to acquire at any time in life new knowledge and skills. It is vital in economic terms in order for Europe to remain competitive and also to head off social exclusion.

This newsletter highlights some of the key features from completed research which will help policy and decision makers make lifelong learning a reality.

Coping with an Ageing Workforce

Recent research has made an important contribution to a better understanding of how the labour market and the working lives of people will need to adapt to an "ageing workforce" that will also have to cope with technological changes and an increasingly global economy. Demographic change will continue to drastically alter the structure of the workforce in coming decades across Europe. This will lead to a diminishing supply of labour, which could have an impact on productivity and competitiveness.

Continued on Back Page

Contents

| | |
|---|-----------|
| European research supports Lifelong Learning Initiative | 1 |
| <i>Building partnerships</i> | 2 |
| New Approaches to Work Experience | 3 |
| Encouraging Innovative Partnerships | 3 |
| <i>Learning requirements in the knowledge-based society</i> | 4 |
| Effectiveness of Computer-Supported Collaborative Learning Networks | 4 |
| Organisational Learning with Small and Medium Enterprises | 5 |
| Training the Long-term Unemployed | 6 |
| Helping Unemployed Youths into Work | 6 |
| Redefining Approaches to Labwork in Science | 7 |
| Improving Early Literacy | 7 |
| <i>Investment in Learning</i> | 8 |
| Investment in Schools | 8 |
| Reshuffling of Relationships between the State and Public Sector Education | 8 |
| Investing in Training for the Long-term Unemployed .. | 9 |
| Public Funding and Returns on Education | 9 |
| Integrated Funding Models for Lifelong Learning | 10 |
| <i>Making Learning more Accessible</i> | 11 |
| Innovations in Education and Training | 11 |
| University Access Policies for Adult Learners | 11 |
| Student Mobility in Europe | 13 |
| Immigration and Cross-Cultural Teacher Training | 14 |
| Training Needs of Small Businesses | 15 |
| <i>Developing a Culture of Learning</i> | 15 |
| Low Skills: A problem for Europe | 15 |
| Learning within Multi-cultural Environments | 16 |
| <i>Quality Assurance for Learning</i> | 17 |
| Assessment, Effectiveness and Innovation | 17 |
| Effective School Improvement | 17 |
| Measuring the Impact of Training on the Long-term Unemployed | 18 |
| Evaluation and Self-Evaluation in European Universities | 18 |
| Competence Evaluation and Training for Europe | 19 |
| <i>Other Features</i> | |
| Coping with an Ageing Workforce | 1 |
| Lifelong Learning: role of Human Resource Development within Organisations | 20 |
| Lifelong Learning: Implications for Universities | 21 |

ISSN 1475-6587
(Print version)

ISSN 1475-6595
(Online version)

More details at: <http://www.cordis.lu/improving/socio-economic/home.htm>
or for Briefing papers and an online discussion of the topics go to:-
<http://www.pjb.co.uk/npl/index.htm>

Building Partnerships

New Approaches to Work Experience

Work experience is all about partnerships between educational institutions, companies and students. However, the nature of work is changing due to the quickening pace of global scientific and technological innovation and the use of information and communication technologies. The scale and impact of global multinational activity and the process of industrial convergence have also exerted pressure for industrial, organisational and occupational change.

Distinctions between formal and informal contexts of learning are being challenged and innovative developments like "learning organisations" have emerged, all of which has an impact on the future role of work experience. Yet there is evidence that the true learning potential of work experience is not fully understood.

Some recently completed research has examined the purpose and assumptions

about learning, and the practice and outcomes of work experience in the light of changes in the European labour market and trends in workplace requirements and organisation. An intensive exploration of learning theory was undertaken and innovative approaches to work experience were analysed through a number of case studies.

It concluded that there is a poor relationship between policy and practice. There is a lack of clarity in relation to the aims and objectives of post-16 work experience and its delivery - in particular, a lack of clarity in relation to workplace supervision, mentoring and teaching, the availability and quality of placements.

There was also a lack of evidence in relation to learning gains and the role of employers.

The quality of relationships between employers and education needs improving and greater attention needs to be paid to the changing nature and modes of work.

Work experience should no longer be viewed as developing a technical competence in 'something' nor as providing an opportunity to use 'learning

outcomes' as though they capture in some way the authentic knowledge/skill developed by a young person in a specific situation. Increasingly, work experience should be viewed as a means of developing an involved sense of responsibility.

As workers are increasingly expected to act as 'boundary crossers' between "activity systems" - they need to possess the ability to contribute to the development of new forms of social practice and to produce new forms of knowledge. This entails learning how to contribute to the transformation of work contexts.

Finally, the research considered that work should not be solely a context which students learn *about*; it is a context *through which* students can learn and develop. This shift of focus can direct attention to how individuals learn, grow and develop through the strength and richness of their interactions and applications within and between different contexts.

"distinctions between formal and informal contexts of learning are being challenged"

"there is a poor relationship between policy and practice"

"work experience should be viewed as a means of developing an involved sense of responsibility"

"work is a context through which students can learn and develop"

Further information: -

Project Title: "Work Experience as an Education and Training Strategy New Approaches for the 21st Century" - February 2001.

Contact: Toni Griffiths, Director of Education and Professional Development, University College London, United Kingdom

Tel: +44 207 679 5939

Fax: +44 207 813 0277

Email: toni.griffiths@ucl.ac.uk

or get the Briefing Paper at: -
<http://www.pjb.co.uk/npl/bp3.htm>

Continued on Page 4

“need to develop a “connective” model of learning through work experience”

“granting more autonomy to higher education institutions for modification”

“fostering university-industry partnerships in critical scientific-health-industrial sectors”

Therefore, businesses, educational and vocational institutions should practically respond by using and developing a “connective” model of learning through work experience.

Encouraging Innovative Partnerships

Recommendations from other research call for the fostering of innovative networking and partnership arrangements by encouraging public institutions to support the setting up and running of innovative partnerships, and facilitating their medium and long-term sustainability.

It also considered that granting more autonomy to higher education institutions for modification of their internal structures and in particular fostering university-industry partnerships in critical scientific-health-industrial sectors is also a key need.

This research was aimed at deepening the understanding of educational innovations. It gathered empirical evidence of innovative education and learning arrangements and developed specific methodologies and guidelines for enhancing the design, implementation and evaluation of learning innovations. It has specially explored the issue of social disadvantage and exclusion, with a particular emphasis on exclusions from education and training.

Further information: -

Project Title: “Designing and Evaluating Learning Innovations and Learning Applications”

Contact: Dr. Joseph Cullen
Tavistock Institute of Human Relations, London, United Kingdom

Tel: +44 207 417 0407
Fax: +44 207 417 0567
Email: edru@tavinstitute.org

or get the Briefing Paper at: -
<http://www.pjb.co.uk/npl/bp7.htm>

Learning Requirements in the Knowledge-Based Society

Effectiveness of Computer-Supported Collaborative Learning Networks

Developments in information and communication technologies are starting to make it possible to use the tools for assisting the process of learning beyond the boundaries of the classroom. In addition, their use will start to prepare learners for participation in a networked, information society where knowledge is the most critical resource for personal, social and economical development.

School children and students increasingly need to acquire the individual and the group learning skills for use in learning societies and learning organisations. They need to acquire the skills that enable them to cope with an abundance of information in order to build knowledge and thus learn from the knowledge acquired.

Research has explored the effectiveness of computer-supported collaborative learning networks in creating a community of learners who use educational technology to build knowledge together through learning environments. Some key conclusions were reached:

- 1) Computer-supported collaborative learning requires teachers and students to adopt an educational philosophy that focuses on “knowledge building” rather than “knowledge reproduction” as the main learning activity.
- 2) This requires both teachers and students to believe in and trust a learning style that involves active, self-regulated, constructive and contextualised learning by groups of students more or less independently.

3) However, not every student or teacher is used to this way of learning and for many it was not easy to learn together with other students. In addition, it is not easy to integrate this new educational philosophy with existing philosophies in schools.

Further information: -

Project Title: "Computer-supported Collaborative Learning Networks in Primary and Secondary Education"

Contact: Prof. Robert-Jan Simons, (formerly of Katholieke Universiteit Nijmegen) now at Utrecht University, The Netherlands

Tel: +31 30 253 4099
Email: r.simons@ivlos.uu.nl

or get the Briefing Paper at: -
<http://www.pjb.co.uk/npl/bp31.htm>

Organisational Learning within Small and Medium Enterprises

Research into the organisational learning of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) has found that three main levels of organisational learning were identified which encapsulate varying combinations of formal and informal learning activities: -

Information gathering - The lower data monitoring, acquisition and management intended to ensure that an enterprise remains aware of changes and developments in the markets in which they operate.

Knowledge acquisition - A process where by enterprises define and acquire the skills, know-how and strategic intelligence necessary to carry out day-to-day activities.

Competence consolidation and development - A process where by existing information and knowledge is converted into learning through, for example, identifying skills deficits and acquiring new knowledge through training and collaboration.

A number of recommendations were made which focus on developing guidelines and practical tools to promote organisational learning in SMEs and SME clusters.

SMEs need carefully targeted "formal" and "informal" training and support networking strategies in the context of the various types of learning behaviours they exhibit and in line with the three main constituent components of 'organisational learning' - information gathering, knowledge acquisition, competence consolidation and development.

There is a need to raise awareness amongst SMEs of the need to balance these three different components of 'organisational learning' in their human resource development planning and management.

As a large proportion of SMEs are in 'crisis management' rather than pro-active learning situations they need to be encouraged to adopt a more participative style of collective learning. Support services need to be provided and resources pooled.

The lack of competencies in marketing and multi-job skills in small enterprises needs to be addressed as well as the lack of expertise in skills auditing. SME support organisations

Further information: -

Project Title: "Developing Learning Organisation models in SME Clusters"

Contact: Mrs. Ruggiera Sarcina, Fondazione Istituto Guglielmo Tagliacarne per la Promozione della Cultura Economica, Roma, Italy

Tel: +39 6 78052330
Fax: +39 6 78052346
Email: r.sarcina@tagliacarne.it

or get the Briefing Paper at: -
<http://www.pjb.co.uk/npl/bp19.htm>

and regional development agencies need to address this by developing a 'skills evaluation culture'.

"SMEs need carefully targeted formal and informal training and support networking strategies"

"a large proportion of SMEs are in crisis management"

"need to develop a skills evaluation culture"

Continued on Page 6

Continued from Page 5

A European Skills Accreditation System should be established to homogenise the features and needs of SMEs and local clusters should be encouraged to act as the “hub” of the European Accreditation System.

SMEs should be encouraged to promote the value of capturing on the job experience; to promote competence standards for their local cluster and contribute towards the accreditation of informal competence development.

Training the Long-term Unemployed

Bringing the long-term unemployed back into employment through training is an ongoing policy of many governments. However, little is known on the effectiveness of labour market oriented training for the long-term unemployed. In order to get a better understanding at the micro-economic level, some research has addressed the question of what works and what does not work in terms of the training the long-term unemployed. It has looked at the organisational, curricular and instructional characteristics of training programmes - that might make one type of training programme more effective compared to another training programme.

The research recommended that a greater understanding is needed of the type of

Further information: -

Project Title: “The effectiveness of labour market oriented training for the long-term unemployed”

Contact: Dr. Jittie Brandsma,
Universiteit Twente,
The Netherlands

Tel: +31 53 489 20 93
Fax: +31 53 489 37 91
Email: t.f.brandsma@edte.utwente.nl

or get the Briefing Paper at: -
<http://www.pjb.co.uk/npl/bp12.htm>

training that is needed to bring the least qualified up to the level of skills required for entry to the labour market.

Therefore, more understanding is needed of the size and structure of the group of the least qualified with respect to the reasons why they have become unemployed. This may be due to major economic restructuring as a result of decline in particular economic sectors or due to obsolescence of skills. It could be due to an overall lack of education and training or insufficient quality of the education and training received.

Such differentiations could be helpful in setting out training strategies and designing particular training programmes.

Helping Unemployed Youths into Work

Some insights into employment choices of unemployed 18-25 year olds can be gained from research, which has explored the limitations, and opportunities resulting from policy in education, training and guidance programmes.

Further information: -

Project Title: “Enhancing the participation of young adults in economic and social processes: Balancing instrumental, social and biographical competencies in post-school education and training”

Contact: Dr. Danny Wildemeersch,
Katholieke Universiteit Leuven,
Belgium

Tel: +32 16 326205
Fax: +32 16 326211
Email:
danny.wildemeersch@ped.kuleuven.ac.be

or get the Briefing Paper at: -
<http://www.pjb.co.uk/npl/bp14.htm>

The research concluded that current professional intervention focuses on “adapting” low qualified young adults to the

“promote the value of capturing on the job experience”

“little is known on the effectiveness of labour market oriented training for the long-term unemployed”

“more understanding is needed of the size and structure of the group of least qualified with respect to the reasons why they have become unemployed”

needs and demands of the labour market, rather than allowing them to participate in identifying their training needs.

It also suggested that performance indicators and target pressures also force professionals to stick to traditional methods of education, training and guidance. This removes the possibility of professionals being able to work intuitively.

One recommendation from the research is to offer some freedom for education, training and guidance professionals to explore the possibilities and difficulties of working in an interpretive way.

There should also be an exchange of know-how and experience between professionals on both organisational and inter-organisational levels. This know-how should also be made explicit and refined, and translated into flexible 'guidelines' that are continuously reviewed.

Redefining Approaches to Labwork in Science

The scientific skills that can be acquired through scientific labwork are becoming increasingly important in a knowledge-based society. However, some research has concluded that a positive attitude towards science is rarely promoted, with labwork

generally failing to address important scientific questions like how to design an experiment; choose the relevant method to process data and recognise the validity of results.

It recommended that labwork should address a broader range of learning objectives than the range currently addressed. In particular, labwork rarely addresses epistemological objectives and teachers rarely make these objectives explicit when designing labwork activities, sequences of labwork or labwork sheets. Similarly, conceptual objectives, procedures to be learnt, data collection and processing are generally left implicit in the design of labwork.

Improving Early Literacy

Throughout the European Union, literacy is seen as a pressing concern. Success and failure in literacy teaching carry implications for the economic and social well being of the Union. The most important phase of literacy learning is arguably that which takes place during, or even before the first years of formal schooling.

Some interesting work has come from a thematic network that was established to share information on innovative developments in early literacy teaching and learning. Particular emphasis was placed on the development of literacy for children from marginalized groups. It aimed to develop innovative teaching practices to increase literacy levels for children aged 4-6 years old.

Further information: -

Project Title: "Improving Science Education: issues and research on innovative empirical and computer-based approaches to labwork in Europe"

Contact: Prof. M-G. Séré,
Université de Paris-Sud XI, Orsay,
France

Tel: +33 1 69 41 67 07
Fax: +33 1 64 46 33 25
Email:
marie-geneviève.sere@didasco.u-
psud.fr

or get the Briefing Paper at: -
<http://www.pjb.co.uk/npl/bp4.htm>

Further information: -

Project Title: "Early literacy teaching and learning: innovative practice in four different national contexts, a thematic network"

Contact: Prof. Henrietta Dombey,
University of Brighton, UK

Tel: +44 1273 643403
Fax: +44 1273 643453
Email: h.dombey@brighton.ac.uk

or get the Briefing Paper at: -
<http://www.pjb.co.uk/npl/bp11.htm>

"labwork should address a broader range of learning objectives"

"success and failure in literacy teaching carry implications for the economic and social well being"

"most important phase of literacy learning before the first years of formal schooling"

Investment in Learning

Investment in Schools

Comparative analysis from an economic perspective offers some insights into investment in schools. Generally, all schooling systems are subject to market forces i.e. as the school population increases more resources are put into the system. However the way in which resources are allocated within schools is as important as differences in resourcing levels across schools or school districts.

A low pupil-teacher ratio significantly increases the unit cost of education, as does early streaming and decentralisation. Since a higher pupil-teacher ratio compensates for the increased cost of streaming, differentiated education systems allow more crowded classrooms in order to maintain the unit cost of education at the same level as that in non-differentiated systems.

Higher resources in the form of early streaming or a lower pupil-teacher ratio do raise the unit costs of education but also seem to increase the academic attainment of pupils.

Further information: -

Project Title: "Schooling, Training and Transitions: An Economic Perspective"

Contact: Prof. Catherine Sofer
Université de Paris 1- Panthéon-Sorbonne, Paris, France

Tel: +33 1 44 07 82 56
Fax: +33 1 44 07 82 47
Email:
catherine.sofer@univ-paris1.fr

or get the Briefing Paper at: -
<http://www.pjb.co.uk/npl/bp18.htm>

There was some evidence to suggest that since ability can be detected earlier than talents, it is not optimal to make an intensive use of differentiation by cognitive ability too early at the lower secondary level.

There seems to be a trade-off between differentiation in schools and selection at university entry level. The use of selection at university is reduced essentially by the amount of differentiation at the upper secondary level, the quality of secondary education, and the typical duration of study in universities.

Reshuffling of Relationships between the State and Public Sector Higher Education

Arguably, higher education is one of the sectors where this 'reshuffling' or redistribution of existing resources has been most extreme and most successful.

The transformation of national higher education systems is on the political agenda in every country in Europe. The higher education sector is being urged to 'modernise', 'adapt', 'diversify', 'marketise', and is expected to become 'entrepreneurial', 'competitive', more 'efficient' and more 'effective', more 'service oriented', and more 'societally relevant'.

It also has to improve the 'quality of its processes and products', its 'relationship with the labour-market', and the 'governance and management' of its institutions, the universities and colleges. It is generally acknowledged that this transformation can only be successful if the traditional steering relationship between state authorities and higher education institutions is changed dramatically.

Recommendations from research findings in this area consider that governments should acknowledge that the role of politics is to design, adapt, and monitor the 'framework' conditions within which higher education operates in order to ensure that policy processes are more effective. It also considers that appropriate higher education professionals should be deliberately involved in policy making.

"a low pupil-teacher ratio significantly increases the unit cost of education"

"a higher pupil-teacher ratio compensates for the increased cost of streaming"

"a trade-off between differentiation in schools and selection at university entry level"

Higher education institutions should be expected to operate autonomously in implementing policies and realising goals within the agreed framework. Politics should not interfere in the detailed operation of higher education institutions.

However, governments should develop more effective monitoring structures for evaluating and analysing the ways in which higher education policies are handled in practice. An independent, de-politicised European higher education policy monitor should also be established to provide data for future research on higher education. And, further comparative and longitudinal research should be conducted on issues relating to change processes in higher education.

Further information: -

Project Title: "Governmental Policies and Programmes for Strengthening the Relationship between Higher Education Institutions and the Economy"

Contact: Dr. Peter Maassen
Universiteit Twente, Enschede
The Netherlands

Tel: +31 53 4893263 or
+31 6 53779390
Fax: +31 53 4340392
Email: p.a.m.maassen@cheps.utwente.nl

or get the Briefing Paper at: -
<http://www.pjb.co.uk/npl/bp6.htm>

Investing in Training for the Long-term Unemployed

Research has found that there is a dilemma to be faced in designing labour market measures for the long-term unemployed. If labour market measures intend to promote the re-entry of long-term unemployed in gainful employment - with the prospect of employment in the long run and even the prospect of continuing training in the context of employment - the initial investment needed for training these unemployed will be substantial.

At the same time the least qualified long-term unemployed are often confronted with multiple problems and do not necessarily give priority to training. Therefore, further research is needed into the macro effects of training and what investment in training from an economic point of view is a good investment.

Further information: -

Project Title: "The effectiveness of labour market oriented training for the long-term unemployed"

Contact: Dr. Jittie Brandsma,
Universiteit Twente,
The Netherlands

Tel: +31 53 489 20 93
Fax: +31 53 489 37 91
Email: t.f.brandsma@edte.utwente.nl

or get the Briefing Paper at: -
<http://www.pjb.co.uk/npl/bp12.htm>

Public Funding and Returns on Education

Research into public funding and individual returns on educational investment has identified that there are considerable variations across Europe.

Countries can be classified into three groups - those with a low average return on education like the Scandinavian countries and the Netherlands; those with a high return on education like Ireland and the UK and those in-between these two extremes.

The research also found that there are no signs of a convergence of returns on education across the European countries. Some countries show a downward trend in rates of return, others are characterised by an upward trend, while still others display no time trend whatsoever. The trend can differ for men and women within a single country.

In the future this may result in higher mobility across national borders, particularly of highly educated people trying to exploit these cross-country differences in the rewarding of individual investment in education. The rapid

"least qualified long-term unemployed are often confronted with multiple problems"

"individual returns on educational investment - considerable variations across Europe"

"highly educated people trying to exploit these cross-country differences"

Continued on Page 10

“information technologies aid the possibility of working and living in separate countries”

“investing in the education of individuals raises their productivity in working life”

“interventions are needed along the “learning gap”

Continued from Page 9

expansion of the use of information technologies could be expected to boost such a development, since the possibility of working and living in separate countries becomes a reality.

However, the evidence suggests that investing in the education of individuals raises their productivity in working life, and thus contributes to productivity and output growth in the economy. This strengthening of the national economy justifies governmental involvement in the production and financing of education.

Further information: -

Project Title: “Public Funding and Private Returns To Education. A Cross-Country Policy-Oriented Perspective on Private Benefits of Education”

Contact: Dr. Rita Asplund, The Research Institute of the Finnish Economy, Helsinki, Finland

Tel: +358 9 609900
Fax: +358 9 601753
Email:rita.asplund@etla.fi

or get the Briefing Paper at: -
<http://www.pjb.co.uk/npl/bp29.htm>

Further information: -

Project Title: “Further Training Funds as an Impulse for New Models of Lifelong Learning - Integrated Funding Concepts”

Contact: Rolf-Joachim Heger, SPI ServiceGesellschaft mbH, Berlin, Germany

Tel: +49 30 695 705 0
Fax: +49 30 69818355
Email:rolf.heger@spisg.de

or get the Briefing Paper at: -
<http://www.pjb.co.uk/npl/bp23.htm>

Integrated Funding Models for Lifelong Learning

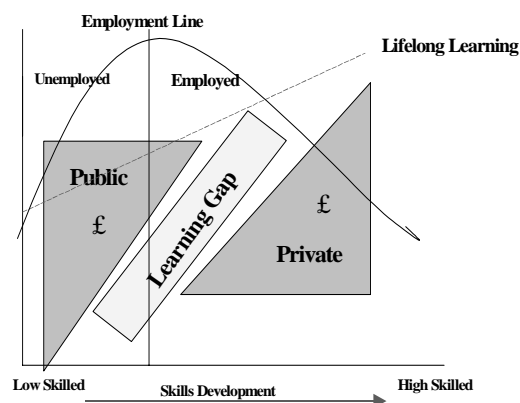
A thematic network of European researchers has considered the need to develop a new financing concept for funding vocational qualifications at a national level. They have identified ways of integrating existing patterns of funding with forms of lifelong learning in order to develop new concepts. This has involved a thorough stocktaking of the financing models and instruments for vocational training and further education in the various national contexts.

As a result of this work a model for lifelong learning (right) was developed that represents a number of the competing interests that have

to be reconciled if a culture of lifelong learning is to be created and sustained within any economic system. These competing interests may be social, individual or economic. For lifelong learning to be a reality the two triangles need to be brought closer together so individuals can move seamlessly along the hypothetical lifelong learning line.

Thus interventions are needed along the “learning gap” in order to close it. This requires investment from all parties, employers, individuals and government. If the needs of the excluded are not incorporated and integrated with the needs of employers and the economy then there will continue to be a segmented learning market within which opportunities and rewards will not be available to all.

A Model of Lifelong Learning



Making Learning more Accessible

Innovations in Education and Training

Making learning more accessible involves stimulating innovation in education and training. Research has been conducted to help deepen the understanding of educational innovations. It has gathered empirical evidence of innovative education and learning arrangements and developed specific methodologies and guidelines for enhancing the design, implementation and evaluation of learning innovations.

Recommendations aimed at increasing accessibility in the higher education sector include networking public centres like museums and libraries and facilitating easy access to such resources for home-based students. There is also a need to develop new territorial multimedia resource centres as student meeting places and self-access resources.

Specific policy recommendations related to social disadvantage and the provision of training for unemployed and disadvantaged groups suggest improving the position of organisations and community centres providing training and other services to the unemployed and disadvantaged within the

Further information: -

Project Title: "Looking at Innovations in Education and Training."

Contact: Dr. Joseph Cullen
Tavistock Institute of Human Relations, London, United Kingdom

Tel: +44 207 417 0407
Fax: +44 207 417 0567
Email: edru@tavinstitute.org

or get the Briefing Paper at: -
<http://www.pjb.co.uk/npl/bp7.htm>

tendering processes by increasing the representation and involvement of small providers for the disadvantaged in decision-making structures and bodies.

It was also suggested to induce work through the provision of worthwhile quality training by combining current Labour Market Supply Efficiency & Labour Market Performance Indicators with new Labour Market Indicators such as Job Gaps Indicators and Wages Gap Indicators.

There is a need to replace 'job-inducing' training schemes with quality training programmes and improve the funding and monitoring of training initiatives for the unemployed and disadvantaged by setting up a funding framework, which provides both stability and efficiency using both quantitative and qualitative measures as indicators of performance.

University Access Policies for Adult Learners

If Europe is to compete economically on a global scale a wider range of people need to be given opportunities to access knowledge at university level. Fortunately there are signs that European universities are responding to these social and economic changes. Expansion has generally been the pattern in many European universities moving the system as a whole to one of mass higher education. However, wider access to higher education is not an automatic outcome of this expansion. The widening access debate is concerned with who gets in and who is left out.

Recently completed research has focused on the effectiveness of access policies and practices for adults in universities and higher education institutions across the European Union. Particular attention was paid to socially excluded groups and communities and identifies barriers to the participation of the excluded.

It was found that access to university lifelong learning is not equal across Europe and ranged from being virtually impossible in Spain to being relatively open in the United Kingdom. This inequality was also present

"replace 'job-inducing' training schemes with quality training programmes"

"wider access to higher education is not an automatic outcome of this expansion"

"access to university lifelong learning is not equal across Europe"

Continued on Page 11

Continued from Page 11

within individual countries. Some institutions, particularly the new Universities formed from former Polytechnics, are more open than traditional elite Universities. It was also found that non-traditional students preferred social sciences and humanities rather than the sciences reflecting both departmental attitudes and the student choice factor.

The research acknowledges that participation, or not, of non-traditional adult students in higher education is a complex issue. Factors such as national policies, institutional policies and practices, and student experiences interact to produce this complexity.

For many non-traditional adult students returning to learn in higher education is a risk. At entry many participants found the university campus daunting, not only because of the size and impersonal systems but also because of their lack of self-confidence as learners. These concerns are prevalent especially during the first few weeks and some non-traditional students contemplated leaving due the challenges of adopting the student role, familiarising themselves with academic language and an underlying concern about the demands of working at degree level.

Induction days for mature students such as those offered by many UK institutions proved to be a life saver for these students who felt that they would not have had the courage to enter campus on the first day of term if they had not undergone induction. The research highlights the need for a range of such support structures such as a common room for adult students, supporting written materials to help them with the transition from non-learner to undergraduate student in addition to a well-developed induction programme.

Many students also felt that more contact time with personal and course tutors was needed. Assessment was also a concern to many, although attitudes were contradictory. Many students stated that they preferred assigned essays to examinations as the latter reminded them of school and made them feel nervous but they also felt that assigned essays were time-consuming.

Not surprisingly financial issues, such as course fees, student loans or having to cope on benefits, made study a major risk for many students especially as there is no guarantee of obtaining employment at the end of study. However despite the difficulties, such as finance and finding time to study, the majority of students enjoyed learning as they felt it empowered them. Many non-traditional students said that they experienced personal change, were more informed by knowledge and viewed the world in a different way. Others hoped that their engagement in learning would encourage their children to study.

The research identified a number of policy recommendations at European, national and institutional level. There is clearly a wide variety of non-traditional students differentiated by age, gender, ethnicity and mode of study and this needs to be a recognised by policy-makers. Different institutional and curriculum structures are required to take account of the differing needs. This might include offering programmes taught in both the daytime and evening for full and part-time students and classes within the school day for others.

It is desirable for non-traditional students to be integrated with mainstream younger students although this may have far reaching implications for institutions such as the need to change the timing of classes across the

Further information: -

Project Title: "University Adult Access Policies and Practices Across the European Union; and their Consequences for the Participation of non-traditional Adults" - June 2001

Contact: Prof. Etienne Bourgeois, University of Louvain, Belgium

Tel: (direct line) +32 1 0473799
(secretary) +32 10 47 8280
Fax: +32 1 0478589
Email: etienne.bourgeois@psp.ucl.ac.be

or get the Briefing Paper at: -
<http://www.pjb.co.uk/npl/bp8.htm>

"for many non-traditional adult students returning to learn in higher education - is a risk"

"at entry many participants found the university campus daunting"

"more contact time with personal and course tutors needed"

whole institution to enable attendance. Institutions also need to consider the development of improved support systems like tutor contact and study skill support as well as provide more feedback regarding students' work. At the heart of many of these issues is the need for training and staff development for university staff to raise awareness of the learning needs of non-traditional students and to highlight best practice.

Attention to treatment at the point of entry is also a concern. The research identifies a need for more flexible systems at both the point of entry and during the course. For example, entrance examinations are a major barrier. Greater use of access qualifications and use of Accreditation of Prior Experience and Learning (APEL) and Accreditation of Prior Learning (APL) would enhance access across all member states. Entry can also be facilitated by improved links between higher education institutions and other adult education providers that promote routes for progression and mechanisms to aid transition.

There are also a number of recommendations relating to other factors such as finance and childcare. The funding of non-traditional students is patchy at the moment and the research suggests that funds should be available to facilitate the participation of all age groups so that there is no upper age limit as currently exists in some countries. Crèche and/or nursery provision is also a key enabler for many non-traditional students and should be made available free of charge or at subsidised rates. There is a role here for employers to support their employees who participate in higher education. This support could be in a number of forms such as financial assistance or time off to study.

As there were difficulties obtaining reliable EU wide data, it was recommended that ways should be found towards a more common European framework for collecting institutional and national data on students. It is also suggested that there is a need for a more integrated European wide policy framework that recognises the importance, value, and economic and social gains for the EU of access, participation and social inclusion. There needs to be investment in the form of grants and subsidies to enable improved policy and practice.

There is scope for a great deal of further research in related areas such the tracking of non-traditional students after leaving university, the identification of successful models of learning and teaching for non-traditional students, the impact of financial policies and issues and their implications for student success and failure, University, Departmental and lecturer attitudes towards non-traditional students, and the relationship between lifelong learning and social capital.

Student Mobility in Europe

Student mobility and accompanying academic recognition are assumed to be necessary prerequisites for an open and dynamic European educational area that will aid European integration and labour market mobility. However, for students to be mobile they have to have access to higher education and the financial resources to enable them to study abroad.

One research project has made a number of recommendations for overcoming the barriers that were identified with language, finance and recognition of qualifications and admissions procedures.

Further information: -

Project Title: "Higher education admissions and student mobility within the EU"

Contact: Dr. Anne West
London School of Economics and
Political Science, London, UK

Tel: +44 207 955 7269
Fax: +44 207 955 7733
Email: a.west@lse.ac.uk

or get the Briefing Paper at: -
<http://www.pjb.co.uk/npl/bp2.htm>

"need to research the relationship between lifelong learning and social capital"

"for students to be mobile they need access to financial resources to enable them to study abroad"

“education is strategically important for integrating foreign newcomers into the society of their new residence”

Immigration and Cross-Cultural Teacher Training

One aspect of removing obstacles to learning is to ensure that teachers are trained to deal with the multicultural competencies required to function effectively in culturally diverse environments. During the 1990s many countries of Europe experienced voluntary and involuntary inward migration that has resulted in pressures and raised issues concerning integration and educational policies for immigrants. Research has looked in detail why education is strategically important for integrating foreign newcomers into the society of their new residence.

Further information: -

Project Title: “Immigration as a Challenge for Settlement Policies and Education: Evaluation Studies for Cross-Cultural Teacher Training”

Contact: Dr. Pirkko Pitkänen,
University of Joensuu, Finland

Tel: +358-13-2513343
Fax: +358-13-2515275
Email: pirkko.pitkanen@joensuu.fi

or get the Briefing Paper at: -
<http://www.pjb.co.uk/npl/bp1.htm>

Integrating Immigrant Children into Europe

Research has found that - the school system is failing immigrant minors and minors of immigrant origin in a variety of areas: -

Enrolment - minors are assessed in the host countries language, not their mother tongue. This can lead to children being placed in classes below their age group, which dramatically hinders their development.

Choice of schools – they have a tendency to choose vocational or technical schools, over high schools. This has resulted in a very high concentration of immigrant minors and minors

of immigrant origin in certain schools, which are often in underprivileged neighbourhoods and have bad reputations.

Drop out and expulsion rates – they have higher rates than native students.

Discrimination - immigrant minors struggle with the language demanded by the school, and minors of immigrant origin have difficulties in the acquisition of cultural skills that are demanded by the school.

Results - they have lower results than the native population. This difference increases as students advance through the years.

Careers Advice - they have limited job prospects their background affects their choice of a course of study (i.e. Belgian advisory services encourage immigrant minors towards technical and vocational sectors regardless of their results). Immigrant families also translate their perception of the prospects for integration as adults, on to their children, which directly influences minors' attitudes to their life and career prospects.

Higher Education - significantly less choose higher education than the native population.

Further information: -

Project Title: “Child Immigration Project” - February 2001

Contact: Dr. Carla Collicelli,
Censis - Fondazione Centro Studi
Investimenti Sociali, Roma, Italy

Tel: +39 6 860911
Fax: +39 6 86211367
Email: c.collicelli@censis.it

or get the Briefing Paper at: -
<http://www.pjb.co.uk/npl/bp17.htm>

“school system is failing immigrant minors and minors of immigrant origin”

Training Needs of Small Businesses

Recently completed research has found that small and medium enterprises (SMEs) find training courses are too broad in scope and are failing to meet their specialised needs. This issue is especially important for new employees with a need for specific technical knowledge/skills. Unfortunately, universities and training centres do not always meet the training needs for new skills and knowledge derived from innovative processes and the increasing need for multiple skills.

Training not only serves the need to acquire new skills/knowledge, but it also a means of widening their network of market specialists.

The involvement of universities and research centres can help to create, store and disseminate knowledge, while SMEs can also bring flexibility, market orientation and creativity to foster innovation. In fact some entrepreneurs with low technical skills use their network of colleagues and university faculty to evaluate company risk.

SMEs also acquire innovative ideas through trade fairs.

Although financial assistance and consulting services provided by the public service are important, SMEs still have difficulty utilising this knowledge to meet client and market needs.

Further information: -

Project Title: "Small Business Training and Competitiveness: Building Case Studies in Different European Cultural Contexts"

Contact: Prof. Alfons Sauquet, Escuela Superior de Administración y Dirección de Empresas, Barcelona, Spain

Tel: +34 93 280 61 62
Fax: +34 93 204 81 05
Email: sauquet@esade.es

or get the Briefing Paper at: -
<http://www.pjb.co.uk/npl/bp26.htm>

Developing a Culture of Learning

Low Skills: A Problem for Europe

Once good reason for developing a culture of learning is the relentless fall in the demand for low-skilled labour, which is a matter of serious concern for European society. Since the beginning of the 1990's the gap between the earnings of high skilled and low skilled workers has widened and in many countries the unemployment rate for people without qualifications is four times higher than for university graduates.

Some insight into the reasons for the changing situation of the low-skilled on the labour market can be gleaned from research that has investigated the extent and reasons why employers' demand for the low-skilled was falling. It has explored the factors affecting the supply of skills, particularly low-skilled adults in the workforce and focused on the low-skilled individuals who have left full-time education after the completion of their period of compulsory education.

The research found that despite a sharp decline in the supply of low-skilled individuals on the labour market, their labour market situation has deteriorated over the last decade, as the supply of low-skilled individuals continues to exceed demand at current labour costs.

Demand for those with low skills has declined as a result of technical change, which requires more advanced skill levels. Although demand for those with low-skills will continue, it will only be in certain sectors of the economy and demand will vary from country to country but largely as a function of relative labour costs.

The employment sectors in which the low-skilled groups are concentrated are either

"fall in the demand for low-skilled labour of serious concern for European society"

"gap between the earnings of high skilled and low skilled workers has widened"

"supply of low-skilled individuals continues to exceed demand at current labour costs"

Continued on Page 16

Continued from Page 15

contracting or not expanding low-skilled employment relative to other skill groups. In most European countries it will take at least a decade to reduce the low-skills group at current rates of progress.

Employers claim that unskilled jobs now require better communication and social skills, and that many low-skilled individuals lack these skills.

The research found that employers do get a high return on investment in work-based training, but incentives for the low-skilled group to participate in workplace training are insufficient.

It was also found that poorly qualified individuals receive less training than the more highly qualified. Older individuals receive less training than the young. And low-skilled individuals are more reluctant to participate in employer-provided training than higher skilled individuals.

There was a call for innovative incentives and support to encourage those already in the labour market to develop their skills to a minimum level. One example of this is Individual Learning Accounts as in the UK.

Wage subsidies for older low-skilled workers who are soon to reach retirement age may be necessary to counteract labour market exclusion.

There are recommendations for the establishment of a 'minimum learning platform' which would set an agreed level of knowledge, skills, and personal qualities that all individuals would be entitled to and expected to acquire.

Each European country should produce its own policies for a 'minimum learning platform', which would address the specific country's problems and challenges with their low-skilled group and their labour market.

However, a minimum platform should be informed by a set of values that individuals in all countries can share by virtue of their European citizenship i.e. respect for human rights, the rule of law and democratic decision making. It is also suggested that a new balance needs to be established in education between formalised knowledge and personal and social skills.

Learning within Multi-cultural Environments

Developing a culture of learning also involves having an understanding of the multi-cultural dimension in which learning can often take place.

From research findings it is considered that efforts need to be made to develop teacher training that can provide students with cognitive powers, attitudes and operative competencies required to function effectively in multi-cultural environments.

"will take at least a decade to reduce the low-skills group at current rates of progress"

"poorly qualified individuals receive less training than the more highly qualified"

"low-skilled individuals are more reluctant to participate in employer-provided training than higher skilled individuals"

Further information: -

Project Title: "Education and Training New Job Skill Needs and the Low-Skilled"

Contact: Dr. Hilary Steedman,
London School of Economics and
Political Science, London, UK

Tel: +44 207 955 7789
Fax: +44 207 955 6971
Email: h.steedman@lse.ac.uk

or get the Briefing Paper at: -
<http://www.pjb.co.uk/npl/bp13.htm>

Further information: -

Project Title: "Immigration as a
Challenge for Settlement Policies
and Education: Evaluation Studies
for Cross-Cultural Teacher
Training"

Contact: Dr. Pirkko Pitkänen
University of Joensuu, Finland

Tel: +358-13-2513343
Fax: +358-13-2515275
Email: pirkko.pitkanen@joensuu.fi

or get the Briefing Paper at: -
<http://www.pjb.co.uk/npl/bp1.htm>

Quality Assurance for Learning

Assessment, Effectiveness and Innovation

During the mid 1990's there were calls like that of the European Roundtable of Industrialists who stated: -

"It has become a matter of urgency to set up a European Education Information and Monitoring System in order to record experience, evaluate results and improve the quality of education on a European level."

One result of this call was the establishment of the "European Network for Education Research on Assessment Effectiveness and Innovation". Although no longer in existence, it did carry out international comparative research in education in the domain of achievement, assessment, effectiveness and innovation within Europe. It asked questions about the micro-, meso - and macro-level

Further information: -

Project Title: "European Network for Education Research on Assessment Effectiveness and Innovation"

Research Database:
<http://www.to.utwente.nl/prj/euaei/index.htm>

Contact: Dr. Willem J. Pelgrum,
Universiteit Twente, Enschede
The Netherlands

Tel: +31 53 89 35 93
Fax: +31 53 31 50 99
Email: pelgrum@edte.utwente.nl

or get the Briefing Paper at: -
<http://www.pjb.co.uk/npl/bp9.htm>

conditions that enhance educational performance and about the potential for educational change and innovation.

This resulted in an inventory of national education assessment databases and a conceptual framework with a basic categorisation for accessing the statistical overview, the assessment data sets and published results. 136 comparative statistics of primary and lower secondary schools for the EU-countries, Japan and the USA were also collected and can be found in their research database.

Effective School Improvement

Effective school improvement is high on the agenda of most countries' educational policies. However, theory and research associated with this have tended to come from the paradigms of "school effectiveness" and "school improvement" which have grown apart over the years in terms of their methodology and focus.

School effectiveness is strongly focusing on student outcomes and the characteristics of schools and classrooms that are associated with these outcomes without automatically looking at the processes that are needed to

Further information: -

Project Title: "Capacity for Change and Adaptation of Schools in the Case of Effective School Improvement" (July 2001)

Contact: Prof. Bert Creemers
Rijksuniversiteit Groningen,
The Netherlands

Tel: +31 50 3636635
Fax: +31 50 3636670
Email: b.p.m.creemers@ppsw.rug.nl

or get the Briefing Paper at: -
<http://www.pjb.co.uk/npl/bp27.htm>

bring changes. School improvement is mainly concerned about changing the quality of teachers and schools without automatically looking at the consequences for student

"136 comparative statistics of primary and lower secondary schools"

"school effectiveness is strongly focusing on student outcomes"

"school improvement is mainly concerned about changing the quality of teachers and schools"

Continued on Page 18

“creation of a “comprehensive framework” for effective school improvement”

outcomes. In short, school effectiveness is trying to find out *what* is to be changed in schools in order for them to become more effective while school improvement is trying to find out *how* schools can change in order to improve.

Recently completed research work has aimed to create stronger links between these two ways of thinking by the creation of a “comprehensive framework” for effective school improvement that helps to explain why improvement efforts succeed or fail and which factors promote or hinder effective school improvement.

The key outcome was the Effective School Improvement (ESI) framework based on the theoretical and practical analysis of school improvement projects. The school is put at the centre of this framework that can be used by: -

- a) *Practitioners* - for designing, planning and implementation of school improvement.
- b) *Researchers* - for further research in the field of effective school improvement.
- c) *Policy makers* - as it helps to clarify which factors must be taken into consideration in the planning of improvement processes in schools. However they must be aware that the framework can never be used as a recipe for effective school improvement or as a ready-made toolbox for the implementation of improvement in schools.

Measuring the impact of training the long-term unemployed

Research has found that vocational education and training, and certainly (continuing) vocational training for either the unemployed or employed people, differs substantially between countries. Attempting to classify training activities and training measures in order to establish comparable data is a very difficult undertaking. Some countries do have a clear record or register of what training is provided and by which organisations. Other countries do not know the total population of training schemes and initiatives or can only “construct” a population overview with great difficulties.

Therefore improvements are required in order to better identify the various training initiatives for long-term unemployed in some European countries. This will also require reaching a consensus in national definitions of unemployment particularly relating to being unemployed and taking a training course as a result of being unemployed.

Further information: -

Project Title: “The effectiveness of labour market oriented training for the long-term unemployed”

Contact: Dr. Jittie Brandsma,
Universiteit Twente,
The Netherlands

Tel: +31 53 489 20 93
Fax: +31 53 489 37 91
Email: t.f.brandsma@edte.utwente.nl

or get the Briefing Paper at: -
<http://www.pjb.co.uk/npl/bp12.htm>

Evaluation and Self-Evaluation in European Universities

In relation to evaluation in European universities, research has looked at how evaluation systems of core activities of teaching and learning have been implemented and how universities have reacted to them. Results suggest that - given the different types of universities - a single mode of evaluation is insufficient to meet the diverse needs of institutions.

A new model of evaluation, therefore, needs to be developed to deal with this complexity. Such a model should recognise a range of local, national, and international factors affecting each university and take account of the specific university environment including the university’s objectives and history. To be effective, the model should also ensure that it recognises the links between all university activities.

Research also points to a need to improve “objective and results” based evaluation tools, as there is a trend to link funding to objectives and results through internal contractualisation between universities and

“but framework can never be used as a recipe for effective school improvement or as a ready-made toolbox for the implementation of improvement in schools”

“vocational education and training differs substantially between countries”

Further information: -

Project Title: "Evaluation and Self-Evaluation of Universities in Europe"

Contact: Dr. Pierre Dubois,
Université de Paris X, Nanterre
France

Tel: +33 1 40977133

Fax: +33 1 40977135

Email: pierre.dubois@u-paris10.fr

or get the Briefing Paper at: -
<http://www.pjb.co.uk/npl/bp5.htm>

government and within university organisational units that can generate new modes of funding.

It was suggested that ways should be found to improve the "quality assurance procedures and methods" of administrative and support services as most innovative practices relate to the quality of services delivered to users (teachers, students, and external agencies).

There is also a need to develop a new model of evaluation that is pluralistic (recognises a range of local, national, and intentional factors), contextual (takes into account the specific university environment), dynamic (takes account of the university objectives and history) and integral (makes use of links between all university activities).

Competence Evaluation and Training for Europe

One of its objectives of the European Union White Paper on Education and Training was to create a European Skills Accreditation System. It aimed to set up permanent and accessible skill accreditation mechanisms that will allow individuals to validate their knowledge however it has been acquired, on the basis of standardised frameworks of competencies, using personal 'smart cards' (credit-card like skills cards).

Some useful research contributing to this discussion has concluded that the levels of labour mobility within the European Union have historically been consistently low.

In-migration to the EU from 'external' countries has consistently run at a far higher level than inter-EU migration and migration and labour mobility is inherently 'localised' in nature.

Therefore it considers that there is no evidence that these patterns will change dramatically over the foreseeable future and that the mass diffusion of smartcard technologies will precipitate dramatic changes to these patterns.

However, tools based on Internet-based technologies and interactive knowledge bases might be used for the utilisation of a "skills audit" for an individual, a company or a local area. A toolkit was developed to assist in the carrying out of such an audit.

"a "skills audit" for an individual, a company or a local area"

Further information: -

Project Title: "Competence Evaluation and Training in Europe"

Contact: Dr. Joseph Cullen
Tavistock Institute of Human Relations, London, United Kingdom

Tel: +44 207 417 0407

Fax: +44 207 417 0567

Email: edru@tavinstitute.org

or get the Briefing Paper at: -
<http://www.pjb.co.uk/npl/bp25.htm>

"levels of labour mobility within the European Union have historically been consistently low"

"In-migration to the EU from 'external' countries has consistently run at a far higher level than inter-EU migration"

"migration and labour mobility is inherently 'localised' in nature"

Lifelong Learning: role of Human Resource Development within Organisations

“learning society - resulting in a new focus on employee learning”

“managers fulfil a key role in changing HRD practices”

“HRD functions should be recognised by top management and seen as an investment rather than a cost”

Lifelong learning is becoming an important issue for Europe, as it develops into a “learning society”. This is resulting in a new focus on employee learning which, is changing the role of the Human Resource Development (HRD) function and creating many uncertainties for HRD professionals.

Research has concluded that the “learning organisation” is an important metaphor for HRD professionals to assist them in developing collective intelligence within organisations and organisational forms supporting such a need - thus eliminating the holding of knowledge in separate compartments at different levels. It was also useful to help understanding of the importance of knowledge and in particular tacit knowledge, which is embedded within human resources.

This metaphor is helpful when moving from training-based development policies towards new policies fostering learning in different ways like support for competence development, learning networks and learning self-assessment in the communities of practice.

It was considered that the envisioned role of HRD professionals within learning organisations is to support the business, support informal learning, support knowledge sharing as a special form of supporting informal learning as well as develop and coordinate training and change HRD practices.

Although HRD professionals, consider that this is still their main responsibility, managers and employees are important active partners in supporting learning, and are expected to become more so in the future. Their role is predominantly one of identifying learning needs, stimulating and supporting informal learning, ensuring the continuous

learning of themselves and others. HRD professionals will continue to provide support like organising training and supporting informal learning efforts.

However, it was found that HRD practices to some extent appear to fall behind HRD visions. Innovative HRD practices, dominated by new methods such as knowledge management networks and a stimulating learning climate in the workplace were not often observed.

Although managers fulfil a key role in changing HRD practices, it was found that it is sometimes difficult to get them to fulfil this active role, either because of their workload, lack of affinity with HRD tasks or a lack of skills in this field.

Therefore in the short term, it is necessary to find strategies to involve managers in HRD, by changing their views on learning and increasing their motivation to support learning. In the long run, consideration should be given to incorporating HRD skills in all management training programmes.

In addition the HRD functions should be more precisely defined and recognised by top management as a major part of the global development strategy of the company and seen as an investment rather than a cost.

Further information: -

Project Title: “The Role of HRD Within Organizations in Creating Opportunities for Life-Long Learning: Concepts and Practices in Seven European Countries”

Contact: Saskia Tjepkema,
Universiteit Twente, Enschede,
The Netherlands

Tel: +31 348 690303
Fax: +31 53 489 37 91
Email: tjepkema@edte.utwente.nl

or get the Briefing Paper at: -
<http://www.pjb.co.uk/npl/bp22.htm>

Lifelong Learning: Implications for Universities

Although often cited in policy statements lifelong learning is a rather nebulous concept, where hardly any detailed research has been conducted, especially concerning the involvement of the universities in its provision. Some research has started addressing this issue by studying the understanding of the concept and how it is implemented in universities in several European countries.

As no universal definition of lifelong learning exists the following was adopted: -

“Those novel forms of teaching and learning that equip students (learners, individuals) to encounter with competence and confidence, the full range of working, learning and life experiences”.

The research found that lifelong learning addresses three fundamental objectives of education - personal development, social cohesion and economic growth. The term “lifelong learning” is often used as a synonym with adult education, permanent education and/or continuing education. In France, Germany and Spain, for instance, “permanent” or “continuing education” is used instead of lifelong learning. In some cases, lifelong learning is seen primarily as entailing distinct forms of provision for distinct groups of people. In others, it is more integrated in the totality of higher education.

Generally, universities seem open and well disposed to lifelong learning but its provision on a very wide scale would entail a revolution in university education of which there are no signs. The take-up of lifelong learning policies varies between countries. This is partly due to differing constitutional, policy-making and administrative traditions, and how far higher education has been incorporated into an institutional and legal framework.

Lifelong learning is still seen as a marginal activity in many universities but there is an awareness of the need for its development amongst academic staff and there are embryonic or developed structures for its provision.

To encourage the development of lifelong learning, some universities have created central co-ordinating offices and vice-rector roles that include lifelong learning amongst their responsibilities. Lifelong learning policies also need to be defined within mission statements and university plans. Reward systems for those developing and operating lifelong learning practises need reviewing to ensure continuous developments in this field.

At national level central authorities need to clarify policies and funding allocations for lifelong learning. Minimum criteria and training needs for a commonly recognised accreditation system should also be established, along with common admissions criteria and regulations to guarantee quality.

There should also be clearer distinctions between the lifelong learning functions of higher education and the functions of further education in order to dispel uncertainty about the extent to which university specialist resources are used in the provision of training.

Further information: -

Project Title: “Lifelong Learning: the implications for the universities in the EU” March 2001

Contact: Prof. Nikos Kokosalakis,
Panteios University of Social and
Political Sciences, Athens,
Greece

Tel: +30 1 9237925
Fax: +30 1 9238290
Email: nkokosa@panteion.gr

or get the Briefing Paper at: -
<http://www.pjb.co.uk/npl/bp20.htm>

“lifelong learning is a rather nebulous concept”

“lifelong learning - is often used as a synonym with adult education, permanent education and/or continuing education”

“lifelong learning on a very wide scale would entail a revolution in university education”

These are ongoing projects which have been funded under the Key Action “*Improving the Socio-economic Knowledge Base*” of the Fifth Framework Programme. Further details can be found at: - <http://www.pjb.co.uk/npl/ongoing.htm>

Project title

Education & Training for Governance & Active Citizenship in Europe: Analysis of Adult Learning & Design of Formal, Non-Formal & Informal Educational Intervention Strategies

Gender and Qualification. Transcending gendered features of key qualifications for improving options for career choice and enhancing human resource potential

The Education of the Gypsy Childhood in Europe

Ways of Organisational Learning in the Chemical Industry and their Impact on Vocational Education and Training

Children In Communication About Migration

The role of language in mobilisation processes

Students as “Journeyman” between communities of Higher Education and Work

Youth Policy and Participation. The role of participation and informal learning in the transition of young people to the labour market. A comparative analysis in 10 European regions

Employment and Women’s Studies: The Impact of Women’s Studies Training on Women’s Employment in Europe

Legal Framework of New Governance and Modern Policy in Education throughout Europe

European Network on Human Mobility

Participation in Continuing Vocational education and training: a need for a sustainable employability

Towards the European Society: challenges for education and training policies arising from the European integration and enlargement

Higher education reform network: a collaborative partnership to explore, disseminate and advise on the university of tomorrow in relation to societal change and lifelong learning needs and in the context of European enlargement

Continued from Page 24

Successful work-based learning and training interventions involving older workers have the potential to improve motivation for learning, self-confidence, organisational commitment, and the social climate in groups with mixed ages.

Specific recommendations for European and national policies include: -

- 1) A need to raise awareness of the value of older workers in working life by highlighting the strengths in older workers’ job competences.
- 2) Educational initiatives should be developed that create and strengthen learning opportunities and support both older workers and genuine lifelong learning. European and national educational policies for lifelong learning must support provision for the upgrading of basic skills.

3) Continuing efforts are needed to reverse the lowering of retirement age and to improve the labour market position of older workers like “age-management” in companies.

4) More effort and more positive attitudes are needed towards the training of older workers.

5) The benefits of “inter-generational communication” and co-operation towards increasing productivity should be highlighted and incorporated into national policies. However, there is a need to be aware that this increases the risk and expenditure for small business. National policies should aim to lower this expenditure or extend the horizons for return.

6) Greater attention must be paid to synergies between personal interests in work, leisure and training when developing policies to support flexible arrangements between work and retirement. For example, the personal interests of employees in late career could be used as a point for personal development and for updating work skills.

“need to raise awareness of the value of older workers in working life”

This is a list of education and training projects funded under the EU “*Targeted Socio-Economic Research*” (TSER) 4th Framework Programme. Most of the projects are now completed. Briefing Papers obtainable from <http://www.pjb.co.uk/npl/index.htm>

Briefing Paper

Project

- 4 Improving Science Education: Issues and Research on Innovative Empirical and Computer-Based approaches to Labwork in Europe
- 11 Early Literacy Teaching and Learning: Innovative Practice in Four Different National Contexts, Athematic Network
- 12 Crivet Unemployed. The effectiveness of Labour Market Oriented Training for the Long Term Unemployed
- 5 Evaluation and Self-Evaluation of Universities in Europe
- 32 Teacher Training, Reflective Theories and Teleguidance: Prospectives and Possibilities in Teacher Training in Europe
- 13 Education and Training, New Job Skills Needs and the Low-Skilled
- 19 Developing Learning Organization Models in SME Clusters
- 9 European Network for Educational Research on Assessment Effectiveness and Innovation
- 7 Designing and Evaluating Learning Innovations and Learning Applications
- 15 European Child Care and Education Study
- 18 Schooling, training and transitions: an economic perspective
- 30 In-company training and learning in organisations
- 21 Working Life Changes and Training of Older Workers
- 31 Computer-supported Collaborative Learning in Primary and Secondary Education
- 6 Governmental Policies and Programmes for Strengthening the Relationship between Higher Education Institutions and the National Economy
- 16 A Comparative Analysis of Transitions from Education to Work in Europe
- 33 Science Teacher Training in an Information Society
- 8 University Adult Access Policies and Practices Across the European Union and Their Consequences for the Participation of Non-Traditional Adults
- 24 Forum of European Research in Vocational Education & Training
- 10 Higher Education and Graduate Employment in Europe
- 17 Child Immigration Project
- 3 Work Experience as an Education and Training Strategy New Approaches for the 21st Century
- 22 The Role of HRD within Organizations in Creating Opportunities for Life-long Learning: Concepts and Practices in Seven European Countries
- 27 Capacity for Change and Adaptation of Schools in the Case of Effective School Improvement
- 35 Education Governance and Social Integration and Exclusion in Europe
- 34 Implementation of Virtual Environments in Training and Education
- 25 Competence Evaluation and Training for Europe
- 36 Educational Expansion and Labour Market
- 2 Higher Education Admissions and Student Mobility in the EU
- 14 Enhancing the participation of young adults in economic and social processes: balancing instrumental, biographical and social competencies in post-school education and training
- 28 New Assessment Tools for Cross-Curricular Competencies in the Domain of Problem Solving
- 20 Lifelong Learning: the implications for universities in the EU
- 29 Public Funding and Private Returns to Education
- 1 Immigration as a Challenge for Settlement Policies and Education: Evaluation Studies for Cross-Cultural Teacher Training
- 26 Small Business Training and Competitiveness Building Case Studies in Different European Cultural Contexts
- 23 Further Training Funds as an Impulse for New Models Of Lifelong Learning : Integrated Funding Concepts
- 37 Labour Demand, Education and the Dynamics of Social Exclusion

“education and training systems are going to need to adjust to these changes”

“longer working lives”

“older workers often have a ‘mentoring’ role in the SMEs”

“awareness of SMEs as learning organisations relatively low”

Continued from Page 1

During the 1990s, the trend was for older workers to be excluded from the labour market. Increasingly there will be a need to reverse this trend in order to cope with these demographic changes. Education and training systems are going to need to adjust to these changes in order to ensure that all workers including older workers have the necessary competences to meet these new demands, in perhaps, their longer working lives - thus the growing importance of lifelong learning.

The research covered 27 small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in England, Finland and Norway and looked at the learning of older (45+) workers. It addressed the maintenance, development and utilisation of their job-related competences - knowledge, skills, learning, values, and attitudes. In particular it focused on the individual and organisational effects, needs and opportunities arising from the ageing of populations and changes in working life.

A number of key conclusions were reached. The job competence of older workers was generally highly valued by managers and employees and age as such was not a contributing factor to any competence deficiencies.

Although, there is no systematic monitoring or documenting of older workers' competences, experienced workers were acknowledged and often had a “mentoring” role in the SMEs. In fact work experience and personal characteristics were valued as more important contributors to job-competence than formal training.

Changes in working life and workplaces do challenge the learning of older workers but workload and time pressures reduced their opportunities for learning. In some cases older workers adopted an adjusting rather than participating strategy amidst these changes.

The assessment of learning attitudes, skills, or motivation, showed no relationship to age

except in regard to memory and speed. New technology was the biggest learning challenge to all employees, with some older workers managing well, whilst with others it resulted in their departure. Practice-based learning was preferred, though in some cases

the need for more general theoretical issues was raised by some workers.

Learning in the workplace is a highly social and a collegially shared activity but rarely systematically focused upon or organised. Older workers do participate in informal and non-formal training but are less inclined to participate in formal training, especially in industry.

Competence development of younger workers was more visible and systematic (e.g. mentoring), whereas older workers were viewed more as contributors and ‘teachers’ as opposed to being in need of learning and development, with the exception of information technology.

Awareness of SMEs as learning organisations and what that might mean in one's own company was relatively low with

“diminishing supply of labour could have impact on productivity and competitiveness”

Further information: -

Project Title: “Working Life Changes and Training of Older Workers”

Contact: Dr. Tarja Tikkanen, VOX – The Norwegian Institute for Adult Education, Trondheim, Norway

Tel: +47 73 99 08 40

Fax: + 47 73 99 08 50

Email: tarja.tikkanen@vox.no

or get the Briefing Paper at: -
<http://www.pjb.co.uk/npl/bp21.htm>

both management and employees. However, it was observed that a transition process may be taking place as a SME moves from a traditional, stable organisation towards a more dynamic, responsive learning organisation.

Continued on Page 22