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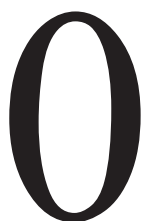
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MONOGRAPHIC SECTION

Monográfico

*Vocational Education and Training.  
An International Perspective*

*Formación Profesional. Una Perspectiva Internacional*



*Research landscapes in Vocational  
Education and Training (VET).  
National enquiries and cross-  
national concerns. An introduction*

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*Panorama de la investigación en formación  
profesional. Indagaciones nacionales y preocupaciones  
transnacionales. Una introducción*

By guest editor:

**Lázaro Moreno Herrera\***

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## 1. An introduction

This special issue attempts to present in a concise way the variety of research problems, theoretical frameworks and methodological paths within research in Vocational Education and Training (VET). A complex endeavor given the nature and diversity of the research conducted in this field. Contributors are scholars doing research within VET in contexts with contrasting cultural and socio-economic characteristics.

In an article entitled *Vocational Education & Training at a Crossroad. New times, new challenges and `new` responses?* (Moreno Herrera, 2016) I highlighted the increased awareness, within and beyond the European socio-economic space, about the importance of VET as a key to sustainable development of society, social cohesion, employability and individual personal fulfillment. Indicating this relevance the *EFA (Education For All) Global Monitoring Report of 2012* focused on the third goal of Education For All, that is to ensure that all young people have the opportunity to acquire skills. According to the report the urgency of reaching this goal has sharpened acutely since 2000 as a consequence of a global economic downturn impacting on unemployment.

“One young person in eight across the world is looking for work. Youth populations are large and growing. The wellbeing and prosperity of young people depend more than ever on the skills that education and training can provide. Failing to meet this need is a waste of human potential and economic power. Youth skills have never been so vital.” (Bokova, 2012, p. i)

The *Global Monitoring Report* is a valuable reminder that education is not only about making sure all children can attend school, but also about setting young people up for life, by giving them opportunities to find decent work, earn a living, contribute to their communities and societies, and fulfill their potential. At the wider level, it is about helping countries nurture the workforce they need to grow in the global economy.

According to the scholars in VET field Felix Rauner and Rupert Maclean (2008, p. 13) the variety of research questions and development tasks at the levels of vocational education and training systems (macro level), the organization and design of vocational training programs and institutions (meso level) and the analysis and shaping of education and learning processes (micro level) leads to the integration of different scientific disciplines and research traditions. Research within this field can therefore be organized only in an Interdisciplinary way, notably through the participation of disciplines like psychology, industrial sociology, sociology of work, sociology of education, organization theory, natural sciences, engineering, pedagogy and economics.

Rauner and Maclean (2008, p.13) stress the challenges for research by arguing that although the call for interdisciplinary in the study of complex research fields and topics is repeatedly stressed from a scientific and political perspective, the practical realization of interdisciplinary turns out to be difficult. From this perspective, however, it is constitutive for research in this field to treat its research subject as an original one and to provide a subject-adequate foundation of the research methods.

Since the beginning of the 1970s the practice of VET research has taken shape and increasingly been organized as an international scientific community. The European research network Vocational Education and Training Research Network (VETNET), which was established in 1997, as well as the international network of UNESCO- UNEVOC centres are an expression of this development (Rauner & Maclean, 2008, p. 14).

I argue in the mentioned article (Moreno Herrera, 2016) that for the case of Sweden the discussions about best ways to develop Vocational Education & Training in Sweden are diverse. Articles in this special issue shows that for other national education contexts the situation is not different. There is learning to draw from different international models of VET; learning however should be done without simplistic imitation or copying. One of the emergent issues in international comparative studies of VET systems that are valuable to consider is the relevance of a social dialog, understood as implication of different stakeholders. I did stress in the article that arguably social dialogue, one of the pillars of the European social model, has contributed to the development of Vocational Education and Training policies since the founding of the EEC, with the social partners making proposals and agreeing action through joint opinions as well as contributing to the development of legally-binding measures. A question that we share with different educational systems internationally is how VET should prepare for future developments in the labor market. The development of the demand for qualifications are fundamental questions for VET planning; “on the one hand the issue is about qualifications that meet the current needs, on the other hand vocational qualification has to be organized in such a way as to ensure transferability with regard to new demands that could emerge” (Westerhuis, 2011, p. 103, cited in Moreno Herrera, 2016)

I argued then (Moreno Herrera, 2016) and would like to highlight also in the context of this special issue that still a key issue to deal with is what actually can be regarded as fundamental knowledge and skills for different occupations? Is this a question of various elementary practical activities and skills, or an issue of fundamental professional knowledge that facilitates transitions? We are then talking of new context in the development of society where professional practice requires both the so-called technical skills and well as the soft skills, for example skills to cooperate, synergize and intercultural competences. A VET that will best suit to the new times and guarantee employability needs to secure that in the learning process in different context, be it the school or the workshop, the development of practical profession-related skills, will go hand in hand with theoretical reflection and social skills. Articles in this special issue illustrate well the diversity of the research that is needed to meet the new demands and challenges in relation to these needs.

Comparative studies in the VET field could make a considerable contribution to learn from each other in order to meet goals of an education for all and secure youth employment. At research level more comparative cross-national studies in the field of VET are needed. It is equally important that comparative analysis do not stay just as information for researchers and policy makers but far beyond it is more relevant that outcomes of these studies reaches practitioners (e.g. schools teachers, supervisors) We are in need of learning from each other not only amongst researchers working in the field but equally relevant at the vocational school levels. This will not only allow us to understand common problems but also sharing more efficient ways of organizing learning process in classroom and workshops.

We hope that this special issue with an international perspective on research in VET will be a modest but yet valuable contribution to learning together across borders!

## 2. References

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## *Exploring agency, learning and identity in women's life trajectories in United Kingdom and Italy*

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*Exploración de la agencia, el aprendizaje y la identidad en las trayectorias de vida de las mujeres en el Reino Unido e Italia*

**Karen Evans\* and Chiara Biasin\*\***

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## **Abstract**

The ways in which women aged 50, in two different cultural contexts (United Kingdom and Italy), narrate and portray turning points in their life course illuminate the relationships between identity, learning and agency that develop through work, family and life experiences. For the UK sample, the data sources are 31 semi-structured interviews, including drawings representing the life course, selected from the national longitudinal study "Social Participation and Identity" deposited in the UK Archives Data. For the Italian sample, the data sources are 28 semi-structured interviews and drawings, based on the same selected items of the UK interviews and provided by women living in the North-East of Italy. A qualitative comparative approach is used in analysing the data. This study shows how women's representations of their life course and of turning points in their lives reveal different propensities to reflect and learn from their own lives. The comparative perspective considers these life sources as situated in their cultural, relational and social contexts and reveals variations in ways these women are enabled or restricted in moving their lives forward.

*Key Words:* Agency; Adult Learning; Identity; Life Trajectories; Women's Trajectories

## **Resumen**

Las formas en que las mujeres de 50 años, en dos contextos culturales diferentes (Reino Unido e Italia), narran y representan momentos decisivos en su vida, ilustran las relaciones entre la identidad, el aprendizaje y la agencia que se desarrollan a través del trabajo, la familia y las experiencias de vida. Para la muestra del Reino Unido, las fuentes de datos han sido 31 entrevistas semiestructuradas, incluyendo dibujos que representan el curso de la vida, seleccionados del estudio longitudinal nacional "Participación Social e Identidad" depositado en los Archivos de Datos del Reino Unido. Para la muestra italiana, las fuentes de datos han sido 28 entrevistas semi-estructuradas y dibujos, basados en los mismos elementos seleccionados de las entrevistas en el Reino Unido y proporcionados por mujeres que viven en el noreste de Italia. Se utiliza un enfoque comparativo cualitativo para analizar los datos. Este estudio muestra cómo las representaciones de las mujeres de su curso de la vida y de los puntos de inflexión en sus vidas revelan diversas propensiones a reflejar ya aprender de sus propias vidas. La perspectiva comparativa considera a estas fuentes de vida como situadas en sus contextos culturales, relacionales y sociales y revela variaciones en las formas en que estas mujeres son habilitadas o restringidas en mover sus vidas hacia delante.

*Palabras clave:* Agencia; Aprendizaje de Adultos; Identidad; Trayectoria de Vida; Trayectorias de Mujeres



## 1. Introduction

Transitions and turning-points in youth and in adult life are markers of diversification for the life course, opening up new opportunities as well as challenges. Longitudinal and comparative research studies have started to uncover how changing demands are negotiated in adult life and in contrasting socio-economic landscapes (Field *et al.*, 2009; Evans, Weale and Schoon, 2013). The need for improved understandings of biographical negotiation in adult life connects directly to questions of how adult learning might be enhanced. In this article we consider women's life trajectories and, in particular, what the processes that involve the exercise of agency and learning mean for identity development in mid-life, in the contrasting cultural contexts of the United Kingdom and Italy.

Comparative perspectives can give some sense of the social regularities in adults' perspectives and how these relate to their socio-economic context and past experiences. Agency in adult life, understood as the capacity "to exercise control over one's functioning and over environmental events" (Bandura, 2001, p. 11) operates through meso-level engagements in and through the social world, the environments, and institutional practices of everyday life in changing social, landscapes (Elder, 1994).

Research into the ways in which life-chances are shaped by structures of opportunity and risk has been increasingly influenced by theories of reflexive modernization. Reflexive modernization refers to a condition in which the growth of knowledge "forces decisions and opens up contexts for action". It is assumed that individuals are released from the chains of social structures, and that they must "re-define their context for action under conditions of constructed insecurity" (Beck, 1998, p.85). Learning in adult life is held to provide avenues for people to improve their life chances actively by taking control of their lives' building capabilities, changing direction and overcoming setbacks (Aspin, Chapman, Evans & Bagnall, 2012).

This article examines the ways in which women aged 50, in two cultural contexts narrate and portray turning points in their life course, giving particular attention to the relationships between identity, agency and learning. Women's accounts of their lives represent their identifications and dimensions of self as well as their motivations, beliefs and attitudes towards learning and their own capabilities to achieve in and through learning (Kirpal, 2011), through work and in life experiences. Orientations towards work and career, similarly, comprise complex sets of motivations, beliefs and attitudes rooted in actual life experiences and social structuring of the life course. Their orientations can also change according to specific experiences of success or failure, opportunities or setbacks at any stage. We consider theories of life course (Heinz, 2001) and, in particular, approaches with relevance to the study of women at the age of fifty, assumed as an age of specific transitions in the life course (Sugarman, 1986; Stewart *et al.*, 2001). The idea of agency as the ability to give direction to one's life is pervasive in the economic and social sciences and in humanities, yet frameworks for understanding human agency are dispersed. A comprehensive understanding of human agency and the multiple influences on the acting individual begins with recognition that the life course is profoundly affected by macroeconomic conditions, institutional structures, social background, gender, and ethnicity, as well as acquired attributes and individual resources such as ability, motivation, and aspirations.

For the concept of agency to be further elaborated in ways that inform research, practice and policy we also need deeper insights into the agency involved in taking action, how these agentic beliefs are developed, what drives them and how they are related to dispositions of people to act in particular ways. According to Evans (2002; 2007; 2009) and Biesta *et al.* (2011), agency is a bounded and reflexive process that gives direction to life and is exercised through, rather than in, different environments. Also, biographical learning perspectives (Tedder and Biesta, 2007; 2008; Goodson, 2013) show how narrative-in-action enables the research participants to negotiate and to make claims about different life events and about life course. The life experiences and women's representations of them also reflect cultural norms and expectations about the adult life course, particularly with respect to gender roles and relationships. The expression of bounded agency in a life course perspective is a temporal process. Biographically produced positions are present in decisions and action-taking in the contingencies of the present moment. This temporally embedded agency can be individual or collective. Past experiences as well as possible futures can be reflectively reformulated and re-imagined. Bounded agency, as previous comparative studies by Evans have shown, also expresses itself in the social landscape through the dynamics of multiple, interlocking socio-biographical journeys in a social terrain. This relational and temporal approach makes a conceptual advance in connecting changing social conditions and individual lives. It goes beyond the core assumption of the life course paradigm in which developmental processes and outcomes are shaped by the life trajectories that are reflective of their time, by examining the multiple flows of influence that are always relational, sometimes reciprocal and may be mutually reinforcing or limiting. The development that takes place through the exercise of human agency is not that of the self-propelled autonomous individual but, rather, relational, historically embedded and biographically produced. What binds us also contains affordances that enable us to think, feel and act.

## **2. Research And Methods**

Comparative studies can be broadly divided into two categories —micro, and macro—. In this inquiry, micro-level analysis has sought to explain phenomena in terms of the expressions of agency embedded in individual women's reflections on experiences and turning points in their lives. This micro-level comparative analysis has a macro-causal dimension (Ragin 2008) as the macro becomes visible in different ways through the lens of the micro: the micro examples of biographical negotiation are more than examples of macro forces in action. They contain manifestations of gender regimes in action.

The methodology is designed to explore the narrative and symbolic representations of the participants' life course. We aim to understand implicit meaning embedded in the narratives and sketches (Mattingly 2007) Our goal is to show the relationship between agency, learning and identity, and to explore the cultural roles and expectations reflected in women's mid-life representations in the two countries considered.

The first data source is the set of 220 interviews conducted with respondents in England, Scotland and Wales at the age of 50, from the "Social Participation and Identity" project deposited in the UK Data Archives From this study, which is part of the wider longitudinal research National Child Development Study investigating the biographies of people born in one specific week on 1958, we have chosen the female sub-sample of 110

semi-standardized interviews, covering five main topics: neighbourhood and belonging, cultural participation, friendship and family, life stories and identities. Respondents were asked also to choose, from eight life course diagram, the drawing best picturing their life trajectories or to sketch their own representation. We have focused on the last two main topics of the interview, and we have selected the 31 interviews in which women have drawn a diagram representing their life course.

The second data source is a set of 28 interviews, based on the same items of the UK interviews, and correspondent 28 life course drawings provided by Italian women of fifty years old, living in the North East of Italy, in the Veneto shire, an area with important cities like Venice, Padua, Treviso and Vicenza.

Using a comparative approach (Fairbrother, 2014), in this article we compare eight narratives and drawings, by four Italian women and by four British women. The cases are not selected for representativeness but according to the predispositions of the women to share their stories and have a personal engagement in the narrative interview process. As Barrett (2006) notes, narrativists working intensively with small numbers of cases usually select carefully on the basis of rapport and personal engagement in the process as qualities that are of greater importance than strict representativeness. Women selected for this analysis from the wider UK NDCS interview sample are those who prefer to draw their own representation rather than select from 'given' examples. The Italian sample consists of women who have already shown their willingness to participate in sharing their stories, with their own drawn representations. Diagrams and visual representations are, in general, powerful tools in the research process. Visual data add new dimensions to data narratives. Differently from the linguistic system, diagrams provide an alternative way to explore the object of the study, reducing potential biases. Graphics and images can be considered sources of data in themselves because they go beyond representation to allow investigation of an object, with a generative potential in sense-making (Buckley and Waring, 2013). The relationship between concepts and images improves the theoretical complexity of the data, avoiding reductionism or simplification. In the NDCS data, diagrams have afforded an additional way to elicit data and were used in the original interview process to encourage narratives. Respondents have discussed their diagrams with the interviewer during the interview process. In the cases selected here, the transcripts show that respondents often talked as they drew their sketch, with the drawing process itself facilitating the telling of their stories. In analysis, the diagrams have also offered summary representations of respondents' life trajectories that supported a reflective and dialogical approach to data (Elliott, 2012, p.291).

A range of backgrounds, including different socio-economic and occupational status and years of schooling are represented in the composition of the sample. In this article, four pairs of cases, British and Italian, are selected to exemplify different types of patterns that emerge from our analysis. An emic perspective (Bray, Adamson, Mason, 2007) is thus implicit in this selection of the smaller set of eight cases for deeper analysis and comparative exploration. The qualitative methodological approach is based on thematic, linguistic and narrative analysis of the transcriptions, using Nvivo. An adaptation of the framework of Tedder and Biesta (2007; 2008) guides the analysis using the categories of the Narrative Learning framework as: Plot; Key events; Narrative character; Core identity; Self-definition; Position of self; Scripts; Genres, archetypes; Reflection. This common frame facilitates the comparative analysis of the two samples. The validity of the results is constantly verified by a continuous process of discussion and by a comparative analysis

conducted by the two authors (UK and Italian) both separately and together. According to Cortazzi and Jin (2007), the focus is on how the analysis represents the participant's voice and ensuring the analysis is appropriate to what the teller means. When the story is related to a socio-cultural context not shared by the teller, the relationship between the teller, the story, the audience and the researcher is not so evident. The close cross-cultural collaboration of researchers in this study has enabled this problem to be better overcome.

Correspondences between narrative and comparative research facilitate the analysis of the tellers' stories and the elicitation of the meaning in them by the researchers. Narrative research and the qualitative tradition in comparative research share commitments to reflection on individual cases and relationships between them in ways that are alert to their situatedness in place and time (Barrett (2006, p.113)). The aim in comparing British and Italian women's stories is to show how women in mid-life represent and evaluate their lives, providing meaning and considering key events of their life course. The comparison allows an elicitation of the meanings embedded in narratives and in sketches. Research questions are: How do the women's representations of the life course reflect the relationship between agency, identity and learning in UK and in Italy? To what extent do representations of the life course of women who have grown up and lived their lives in Italy suggest shared features or differences from those of the women in the UK NCDS sample? To what extent do these shared and contrasting features help to explain the intertwining of identity, agency and learning with cultural norms and expectations in the two countries?

### **3. Findings: peaks, troughs and turning points in the life course**

British and Italian diagrams show a variety of features and images used by women to express their life course: a curve, a spiral, a ladder, steps, waves. Some diagrams reveal significantly similar trends. For example, one English woman (n.18UK) represents her life course as a broken line and makes a sketch in which the ups and downs are very pronounced. The amplitude and the increasing depth of the upward and downward movements signal important changes in the most recent part of the life course. This woman, who is a nurse at the time of the interview, represents herself as an isolated child; one of the downs of her life was the death of the father during her final exams in university. Other important key events coupled to the ups and downs of her life are becoming a Christian Church member, having a baby (a *killer milestone*), her mother's death, with her faith contributing to the overall shape: "I would say my life journey is very much interacted with my faith, if it hadn't got a faith on it: it would be a different shape all together [...] if you could say, probably that's a Christian journey".

The Italian diagram (n.6IT) illustrates a similar trend, emphasising two deep troughs located at six years ("a very sad infancy... when my sister born I was having to be a baby sitter") and at the age of 45 ("problems with my partner and with job"). This woman marks her specific ages at key points in the life line: the age at which she has obtained a university degree and the age at which she became the mother of one child. She declares that her mother was the most important person of her life, the basis where she builds and shapes her life.

Another example comes from two sketches where the comparison between the Italian and UK cases seems, at first sight, to show remarkable correspondences. In the first case (n.58UK), the British woman depicts her life course as a heart monitor, explaining in the interview the association between life and heart. She reflects on the idea of the crisis as a moment of renewal strictly tied to important key events of her life: childhood, marriage, the end of marriage. This woman reveals a great awareness of herself: “But, hmmm, probably a key point this year would be just turning 50 and, hmmm, and where my life goes to next. I’m probably--, for the first time I’m probably in control of that, not necessarily of the people. You know, I’ve been a wife, a mother, a friend, a worker, a lover and now it’s like time for me really”. Her sketch insists on equivalence between her life and her heart as a result from a “horrific childhood”, a husband “with demons of his childhood inside him”, a higher degree, two babies, a job as nurse, and an important illness overcome.

The Italian woman (n.5IT) offers a very similar sketch to the UK case n.58, using the same image of a heart line. This woman with a university degree has two babies from two different partners from whom she is separated, after she moved to another city. She defines herself as a solitary person, who spends her life day by day, without projects, passive and a disbeliever because of illness: “I’m a fatalist, open to all is new [...] I live in present”. In the drawing, two arrows indicate positive moments without crisis or life events that are troubling or upsetting. The two sketches present the same turning points (marriage, academic degree, two children, illness, end of marriage) but the meanings of crisis or absence of crisis were interpreted in different way in the narratives and were marked in the sketches: in the UK heart line, the woman marks the troughs between the peaks as positive periods for calm and renewal, while in the Italian one the troughs represented the negative moments of the crisis.

These visual correspondences emphasize that parallels cannot be assumed in the stories; the parallels can be drawn only in relation to the related pictorial synthesis of the life course. The drawings are not symbolic representations of identity but visual descriptions of the life lived and synthetized by a graphic line. In these particular cases, participants did not use time and events as hooks on which to hang the life shape. The decision to sketch does not necessarily indicate the decision to produce a suitable composition of the personal trend of life or a real internalisation or awareness of the personal trajectories. So, we can assume that the drawings are descriptions not representations of the life course and they do not necessarily imply agency.

In the wider — Italian plus UK — sample, a recurrent series of key events emerge from analysis using Nvivo, revealing eight key influences that shapes the life course.

1. To have/lose a baby
2. To go to/leave school
3. To have a faith
4. To have good/not good relationships with parents and family
5. To have good/not good personal/ family health
6. To have/change/lose job
7. To have/separate from partner
8. To have/have not a social/cultural life

With a limited number of milestones, different “life palettes” are composed. These eight elements are markers used to describe the life curriculum rather than hints applied

to understand or interpret it. All of the women in the samples from the two countries realize that key events are often associated with life turning points; nevertheless, this observation is not directly associated to the awareness of what these events mean or imply. The remark often appears superficial and not embedded in the shaping of identity. However, narratives help British and Italian women to reflect on their life history by giving, through the acts of drawing and talking, a possibility to order their thinking in the process of composing the stories. All those key influences recur throughout the narratives, but there are some differences in emphasis that the comparative approach best reveals.

In UK cases, the key influences are significant for the impetus they give for a change in direction in some kind. For example, family figures have a role both positive than negative; usually the relationship with the father is referred to as more complicated and awkward than the relationship with the mother, which is frequently split between supportive and competitive. Also, to have/change/lose a job and to have/separate from a partner are present and widely narrated in most of the UK cases as elements that enable women to evaluate their possibilities in a different way, introducing a change in a life direction. A recurrent sequence occurring before the age of 25 emerges from the cases: education and learning in adult life are central elements in shaping life. Women who left school early usually enter first jobs that did not require specific qualification. The take-up of opportunities for different forms of learning after 25 years of age could transform this condition, introducing dynamic factors for change of situation. The search for a new job, as we will see in Italian cases, does not imply an obvious connection between learning and job, but the first could have a role in stimulating the second. So, the search for new qualifications in work is often linked with take-up of learning opportunities in adult life.

In the British cases, the changes in life course trajectories are usually linked to a specific event told in the story; in facing up to this event, the search for new directions or meaning can be considered as an indicator of agency. Some “negative” situations (e.g. walked out on job, walked out on husband) are sometimes used to motivate significant or positive transformations in the personal life story. The sense of agency can be connected to the search for a new shape in the life course. So the life event is used to explain how and why the women made a “right” or a “new” choice. The shape of life trajectory is an open construction, and the agency is a subjective ability to search a personal setting (“per se”), to be able to cope with life and its events.

In the Italian cases, the most frequent key influences are strictly linked to having good/not good relationships with parents and family. The influence of family figures is very pronounced in all stories and this happens in a negative way, as a form of control, but also in a positive way, as a form of reinforcement and support. In the Italian patterns, a specific internal milestone is very important: the parents' life and their death. Differently from British cases, education and learning play a secondary role in the Italian visualisations and stories. The ability of the women to give direction to their life course is not associated to these two factors and does not work in a personal dimension (“per se”). Rather, agency seems to correspond to a social ability or a social performance: managing family situations (new birth, parents, parent's death, husband). The principal change in the Italian life course seems, in these cases, to correspond to a role passage from being a daughter to becoming a mother. If in the British cases agency is a personal searching for an individual development, in the Italian ones the emphasis is a specific searching for stability, for a social continuity. The Italian sense of agency seems to correspond to

avoiding the “wrong” choices; it is associated with a specific life event and to its potential for disruption, trouble, change. The Italian women’s life trajectories seem to be the result of threats avoided than active constructions built around and through life events. The life courses described and illustrated by the Italian women are shaped by the relationships with social and family groups during the half century of their lives while the British life courses seem to be fashioned and represented through memorable events and actions that are traced through fifty years of life.

Agency during the life course is manifested in in different ways. On the one hand agency is a path of personal development related the person’s awareness in composing a biography and giving direction to their life; from the other hand agency is the ability to compose a personal path from a social/family situation. These comparative observations seem to confirm, retrospectively over fifty years, some differences in cultural expectations in the two countries, influenced by the societal norms and demands on the gender roles of daughter, wife, mother.

## 4. Findings: patterns and models of identity, agency and learning

Different patterns of relationship between identity, agency and learning have emerged from the accounts. Using the different combinations of agency (low agency = A-; high agency = A+) and learning (low learning = L-; high learning = L+) we found in the stories four profiles of identity according to the weak or strong presence of agency or learning in the women’s lives. These configurations are not considered as a moral labelling or judging of the persons, but are used to indicate the recurrent pattern of responses in the interviews. Table 1 summarizes the combinations.

**Tabla 1.** *Profile combinations.*

PROFILE	PROFILE ACRONYM	COMBINATION
Contained	C	-L -A
Reactive	R	+L -A
Testing	T	-L +A
Conscious and Reflective	CR	+L +A

In the Contained profile of responses (Acronym C), women use few expressions of agency or learning; they see themselves as having few options or as restricted in their life choices. The Reactive profile (acronym R) emerges from responses which are marked by expressions of learning, but with a little occurrence of passages of agency or personal beliefs in ability to change aspects of life situations by personal action. In the Testing profile (acronym T), women express much action-taking in their lives, but they talk about these actions without references to learning or self-insight. Conscious and reflective (acronym CR) expressions of identity are frequent in personal accounts of women who talk explicitly about self-insight gained from their life trajectories, developing a form of acknowledgment regarding their lives and their relationships.

The following analysis sets out, in a comparative perspective, to illustrate each category by two cases: one Italian case, one British case. The aim is to use these illustrate

cases to show how learning and agency are strictly embedded in the identity expressions of these women aged fifty, as the accounts reveal combinations of learning and agency that produce various modes in managing and in leading the life course.

Comparing cases of Contained profile (C), we have selected the British case n.118UK and the Italian case n.29IT. The women use few expressions of agency or learning; they see themselves as having few options or as restricted in their life choices.

The UK (Scottish) woman (case n.188) describes her life as series of jobs and births of children until she returns to work in a bank (her original job) for the next 24 years. This interview reveals some difficulties the respondent had in making her lifeline; she needed prompting by the interviewer to cover some periods and events in her life. There are few points of reference. The main ones that the interviewer elicits are the fact that she lived abroad during her teens, her mother's addiction and the tensions in her relationships with her brother. There are very few details about her husband, or daughters and no references to learning beyond schooling. There is little sense that she feels she has learned or can learn from her life. Her biography is narrated as a linear sequence of events: left school, job, married, pregnant, left job, first daughter, second daughter, back to the (same) job. She seems to have some difficulties in telling her story, which may reflect reticence or shyness ("Hmmm, what else have I done?"). She only replies to questions and does not reflect on her story: she analyses one central event at length involving the role she and her brothers played in a family conflict over an inheritance. There are few expressions of identity: she seems reluctant to communicate about herself in a positive way but she ends with the sense that she could do and be more if pushed by others:

"How do I define myself? I don't know. .... I bore myself. I bore myself 'cause I don't do anything, but then I can be happy too. I just need a wee shove at the moment, I think that's what it is".

The Italian woman in this pair of cases presents herself as a "quiet girl" and she mentions the first key event in life course: a surgical operation she had at the age of nine she feels limited her life possibilities (she mentions that, for physical reasons, she didn't learn to ride a bicycle). She left school at 14 and at this same age she met her future husband. A recurrent theme of her narrative is the omnipresent control of her parents and how their guidance influenced her choices. After she married, her husband's mother also assumed this role, and she describes how she left her job to support her husband's family:

"I have lived through difficult and sad moments because of the illness and the death of mother-in-law that I considered as a mother because she considered me as her daughter. I left my job to foster her and my husband's family, so I worked in my mother-in-law's shop with the two brothers of my husband"<sup>1</sup>.

Even though "some persons" challenged her to pursue further studies, or to combine work and studies, she did not want to do this and she asserts that she is "proud enough" in her life realisation as a mother and as a wife: "If I could be go back in time, I would do the same things".

The Reactive profile (acronym R) reflects a pattern of responses marked by expressions of learning, but with a little occurrence of passages indicating or personal

<sup>1</sup> Italian quotes are translated into English from the original transcripts by the authors.



beliefs in ability to change aspects life situations by personal action. A Reactive profile characterizes the British case n.41UK and the Italian case n.9IT. In the British case n.41, the narrative is organised around the cross-roads in her life and her choice to organise her life around her children. The identity narrative is explicitly linked first with the influences of father and then the husband. She explains that when she married the main influence on her changed, becoming her husband instead of her father. The role of males (father, husband, brother) in her life characterized her identity as “dependent” in relation to these figures. The narrative is assembled around the crossroads in her diagram, that could be interpret as the self-justification about her life around her choice: to have children instead of academic qualifications and career. Nevertheless, she needs to be protected, assured, persuaded, supported in her choices. She justifies dependence on partner’s views “because of the work he does”. Reactions to events and decisions such as changes in job are not autonomous but reliant on support, affirmation, supervision, other-oriented identity with little self-directedness. She speaks more and more to her self because she is the centre of the story. All the events are collected around this centre; she learnt from the job not from her life experiences. Sequence of changes in job are considered as new learning; actions tend to be “reactive” and highly dependent on dominant others, from whom she takes her steer, restricting self-direction in learning but revealing self-awareness and potential for learning from her life.

The Italian case 29 IT shows a woman that has taken important choices in her life, such as deciding to work in a factory rather than in the family’s bakery or deciding to live as unmarried with her boyfriend. But despite these suggestions of an independence of spirit, in her narrative she constantly describes herself as dependent on others. So she expresses her gratitude to her parents, because of values that she learnt and for “what I’ve become”; to the nuns because of the care when parents were working; to her school professors for the training in a good communication; to her first boyfriend “that gave me the awareness to be a woman”; to the sons, for the great joy that they brought to her life. She does not convey a sense of taking her own direction and she tends always to ascribe somebody else her choices. She does not talk in terms of key events but in terms of the key relationships that compose the drawing of her life course.

The Testing profile (T: -L +A), is well captured by the British case n58. in which the woman’s story does not have a sequential order because it is focused on traumatic events of abuse as a child. She presents her life in few descriptive lines: mum, school, husband, degree, qualification, job. The focus of the story is the abuse not rationally analysed but told by emotion and feelings. Life is re-constructed around this event. She portrays her life as a heart and life monitor, characterised by periods of crisis and then stability, as she goes from one crisis event to another involving debt and upheavals in personal relationships. The primary function is the search for meaning and for peace (or inner justification). She learns from her life and from her difficulties rather than her academic studies; she tries to be a better person, she tries to have new possibilities to be different from her story. Her narrative has within it conscious with reflective, analytic elements but she is inside the original abuse event and cannot be disconnected from it: for that reason, her reflection is a self-discourse in search of sense-making. The many facets of this search are separated not unified in a core; she tries to look at many possibilities but learning that moves her life forward seems limited by the self-discourse. In going from crisis to crisis, there is learning potential but it does not seem to take her forward. She has a dream of making a new life far away from her present situation. There is as yet unfulfilled potential for self-development which she herself identifies:

“I’m like ‘well, try anything’. And this I guess is--, I don’t know if that represents now, it’s just that sense of... I know there’s a period of stability and that lovely word you said, renewal, but I know it will go up again (into crisis) and I think somehow that’s the bit that I want to change, my response to it...”.

The Italian woman (n.6 IT) also has negatively feelings from her childhood. She refers to a sad childhood because of two female figures: a harsh grandmother, whom she remembers as using punitive methods of control, and a mother who has “cluttered” her mind, by being very directive in taking important decisions in her life:

“My mother has influenced my life. In her attempts to fill my head, she gave me many opportunities but she has generated in me many insecurities because of very often she decided for me what I had to do, without asking me what I would prefer or not”.

The male figures in her life are also are not considered in a positive way: the father delegates all decisions to her mother, a first boyfriend was very jealous, an ex-husband very competitive (in sport and also with her): “I’m not competitive, I felt frustrated, lacking in competence, inadequate”. She refers to the busyness of her life, that is and was been full of initiatives, activities and so on, firstly according to mother’s decision, and after according to the demands of her working life. She describes having her child as a highlight and turning point. She describes how the birth of her child has been for her a great occasion for personal fulfilment but also how it precipitated a crisis with her ex-husband. At the time of interview, she considers herself to have become “a more balanced person, more able to express myself and my personality”.

The Conscious and reflective profile (acronym CR) is frequent in narratives of women who talk explicitly about self-insight gained from their life trajectories, developing a form of acknowledgment regarding their lives and their relationships. In the selected UK case (n.193UK) the woman talks about how she worked in a range of occupations (bank, optician’s practice) until her son’s graduation created a turning point that led her think in new ways about her own potential. She talks about how the led her to a decision to advance her own learning, through PhD enrolment and later-life identity development. The sequence is told as a chronology, a series of passages: infancy, school, (no adolescence), job, partner, job changes, son, degree and PhD. No specific or traumatic\challenges events are narrated; the “insight” of son’s graduation is tied to the decision to advance in learning. No justification is given for her life choices. Telling the story seems to help her to find the “fil rouge” of her life and to find the potential for self-development. The story has a function of reminding her who she is and whence she is coming to her actual self. Many reflections on her identity or events seem to be important not for the task (the interview) but for her empowerment. Reflection for her is a form of awareness about herself, in which she spontaneously takes up opportunities as they arise (for example, changes in job). The expression of her sense of self unfolds with and throughout the narration. It seems that she learns from her story about herself because she becomes more and more conscious of her changing identity, centred on her passion for learning science. “Biologist” is the dimension of identity that she wants to be socially recognized. The identity is embedded with the profession, that takes her beyond the influence of the family. She recognizes a tendency to low self-esteem: “sometimes I can’t think of myself as being at that level” and she defines herself “quite happy”.

In the Italian case n.12IT, the woman lived her childhood with grandparents because of the long illness of her mother. She perceived herself as abandoned and not accepted by her mother. She felt she came “alive” during her time at the college, and she recounts the time she started to express her personality (“my life is exploded”) when she decided to choose a type of scooter against her father’s wishes. Two key events characterise her narrative and her sketch. First, after she was fired from her job in an assurance company in mid-life, she decided to seek a future job that she would like doing and which would fit better with her interests. She took the loss of her job as a new beginning for changing her life. So, she explains, she enrolled in a nursing school and gained a professional degree at 40. Second, after the death of a baby during pregnancy she learns, over time, to cease living this dramatic event as a punishment from God. She overcomes her feelings of anger with God to experience faith as a shining light giving her healing:

“My life has had many difficulties, but I’ve realized that all things happened to me have helped me to growth, to be in the game, and have been useful to believe in myself”.

## **5. Discussion: comparing narratives in context**

These narrative accounts have been elicited as research participants have reflected on their life experiences and in particular on their own representations of their life course and on turning points in their lives. Changes experienced by women at their self-identified turning points can entail greater confidence and willingness on the part of women to develop themselves in new ways. The reverse can also be true: individuals can become trapped by events and locked into their own stories. The four recurrent profiles: Contained; Reactive; Testing; Conscious-Reflective can be recognised in the extent of each woman’s capabilities to analyse her life and to push her life a little bit ahead. These self-development capabilities appear most pronounced in cases that are characterised by conscious-reflective expressions of identity development. Moreover, the combination of strong expressions of learning and agency (+L, +A) is evident in accounts which also show capabilities to reflect on and learn from their own lives.

However, shifting interpretations of life trajectories, and the degree to which such understandings are sustained over time, depend on the interplay of cultural and systemic factors. The role of learning is connected to agency, where capacities to give direction to one’s life are embedded and expressed in the individual’s reflections on events, activities, roles and relationships perceived as important, particularly at turning points. In the British life courses it emerges like an exploration for a personal development built from family and social situations and stimulated by life course events, facilitated by the ready availability of part-time and ‘second-chance’ types of educational programmes for adults at earlier times in their lives and the flexible access routes to higher education that enabled them to change directions. In Italian women’s narratives, the role of learning is remarked upon in the first part of the women’s life course accounts only and associated to the school periods (infancy, adolescence or the entrance in adulthood) as formal learning. Other forms of learning (further, recurrent, incidental, informal and non-formal) are not evident in the stories or in the graphic visualisations. Agency and learning do not appear explicitly connected in the Italian cases, in which agency tends to be expressed according

to the ability to deal with ups and downs, events or non-events, that shape the life course. In both UK and Italian cases life course trajectories are shaped through expressions of 'bounded agency', which are often acknowledged to depend upon the enabling activities of others.

Narrative and comparative lenses bring distinct but related perspectives on these phenomena. The methodological correspondence between narrative research and the qualitative tradition in comparative research is shown in a commitment to reflect on relationships in ways that are alert to the cultural context. While comparativists see relations in less personalised terms they are alert to the social realities of researched cases. Narrativists view their subjects as situated in place as well as time, as do comparativists, who view their subjects in the context of systems and societies that change over time (Barrett 2009). Their intersection leads to a focus on temporality, in which events are viewed as unfolding over time, keeping past, present and anticipated future in view.

The retrospective accounts have shown how the women's expressions of agency in a life course perspective can be understood as temporal (Emirbayer and Mische, 1998), reflecting the ways in which habit and routines of the past and what people believe is possible for them in the future are brought together in decisions and action-taking in the contingencies of the present moment. This temporally embedded agency can be individual or collective and is not structurally determined, in the senses offered by Bourdieu (1993), since horizons and imagined futures can be reflectively reformulated and re-imagined through a process of self-learning. The combination of comparative-narrative perspective strives to keep in view the ways in which health, income and social networks at older ages are the consequence of what has happened to us over the course of lives. Women's situations in their sixth decade of life always reflect personal decisions as well as many influences and environmental factors, including interventions by the welfare and social state such as education policies, access to health care and types of social protection and support (Borsch-Supan *et al* 2011). Where this is the essence of narrative accounts of 'turning points', the identity development that takes place through agency and learning is not that of the self-propelled autonomous individual but, rather, relational and reflexive.

Where our analysis of these narratives connects identity development with temporal understandings of agency and self-learning through the life course, we have to be alert to variations in how women can learn to cope with and move on from conditions and relationships that reflexively shape their lives. Some narratives reflect the gendered relations that transcend national boundaries; the IT-UK comparison however reveals how particular historically and culturally-embedded gender regimes (O'Connell 1987) are embedded in expressions of agency, learning and identity development. Differences in access to resources —personal, relational or material— can further influence patterns which are part of an existing 'gender regime', rooted as a network of norms, regulations and principles in the structure of social practices (Connell 1987 p 139). There are parallels between the present study and Connell's use of biographical life-history interviewing, in education, family life and workplaces. Women in this present study have given their retrospective accounts over periods in which gender regimes have shifted. The gender gap in both countries has narrowed over the 50 years of their lives. Although the gender gap in the UK is, at the present time, significantly narrower than the gender gap in Italy, (World Economic Forum 2013) the WEF rankings also show significant variations between the gaps in differing areas of women's lives and that narrowing of the gap has

stagnated in the UK. At the same time, dominant gender regimes and characterisations of 'gender gaps' are themselves increasingly challenged in both countries by migration patterns and multi-cultural influences. .

A reflexive approach that sees gender regimes as dynamic rather than static emphasises the compound mix of inner abilities of the person which are not clearly visible but can be made effective when the situation stimulates the person to act or choose differently (see also Evans 2006). These inner capabilities, are developed reflexively through experiences in a range of life and work environments, and there is potential to support people, through education in adult life, towards the achievement of 'critical insight' (see Roth 1971, Stromquist 2006) into themselves and into the limits and possibilities afforded by their everyday situations and relationships.

## 6. Conclusions

Women's representations of their life course and of turning points in their lives reveal different propensities to reflect on and learn from their own lives and, in comparative perspective, contrasting relational, cultural and institutional affordances that can enable or limit them in moving their lives forward. Some of the women's accounts reflect gendered relations that transcend national boundaries, others are embedded in the historically prevalent societal conditions and gender regimes of Italy and UK, respectively. They represent contrasting manifestations of gender regimes in action and can be understood, at both individual and societal levels. It is too simplistic to interpret these manifestations solely in terms of assumptions that a Southern European heritage renders women culturally pre-disposed to privilege familial duty over their own life chances to a greater extent than UK women. While agency can be argued to include the co-construction of situations that promote or limit agency, that is to say actors are often complicit in the conditions that limit them, it has to be recognised that the wider socio-economic framework can either reinforce or disrupt cultural pre-dispositions that disadvantage women. The gender gap in Cuba, for example, is smaller than it is in the UK. Furthermore, recognition of the challenges of increasing social and cultural diversity to dominant cultural pre-dispositions, while beyond the scope of the present retrospective analysis, also introduces an important caveat to overly simplistic interpretations of the distinctiveness of the respective gender regimes. The comparative life course approach to the understanding of propensities for self-learning and identity development in adult life indicates how:

- development takes time and that it reflects cumulative experiences (e.g., the accumulation of individual resources such as educational credentials and the progressive development of capabilities).
- the social contexts within which human development is embedded range from close interactions with significant others (proximal) to macro-social conditions (distal).
- life course transitions, such as from school to work, in job change or job loss, or in work to retirement, are not only shaped by institutional and labour market structures but also involve developmental tasks that challenge the individual actors as well as cultural norms and expectations.
- individual decision making, bounded by the socially positioned life the person leads, social institutions, and wider macro-social conditions, can also be understood in terms of wider social-ecological interdependencies.

Comparative reflections on these temporally embedded, retrospective accounts of lives shaped over the course of half a century lead us further into the debate on individualisation and the extent to which the 'traditional' social structures of class, gender, religion and family are weakening, as biographical negotiation confronts pre-given life worlds. The realities of gender gaps and the slowness with which these are narrowing alert us to the enduring challenges and limits on human agency. Variations in the ways in which women move their lives forward reveal inner capabilities that are developed reflexively through experiences and relationships, with potential for adult education to better support people towards the achievement of critical insight into these experiences and in learning from their lives. This learning from their lives extends to an understanding of their situation in the wider context of gender regimes and their own future learning and development potential.

## 7. Note

This paper is a common and shared work based on equal contributions; however it is possible to attribute to K.Evans the sections 3,5 and 6 and to C.Biasin the sections 2 and 4.

## 8. Acknowledgement

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2



## *German transplant companies in China: how do companies solve the problem of skill formation at the shop-floor level?*

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*Empresas alemanas en China: ¿Cómo solventan las  
empresas el problema de la formación a nivel de planta?*

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## **Abstract**

This article explores German transplant companies' attempts to foster and assure the skills levels of their Chinese employees for production and innovation in consideration of a different socio-cultural and political framework. Methodologically conducted by on-site expert interviews, this paper first reports empirical findings on German companies' strategies and practices for recruiting and retaining (skilled) local employees for the shop-floor level. On the basis of Engeström's activity theory, the concept of boundary objects functions as the theoretical framework. The results indicate complementary innovative personnel strategies with regard to qualifying and retaining. In the discussion, the identified phenomena such as the foundation of a cooperative practical training center are assigned to the theoretical context of boundary objects.

*Key Words:* China; Vocational Education and Training; VET; Skill Formation; Activity Theory; Boundary Object

## **Resumen**

Este artículo tiene el propósito de aprender sobre la intención de las empresas alemanas en el extranjero en fomentar y asegurar los niveles de competencia de sus empleados chinos en producción e innovación considerando un marco socio-cultural y político diferente. Llevado a cabo metodológicamente a través de entrevistas a expertos in situ, este artículo se centra en reportar sobre los primeros hallazgos empíricos en estrategias y prácticas de empresas alemanas sobre reclutamiento y vinculación de empleados locales (competentes) para el nivel de planta. En base a la teoría de la actividad de Engeström, el concepto de boundary objects actúa como marco teórico. Los resultados indican estrategias de personal innovativas complementarias con referencia a cualificación y retención. En la discusión, los fenómenos identificados como la fundación de un centro de entrenamiento práctico cooperativo, son asignados al contexto teórico de *boundary objects*.

*Palabras clave:* China; Formación Profesional; FP; Formación en Competencias; Teoría de la Actividad; Boundary Object

## 1. Problem Statement

Over the past decades, China has developed impressively in terms of its political, social and economic levels. From an economic point of view, due to lower labour costs that provided important local advantages in the mid 1990s, a large number of foreign invested companies moved their production plants to China. As a result, China became known as the “elongated workbench” (SCHWÄGERMANN, 2016: 166) and has become one of the leading destinations for foreign direct investment (THE WORLD BANK, 2016).

Today, Germany is one of the ten major investors in China, and approximately 5,200 German companies are currently situated there. However, the situation has changed and lower labour costs are no longer one of the key advantages for foreign invested companies to produce in China. Instead, those companies operating in China have a high demand to achieve local adaption and innovation for their products to affect conditions of competition (GERMAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, 2015). As a result, as is evident in the case of the mechanical engineering sector, a growing number of German companies are pursuing the field of research and development.

This development is accompanied by an increasing demand for better-skilled workers who can take part in different stages of production processes and who are able to improve product quality and productivity (ZHAO, 2013; DEITMER *et al.*, 2013, GESSLER, 2017). In this respect, China’s development from a social point of view is a hindrance.

The situation in the labour market is difficult, and there is a lack of workers both in terms of quality and quantity (LI & SHELDON, 2014; VAN DER BURGT *et al.*, 2014; PILZ & LI, 2014; ZHAO, 2013). The quantitative lack is reflected by low numbers of graduates from vocational schools, which is, in turn, deeply anchored in the Chinese culture (ZHAO, 2013). As most parents have only one child, they greatly emphasise academic tracks geared toward the upper educational system, leading to a low number of graduates from vocational schools (BARABASCH *et al.*, 2009).

The gap of skilled workers in quality, however, can be attributed to an imbalance of practical and theoretical training that is relevant both in vocational schools and academic tracks (PILZ & LI, 2014). Education in China clearly focuses on full-time schooling, but work-related skills and knowledge are tremendously neglected (DEITMER *et al.*, 2013). As a consequence, this is manifested in a disconnection between the design of vocational school and academic track courses and practical employment needs (PILZ & LI, 2014). This results in a mismatch between the employees’ skills levels and companies’ expectations. Zhao (2013) notes that in order to approach this problem there is a substantial need for cooperation between Chinese companies and vocational schools and colleges in order to promote and standardise laws, regulations and operation mechanisms.

Also, from the governmental side, efforts have been made to strengthen the vocational track, which had been falling behind (DEITMER *et al.*, 2013). However, adequate laws and regulations are still lacking, and the responsibility for vocational education is vague. Some Chinese companies even see the responsibility for vocational education and training (VET) as belonging solely with the government, and are thus neither interested in involvement with VET, nor in cooperation with vocational institutions (ZHAO, 2013).

It is precisely in this field of unresolved tension that German transplant companies<sup>1</sup> are operating. On the one hand, there is a high demand for skilled workers in order to

<sup>1</sup> “Transplant companies” are companies that have set up facilities abroad. In this case, the target country is China.

fulfil high product standards and to pursue research and development, but the labour market does not supply this workforce, neither in quality, nor in quantity. There is therefore a need for a number of strategies and measures for firm-based qualifications.

“Workforce Skill Formation and Innovation at the Shop-floor Level in China”, financed from central funds by the University of Bremen, is a three-year explorative project, whose object is to investigate the strategy and practice of skill formation in German firms at the shop-floor level in the international context of firms operating in the region of Shanghai, China (GESSLER & FREUND, 2015). This project builds the framework to investigate the central research question:

“How do German firms with production sites in China foster and assure the necessary skills levels of their Chinese employees for production and innovation when a vocational education system according to the German model does not exist?”

## 2. Theoretical Approach

Activity theory research aims to analyse different types of activities as well as the learning and developing processes of acting subjects who shape an activity by their actions (GEITHNER, 2012). One of the models that was developed in order to make an activity conceptually tangible was the cultural historical activity theory by Yrjö Engeström (1987).

This theory builds the basic foundation for a concept that has become an explicit part of Engeström’s activity theory, the concept of boundary object (AKKERMAN & BAKKER, 2011). This concept is constituted by two terms: boundary and object. Boundaries can be seen as socio-cultural differences leading to discontinuity in an action or interaction where there is, however, a common purpose that is relevant to each actor (ebd.).

Boundaries between groups are formed by common objects through flexibility and shared structure and serve as the “stuff of action” (LEIGH STAR, 2010:603). Objects are those objects that:

“...both inhabit several intersecting worlds and satisfy the informational requirements of each of them.... [They are] both plastic enough to adapt to local needs and the constraints of the several parties employing them, yet robust enough to maintain a common identity across sites. They are weakly structured in common use, and become strongly structured in individual site use.” (STAR & GRIESEMEIER, 1999: 393)

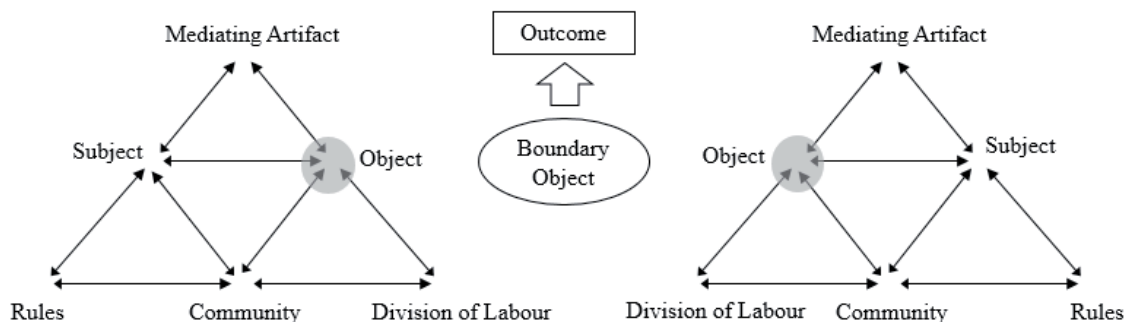


Figure 1. Boundary object as connection of two activity systems. Based on Engeström 1987, p. 78

For this research paper, the concept of boundary object as an extension of the cultural historical activity theory of expansive learning by Engeström (1987) is suggested as a theoretical framework. Engeström's approach seems to be suitable as it considers the two-way relationship of working and learning as well as the connection of individual and collective development, and the concept of boundary object indicates how artifacts can fulfil a specific function in bridging intersecting practices.

### 3. Methodology

This exploratory research was conducted using a grounded theory methodology, which is a “qualitative research method that uses a systematic set of procedures to develop an inductively derived grounded theory about a phenomenon” (STRAUSS & CORBIN, 1990: 24). This approach is well suited to investigate the above mentioned research question as it fulfils the requirement of a methodological approach that mitigates the uncertainties associated with international comparison studies. Considering the fact that the case study is undertaken in a new area of knowledge where outcomes are difficult to predict, this approach offers the opportunity to construct a new theory through the analysis of data that were empirically gained. Furthermore, it differs from traditional models of research, in which an existing theoretical framework is used to examine whether or not the collected data does or does not apply to the phenomenon of the study.

Data collection was conducted between 2014 and 2016 in the autonomous city of Suzhou, Jiangsu Province, in which a total of around 17,000 foreign enterprises can be found (BMBF, 2013). Within Suzhou, we focused on two economically advanced areas with a local labour market perspective and a high concentration of German transplant companies.

The first research site is Suzhou Industrial Park (SIP), in which 5,000 foreign enterprises are located (BMBF, 2013). Twenty-five per cent of these foreign enterprises have their headquarters in Europe, and around 200 enterprises are German. A sector analysis that we conducted in 2014 shows that around 25 per cent of all German enterprises in SIP are assigned to the manufacture of machinery and equipment sector, which makes up the largest proportion of all sectors and represents the focus of interest for our empirical approach. The second research site within Suzhou is Taicang German Industrial Park, in which 1,200 foreign transplant companies can be found, around 220 of which are German owned. Like with SIP, we focused our data collection in Taicang on German transplant companies in the manufacture of machinery and equipment sector.

All German companies within this sector were contacted via email. Those companies that expressed their willingness to be available for an interview by answering our email were selected for the purpose of investigation.

Data were collected from four different German transplant companies situated in SIP as well as from four with production sites in Taicang through expert interviews with CEOs and human resources and/or training managers. In these eight companies, in total, 13 interviews with different experts were conducted. On average, the interviews lasted around two hours. To achieve comparability, the interviews were semi-structured and were recorded and transcribed for evaluation purposes.

The data analysis procedure followed the grounded theory approach formulated by Strauss and Corbin (1996). In contrast to the classical grounded theory approach, originated by Glaser (1965), this advanced developed approach by Strauss and Corbin

allows theoretical sensibility by analysing categories, codes and coding through abductive reasoning. These different steps are repeated until it becomes possible to describe and explain the phenomenon that is to be researched. In this context, the attention is directed to the theory's suitability as a framework for the data collected. The positive outcome of this fluid exchange between theory and data is a reconceptualisation, based on a creative leap.

## 4. Results

The empirical findings offer answers to the following questions, which set up the focus of this article:

- What do we learn about the cooperation developed between German transplant companies and vocational schools to solve the problem of skill shortages?
- What kinds of measures are promoted by German transplant companies to strengthen (highly-skilled) employees' loyalty?

Considering all explored issues would go beyond the scope of this article. Therefore, for this research paper, we focus on two phenomena, which examine different perspectives on how German transplant companies try to foster and assure the necessary skills levels of their shop-floor level employees. These ideas build on one another.

### 4.1 Cooperation in Apprenticeship

In Chinese provinces that have a huge demand for skilled labour, and thus for vocational learning tracks, two reform concepts have emerged in the past several years, production schools and practice firms (DEITMER *et al.*, 2013). Whereas in production schools, production areas for training purposes are developed within vocational schools, in practice firms, artificial practice companies are set up, aiming to give insights into the working environment by simulation (*ibd.*).

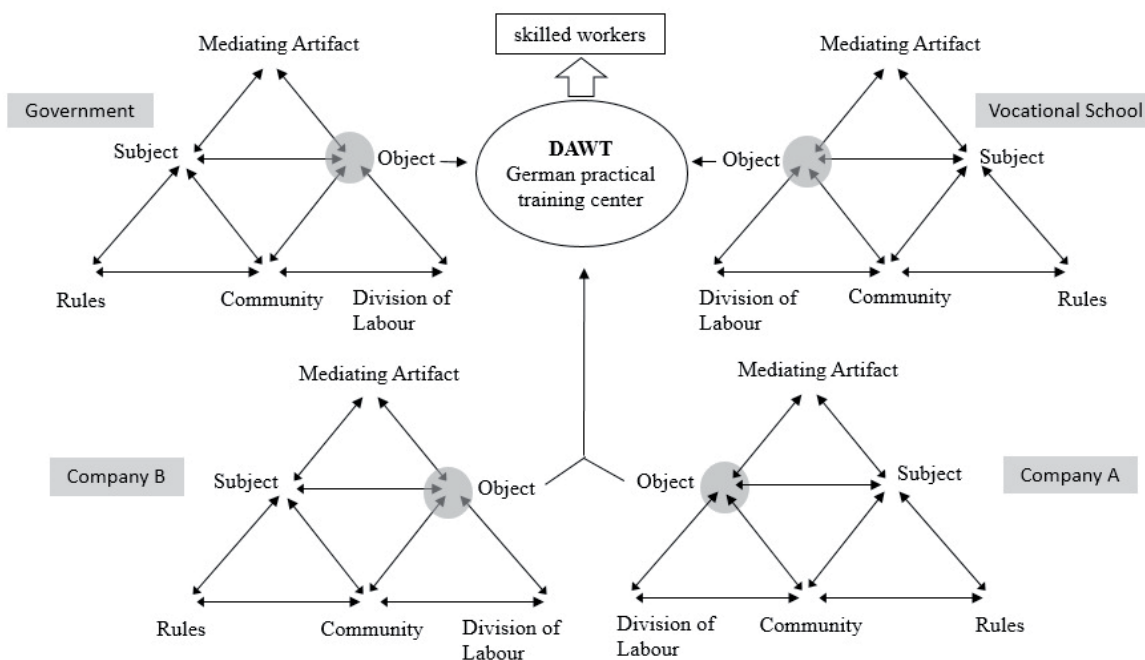
Although these two reform concepts are the results of successful initiatives made by vocational schools in cooperation with Chinese enterprises, these reform concepts cannot replace a system of dual VET (GESSLER, 2016; GESSLER & HOWE, 2013). Deitmer *et al.* (2013) see the problem as mainly that there is a distance that is too huge between vocational training and the job market, and they articulate the urgent need for the implementation of a systematic and well-structured vocational training programme, which would be executed with the cooperation of both sides: companies and vocational schools.

The answer for such a concept might be found in a form of cooperation that was developed by two German transplant companies, a vocational school and the local Chinese government. Although both German companies are suppliers, producing springs, and are thus competitors in their field, they are cooperating. They are "coopetitors" (BONEL & ROCCO, 2014: 9) working together in order to find a solution for their common problem of not getting employees with suitable skills and experience from the labour market.

In cooperation with the local government that gives financial support, as well as a local vocational school that conveys theoretical knowledge, the DAWT<sup>2</sup>, a practical training centre according to the German system of dual VET, was established.

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<sup>2</sup> The abbreviation DAWT stands for "Deutsches Ausbildungszentrum für Werkzeugmechaniker Taicang", translated into English as "German training center for tool mechanics Taicang".



**Figure 2.** Cooperation in apprenticeship imbedded in the activity theory model. **Source:** own illustration.

Imbedding the phenomenon of cooperation in apprenticeship in the activity theory model proves that the DAWT dual practical training centre functions as a boundary object (see section 2: theoretical approach). The two companies involved, as well as the local government and vocational school, share the common objective of finding a solution to compensate for the disconnection between the design of vocational school courses and practical employment needs. DAWT was developed in cooperation with all of the subjects involved and can be classified as a boundary object with skilled workers as the outcome.

Although the parties involved share the same objective, their intention and interest for cooperation differs. The two German companies initiated the cooperation as they continuously require shop-floor workers with suitable skills and practical, work-based experience that was not found in the labour market. Therefore, the two German companies have a privileged position with regard to executing employment agreements with DAWT trainees.

The local government, however, intends to improve the situation in the whole local labour market by giving financial support to DAWT. Graduates who are not employed by the two German companies are available for the labour market as highly skilled workers, both theoretically and practically.

Analysing the phenomenon of cooperation in apprenticeship in depth, we find two types of cooperation. While the government and vocational school constitute a public cooperation, the two German companies represent a private cooperation. Hence, the phenomenon found can be described as a public-private cooperation in apprenticeship that was developed with the objective of fostering the necessary skills levels of Chinese shop-floor workers. This type of vocational education system, according to the German model, had not previously existed in the Chinese context.

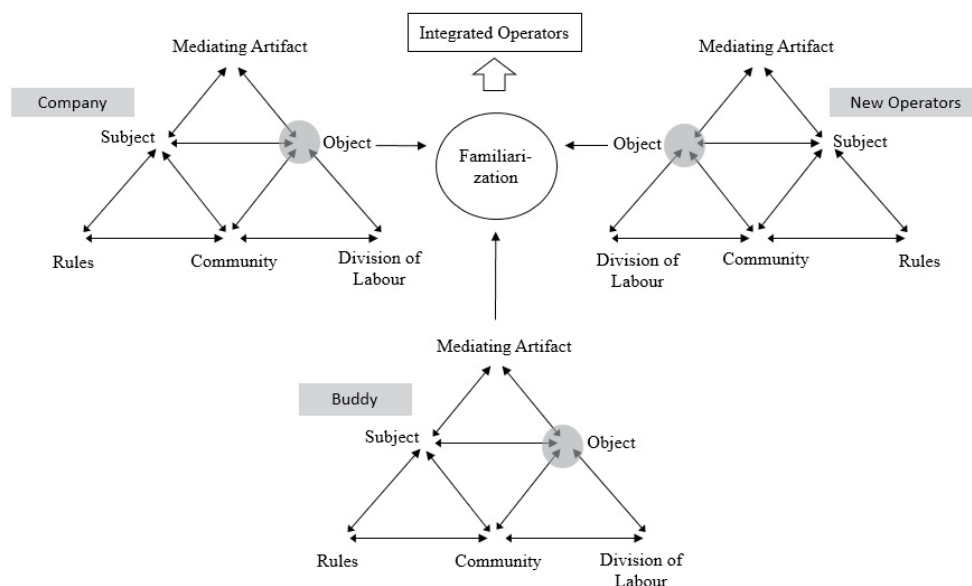
## 4.2 Staff Retention Programme

Despite a lack of skilled workers in quantity and quality, high labour turnover has become another important challenge for employers in China (LI & SHELDON, 2012). With the implementation of an apprenticeship system according to the German dual model (see section 4.1: cooperation in apprenticeship), not only those companies recruiting DAWT graduates, but also others, whose employees have valued experience and skills, face the problem of losing their skilled workers as they are highly coveted on the labour market. Poaching employees from neighbouring firms intensifies competition amongst companies and, as a number of previous studies show, the prevalence of poaching even discourages firms from investing in qualification measures that would be necessary to redress skill shortages (AMCHAM SHANGHAI, 2009; JIANG *et al.*, 2009; LI & SHELDON, 2012).

German transplant companies are confronted with the risk of labour piracy, and in order to keep the number of employees being poached by other companies as small as possible, they implemented attractive staff retention programmes.

One example of such a staff retention programme is the so-called “buddy programme” that was implemented by one of the companies surveyed for this research paper. The respected company developed the buddy programme after they suffered high labour fluctuation over a long period. The programme was designed in consideration of cultural incentives and values and was therefore exclusively implemented at production sites in China.

Every operator that is new to the company is assigned to a fixed “buddy” from the first day of work. Buddies are selected carefully. They must fulfil a minimum duration of uninterrupted company affiliation, as well as a minimum verifiable performance level, and must have favourable personal characteristics. A buddy’s task is to foster the integration of a new employee into the company, for example, by spending lunch or cigarette breaks together. Furthermore, buddies get a monetary award if the new operator assigned to him or her stays in the company for at least six months. According to Ma (2007), awards for extraordinary performance of individuals are deeply anchored in China’s culture and tradition.



**Figure 3:** Staff retention programme, “Buddy Programm”, imbedded in the activity theory model.

**Source:** own illustration.



Imbedding the phenomenon of a staff retention programme in the activity theory model proves that the company, as well as the new operator and the buddy, share a common objective, that is, familiarisation. It thus functions as the boundary object (see section 2: theoretical approach) that connects the three activity systems.

Again, the parties' intentions and interests differ. The company conceptualised and implemented the programme as it is in its interest to reduce the number of employees leaving the company. The new operator's interest, however, is to settle down in a new working environment and to get the feeling of being welcomed and valued as a new member of a family-like organisation. In contrast, it is the buddy's motivation to pursue familiarisation as it is a sign of appreciation to be able to be a buddy and as it is connected to a monetary award.

Although the intentions and interests are different, the three parties are connected by their common objective, familiarisation, which functions as a boundary object. As a result, the outcomes are integrated operators. Hence, the phenomenon found can be described as an innovative, business-related strategy that was implemented with the objective of assuring the necessary skills levels of Chinese shop-floor workers.

## 5. Conclusion

The two phenomena presented in this research paper were selected as they are very good examples of innovative strategies that were initiated by German transplant companies in China with the objective of fostering and assuring the necessary skills levels of their shop-floor workers for production. From this study, we learn that cooperation is not only essential to developing and implementing solutions to foster and train highly skilled shop-floor workers, but that cooperation is also necessary to assure that the company has adequate employees. The outcomes of such cooperation were constituted by imbedding the forms of cooperation in apprenticeship, as well as the staff retention programme, into activity theory models and identifying boundary objects. For further research, a broader range of cooperative phenomena could and will be analysed according to this scheme. The phenomena presented are only two among many others that were implemented by German transplant companies acting in China, in a context that is neither restricted nor pre-defined. It is in exactly this context that there is both the need and the possibility for the implementation of innovative strategies.

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3



*Emotional capital: the set  
of emotional competencies  
as professional and vocational skills  
in emotional works and jobs*

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*Capital emocional: el conjunto de competencias  
emocionales como habilidades profesionales  
y vocacionales en obras emocionales y trabajos*

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## **Abstract**

In the context of changes or decreasing quality of life at school and at work (violence, incivilities, stress, anxiety, depression, burn out, pressure, bullying..), research on Education with its dialectic links between learning and well-being competencies, that is, between educational processes and outcomes on the one hand, and well-being-promotion processes and outcomes on the other, suggests a frame to purpose radical alternatives and reconceptualize educational programmes in itself. Beyond general knowledge (Savoirs) and technical skills (Savoir-Faire), the role of Emotional Capital, referring to the set of emotional competencies (Savoir-Etre), is crucial at sustaining human capital constitution in a broad sense and person development and well-being and performance (Gendron, 2004). This communication will be focus on the experimental research-action part of a global research led at the university of Montpellier 3 called Idefi-UM3D-“Réussir en 3D determination, diversification, différences”. This peticular project called “Idefi-UM3D-emotional capital & well-being & performance”, aims at developing emotional competencies among emotional works and jobs, peticularly future educators and teachers’ students, using tools from the positive psychology, the Mindfulness and the Acceptance and Commitment Training (ACT’) and its return and impact on trainees’ well-being, personal and social emotional competencies and performance. From an interdisciplinary approach combining sciences of education, economic of human resources and positive psychology, it shows that emotional capital, can improve the well-being and performance of trainees, future educators and teachers that contributes to ensure sustainable and benevolence education and balanced person development and professional skills.

**Key Words:** Emotional Capital; Emotional Competencies; Soft Skills; Acceptance and Commitment Therapy; Mindfulness

## **Resumen**

En el contexto de los cambios o la disminución de la calidad de vida en la escuela y en el trabajo de investigación sobre la educación con sus vínculos dialécticos entre competencias de aprendizaje y bienestar, entre los procesos y resultados educativos, y los procesos de bienestar de promoción y resultados, sugiere alternativas que reconceptualizan programas educacionales. Más allá de los conocimientos generales (Savoirs) ya la técnica (saber hacer, Savoir-Faire), el papel del capital emocional, se hace referencia al conjunto de competencias emocionales (Savoir-Etre), es crucial en el mantenimiento de constitución del capital humano en un sentido amplio y de desarrollo personal y bienestar y el rendimiento. Este artículo será el foco en la parte de investigación-acción experimental de una investigación global llevó a la universidad (Idefi-UM3D-“Réussir en 3D determination, diversification, différences”). Este proyecto peticular “Idefi-UM3D-emotional capital & well-being & performance” tiene como objetivo desarrollar el capital emocional, i.e las competencias emocionales, en los trabajos emocionales, for ejemplo, los futuros educadores y maestros, con el uso de herramientas de la psicología positiva, y de la Meditación mindfulness o conciencia plena y la Terapia de Aceptación y Compromiso (ACT). A partir de un enfoque interdisciplinario que combina las ciencias de la educación, la economía de los recursos humanos y la psicología positive, el desarrollo del capital emocional muestra que puede mejorar el bienestar y el rendimiento de los alumnos, futuros educadores y maestros, y contribuye a garantizar la educación sostenible y la benevolencia y el desarrollo personal equilibrado y habilidades profesionales.

**Palabras clave:** Capital Emocional; Competencias Emocionales; Terapia de Aceptación y Compromiso; Meditación Mindfulness; Conciencia Plena

## 1. Introduction

Learning environments are social environments, and learners are highly complex beings whose emotions interact with their learning process in powerful ways. Psychologically-based theories and educational research have provided influential explanations of how emotional experience is produced and how it affects behaviors and can affect learning processes and lives' construction and, also professional skills.

In the context of changes or decreasing quality of life at school and at work (violence, incivilities, stress, anxiety, depression, burn out, pressure, bullying..), research on Education with its dialectic links between learning and well-being competencies, that is, between educational processes and outcomes on the one hand, and well-being-promotion processes and outcomes on the other, suggests a frame to purpose radical alternatives and reconceptualize educational programmes in itself. Beyond general knowledge (Savoirs) and technical skills (Savoir-Faire), the role of Emotional Capital (EK), referring to the set of emotional competencies (Savoir-Etre), is crucial at sustaining human capital constitution in a broad sense and person development and well-being and performance (Gendron, 2004). This experimental research-action financed by the French National Agency of Research, is focus on emotional capital developing emotional competencies among future educators and teachers' students, using tools from the positive psychology, the Mindfulness and the Acceptance and Commitment Training (ACT') and its return and impact on trainees' well-being, personal and social emotional competencies and performance. From an interdisciplinary approach combining sciences of education, economic of human resources and positive psychology, this research, focus of this communication, shows that emotional capital, can improve the well-being and performance of trainees, future educators and teachers which contributes to ensure sustainable and benevolence education and balanced person development and professional skills.

But today's trend of the increased emphasis on the accountability of schools and their efficacy leads school leaders and educators to focus solely on improving students test results or academic performance in the core areas of certain domains (such as the 3R, reading, writing, arithmetic...). Under these pressures, for instance, teachers have to focus on teaching or educative content and less on preparing students to learn how to build their sustainable development, to be a good citizen, or to feel happy and peaceful, mindful. All those behavior and social skills called emotional competencies combined with technical and general skills allow a real and complete "Education" with a big caps "E". In this framework, the education of the whole person as the major clue is urgently required today.

Previous researches predicted the necessary competences in order to maintain resilience, health, development, in other words to achieve an optimum development. It's about the emotional competences that constitute the emotional capital (Gendron, 2004, 2008) of each person, decisive in personal, professional and institutional development. Beyond general knowledge (fr. savoir) and technical skills (fr. savoir-Faire), the role of Emotional Capital (EK), referring to the set of emotional competencies (fr. savoir-être), is crucial in sustaining human capital constitution and person development and well-being and emotional work performance (Gendron, 2004). Embedded in an interdisciplinary framework (as neuroscience, sociology, psychology, education and economics of HR), EK is a multi-level concept and approach (macro, meso, micro) which we will define and develop further.

The aim of this communication is to present the outcome of an experimental program addressed to future teachers and educators, trained at the university of Montpellier 3 (sciences of education freshmen students), in order to develop their emotional capital, via an active, positive and interactive workshops focused on personal health issues and well-being. Proficiency in emotional capital includes skilled management of emotions, external situations and relationships, and promotes performance and a better mental health for students, especially a higher resilience to stress. In particular, developing emotional capital can be helpful to students and future teachers working in emotional contexts and works ; that' s the case for freshmen students of sciences of education expose to a new life or care helpers facing stressful work events. The development of emotional capital was realized via two approaches: project managements (PIA2) - and ACT - Acceptance Commitment Training (ACT<sup>®</sup>). This proceeding is interesting and innovative because it allows the development of all emotional skills and gives students the possibility to act in a structured frame facilitating work group, self and others knowledge, etc. This experimental research on Emotional capital aims at preparing and facilitating the integration of future teachers and educators at participating to their academic and professional success and performance through ad-hoc development of relevant Savoir-être, their Emotional Capital, human capital and skills which we will discuss in the next section.

## **2. Theory and methods : Emotional capital and educational performance**

The notion of capital is derived from economic discourse and refers to a stock of capital identified by its sources and its returns or effects' returns on performance and socio-economic situations (Gendron, 2004). Traditional economic theory, generally viewed capital as physical items that are used and useful in the production process. But the notion of capital has been expanded as a general way of thinking and taken on a broader meaning especially, when some aspects of its definition provide a useful way of thinking in another domain.

### **2.1. Theory : from Economics of education, human capital theory, to Emotional capital inclusion**

The concept of human capital has a long history (Smith, 1776); the term itself was first coined by economists T.W. Schultz and G.S. Becker less than 40 years ago. In his 1964 book, Human Capital, G.S. Becker viewed education, on-the-job training and health as components of human capital with consequences for earnings and economic productivity. The key aspects of human capital have to do with the knowledge and skills embodies in people. It can be distinguished between the following three components of human capital:

- General skills linked to basic language and quantitative literacy and, more broadly, to the ability to process information and use it in problem-solving and in learning.
- Specific skills are those related to the operation of particular technologies of production processes.
- Technical and scientific knowledge, finally, refers to the mastery of specific bodies of organized knowledge and analytical techniques that may be of relevance in production or in the advance of technology.

If human, social and cultural capitals can be considered as a public good, it is also partly a private good. Gendron (2004) appreciates that, in previous definition of human capital, it's missing the individual part of it, which are social individual skills that enable an individual to reap market and nonmarket returns from interaction with others but not only. Those socio-emotional and individual skills which participate to social cohesion are crucial to behave and grasp the opportunities to grow up in the society. We will argue this position in the following section.

## **2.2. From Emotional Intelligence and Emotional Competencies concepts to the Emotional Capital approach**

Emotions have to be taken into account in economic theory as they can have major impact and economical returns, if well managed and utilized. As cognitive rationality has to be considered in the individual decision-making process in economic models (Gendron, 2004), there is also an emotional capital basis which has to be highly considered in education and in work place. First, we will define emotional intelligence and competencies and what do we mean by emotional capital (Gendron, 2004); then, we will see why the set of emotional competencies have to be considered as a crucial capital, through its major role in allowing and boosting the formation and use of the other capitals (social, cultural and the Becker' human capital).

The term emotional intelligence was introduced in psychology in a series of papers by Mayer and Salovey (1993), though it was Goleman who brought wide popular recognition to the concept of emotional intelligence in his 1995 book *Emotional Intelligence*. In their work, Mayer and Salovey (1993) confirm that being able to direct one's emotions, as well as being able to understand and influence other people's emotional responses, went a long way towards effective adaptation to an environment. They defined emotional intelligence as: "Ability to monitor one's own and other's feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions" (1990); "the ability to perceive emotions, to access and generate emotions so as to assist thought, to understand emotions and emotional knowledge, and to reflectively regulate emotions so as to promote emotional and intellectual growth" (1997).

Later, Cherniss and Goleman (2001) have argued that emotional intelligence itself probably is not a strong predictor of performance. Rather, it provides the bedrock for competencies that are. A certain level of emotional intelligence is necessary to learn the emotional competencies and these competencies can be increased. They tried to represent this idea by making a distinction between emotional intelligence and emotional competencies and divided it in two kinds of emotional competencies: personal and social.



**Table 1.** *A Framework for Emotional Competencies (Cherniss & Goleman, 2001)*  
(non exhaustive list).

	<b>Personal Competencies</b> (intrapersonal)	<b>Social Competencies</b> (interpersonal)
<b>Recognition</b>	<b>Self-Awareness</b> - Emotional self-awareness - Accurate self-assessment - Self-confidence - Own culture awareness [...]	<b>Social Awareness</b> - Empathy - Service orientation - Organizational awareness - Other culture awareness [...]
<b>Regulation</b>	<b>Self-Management</b> - Emotional self-control - Trustworthiness - Conscientiousness - Adaptability [ <b>revisit</b> ] - Achievement drive - Initiative - Nonjudgmentalness [...]	<b>Social Skills</b> - Developing others - Influence - Communication [ <b>revisit</b> ] - Conflict management - Visionary leadership - Catalyzing change - Building bonds - Teamwork and collaboration - Respect [...]

In sum, emotional competencies are learned capabilities from the early age until adulthood, in family, peers, communities, societies and school contexts. Consequently, the different emotional competencies developed through those experiences will have a major impact on individual personality and different returns in different spheres. Because of the recognized impact of emotional competencies on performance and on the learning process, those emotional competencies have to be included in the human capital in a broader sense and in its measurement. They refer to the know-how-to-be/behave (fr. savoir-être) to the rules of democratic socialization, to know how to behave in social situation, to know how to communicate, to handle a conflict, to respect other's opinion, etc. Thus, if technical competencies or experiences, referring in the French language to the concept of "Savoir-faire" and in general knowledge to "Savoir", constitute the Becker's human capital (1964), the emotional competencies, which has not been taken into account in Becker's measurement, referee to "Savoir-être".



**Figure 1.**

Emotional competencies are useful and constitute a crucial capital resource for actors through processes such as using and exploiting plainly their human and social capitals. As emotional competencies are useful to better perform socially, economically and personally, we have to consider them as a capital (Gendron, 2004, 2008) that we will present and develop next.

### **2.3. Emotional Capital and Educational Challenges**

This set of emotional competencies (EC) compounds the emotional capital defined as “the set of resources (emotional competencies) that is inherent to the person, useful for personal, professional and organizational development, and participates in social cohesion and has personal, economic and social returns” (Gendron, 2004). It can be developed as emotional competencies are learnt capabilities. Emotional capital (EK) as a set of emotional competencies is developed and provided since the early age until adulthood in informal manners and contexts, in social environments as family, neighborhood, peers, communities, societies and school contexts. Because social environments include the groups to which people belong, the neighborhoods in which they live, the organization of their workplaces, and the policies created to order their lives, the EK differs from one person to another. The optimum constitution of the human capital might never happen if basic or appropriate emotional capital is not here.

Precisely in education, it's a crucial capital as it impacts people's learning processes and especially for children and young people at risk to enable their balanced human development which participates in social cohesion, smoother human relationships, for their future successful life in the society and already for their school retention and success.

Regarding its effects or returns, neurosciences (see the project on “Learning Sciences and Brain Research” introduced to the OECD's CERI Governing Board on 23 November 1999, and Damasio, 1995), reporting on the brain and learning process, brought the evidence that emotional competencies impact the learning process (Gendron, 2013). According to the capacity of regulation of emotions, referring to emotional competence, an appropriate emotional capital can facilitate the learning process. Considering school performance and failure, students with too high-esteem can be counter-productive in certain situations where modesty should be appropriate to question him-or-herself regarding his-her own failure. At the opposite end, a too low self-esteem or a lack of self-confidence can impede people to progress or lead to self-censure.

Also, emotional capital can be damaged in certain situations. For instance, repeated failure at schools can discourage and develop inappropriate reactions, leading to dropping out or being kicked out. Research on management sciences and on psychology stress the vicious cycle of depression people who have been laid off people can see some part of their personal EK altered or damaged like losing their self-confidence and lowering their self-esteem and isolate themselves (Bennett *et al.*, 1995), and in consequence, may not use optimally their social capital as their social network for finding a job.

A balanced emotional capital can help students to reach their best potential in the classroom and as future workers at the workplace. Emotional capital becomes crucial for the youth's well-being and achievement in life. Balanced emotional capital is the basis for self-improvement, growth, and lifelong learning, as well as being able to successfully and adequately interact with others. It helps at becoming resilient, allowing people to respond to stress and disappointment in appropriate and productive ways.

### **3. The development of emotional capital using mindfulness education based on ACT' - Acceptance & Commitment Training (derived from ACT Therapy) and project management**

Emotional capital has been developed in this experimental research using the project management tools and mindfulness tools. Precisely, two approaches: PIA2 -European management and project management methodology) and ACT' training derived from ACT Therapy (Acceptance and Commitment Therapy). Using these two approaches, the objective is to develop trainees social and personal emotional competences such as a better self esteem, self knowledge and relation with the others as empathy, as conflict management...

#### **3.1. Theoretical basis, objectives and protocol of the mindfulness approach**

To develop personal emotional competencies, it has been used the approach of ACT Acceptance and Commitment Therapy belonging to mindfulness approaches that we declined in a training version Acceptance and Commitment Training-ACT'. The approach ACT' involves a higher level of personal part of emotional competencies. This part of developing emotional capital is based on workshops on acceptance and engagement and practical exercises of mindfulness. Based on psychology and positive education approaches, these workshops envisage the development and the research of a psychological flexibility. They are focused on human language processing; they allow understanding how a behavioral inflexibility/rigidity and a tendency to avoid psychological events can be damaging. The educational approach proposed by ACT' is based on learning have to cope with disagreeable thoughts, emotions and sensations that allows to canceling the barriers in useless or counter-productive behaviors for the learner. So, the objective is to help students to find a psychological flexibility and to stop fighting against their painful thoughts, emotions, memories and perceptions, in order to reset themselves in action for things that really matters. The workshop articulates six central cognitive processes, mentioned before: cognitive diffusion, acceptance, contact with the present moment, observing the self, values, and committed action.

Based on a multidisciplinary approach, the Mindfulness programs (founder Kabat-Zinn in 1982) and others based on Acceptance and Commitment Therapy-ACT (founders Hayes, Strosahl, & Wilson in 1999) derived in educational training participates particularly to the development of emotional competencies. It is an empirically-based psychological intervention that uses acceptance and mindfulness strategies mixed in different ways with commitment and behavior-change strategies, to increase psychological flexibility. ACT differs from traditional cognitive behavioral therapy in that rather than trying to teach people to better control their thoughts, feelings, sensations, memories and other private events, ACT teaches them to just observe, accept, and embrace those private events and emotions, especially previously unwanted ones.

ACT commonly employs six core principles to help individuals develop psychological flexibility (Harris, 2006) : the cognitive diffusion as the learning methods to reduce the tendency to reify thoughts, images, emotions, and memories ; Acceptance allowing thoughts to come and go without struggling with them. Contact with the present moment

which works on the awareness of the here and now, experienced with openness, interest, and receptiveness ; Observing the self by accessing a transcendent sense of self, a continuity of consciousness which is unchanging ; defining values i.e discovering what is most important to one's true self ; Committed action is about setting goals according to values and carrying them out responsibly.

The main objectives of this approach were to develop students' personal emotional competencies, to learn about themselves to be able to learn about others, to be able to regulate their own emotions to be able to help others' emotional regulations.. Combined with a positive education perspective, some exercises work at training future educators and teachers students' mind to assess situations in a positive way : metaphor of "half full/ half empty glass" for a positive outlook/vision (cf. positive psychology), to be aware of difficult psychological situations or events in exercises that include thoughts. ACT aims at training people to (re-)gain flexibility in the presence of some painful events or emotions and to avoid to seek at controlling them. It obliges to think about their own "values", (areas of personal, couple, family, work values, q health, welfare, education life). Such a program participates at preventing stress and psychological and physiological impacts of painful situations.

To do so, the program follows a scientific predefined protocol of interventions based on ACT : at minimum, six workshops of two hours. The experimental research was based on traditional design : two groups – experimental and control with two phases of testing – pre-post-tests and the control group for deontologic motives, received the training (ACT) after the end of the research data collection, after the end of the courses with the experimental group.

### **3.2. Theoretical basis, objectives and protocol of the management project PIA2 programs**

Using the pedagogy of action according to Dewey's work, the main objective of the project management program is, the main objective of the project management program is, by working by groups on a common project, students have to learn about themselves and each other, to evaluate properly and to work together collaboratively. Using a variety of exercises we facilitated students' commitment into their projects. This way, students become actors of their projects where team spirit had an important place. In order to constitute the groups, a short questionnaire allows students to identify their profile choosing from four categories: manager, visionary, analyst, and collaborator. More, in this approach, each member has responsibilities which alternate and specific duties which contribute to the team performance. Each team uses "a board notebook" in order to manage project's progress and, this way, each student learns to control him/herself and to develop his/her deductive, inductive, analytic, synthetic and critical spirit. Using a guidebook, students define and analyze the stakeholders and associated risks. The professor, tutor has an important role as a coach, helping and encouraging students to continue and to persist in order to achieve the team objectives. From the first session until the end of the project, students complete tests and identify, using an evaluation scale, their emotional, social and personal competencies.

### **3.3. Researchers, stakeholders and Data**

The IDEFI - Initiatives of excellence in innovative training team on Emotional capital & Well-being & Performance, the University service of Coaching and the University

Service of Preventive Medicine and Health Promotion were involved in this research experimentation. The participants for this research consisted in a group of 132 future educators or teachers of the first academic year of Sciences of Education (valid data: 97 students compounded of 11 males and 88 women students. All the participants were splitted into in 8 groups (19 students maximum per groups.) and 4 groups as experimental groups (XP GP) and the 4 others as control groups (Ctrl GP). To measure their EK progress, we used several scale of measurements and tests based on the instruments and tools used. First, the Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (TEIQue) is a scientific measurement instrument based exclusively on trait EI theory. Developed by Petrides in 2009, it consists of 153 items responded to on a 7-point scale (from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree”). It provides scores for 15 subscales and four factors (wellbeing, self-control, emotionality, and sociability) and global trait EI. The Emotion Regulation Profile-Revised (ERP-R) developed by Nelis, Quoidbach, Hansenne, & Mikolajczak in 2008, is a vignette-based measure. It comprises 15 scenarii describing different types of emotion-eliciting situations. Each scenario features a specific emotion (e.g., anger, sadness, fear, jealousy, shame, guilt, joy, contentment, awe, gratitude, pride) and is followed by eight possible reactions: four considered as adaptive and four viewed as maladaptive. Respondents are required to select, for each scenario, the strategy(ies) that best describe their most likely reactions in the situation. We used also the ACT measurements, the Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS) developed by Brown and Ryan in 2003. It is a 15-item scale designed to assess a core characteristic of dispositional mindfulness, namely, open or receptive awareness of and attention to what is taking place in the present. Co-relational, quasi-experimental, and laboratory studies have shown that the MAAS taps a unique quality of consciousness that is related to, and predictive of, a variety of self-regulation and well-being constructs. The Acceptance and Action Questionnaire 2 (AAQ 2) developed by Bond *et al.* in 2011, assesses a person’s experiential avoidance and immobility and acceptance and action. The 10 items are rated on a 7 point Likert-type scale from 1 (never true) to 7 (always true). High scores on the AAQ-2 are reflective of greater experiential avoidance and immobility, while low scores reflect greater acceptance and action.

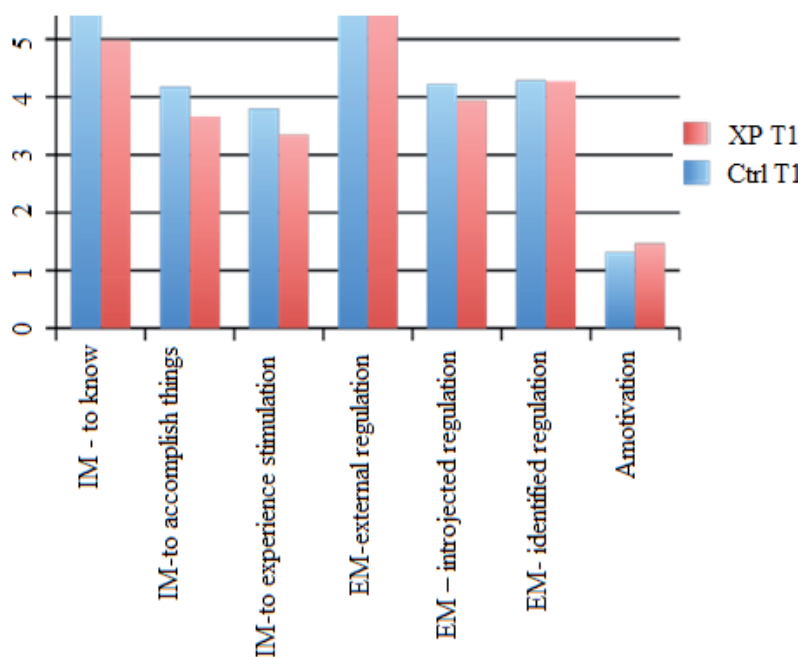
Beyond those tests, we used also the Depression, Anxiety, Stress Scale (DASS) developed by Lovibond and Lovibond in 1993, which consists of 42 negative emotional symptoms. The scale rates the extent to which individuals have experienced each symptom over the past week, on a 4-point severity/frequency scale. Scores for the Depression, Anxiety and Stress scales are determined by summing the scores for the relevant 14 items. The Academic Motivation Scale – AMS (fr. Echelle de Motivation en Education) developed by Vallerand *et al.* in 1989, is based on self-determination theory and is composed of 28 items subdivided into seven subscales. This scale is assessing, on a 7-point-Likert-type-scale, three types of intrinsic motivation (intrinsic motivation to know, to accomplish things, and to experience stimulation), three types of extrinsic motivation (external, introjected, and identified regulation), and amotivation. And the Generalized Self-efficacy Scale (fr. Echelle d’auto-efficacité généralisée) developed by Schwarzer and Jerusalem in 1992, is a 10 items scale who was created to assess a general sense of perceived self-efficacy with the aim to predict coping with daily hassles as well as adaptation after experiencing all kinds of stressful life events.

## 4. Outcomes and Analysis

### 4.1. Experimental Group (XP GP) and Control Group (Ctrl GP): main inter-group differences

Regarding intrinsic motivation, the first inter-group analysis (T1) indicated significant differences between XP GP and Ctrl GP using Academic Motivation Scale. Using a 7 point scale, each student indicated to what extent each of the items corresponds to one of the reasons why they go to university. Statistical data shows that the Ctrl GP obtained higher scores than XP GR (see Figure 2) for two subscales of intrinsic motivation (IM).

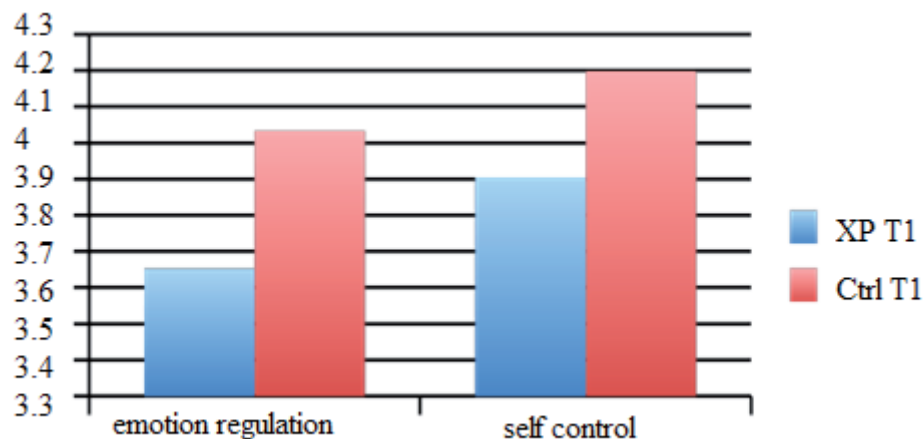
This subscale, IM – to know, (score  $m=5,42$  Vs  $4,99$ ;  $U=745,5$ ;  $p=0,024$ ), is related to several constructs such as exploration, curiosity, learning goals, intrinsic intellectuality, and finally the intrinsic motivation to learn (e.g. “Because I experience pleasure and satisfaction while learning new things”, “For the pleasure that I experience in broadening my knowledge about subjects which appeal to me. The scale IM-to know can be defined as the fact of performing an activity for the pleasure and the satisfaction that one experiences while learning, exploring, or trying to understand something new (Vallerand *et al.*, 1992).



**Figure 2.** Mean scores of XP T1 and Ctrl T1 (AMS).

The second subscale, IM – to experience stimulation ( $m=3,80$  Vs  $3,35$ ,  $U=819,5$ ;  $p=0,04$ ), is operative when someone engages in an activity in order to experience stimulating sensations derived from one’s engagement in the activity (e.g. “For the pleasure that I experience when I read interesting authors”, “For the “high” feeling that I experience while reading about various interesting subjects”). Students who go to class in order to experience the excitement of a stimulating class discussion, or who read a book for the intense feelings of cognitive pleasure derived from passionate and exciting passages represent examples of individuals who are intrinsically motivated to experience stimulation in education (Vallerand *et al.*, 1992).

Regarding the self-control competencies, another relevant inter-group characteristic, identified in the moment T1, was released using the Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire – TEIQue. This instrument allowed us to evaluate the factors and scales of emotional intelligence and the total EI score of the subjects. Statistical data analyze underlined that the mean scores of the subjects from the Ctrl GP are higher than the mean scores of the subjects from XP GP (see Figure 3) on self control factor ( $m=4,1987$  compared to  $m=3,9051$ ;  $U=648,000$ ;  $p=0,044$ ). Individuals with high scorers have a healthy degree of control over their urges and desires. In addition to fending off impulses, they are good at regulating external pressures and stress. They are neither repressed nor overly expressive. In contrast, low scorers are prone to impulsive behaviour and seem to be incapable of managing stress. Low self-control is associated with inflexibility (Petrides, 2001).



**Figure 3.** Mean scores of XP GP and Ctrl GP in T1 (TEIQue)

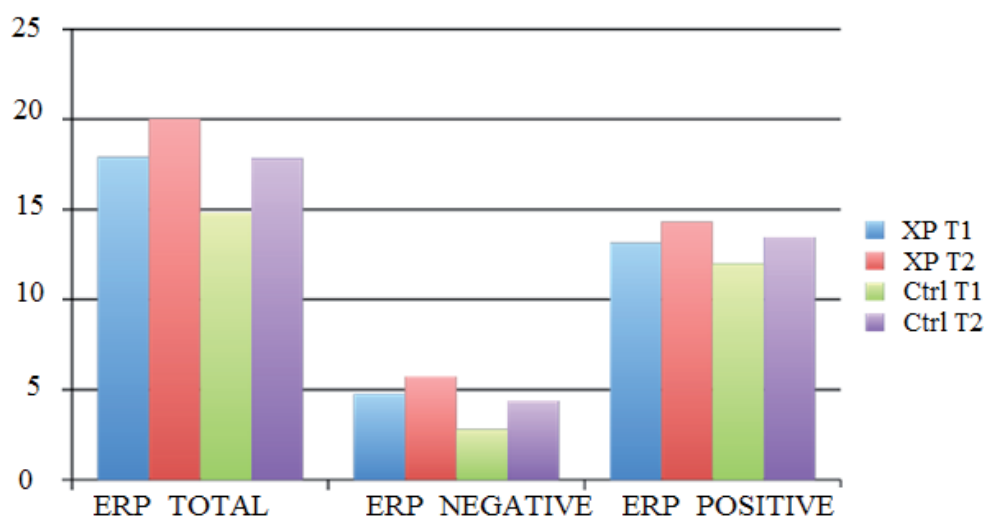
TEIQue allowed us to identify also a significant inter-group difference for the emotion regulation scale of the same factor ( $m=4,0338$  compared to  $m=3,652$ ;  $U=774,500$ ;  $p=0,030$ ). A characteristic item for this subscale is “When I get upset, I can calm myself down quickly”. This scale measures short-, medium-, and long-term control of one’s own feelings and emotional states. Individuals with high scorers have control over their emotions and can change unpleasant moods or prolong pleasant moods through personal insight and effort. They are psychologically stable and they know how to pick themselves up after emotional setbacks. Low scorers are subject to emotional seizures and periods of prolonged anxiety or even depression. They find it difficult to deal with their feelings and are often moody and irritable (Petrides, 2001).

The scores obtained regarding flexibility, via the Acceptance and Action Questionnaire (AAQ2), indicate the same rapport as the previous analyses. The mean scores of the XP GP are lower in the domain of flexibility than the mean scores of the Ctrl GP ( $m=4,76$  compared to  $m=4,44$ ;  $U=816$ ;  $p=0,05$ ). Higher scores obtained by the Ctrl GP indicate greater psychological flexibility or acceptance and committed action towards valued goals. This variable was evaluated through items like: „My painful experiences and memories make it difficult for me to live a life that I would value”, „It seems like most people are handling their lives better than I am”, „Worries get in the way of my success” etc.

Psychological flexibility is even more important as a broad number of studies indicate that lower psychological flexibility, have been found to predict: higher anxiety, more depression, more overall pathology, poorer work performance, inability to learn, substance abuse, lower quality of life, depression, alexithymia, anxiety sensitivity, etc. (Kashdan & Rottenberg, 2010).

#### 4.2 Experimental Group (XP GP) and Control Group (Ctrl GP) : main intra-group differences

Regarding emotional regulation, at the end of the program (period named T2), the purpose of ERP- R was to evaluate the emotion regulation of our subjects and to determine how they usually react in different emotional situations. ERP-R evaluated two forms of regulation. Nine scenarii evaluate the down-regulation of negative emotions and six measure the up-regulation of positive emotions. For each scenario, eight reactions are proposed: four adaptive and four maladaptive. The two most common circumstances in which people regulate their emotions are first, when their emotions impede goal achievement and then when their emotions do not match with the group’s emotional display rules. Emotional regulation (ER) refers to the processes through which individuals influence which emotions they have, when they have them, and how they experience or express these emotions (Gross, 1998). Namely, the ERP-R not only provides information about how a person regulates his/her emotions, but it also highlights the regulation strategies used. Statistical analyze identified, after the intervention program (period T2), that subjects from XP GP have better abilities than subjects from Ctrl GP on up-regulating positive emotions ( $Z=2,284$ ,  $p=0,022$ ) and on concentrating in the positive side of the situation even if there are some obstacles ( $Z=2.851$ ,  $p=0,004$ ).



**Figure 4.** Mean scores of XP GP and Ctrl GP in T1 and T2 (ERP-R)

For the positive emotion component, participants were presented with vignettes concerning positive events (winning the lottery, going on a romantic break, enjoying a scenic walk with friends or being invited on a free holiday). Participants were allowed to choose as many options as they wanted from eight options to indicate how they would typically respond in these situations.



Four of these options are designed as savoring strategies:

- behavioral display – expressing positive emotions with non-verbal behaviours such as smiling;
- being present – deliberately directing attention to the present pleasant experience;
- capitalizing - communicating and celebrating the event with others;
- positive mental time travel - remembering or anticipating positive mental events.

Four of the options were designated as dampening strategies:

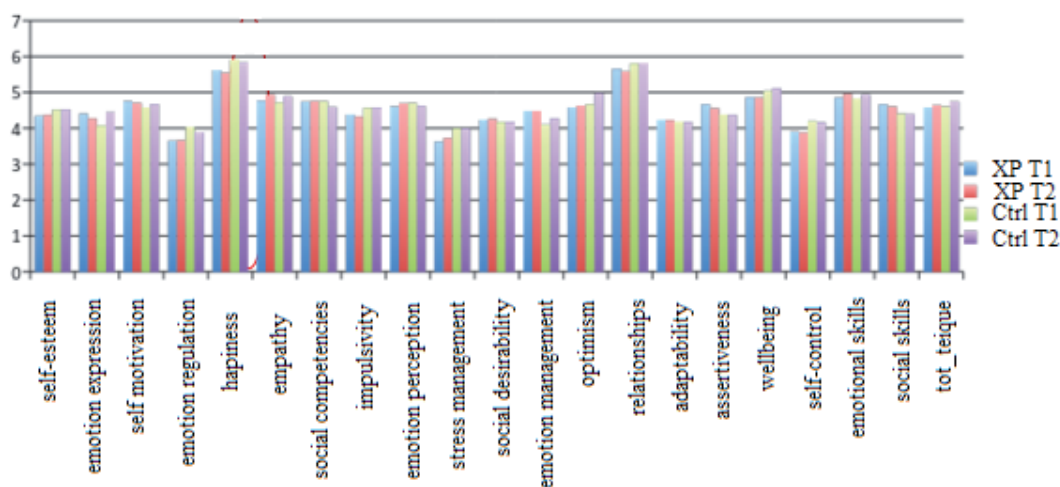
- suppression - repressing or hiding positive emotions;
- distraction – engaging in activities and thoughts –often worries- unrelated to the current positive event;
- fault finding – paying attention to negative elements of otherwise positive situations;
- negative mental time travel – negative reminiscence on the causes of a positive event with an emphasis on external attribution.

Depending on which strategies were checked, participants obtain a total score on eight strategies. Total dampening and savoring scores were calculated by adding the total scores for the four savoring strategies and the four dampening strategies. For the same group (XP GP), we also identified a positive correlation between up-regulating positive emotions ability and the subscale optimism of TEIQue ( $r= 0,306$ ;  $p= 0,018$ ).

This correlation is almost expected, because as Carver and Scheier (2002) underline: optimists are people who expect good things to happen to them and the difference between optimists and pessimist is the way they approach and cope with adversity. Optimism, defined as the persistence in pursuing goals despite obstacles and setback, is not only a state, but can be learned and developed.

In TEIQue, optimism is linked to well-being, albeit in a forward-looking way. High scorers look on the bright side and expect positive things to happen in their life. Low scorers are pessimistic and view things from a negative perspective. They are less likely to be able to identify and pursue new opportunities and tend to be risk-averse. Along with happiness and self-esteem, this scale reflects your general psychological state at this point in time (Petrides, 2001).

Regarding empathy, after the training intervention, statistical analyze identified that subjects from XP GP raised their level of empathy ( $m= 4,94$  compared to  $4,74$ ;  $Z= 2,347$ ;  $p= 0,019$ ). Empathy measures the perspective-taking aspect of empathy: seeing the world from someone else's point of view. In other words, it has to do with whether one can understand other people's needs and desires.

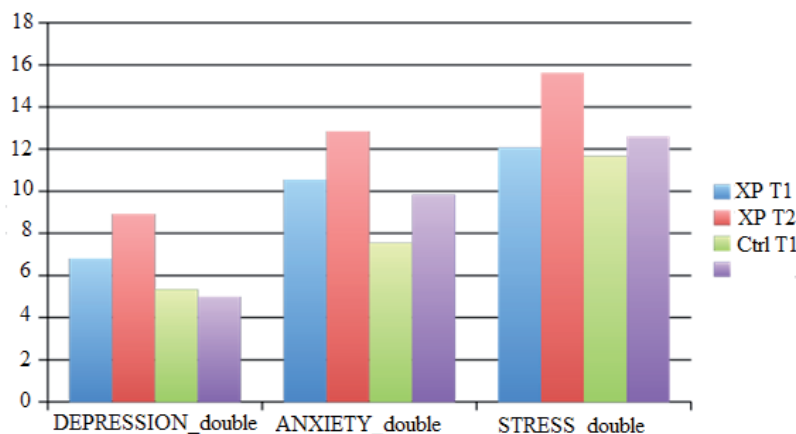


**Figure 5.** Mean scores of XP GP and Ctrl GP in T1 (TEIQue)

People with high scores on this scale tend to be skillful in conversations and negotiations because they take into account the viewpoints of those they are dealing with. They can put themselves “in somebody else’s shoes” and appreciate how things seem to them (Petrides, 2001).

Empathy is one basis for moral action, as a motivator of helping and altruism, it’s part of the emotional connection between people culture and society, but also for developmental psychologist, the growth of empathy reveals an individual capacity to respond to another’s emotional experience, which is a foundation for social and emotional understanding. And this emotional competence, to take only this one as an example, is crucial and essential in social situation as the class situation (Gendron, 2004).

Regarding subjective stress and anxiety, the Depression, Anxiety, Stress Scale (DASS) revealed a paradoxical outcome in appearance (Figure 6). Statistical data illustrated that, after the training (period T2), subjects from XP GP feel more stressed and anxious than before (period T1) ( $m=7,81$  compared to  $m=6,04$  ;  $Z=2,702$  ;  $p=0,007$ ,  $m=5,28$  compared  $m=6,42$ ;  $Z=2,194$ ;  $p=0,028$ ). One explanation for this result is that the training may have allowed to students to better know themselves and to better evaluate their resources and not to be afraid to look the reality.



**Figure 6.** Mean scores of XP GP and Ctrl GP in T1 and T2 (DASS).

## 5. Conclusions, limitations and suggestions for further research

The purpose of this study was to develop emotional capital among future educators and teachers using a learning by action methodology, as some projects management and trained self awareness and self regulation via Mindfulness and the Acceptance and Commitment Training (ACT) derived from Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT). A limit of this research is that it was not possible a random selection regarding groups' schedule enrollment. Further studies will consider: a random selection of participants, the selection of tests towards a more reduced battery of test, promising results to be confirmed with next promotions of students follow-up and coaching in 2nd and 3rd year of university (for the sustainability and the maintenance of the emotional capital...).

Nevertheless, statistical data underline positive changes in future educators and teachers regarding their emotions self-regulation, empathy, but also regarding their level of anxiety and stress as this training helped them to know better themselves and to be able to cope with their level of stress and to manage it. This participate to a better quality of life and well-being, both in private and social sphere. Also, social and personal emotional competencies as self-adaptation are crucial to cope with changes in society and the work world. Developing emotional capital represents a personal, professional and organizational asset that helps people to act on themselves, their environment and organization. Acceptance and Commitment Training participates on this development. Engaged in action based on core values and overcoming psychological barriers of changes, the person discovers flexibility necessary to live better.

To end, emotional capital, which belongs to the human capital in a broad sense, is a singular capital in which people, institutions (such as educational institutions) and society should invest in it, because of the economic, social and personal' returns. It enables at a micro level, sustainable person development in the lifelong learning perspective, as it can lead to less individualism and favour an humanistic and civic engagement, respect of education and work values in the economic and social life (at schools, at work) ; and at a macro-level, it participates in social cohesion and citizenship responsibility (Gendron, 2015) ; which in it all, makes Emotional Capital a real and effective Personal, Professional, Social and Organisational Asset.

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*Developing knowledge through different  
spaces in work-related settings:  
insights from the United Kingdom*

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*El desarrollo de conocimientos a través de diferentes  
espacios en entornos laborales: una visión del Reino Unido*

**Natasha Kersh\***

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## **Abstract**

This article will discuss the notion of spaces as learning contexts and explore how this concept can enhance our understanding of experiential learning in work-related settings. This article aims to consider how employees learn and develop their knowledge through different pathways, and through the different learning spaces in which they are building on their knowledge. The research has demonstrated that employees develop their knowledge through different environments that are often associated with different types of learning spaces: (1) formal learning spaces/academic spaces (which relate to learning through formal courses) and (2) experiential learning spaces (which relate to learning experientially, e.g. from day to day workplace activities). The article draws on the concept of the learning space as a framework for illustrating the interplay between employees' learning styles and different types of learning environments.

*Key Words:* Experiential Learning; Workplace Learning; Learning Spaces

## **Resumen**

En este trabajo se discutirá la noción de espacios como contextos de aprendizaje y se explorará cómo puede este concepto mejorar nuestra comprensión del aprendizaje experimental en los entornos laborales. Este artículo tiene por objeto reflexionar sobre cómo los empleados aprenden y desarrollan sus conocimientos a través de diferentes vías y de diferentes espacios de aprendizaje en los que se construye su conocimiento. Las investigaciones han demostrado que los empleados desarrollan sus conocimientos a través de diferentes ambientes que se asocian a menudo con diferentes tipos de espacios de aprendizaje: (1) los espacios de aprendizaje formal / espacios académicos (que se relacionan con el aprendizaje a través de cursos formales) y (2) espacios de aprendizaje experiencial (que se relacionan con el aprendizaje por experiencia, por ejemplo, de actividades del día a día del lugar de trabajo). El artículo se basa en el concepto del espacio de aprendizaje como marco para ilustrar la interacción entre los estilos de aprendizaje de los empleados y los diferentes tipos de ambientes de aprendizaje.

*Palabras clave:* Aprendizaje Experiencial; Espacios de Aprendizaje; Aprendizaje en el Lugar de Trabajo

# 1. Introduction: learning spaces and work-related knowledge

The research on social science and education of the past 20 years has brought attention to the concept of space as a learning context that has been socially constructed (e.g. Evans *et al.*, 2006; Kersh *et al.*, 2012; Edwards, *et al.*, 2004 Solomon *et al.*, 2006; Kolb and Kolb, 2005). Issues such as interactions between contexts, spaces, learning and individuals are important dimensions that have contributed to a better understanding of how individuals learn through different spaces and environments.

The learning space as a concept has been subject to various interpretations in the research literature. The learning space could be considered in its different configurations, for example physical space (Temple, 2008), virtual space or informal learning spaces (Kersh *et al.*, 2012; Felstead and Jewson, 2012). Bronfenbrenner's topology (1977) helpfully summarises characteristics of learning spaces that present a combination of both formal and informal learning experiences such as the learner's immediate setting, such as a course or classroom (the microsystem) and other concurrent settings in the person's life such as other courses, or instances of informal learning (mesosystem). This theory, as noted by Kolb and Kolb (2005), provides a useful framework for analysis of the social system factors that influence learners' experiences of their learning spaces. Space as a learning context may provide affordances to the learners that enable them to develop and facilitate their learning. On the other hand, learning spaces may also provide not only affordances but also some potential constraints that may restrict opportunities for learning. Drawing on this framework, this article considers the learning space as a space that is constructed by the learning experiences of individual learners, and, at the same time, constructs their learning experiences in the settings that relate to developing underpinning occupational knowledge. In particular, we consider the following types of the learning spaces where adult learners and employees may develop their occupational knowledge:

1. formal/academic-related learning spaces (such as VET college courses /post-graduate degree programme), and
2. informal learning spaces that are associated with environments where learners/employees acquire knowledge informally: through a range of learning spaces and environments where they learn experientially through drawing on their previous knowledge and experiences and developing it further through a range of activities, tasks and projects. Informal learning spaces, therefore, may represent a combination of elements of various learning spaces, such as those associated with workspaces or previous personal and professional experiences (Kersh, 2015), and may involve crossing boundaries between spaces and contexts (Young *et al.*, 2003).

The link between learning informally/experientially and learning through different spaces has been brought to attention through research in various theoretical traditions and by a range of theoretical approaches, including situated learning (Lave and Wenger 1998), activity theory (Engeström *et al.*, 1995), social ecology (Evans *et al.*, 2011) and the theory of knowledge creation (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995). The workplace as a learning space that may facilitate personal agency and motivation has also been recognised as a significant



context associated with individual attitudes and aspirations (e.g. Eraut and Hirsh, 2007; Evans 2002; Evans, 2009). Kolb defines experiential learning as ‘the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience from the combination of grasping and transforming experience’ (Kolb, 1984: 41). The role of the workplace context and the extent to which it facilitates experiential learning have been further accentuated by a substantial body of research literature (e.g. Edwards *et al.*, 2004; Evans *et al.*, 2006; Malloch *et al.*, 2011), specifically drawing attention to a range of complex interdependencies between individual experiences and learning from everyday working activities and tasks. What employees learn both as novices and experts, in the workplace and in experiences beyond the workplace, contributes to their experiential learning. In addition, their personal workspaces enhance their effectiveness, creativity and social practices within constantly changing contemporary workplaces (Kohlegger *et al.*, 2013).

The workplace as a context for facilitating informal learning provides affordances that may contribute to employee learning opportunities embedded in day-to-day activities (Kersh *et al.*, 2011). Evans *et al.* (2006) make a link between opportunities provided by the workplace and the nature of the environment at work, which offer chances for learning from everyday experiences. Learning in, for and through the workplace (Evans *et al.*, 2006) offers a range of opportunities for exercising individual agency and knowledge development. The related concepts of place, work and learning (Malloch *et al.*, 2011) together constitute the nature of workplace learning, specifically in terms of their structure, meaning and potential utility, that facilitate learning at work through individual engagement (Kersh, 2015).

## **2. The context of research and methodology**

In order to illustrate how knowledge and skills are developed and recognised through and in different spaces, the article will draw on data gathered through 3 projects : ‘Enhancing STEM Teaching at Level 3’, ‘Impact of Poor English and Maths Skills on English Employers’ and ‘Adult Basic Skills (Skills for Life) in the Workplace project’ carried out at the UCL Institute of Education from 2012 to 2016. The article draws on data from 15 qualitative interviews, including 5 interviews with social workers, 4 interviews with Fire and Rescue Service employees and 6 interviews with FE college tutors. The semi-structured interviews aimed to uncover ways in which learners and employees bring together different kinds of knowledge and skills through boundary spaces that emerge from different practices and experiences.

Within this article the following research questions are posed:

- To what extent does the knowledge acquired in different spaces: (1) academic-related/formal, and (2) experiential learning/informal spaces contribute to developing work-related skills and knowledge?
- What is the role played by informal learning spaces and experiences in the development of occupational skills and knowledge?

The next two sections of this article will consider aspects of the development of occupational knowledge in academic-related and informal learning spaces. Both the strengths and the limitations associated with each type of space will be discussed and, furthermore, the following section will look at the experiential learning space, which brings together, contextualises and builds on different types of knowledge acquired from other settings and contexts.

### 3. Developing occupational knowledge through formal and academic-related learning spaces

Developing occupational knowledge through formal learning spaces relates to acquiring subject-specific theoretical knowledge. Interviews with social workers, FE college tutors and Fire and Rescue service employees indicate that the disciplinary knowledge acquired from accredited degrees is considered to be extremely useful; however, the affordances of the academic-related spaces do not provide opportunities for using this knowledge in relevant practical settings and therefore, in order to be meaningful, it needs to be contextualised and/or supplemented with additional research and/or practical activities in the workplace space. Therefore, the development of knowledge in formal learning spaces indicates the following:

- the significance of theoretical/subject-specific knowledge and
- the role played by experiential/informal learning in the workplace in consolidating theoretical and practical knowledge (e.g. contextualised in practical situations within workplace spaces).

The data from the interviews further suggests that learning acquired from formal contexts needs to be contextualised in the requirements of specific workplaces. As noted by a social worker:

“We are learning on the job. Skills and knowledge that I acquired from my qualification are extremely useful, however, the role of a social worker is a challenging one, requiring a range of skills. Of crucial importance are the skills and knowledge required to communicate with children, ... families, this comes with practice. We [social workers] need to be motivated, confident and compassionate.” [extract from interview with a social workers].

The significance of theoretical and subject-specific knowledge has also been stressed by a Fire and Rescue Service employees. As was noted, nowadays a firefighter’s role is different from what it was 10 or 20 years ago. Firefighters are now expected to be able to deal with a wide range of emergencies, apart from fire, such as flooding, road rescue and terrorism. And this involves acquiring theoretical knowledge and using new skills, including more advanced Maths skills:

“A basic firefighter has to have a certain level of education, and capability of displaying a range of skills. No longer are they just smoke eaters. They are learning new things constantly.” [Extract from employer interview: Fire and Rescue Service].

Maths skills that are required for officers, crew commanders and watch managers involve its use for equipment assessment, data analysis and statistics, finance and budgeting. However, as stressed, even in the firefighter job role:

“Being able to read, write and calculate is fundamentally important within the settings of the Fire and Rescue Service. Staff are engaged in continuous workplace learning, from the time they start their employment. Employees need to have good Maths and English skills.” [Extract from employer interview: Fire and Rescue Service]”

In the job roles in questions, the need for good Maths skills is essential. The impact of poor Maths skills could result in serious consequences (e.g. health and safety, putting civilians at risk, etc.). Firefighting involves an understanding of what buildings are made of, how fire behaves, how smoke moves and what quantities of water are needed. All those are basic elements that firefighters need to understand:

“If you can’t calculate properly, this means, for example, that you run out of water at a crucial time. Basic English and Maths ensures that all the other technical elements are understood by the staff. A good example is putting foam on a chemical fire – firefighters need to be able to calculate how much is needed for a specific situation.” [Extract from employer interview: Fire and Rescue Service].

However, as further noted by a group manager (Fire and Rescue Service ), formal theoretical knowledge alone would not provide understanding and skills that could be applied in ‘real-life’ situations carried out in workplace spaces, and the novice would need to be supported within their new workplaces:

“The novices come with theoretical knowledge however , they are learning through applying this knowledge in real practical tasks and challenges. Theoretical knowledge, is useful, like, [...] maths [...] but for many of them it seems to be detached from the real world, until you apply it in your work. They see its usefulness when they realise few simple things. If you can’t calculate properly, this means, for example, that you run out of water at a crucial time. Basic English and Maths ensures that all the other technical elements are understood by the staff. A good example is putting foam on a chemical fire – firefighters need to be able to calculate how much is needed for a specific situation.” (Extract from group manager interview, Fire and Rescue Service).

Formal learning spaces provide employees with a theoretical basis in relevant occupational fields, while a valuable in-depth knowledge of the can be acquired only through experiential learning in relevant workplace spaces. Evidence suggests that theoretical and disciplinary knowledge is important and meaningful when it is supplemented by and contextualised within experiential learning/workplace learning spaces. The acquisition and use of disciplinary knowledge provide a sound contribution for the development of work-related competence and further engagement with experiential learning, specifically through both contextualisation and supplementation of theoretical (disciplinary) knowledge in practice.

Interviews with tutors in the context of further education, similarly indicate that theoretical knowledge needs to be supplemented by practice. Contextualising theoretical knowledge within vocational practice is achieved through demonstrating the relevance of academic knowledge to the real-life workplace context. Theoretical input from the tutors would usually be followed by a discussion and/or illustrations on how this knowledge could be used (contextualised) in the world of work. Visual images, video extracts, workshop simulations and demonstrations as well as hands-on experiences for the students are used to exemplify the relevance and contextualisation of theoretical knowledge within the context of Engineering sector practices. As noted by one of the tutors [Further education, engineering department]:

“Sometimes they [the learners] have a theory-based teaching session, and then straight after the session they would go to the workshop to see how this theoretical knowledge could be applied in the workshop.”

Within specific modules, contextualising vocational knowledge is closely related to incorporating practical skills in the curriculum.

“At Level 3 the curriculum could be very much theory-based, so we try to put some practical element into our modules’ delivery to ensure that the students get hands-on experience in using machines and equipment. [...] We are trying to give them a mix of skills, as most of our students tend to go and work for local industries (e.g. small machine shops). [...] We try to arrange our courses the way that students are learning from both research and experiences rather than just from research.” [Curriculum leader, tutor].

Contextualising academic knowledge acquired in formal settings within the context of vocational and work-related practice has been considered as a fundamental principle of occupational knowledge development. Different strategies related to boundary crossing, knowledge transfer and tailoring the provision to the needs of local industries have been employed in order to make the contextualisation meaningful and productive for both learners and employers. The significance of both contextualisation and supplementation of disciplinary knowledge in workplace learning spaces has been highlighted by our respondents. Our interviews with the Fire and Rescue Service employees, indicate that sharpening maths skills for the development of theoretical knowledge is important and meaningful when such skills are embedded in every day workplace activities and practice.

Examples from the social care sector indicated that the respondents have accentuated the significance of contextualising the theory they learned while studying for their degree in practical situations within workplace spaces. The theoretical foundation (e.g. theoretical knowledge acquired through their accredited degrees) provided them with a basis for addressing practical problems, but their theoretical knowledge needed to be contextualised in work-related activities. One of the respondents, a social worker, illustrates this point with the following observation:

“We come with theoretical knowledge, taught as a part of our formal qualification, [...] theories of psychology, education, management. These theories are meant to help us to understand better human behaviour and relationships between people. But the theory, in my view, needs to be linked to everyday practice, or it becomes meaningless.” [extract from interview with a social worker].

As further argued by a college tutor (FE sector) subject-specific knowledge delivery is not simply a mechanical reproduction of various kinds of information and facts in the classroom. As our interviews indicated, subject-specific knowledge becomes meaningful when is embedded in teaching practices. The way subject-specific knowledge is embedded and delivered to learners depends on tutors’ teaching approaches and strategies. As noted by one of our respondents:

“There are a number of different ways you can teach the same discipline, the same topic, the same subject, depending on a particular context. You look at the context, and sometimes your intuition helps you to find the

way to deliver the discipline to the learners. Subject-specific knowledge is re-contextualised when we transfer it to a specific context. Sometimes you need to use different terminology, depending on a context or the groups of learners” [FE college tutor].

Re-contextualisation in this context, also deals with how the subject specifications and generic teaching standards are selected in terms of what to teach, the order in which they are taught, the time that is required to cover the curriculum, and how the different parts of the subject specifications are related to each other and to generic teaching standards. Also, the past knowledge and experience of trainees need to be considered in the teaching process (Loo, 2006: 466).

## **4. Embedding learning from previous experiences in the workplace**

As Pye (1994) suggests, recontextualisation draws on one’s biography of experience, which is fluid, embracing past and future possibilities. Both our empirical and theoretical research emphasised the importance of employees individual experiences and biographies in the development of their work-related skills and knowledge. The significance of individual biographies, experiences and dispositions in the workplace and, in particular, in teaching practices, has been stressed by Hodkinson *et al* (2006). They identify overlapping and inter-linked ways in which biography is relevant to learning at work, specifically emphasising dimensions such as workers/learners’ prior knowledge, which can contribute to their future work and learning; the habitus of workers, including their dispositions towards work; the values and dispositions of individual workers and working and belonging to a workplace community. As demonstrated by Evans *et al* (2004) research, while the considerable learning which takes place in the workplace has been increasingly recognised, learning also results from a range of life experiences, in home and family settings, engaging in volunteer activities, and overcoming various setbacks in life. Our interview data has shown that employees’ prior experiences play a significant part in developing their teaching practices:

“My previous work and life experiences have greatly influenced me in the way I deal with [challenges of the teaching profession]. I have had jobs in a variety of different employments in Australia, the US and UK in both large and small companies, plus I studied for several years to qualify in Homeopathy and Reflexology as well as gaining more conventional academic qualifications and it is clear to me that both management of staff or management of students has many parallels. The best managers and teachers I have had have been the approachable easy-mannered ones, those confident enough in their own world to either delegate work without strings attached or calm and patient enough to talk things through” [FE college tutor].

The acquisition of these skills is often tacit in nature and thus individuals do not necessarily recognise to what extent they use their previously acquired skills in their teaching practices or draw on their learning biographies in developing new strategies and approaches to be used in college contexts. However, our research has indicated that

these skills have proved to be very important for the development of teaching practice in a college context. Various dimensions of the tutors' previous experiences as well as their previously acquired skills are recontextualised in their current workplace context. In this context, recontextualisation of the tutors' previous experiences/skills could be either tacit or explicit. Building on the work of Merriam and Clark (1993), Loo (2008) points out that most life-changing experiences are informal, such as parenting, travel, balancing work and personal life, death in a family, living abroad, and the break-up of a serious relationship. He found that life experience learning was significant in two ways. The first affected the individual, which resulted in an expansion of skills, abilities or self-awareness, or the experience transformed the person. The second finding involved the value placed by the individual, which might create a "personal stamp" on the experience and was viewed as of importance in the individual's life. Our interviews support the argument that tutors draw on their personal experiences and previously acquired skills when they undertake various teaching activities in college contexts. Their skills, knowledge and experiences are recontextualised in their new settings:

"I began teaching Art in 1993, then IT in 1994, at which time there were very few suitable materials available for the subjects that I was teaching. I taught mainly foreign students who were here to learn English and computer skills became part of their timetable. With no examples to refer to I devised training materials entirely based on my own personal work experiences. In hindsight these materials were at best adequate; however, they improved as my academic experience grew. I learned heavily from my mistakes" [FE college tutor].

Skills and experiences are being further recontextualised in order to respond to changing workplace requirements and be better embedded in the everyday workplace practice:

"Today, however, I have changed the way I teach in response to the different students I now encounter. Previously they were foreign students who had high levels of capability and they also expected a more traditional lecture-centred delivery. Now I teach mostly local and younger students who initially at least seem to need more parenting and role modelling as well as academic training. There may be several factors at work here in that these students come with higher levels of IT skills having grown up with this technology as a key part of their lives, yet their academic skills are generally very poor. The focus for these students appears to be more on their basic communication and social interaction skills so the traditional lecture-centred teaching system is not always the most appropriate method. The original simple system of materials delivery I used, based heavily on my previous work experience, has changed significantly due principally to my academic experience" [FE college tutor].

This indicates that the workplace environment fundamentally affect how skills and knowledge are put to work (Evans and Guile, 2012). Hodkinson *et al.* work (2006) illustrated the importance of the influence of prior activity on current activity and the different ways in which actors may construe situations as being 'similar'. In this context, various work-related processes involve responding to affordances and constraints of the workplace. In addition, workplace environments enable individuals to learn and acquire new skills and experiences, which are then contextualised within the same environment or different environment or context.

## **5. The role and significance of the workplace learning space**

The findings support the view that in order to develop and demonstrate knowledge that enables employees to develop their occupational knowledge, all types of knowledge need to be contextualised within workplace spaces through practical, experiential and informal learning. This applies to both knowledge developed through formal learning spaces and that developed through less conventional learning spaces, such as experiential and informal learning spaces. The affordances of workplace learning spaces allow for different types of knowledge to be contextualised and applied in specific activities and projects.

The workplace learning space that provides affordance for experiential learning is perceived as a space where knowledge becomes meaningful once it's embedded and contextualised in specific activities. These affordances of the workplace are related to the notions of *learning in, for and through the workplace* (Evans et al, 2006) . Learning is here perceived as something that “you do continually whilst at work, both out of choice and by necessity” (Gray et al. 2004). Similarly, “most of what we learn takes place at work rather than on formal courses. Work activities, the workplace, the supervisor, other workers ... are the key learning resources for workers” (Malone: 2005: 67). What employees learn as learners-in-the-workplace leads to the development of certain skills or competences, which may be job-specific, occupational or personal development related.

Recontextualisation of such skills and competences is important in this context. Even if employees' work-related skills have been acquired within the setting of their current workplace, the skills often need to be embedded and recontextualised within the same workplace, but within different contexts of the same workplace. Examples from our data include, for example, acquiring skills through participation in a range of CPD (FE Continuing Professional Development) sessions, and then embedding and recontextualising these skills in real teaching practices.

Our respondents reported that in order to be deployed and utilised, such newly acquired job-related skills, knowledge and experiences need to be recontextualised, or in other words, properly embedded, in the work with learners, for example, in classroom activities (for FE tutors) or in Fire and Rescue tasks and assignments (for Fire and Rescue employees) . Transferring skills and knowledge from one space (context) to another is neither straightforward, nor simple. It depends on many factors, such as employees' attitudes and dispositions, regulatory frameworks and the structural organisation of their workplace environment as well as workplace constraints or opportunities.

Our research has indicated that the process of recontextualisation can be facilitated by employee positive attitudes towards learning in the workplace. Their skills and knowledge need to be continuously recontextualised in their workplace environments, as the environments themselves are in a process of constant transformation. The factors that contribute to this transformation include new/changing learners' requirements; changing government policies, internal changes in the workplace, etc. All these changes require employees to adapt their skills and knowledge to the changing demands of workplace environments. Thus, their knowledge needs to be recontextualised and embedded in their current practices.

Fuller and Unwin's (2004) typology of expansive and restrictive workplace environments suggests that workplace environments *experienced as* expansive facilitate

further development, deployment and embedding of skills whereas environments *experienced as* restrictive are found in workplace settings that do little to encourage further professional training or development of new skills. Restrictive working environments are also connected with isolation at work when employees have a feeling that they are outsiders or mere observers. Conversely, as the authors observe, expansive workplace settings are often associated with the feeling of being a part of a team at a workplace. Our research findings support the argument that environments experienced as expansive facilitate the meaningful recontextualisation of tutors' skills and experiences. Therefore, affordances of the learning space, influenced by either expansive or restrictive environments, play a crucial role in facilitating or undermining learning in the workplace. Through engaging in various configurations of their workplace practices, employees use and recontextualise their skills. What is more, as a result of the recontextualisation of their previous experiences and knowledge, new knowledge or new types of skills may be constructed and developed. Another important factor is that of the influence of the workplace environment. Novices entering a new workplace may experience their working environment as expanding, and this would also facilitate further embedding and recontextualisation of their skills. Environments that are experienced as giving recognition to and supporting deployment of their tacit, as well as explicit, skills (expansive environments) assist in further development.

## 6. Conclusion

In this article we considered the extent to which learning through different spaces contributes to developing work-related skills and knowledge. The findings support the view that both types of knowledge i.e. formal (subject-specific) and informal (experiential) make a significant contribution towards developing occupational knowledge and competences.. However, all types of knowledge need to be contextualised in relevant work-related activities through experiential learning. Different configurations of the learning space at work facilitate knowledge development through work-related spaces and environments, specifically through providing opportunities and affordances for the development of personal skills, motivation and outcomes. Crossing boundaries across academic-related spaces and workplace-related spaces enables employees to navigate these spaces while developing their knowledge through contextualising theory into practice and vice versa. The findings underpin the significance of workplace learning spaces as a context that provides affordances for developing occupational knowledge, including both knowledge developed through formal learning and that developed through less conventional informal learning spaces. The significance of experiential learning, as a configuration of the learning space at work, has strongly emphasised the value of practical learning and learning through the practical application of theoretical knowledge, where motivation, self-learning and learning from colleagues play a crucial role. The interpretation of interview responses indicates that employees learn continuously on the job through workplace activities, tasks and responsibilities. An accredited qualification and related subject-specific knowledge are important for the development of occupational knowledge. However, as the respondents indicated, the knowledge gained through formal learning needs to be contextualised into practical workplace contexts. Workplace spaces provide valuable opportunities for both practical and theoretical learning; which requires a high level of personal involvement, motivation



and mentor/employer support in the workplace. Furthermore, learning experientially through workplace activities, where theory and practice come together, contributes to the development of work-related knowledge. Developing effective knowledge through the workplace depends on a range of factors and preconditions, such as professional support, individual responsibility and, what was cited as a very important factor, opportunities to engage in projects that enable one to build on existing knowledge and acquire new knowledge through practical application and activities. The perception of knowledge development that relates to the process re-contextualisation has been emphasised by the interviews. Such a process involves employees building on their current knowledge, and continuously developing their underpinning knowledge further within and through practical workplace contexts.

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*Integrated content and language learning  
as a new challenge of vocational training.  
Experiences from public funded  
qualification programs in the  
health care sector in Germany*

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*Integración profesional, un nuevo desafío profesional  
de aprendizaje de un idioma. Experiencias de  
programas de formación en el campo de la salud  
en Alemania financiados con fondos públicos*

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## **Abstract**

The growing need of professionals led to an increased transnational mobility in the health care sector within Europe. Integrating international nurses into the job market implies public funded qualification programs that train and certify necessary competences of the professionals. Being faced with the connected challenge of culturally and linguistically diverse groups within those qualification programs the described project “Integrated content and language learning (IFSL) in professional adaptation qualification – a job-related training for specialist trainers in the health care sector” customizes a train-the-trainer program to equip the trainers with skills to integrate the acquisition of vocational knowledge and related language skills at the same time. The article focus the results of the first step of the project, a multi-perspective needs assessment to identify challenges of trainers working in these programs. The needs assessment consisted of a systematic document analysis of curricula and concepts of 53 qualification programs as well as problem-centered qualitative interviews with experts, program coordinators and trainers working in this context. Results show a high diversity of programs, participants and their language deficiencies. Trainers’ challenges emphasize the need of skills to deal with the socio-cultural and linguistic heterogeneity of participants. The train-the-trainer program is adjusted to these needs and integrates a period of individual coaching but also team-teaching processes of participating vocational and language trainers. Implications show further organizational and qualification demands of (educational) institutions in this field.

**Key Words:** Health Care; Vocational Qualification; Content and Language Integrated Learning

## **Resumen**

Las crecientes necesidades de personal de enfermería profesional han conducido a un aumento de la movilidad transnacional en el sector de la salud en Europa. La integración de enfermeras internacionales en el mercado laboral requiere programas de formación, los cuales son financiados con fondos públicos, que entrenar las competencias necesarias del personal de enfermería y lo certifican. Considerando la diversidad cultural y lingüística de los participantes en estos programas de formación, el proyecto «Integración técnica y aprendizaje de idiomas en las evaluaciones de adaptación profesional - una formación vocacional para entrenadores en el campo de enfermería» tiene por objetivo crear un programa de entrenamiento de los entrenadores terapéuticos para desarrollar las habilidades de el entrenador como mediador, y de esta forma promover al mismo tiempo competencias profesionales y lingüísticas. El artículo se centra en los primeros resultados de le proyecto. Se necesitan más estudios para identificar los desafíos del instructor en los programas de formación. La evaluación incluyó un análisis y documentación de los conceptos utilizados en 53 de los cursos y programas de estudio. Igualmente incluyó entrevistas con expertos, coordinadores y formadores en el campo de la atención de salud. Los resultados describen una amplia gama de programas y las limitaciones lingüísticas de los participantes. Un de los mayores desafíos para los entrenadores es la necesidad de competencias, el distinguir el lenguaje, la cultura y las diferencias sociales que influyen en la participación. El programa descrito incluye un entrenamiento individual de los participantes también el trabajo de equipo entre profesores de la especialidad y profesores de idiomas. Se asume en este artículo que los enfoques descritos tienen implicaciones para el desarrollo futuro en esta área.

**Palabras clave:** Sector de la Salud; Cualificación Profesional; Aprendizaje Integrado de Contenidos y Lenguas

## 1. Introduction

Because of the demographic changes in Germany, including an increasing life expectancy, qualified health care professionals have become an important part of the job market. National statistics calculate increasing numbers of people in need of care from today's 2.5 million to 3.5 million in 2030. Until 2050, the numbers are to be expected even about 4.7 million people (STATISTISCHES BUNDESAMT, 2008, p. 28). As home care, facilities by family members are decreasing in the same time professional help is to be organized by the state.

Otherwise, care facilities in Germany have already problems to find suitable applicants within the local job market because of the lack of qualified workers in this field (GIRALDI 2010, p. 1). In May 2014, compared to registered unemployed applicants, 22 % more vacancies were notified in the health care sector and over 50 % more vacancies in the elder care sector (BUNDESAGENTUR FÜR ARBEIT, 2014). Additionally, the existing work force is not suitable to cover the demands of high-qualified professionals because of lacking competences (BUßMANN & SEYDA, 2014, p. 9)

Foreign employees represent an opportunity to solve this problem. European initiatives, such as the joint action health workforce planning and forecasting (JAHWP)<sup>1</sup> support need based exchange of professionals within European countries. In fact, in European countries with high unemployment rates many professionals in the health and elder care system are interested in working in Germany (BUNDESAGENTUR FÜR ARBEIT – ZENTRALE AUSLANDS-UND FACHVERMITTLUNG, 2014). This led to an increased transnational mobility in the mentioned sectors within Europe towards Germany (GIRALDI, 2010, p. 3).

Statistical data of the year 2010 shows a number of 70.000 migrant workers with a certificate brought from their mother countries in the health care field (including elder care). The majority are originated in states of the former Soviet Union (22.000) and the eastern parts of the European Union (19.000) – mainly from Poland (12.000) (AFENTAKIS & MAIER, 2014, p. 177). In 2013, an overall number of 73.600 regular employees in the German care sector were foreign nationals (MERDA, BRAESEKE & KÄHLER, 2014, p. 8). Additional special recruitment programs were established with Croatia, China, Bosnian and Herzegovina, Serbia and the Philippines (GIZ, 2013).

Although there is obviously an economic interest in international nurses because of the skill shortage in the German health care system and the German Recognition Act (BUNDESGESETZBLATT, 2011) gives migrant workers the formal right to get their competences justifiably assessed, in real their professional background is usually not fully recognized automatically because of different reasons: Educational curricula and structures in the health care system differ between more vocational oriented apprenticeships and university studies, while academic knowledge is not seen equivalent in general. Specific aspects of health care (e.g. elder care) can be part of more comprehensive education certificates without formal certification (such as in the former states of the Soviet Union). General educational certificates can differ between European countries to get access to a training program in health care (e.g. in Switzerland the general school exam is sufficient to start an apprenticeship as a nurse). In addition, many international applicants are limited to informal work experience in this field (e.g. caring a family member or working as a care helper over many years) without having any official confirmation.

1 Further information: <http://healthworkforce.eu/>

Third country nationals are forced to a comprehensive formal competence assessment in general. Most of the assessment results lead only to a not equivalent recognition (ENGLMANN & MÜLLER, 2007, p. 54f.).

To reduce the possible “brain waste” (ENGLMANN & MÜLLER, 2007) because of not recognizing the initial professional competences brought with the job migrants, national funded adaptation qualification programs have been established recently to support the required competence development processes of participants with respect to their formal attested deficiencies and/or in preparation of their vocational certificate for a permanent work permission in Germany (FANDREY, 2014).

Educational professionals in these qualification programs can be separated into vocational trainers and language trainers. Vocational trainers are usually external trainers (with an own professional background of health care) working as freelancers. Those trainers need to be qualified to deal with the crucial role of language in knowledge acquisition in a new way: They have to design vocational learning processes with respect to language deficiencies and diverse linguistic backgrounds but in a way to promote vocational and language skills (especially an advanced level of professional language) of their learners both. Language trainers are specialized in German as a second or foreign language. Their experiences with respect to health care are usually very limited. This leads to the struggling situation of a lacking understanding of professional communication, language routines or specific language competences needed for health care professionals. They need to connect language learning to language needs of their participants. As a summary, both specialist trainers are not qualified themselves for an integrated content and language teaching process. Both groups are in need for a deeper cooperation to adopt their teaching to the participants need and to support each other with their expertise.

The here described project “Integrated content and language learning in professional adaptation qualification – a job-related training for specialist trainers” (IFSL)<sup>2</sup> connects to these challenges as it customizes a specific program to equip those trainers with methods to integrate the acquisition of knowledge and of learning-related language skills at the same time. The underlying research question can be described as followed: How can vocational and language trainers in qualification programs for international nurses be trained for an integrated content and language teaching?” Connected to the answer of this question are several project inherent goals. First, it is an attempt to get initial empirical data about linguistic needs and challenges in this specific context. Secondly, a practical outcome is going to be derived by developing a real training program that will be published freely nationwide with the project end. Finally yet importantly, the project fosters an indirect support of the international nurses within the qualification programs, by incorporating a new teaching tradition, incorporated by participating specialist trainers in the described project.

## **2. Theory and methods**

### **2.1. Theory**

The project tries to foster an innovative approach of IFSL in vocational qualification programs. Particular aim of the project is to support the participating vocational trainers to increase their competences with respect to the following aspects:

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<sup>2</sup> The project is financed by the European Social Fund (ESF) and as part of the Network “Integration through Qualification (IQ)” controlled by the Competence Centre for Work-Related German Language. Further information about the project: [http://www.deutsch-am-arbeitsplatz.de/weiterbildung\\_ifsl.html](http://www.deutsch-am-arbeitsplatz.de/weiterbildung_ifsl.html)

- Language Awareness: Trainers can reflect the linguistic nature of the job-related learning processes of their participants and their own job-related teaching activities
- Language Sensitive Didactical Design: Trainers can encourage their participants in their vocational learning with respect to their language deficiencies
- Promotion of language competences as part of vocational competences: They are able to integrate the switching necessary for the acquisition of professional education content language skills in a didactic-methodical overall planning of professional instruction in their professional courses

Language trainers on the other side are to be trained in a vocational orientated version of language teaching, focusing linguistic needs and routines in the particular professional field of health care.

Behind this project, goal and intern definition is the pre-understanding of deep interconnections between the language development and biography of someone. Within migration processes, those processes are decoupled and need to be reunited again. This is immanent important, as language competences are a distinctive part of vocational action skills (compare EXTRAMIANA & VAN AVERMAET, 2011). Following this idea, specific language competences for determined professional fields are necessary to interact professionally in someone's own vocational working field. This makes principles necessary that allow organizing learning needs oriented, flexible and personal with respect to individual vocational and linguistic deficiencies.

Forms of instruction that combine content teaching and language teaching are not a very new topic but is discussed from different perspectives and disciplines – including changing approaches and names. In the applied linguistics IFSL relates to the long tradition of content language integrated learning (CLIL) as it is known for primary and secondary education and bilingual settings for several decades (see CRANDALL, 1992; DALTON-PUFFER, 2011; BREIDBACH, 2013).

“The acronym CLIL is used as a generic term to describe all types of provision in which a second language (a foreign, regional or minority language and/or another official state language) is used to teach certain subjects in the curriculum other than the language lessons themselves.” (EURYDICE 2006, p. 8)

As a common idea of these approaches is the urgent call for a profound professionalism of all educational professionals working in these contexts. This includes considerations of cooperation between subject teacher and language teacher (PAVON VAZQUEZ *Et al.*, 2015). Initial concepts of qualification for subject teachers include factors such as role changes, new didactical tasks, diagnosis skills and awareness for the own behavior or lack of knowledge. But the role of general subject teachers as equivalent part of a comprehensive support of second language learners over the whole curriculum is also part of the scientific and school experience based educational discussion about English as a second language learners (ESL) (e.g. MESKILL, 2005; LEVINE, HOWARD & MOSS 2014).

There is a first awareness of vocational education researchers for the increasing linguistic diversity connected with heterogeneous learning biographies in vocational learning groups at the transition from school to work in Germany (compare e.g.



BECKER-MROTZEK *Et al.*, 2013; GOGOLIN, LANGE & GRIEBBACH, 2010) or in vocational qualification programs (OHM, 2014).

Didactical strategies for teachers in schools - named language sensitive content teaching - to deal with language deficiencies in the subject context have been developed in the German speaking area for general schools (compare e.g. SCHMÖLZER-EIBINGER *Et al.*, 2013).

For the context of VET, first concepts of IFSL were developed under the term “integrated language promotion” (compare KIMMELMANN, 2013) or as forms of “associated language promotion in vocational training” (compare BETHSCHEIDER, DIMPL, OHM & VOGT, 2011) from the vocational trainers’ perspective.

IFSL connects to these approaches and their ideas by integrating language learning into the vocational learning process from two perspectives. Vocational trainers are to address their learners’ linguistic needs. Language trainers will connect the language learning to professional language needs, situations and routines.

A first corresponding framework curriculum for trainers in vocational qualification programs has been developed by the author’s team within a former research project. Findings of this project emphasized a need for more specific and flexible offers of professionalization, considering the diversity of trainers but also institutional frameworks of vocational (adaptation) qualification programs, the changing didactic concept of qualification processes involving more individualized teaching and learning arrangements and process support as well as the inclusion of practical experience and output in the training programs for trainers. The project IFSL correlates to this, as it is specific to trainers in qualification programs for international nurses.

## **2.2 Methods**

The described project is funded by the European Social Fund, directed by the Network “Integration through Training” (IQ). The project’s duration is from Mid 2015 until end of 2017. To answer the inherent research question the project is structured in six consecutive steps:

1. Exploration of the Qualification Programs, Needs Assessment
2. Development of the Training Program
3. Implementation and Evaluation of the Training Program
4. Coaching and Further Development of the Trainers
5. Modification of the Training Program
6. Final Evaluation and Publication of the Training Program

The following descriptions are the results of step one of the project, a systematic needs assessment. Aim of the needs assessment was on one hand to capture the needs and requirements of the potential participating trainers with respect to language deficiencies, language demands and linguistic routines in their qualification programs. On the other hand, existing approaches and results about successful approaches of IFSL in vocational qualification programs were ought to be collected and analyzed.

To achieve the aim the project team carried out a multi-perspective needs assessment, which consisted of a systematic document analysis (BOWEN, 2009) of concepts and a frequency analysis of operators in curricula as they are both used in these qualification programs. Goal of this document analysis was to get information about objective linguistic needs in the qualification programs and to clarify relevant typical text formats. A combined research strategy – using network contacts of the funding network for Integration through Qualification (IQ)” on the one side and an comprehensive free internet research on the other side - led to a data base of 53 analyzed qualification programs in the health care sector in Germany. Most of them were established recently. With respect to federal substructures in Germany there can be assessed a focus of responding qualification programs in the states Baden-Württemberg (nine programs), Bayern (nine programs) and Hamburg (seven programs).

Curricula and concepts of these programs were scanned for linguistic competences named explicitly or implicitly, analyzing the vocational content under linguistic perspective. Relevance of the four language competences were documented by creation of a ranking list.

Additionally, project members conducted fifteen problem-centered qualitative interviews (WITZEL, 2000) with experts, coordinators, language and vocational trainers within the programs. Some of the interviewees have multi-roles in the programs (coordinator and trainer). Eleven interviews were made with persons being in the trainer role in any way. By integrating all relevant professionals groups for the qualification programs within the interview study it was possible to get a deep understanding of the macro- and micro-level of the qualification programs as well about the relevant training needs from a different point of view. The main questions for coordinators included the following issues:

- Formation process of the qualification program
- Characteristics of the qualification program
- Experiences made with the qualification program
- Characteristics of participating international nurses
- Relevance of a language awareness for professionals in the qualification programs

Interviews with trainers were conducted following these themes of guiding questions:

- Characteristics of participating international nurses
- Challenges with participating international nurses
- Methodical and didactical design of the programs and course settings
- Relevance of language competences in the course settings
- Personal training need with respect to trainer role and language deficiencies of participants

The analysis of the interviews data was based on thematic coding (HOPF in KUCKARTZ, 2010, pp. 84-92) following the named steps:

- Transcription of Interviews
- Development of the Codes and Categories
- Coding of the Interviews via analysis software MAXQDA
- Deduction of the Training Needs
- Comparison between Derived Training Needs and Articulated Training Needs

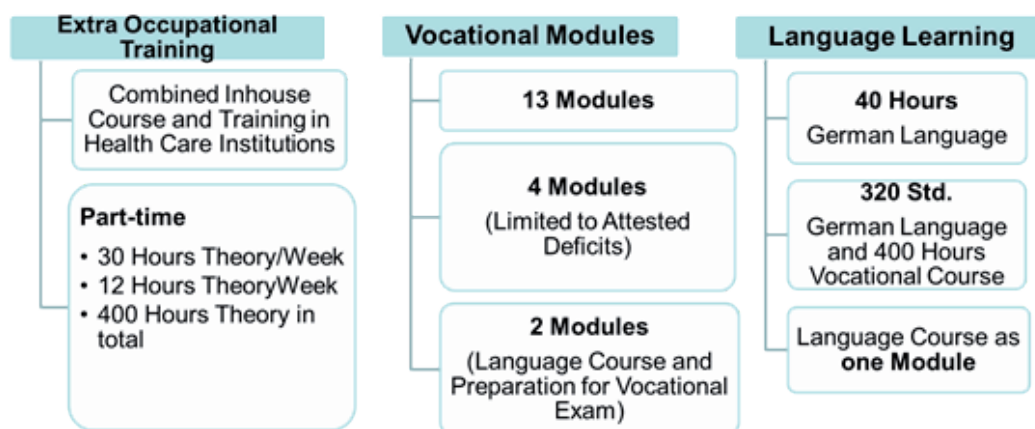
The initial code scheme based on literature analysis about IFSL and similar approaches was complemented by in-vivo-codes of the interviewees. In order to guarantee intercode-reliability codes were defined precisely in a team process and documented in written words. A final comparison between the results of the document analysis and the interview results were used to identify conflicting perspectives and further research needs. The subsequent chapters describe the common results of the data analysis with special focus on the following aspects: Structure, content and final exams of the qualification programs, Challenges for the participating international nurses and the specialist trainers. Based on these results the content of the trainers' training program was derived and composed by the project team.

## **3. Results**

### **3.1 Structure of the Qualification Programs**

Figure 1 shows the variety within the qualification programs when it comes to their structure and combination of vocational and language training. Because of the federal system in Germany vocational training institutions offering qualification programs can vary in the form of qualification (combined in-house course and training in Health Care Institutions or part-time training). Vocational competence training can be extensive in a comprehensive 13-module program (even for totally beginners in the health care) or limited to a reduced number of modules focusing only attested deficits of participants. Short-term programs offer a reduced combination of language course and preparation for a vocational certificate.

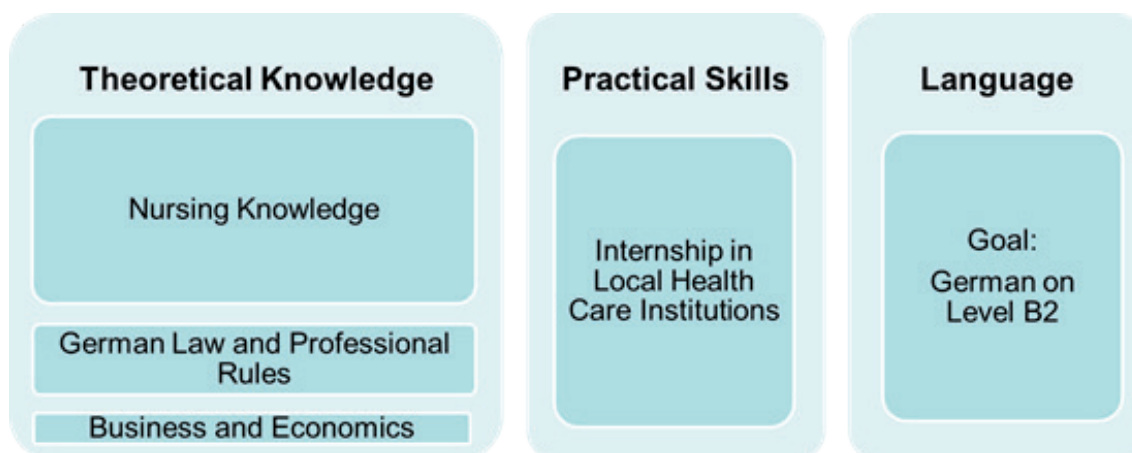
The analyzed programs can be described as heterogeneous also when it comes to the required language competences of participants at the beginning of the programs. Majoritarian, German competences on level B1 GER are demanded. But the overall language level can differ between A1 and B2 GER. Independent of the initial level of participants most programs integrate an explicit language learning part that can differ with respect to length and intention of the overall program between short term language crash modules up to comprehensive language courses of 320 hours (see figure 1).



**Figure 1.** Exemplary structure of analysed qualification programs. **Source:** own figure

### 3.2 Content of the Qualification Programs

With respect to the structure of the qualification programs, the developing competences can be separated into theoretical knowledge, practical skills and professional language competences that are usually defined as German Language Skills on Level B2 GER (see figure 2).



**Figure 2.** Content of the qualification programs. **Source:** own figure

### 3.3. Didactical Design of the Qualification Program

Altogether, the qualification programs are characterized by some common themes and structures but also a high heterogeneity when it comes to participants` pre-knowledge in vocational content and language skills. Trainers need to adopt their teaching to federal requirements, diverse participants but also intra-institutional specifics. In most of the analysed qualification programs different trainers train vocational competences and language competences. Only in few cases, first approaches of team teaching are checked out. This demonstrates that the idea of an IFSL is not established in the qualification programs.

Trainers are encouraged to plan their course setting more interactively but are reduced to traditional teacher-focusing methods in reality because of time limitations and complex content. Group work is often combined with presentations to train for final exam situations. Simulations to train communication and practical skills of participants is used additionally.

Connected to the traditional teacher focusing, methods are media such as handbooks and worksheets to transport as much as possible content in short time. Videos are used to demonstrate practical procedures in an effective way that brings the workplace and its requirements into the course setting. Relevant formats of text are especially linguistic difficult medical texts and complex workplace documents such as the nurse-planning sheet.

### **3.4. Formats of Final Exam in the Qualification Programs**

When it comes to the formats of final exam, the concept analysis and interviews show an emphasis on assessment tests as a combination between a practical and oral audit. Concrete procedures differ with respect to the federal state. In the practical part, examinees need to simulate different central care situations. Additionally some of the programs include an explicit language test. Participants need to demonstrate their reading, speaking, writing and listening competences in real work life situations. This makes language competences necessary to transfer language to different contexts, persons and their language style. Real life situations also force participants to easily shift between spoken everyday language (BICS: basic interpersonal communicative skills) and cognitive academic language proficiency (CALP) as separated by CUMMINS (2008).

Corresponding to the legal regulations (see chapter 1 introduction) qualification institutions usually differ between participants from other European countries and third state nationalists. For European learners with no serious deficits in the legal assessment document the assessment within the qualification program can be reduced to a formal attendance confirmation. Third state nationalist usually need to undergo a comprehensive assessment procedure including all mentioned aspects of testing.

Preparation for the final exam is part of most of the qualification programs. Especially for interactive parts of the assessment tests learners need support. In addition, the nursing planning is part of the preparation process as it combines complex reading, writing and speaking activities following an anamnesis, documentation and conversations with colleagues or relatives.

### **3.5. Linguistic Requirements for Participants of the Qualification Programs**

The results about the curricula, concepts, structure, content, didactical design and formats of formal exams in the analyzed qualification programs are highly interconnected with the linguistic requirements. They emphasize certain forms of language competences and determine the level and kind of way language competences need to be demonstrated by learners in course setting but also final exams.

All interviewees emphasize the relevance and demand of speaking and listening in the qualification programs. The inner course used formats of text require comprehensive reading competences most, followed by writing skills. Methods that are characteristic for trainer-learner interaction demands all forms of language competences with an emphasis on speaking and listening again. With respect to the final exam, all language competences need to be trained from the trainers' perspective.

In addition to these subjective impressions, the operators in curricula are an more objective and general significant indication for linguistic routines and language competences needed for a successful passing of the qualification program`s requirements.

Linguistic operators in the here used meaning are verbal expressions in the curricula (usually verbs) that initiative and control a certain kind of learners linguistic behavior as it is connected with the vocational content or media used (THÜRINGER INSTITUT FÜR LEHRERFORTBILDUNG, LEHRPLANENTWICKLUNG UND MEDIEN, 2005, p. 17). Based on the curricular analysis the ranking of linguistic operators can be defined connected to the vocational content in the qualification programs as seen in table 1.

**Table 1.** *Ranking of Linguistic Operators in the Analyzed Curricula/Concepts.*

**Source:** *own figure.*

Ranking of Importance (decreasing)	Operator
1	Describing
2	Documenting
3	Advicing
4	Instructing
5	Having conversations
6	Discussing
7	Passing on information
8	Communicating
9	Applying different conversational techniques
10	Verbalising
11	Drawing up cultivation and [...] maintenance plans (nursing planning)
12	Presenting
13	Informing
14	Supplying professional terms
15	Obtaining information
16	Explaining
17	Giving feedback

Assigning the operators to forms of language competences, speaking is the highest priority, followed by writing and listening. Reading is at the end. Nursing planning is he only format of text that is named directly in the curricula.

Comparing the curricular analysis with the interview results makes clear, that from both perspectives the international nurses require especially speaking competence. In contrast to the curricular analysis, writing is not giving enough attention in the qualification programs. Reading is more emphasized in the actual course setting than in the curricula. The results about the structure, content, didactical design and formats of formal exams in the analyzed qualification programs are also highly interconnected with the vocational and linguistic difficulties of the participants as well as the challenges on trainers` side.

### **3.6. Linguistic Challenges of the Programs' Participants**

Participants of the qualification programs struggle especially with the particular professional/medical language. This is increased when bridging-languages such as Latin are missing (as most of the German expressions in this field are based on Latin).

Writing skills are also insufficient to manage complex professional documents (e.g. nursing planning) as they often need to be written in a way that is comprehensible to other professionals working in the field (such as physiotherapists and doctors).

Success of the participants is highly dependable of their competence to understand complex tasks or even case studies to apply their knowledge to real life situations in a stringent way. In contrast to this, most of the learners need support in comprehensive reading.

As professional presentations and simulations are part of the final exams learners, need to have profound communication skills on a professional level that even includes aspects of rhetoric. In reality, most of them lack the sufficient vocabulary to adopt their language to different professional situations without reducing to standard phrases. In addition, socio-linguistic competences are missing to interact with patients and colleagues in a way that follows social rules and norms adequately.

As most of the learners have been learning German in different languages courses, solidified linguistic errors are occurring as struggling aspect of course communication. Giving and taking feedback with respect to these, errors are sometimes embedded in intercultural conflictary situations between trainers and learners.

### **3.6 Challenges of the Programs' Vocational Trainers**

The challenges of the vocational trainers are not reduced to the innovative approach of IFSL or the linguistic challenges of the participants but include also additional problems that can be summarized thematically using the following core categories:

- *Diversity of Participants*

This category connects to different aspects of participants' diversity. Interviewees emphasized the different mother languages, learning biographies and levels of professional pre-knowledge or practical experience. This makes an individual adjustment of teaching necessary to reach everyone on his/her personal level within one qualification program. Different language levels (sometimes from level A1 to B2 within one qualification program group) and the missing of "bridging languages" such as Latin in the former education system of some mother countries are named.

- *Learning Tradition of Participants*

The described formats of final exams in most of the qualification programs emphasize highly interactive formats of teaching to prepare learners for presentations, practical case studies and simulations. Otherwise, most of the interviewed trainers attest their learners no skills in problem-based, self-regulated learning or learning strategies. Especially academically influenced learning-biographies of participants are limited to trainer focusing learning, including memorizing of knowledge without embedding and transferring this into real life contexts. Their participants also confront trainers with an authoritarian ideal of trainers. Therefore, equal discussions between learners and trainers can be a new experience and needs to be trained.

- *Time Limitation*

The described language deficiencies and diversity of the learners emphasize the need of an individual content and language learning. Structure and time limits of the qualification programs complicate these didactical claims by giving trainers only a very limited time allocation to train the comprehensive content to learners. Especially complex and demanding competences such as writing skills for professional documents cannot be trained in the needed way. In addition, preparation for interactive methods in exam needs to be shortened to a few sessions because of time limits.

- *Cultural Differences*

Connected to the different cultural background of the participants are diverse point of views with respect to standards, routines, roles and duties as professional in the health care sector. Example of this are hygiene, communication with relatives and other professionals or lacking experiences and understanding of basic care skills (e.g. cleaning of patients) as part of professional behavior. This can be explained by the different professional education systems in the health care field in the originated countries, too.

## **4. Derived Conclusions and Implications for a Train-the-Trainer Program**

The following described conclusions and implications are connected with descriptions of concrete implementation plans derived from these results.

### **4.1 Training Program`s Content**

- *Modular competence portfolio*

Based on the multi-perspective assessment and analysis of challenges in the qualification programs the vocational trainers` training needs can be separated into two areas: A fundamental didactical knowledge and skills set in IFSL on the one side, and an understanding about socio-cultural aspects of teaching/learning in those qualification programs as it is driven by the diversity of participants on the other side. Both aspects must be addressed in a training program to adjust vocational training to the professional demands and learners from different countries. This might also help to understand learners` difficulties on the content level.

Skills portfolios for IFSL based teaching include different competences for both target groups. Vocational trainers need theoretical basics of language learning and elementary language learning methods, but also skills for diagnosis of language deficiencies of their learners. Language trainers need an understanding of the vocational knowledge and routines in the health care system.

- *Action oriented language promotion methods*

As vocational situations in health care are highly complex, corresponding comprehensive methods for language sensitive teaching (that address all forms of language competences in real situation) are necessary. This emphasizes the need of acquiring competences in action-oriented methods that combines the promotion of different languages competences around a vocational situation, such as scenarios.



- *Methods for internal differentiation*

Connected to the described diversity of participants, methods and competences for internal differentiation with respect to language and content are essential contents of a training program. Trainers must be able to adopt their methods to different occupational profiles, learning biographies/traditions and mother languages.

- *Intercultural awareness*

Because of the high cultural diversity of international nurses, an intercultural awareness must be supported to understand possible intercultural conflicts in the future workplace when it comes to communication and language.

- *Competences in Cooperation*

As IFSL is to be supported from both perspectives (language and content), forms of cooperation need to be established in the qualification organizations. Both groups of trainers need to be trained in realizing cooperative teaching (from common preparation up to implementation of courses). This includes a more sensitive awareness for the other perspective of language or vocational trainers.

Based on the conclusions a training program has been developed following the thematically structure as presented in figure 3.

Day 1	
<b>Section 1</b>	Own role as a trainer in IFSL: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Definitions and basics of IFSL</li> <li>• Forms of cooperation in IFSL</li> <li>• Most relevant vocational situations in the health care field and corresponding linguistic demands</li> </ul>
<b>Section 2</b>	Designing a linguistic sensitive group discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Methods for promoting listening and talking in class discussion</li> <li>• Role of the trainer's use of language</li> </ul>
Day 2	
<b>Section 3</b>	Dealing with Diversity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scaffolding as overall approach of internal differentiation</li> <li>• Methods of internal differentiation</li> </ul>
<b>Section 4</b>	IFSL in practice: Promoting language competences connected to the vocational situation of "Nurse Planning" <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Linguistic requirements connected with the situation of "Nurse planning"</li> <li>• Strategies of promoting vocabulary, reading, listening, writing and talking for this situation</li> </ul>
<b>Section 5</b>	Transfer into Practice: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preparation for individual coaching</li> <li>• Team building for individual coaching</li> </ul>

**Figure 3.** Thematically Structure of the Trainings Program. **Source:** own figure

## 4.2 Training Program`s Didactical Structure

The analysis of the qualification programs and results of the interviews also imply relevant didactical strategies of training programs, to build on the linguistic demands and characteristic of participants.

- *Interdisciplinary approach*

Because of the two-perspective approach of IFSL, vocational and language trainers are supposed to be common target group of a training program to experience synergy effects for further cooperation. For a deeper cooperation between vocational and language trainers, interactive social methods are to be integrated that give possibilities of group works forms. In addition, simulations and tasks for self-reflection, interdisciplinary group work and discussion are used to establish a better understanding of the other perspective.

- *Inner differentiation*

Because of their different educational background and expertise, participating trainers might have various experiences with IFSL. Therefore, forms of inner differentiation in the workshop must be found. This is going to be realized by further documents and materials (booklet) given to the participants in advance of the workshop for building up a common knowledge base. In addition, discussions and tasks that address the different expertise of trainers will be used for a reciprocal learning within one format.

- *Practical transfer of knowledge and competences*

As analysed programs show a high diversity with respect to their content, structure, curricula and target groups, it is necessary to address the different situations of trainer working in the qualification programs. Therefore, within the workshop will be a continuous connection to material brought with by the participating trainers themselves. As a result, the transfer of the workshop content is supposed to be supported for every participating trainer.

The described content also demonstrate a high complexity of the knowledge and competences needed for IFSL. This makes the need for a comprehensive training approach transparent that also includes concrete training in the field. Therefore, the training program is going to be followed by a period of two to three months of individual coaching in the practical field. This includes the common planning and analysis of at least one lesson of every participating trainer together with a member of the project team as coaching part. Problems occurring during the practical experience of the learnt content will be documented in a questionnaire additional. A follow up meeting will ensure catching up with these problems as well as giving feedback to the developed course material of every participant. As preparation for this period section 5 in the training program will be used to introduce the individual coaching and to encourage participants to build up team that can work together also inter-institutional in the future.

## 5. Outlook

The described training program is going to be implemented in two different German cities in November 2016 and February 2017. Course resources allow eighteen participants for every implementation. An comprehensive evaluation will show effects with respect to formats of IFSL in qualification programs of participating trainers afterwards as well

as problems when realizing learnt strategies in their real courses. Results of this implementation and evaluation process will be published end of the project in December 2017.

Because of the important role of intercultural aspects connected with IFSL, additional training programs should be established. Exemplary contents are different role models and professional self-understandings. This could also lead to a more cultural sensitive care system for patients with migration background.

Trainers working in the qualification programs need to be financed in an adequate way. This includes the monetary consideration of a more complex preparation in the context of IFSL settings. For institutions, offering qualification programs the IFSL approach might remain as a desirable development only if monetary and temporary resources for preparation and course settings will remain as restrictive as now.

Additional and continuous support of international nurses at the workplace need to be established. This includes workshops for colleagues and supervisors, to design workplace procedures and communication in a more sensitive way to language deficiencies of migrant workers.

As job migration in the health care is characteristic for other European countries, results of the project are likely to be transferable to their qualification programs. Countries with no support and education system in this professional field so far, can learn about possible struggling issues connected with job market trainings of international nurses. The innovative aspect of the project demonstrates also first results that address the changing role and competences of trainers working in those qualification programs. This connects to political questions about the integration of migrant workers and national financed corresponding projects in European networks of Language Learning for the workplace, such as “Language for work”.<sup>3</sup>

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## *Implementation of dual apprenticeship structures in german plants abroad: Boundary Objects in educational transfer*

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*Implementación de estructuras de aprendizaje  
dual en plantas alemanas en el extranjero:  
Boundary Objects en transferencia educacional*

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## **Abstract**

The article at hand intends to learn about companies' attempts to transfer educational concepts by means of a case study. The investigated cases come from the automotive industry and a comparative approach (USA, South Africa) is used here to focus on the implementation and development of dual apprenticeship structures. How do German manufacturers abroad, in this case a German MNC, build up cooperations within very different cultural environments? The theoretical approach is, coming from Engeström's activity theory, the concept of boundary objects with regard to boundary crossing. The results show the different approaches of both cases to build up dual training structures abroad successfully. In the discussion, boundary objects are being identified and assigned to three categories: path dependency, organizational learning and innovation.

*Key Words:* Boundary Objects; Vocational Education and Training; Educational Transfer; Activity Theory; MNC; Mercedes-Benz

## **Resumen**

Este artículo tiene el propósito de aprender sobre la intención de las empresas en transferir conceptos educacionales a través de un caso práctico. Los casos investigados provienen de la industria del automóvil donde se utilizó un enfoque comparativo (EE.UU., Sudáfrica) para centrarse en la implementación y desarrollo de estructuras de aprendizaje dual. Cómo hacen los productores alemanes en el extranjero, en este caso una corporación multinacional alemana, para crear cooperaciones en ambientes culturales muy diferentes? El enfoque teórico es el concepto de Boundary Objects, proveniente de la Teoría de la Actividad de Engeström, en referencia al cruce de fronteras. Los resultados muestran los diferentes enfoques en ambos casos para desarrollar estructuras de formación dual en el extranjero exitosamente. En la discusión, boundary objects están siendo identificados y asignados a tres diferentes categorías: dependencia del camino, aprendizaje organizacional e innovación.

*Palabras clave:* Boundary Objects; Formación Profesional; Transferencia Educacional; Teoría de la Actividad; MNC; Corporación Multinacional; Mercedes-Benz



## 1. Problem statement

The starting point of this investigation is the current discussion on educational transfer. For some time now, efforts were made to develop vocational education systems in countries where vocational education and training (VET) programs are not traditionally cultivated. The German government, for example, promoted measures to strengthen VET in more than 80 developing countries with investing 125 Mio. Euro in 2012 (BMBF, 2014). According to the Riga conclusions in 2015, ministers responsible for VET of countries participating in the Copenhagen process decided inter alia to reinforce the 2020 vision for VET and to strengthen partnerships with social partners and other relevant stakeholders such as chambers, other institutions and companies (European Commission, 2015). These examples indicate the relevance of educational transfer and suggest that the German VET system might be transferable to other countries. This is exactly the crux of the matter: Is it possible to transfer an educational system to another context such as different nations? If an educational system can be implemented into a different context, is the adapted system simply a copy of the original or does its new context shape it into an entirely different organization that has deviated from its original appearance (see for example Euler, 2013; Bliem *et al.*, 2014)?

Nevertheless, the aforementioned examples disregard companies' perspectives. Unlike certain institutions, for-profit companies are responsible for implementing their own vocational skills programmes. Consequently, some German companies try to establish a dual training program. This essay considers the German automotive company Mercedes-Benz – an establishment with 17 production sites worldwide. In several plants, elements of a dual training system have recently been or are already established at the moment. For example, in the Mercedes production site in Tuscaloosa, U.S., the establishment of dual structures has already undergone its pilot phase (in autumn 2011, the apprenticeship programs for the professions “Industrial Mechatronics” and “Automotive Technician” began and have ran successfully so far). In the Mercedes plant in East London, South Africa, a trainer from Bremen, Germany is currently on-site to build up new training structures due to the success in the U.S.

These two foreign plants can be compared to one another. In this comparative context, cooperations – between vocational schools and the employer, for example – and its problems and challenges are important aspects. This generates the main research questions:

“How and with what tools do companies such as Mercedes-Benz establish dual apprenticeship systems in different foreign countries? Do the companies solve the cooperation problem?”

## 2. Theoretical approach

In an analysis of cooperative relations, organizational research that describes concrete activities is especially fruitful for understanding cooperation. Often, this research investigates structural changes, interdependences between work and organization and changes in organizational culture (Schaal, 2009). In the long run, changes within an organization mean that some kind of development, usually some learning, has taken place also in the context of cooperation. This learning requires moving beyond boundaries, such

as “borders in the head“ and directly overcoming institutional obstacles. This process is captured by the term *boundary crossing*, which can be used to analyse learning in hybrid and multi-organisational context (Engeström & Sannino, 2010). Engeström details the concepts of “boundary objects” and “boundary crossing” in his larger “activity theory”.

The term “boundary objects” was coined by Star and Griesemer (1989) in their study “Berkeley’s Museum of Vertebrate Zoology,” where they defined a boundary object as an object that lives in multiple social worlds and which has different identities in each” (p. 409). Boundary objects are presented as “brokers” in the literature (see for example, Kimble *et al.*, 2010, p. 438). This term has a symbolic origin, since brokers also concern themselves with communication between different communities. Boundary objects can help boundary crossing by acting as a translation device that mediates between different participants and institutions. The concept of boundary objects with regard to activity systems analysis can serve as a theoretical framework for answering the research questions concerning dual apprenticeship programs and cooperation problems which can occur.

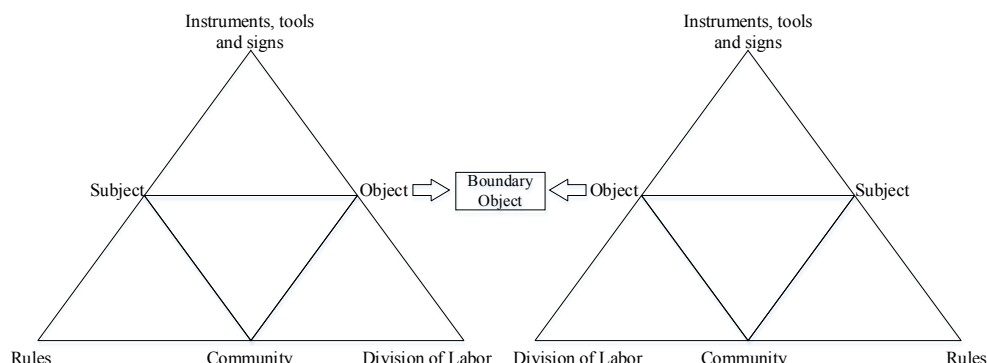
In the following, the concept by Star and Griesemer (1989) is presented.

### **2.1. Types of boundary objects**

*Boundary objects* can be material items, as well as abstract ideas and thoughts. Participants from different social worlds use boundary objects to translate and express their respective interests. On the one hand, they address their aims to the object; on the other hand, they differentiate themselves from each other using the object. Thus a boundary object fulfills the function of the object from the activity system, because an object is frequently part of different activity systems (Schaal, 2009). Star and Griesemer (1989) define four ideal types of boundary objects, these are (1) ideal types, (2) repositories, (3) coincident boundaries and (4) standardized forms (Star & Griesemer, 1989, p. 410 ff.):

1. Ideal types are highly abstracted objects, which describe few concrete details of a thing. One example for an ideal type is an atlas. They use symbols, to speak about the same object from different perspectives. At the same time, ideal types make precision possible in a specific context.
2. Repositories are characterized by modularity, meaning that they contain existing components which are used depending on the situation. A library is an example here. Libraries allow users to help themselves without having to engage in negotiation. Individual components (e.g., books, shelves) can be removed without threatening the entire structure of the system.
3. Coincident boundaries are objects that share the same boundaries but are different in their content. This can be understood as the “lowest common denominator”. For example, the same object (e.g. a map) can emphasize various features: One map may show the most beautiful viewpoints and picnic areas for hikers while another map of the same region may show speedy and slow highways for drivers.
4. Standardized forms are communication forms that make mediation possible by standardization. For example if course participants speak different languages and English is the shared language. Another example is that of a medical history form for patients in which all information about a patient is collected and is sent to other physicians or hospitals if necessary.

It becomes clear that boundary objects would be missing substance without taking into account an activity system (see figure 1).



**Figure 1.** Boundary object as connection of two activity systems.. **Source:** Based on Akkermann & Bakker, 2011, p. 139; Schaal, 2009, p. 34

## 2.2. Cooperation and boundaries

Companies are constantly re-defining their organizations by adjusting their practices according to new social and technological developments. In order to keep up with competitors, customer-oriented services and flexible offers have to be provided. An increased adjustment between suppliers and customers becomes necessary, resulting in the establishment of a successful transnational cooperation (Engeström, 2008). It can be assumed that these transnational cooperation considerably affect companies' work activity (Geithner, 2014). For example, a company will adapt its products according to its competitors, to partner companies and to customer wishes. These various interactions require adequate tools and rules of cooperation as well as a shared understanding regarding the cooperative object. Okhuysen *et al.* (2013) describe cooperation as "boundary activity". "Boundary crossing" acts as a sign of cooperation between and within organizations considering rising interlaced working (Engeström, 2009). Lompscher (2004, p. 158) states that the individual is thus challenged to question the boundaries, to reach a common view on the subject of activity and to coordinate the actions, means, and rules of the activity system; this leads to changes in the entire activity system and in the community to the overcoming of boundaries.

Oswik and Robertson (2009) stress that *boundary objects* are too often reduced to their role as transformation devices; although they actually serve multiple functions including acting as the subjects of political processes, mediating opposite demands, and even potentially providing the means to clarify the balance of power and hierarchies.

Therefore, a high research interest in the analysis of cooperation between activity systems can be noted (Engeström & Sannino, 2010).

Primarily, the focus is on the common object, the shared object and/or the boundary object -- such as in analyzing networks (Lompscher, 2004; Kerusuo, 2006). The special benefit of the concept of boundary objects is that it aims to explain cooperative relations and elements between individuals, groups, etc. (Schaal, 2009). Flynn *et al.* (2015, p. 1) examine the so-called "industry-school partnerships" and notice the challenges of establishing those partnerships, as each partner of the cooperation has its own aims

and frames of reference (e.g., an educational reference frame versus business reference frame).

This investigation will use Mercedes-Benz plants as a case study for examining the establishment and development of dual training structures.

### **3. Methodology**

A major advantage of case studies is that they can draw on multiple sources of evidence which leads to a greater extent of detail available for each case (Rowley, 2002). In this way, case studies and case comparisons are suitable for investigating complex or unknown phenomena (Geithner, 2012).

For this case study, the authors chose the automotive industry as it is a traditional production sector whose various organizations can be reasonably compared across the world. Of course, standards may be different in South Africa, the USA and Germany, but cars produced in all of the plants are branded with the Mercedes-Benz star which represents a high level of quality. So both, the aspect of tradition in the dual apprenticeship system in Germany and the fact that the automotive industry is a global player led to the choice of Mercedes-Benz.

The data collection and research design contain the following elements:

Tuscaloosa, USA (MBUSI):

- Document analysis (articles in the newspaper “Tuscaloosa News”; documentation from the factory itself, e.g. DaimlerChrysler, 1999);
- interviews (with (1) a trainer from Bremen, Germany, who was responsible for the
- implementation of a dual training system in the USA; (2) U.S. trainers who instruct on site at the plant in Tuscaloosa; and (3) course leaders in the college in Tuscaloosa; conducted in spring 2015); and
- site visits to the plant (spring 2015).

East London, South Africa (MBSA):

- Document analysis (articles in the newspaper “Daily Dispatch”; research articles on the South African Automotive Sector, e.g. Bronkhorst *et al.*, 2013); and
- interviews (with (1) a trainer from Bremen, Germany, who is at MBSA as an expatriate from 09/2015 until 09/2017; (2) South African HR managers; (3) trainers from the Mercedes Benz Learning Academy in East London; April 2016); and
- site visits to the plant (April 2016).

All interviews were (and will be) recorded, transcribed and analysed.

## 4. Results

The following questions will be answered in this article, with conclusions deduced from empirical results:

- What do we learn about educational transfer in the context of Tuscaloosa (U.S.) and East London (South Africa)?
- How are cultural and cooperation problems observable and how are solutions to those problems developed?
- What role do boundary objects play in the implementation of dual training structures in foreign plants in the case of Mercedes-Benz? Can the boundary objects be identified?

As this research is part of a project on skill formation at the shop floor level, reporting all of the explored issues would go beyond the scope of this article. Thus, the authors decided to concentrate on several aspects to answer the mentioned questions (see chapter 5: Analysis).

### 4.1. MBSA (Mercedes Benz South Africa)

The role of skills development in South Africa extends back to the late nineteenth century – specifically the period between the beginning of industrialization and World War I. Skills of white immigrants built the basis of craft skills during the early industrialization period, and the substantial influx of immigrants had a “serious distorting effect on official attitudes to skills formation” (McGrath, 2004, p. 12). Hence, not enough attention has been paid to the role of autonomous skills formation. Besides, the white artisanal training that did develop had a strong connection to social programs that focused on the poor and the delinquent. Additionally, an important topic characterizing South Africa during this time was skin color. Semi-skilled labor should have been protected against undercutting cheaper black labor. Moreover, racist views were promoted constraining skills development for blacks. While coloreds had some more opportunities for skills development, the white community simply wanted to provide blacks only the very basic abilities for surviving in the rural areas (McGrath, 2004). Not only was the notion of skill racialized, but it was also gendered. Thus, South Africa has faced a polarized, racialized and gendered system of skills ever since the early nineteenth century.

Mercedes began its production in South Africa within the scope of the Car Distributors Assembly (CDA)<sup>1</sup>, which has been in East London since 1948. Since 1958, parts of the limousines W120, W121 and W180 have been assembled there. 1962 marked the beginning of truck production at the plant. Mercedes-Benz passenger car engines were made out of Germany for at first, with the production of engines beginning in East London at CDA in 1973. That same year, the first C-class was assembled in East London and the first women worked on the assembly line. Mercedes has quite long tradition of building cars in South Africa. Some authors state East London to be the most complex facility outside Germany as it has produced extremely demanding niche vehicles (e.g., the S-class) and passenger cars for other manufacturers (e.g., Honda and Mitsubishi) (Lorentzen, 2007).

<sup>1</sup> CDA Ltd officially opens its doors to assemble various brands, including Nash, Fiat, Renault, Land Rover, Hino Briska, Prince Miller and Commer in 1950. In 1984, Daimler-Benz acquired 50,1 % of shares of CDA and the name was changed to Mercedes-Benz of South Africa Ltd. Retrieved from [www.mercedes-benzsa.co.za/history](http://www.mercedes-benzsa.co.za/history).

This required a really high competence level. To come back to international markets and to export trade after apartheid times in the 1990s,<sup>2</sup> the Motor Industry Development Programme (MIDP) granted benefits to the automotive industry (e.g., forgoing of import tariff revenues).

In 1981, the first local skills and artisans training center, Mercedes-Benz Technical Training Centre, was established as a non-racial institution within the industry. Since this time, the apprenticeship “millwright”<sup>3</sup> has been trained on the Mercedes site in East London. According to Lorentzen (2007, p. 170), “without investing in these shop-floor skills, it would have been impossible to master the plant’s complexity.” This was also mentioned in the interviews by current trainers. Millwright is accredited by the Qualification Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO) and follows a national curriculum. The apprenticeship takes 3-4 years and the trainees learn in the workplace. Trainees have regular school times, but do not attend college or high school. The theoretical parts of the curriculum are taught by teachers in the Mercedes Benz Learning Academy<sup>4</sup> who are qualified as trade test officers. Examinations are developed by MerSETA (Manufacturing, Engineering, and Related Services - Sector Education and Training Authority), and assessed by the trade test officers in the QCTO-accredited trade test center. Most of the practical training parts are conducted by a full-time trainer coming from the production, maintenance and/or specialist areas in the plant. Around 25 apprentices – “appies” how they are called at Mercedes – participate in the program each year. The system of the apprenticeship is dual in that trainees undergo both workplace learning and the school place learning, although both components are in-house.

In addition to the apprenticeship Mercedes offers a new way of achieving qualification that has been in effect since August 2014: The Shop Floor Skills Center has been established in a cooperation with the National Treasury and the Jobs Fund. In a two-month training, young people are taught basic knowledge for production work at the shop floor level. 48 adolescents are in each cohort, starting every two months. The objective from the National Treasury is to bring 500 people through the program within two years. It was Mercedes’ initiative to start the program; it is not only set up to train according to their own requirements of skilled labor, but also to provide qualified young people for suppliers. The South African government supports these Mercedes’ training programs as they potentially provide positive effects on the labor market. East London currently has a youth unemployment rate of more than 60 %<sup>5</sup>.

According to the Mercedes HR department, trainees from the Skills Center are qualified to work on the assembly line while apprentices are trained to work in maintenance and as specialists. The motivation to create a second, much shorter and more shallowed training program came from Mercedes’ internal need for qualified workers on the assembly line, but also from the external need to structure the labor market. Ever since, Mercedes has had the problem of human capital loss to more structurally stronger areas like Port Elizabeth, Johannesburg, Pretoria or Cape Town as people cannot “warm to the cultural backwater of East London [and] hence, [the higher qualified employees] typically leave after two or three years and join other assemblers.” (Lorentzen, 2007, p. 170). Having a

2 From the 1980s until 1994, South Africa’s automotive industry was isolated due to apartheid-sanctions internationally (Bronkhorst *et al.*, 2013).

3 Alternative titles used by the industry which might sound more familiar to a European reader are Electro Mechanic or Machine Tool Millwright (QCTO, 2015, Qualification Number 671202000).

4 The Mercedes-Benz Technical Training Center was re-named in Mercedes Benz Learning Academy in 2016.

5 See <http://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P0211/P02114thQuarter2015.pdf> (retrieved 25.04.2016).

high number of qualified throughputs increases both, the general education level and the chances of employees staying in East London.

#### **4.2. MBUSI (Mercedes-Benz U.S. International)**

The weak dollar in 1989 was responsible for making exports to the United States unattractive. In the beginning of the 1990's, Mercedes decided to build a new plant in the USA. Surprisingly, Mercedes' decision chose Tuscaloosa, Alabama for their new production site. In the past, cotton and crop cultivation were the main industries in Alabama and industrial production was not very popular. Thus, trade union associations were barely present and wage costs were low. At the same time, there was a large number of potential (unqualified) employees. The strong interest of local stakeholders influenced Mercedes' decision: "They wanted to be our partners. Alabama would rise or fall with Mercedes-Benz." (Paulmeno, Public Relations, Mercedes, cited in Haasen, 1999, p. 76). "Significant state incentives" (Apfelthaler *et al.*, 2002, p. 109) also encouraged Mercedes' decision to choose a southern state.

In 1997, the factory in Tuscaloosa began production. To qualify employees, Mercedes implemented an exchange of knowledge: 160 American employees were sent to the Mercedes production plant in Sindelfingen, Germany in order to learn the skills they would need to take up the role of Trainer in the work process upon their return. Another 80 skilled workers from Germany were sent to the U.S. to work as trainers in order to support these multipliers in the work process.

Afterwards, rather informal training structures have been established. For example *training places near the line* or *training teams in the work process* (consisting of six team members, led by a team leader). The success of these training structures has proved successful for Mercedes in at least one way: the M-class was a bestseller. However, the quality was not regarded to be as prestigious as other Mercedes cars. Driven by the Mercedes' success, Honda (1999), Toyota (2001) and Hyundai (2002) opened factories in the southern states, all within a 130 miles radius of the Mercedes plant in Tuscaloosa. This led to enormous changes in the labor market and to the need for loyal employees in order to circumvent potential poaching.

The first attempt to implement dual apprenticeship structures started in 2003 when Mercedes decided to implement the *West Alabama Apprenticeship Program* from 2005. For apprentices, this meant attending high school full-time and working in the plant every working day for the duration of three years (Wortham, 2003). Though this approach is obviously "dual", it lacks essential elements for success, such as an elaborate curriculum, appropriate trainers at the workplace, and integrity of objectives. The results of this early apprenticeship program are not communicated in details by Mercedes representatives. In the interview, the only statement on this was: "Yes, we had some apprenticeship structures already before." (Wayne Smith, HR MBUSI)

By 2005, the factory and number of employees were largely extended; also, the production of the new M-class series as well as the new SUVs (R-class and GL-class) became more complex. Moreover, in 2009 Mercedes decided to produce all C-class cars for the North American market in Tuscaloosa. The need for skilled labor increased.

A German CEO ensured that beginning in 2011, two expatriates from Germany started to develop dual training structures at MBUSI and were supported by a former production employee. A college acted as the educational cooperation partner for the training program. An alternative option would have been to choose a high school, as

it is the practice in the German dual system, but these have a poor reputation and are usually not very specific in knowledge transfer but rather in orientating. Students taking part are awarded degrees that are regularly accepted (e.g., associate degrees and short-term degrees) in North America. The curriculum was developed by MBUSI and the college; accreditation of the courses was subject to the supervision of the Alabama Department of Postsecondary Education. Two training courses were conceptualized: The Mercedes-Benz Automotive Technician Program (length: 15 months) and the Industrial Mechatronics Program (length: 27 months). The structures and contents of both courses follow an existing standard on the one hand, and are organized according to the wishes of MBUSI on the other hand. MBUSI created a financial support and incentive system to promote participation: 65 % of the college tuition fees for the Mercedes-Benz Automotive Program are paid by Mercedes. In the second and third terms, Mercedes pays either 100 % of tuition fees if good grades are achieved or 50 % of tuition fees for poor grades. Likewise, MBUSI initially pays 65 % of the tuition fees for the Industrial Mechatronics Program. In the second term, compensation is either 70 % or 35 % and in the third term, it is either 80 % or 40 %. From the fourth to seventh terms, MBUSI pays either 100 % or 50 % of tuition fees depending on the grades achieved. Moreover, trainees are able to earn an additional income while working in the factory on non-college working days. It is intended that formal learning phases are also carried out in the factory, including at the MBUSI training centre.

A third course has been established for the more technically demanding work such as maintenance and service work of robots: Mercedes-Benz Industrial Mechatronics Maintenance Program (18 months, without cooperation of a college). It is designed as a further training for students who have completed the Industrial Mechatronics course. Apprentices participating in the Industrial Mechatronics Maintenance Program receive a regular employment contract as well as regular payment.

## 5. Analysis

Within both cases, MBSA and MBUSI, the following elements characterize the brief outlines of both programs and developments (see table 1):

- Path dependency,
- Organizational learning
- Innovation.

**Table 1:** Path dependency, organizational learning and innovation.

	<b>Path Dependency</b>	<b>Organizational Learning</b>	<b>Innovation</b>
<b>MBSA</b>	Skilled labor coming from immigration; racial problems and Apartheid; Production starts with CDA	Apprenticeship since more than 30 years; need to overcome structural problems and need to qualify employees	Shop Floor Skills Center since 2014 to train young people for the assembly line
<b>MBUSI</b>	Cotton and Crop cultivation; Low wage costs; high number of unskilled available labor	Training on the job; first dual structures; need to qualify employees	Establishment of dual apprenticeship structures in cooperation with a college



In the following, for each part of table 1, exemplary boundary objects are being assigned.

### 5.1. Boundary objects

In table 2, we inserted keywords of boundary objects which have been identified during the analysis of the collected data. In the following, they will be described in more detail. The categories were inspired by Gonon’s (2014, p. 244) criteria which have to be met if “dual models are to be successful”.

**Table 2:** *Boundary Objects.*

	<b>Path Dependency</b>	<b>Organizational Learning</b>	<b>Innovation</b>
<b>MBSA</b>	Governance structures (Coincident Boundaries)	Codified Knowledge (Standardized Forms)	Vocational Training as a career relevant model (Ideal Types)
<b>MBUSI</b>	Financing Sources (Repositories)	Willingness of the company to train in a dual way (Ideal Types)	Integration of Schools (Coincident Boundaries)

#### 5.1.1 Path dependency

At MBSA, the governance structure of the MIDP is an example of a coincident boundary. The financial support of the National Treasury is a governance item that supported Mercedes’ idea to further develop their qualification system. Coincident boundaries as governance structures are characterized by the interesting background that both Mercedes on the one hand and the state on the other hand pursue an aim (Mercedes: profit maximization with skilled personnel; state: minimization of unemployment) that overlaps with the aim of the other.

For MBUSI, financing sources *inter alia* played a decisive role in building the plant in Tuscaloosa. As this decision was a complex process, the financial matters are a good example of a repository.

#### 5.1.2. Organizational learning

Each form of training requires structures to help trainees and trainers achieve their objectives. Within MBSA, codified knowledge is an important part of the training, as the curricula is highly modularized and unitized. For example, MBSA training programs utilize standardized forms in their overall didactical approach and in their examinations.

At MBUSI, the willingness of training employees seems like the biggest milestone. As this willingness is a rather abstract, top-heavy process, the boundary object known as an “ideal type” describes willingness in an appropriate way. The ideal type uses other boundary objects to become more concrete. In this case, the “knowledge from Germany” in form the of expatriates is a jointly used resource.

#### 5.1.3. Innovation

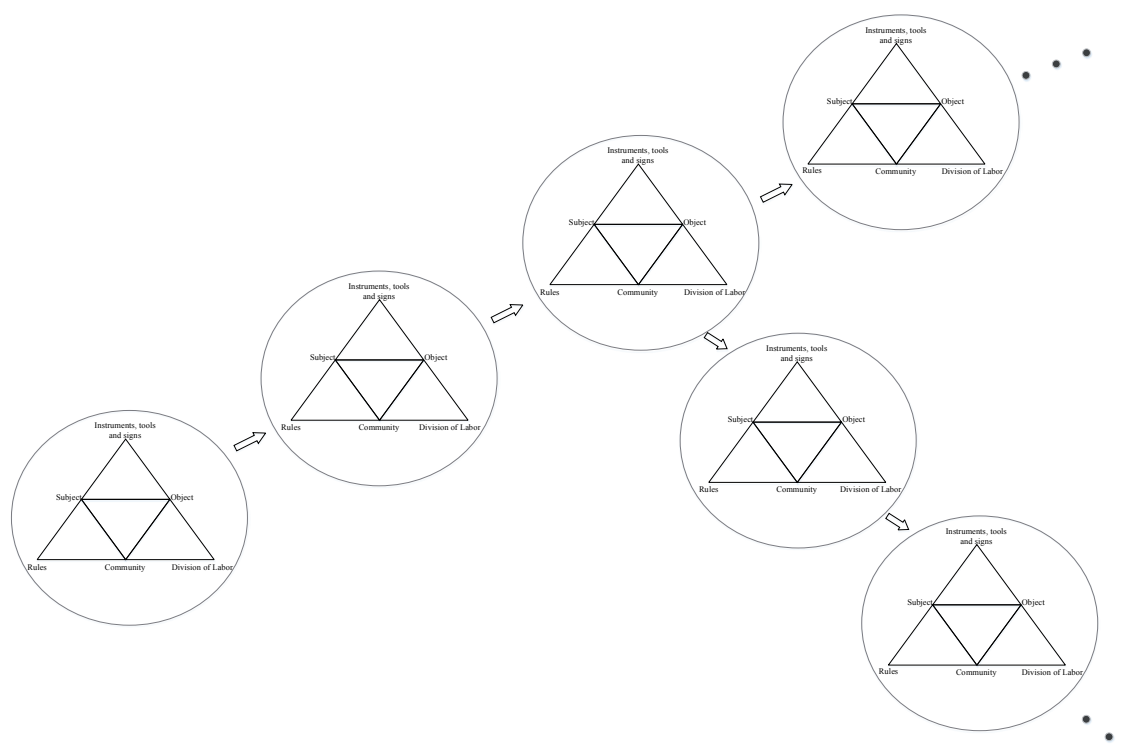
Though VET has been regarded as a career relevant model in the South African Mercedes plant for several decades, the dual training structures reflect an important

innovation. Their successful implementation and operation demonstrate the quality of this innovation. The most recent achievement in dual training programs is the short-term qualification for the workers at the assembly line. These differentiated development is a vivid example for ideal types.

MBUSI chose the path of cooperation with a college to implement dual structures. The coincident boundary shows again that different partners (MBUSI and the college) share a “lowest common denominator”: MBUSI outsources the theoretical training parts of its apprenticeship program to the college and the college has a well-known industry partner with a very good reputation.

## 5.2. Activity theoretical conclusion

The different types of boundary objects demonstrate a high variety of development steps. It is important to note that the innovative aspects in the implementation of training structures of German plants abroad cannot be evaluated without taking path dependency and organizational learning into account. Therefore, activity systems cannot be investigated without taking the aspects of path dependency and organizational learning into consideration. Figure 2 is a graphic of this finding that represents activity systems using theoretical triangles.



**Figure 2:** Path dependency in activity systems.

## 6. Conclusion and suggestions for further research

This research has explored how the German MNC Mercedes-Benz uses dual apprenticeship structures in its plants abroad and what way these are implemented and further developed. Boundary objects have been identified within these programs – leading to the conclusion of activity theoretical nature outlining the importance of holistic research strategies.

The cases of MBSA and MBUSI show quite different approaches, but, are overlap as well. There was neither an apparent, direct 1:1-transfer of dual training systems, nor a simple adaption. A “grown-inside” system resulting from organizational learning can be called an innovation, especially compared to the initial vocational education and training systems in the U.S. and in South Africa. In further research, actual VET systems should be taken into account and factors such as the production system, recruiting system and quality assurance system should be discussed. Though somewhat implied already by path dependency, cultural aspects should be considered more deeply in future research as well.

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## *Educating Judgment. Learning from the didactics of philosophy and sloyd*

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*Educar el juicio. Aprendiendo de la didáctica  
de la filosofía y de las manualidades*

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## **Abstract**

Teachers in vocational education face two problems. (1) Learning involves the ability to transcend and modify learned knowledge to new circumstances. How should vocational education prepare students for future, unknown tasks? (2) Students should strive to produce work of good quality. How does vocational education help them develop their faculty of judgment to differentiate between better and worse quality? These two questions are tightly interwoven. The paper compares the didactics of philosophy and sloyd. Both developed independently, but their solutions to how one advances the capacity for reflective judgment are similar. Central to this capacity is not merely devising efficient means to work towards pre-existing aims, but to reflect in practice on what one's aim are and should be. This implies reflection on what future problems, as well as solutions to them, demand of us cognitively, socially and morally.

*Key Words:* philosophy for children; sloyd education; faculty of judgment; competence

## **Resumen**

Profesores de la enseñanza vocacional se enfrentan con dos problemas. (1) El aprendizaje incluye la capacidad para modificar conocimientos adquiridos a nuevas circunstancias. ¿Cómo debería la educación vocacional preparar los estudiantes para futuras, todavía desconocidas tareas? (2) Los estudiantes deberían producir trabajos de buena calidad. ¿En qué modo les ayuda la educación vocacional a desarrollar su habilidad para distinguir entre mejor y peor calidad? Estas dos preguntas son fuertemente enlazadas. El artículo compara la didáctica de la filosofía con la didáctica de las manualidades. Las dos se han venido desarrollando independientemente, pero la similitud entre sus respectivas soluciones para fomentar el desarrollo de la capacidad de reflexión es significativa. Tal capacidad no se centra únicamente en idear modos eficaces para laborar hacia metas predefinidas, sino implica reflexionar en la práctica sobre la meta que uno tiene o debería tener. Esto implica asimismo reflexión sobre lo que futuros obstáculos y sus soluciones requieren de uno en términos cognitivos, sociales y morales.

*Palabras clave:* didáctica de la filosofía; didáctica de las manualidades; capacidad de reflexión; competencia

## 1. Introduction

Students in vocational education learn to produce services and products. The aim of this learning is not only to be able to repeat school-tasks, but to deliver similar services and products in future situations that are different from the ones in the student's vocational education. Teachers are thus challenged to teach their students in such a way that they learn to apply their knowledge and abilities to unknown circumstances. This is needed to respond to the labor market's demand for vocational professionals who are not only professional in their own trades, but also flexible to the changing demands of society and on the labor market. This demand of the labor market, as well as of earlier and present educational policy, appears somehow paradoxical: as a professional you should both be deeply familiar and situated in the trade's knowledge and you should be open and flexible, even to the extent of questioning and reinventing the professional knowledge itself.

Furthermore, the purpose in manufacturing things or delivering services is not only to realize the production in any possible way. When becoming professionals, students are asked to strive for good quality in their work. A student might have fulfilled the task of cutting someone's hair, serving salad or repairing a car, but the important question remains whether this was done in a good way, resulting in good quality. Vocational education should therefore help students develop their faculty of judgment, to differentiate between better and worse quality in their own and in other's work.

This raises two demanding questions for vocational education. (1) How should we prepare students for future, unknown tasks? (2) How do we help students develop their faculty of judgment to differentiate between better and worse quality? Throughout this article we argue that these two questions are tightly interwoven.

In the following, we examine these questions via a comparison of two didactical practices, the didactical school that developed methods for teaching philosophy for children and the didactics for sloyd-education<sup>1</sup>. This comparative study allows us to describe some central features of the educational processes that further the quality of student learning, independently of their particular content and the national context in which they have been developed.

These two schools developed theories and methods independently from each other, but came to similar solutions as to how to teach in a way that enables the student to transcend previous knowledge, and doing it in a good manner. Taking different points of departure, both came to focus on reflection as a central feature of teaching and learning. In doing this, they offer a concrete, methodological, but still theoretically insightful treatment of the recognition that thinking and reflecting as well as being in action and engaging in a practice cannot be seen as two distinct activities.

Using insights from Donald Schön's "The Reflective Practitioner" (1983) and virtue theory, we argue that both didactical fields offer examples of learning to reflect in practice and provide reasons for thinking that such reflection is an intellectual virtue. Central to this capacity for making reflective judgment is not merely devising efficient means to work towards pre-existing aims, but to reflect in practice on what one's aim are and should be. This implies reflection on what future problems, as well as solutions to them, demand of us technically, cognitively, socially and morally. In conclusion, we tie these insights to current debates on educating competences and using formative assessment to further the quality of student learning.

1 Sloyd (Swedish: slöjd) is the education of manual skills gained in woodwork and handicraft.



## **2. How to teach thinking and producing? A presentation of didactic of philosophy and sloyd**

Every field of knowledge is surrounded by some kind of public myth, which often leads to problematic stereotypical ideas and far too often stereotypical realities. For example, mathematics or technical subjects are often called hard subjects, while healthcare and art are called soft. Languages are discussed as necessary and useful, while sports are considered as fun. Similarly, philosophy and sloyd are connected with images that spontaneously make them appear the opposites of one another. Philosophy is seen as pure thinking about complex questions, which are hard to understand. Sloyd or craft is concrete, and produces real things. Philosophy is seen as a pure brain-activity, while sloyd is considered a purely bodily activity.

The first common task for anyone working within the didactics of philosophy and sloyd is to struggle against these stereotypes. In this article we concentrate on the insights and methods that Matthew Lipman (1922-2010) developed under the name Philosophy for Children (often P4C) and the sloyd-education that in the Nordic countries is academically grounded. In Finland it is e.g. possible to gain a PhD in sloyd-education. We will present and compare both didactical fields and finally discuss some important insights as to how these methods contribute to developing the faculty of judgment.

### **2.1. Philosophy for Children**

We easily accept that it takes several years until a student learns to write, read and calculate. Compared to the amount of detailed didactical tools and methods for, as well as research on, teaching these abilities, it is interesting that the ability to think and reason, to question and argue is marginalised in the didactical discussion. Philosophy is not only faced with the public image of being complex and difficult. At the same time (school) education and curriculum-writers seem to assume that the ability to reason and question comes automatically with the other knowledge and skills a student obtain during the years spent in school. In the case philosophy is a subject in school at all, it is mainly for students in secondary school. It often only appears in more academically orientated programs and is not mandatory.

A noteworthy contribution to change this kind of thinking about philosophizing and critical thinking is found within the program Philosophy for Children (P4C). Philosophy for Children is a set of methods, games and discussions, aimed at improving the reasoning skills of kindergarten and school children. It was originally developed by American philosopher Matthew Lipman (1976, 2003, 2009), to remedy what he found to be poor thinking skills in his philosophy students. They were, he argued, not encouraged to philosophize themselves, but rather to gain knowledge about philosophy. A central insight in Lipman's work is therefore the distinction between knowledge *about* philosophy, the work and life of philosophers, philosophical theories etc., and the ability *to do* philosophy. Lipman wrote and published textbooks of his own in which central philosophical questions were raised without any links to the factual persons and circumstances in which they were discussed originally. The aim was to engage students in the question itself and not in historical facts about the life and time of certain persons (BØRRESEN & MALMHESTER 2004: 13).

“[P]hilosophy for children is [...] about philosophical problems. These problems are not owned by specialists or by people with academic philosophical training, but are indispensable parts of every human life.” (BØRRESEN & MALMHESTER, 2004: 13, *our translation*.)

P4C encompasses different didactical methods, and there is no one distinct structure for philosophical inquiries. However, a central place is held by the so-called *community of inquiry*. Here students, coached by the teacher, independently philosophize about questions they pose themselves. This can be a subject that is directly from the curriculum, or something else that the teacher or the students want to discuss more closely. The topic might be presented by a text, a video, a picture, a scene that just happened in the schoolyard or a visit to the local theatre. After some minutes that the students spend individually to formulate their own question concerning the topic, they are asked to agree upon one question that they want to discuss. Depending on the topic and the age of the students, the inquiry can be divided in different parts, with breaks for the individuals to reflect and formulate thoughts and questions. A central part of the whole inquiry is a closing meta-discussion about whether or not the initial question was answered, about the way it had been discussed and about what should be learned for the next inquiry together.

In these inquiries, the teacher and students work together towards something that could be described as the best answer to issues that, as Børresen and Malmhester say, “are obviously packed into problems and situations with which they are familiar.”

“The basic ethical question “How should we live?” is often formulated concretely, maybe in the manner: “Do I have to go to school today?”, “Can’t we go out and play?” or “Can’t we do something fun?” This last question can in turn lead to questions such as “What kind of fun things can we do?”, “What’s really funny?”, “What can ‘fun’ mean?” or “Is it good to (just) do what is funny?” (BØRRESEN & MALMHESTER, 2004: 13, *our translation*.)

The aim for the Community of Inquiry is the search for truth, understood in such a way that it contributes to develop the student’s self-awareness and understanding of his/her existence in the world.

“In such a community students encourage each other’s imagination, they investigate what is possible, by listening to and assessing the critical arguments that come up, and by reflecting on the conclusions and their work together. [...] It also stimulates the individual independent thinking, the conceptual and linguistic development and the ability to provide arguments and judge different opinions.” (BØRRESEN & MALMHESTER, 2004: 12, *our translation*).

A central question here is how to understand the thinking and reasoning skills, or the critical thinking, which these inquiries aim to develop. Often they are described as just a range of tools, as rational instruments or logical techniques that serve to reach a certain goal that was defined in advance. Here thinking is conceived an instrument for solving problems or answering questions by calculating facts or balancing pros and cons against each other. This idea of instrumental rationality has been strongly criticised (see e.g. SCHÖN 1983), but is still a widespread point of view.

Besides this limited notion of critical thinking, there are also more encompassing notions of critical thinking (see ENNIS 1996, PAUL 2000). Ohlsson and Sigge, however, argue that the notion of critical thinking, when it is elaborated to incorporate all forms of good thinking easily becomes too vague to be usefully employed. Rather, they suggest that speaking of intellectual virtues is a more fruitful way of elaborating on the skills developed in the philosophical practice with children (OHLSSON & SIGGE 2013: 17-18). The emphasis on virtues also incorporates the recognition that certain demands and ideals are embodied in the practice. What is involved in thinking and reflection cannot, in other words, be separated from acknowledging that there are standards for thinking well.

This emphasis on the virtues of thinking, seeks to find a way of surpassing the “relativistic perspective” (DANIEL *et al.* 2002; 2004) that may often emerge on the way to more developed philosophical thinking. Daniel *et al.* distinguish three perspectives: the egocentric, the relativistic and the intersubjective. They argue that children participating in P4C usually stop at the second stage, or only partly reach the third stage after more training. At the relativistic stage, the children are capable of reflecting over problems, but not of questioning their own and others’ opinions. Sigge and Ohlsson describe this as a *laissez-faire* view where everyone is considered to be right in their own way, or where there is no wrong or right in philosophical questions (OHLSSON & SIGGE 2013: 20).

The notion of virtues is central in responding to such relativistic views of thinking. It enables us to shift the perspective from conceptualizing the act of thinking as a simple instrument to the insight that the act of thinking has clear moral implications (cf. PAUL 2000). Thinking requires courage, e.g. to question notions that are generally accepted, or to think independently, to endure criticism and be capable of changing. Thinking also requires patience and perseverance to think carefully about a problem and to tolerate ambivalence and frustration (SCHAFFAR 2012). Thinking well also requires good judgment so that one is able to ponder the arguments to be considered. Ohlsson and Sigge stress that a central difficulty lies in the insight that the rules and principles that are governing such a weighing themselves rest on rules and principles that can and should be argued for and against (OHLSSON & SIGGE 2013: 25f). In this regard methods in philosophy for children also develop children’s faculty of judgment, by enabling them to become better judges of what constitutes good judgment.

When we realize that we cannot have one certain foundation from which other principles of truth can be derived, we must learn to see problems and solutions in a different way. We need to take a position on them as individuals with a will and ability to influence others, not as people who mechanically try to calculate facts in the hope of arriving at the correct solution. When we approach the foundations of thinking in this manner, a moral dimension is revealed in the attitudes and dispositions of individual thinkers. Among such desirable attitudes, or virtues, Ohlsson and Sigge list, among others, the love of truth, intellectual honesty, skepticism, humility, courage and compassion (OHLSSON & SIGGE 2013, chapter 5).

In the didactics of philosophy, a leading insight is that thinking is not a contrast to actions or practice. Thinking or reflection is not to be conceived as an inner mental process (cf. KRONQVIST 2008, chapter 1 and 2, HERTZBERG 2007). It is neither a contrast to action, nor a preparation for future “real” actions, but a way of *being in action*. Learning to become better at reflection, or in critical thinking, is here centrally seen as a change in attitude, as the outcome of practicing a skill or training a new habit. In particular, it is a way of learning, by engaging in practice, what is a good way of posing a

question, as well as the ways in which different questions can and cannot be answered. By engaging in this practice, students discover that they have to take a stand in different questions. Every thought, argument, moment of reflection and decision is a concrete action in the process of discussion.

## 2.2. Sloyd education

Historically the curriculum of sloyd education shows a long tradition of teaching both social and cognitive skills as an internal part of the process of production itself (cf. FRÖBEL, DIESTERWEG, CYGNAEUS, see PELTONEN 2011, p. 314). The aim of sloyd-didactics is not only to trade different crafts and practical techniques to the students. Rather, sloyd requires both practical and reflective skills from the students. This reflection focuses both on the product and on the process. That is why Peltonen describes the core of sloyd as the conception of a production-process that not only accompanies, but also steers the situation of production (PELTONEN 2011: 320).

“Sloyd is a practice within which the person’s thoughts change from concerning simple conceptions about products and demands of the situation in relation to the tools used towards reasoning in advance about how one should approach the very act of production and what the conditions are for completing the act of production. The result of this act of production is a product and a conception of whether one masters the act of production.” (PELTONEN 2011: 320, *our translation*)

Engaging in reflection about one’s production is, in this sense, centrally not conceived as an additional task, but as integrated in the very act of production.

Lindström points out that teaching creative activities should encourage students to actively experiment, investigate and change circumstances, material, tools and techniques. Students develop a habit to formulate problems and to find new possibilities throughout their work (LINDSTRÖM 2007: 12). In the education of creative activities the manufacturing of a product is combined with observation, reflection and the training of sensitivity. Lindfors lists several abilities that are trained by the sloyd-education process; students learn to perceive, investigate, analyse, control, regulate, judge, choose, express, form, perform, communicate and to act socially (LINDFORS 1991: 84). Lindström adds that the process even involves courage and the will to take risks when students are faced with the need to reformulate the problem or to try new solutions. In some way, Lindström says, it is part of the nature of creative activity that experiment and risk taking not always leads to a satisfying result (LINDSTRÖM 2007: 12; LINDFORS 1991: 123f).

In a similar manner to the discussion about the didactics of philosophy, the skills that sloyd education generate can be understood in a simple instrumental sense, as practical tools aimed at solving a problem or need in a concrete situation. Sloyd educational theorists, however, often stress the moral and existential questions that are implied in the planning and manufacturing of things. Lindfors e.g. distinguishes between several levels of reflection that students have to take into account when practicing sloyd. On a technical level, students have to experience and reflect on their own concrete handcraft achievements: “Is the seam straight enough?” This reflection often implies an aesthetical judgment comparable to “Does the strand’s color match with the rest of the fabric?” Further, students are confronted with economical questions: “This fabric would provide better cover, but it is more expensive. How could it be used more economically?” These

questions are in turn related to a political and environmental level of reflection: “Is it necessary to use new material, or can some used material be recycled? Who produces the material that we use, and under what conditions?” Students are working with and experiencing different cultural and traditional heritage: “What kind of weaving looms did earlier generations and other cultures use? How are different ways and tools for knotting linked together?” The social level comes to the fore when students plan and work together during the entire sloyd-process as a team or when they give each other a hand or share tips, but even when they plan to give their piece to somebody as a present (cf. LINDFORS 1991: 56).

Peltonen further deepens these aspects of reflection by bringing in a moral and existential level. In his article “The philosophical foundations of sloyd-education”, he discusses four different philosophical questions and principles at work in sloyd-education. (1) Sloyd raises existential questions about our existence in the (material and spiritual) world, and about the way humans are able and compelled to use nature. (2) Sloyd-education facilitates a deeper understanding of the traditions and history of craft and tools, and raises questions about what characterizes a good practitioner in relation to the remaining and changing features of our history of habits and practices. (3) Sloyd facilitates the student’s own maturation from a consumer of a certain content or product towards a producer of content. The important difference lies in the students’ ability to verbally communicate the meta-theory that led them through the production. It enables the student to consciously discern different alternative solutions, to choose and to realize one distinct solution. (4) Finally Peltonen describes a pacteistic perspective in sloyd by drawing on Michel Serres’ philosophy about the necessity of a contract between humans and nature. Before entering a concrete act of production the result or product should be evaluated with respect to the effects it will have on the material environment and with respect to the effects on the human and social conditions it creates or influences. (PELTONEN 2011: 322f).

In sloyd education, as in the education of creative activities as such, the concrete manufacturing of a product is embedded in distinct phases of planning, reflecting and evaluating both the product itself and the whole process (LINDFORS 1991, PELTONEN 2011). Different theories and production-processes might have slightly different descriptions of the process of manufacturing, but they share some general features. Lindfors lists three phases that are necessary in the student’s sloyd process. (1) The process of design in which the general orientation about the task, the circumstances of the situation, the demand and possible ideas for a product are combined with the development of the structure, form and function. (2) The phase of planning the production, in which the student is asked to prepare the task by searching for further information that aids in reaching decisions about questions related to technique, details and construction. (3) The phase of production, which includes preparing the production-process, manufacturing the product and finishing the process. These three phases are seen as a constant circle of orientation, preparation, modification and realization towards the task of production. Each phase is in itself completed by a moment of evaluation and documentation, and the whole process of production is discussed in a meta-evaluation at the end (LINDFORS 1991: 90, 125).

### 3. What we can learn about the faculty of judgment from a comparison between the didactics of sloyd and philosophy?

We framed our considerations about how to educate the faculty of judgment with two questions. (1) How can vocational education help students develop their faculty of judgment, to ensure that they not only repeat the skills from their educational training, but transcend their knowledge and modify it to yet unknown situations? (2) How can students learn to differentiate between better and worse quality in their own and in other's work?

In the following we want to bring to the fore some similarities in the two contexts we examined to throw light on how students develop their faculty of judgment and how teachers can be of aid in this. Although seemingly distant from each other, the one concerned with, as it seems, pure reflection and the other with pure technique, this short introduction into their basic assumptions and methods already showed that neither the didactics of P4C nor the didactics of sloyd can be reduced to either gaining factual knowledge, applying knowledge or learning a technique.

Our main interest in the didactic of sloyd and philosophy, here, is the central notion given to learning to reflect in and on one's practice. Both didactical schools have developed methods for learning to reflect on one's thoughts and actions. In this respect, they contribute to the long history of ideas in which the division between theory and practice is critically discussed and questioned. We begin by discussing central features of this reflection in relation to Donald Schön's notion of reflection in practice. We submit, with Schön, that becoming good practitioners involves the ability not merely to devise means to realize previously established goals and to find solutions to problems or tasks that confront us. It also involves the ability to reflect on and articulate what the good goals are within our practices. However, we deepen this point by considering how such reflection depends on the shared understanding of a community of what is involved in a practice. We then go beyond Schön's account of reflection in action, by suggesting that thinking about what the problem is, or what is a good way of construing the situation, as a shared social practice, also raise moral questions. This is seen in the emphasis of intellectual virtues in P4C, and in the need to place one's reflections in an ethico-existential setting within sloyd.

#### 3.1. Donald Schön on being a reflective practitioner

In *The Reflective Practitioner* Donald Schön introduces a fruitful analytical distinction between "knowing-in-action" and "reflecting-in-action" (SCHÖN 1983: 50-58). The first notion asks us to recall the know-how involved in mastering a practice. This is the sense in which doing something is not to be equated with blindly applying one's knowledge or a technique, but involves a form of seeing, a form of knowledge of *how* something is done that is often tacit. This also points to the ways in which knowledge, in the sense of know how, is embodied. The knowledge manifests itself in the way we react—seemingly without thinking—to unknown situations in an adequate way. The second notion rather calls on our ability to at different points articulate this tacit, intuitive, knowledge. Both these forms of reflection can be seen in our two examples.

The notion of knowing in action alerts us to the ways in which the knowledge sought in practicing a trade, is only available through training. It sits, as it were, in the skilled hands, in the familiarity with working with materials and tools that is gained through training, but also in the feeling of security after learning to pose one's question in a clear way. Certainly a person can be said to have some knowledge of what it is to sew a straight seam on a sewing machine, or hit a nail with a hammer, without having personal experience of doing it (cf. HAMLIN 1994, p. 218-219). Someone can be able to distinguish straight seams from uneven ones, and even know methods for keeping the fabric straight. Yet they may not be able to sew one themselves, because they are not used to the resistance provided by both fabric and sewing machine. Similarly someone might know that nails are used to fasten two pieces of wood, yet be unable to use a hammer to do it, not knowing how to allow the force of the hand to run through the hammer to the head of the nail. However, there are also cases in which the knowledge *that* "One should hold it like this and not like that" can only be obtained by engaging in the actual practice. Without doing it, one cannot even perceive the difference in how it should be held. In coming to master this technique, it is also clear that many of the initial considerations fall into the background, and thus become more tacit. One does not need to think about how to hold the hammer, rather the tool becomes an extension of one's body.

This notion of an embodied, tacit know-how, obtained through practice, is clear enough in the case of sloyd didactics. Nevertheless, it is also an aspect of philosophical practice. Learning to give voice to one's thought does not only involve a process of transmission, where something inner, a mental process, is turned into something outer, audible words and sentences. Giving voice to one's thoughts involves learning to use one's voice as an instrument, to say something without stumbling on the words, to speak slowly and clearly. Here, practice is usually needed to overcome the bodily discomfort associated with the nervousness, shame and fear of speaking in front of a group of people. It involves the embodied experience of taking a stand on an issue, sometimes even literally, revealing one's thoughts, and oneself in the action. It also involves presenting one's thoughts in an orderly way, as well as learning to speak in full sentences and framing one's sentences in a manner that makes the content of one's thought clear; "I don't think this is a good argument because ..." "Now, I take a stand on this..." "Now, I give an example of that..." Here there is no simple distinction between the form and content of one's thoughts. In giving them this form, one is able to see exactly what one's thoughts are.

The notion of knowing-in-action, shows how familiarity with a practice itself is a form of knowledge. Turning to "reflecting-in-action" points to ways in which this tacit knowledge can be transformed by finding ways of articulating it. Reflection for Schön is not just a means of finding solutions to pre-given problems. This again introduces an instrumental understanding of reflection, where reflection is conceived as a means to reaching certain aims. Rather Schön submits that good practitioners are not only problem solvers, but framers or setters of problems. Speaking about the significance of recognizing problem setting as a central characteristic of being professional, he writes,

"although problem setting is a necessary condition for problem solving, it is not itself a technical problem. When we set the problem, we select what we will treat as the 'things' of the situation, we set the boundaries of our attention to it, and we impose upon it a coherence which allows us to say what is wrong and in what direction the situation needs to be changed. Problem setting is a process in which, interactively, we *name* the things to which we will attend and *frame* the context in which we will attend to them." (SCHÖN, 1983: 40)

This aspect of reflection is embedded in both didactical methods that let students constantly move between their doing and their reflection, at three stages of their action, *planning, reflecting in one's action, and evaluation*. For analytical purposes, we describe these features as part of three different stages. However, engaging in a practice involves an ongoing movement between them.

The first stage appears in the *initial* questions, “What is my problem?” “What is my plan?” “What do I want to do?” “How should I do it?” Both didactical schools stress the importance of initially carefully focusing on a systematic analysis of what actually is the question to discuss or the task to solve by a concrete production. The process starts with a separate phase in which students and teachers consciously discuss the starting point of the student's endeavor. Problem setting is an essential feature of the practice in which both didactics involve students. This answers to the insight that seeking out what the problem is, is essential to the method one chooses for solving it.

The second stage is the *ongoing* reflective endeavor of the philosophical inquiry or the sloyd process. This is characterized by questions such as, “What am I doing now?” “How does this contribute to doing what I planned?” Central to this stage is the realization that a failure to follow one's plan, may result in a failure to do what one was supposed to do. If one e.g. is about to make a shirt out of limited amount of fabric, one needs a plan for how to make the most of the material, but one also needs to take care to follow the plan. Otherwise, one may end up unable to make a shirt, for lack of useable material. Significantly, however, this reflection may also involve adjusting and at some points redefining one's plan to the present situation. This involves the constant redefinition of the problem and the challenges one faces, i.e. Schön's problem setting, when one receives more detailed knowledge of e.g. the material used and specific production-circumstances.

The final stage occurs in the assessment of what I have done, and whether I could have done something differently. “What did I do?” “Did I solve the problem?” “Did I formulate it in a good way?” Here, both P4C and sloyd-education emphasize the importance of meta-reflection *at the end* of each part of the process and at the end of the process as a whole. Even here the reflection is directed towards the process or discussion and towards the results of them. “Did we get an answer to our question”, “Did I manufacture a good product?”, “Precisely why or why not did the discussion and the production succeed?”

Both the didactics of philosophy and of sloyd formulate concrete methods that trade the knowledge of earlier generations but also provide a necessary distance and space to plan solutions, to constantly evaluate the process and the results, to think of alternative solutions, and to plan new steps. Significantly, this procedure has no given end and no given content. Every discussion and insight can be deepened further and every product can be improved in some way. It confronts students with the openness of future situations and develops their flexibility to adapt and to even question the traded knowledge, i.e. to transcend knowledge based on educated judgments.

These features of the reflective process develop the students' ability to make judgment in unknown situations in at least three ways. (1) They strengthen the ability to see different options and possibilities with which a concrete situation could be improved or a problem solved. This requires imagination, creativity and innovative thinking. (2) They further the ability to ponder the different demands that the concrete situation imposes on the product, service or argument. This requires sensitivity for the particularity of every situation. (3) They advance the ability to ponder what needs to be implemented of



one's own specific knowledge and skills. This requires a realistic estimation of one's own abilities and one's available resources. In this way both the didactics of philosophy and of sloyd ensure a constant challenge for the students to exceed, i.e. to transcend, their factual knowledge, their skills and routines in a certain action.

In these ways, both schools provide answers to how one can initiate, structure and maintain the learning process in such a way that the students are able to modify their knowledge in new circumstances. Yet, it is significant that what the students learn in doing this, on these accounts, is not a capacity or skill of its own, but something that comes with learning the practice, by becoming reflective practitioners. Every act of learning, as it were, involves the ability to transcend previous knowledge: the concept of learning itself implies this ability. In education, we differentiate clearly between *learning*—the person understands a certain content—and *imitation*—the person just repeats something without an understanding of their own (see e.g. KANT in LEHMANN 1979: 77). In these ways, learning as a concept implies the embodiment and transformation of knowledge into insights and abilities of our own. At the same time, we will see that knowledge also forms, changes and develops us as human beings.

### **3.2. Meta-reflection as a way of developing a shared understanding**

At the meta-level of discussion, after a shared experience of engaging in an activity in philosophy and sloyd, several aspects of learning are made possible and apparent. The meta-reflection addresses the group and the collective processes. Both a philosophical discussion and the manufacturing of a product are joint endeavors, even though there are situations in which the individual students are asked to think of their own answer to a certain question or in situations where the students are working on their own with a product or parts of a shared product. The joint group situation also underlies the individual tasks, both on a seemingly superficial level and on an existential level.

Børresen & Malmhøster touch on these two levels when they summarize the two main reasons to allow children to philosophize.

“It's good and it's fun. The students discover the benefits when they notice that they can solve problems by thinking for themselves, and when their own experience is of value. Furthermore, such discoveries are often enjoyable: finding the absurd sides of an opportunity for example. Games and exercises are obviously fun as long as they last, but kids notice gradually that what they do is part of a larger context, too. They sometimes say that they learn to think better. They rarely think about all the fundamental and everyday concepts they constantly practice in different contexts. But this is finally what first and foremost helps to create and increase meaning for the children - both in school and in life in general.” (BØRRESEN & MALMHØSTER 2004: 20, *our translation*).

Experiencing themselves as part of a community, is here central to the students' learning. At its best this enables the existential experience of being welcomed in a group that on the one hand sets and develops frames for actions and behavior, and on the other hand welcomes them as individuals with voices of their own.

At a first glance these two aspects appear paradoxical or impossible. Nevertheless, the ability to develop a voice of one's own is essentially linked to a shared community with others (SCHAFFAR 2014). What might look like a group's power to limit a student's individuality, from

one perspective, can, from another perspective, be seen as the frame of criteria within which it is possible to speak of the individual's effort as being directed towards a possible product or an answer in the first place.

Consider this in relation to philosophizing. It is often stated that in philosophy there is no one correct answer. This can be said as an encouragement to students to dare to say what they think on an issue, without thinking that they will fail by giving the wrong answer. As we saw, such a statement often leads to a form of relativism in the initial stages of being introduced to philosophy. Yet, the point of this is not that anything the student says serves equally well as an answer to the question. Rather they offer their thoughts as a contribution to the joint endeavor of trying out what counts as a real answer to the question. Some students will always try to respond in an arbitrary, random, merely funny or meaningless way, but the onus is on the students, individually and in the group, to show why their thoughts can be seen as answering the question, and furthermore as providing a good answer to it. Thus they are asked to provide *convincing arguments*, not mere opinions.

The meta-reflection offers the opportunity to delve deeper into this issue. There one raises questions such as, "What did we learn?" "What did we agree and disagree upon" but also "Did we listen well?" and "Should we change something?" At this stage of meta-reflection it becomes obvious that a discussion is not possible if some people are never serious in what they say, if they are not able to explain and develop their thoughts. However, the discussion also fails if one does not take the time to listen to what people say, when they are serious. The group and the shared desire to understand an issue here act as a counterpart to random individual utterances. Such utterances should also not be taken as an expression of the individual's freedom of speech. If the others do not understand what the person is saying, it is not an act of speech, in the sense that others are asked to take it into account in their further discussion.

Similarly we can see the need of a community in the process of production. On the one hand, there is no one right expression in the context of creativity. On the other hand, as the hermeneutic tradition has shown, it is only in contact with the responses of others that it is possible to discuss the meaning of the work. A product can be more or less useful, beautiful or fitting to certain needs, but to judge whether it is requires a shared community that reflects on both the product itself and on the criteria used in judging it. The individual students are not able to define on their own what is understandable, useful, beautiful or serious, rather it is in relation to another, and to a shared community that such questions arise.

Reflection, and significantly self-reflection, is in that way, something that essentially happens in interaction with each other (NYMAN 2012). In these respects P4C and sloyd-education shares many of the features of reasoning about learning, that are seen in the move in educational theory from more behaviorist approaches which measure learning as a matter of stimulus and response, to seeing learning as socially and culturally constructed (cf. works of VYGOTSKY and DEWEY).

### **3.3. Reflection as intellectual virtue**

The former considerations naturally lead us to the intellectual virtues that were central to the conception of P4C that we introduced. Engaging in the practice of philosophy and sloyd, both raise questions about what it means to do something, and do it well, as well as to who I am who is doing it. The meta-reflection serves as a scene for reaching a common understanding of what is being done, what the problem is and how to solve it. It provides the participants with a sense of assurance of being together in the world and carrying responsible for their actions in it. The meta-reflection also calls for the need to recognize *how* something should be done, carefully, attentively, creatively, imaginatively, honestly, and so on, with an ever-growing understanding of what it is that is being done. All these virtues conspire to a certain form of practical wisdom that

characterizes the person who knows how to do something well (cf. BIESTA 2010, HEILBRONN 2011, BENNETT 2012). By attending to the way something is being done, students in the meta-reflection are also faced with reflecting on questions directed towards themselves, their own efforts and their place in and responsibility for the shared experience. It is important to learn both to honestly evaluate their own work and their own effort in the whole process and to develop procedures for an honest evaluation of other's work. The aim of this meta-reflective discussion in both philosophy and sloyd is meant to lead to an improvement of the individual student, the teamwork and the concrete results/products.

Just as in the case of learning, the ability to go beyond, transcend and modify what one has been told and shown, learning what it is to do something well, is not anything we learn in addition to learning the particular practice. Rather it is something we learn *in* learning the practice. We learn what we should attend to, to be able to sew a straight seam, why it is important to be serious in making a contribution to a discussion, why we should take our time in some cases, and how to speed up the process in others. To some extent, it is possible to separate what it is to do something from doing it well. A slightly uneven seam still does the work of holding two pieces of fabric together, and its faults may not show on the outside. Thus, it may fulfill its purpose, although it does not stand an aesthetic judgment. However, there are also times where the failure to attend to one's work carefully, will lead to one not doing what one was supposed to in the first place. If a seam is so uneven that it runs outside the fabric, it will not fulfill its purpose, nor look good. In these cases we see how the notion of doing something well also comes into our understanding of *what* it is we are doing.

When discussing virtues, it is important to remark on a certain circularity in the argument. Aristotle, who is the major source of inspiration for modern versions of virtue theory (ANSCOMBE 1981, MACINTYRE 2007, on virtues in an educational context see KOTZEE 2013), noted that one already needs to be a virtuous person to recognize virtue. The virtuous person is "as it were a standard and measure" of what is virtuous. (ARISTOTLE 2000: 3.5.1113a29-33). This does not mean that the virtuous person can willfully decide on what the virtues are. Such a view, again, neglects the sense in which these activities are fundamentally couched within a social and interpersonal setting. It also neglects that someone who does not act virtuously would not be conceived as being virtuous. Remarking on this circularity, rather points to the need of understanding how what we perceive as good in a practice is internal to our understanding of that practice. The moral demands, as Lars Hertzberg notes in a different context, "are not imposed from outside but are internal to an agent's perception." (HERTZBERG 2011: 7).

The training in thinking that P4C promotes, e.g., presupposes an understanding of what constitutes good forms of reasoning that can only be acquired through this training, or through philosophical reflection taken more broadly. (Cf. DUNNE 1993: 293.) This creates difficulties in judging whether someone has learnt to be more reflective using any form of external standards (cf. CURREN and KOTZEE 2014). For this reason, there has been criticism of the research done on the positive contributions of P4C for being limited in its approach, as, "largely unsystematic reflections on the goals and practices of the practices" (REZNITSKAYA 2004: 4.) Yet, as Sigge and Ohlsson point out, the aim of studies with a qualitative approach "have been to gain a deeper understanding of the experiences and processes [involved in the practice of P4C] rather than generalizable results." (OHLSSON & SIGGE 2013: 20, *our translation*). Even more, P4C was developed, precisely as a response to the need for ways of improving our sense of what constitutes good reasoning, or a reasonable position, given the limitations in establishing an external standard of what constitutes good thinking. To be able to judge a chain of reasoning as good, as it were, we need to develop into becoming more reasonable persons.

This involves, coming to see how the standards and demands we recognize in a practice are internal to our understanding of that practice.

This allows us to articulate two ways of thinking about what it is to do something well, or to do it in a *good* way, which helps to consider what constitutes good quality. On the one hand, we may think of goodness as the means, which contribute to reaching certain aims. “Goodness” is then understood instrumentally, as relative to reaching one’s aims in such an efficient and time-saving way as possible. It is then judged according to external standards, such as efficiency. On the other hand, we may think of “goodness” as a central aspect of the reflection about what one’s aims are, what one seriously, honestly and imaginatively can think of as possible aims of different practices (BIESTA 2010). In this case the standard called upon is internal to one’s understanding of these practices.

## 4. Conclusion

We began this article with the questions, “How should vocational education prepare students for future, yet unknown tasks?” and, “How does vocational education help students develop their faculty of judgment to differentiate between better and worse quality?” To clarify the possible aims of these questions, we compared two different didactical schools. Both are seemingly marginalized in the educational discussion, and, since they are easily considered as essentially different, they have not been discussed together before. We made this comparison very aware of the recent discussions about the notion of competence, which some educational theorists and policy-maker prefer to the notion of knowledge or *Bildung*, and the recent discussions about methods for formative assessment. In our conclusion we would like to address some issues raised by these two fields.

In today’s language in vocational curricula, in policy documents and in educational theories the knowledge and abilities aimed at for learning how to answer future, unknown demands is often described with the term “competence”. This concept is introduced to answer precisely the same challenge that we raised in this article. That is, the insight that having great knowledge (understood as facts) about a certain subject or being skilled to conduct a certain practical action is not sufficient to solve the problems that a person encounters in their (professional) life. In order to respond to new, unusual situations where results are not given in advance, people need to be able to work in ways that go beyond what they have learnt in their training (CEDEFOP 2010, KEEN 2003, ILLERIS 2013: 24f).

This notion of competence is meant in a broad sense, to overcome the simple idea of knowledge as cumulative. Yet, competence is often used and discussed in the literature in a way that invites us to think of it as a specific, separable skill or ability. One distinguishes e.g. between the basic key competences and the more specific competences that are necessary for certain tasks. This distinction itself suggests a cumulative picture of knowledge and learning (cf. ALLAIS 2014). Furthermore, it is unclear what problem the concept of competence is expected to solve. The motivation for introducing competence appears to be dissatisfaction with earlier central concepts, such as knowledge, qualification or *Bildung* (see e.g. ILLERIS 2013: 19f). Yet, a survey of the concerns motivating the earlier choices of concept shows a considerable similarity with the motivation for speaking about “competence”.

The concept of knowledge, such as it was used by e.g. Aristotle, already held the significance now attributed to the concept of competence, namely, a knowledge that goes

far beyond the one-sided familiarity with the facts or know-how to perform skill-based actions. Aristotle distinguished between different aspects of knowledge (*episteme*, *techne*, *phronesis*, *doxa*, see ARISTOTLE 2000, and e.g. GUSTAVSSON 2000), but kept the notion of knowledge as the overarching concept. Similarly with the notion of *Bildung*. Thinkers of the Enlightenment and Romanticism (KANT, VON HUMBOLDT, SCHLEIERMACHER, FICHTE, ROUSSEAU etc.) attempted to transcend precisely the sort of narrow-mindedness in facts and actions that some people show after being, according to these philosophers, poorly educated and taught. The process of *Bildung*, they meant, had failed if these people were not able to act appropriately in unexpected situations. Acting “appropriately”, here, is understood in the very broad sense that we tried to spell out in this discussion, including the profound moral implications of humanism (for an overview see e.g.: SCHAFFAR & ULJENS 2015, SILJANDER, KIVILÄ & SUTINEN 2012, THOMPSON 2009).

The question that “competence” is designed to answer, therefore, is no new question. Rather it touches on one of the central themes in the history of philosophy and several disciplines that emerged out of philosophy, such as education. In accordance with our previous argumentation, every theory of education in some way answers to the question about how learning enables the student to go beyond the original learning situation. They do so because this is a central characteristic of how we understand the concept of learning, as distinct from, say, repetition and imitation. For this reason, the ability in learning to go beyond the actual learning situation should not be conceived as yet another skill that we learn in addition to other specific skills or knowledge. Rather this ability is a fundamental aspect of human life, an enabling condition for the concept of learning.

The aim of introducing competence as a new concept, thus, appears to be to find a solution to an age-old problem in the philosophy of education. Our discussion was rather aimed at showing that it is not enough to introduce a new concept if we want to reach a better understanding of this problem. What is demanded is a greater transformation in how we conceptualize and learn to reflect on the issues at hand and a move away from the temptation to define new educational concepts.

The insight that making judgments, and reflecting on a practice cannot be conceptualized as a simple skill, technique or competence, reveals other similarities between philosophy and sloyd, since both practices situate us in a moral context. They alert us to moral questions that arise in the reflection of what kind of practice it is in which we are initially involved, how to engage in it in a good way, and who we become as practitioners. This allowed us to in part answer the question about how to judge the quality of what one does. A deepening understanding of the practice in which one is engaged, we argued, will involve a greater grasp of the standards inherent in it, and what it takes for the practitioner to meet these standards.

The comparison between sloyd and philosophy also shows significant similarities with methods for formative assessment. William Dylan (2011) e.g. formulates five strategies for improving the teacher’s practice and the student’s learning. These strategies stress several of the didactical aspects that we have mentioned and discussed. Thus they serve to summarize key features of our discussion. Formative assessment takes its starting point in methods that enable regular planning and evaluation. These methods are embedded in a group setting, which enables both self-reflection and evaluation, peer-feedback and evaluation and feedback by the teacher. Learning is fundamentally situated and conceptualized as a group endeavor where it is essential that the individual is seen

and sees him- or herself as an essentially active participant. The methods are finally conceptualized to make the process of success visible both for the student and the teacher. Dylan describes these features of learning and teaching methods without any concrete subject matter in mind. Our comparison between these two different subjects can be read as confirming the virtues of these methods situated in a concrete context.

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*Apprenticeship contract termination  
and dropout from VET: a comparison of  
educational-political challenges  
and strategies in Norway and Switzerland*

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*La terminación del contrato de aprendiz y el abandono en  
la formación profesional: comparación de desafíos  
y estrategias político-educacionales en Noruega y Suiza*

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## **Abstract**

Vocational education and training, and thus the preparation of young people for the job market in many respects, follows different patterns in Norway and in Switzerland. Both countries, however, struggle with delayed transitions into apprenticeship training, apprenticeship contract terminations and dropouts. In both countries, the lowering of the dropout rate is one of the top priorities in educational policy.

The present article examines the challenges and educational-political strategies of both countries regarding the integration of young adults into VET. It is based on a comparison of research literature from both Norway and Switzerland on the transition from school to VET, on apprenticeship contract termination, and on dropout. Despite a great number of non-linear educational pathways, both countries are successful in leading a great number of young adults towards graduation in different ways and with the help of different offers and measures. The strategies of both countries concerning the vocational integration of young adults are discussed in the final conclusion.

*Key Words:* transition; apprenticeship contract termination; dropout; occupational choice; Norway; Switzerland

## **Resumen**

La formación profesional, y por lo tanto la preparación de los jóvenes para el mercado laboral, en muchos aspectos, sigue diferentes patrones en Noruega y Suiza. Ambos países, sin embargo, se enfrentan problemas con con transiciones retardadas a la formación de aprendices, la terminación de de contrato de aprendizaje y abandono escolar en programas de formación. En ambos países, el descenso de la tasa de deserción es una de las principales prioridades de la política educativa.

El presente artículo examina los desafíos y estrategias de ambos países en relación con la integración de los adultos jóvenes en la formación profesional. El artículo se basa en una comparación de la literatura de investigación de Noruega y Suiza sobre la transición de la escuela a la formación profesional, la terminación contrato de aprendizaje, y sobre la deserción. A pesar de un gran número de itinerarios educativos no lineales, ambos países tienen éxito en la conducción de un gran número de adultos jóvenes hacia la graduación en la formación profesional de diferentes maneras y con la ayuda de diferentes ofertas y medidas. Las estrategias de ambos países en relación con la inserción profesional de los jóvenes adultos se discuten en las conclusiones finales.

*Palabras clave:* transición; terminación de contrato de aprendizaje; abandono escolar; la elección ocupacional; Noruega; Suiza

## 1. Introduction

In the vocational education and training of young people, there are great differences between Norway and Switzerland in many respects. Whereas Switzerland is characterised as a collective skill formation system combining strong firm involvement with a high level of public investment in VET (Busemeyer & Iversen, 2012), Norway can be classified as a hybrid between a statist and a collective skill formation model (Nyen & Hagen Tønder, 2014). Young people in Norway are legally entitled to three years of upper secondary education, and even the first two years of VET programmes are school-based. In Switzerland, company-based VET programmes are the most common form of vocational education and training (Wettstein, Schmid & Gonon, 2014), the majority of young people complete their training at training companies. Vocational qualifications are rather narrow in Switzerland: with about 240 skilled trades, there is a high level of vocational specialisation. In Norway, on the other hand, there is much emphasis on broad basic skills and a good educational background in order to prepare young people in the best way possible for a constantly changing labour market. In both years at school, a number of vocations are combined within programmes. Occupational choice therefore takes place step-by-step, the decision to pursue a certain occupation is made only after having completed two years at school. By way of international comparison, both countries show low rates of youth unemployment (e.g. OECD, 2016a) and, according to a US study, both Norway and Switzerland feature among the top six countries when it comes to vocational education – along with Germany, Austria, the Netherlands and Australia (Hoffman, 2011).

Notwithstanding the many strong points of the two different systems, both Norway and Switzerland struggle with apprenticeship contract terminations and dropouts. In both countries, dropping out of a VET programme carries a great risk of remaining without any upper secondary level qualification in the long term. For years Norway has been formulating goals to increase the successful completion rate, which is measured five years after the beginning of upper secondary education (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2014b). Furthermore, some of the 19 counties have set specific goals to reduce the number of apprenticeship contract terminations (e.g. Akershus fylkeskommune, 2016). In Switzerland, the transition from compulsory school to further training at upper secondary level was the principal focus of education policy for a long time. Since the decline in the number of school leavers and the resultant easing of the apprenticeship market, dropouts and failed examinations have increasingly moved into focus. The Confederation, the cantons, professional organisations and teachers' associations jointly set a goal of 'reducing the dropout rate during vocational education and training' in 2015, calling on trade associations to support appropriate projects (EDK, 2015).

The article presented here pursues the following questions:

Which education policy challenges do Norway and Switzerland face when it comes to integrating young people into VET? Which role do dropouts and apprenticeship contract terminations play concerning the vocational integration of young adults?

As a first step, the two VET systems will be briefly introduced. The focus here is on the transition from school to further education, as well as on occupational choice. As a second step, educational pathways, dropouts and apprenticeship contract terminations will be analysed in both countries. As a conclusion, the strategies of the two countries to facilitate the vocational integration of young people are discussed.

## **2. Method**

The present article is based on a comparison of research literature on the transition from school to VET, on apprenticeship contract terminations, and on dropout in Norway and in Switzerland. In social sciences, comparisons between countries and political systems are supposed to be helpful in identifying challenges and different ways of dealing with these challenges – regardless of differing structural and political frameworks and conditions. The challenge examined in the present article is the integration of youths and young adults into education and vocations. This includes a successful transition from compulsory schooling to VET, and, further on, the successful completion of VET. Apprenticeship contract terminations and dropouts place young people at considerable risk of not reaching final graduation. For this reason, these two issues are addressed in the present comparative study. The article consists of a literature analysis on these topics in both countries. In addition, for Norway, some statistical data and background information on apprenticeship contract terminations received from the Akershus county were consulted. These data should therefore not be interpreted as providing general information but rather should be seen as complementing the cited studies with local information when general information on national level is missing.

## **3. Vocational education and training in Norway**

In Norway, compulsory education is provided in single-structure comprehensive schools. It lasts for ten years and comprises two levels (primary level: grades 1-7, and lower secondary level: grades 8-10). Since 1994, young people in Norway have been legally entitled to three years of post-compulsory education. Thus, one of the most important principles of the educational reform at the time was implemented: creating equal rights to education for everybody, independent of their place of residence, gender, socio-economic background, ethnicity, age or ability to work. Young people may choose from three general academic and nine VET programmes offered at the same schools. General academic programmes are completed with a university entrance qualification after three years. The main model of VET has been the so-called 2+2 model: two years of school-based education are followed by two years of apprenticeship training at a training company (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2014a).

Most young people exercise their right to education. Almost 98 per cent start upper secondary level education immediately after having completed compulsory school (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2014b). Although all of them are accepted, access to the programmes is regulated: the better their marks during compulsory schooling, the higher their chances of being accepted for their desired programme. Around half of school leavers start a VET programme (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2015). Pursued by almost a quarter of all students, Health and Social Care was the biggest VET programme, followed by Technical and Industrial Production (18 %) and Electrical Trades (13.4 %). The VET programmes show considerable gender segregation. More than 90 per cent of students in Building and Construction as well as in Electrical Trades are male, whereas VET programmes in Design, Arts and Crafts as well as Health and Social Care are chosen mostly by women. The only programme chosen equally by women and men is Restaurant and Food Processing Trades (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2015).

The content of the first two years of school can be divided into three parts: common core subjects, common programme subjects and vocational specialisation. All in all, there is little vocational specialisation: apart from general education content, which is comparably important throughout the first two years of VET, the emphasis is on broad vocational skills (Nyen & Hagen Tønder, 2014). “In-depth study project” [*yrkesfaglig fordypning*] provides a counterbalance. This subject was introduced in 2006, with the aim of providing students with experience in the use of working methods and tasks within vocations before the start of apprenticeship training. The subject covers about 30 per cent of the VET provided during these two years. The counties are responsible for developing training plans. In the second year at the latest, the aim is for the students to do more practical work and to spend, say, one day a week at a training company. These periods of practical work are important both for the young people and for the training companies. Young people are given an opportunity not only to gain a comprehensive insight into the activities of a certain vocation but also to demonstrate their strengths. The training companies, for their part, use these periods of practical work as a selection tool (Nyen & Hagen Tønder, 2012).

For the second part of their education, apprenticeship training, students need an apprenticeship contract. Usually, they start looking for apprenticeship places during their second year at school. This means choosing a vocation. They may choose from among 180 skilled trades, all of them with a nationwide curriculum. In 2014, about 27,000 young people were looking for apprenticeship places, by the autumn, when training started, 19,000 apprenticeship contracts had been concluded. Thus, about seven out of ten young people looking for apprenticeship places are given an apprenticeship contract in the end. Furthermore, the figures for each county are quite different. The number of new apprenticeship contracts has been continuously increasing. At the same time, however, the number of people looking for apprenticeship places has grown, most of all in VET programmes in Health and Social Care, Services and Transport and Technical and Industrial Production (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2015).

In addition to the slightly more than 19,000 apprentices (*lærling*) who had started work at a training company, 1,900 training candidates (*lærekandidat*) were listed at the time (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2015). In contrast to an apprentice, who follows a regular training course, a training candidate attends a personalised training programme. Instead of the trade or journeyman’s examination (*fag-/svenneprøve*), they may sit a less demanding skills examination (*kompetanseprøve*) and in this way acquire a certificate of competence (*kompetansebevis*). This option is quite common, especially in the fields of Service and Transport, Building and Construction and Health and Social Care.

Young people who cannot find an apprenticeship place are entitled to attend school for a third year (*alternativ Vg3*) – leading up to the same trade or journeyman’s examination. In autumn 2014, 700 people were registered for this school-based certificate (Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2015). For the time being, however, this programme has been considered inadequate, both due to its short length and its relative lack of workplace training. Individual attempts have therefore been made to strengthen this alternative third year at school by extending it from 12 months to 18 months, with more practical experience (Mogstad Aspøy & Nyen, 2015a).

Another possibility for young people who do not find an apprenticeship place is to complete their education with the supplementary programme for general university and college admissions certification (*påbygging til generell studiekompetanse*). Young people

who have successfully completed the first two years are given a chance to obtain a university entrance qualification by way of a third year at school. This way, however, they do not acquire a VET qualification. The number of young people taking up this offer has considerably grown in recent years: in 2007, about a fifth of those who had started the first year of VET started a third year in a general academic programme two years later. However, the failure rate for this route is comparatively high. Some students consider this path to be something of a compromise resulting from unsuccessful searches for an apprenticeship place rather than a deliberate choice (Markussen & Gloppen, 2012).

By order of the Ministry of Education and Research, further measures have been tried out in recent years that are supposed to help students find an apprenticeship place or to improve their qualifications so that they can successfully complete their third year and attain a university entrance qualification. There is, for example, an apprenticeship course (*læreplasskurs*) aimed at young people who have not found an apprenticeship place by the summer. These courses are of different lengths and are meant to support these young people in their search for apprenticeship places as well as increasing their motivation. A final assessment of this offer is still to be made (Mogstad Aspøy & Nyen, 2015b).

Finally, it must be mentioned that the Norwegian educational system provides several ways to acquire professional qualifications, not just that of *regular* training in the context of the 2+2 model, which addresses mostly young people. There is also the possibility of acquiring a professional qualification as a practical candidate (*praksiskandidat*). Practical candidates are adults with at least 25 per cent more professional experience in a certain field than the normal duration of VET in the occupation concerned. They must document their professional experience and pass a theoretical examination before being allowed to take the regular trade or journeyman's examination. This path is no exception: every year, about a third of all trade or journeyman's examinations are passed by practical candidates. Almost two-thirds of qualifications are acquired by apprentices in the regular way, with about 3 per cent of them achieved by those students who completed the last part of their training at school (Utdanningdirektoratet, 2016b). Compared with just under 25,000 trade or journeyman's examinations, the number of certificates of competence (*kompetansebevis*) is comparatively low, at about 500 to 600. Nevertheless, this path offers good prospects for some young people, and some of them apply for the trade or journeyman's examination as a practical candidate after a number of years.

According to the OECD (2015), the graduation rate at upper secondary level in Norway is almost 90 per cent, above the OECD average of 84 per cent. Together with Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands and Iceland, Norway stands out with more than 10 per cent of upper secondary level degrees being acquired by people over 25. The average age of those acquiring a VET qualification is 28, which is markedly higher than the OECD average of 22.2 (OECD, 2015).

## **4. Apprenticeship contract termination and dropping out in Norway**

As has already been mentioned, the vast majority of young people in Norway start upper secondary education immediately after their compulsory schooling (Utdanningdirektoratet, 2014b). After five years, about 70 per cent successfully complete their education. This

figure has risen slightly compared with previous years, but it is still clearly below the national goal of 75 per cent (Utdanningdirektoratet, 2014b). Some counties have already achieved this goal, in some counties the figures are clearly below the national average.

There are big differences between general academic and VET programmes. Whereas about 83 per cent of those students who started a general academic programme successfully completed their education after five years, among those attending VET programmes the completion rate is only 58 per cent (SSB, 2016). In both programmes the share of women who graduate (87 % and 61 % respectively) is clearly bigger than that of men (78 % and 56 %). Among the VET programmes, *Media and Communications* shows the highest graduation rate (81 %); it is lowest for *Restaurant and Food Processing* (46 %).

Most of all, the transition from the second year at school to apprenticeship training is problematic and results in students “leaving” or “dropping out”. Just under 68 per cent of students in the second year of a VET programme start apprenticeship training in the following year. For general academic programmes, the transition rate from the second year to the third year at school is nearly 95 per cent (Utdanningdirektoratet, 2014b).

Furthermore, not all of those young people who start apprenticeship training will successfully complete their VET – some of them will drop out of apprenticeship training. There are no exact figures concerning terminations of apprenticeship contracts at the national level. However, according to figures from the Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training, in recent years, an average of 20 per cent of apprentices have been dropping out of their apprenticeship training each year, at least temporarily, before graduation (Utdanningdirektoratet, 2016a). This figure cannot be equated with the number of apprenticeship contract terminations. Apprentices who have changed occupation or transferred to another company after having terminated their contracts, and who at the time of the review had already started another training course, are not included.

Some counties, such as Akershus, provide somewhat more detailed information about terminations of apprenticeship contracts. In 2013, 187 out of 2,628 current apprenticeship contracts there were terminated without new contracts being entered into. Compared with the total number of current contracts, this is a share of 7.1 per cent (Akershus fylkeskommune, 2014). This figure is relatively stable – it has slightly declined – compared with previous years, however it is still above the current target of a maximum of 6.5 per cent (Akershus fylkeskommune, 2016). Also – as already mentioned – it includes only those terminations of apprenticeship contracts which are not followed by new contracts. If, in parallel to the termination of a contract a new one is entered into, such as in cases of changing the training company or changing from an apprenticeship to a training contract, this is not counted as the termination of a contract.

The occupations of retail butchering, painter/decorator, equestrian trades and hair-dressing constantly show an above-average termination rate – as high as over 30 per cent. In most years, cookery and bricklaying are also listed as having an above-average rate. However, due to the very small numbers of current apprenticeship contracts in these occupations, these figures must be taken into perspective, as already few contract terminations make a high rate. The high number of terminations among hairdressers, an occupation with many current contracts, should be treated the most seriously. However, the termination rate of slightly more than 20 per cent in 2011 dropped to 14 per cent in 2013 (Akershus fylkeskommune, 2014).

The causes of the termination of apprenticeship contracts are highly varied. By far the most frequent reason listed in the statistics is “private reasons” – a collective term for physical or mental problems on the part of the apprentice concerned as well as for problems between the contract partners affecting the apprentice’s wellbeing. “Wrong choice of profession”, “moving house” or “abuse of regulations” are also listed as causes. However, the county points out that, as there are often multiple causes for the termination of apprenticeship contracts, these reasons must be interpreted with care (Akershus fylkeskommune, 2014).

Compared with other counties, Akershus has one of the highest graduation rates (Utdanningdirektoratet, 2014b). It may thus be assumed that in other counties the termination rate is much higher. This is confirmed by a report from the county of Vestfold, which provides evidence that, since 2009, the number of terminated apprenticeship contracts has continuously gone down – it was 9.1 per cent down by 2013 (Vestfold fylkeskommune, 2015). Beyond this, however, it is difficult to provide evidence for this assumption, due to a lack of statistics at national level.

## **5. Vocational education and training in Switzerland**

In Switzerland, about two-thirds of young people enrol in a VET programme. At 27 per cent, the proportion of students who attend a general education is low in comparison with other European countries. VET takes two to four years and is offered by 240 different skilled trades with different intellectual demands. Three-year or four-year VET programmes leads to a Federal VET Diploma (*Eidgenössisches Fähigkeitszeugnis EFZ*). As a further step, one may also acquire a Federal Vocational Baccalaureate (*Berufsmaturität*), which grants access to universities of applied sciences (*Fachhochschule*) without further examination. Two-year VET programmes are aimed at young people who have performed less well at school but who are more practically gifted. This leads to a Federal VET Certificate (*Eidgenössisches Berufsattest EBA*).

Vocational education and training is mostly of a dual nature, with training at small companies of less than 50 employees being the most frequent option (SERI, 2015; Wettstein, Schmid & Gonon, 2014). Education takes place at three sorts of location: training companies, vocational schools and branch training centres, where branch courses are taught. The bulk of educational time is spent with training companies. Usually apprentices spend three to four days a week at the company and attend vocational school one or two days a week. The branch courses are organised by trade organisations and take between two weeks and three months over the entire period of training. All in all, the emphasis lies clearly on specific vocational and practical skills, there is comparably less emphasis on general educational contents. In most of the trades general education covers three lessons per week: general education [*allgemeinbildener Unterricht ABU*] is a multidisciplinary subject which covers educational objectives both from the fields “society” (e.g. economy, ecology, culture, ethics and law) and “language”. Language teaching follows always in connection with educational objectives from the field “society”, the aim is first of all to enhance communication skills. A foreign language is in most of the trades not part of general education. Only a few trades, especially the numerical biggest in commercial and retail business, have extended the amount of general education, most of all by adding one or to foreign languages.



Companies that meet the legal criteria for the training of apprentices are free to decide whether to participate in training, and they select their apprentices according to their own selection criteria (Imdorf, 2014). The rights and duties of training companies and apprentices are set out in an apprenticeship contract, a special kind of employment contract focusing on the training of the apprentice. Thus, apprentices are not just people to be trained; they are also staff members with a special status. They are included in the actual work and service processes, in many branches they generate revenue that exceeds the expenses for their training (Strupler & Wolter, 2012). Particularly in small companies, apprentices often take over tasks which would otherwise be carried out by semi-skilled or skilled employers.

Preparation for the transition into upper secondary education happens during the final three years of compulsory schooling. In most of the 26 cantons, upper secondary education is divided into two to four different performance levels (schools of basic qualification and schools of extended qualification). Preparation for choosing an occupation counts among the tasks undertaken in schools at secondary level I, and it forms part of the cantonal curricula. Actual implementation is left to the individual school. At most schools, lessons on occupational choice start at seventh grade. The goal of this preparation for occupational choice is to prepare the young people for integration into education at upper secondary level and for their later professional lives, as well as supporting them in the process of occupational choice itself. In this way, the schools are supported through occupational guidance, studies advice and careers advice.

In eighth and especially ninth grade students start their actual search for an apprenticeship place and write applications. Most apprenticeship places are filled from November during the final year at school. An informal “fair play” regulation applies to the Swiss apprenticeship market, according to which apprenticeship places should not be filled before 1 November, in order to reduce the pressure on young people during their search. However, this regulation has increasingly been ignored in recent years, with ever more companies filling their vacancies before the autumn holidays or even in summer. In recent years, the number of apprenticeship places has exceeded the number of young people looking for an apprenticeship place (SERI, 2015b). The number of written applications for VET by young people has thus gone down compared with previous years. However, it is still true that young women and most of all foreign young people apply many more times than young men or young people from Switzerland respectively (SBFI, 2015b).

The choice of occupation by young women and men in Switzerland is highly genderspecific. For decades, VET programmes in commerce have clearly been the most popular for both women and men. In other areas, however, the majority of professional apprenticeships are distributed very differently among women and men. Whereas young women tend to opt for school-based courses and focus most of all on occupations in business and administration, health and social care and personal services, young men often choose occupations in architecture and the construction sector, as well as engineering and technology (Wettstein, Schmid & Gonon, 2014).

The level of immediate transitions from compulsory schooling to upper secondary level education declined during the apprenticeship crisis of the 1990s, and has remained at about 75 per cent for several years (SKBF, 2014). Slightly less than half of young people immediately enrol in a VET programme, and slightly more than a quarter of them start education at a general education school. About 15 per cent of the students make use of a transitional option (e.g. a 10th school year or a preparatory course for VET), and another 10 per cent opt for an informal transitional solution (e.g. motivation semester, periods of

practical work, social year or foreign stays) or do not pursue any activity connected to VET (SKBF, 2014). The number of young people making use of transitional options or intermediate solutions has gone down in recent years (SBFI, 2015b). However, due to factors such as insufficient adjustment of supply and demand on the apprenticeship market even today, with several thousand apprenticeship vacancies not being filled, thousands of young people are making use of transitional options or intermediary solutions after school.

Basically, these transitional options or intermediary solutions are meant to make it easier for young people to start their education at upper secondary level. They are supposed to help them by “compensating for” school, language and other deficits, thus improving their chances of finding a (demanding) VET place as well as to help young people with their decision-making and to provide them with decision guidance (compensation as well as orientation function, see Meyer, 2014). In the years when apprenticeship places were hard to come by, transitional options were also given a “systemic buffer function” (Meyer, 2014, p. 42). They are supposed to rebalance the imbalance of supply and demand, thus ensuring that young people are not left without any solution after leaving compulsory school. Studies show that this function – contrary to the intended functions under educational policy, which mostly emphasise the correction of individual deficits – can be considered to be at the forefront (e.g. Meyer, 2014).

Even though a large proportion of young people do not start upper secondary level education directly after compulsory school, most enter this level of education sooner or later. Ten years after leaving compulsory school, the number of people who have not at least started an upper secondary level education is 2 to 3 per cent (Keller, Hupka-Brunner & Meyer, 2010). Currently, the graduation rate at upper secondary level is about 90 per cent (SERI, 2015). The average age when acquiring a VET degree is 21.4, which is slightly below the OECD average of 22.2 (OECD, 2015).

## **6. Apprenticeship contract termination and dropping out in Switzerland**

Most young people in Switzerland start post-compulsory education – either immediately after compulsory school or after a transitional option. Not all of them, however, graduate – at least not initially. For the time being there are no exact figures on apprenticeship contract termination and dropouts at national level. Previous figures have come from the cantonal VET authorities or research projects, which each apply different methods of calculating the rates of apprenticeship contract termination. In Germany, the method of calculating this rate has been a topic of scientific and education policy debate for many years (e.g. Uhly, 2015). Appropriate figures are calculated by way of a special calculation model and are published yearly (e. g. BIBB, 2014). Following this model, Switzerland has created the methodological foundations for the publication of figures on the termination of apprenticeship contracts at regular intervals. Focus is placed on the question of how many apprentices are concerned by the termination of an apprenticeship contract in the course of their vocational education and training. Accordingly, in future, the rates of terminated apprenticeship contracts are supposed to be calculated longitudinally (Schmid & Kriesi, 2016). Up to now, the rates of terminated apprenticeship contracts have mostly been calculated with reference to the share of terminations of apprenticeship contracts in

one year compared to that of all running contracts. According to this calculation, the rate was 9.7 per cent in 2014, with major differences between the cantons, which had rates ranging between 2.7 per cent and 13 per cent (Nock, 2015). On the whole, according to canton-level calculations and estimates, it can be assumed that about one in four apprentices may experience the termination of an apprenticeship contract in the course of education (Schmid, 2015). These calculations include all terminations of apprenticeship contracts, including those immediately followed by new contracts, for example if the apprentice continues training at another company.

Independently of how the rate is calculated, there are large differences between branches and occupations. For example, the hospitality industry, hairdressing and beauty and the transportation and automobile industries, as well as some occupations in the construction sector, show above-average rates. On the whole, occupations that are less intellectually demanding have higher termination rates than those that are moderately or highly intellectually demanding. Furthermore, the rates are above average for foreign young people. There are no differences between women and men (Stalder & Schmid, 2006).

Apprentices and apprenticeship trainers give different reasons for the termination of apprenticeship contracts. Most contract partners cite performance-related difficulties as reasons for a termination. That aside, they often make different judgments on the situation. Apprentices frequently point to the quality of training given by the company, but apprenticeship trainers seldom give this reason. In most cases the apprentice is responsible for the termination according to the trainers. Aside from performance at school and at the company, they mention insufficient commitment or problems with their parents. Generally, it has become obvious that, in most cases, termination of an apprenticeship contract is due to several factors, in the context of which the chronology of what has happened is usually difficult to ascertain (Stalder & Schmid, 2006).

Between 60 and 75 per cent of the young adults concerned start a new course of education within three years of the apprenticeship contract termination – they often do so after only a short interval or even immediately after termination (Schmid, 2010). The majority of them do not pursue an entirely new education pathway but rather continue their apprenticeship at another company or change to a less demanding (or occasionally more demanding) apprenticeship in the same vocational field. On average, young people are clearly more satisfied with their new education pathway than with the old one. They have been able to use the opportunity of apprenticeship contract termination to optimise their working and training conditions, to correct unsuitable occupational choices or for reorientation (Schmid & Stalder, 2012).

According to estimates, between 50 and 75 per cent successfully complete their VET after having started again. About a quarter to a half of young adults leave the educational system without formally graduating. For youths and young adults, early termination of an apprenticeship contract thus constitutes the biggest risk of remaining without upper secondary level qualifications in the long run (Schmid, 2013).

## 7. Discussion

In the international debate, when it comes to vocational education and training, both Norway and Switzerland are counted among the top six countries (Hoffman, 2011). Furthermore, both count among the countries with the highest employment and the

lowest youth unemployment rate (OECD, 2016a, 2016b). However, both countries are confronted with delayed transitions into apprenticeship, apprenticeship contract terminations, dropouts and delayed graduation. Both in Norway and in Switzerland, about 98 per cent of young people start a post-compulsory education, however not all of them graduate. In both countries the upper secondary graduation rate is similar – in Switzerland it is about 90 per cent; in Norway it is 88 per cent (OECD, 2015). On the whole, both countries are successful in leading a high number of young adults towards graduation, in different ways and with the help of different offers and measures, despite a large number of non-linear educational pathways. The following discussion starts out from three points in time during the course of education and discusses them in the context of a comparison between Norway and Switzerland: 1. transition to apprenticeship training; 2. apprenticeship contract terminations and dropout; and 3. successful completion of vocational education and training.

### **7.1. Transition to apprenticeship training**

One of the biggest risks with the integration of young people into vocational education concerns the guarantee of a sufficient number of apprenticeship places as well as the adjustment of supply and demand on the apprenticeship market. In both Norway and Switzerland, the transition to apprenticeship training is a great challenge. In both countries, thousands of young people are left without an apprenticeship place every year. In Norway this transition from the school-based part of VET to apprenticeship training, which usually happens between the second and third years of VET, is the time when students are at greatest risk of dropping out of VET. About three out of ten young people looking for an apprenticeship place are not successful. Indeed, it was made possible for the number of apprenticeship contracts to be continuously increased over the past few years. Nevertheless, there are still not enough apprenticeship places in all regions and occupations. Although almost all young people start further education immediately after compulsory schooling, for many this is no guarantee that they will be able to successfully complete their education, at least not as originally intended. Many of those dropping out of VET take the trade or journeyman's examinations some years later, thus still acquiring a professional qualification. However, these pathways are associated with a number of risks and imponderables, and the Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research has formulated a goal of increasing the number of people acquiring a professional qualification within five years of starting VET. Measures to achieve this goal are currently being tested and evaluated (e.g. Mogstad Aspøy & Nyen, 2015b).

In Switzerland, too, many young people looking for an apprenticeship place face challenges or difficulties, and only about 75 per cent of school leavers start a certifying postcompulsory education immediately after completing their compulsory schooling. However, the great majority of those unwilling or unable to start VET immediately will start it at a later time, in most cases after having made use of one or several transitional options or intermediate solutions. On the whole, however, young people in Switzerland face considerable insecurity during the transition from school to post-compulsory education, and this transition is often difficult especially for those young people who are socially disadvantaged or disadvantaged at school. Several studies show that social and cultural origin, independent of school performance, considerably co-determines whether someone finds an apprenticeship place or not (e.g. Sacchi, Hupka-Brunner, Stalder & Gangl, 2011). Most of all, this concerns access to company-based VET,

which has different selection patterns than school-based VET (Seibert, Hupka-Brunner & Imdorf, 2009). Apprenticeship trainers apply their own, often less standardised selection criteria (Imdorf, 2014). Furthermore, the selective school system – the separation of students into different performance groups after six years of primary school – increases social inequalities. Access to upper secondary education is strongly influenced by the type of lower secondary programme young people were previously enrolled in – independently from their actual performance, according to PISA measurements (BFS & TREE, 2003; Hupka-Brunner & Wohlgemuth, 2014).

In Norway as well, young people are faced with having to apply for an apprenticeship place and have to contend with the unpredictability of the apprenticeship market. While working at a training company in the first two years of school, they have, however, the opportunity to show their motivation and strengths, and apprenticeship trainers get to know apprentices and their way of working and learning. Thus, it is most of all the marks from the first two years of VET in school, the number of absences and the age of the student which predetermine whether someone will obtain an apprenticeship contract or not (Mogstad Aspøy & Nyen, 2015a). Thus, at least when it comes to criteria of social origin, Norway seems to have achieved the goal of providing everyone with the same right to education, although there are not enough training places in every field all over the country.

## 7.2. Apprenticeship contract termination and dropout

As far as the successful completion of post-compulsory education is concerned, a great risk is presented not only by a delayed start to apprenticeship training but by apprenticeship contract terminations. In Switzerland, apprenticeship contract terminations in fact represent the biggest risk of not graduating at upper secondary level in the long run. About a quarter of apprentices are affected by the termination of an apprenticeship contract in the course of training, and a quarter to a half of them leaves the educational system without any formal qualifications. In 2015, the Confederation, the cantons, professional organisations and teachers' associations – set a goal of 'reducing [the] drop-out rate during vocational education and training' and called on the professional associations to support projects serving this purpose (EDK, 2015). Furthermore, the Swiss Federal Statistical Office intends to improve the data concerning apprenticeship contract terminations and to publish figures on this at regular intervals in the future. Thus in Switzerland there is a growing awareness that young people should be supported not only until they start their VET but until they have successfully completed it.

In Norway the focus of education policy measures is on the transition from the second to the third year of VET, rather than on apprenticeship contract terminations. Generally, one assumes that the number of apprenticeship contract terminations is comparatively low. A direct comparison of figures on terminations of apprenticeship contracts in Switzerland and Norway is difficult, because of gaps in statistical data and different definition and calculation methods. Generally, however, when it comes to apprenticeship contract terminations, there are many surprisingly clear similarities. In both countries there are different definitions and methods of calculating rates, and in both countries one should be careful when defining the various events. In Norway this most of all concerns the terms *fracfall*, *omvalg*, *bortvalg* and *gjennomføring*, which are often used inconsistently (Markussen, Frøseth, Lødding, Sandberg, 2008; Markussen, 2011); in Switzerland this applies to the terms *Lehrvertragsauflösung*,

*Lehrstellenwechsel* and *Lehrabbruch*. In both countries, this can be the case in certain occupations and sectors such as hairdressers, bricklayers and the hospitality trade. A surprisingly major congruence between Norway and Switzerland also emerges when it comes to the legal regulations governing apprenticeship contract terminations.

### **7.3. Successful completion of vocational education**

One of the major differences between Norway and Switzerland is the time required to complete VET. Whereas young people in Switzerland are on average 21.4 years old when they complete their vocational education, the average age in Norway is 28. Despite a high number of delayed starts, the majority of young people in Switzerland still complete a course of post-compulsory education some years after having left compulsory school. Thus Switzerland is succeeding in integrating not only intellectually strong young people but also those with a weaker school performance into continuing education, and is leading them towards graduation. More than half of those who, according to PISA, have very low reading skills (reading skills level  $\leq 1$ ) and who thus belong to a risk group acquire a professional qualification (Stalder, Meyer & Hupka-Brunner, 2011). There is a wide offer of apprenticeships and skilled trades, which includes both young people with high levels of performance and motivation at school and those who are more ‘practically gifted’, those with a weaker scholastic performance or those who are tired of school. Furthermore, young people with a weak school performance benefit from the fact that the selection criteria of small and medium-sized companies, which train the vast majority of young people in Switzerland, are often not very standardised. In less demanding occupations, companies are more interested in criteria such as motivation to learn and the ability to integrate when it comes to selecting their apprentices (Buchholz, Imdorf, Hupka-Brunner & Blossfeld, 2012). In Norway, up to now, there are not many alternatives for less scholastically inclined pupils or those tired of school: regardless of the post-compulsory programme chosen, education starts with two years at school, including a considerably high amount of general education. A decision was reached some years ago to step up support for alternative educational paths to the 2+2 model. Models involving a more frequent change between school education and training at companies – so called change models (*vekslingsmodell*) – are intended to improve the educational connection between the two places, to make education more practice-related and thus to increase the motivation of the young people (Høst, Nyen, Reegård, Seland & Hagen Tønder, 2015). This is in accordance with the Education Act, which stipulates that ‘Education shall be adapted to the abilities and aptitudes of the individual student, apprentice and training candidate’ (Opplæringsloven § 1–3). It is not yet clear how many young people will make use of this offer and how much it could help a larger number of young people to graduate sooner and thus at a younger age. Up to now, it is difficult to say whether the change models indeed do represent support for alternative educational paths. A final evaluation has not yet been conducted.

In Switzerland, the volume of vocational qualifications acquired by adults is still not very high at present. Indeed, pathways for acquisition of vocational qualifications have become more diversified in Switzerland as well. Like in Norway, adults with more than five years of professional experience in a certain field may immediately take a final examination to obtain a vocational qualification. However, in 2014 only slightly more than 2,000 people acquired a vocational qualification in this manner (Maurer, Wettstein & Neuhaus, 2016) – compared to 70,000 Federal VET Diplomas and Federal VET Certificates awarded

through normal pathways (BFS, 2016). In 2014, a total of around 7,600 persons over the age of 25 obtained a vocational qualification, mostly by way of regular apprenticeship training (Maurer, Wettstein & Neuhaus, 2016). Alternative pathways to vocational qualifications are therefore not very popular in Switzerland. This raises the question of what steps Switzerland can take to make these educational pathways more appealing.

## 8. Conclusion

Norway and Switzerland both face several challenges in their efforts to integrate young adults into VET and ensure that they successfully complete their training. In both countries, virtually all young people start upper secondary education – immediately after leaving compulsory school or after one or a few intermediate years. However, not all of them graduate, at least not in the originally intended way: in both countries, young people dropping out from VET as well as apprentices with apprenticeship contract terminations run a big risk of remaining without any upper-secondary qualifications in the long run. All in all, it may be stated that Norway and Switzerland apply different strategies when it comes to integrating young people into education and vocations. Switzerland is particularly characterised by leading a high number of young people with weak school performance, rather practically gifted or tired of school towards a professional qualification. The integrative achievements of the highly practice-oriented system and the great significance of VET in Switzerland are unique even by international comparison. The strong point of the Norwegian educational system is its inclusive nature, which has also been emphasised by the OECD (Kuczera, Brunello, Field & Hoffman, 2008). This does not just refer to the comprehensive school system and the legal entitlement to three years of post-compulsory education; it also involves flexible structures and open-mindedness when it comes to alternative educational paths, making it possible to integrate people whose educational paths are different from the ‘ordinary pathways’ into continuing education and vocations.

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9



## *Challenges of development work: Instrumentality and constellation of rules as conceptual resources\**

*Desafíos en la investigación de desarrollo:  
Instrumentalidad y constelación de reglas  
como recursos conceptuales*

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## **Abstract**

Professional and vocational institutions are facing challenges due to changes in working life: increase of knowledge work, digitalization, globalization and constant need for improvement of practices. The aim of this paper is to explore organizational change efforts in two educational institutions. First case introduces the vocational college, in which focus of development was new training for immigrant students. The second case presents development work done within training of dentists and oral-hygienists. Theoretical and methodological anchoring of both cases was cultural-historical activity theory and developmental work research, which is an approach evolved in the 1980s in Finland. It combines scientific research, practical development work and learning, called expansive learning. In developmental work research projects one of the theoretical tools is an activity-system model. My focus will be on two elements of the activity-system model: instruments or instrumentality and rules or constellation of rules. It seemed that, at least, partial failure of development work in two educational institutions was due to lack of taking into account the systemic whole of activities under development: activity of learning in multicultural context and in context of patient care.

*Key Words:* instrumentality; rules; developmental work research; cultural-historical activity theory; activity-system model

## **Resumen**

Los profesionales y las instituciones de formación profesional se enfrentan a desafíos debido a los cambios en la vida laboral: aumento del trabajo del conocimiento, la digitalización, la globalización y la necesidad constante de mejora de las prácticas. El objetivo de este artículo es explorar los esfuerzos de cambio organizacional en dos instituciones educativas. El primer caso presenta la escuela de formación profesional en el que el foco del desarrollo era nueva formación para los estudiantes inmigrantes. El segundo caso se presenta el trabajo de desarrollo realizado dentro de la formación de los dentistas y los higienistas. El anclaje teórico y metodológico de los dos casos es la teoría de la actividad histórico-cultural y la investigación trabajo de desarrollo; el último un enfoque desarrollado en la década de 1980 en Finlandia. Se combina la investigación científica, el trabajo de desarrollo práctico y el aprendizaje, llamado aprendizaje expansivo. En los proyectos de investigación de trabajo de desarrollo una de las herramientas teóricas es un modelo de sistema de actividad. La atención del análisis presentado en este artículo se centra en dos elementos del modelo de sistema de actividad: los instrumentos o instrumentalidad y las reglas o constelación de reglas. Parecía que, al menos, el fracaso parcial del trabajo de desarrollo en dos instituciones educativas se debió a la falta de consideración y atención al todo sistémico de las actividades en el proceso de desarrollo, es decir, falta de atención a la actividad de aprendizaje en el contexto multicultural y de la atención al paciente.

*Palabras clave:* instrumentalidad; reglas; investigación de desarrollo; teoría de la actividad histórico-cultural; modelo de sistema de actividad

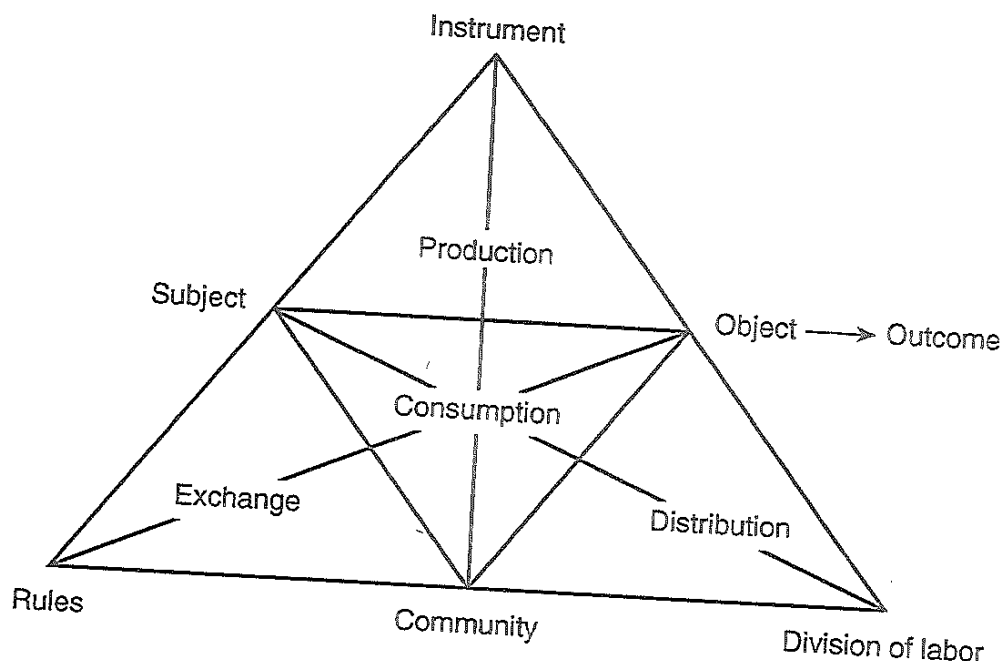
## 1. Introduction

One of the biggest challenges of working life is immense change and rapid development, as Cairns and Malloch (2011, p. 12) wrote when they outlined theories of work, place and learning. Engeström (2011, p. 88) continued on the same line by stating that the life cycles of entire product, production and business concepts are rapidly becoming shorter and the rhythm of concept-level transformation has accelerated. This paper deals with challenges of multi-organizational and multi-professional change efforts through the lens of an activity-system model (ASM). Cultural-historical activity theory (CHAT) and the developmental work research (DWR) approach were employed as theoretical and methodological anchoring in development work within organizations.

DWR is an interventionist approach, the aim of which is to study transformations and learning in work technology and organizations. Under the interventionist approach, practices are intentionally explored and changed to facilitate understanding and the transformation of those specific practices and social realities. DWR combines practical development, scientific research and expansive learning. The theoretical foundations of DWR are in CHAT, which was initiated by Russian scholars, such as Vygotsky, Leont'ev and Luria, in the early 1900s (cf. ENGESTRÖM & MIETTINEN, 1999; COLE & ENGESTRÖM, 2011). The origins of DWR lie in the work and research carried out in Finland since the early 1980s. In the last 30 years, the DWR approach has been used in various studies focused on the development of workplace practices and tools in industry, health care, technology, co-operation between work and education, vocational teacher education and multi- and intercultural education, to name a few (ENGESTRÖM & SANNINO, 2010). The theory of expansive learning, and the ASM introduced first by Engeström (1987/2015), has been foundational for these development endeavors, as well as analyses of them. He formulated his efforts as follows:

*“First, activity must be pictured in its simplest, genetically original structural form, as the smallest unit that still preserves the essential unity and quality behind any complex activity. Second, activity must be analyzable in its dynamics and transformations, in its evolution and historical change. No static or eternal models will do. Third, activity must be analyzable as a contextual or ecological phenomenon. The models will have to concentrate on systemic relations between the individual and the outside world. Fourth, specifically human activity must be analyzable as culturally mediated phenomenon. No dyadic organism environment models will suffice. This requirement stems already from Hegel’s insistence on the culturally mediated, triadic or triangular structure of human activity.”* (ENGESTRÖM, 1987/2015, pp. 32-33 italics in original)

The ASM consists of six elements in the form of a triangle: a subject, an object, instruments, rules, community and division of labor (Figure 1). The model was developed by Engeström (1987/2015) in his dissertation *Learning by Expanding*.



**Figure 1.** The Activity-System Model (ENGESTROM, 1987/2015, p. 63).

The ASM was inspired by Vygotsky's (1978) concept of mediated action, cultural mediation by tools and signs that Engeström called *instruments* of activity and *artifacts* referring to Wartofsky's (1979) primary, secondary and tertiary levels of artifacts. The model was further stimulated by Leont'ev's hierarchical structure of activity, and especially his understanding of extraction action, activity and operation levels. The meaning of *an object* in activities and *a subject's* relations to the object were of utmost importance. *Division of labor* and *community* were generated by Leont'ev's famous hunting example. *Rules* emerged as the cultural evolution of human forms of activity. Furthermore he stated that:

“The model suggests the possibility of analyzing a multitude of relations within the triangular structure of activity. However, the essential task is always to grasp the systemic whole, not just separate connections.” (ENGESTRÖM 1987/2015, p. 62)

This concern is relevant, as often, when the focus is on a single element of the ASM (whether the object, subject or instruments), the systemic whole is easily forgotten. This may have been the case in these two empirical examples. Instead of using the ASM to organize one's data, it needs to be used to capture the inner and outer contradictions and to produce a qualitatively new type of activity system, such as a new type of understanding of the systemic whole and of concepts such as instruments, rules and division of labor. Thus, the activity system depicts a theoretical generalization of a practical activity in focus. Today, the ASM is often depicted with at least two interconnected activity systems or a network of activity systems, what Engeström (2001) called the third generation of activity theory.

Another important concept for understanding development and change within DWR is contradiction. In DWR, contradictions are seen as tensions between two opposing forces

and dynamics that trigger learning and development (cf. ILJENKOV, 1977; LEONT'EV, 1978; ENGESTRÖM, 1987/2015). Thus, contradictions are not something that need to be got rid of; instead, they are explored and examined to reveal their potential, and they are used to create solutions to existing problems. Engeström (1987/2015, pp. 70-72) presented four levels of contradictions. The first level is a primary contradiction inside one element of the activity system, typically a contradiction between the use value and the exchange value. The second-level contradiction is identified between elements of the ASM, and the third level between old and new activity systems. Fourth-level contradictions are those identified between neighboring activity systems. In this paper, contradictions and levels of contradictions help the reader follow the second empirical example.

## 2. Instruments and instrumentality in developing immigrant training

The concept of instrument originated from Vygotsky's mediational means: tools and signs, as stated above. From the concept of instrumentality Engeström stated that there has been:

“a shift from utilizing well-bounded singular tools to designing and implementing tool constellations or instrumentalities. A tool constellation or instrumentality is literally the toolkit needed in an activity” (ENGESTRÖM, 2007, p. 33).

He (1990, p. 188) elaborates empirical tools of physicians as *why*, *how*, and *what* artifacts. For example, a '*why*' artifact is an explanatory model of illness, and *how* artifacts are procedures and methods medical doctors use in their work. In 2007, he presented a more elaborate model of instrumentality. He systemized different artifacts using a hierarchical structure and naming them six *epistemic levels of mediational artifacts*. At the bottom level, he finds *what* artifacts such as images or prototypes, in the middle there are *in which location* artifacts such as maps and classifications, and at the top, there are *where to* artifacts such as germ cells, models and visions (Ibid., p. 34). Naming artifacts as epistemic mediational means he wants to draw attention to technologically mediated learning, claiming that the technologies introduced to facilitate learning are themselves poorly analyzed and understood in the epistemic qualities and potential (Ibid., p. 35).

Now let me turn to the first empirical case. The empirical material comes from a study focusing on a preparatory vocational immigrant training (TERÄS, 2007). I will briefly explain the context to give the reader background. In 1999, new training for immigrant students was launched in Finland. The new training was started, because the number of immigrants increased during the 1990s in Finland. At the time, Finland changed from a country of emigration into a country of immigration. The biggest groups came from Russia, Estonia and Somalia. The new training was not regular vocational training but was oriented toward regular vocational training. Therefore, the aims of the training were that students learned sufficient Finnish language and cultural practices in Finland so that after this one-year training they could apply for regular vocational education and training (VET).

The new training began in a social and health care college located in Helsinki. The college was a secondary-level vocational school, and between 1,500 and 1,800 students were enrolled in vocational programs each year. The Practical Nursing diploma was the most popular choice among the students. Immigrant students were offered either vocational education or the new preparatory immigrant training (TERÄS, 2007, p. 46).



The empirical material was produced with immigrant students (17 students who were natives of eight different countries Estonia, Russia, Somalia, Iraq, Chile, Italy, Afghanistan, and Japan), their teachers, other personnel at the college and researchers during a change laboratory intervention called a culture laboratory. It was organized in 2001-2002 and included nine meetings lasting 2–3 hours with a total of 26 persons. The meetings were videotaped and transcribed for further analyses.

During the discussions, the participants identified and compared different cultural practices by questioning and negotiating the cultural tools used in the vocational college. For example, multiple uses of papers and written texts that mediated learning activity were discussed (see also TERÄS, 2012). In activity theoretical terms, the concept of the subject and the object had changed. In addition to mono-lingual and -cultural students, the college received multi-lingual and -cultural students; therefore, the concept of the student had expanded, and new students had new needs. Furthermore, the object of regular VET had shifted from educating skilled students for labor markets to educating skilled students for vocational colleges. One could argue that the object had narrowed instead of expanding.

In the analysis, I asked: What kinds of instruments of learning did the participants identify in the cultural practices of the vocational college (TERÄS, 2015). Instrumentality and the six epistemic levels of mediational artifacts were used as an analytical model (ENGESTRÖM, 2007). All six levels of artifacts were identified. For example, *what* tools such as papers and computers used in a learning activity were pointed out by the students as in the following example in which a student explains changes in tools “In my life, computers, IT lessons are changes, because when I studied in [name of the country omitted] in our school or institute there were no computers.” *How* artifacts, for example, were the rules and roles of the students and teachers, and how they differed from the students’ previous experiences. In the next example, the teacher reported discussions with the students and the differences the students stated:

“Well, then, in [name of the country, omitted] there are many more rules. There is, for example, a school uniform, no rings, no nail polish, no coloring your hair, no mobile phone, no drinks.”

In addition, one epistemic artifact was recognized at the second level: *where from*. When the students compared their previous cultural tools and practices, the students often mirrored practices between their previous and current experiences, as in the examples.

Taking into account and focusing on learning activity at the theoretical level as a systemic whole, what were the relations between different elements of the activity of learning in the empirical context of immigrant training from the students’ perspective? First, what was the relation between the new subject, immigrant students and instruments? The analyses showed that the texts and textbooks were written for native speakers; thus, these materials were far too difficult for the students, for whom Finnish was their second or third language. This also affected the subject’s relation to the object. In theoretical terms, new types of *what* instruments were needed. More specifically, *hybrid what and how* instruments that could integrate vocational vocabulary to target language, in this case Finnish, were needed. Second, what was the subject’s relation to the object? Most of the students were motivated by getting into vocational schools, but some wanted to go to work directly after the training; therefore, they also had individual goals. In theoretical terms, the object was divided between the new training aimed at VET and the regular VET aimed at the labor market. Third, what was the subject’s relation to the division of labor and rules? There were clearly differences between the rules and roles for teachers

and for students at the vocational college but also between the students' previous schools and the current one. In theoretical terms, temporal rules connecting the past and the present were needed, as well as making a division of labor between the teachers and the students visible. Fourth, what was the subject's relation to community of learners? In the students' previous schools, the students had tended to be members of the majority group; in their new school, the students were part of the minority, which changed the notion of community and caused ponderings about the division of labor, rules and the community. This brief reflection about the systemic whole of learning activity in the context of immigrant training has focused attention on three issues. First, the notion of instrumentality revealed the richness of the instruments the vocational students and teachers encountered. Second, the notion of instrumentality alone did not capture the systemic whole of the learning activity. Third, in the context of immigrant training, a temporal dimension of instrumentality and rules was needed that is a reflection of tools in the past and present activity of learning. Next, I bring the notion of rules into focus.

### 3. Rules and constellation of rules in education of health care professionals

Rules were recognized as part of the ASM in the evolution processes of human activity. Human societies, communities and groups need rules in order to function and to organize their collective activities. Engeström provided examples of rules such as “societal (state, law, religion), organizational and interpersonal rules” (1987/2015, p. 122). He then talks about “quantitative procedural rules” and “heuristic rules.” He (1990, p. 172) later described the ASM and rules as follows “the rules regulating the actions legitimately taken by the actors (typically rules pertaining to issues of time and money).” He (1990, p. 81) also described the ASM “as a whole also represents some historically identifiable ideal-typical qualitative pattern or constellation of its components and inner relations.” He described inner contradictions of the work activity of general practitioners at a health center in which rules represented a primary contradiction in the “categorization of patient visits and rapid processing vs. prevention” (Ibid., p. 93). Rules “refer to the explicit and implicit regulations, norms and conventions that constrain actions and interactions within the activity system” (Ibid., p. 79). Engeström (1999, p. 66) described ‘the bottom’ of activity system model – rules, community and division of labor – as the less visible social mediators of activity. He recognized that if development work emphasizes instrumental re-mediation, which focuses on developing new instruments, then socio-organizational re-mediation of the activity system is often dismissed. This was what happened with the first case I introduced: We focused on the instrumentality of immigrant training and forgot other elements of the ASM.

When *how* rules had been used as an element of the ASM was examined, three types of analyses were found. First, the inner contradictions of the rules were identified as similar to the inner contradictions of the work activity of general practitioners at a health care center. Second, contradictions in and between activity systems, for example, between rules and tools, were identified. In addition, displacement and ambiguity between tools and rules were common. The physicians saw medical records more as a bureaucratic rule than as a tool (ENGESTRÖM, 1999, p. 179). Third, what rules are used in the activity (cf. ENGESTRÖM, ENGESTRÖM, & VÄHÄÄHO, 1999)? However, rules were not focused

on or analyzed more deeply. To further analyze and theorize about rules, we used Elinor Ostrom's (2007) and her colleagues' long-term studies, evolution of rules and rule systems in the context of developing irrigation systems in Nepal (TERÄS & MIETTINEN, forthcoming).

Instrumentality has an interesting counterpart in Ostrom's (2007) rule constellation or rule configuration. Ostrom emphasized the configurational nature of rules:

“One needs to know the basic contents of a *full* rule configuration, rather than a single rule, to infer both the structure of the resulting situation and the likely outcome of any particular rule change” (Ostrom, 2007, p. 18 italics in original)

For an examination of the transformation of rules, she made a distinction between seven clusters of rules according to the element of action and the decision-making situation they directly affect (Ibid., p. 11). The seven types of rules were boundary, position, choice, aggregation, information, payoff and scope rules, reflecting different aspects of rules in action situations. For example, boundary rules regulate who can enter or leave the situation, position rules create a certain status and scope rules state outcomes that need to be reached or avoided in the situation. Together, these rules form a set of instructions and a structure for a working situation (Ibid., pp. 11–12). Furthermore, her main argument was that when the users have autonomy to develop and tinker with the rules, better outcomes result than if external experts impose their rules on practitioners. Ostrom aptly pointed out that formal rules may be written, but a researcher in the field needs to determine “rules-in-use,” as she called them, when trying to understand the behavior and outcomes in any situation (OSTROM, 2007, p. 13).

Next, I provide examples from the second empirical case, which was part of a larger project called “Co-operation between a university, a university of applied sciences and working life: New teaching experiments” (cf. TERÄS & NUUTINEN, 2010; TERÄS, 2016). The project was organized in Helsinki in 2008-2010, because gum diseases were identified as a new and aggravating oral health problem in the adult population in Finland. Thus, the societal need in this case shifted from caring for caries to caring for periodontal diseases. For periodontal care patients' self-care activities at home are of vital importance.

The data involved two periodontal patient trajectories, about 25 hours of video recordings, collected during dental and oral hygienist students' clinical practice periods. Three organizations (a university dental clinic, an oral hygiene clinic at the University of Applied Sciences and a city dental care clinic) created a new model for oral-health work, called “health-centered teamwork.” In activity theoretical terms, the practitioners expanded their object of work from disease-centeredness to health-centeredness and from individual-based work to team-based work.

From the perspective of instrumentality, the new model is a *where to* artifact aimed at the future of dentists' and oral hygienists' work. Other instruments identified in these professionals' work included instructions and manuals that define a good practice: one for dental students (Paro-Manual) and one for oral hygienist students (instruction for the care of adult patients). Diagnostic means such as x-ray images and an instrument for measuring the depth of gingival pockets were used to evaluate the illness. A care plan was an important instrument, in which the goals and measures of care were documented. Instruments for caring for the teeth and gums were the practical tools the professionals employed. Thus, the instrumentality of oral health care involved what, where to and how tools, among others. In particular, two mediational means seemed to be important for the practice of periodontal patients' care: manuals and the patient database, including

the care plan. The means acted in practice as rules and as tools. For example, the manuals included direct instructions for how to diagnose a patient's oral health, as well as an evaluation of the periodontal disease stage.

The challenge was how the new model affected actual care practices. In the analyses, we found that the new model was manifested only partially in the care practice of periodontal patients: The health-centeredness embedded in the model had not changed the actual care practices, which still followed the traditional disease-centeredness model and focused on caring for the disease and not on emphasizing patients' health-care activities at home. The data showed that only 7 % of the time was invested in health-related issues and almost 70 % of the time was invested in treatment of the disease (TERÄS & NUUTINEN, 2010).

We found that there were two reasons for that. First, the strategic instruments (the manuals and the care plan) were named health education as one of professionals' tasks, but it was not clearly stated what the term actually meant, for example, how, when and what kinds of topics health education was supposed to include. Second, no time invested was in the script for a treatment session on health issues. Thus, it seemed that health education was assumed to be self-evident practice in the care of periodontal patients. In activity theoretical terms, the new object of health-centeredness had not affected other elements of the ASM (TERÄS & NUUTINEN, 2010).

In relation to the teamwork embedded in the new model, the manuals recognized teamwork as part of the professionals' task. The manuals gave explicit instructions for the responsibilities between the two student groups. In the next example from the dental students' manual the rule for the division of labor was explicated as follows:

“After showing that a dentist candidate has needed knowledge and skills (at least 2 middle large treatments) he or she can implement, starting from the H42 course, periodontal care together with an oral-hygienist student. The oral-hygienist student's task is not to clean gingival pockets that are more than 5 millimeters deep (CPI 4). Every student must care for at least three co-operation patients during her or his studies.” (Paro-Manual, p. 21)

In this example, the manual clearly recognized teamwork and provided rules for the division of labor: the depth of the gingival pockets. In Ostrom's perspective, this would indicate a position rule. The dental student's position was different from that of the oral-hygienist student and was supposed to implement different actions compared to the oral-hygienist student. However, Ostrom (2007) pointed out that to understand actions in a specific situation, rules-in-use must be followed. In the next example, the students discussed the division of labor:

Dental student: Well, surely some treatment sessions with you [the oral-hygienist student] and then with me, and then we take care together the second evaluation when we have cleaned. (...) Last time, we did so that you took care of the lower jaw, and I the upper jaw.

Oral-hygienist student: Yeah, and I cleaned with an ultrasound for the whole mouth.

Dental student: Maybe we can do the same kind of division of labor, if that is ok for you.

Oral hygienist student: Yes, whatever, it's the same for me.

Dental student: Yeah, let's do so that you take care of first a basic cleaning with the ultrasound, and then you'll clean the lower jaw, and I'll do the upper one.”

In this situation, the students decided to act as they had previously, which is called a “previous rule.” Furthermore, the anatomy of the jaw affected their actions and division of labor. Ostrom called this “a biophysical condition” of a situation, which interacts with the rules. Thus, instead of using the measured gingival pockets (the previous example), the formal rule, to divide the tasks, the students took a practical stance. If they had followed the written rule, it could have resulted in the dental student taking care of some teeth in the upper and lower jaws and the oral hygienist student taking care of the rest. It seemed more practical to divide the tasks according to the anatomy: the upper and lower jaws.

From the activity theoretical point of view, there are two interesting observations. First, an explicit rule was replaced by the students with a more practical rule; thus, they had tinkered with the rules-in-use and navigated through multiple rules. Instead of using one static rule, the activities involved multiple rules and a constellation of rules. Second, the creation of a new model or concept for an activity is not sufficient if all elements of the activity system are not evaluated, tinkered with and re-mediated.

## 4. Discussion

The aim of this paper was to reflect and explore organizational change efforts in two educational institutions in light of the ASM and especially through the lenses of instruments or instrumentality and rules or a constellation of rules.

Instrumentality was beneficial in revealing the richness and the interconnectedness of cultural tools and practices in VET. There was not one “culture, instrument or practice” but a fruitful repertoire and constellation of cultural instruments used in different cultural practices. In providing education for immigrants, VET teachers face different expectations, conceptions, methods and instruments of learning. However, when looking at the instrumentality of immigrant training, models or visions, as *where to* artifacts, were missing

Constellation of rules, in the second case, offered a broader conceptualization and a tool to analyze and navigate through practices of oral-health care. The challenge in this case was that the new model, as *where to artifact*, seemed not to have affected other elements of the ASM.

Thus, instrumentality, as well as a constellation of rules, provided a solid background for analyzing the efforts and challenges in organizational development work. However, it seemed that the development work in these cases partly failed, because the systemic whole was not taken into account during the development work. In the first case, a clear new model or vision that combined all development efforts was lacking; instead, the focus was on the development of instrumentality in immigrant training. In the second case, a new model was created, but its relation to instruments, and especially rules, was missing. Thus, in development work the systemic whole of the activity should be taken seriously. This is a challenge for researchers within DWR. If researchers do not take the systemic whole into account, practitioners need to navigate through the systemic whole in their everyday practices.

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10



*Complex transitions between different  
learning contexts: a case study  
from a French vocational school*

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*Transiciones complejas entre diferentes contextos  
de aprendizaje: un estudio de caso  
de un centro de formación profesional francés*

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## **Abstract**

In France, secondary initial vocational courses are characterised by learning contexts that can vary greatly from one to another, both in terms of content and with regard to space configurations and transmission methods. In this paper, we look at the continuities and discontinuities caused by switching, daily or weekly, between three different teaching contexts (french lesson, technical theoretical lesson, practical session in a school workshop), in a secondary training course in the field of car repairing. We used sociological (classification, frame) and didactical (learning milieu) concepts to analyse and compare both the specificities of knowledge and the configuration each teaching situation in terms of space, material and symbolic components. Our results show more or less subtle and implicit continuities and discontinuities for students to shift from one context to another. The problem is that they generally receive very little help to identify these ruptures and continuities, due to a lack of pedagogical collaboration between the teachers of different disciplines.

*Key Words:* vocational education; learning environment; transitions

## **Resumen**

En Francia, los cursos de formación profesional inicial se caracterizan por contextos que pueden variar considerablemente de uno a otro, tanto en términos de contenido, de configuración de los espacios y en los métodos de transmisión de aprendizaje. En este artículo, nos centramos en las continuidades y discontinuidades producto de estas transiciones, que ocurren diaria o semanalmente, entre tres contextos de enseñanza diferentes (clase de francés, clase de teórica técnica, y clases prácticas en taller), en un curso de formación profesional en el ámbito de mantenimiento y reparación de vehículos. Para ello, movilizamos conceptos sociológicos (clasificación, marco) así como conceptos didácticos (campo de aprendizaje) para analizar tanto las características específicas de los conocimientos y la configuración de la situación de la enseñanza en términos de espacio como los materiales y componentes simbólicos. Nuestros resultados muestran las sutiles e implícitas continuidades y discontinuidades de los estudiantes para pasar de un contexto a otro. El problema es que generalmente reciben muy poca ayuda para identificar estas rupturas y continuidades, debido a la falta de colaboración pedagógica entre los profesores de las diferentes disciplinas.

*Palabras clave:* formación profesional; contextos de aprendizaje; transiciones

## 1. Introduction

In France, secondary initial vocational courses (e.g. ‘*Certificat d’Aptitude Professionnelle*’, ‘*Baccalaureat Professionnel*’) are characterised by learning situations that can vary greatly from the context to another, both in terms of content (general, technical and practical knowledge) and with regard to spaces and transmission methods (traditional lesson in a classroom, practical activities in a technical unit or a school workshop, work-place learning during a placement). This pedagogical organisation of training courses, which can be described as differentiated or segmented, inevitably creates a certain number of problems for students. Indeed, they have to move often from one context to another for very short periods of time. This requires the ability to adapt to a variety of educational methods, linguistic norms and forms of socialisation. In the longer term, this also requires the ability to transfer and integrate knowledge and experiences from these different contexts to build the complex skills expected at the end of the training. In this part of the education system where young people from underprivileged environments are overrepresented (Palheta, 2012), students receive very little help enabling them to do this two-fold task: 1) adapting to different educational methods; 2) integrating different forms of knowledge, even though several studies underline that this is a major difficulty, for the students having previously struggled the most at primary and then lower secondary school (BONNÉRY, 2007; ERAUT, 2004; JELLAB, 2008; SENSTRÖM & TYNJÄLÄ, 2009; AUTHOR, 2012; 2015).

In this paper, we look at the continuities and discontinuities caused by switching, daily or weekly, between three different teaching contexts, all included in the same secondary training course: a CAP (*Certificat d’Aptitude Professionnelle*), in the field of car repairing. This course is the most elementary qualification degree in the French vocational training system. Students who choose this training track have generally experienced important scholar difficulties at primary and lower secondary levels. In the first part of this paper, we present a theoretical approach enabling to conduct this type of study, before describing the methodology put in place (part 2). Then, we present some of the analyses conducted (parts 3 and 4). In the last part (synthesis and conclusion), we highlight the main continuities and discontinuities faced by students when they switch from one learning context to another and We outline some pedagogical directions to assist students during these transitions.

## 2. Theoretical approach

The current educational organisation of vocational training of workers and white-collar staff in France is the result of historical developments, which cannot be presented in this article in a detailed manner (LEMBRÉ, 2016; PELPEL & TROGER, 1993). Historians have accurately described the initiatives, debates and decisions that have led to courses followed mainly in State Vocational schools. But for more than 20 years, this school-based model was criticised due to its incapacity to prepare operationally and professionalise youngsters to the workplace. This led to introduce more work-based learning periods in the curricula, either as more frequent and longer internship phases, or by developing apprenticeship-training programs, which was quite neglected during a long time. On parallel, within the school-part of the curricula, new types of teaching situations were introduced in addition to general (French, History, Maths, Sciences) and

theoretical courses. The common idea of all of them is to be based on a competency approach, and to propose to students learning situations that are closer to workplace settings: serious educational games, simulation software, projects undertaken in small groups resulting in a deliverable (service or product for a customer). The result of this is a more varied curriculum than in the past, which introduces them to a wider range of learning situations and teachers with different profiles.

The *classification* concept of the sociologist B. Bernstein (1996) is of great interest to understand the differentiation of knowledge in vocational courses organised in different entities, with objects and epistemologies as well as methods and pedagogical learning practices which are specific to them. These entities, which I suggest describing as *learning contexts*, can generally be identified in the training programmes or frameworks, in the form of teaching disciplines or modules. A *strong classification* means that knowledge belonging to a teaching discipline or module has a strong identity and that it is transmitted without any (or with little) reference to those taught in other contexts. Boundaries between these learning contexts are consequently very clearly marked and relatively watertight. Conversely, a weak classification between learning contexts indicates that knowledge transmitted in each one has common links and characteristics (e.g. the knowledge taught in context A will serve as conceptual tools for activity and learning in context B for instance).

Each of these contexts can also develop situations and pedagogical practices which may be either in rupture, or more in continuity with those applied in other training situations. In particular an important feature of pedagogical methods used is their degree of *framing* according to Bernstein, i.e. the strength of the control exercised by the trainer on the knowledge transmission process (deciding on the order and timing of the introduction of knowledge, choosing supports, choice and degree of guiding tasks, cognitive operations to be undertaken, etc.) A *strong framing* is translated by a high degree of control from the teacher concerning these different educational aspects. Students will be highly oriented and guided with regard to the practical activities and the reasoning that they have to undertake. Conversely, a *weak framing* will give far more freedom and latitude to the students to manage pedagogical activities and develop their reasoning. In this case, they will have to draw far more upon their own cognitive and social resources.

The organisation of the learning environments can also vary considerably. This is firstly true in terms of arranging the space and material objects. A student, within the context of the same vocational training course, may experience very different types of space, from traditional classroom, with just a board, some tables and chairs, to complex school workshop, very well-equipped in terms of various technical objects which can be more or less similar to those found in current work situations (DE SAINT-GEORGES, 2008; PELPEL & TROGER, 1993). This organisation of the space and the objects in each context represents a feature of the *learning milieu* (BROUSSEAU, 1986; SENSEVY, 2007) put in place to enable certain types of practical and conceptual activities and to develop learning effects. But this *milieu* also contains symbolic and semiotic dimensions such as instruction sheets, resource documents, as well as oral and gestural interventions from the trainer and other students, etc. These different material and symbolic elements, events and actors who are present in the surrounding environment of students represents a system of constraints and affordances (possibilities of actions) for their activity and learning. Depending on their previous learning experiences and actual motivations, students are more or less able to perceive or understand these affordances (and

constrains), make some individual or collective activities and finally develop the learning dimensions expected by the teachers (BILLETT, 2006; DE SAINT-GEORGES, 2008).

This set of concepts (*classification, framing, learning milieu*) will enable us to characterise the students' different learning contexts and then to make some inferences concerning the nature of complex *transitions* (Beach, 1999) that they must ideally do when they move from one context to another in order to correctly adapt themselves to the requirements of each one. These transitions require more or less strong ruptures (e.g. moving from a traditional classroom when you are seated and you have to carefully listen to a teacher, to a workshop where you must do practical activities with another student without waiting for the trainer's explanations), as well as sometimes identifying continuities (e.g. understanding that a certain type of knowledge taught in a previous lesson can be used as a pre-requisite for the present learning context). These ruptures and continuities are not only cognitive, but also social or related to identity dimensions and even affective aspects. The empirical study that we present here should enable us to shed light some of them.

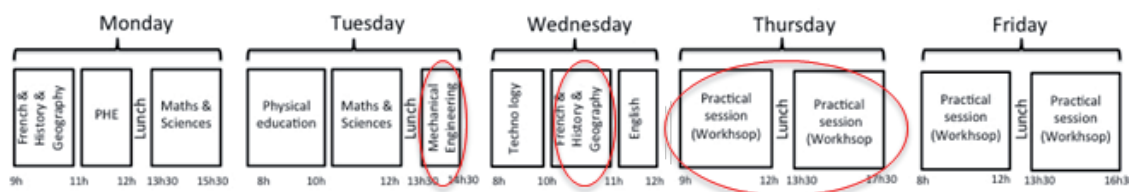
### 3. Methodology

Table 1 below shows the weekly amount of time (over 30 weeks) for the different subjects taught in the CAP in Motor Vehicle Maintenance, Private Cars (MVM-PC) option where we conducted our study.

**Table 1.** Weekly volume of the different teaching CAP subjects.

Practical sessions (workshop)	Technology	Mechanical Engineering	Maths & sciences	French & History & Geography	English	Artistic education	Physical education	Prevention & Health & Environment (PHE)
7h + 7h	2h	1h	2h+1h30	1h30+2h	2h	1h	2h	1h

Our initial goal was to observe and analyse a whole week of lessons forming part of the same training course, but this proved impossible, in particular due to the reluctance of many teachers to be observed during their class. Finally, after a negotiation period with some of them, we were able to observe three different teachers during the course of the week. Each lesson was video-recorded: a French lesson (1 hour), a Mechanical Engineering (1 hour) lesson and a full day's practical session in a workshop (see fig. 1).



**Figure 1.** Video-recorded Lessons (surrounding in red).

We conducted a two-step analysis concerning these different lessons.

1. First, we did an analysis of the characteristics of the knowledge to be taught and the approach used by each teacher to transmit this knowledge. We did this analysis using different sources: institutional reference texts (teaching programmes or activity and competency framework), setting out the content to be taught, pedagogical methods to be implemented and recommending materials to be used; pedagogical documents prepared by the teachers in charge of the lessons studied; interviews with these teachers; observations *in situ* (written observation notes and/or video recordings). These different data enabled us to undertake a first analysis of the features of the three lessons, as each teacher prepared them, and to identify a set of institutional, social and technical constraints structuring quite strongly the implementation of the different learning contexts.
2. Second, we developed an analysis of each teaching/learning process, especially based on video-recorded observations (and enriched by additional written observation notes). In the classrooms (French and Mechanical Engineering lessons), we used two cameras, placed in such a manner as to film what was happening in front of the board and in the rest of the room (see figures 2 and 3). In the workshop, we followed two pairs of students, each working on a specific task (replacing the shock absorbers and wheels on a car for the first pair; changing a timing belt for the second) and whose workstations were positioned next to each other. In this situation, we used three cameras: one mounted on a tripod, offering a panoramic view of the two workstations, and the other two, hand-held cameras on each of the two pairs (see figure 4). Consequently, when one of the two students from a pair left the workstation, for example to go and get a tool from an adjoining room, we could follow him without losing sight of what the second one, filmed by the mounted camera, was doing. From these video-recordings, we built synoptic tables enabling us to see how of each session was evolving from the point of view of different dimensions (Table 2).

<b>Time and location</b>	<b>Description of main actions and interactions</b>	<b>Learning milieu components</b>	<b>Frame by the teacher</b>
0:00:00 <i>(1 min. and 54 secs.)</i> Technical Room	<b>First instructions</b> Teacher (T) gives some instructions to all the students: - avoid the area where the cameras are for those who don't want to be filmed, - changing a pair; - feedback on the warnings issued during the <i>conseil de classe</i> (Term Evaluation Board).  T asks the students to take the cars out. He will give detailed instructions afterwards.  Students go outside taking the car keys.	- Teacher's instructions  - Other students	Strong  (Students have to listen carefully to the teacher's instructions)
0:01:54 <i>(12 mins. and 8 seconds)</i> Outside workshop	<b>Taking vehicles outside</b> Researchers put micros on the pairs, start the panoramic camera in the workshop and... action! Students take the vehicles out by pushing them. Discussions between them  T observes that the cars are taken out correctly. Pair 2 (pushing) and M (at the wheel) take the Polo outside. T talks with students from other pairs in local T13	- cars, with the engine stopped  - Other students	Strong  (Students have to respect strict rules to move cars outside)
0:14:02 <i>(2 mins. and 27 seconds)</i> Technical Room	<b>Allocation of the Practical Work and instructions</b> All the students stood around the teacher.  T hands out the Practical Work while referring to the table pinned up on the wall (allocation of Practical Work during the year) and hands out the Practical Work sheet to the pairs one by one. Pairs take their sheets + tools and go out one after the other. Ta and Ma receive their Practical Work second to last. T explains that the Car Repair Manual they will use is the one for the Peugeot 106 model because the one for the Citroen AX model has been mislaid. The two cars have the same mechanical characteristics. T and M go outside.	- Table with the allocation of the Practical Works  - Teacher's instructions  - Practical Work sheet  - Car Repair Manual  - Other students	Strong  (Students have to listen quietly teacher's instructions)

**Table 2.** Excerpt of a synopsis (first minutes of the practical session).

The first column indicates the location where the scene took place and also provides indications of time. The second describes the students' actions and interactions with their technical and human environment during different phases. In the third column, we tried to identify the different components of the learning milieu for each phase, while in the fourth, we have attempted to specify the degree of framing (high, medium, low) exercised by the teacher on the students' actions. When we found more interesting moments (e.g. during conversations between the students and the teacher), we transcribed them more precisely.

In the following parts, we present some of the results of the analyses done.

### **3. Different types of knowledge and their degree of classification**

A first point of differentiation between the three lessons concerns the reference of the different types of knowledge to be taught and their degree of classification.

For the French lesson, there is a pedagogical programme defining the aims and the teaching content over the two years of the course. Its objectives are situated explicitly in the continuity of the common knowledge base to be acquired at lower secondary school. The four major teaching themes are the followings: personal development; becoming part of a group; entering the world of work; finding one's place in society. The third issue explicitly refers to professional needs in terms of written and oral expression. Examples provided are as the following ones: "being able to explain a technical process; attending a meeting and be able to express one's ideas; [...] writing a CV; linking up and comparing different written supports (text, tables, diagrams)". However, the concrete supports to be used during the lessons, which are recommended later on in the programme, are mainly artistic or scholarly works: such as films, encyclopaedias and dictionaries, written works of fiction, etc. The programme clearly recommends using "company documents", but this recommendation is only one line long and provides no further details. How can we understand this gap between a clearly-stated didactic objective (develop vocational linguistic skills) and the very few vocational written documents which are recommended to be used during the lessons?

The first reason must undoubtedly be related to the difficulty to be more precise because of the common nature of the French programme in all the CAP specialities. This means that students who follow a CAP course in the personal services field and those who are learning about car mechanics follow the same teaching programme. Choosing a technical written document that is specific to a given trade, or an oral situation that is typical to a job, is referred to each teacher responsibility in his or her establishment. Another reason probably lies with the persistent historic tension in France, with regard to role of general teaching in vocational training, a tension which can be summarised in the following manner: should general teaching be at the service of vocational needs or should the aim be to acquire a non-utilitarian general culture for all type of students (PELPEL and TROGER, 1993)? Some researches show that for some years now, the balance of power seems to lean mainly in favour of studying artistic and general works (books, films, etc.), at the expense of written and literary skills used in vocational spheres (BELHADJIN & LOPEZ, 2010). This question of the aims of the French Teaching in vocational secondary schools remains a subject of debate amongst teachers of this discipline. However, we can note a tendency on the part of the youngest generations to see themselves more as French literature teachers, rather than trainers to written and spoken linguistic skills. The transformation of the training of these teachers of French (as a first language), which has become much more aligned with the teachers from the general courses, is undoubtedly a major reason of this tendency (LOPEZ, 2010).

The interview with the teacher who prepared the session shows that she follows this orientation. She is still a young teacher (under 40). She said that she gives priority to working with items such as the news, cartoons, short films or film excerpts. Priority is

given to short and, if possible visual works, due to the difficulties experienced by students to concentrate for a long time and “access” the reading and writing activities. In the case of the filmed session, she uses a short film and the transcription of the dialogues to tackle the notion of black comedy. She explained us that she generally does not use, or uses very little, vocational written texts or situations involving oral communication of a vocational nature.

A body of evidence converge to the idea that this teaching takes place in a relatively independent manner, without a great deal of interaction with others (the vocational subjects in particular). A strong classification can therefore be attributed to it according to the concept developed by Bernstein. This closed nature of the discipline with regard to the other types of knowledge taught is undoubtedly reinforced by the way the teacher of French works. Most of the time she prepares her lessons alone without collaborating with her colleagues, be they French or workshop teachers. More generally, this type of collaborative work seems to exist very little in the establishment for different reasons:

- The choice of many French/History teachers to prepare their lessons alone and their reluctance to allow other colleagues observe their lessons. This reluctance is without doubt reinforced by their own training background that did not prepare them very much to work in collaboration with other teachers and a relative lack of recognition on the part of the establishment with regard to collaborative work between teachers.
- A shared reluctance (or fear) on the part of many teachers to go to the technical workshops in order to talk with their colleagues who teach vocational subjects (and vice versa). This was not however always the case of this teacher who told us that she go sometimes to see some of her workshop colleagues (which we were able to see for ourselves through “in the field” observations) and would like to be involved with them in more common projects. But she said she lack of time to make regular visits. However, many other teachers of general subjects do not share her interest and intellectual curiosity and very rarely go into the workshops.
- The layout of the establishment, which polarises the teaching locations depending on the subjects. The rooms for teaching general subjects such as French-History/Geography, English, Arts etc., are situated in a building located at some distance from where the vocational teaching takes place. In comparison, the science classrooms are much nearer. It is therefore highly unlikely for French-History/Geography teachers to see their colleagues who teach vocational subjects, unless they go out of their way to go into the workshops (and vice versa).
- The restrictions imposed by the timetables leave very limited opportunities to find timeslots when teachers are free to work together.

For the Mechanical Engineering workshop sessions, the situation is somewhat different. For these two teaching situations, to which we can also add the technology sessions, conducted by the workshop teachers, there is no set programme. The teachers must build their lessons based on the activity and competency frameworks, which are common to all of them. The first describes the typical activities and tasks of the trade



(“1. Booking in the vehicle; 1.1 greeting the customer and/or the driver, listening to their requirements; 1.2 taking in vehicle after assigning by the Workshop Manager”, etc.), as well as the task exercise conditions (technical equipment and resources required) and the expected results. The second specifies the skills and competencies required to be able to do the tasks and activities, and indicates the underlying knowledge required for each skill. The discussions we had with the teachers of these two subjects show that there is significant collaborative work, if not each year, but whenever the competency framework changes, in order to decide which teaching approach will be used to transfer such or such knowledge or train such or such skill.

“- ENS: “So we already have a sort of teaching progression, that we have defined during some meetings with of all the teachers in car under the authority of our inspector [...] Therefore, the teachers of the same speciality [both theoretical and practical teachers] meet together with the inspector and define a pedagogical progression [...] For example, the workshop teachers on the car mechanics, both those who teach in CAP or BAC courses, meet together and look at how best to plan the progression [...]

- CHE: When does this take place?

- ENS: In general, in May/June for the following year. But after, there are several more meetings during the year, because we work like that whenever there are things to be put in place.”

This method of coordinating all the vocational teachings, also driven by the inspector, is not restricted to building a uniform progression. It is also used in terms of sharing certain equipment, which is tackled from a theoretical viewpoint in Mechanical Engineering (also called mechanical construction) and from a more practical angle in workshop sessions.

“- ENS: “The teachers in theoretical car mechanics try to do technical studies using workshop items. [...] They come to see us to ask if we have a component or whether we have something that would enable them to undertake a theoretical study with the students during their lesson. For instance, we made some technical models. So when they want to tackle a new subject, we lend them the model to allow them to look at it and, above all, they are given the documentation which goes with it and enables them to make a substantial training aid. If need be, they go to the workshop in order to dismantle the model with us, see how things are going, and we can explain them some aspects if necessary. This is a form of cooperation.”

The Mechanical Engineering session that we filmed is a good example of this practice of sharing technical objects used in the workshop. The goal of this lesson is to study the different types of mechanical connections (translation, rotation, fixed) between mechanical parts. In order to do this, the teacher took a door contact, a relatively simple small part that is used to turn the interior light on or set the car alarm off if the door is opened. The students had already seen this part in several types of vehicles during some previous workshop sessions. They see it again during this lesson in a more theoretical angle.

During our observations, we were able to see that the Mechanical Engineering teachers often go into the workshops to talk to the teachers in charge of these practical sessions. This is fairly easy for them as the Mechanical Engineering classrooms are situated opposite the workshops. Discussions between the teachers of these subjects are also

made easier by the way the workshop sessions are organised. Students work in pairs at different workstations and have to work on the vehicles. They do it in relative autonomy, which gives some free time to the teacher who is in charge of these sessions. He can consequently use this time to talk with colleagues about other subjects that sometimes crop up in the workshop. During the time when we were observing, we were able to see that a large amount of information (about students, their difficulties, their behaviour and whether a session is running as planned or, on the contrary, is delayed, etc.) circulated during these informal conversations ensuring an important coordination role. All these factors contribute towards significantly weakening the knowledge *classification* between these two learning contexts, and therefore, on the face of it, create continuities in terms of the knowledge transmitted.


## 4. Learning Milieu

We are now going to look at the educational environments lesson by lesson that we have characterised in term of learning milieu. Figures 2, 3 and 4 below contain information about the way space and the objects (technical equipment, written documents) are organised for each type of teaching.

French (fig. 2) and Mechanical Engineering (fig. 3) lessons take place in very similar spaces. In both cases this is a classroom equipped with a board and a video projector connected to a laptop, with small groups of students (10, but with 2 missing in Mechanical Engineering), sat individually at separate tables. The only notable difference is the use of a white board in French and an overhead projector for transparencies in Mechanical Engineering. The temporal and social organisation is also relatively similar, with a session limited to one hour most of which is spent with the whole class, interspersed with short periods when the students do individual written work on paper.

From a didactical viewpoint, the *learning milieu* of the French lesson is set aside for studying the language, and more specifically a particular literary genre: black comedy. Starting the lesson with a short film aims at understanding of a story using two different media: image and text.

“- Ens: it’s a way of looking at the message from two angles. Our students are not good at reading and they often do not understand the story. It’s a good thing for them to hear several reading and re-reading proposals. By starting with the short film they begin by pictures and oral languages and then, with the scenario, we tackle written work.”

Space organisation		Objects within the milieu
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Classroom with 26 places. Separated tables, arranged in four rows, one behind the other in a circle. Two chairs per table.</li> <li>- 10 students, one per table</li> <li>- ‘Véléda’ board (2) with the video-projection (1) on the right-hand side of it</li> <li>- Teacher’s office on a dais with a laptop connected to the video projector (3)</li> <li>- Cupboard with the students’ folders to the right of the dais</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Short film (video projected)</li> <li>- Transcription of the dialogues in the film (sheet and video projected)</li> <li>- Map (video projected)</li> <li>- Question sheet built around three parts: understanding the story; what is amusing; black comedy.</li> <li>- Annotations on the video projected transcription and sentences written on the board</li> </ul>

**Figure 2.** Description of the teaching environment for French lessons.

The film plays a didactical role in helping with reading comprehension (and perhaps also in enhancing their motivation), but it is not the main working medium, which remains the written work. The piece of paper handed out to the students contains, in addition to the transcription of the dialogues on the front, three parts on the back: - understanding the story, a series of very precise questions about the film; - what is funny, questions aiming at characterising the type of humour from different points of view (language register, the offbeat comedy of the situation, etc.); - and, lastly, black comedy, an open question relating to defining this notion. It can also be added that the video projector, apart from showing the film, makes it possible to project additional comprehension elements, often of a visual nature (e.g. the map to locate Brest, French city mentioned in the story), as well as the transcription, on which the teacher has just added annotations with a felt pen. The part of the board on the side is used to write down the words or expressions spotted in this transcription, which must then be copied by the students on their piece of paper.

Furthermore, this session is based on an important dialogue important between the teacher and the students. For instance, they are orally requested to give a definition of black comedy (writing the suggestions on the board that are then followed up in order to build a common definition), or for the whole class to work together to create a short text representing a continuation of the story. The written work can also be individual (working in silence on a document), also with the possibility of another exercise which consists of reusing and projecting written work produced during a previous session, in order for the whole group to spot spelling and/or syntax mistakes. During the lesson, two students are asked by the teacher to correct the text on her laptop. The didactical progress of the session is therefore strongly based on the involvement and contributions of the students who are given an important role in the production of knowledge. Supervising the exercise is not simple for the teacher who has to regularly steer the common activity back towards the fixed didactic objective, in order to avoid all the digressions, which his students are very keen on. Consequently, it was possible to observe switches between *weakly framed* periods, giving the students a large amount of leeway in terms of initiatives and interventions and other periods that were *strongly framed*, when it is necessary to exert traditional school discipline in order to bring the students under control.

The learning milieu of the Mechanical Engineering lesson is arranged in such a way to study a technical object from different viewing angles, in order to identify the different components and characterise the mechanical connections between them. One particular important difficulty for the students, underlined by many teachers, is establishing a link between an object and its symbolic representations in accordance with the strict standards of industrial design. From this point of view, the arrival of CAD software (Computer-Aided Design), combined with the introduction of video projectors in the classrooms, provides an important training assistance, insofar as these tools make it possible to very quickly show different representations of a technical object, complete or partial, static or dynamic. Unlike the French lesson, the visual and graphic dimensions are just as important in this context, indeed much more so than the written aspect. The first part of the work consists of observing the object, identifying its different parts, and colouring the surfaces, which are in contact from a technical drawing of this object. This is followed by a written work to conceptually characterise the mechanical links (rotation, translation, fixed) observed. In itself this written work is minimal: it is limited to writing the binary values in the tables and naming the type of connection in a document that the teacher has almost completed. The teacher justifies this minimal written part of the students' work

by the fact that “it’s pointless asking the students to do the layout given that on the day of the exam, it will be done for them.” Lastly, it should be underlined that the colouring, the values and the names of the mechanical links are shown on the transparency displayed by the overhead projector, with this method institutionalising the answers in a format which is exactly the same as the format on the document given to the students.

### Organising the space

- Classroom with 24 chairs. Separate tables, placed one in front of another in a line. One chair at each small table.
- Eight students
- Transparencies are projected on the right-hand side by the OHP (2)
- Object is projected in CAD by the video projector onto the Velléda board in the middle (1)
- Teacher’s office on the left, with computer connected to the overhead projector on the left, with a laptop connected to the video projector (3)



### Objects in the environment

- Door contact (in the teacher’s pocket and hands)
- 3D modelling of the contact (CAD, video projected)
- 2D drawing (shown by the overhead projector): view from above (parts 2 and 3); profile cutaway view
- Table showing the links
- Document used for the final plotting of the links graph

**Figure 3.** Description of the teaching environment for the Mechanical Engineering lesson.

The teacher conducts this Mechanical Engineering session in a very dynamic fashion and keeps up the tempo by asking the students several series of quick questions, and requesting equally quick answers which he rephrases every time. He very often provides them visual and symbolic resources (handling the door contact, showing some 3D views by using the CAD software and some 2D drawings from the transparencies shown with the overhead projector, in addition to numerous deictic gestures to show certain parts of the object or its symbolic representations) so that they can answer quickly. Perception and reasoning are therefore permanently heavily supervised. In other terms, this teacher conducts proceedings from end to end, leaving very little opportunity for his students to take the initiative. The documents given to the students also contribute to this *strong framing* leaving little latitude to the students in terms of writing.

The space organisation of the workshop session (fig. 4) differs greatly from the previous two lessons. In contrast to the rather characterless classrooms, the features of the school workshops vary significantly from one to another depending on the vocational specialities taught. In most cases however they are large open spaces where several groups of students and several teachers work at the same time. In many cases, it is also possible to observe operations on the “material”, which involve many people moving around and a noisy environment making it impossible to teach in the standard manner of traditional classrooms.

**Organisation of the space**

- Workshop area, reserved for the CAP and shared by two groups of students. Five workstations per group (1)
- adjoining technical room, with tools (2), the teacher’s office (3), and distribution of the Practical Work displayed (4)
- storeroom for special tools



**Objects in the environment**

- Car (106, old model)
- Two post car hoist
- Workbench with vice
- Tools specific to the pair (in the technical room and then on the pair’s workbench)
- Common tools (technical room; storeroom)
- Special equipment (tyre changer)
- Practical Work sheet
- Manufacturer’s technical journal

**Figure 4.** Description of the teaching environment for the workshop sessions.

In the situation observed, the students were not restricted to one location but instead moved between several rooms. The workstation, in the car workshop is their “base” but the students can often go into the adjoining technical room to listen to the teacher’s instructions for the whole group or to get tools (see Fig. 5, first photo). They can also go, after being authorised to do so by the teacher, to the storeroom if they need a very specific tool or product. This multiplicity of locations is, predictably, accompanied by a multiplicity of technical objects: firstly, the car on which the students will have to carry out the tasks requested by the teacher, as well as the objects situated on the workstation (car hoist, workbench with a vice), hand tools (various wrenches, torches, etc.) and more specialised equipment (e.g. tyre changer, located in a corner of the workshop). Furthermore, the students work with three main types of documents during these sessions: the Practical Work Sheet prepared by the teacher which gives them working instructions in different stages; the car’s repair manual, which contains all the information required to carry out the work (diagrams showing parts, assembly and dismantling instructions, tightening and tyre pressure values etc.); lastly more marginally words inscribed on technical equipment (e.g. graduation a sliding caliper or a multimeter screen for example).

Given the complex nature of this environment, it is tempting to ask oneself if, in fact, there is a *learning milieu* organised for the study. How does this space differ from a real garage? A first part of the answer lies in the choice of vehicles for each Practical Work.

“ENS 2: “If you think about the start of the course, the work must be accessible and easy to find and not too complex. After, you can add to that, resource documents, which will be used either to provide additional technical information, or to use certain types of tool. Let’s say, the precautions to be taken when using such or such equipment.”

Consequently, as a general rule, the old vehicles are often used for students starting their course due to the much greater visibility and accessibility of their different parts compared with more recent vehicles. Certain models from the same period may also be preferred to others for working on a particular part. It can therefore be said that the vehicles have characteristics, which are more or less favourable for didactic use.

The teacher also ensures that the technical documentation is available and accessible to the students, in accordance with the level of their knowledge. He generally gives them copies of the pages of the Car Repair Manual (see an excerpt in fig. 5) corresponding to the task to be undertaken thus avoiding them getting lost in the parts of the document which are not relevant for the operations they have to carry out. A last very important structuring element for the students' activity comes from the Practical Work sheet. It not only sets out the instructions, but also specifies the successive steps of the action and indicates the resources to be mobilised for each of them. Lastly, it can be seen that as in the Mechanical Engineering lesson, the written work is very limited during the workshop sessions. The students only have to find values (tightening torque in particular) in the car repair manual and write them in the boxes on their Practical Work sheet. The teacher justifies this limitation in particular by the recommendations of his inspector: the students write to a sufficient extent in other parts of the training course (in general subjects in particular), and vocational teachers must not require them to write too much in the workshop. What matters the most is that they work with their hands.

The teacher has to move all the time between six pairs of students, each pair working at different workstations in separate parts of the workshop. As a result, the students enjoy a significant degree of autonomy with regard to carrying out the tasks described on the Practical Work sheet. They can move around freely to go and get tools from another room, or even stop working to talk with other students. This low level of supervision of the workshop activity is however somewhat tempered by the Practical Work sheet, which divides their work up into different stages. At the end of each stage, the students must call the teacher to come and check their work. On the sheet it is possible to see, for instance, in bold, the following heading: "Call Teacher: Your work will be checked. You will indicate the method to be followed in order to change the front shock absorbers." This layout of the Practical Work sheet therefore enables the teacher to maintain an overall control on the progress of the students' work, which is also very important in terms of ensuring their safety.

But between these inspections, many of the students find it difficult to act autonomously, in particular when it is necessary to look for information in the technical documentation (Car Repair Manual) in order to carry out certain tasks (dismantling and reassembling procedure, part tightening values, etc.). Consequently, this type of document is very complicated as can be seen below, insofar as it involves very different semiotic modes: texts describing actions, photos with superimposed symbols, 2D and 3D diagrams, tables, lists of values, etc. Finding the correct information is often a great challenge for students who generally have poor skills in literacy.

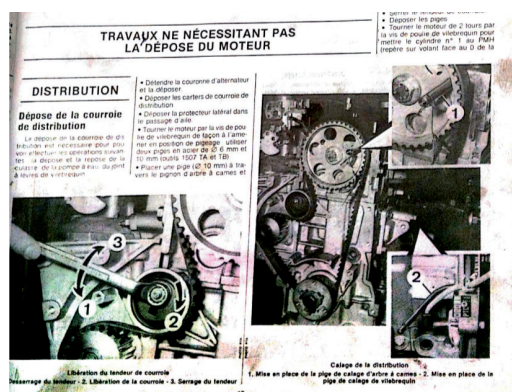


Figure 5. Excerpt from a Car Repair Manual.

In order to circumvent this problem, we observed that the students often ask the teacher for help. The teacher tries as much as possible to avoid their constant requests to get some information. Instead, he answers them to look for the information by themselves. However, if some pairs fall behind too much, the teacher has to help them to a greater extent.

## 5. Summary and conclusion

The table 3 provides an overview of the comparative analysis of these three learning contexts. The first results of this comparative work already provide several indications concerning the nature of the continuities and discontinuities between the three types of teaching.

From the viewpoint of the different types of knowledge to be taught, French is characterised by a strong degree of classification compared with the other content. Conversely, Mechanical Engineering and the workshop session have porous boundaries. They share the same competency framework and many common material objects and concepts. We have seen that several institutional and cultural factors make it possible to explain these classification differences between the three learning contexts. Some historical reasons can explain these differences, in particular a persistent in-depth debate concerning the role of general teaching in vocational training courses. The identity of the French teaching still seems very focused on content originating from major cultural institutions, with certain reluctance of teachers and more generally the institution to build in more professional issues and support. The organisation and architecture of the establishment (dating back to the seventies/eighties) are also very unfavourable for collaborative work with other disciplines.

Moreover, we have been able to outline a comparative approach of the three *learning milieux*. It shows that the French and Mechanical Engineering lessons are organised in a very similar manner in terms of space and time, typical of general disciplinary lessons, allowing the students very little opportunities for moving around, and imposing a fast pace to the activities which must not exceed one hour. Conversely, the workshop space is much more open (students can go from one place to another, although they must stay within certain limits) and the pace of the activities is also far slower. Moreover, the students do not hesitate to take advantage of this spatial and temporal leeway to interact and talk about everything and anything other than the work to be carried out. This is undoubtedly a feature of school workshops, which differentiate them very markedly from other learning contexts which take place in classrooms.

**Table 3.** Synthetic comparison between the 3 learning contexts.

	<b>French</b>	<b>Mechanical Engineering</b>	<b>Workshop</b>
<b>Knowledge classification</b>	Same teaching programme for all the Professional specialities. No or little contact with the other disciplines.  <i>Strong classification</i>	Common reference base. Numerous references between the knowledge and the objects studied in the two contexts. Collaborative work between teachers  <i>Weak classification between these two learning contexts</i>	
<b>Organisation of space / Freedom of movement</b>	Classrooms (similar to other general subject)  Students seated and stationary	Classrooms (similar to other general subject)  Students seated and stationary	Technical hall (several common points with real garage, but also important didactical specificities)  Workstations (1 per pair of students).  Students can move between several places.
<b>Duration of session</b>	1 hour	1 hour	7½ hours
<b>Elements of the learning milieu</b>	Short Film, instructions sheet (with several free fields), inscriptions/ projections on the board	Contacteur, projected 2D/3D views; paper 2D drawing, instructions sheet (with few sections to fill)	Car, spare parts, tools, Practical Work sheet (goal, stages, resources), Car repair manual
<b>Preferred Semiotic method</b>	Written (reading, understanding and writing texts)	Visual (perceive different material components, studying their mechanical connections)	Gestural (disassemble and assemble different mechanical parts)
<b>Didactic dynamic</b>	Teacher often ask students to produce ideas, make presentations and to be able to make some corrections both written and oral.  Frequent teacher interventions to calm students who often heckle  Pace of work quite closely linked to the productivity of the students  <i>Oscillation between weak and strong framing</i>	Tight control of students' perception and reasoning by the teacher (little initiative left open to the students)  Tight control of the work rhythm. <i>Strong framing</i>	Pairs work autonomously. Work progress depends a great deal on the students.  Teacher constantly asked to help.  Teacher helps occasionally when the delay becomes too big.  <i>Weak direct framing by the teacher (most of the time)</i>  <i>Indirect framing through the Practical Work sheet</i>

But beyond these superficial similarities, this work also shows subtler discontinuities between the French lessons and the Mechanical Engineering lessons. The *learning milieux* do not have the same end in the two cases: in the first, it aims at making the students work on written documents (reading/writing), with images only serving to help with reading. In the second, on the contrary, the visual and graphic methods are central and writing is only a secondary tool. In addition to this first difference, which can be described as epistemic (the objects to study are different), there is another more



pedagogical difference. In French, there between periods of weak framing allowing the students to express their ideas) and others when the framing is much greater (regaining control of the class). In Mechanical Engineering, the teacher opted for an extremely tight framing from start to finish.

From the epistemic and pedagogical viewpoints, the workshop sessions stand out clearly from the other two: it did not involve studying texts or technical systems but to learn how to repair vehicles (dismantling, replacing, and assembly). It was also seen how the direct control of the students' activity by the teacher was necessarily much plus looser than the other two contexts but that, at the same time, he was controlling the session more indirectly by means of structuring the activity on the Practical Work sheet.

Lastly, this analysis compared with three learning contexts shows that the transitions that the students have to make when they switch from one lesson to another, made up of ruptures and very subtle continuities, are relatively complex. The problem is that they generally receive very little help to identify these ruptures and continuities, due to a lack of pedagogical collaboration between the teachers of different disciplines. However, there must be many possibilities for collaboration to help the students.

For example, successful training requires the students to be able to see very small links between the theoretical knowledge learned in Mechanical Engineering and the technical operations carried out in the workshop. In other terms, it is preferable to have understood how a car is assembled and how it operates in order to know how to repair it). But the great difficulty is that the students must be able to associate knowledge focused on the explanation of technical phenomena using theoretical models with material objects and practical gestures. The transition is certainly too difficult for the students to undertake alone successfully. A more specific task between Mechanical Engineering and workshop teachers to help students i.e. it would be interesting to how these theoretical lessons could be reused in the workshop.

Another example concerns the possible liens between the workshop and the French lesson. The previous analyses showed that the students struggled to read and interpret the documentation technique in the workshop (RTA) which articulates in a complex manner several semiotic registers (texts, tables, lists, diagrams, photos,...). The students also have to mobilise such complex multi-mode written documents in French, when they work using a newspaper, a magazine or an encyclopaedia. The teachers of the two subjects have little awareness of this common point but collaboration would be possible to make students work on the skill of decrypting documents of this type.

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## *From coal to knowledge: A history of the VET policies in the European Union*

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*Del carbón al conocimiento: Una historia  
de las políticas de FP en la Unión Europea*

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## **Abstract**

The Treaty of Paris (ECSC, 1951) funded in 1951 the European Coal and Steel Community. This first step was followed by the Treaty of Rome, that created in 1957 the European Economic Community. This Treaty states that the constant improvement of the living and working conditions of their people is an essential objective. In 1963 the Council proposes 10 principles for implementing a common vocational training policy. One of the results of these principles is creation in 1975 of the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training – Cedefop. In 1978, the Committee of Education decides to create the network for information and documentation on European education Eurydice and 1984 was the foundation year of the Network of National Academic Recognition Information Centres, NARICs. In the late 80s, European actions begin to foster transnational mobilities. In 1987, the Council of the European Communities adopted the European Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students, ERASMUS and during the years from 1988 to 1994 the programmes PETRA, EUROTECNET and FORCE promoted the European cooperation in vocational education and training. LEONARDO I and II were the successors of these programmes from 1995 to 2006. LEONARDO was included in the Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP) in the period 2007-2013 and has ended up as part of the current Erasmus+ education mobility action during the period 2014-2020. As mentioned in the 2000 Lisbon Agenda and in Horizon 2020, Europe pursues the strategic objective of orienting its economy towards knowledge. This knowledge-based economy idea has an influence on the Bologna (1999) and Copenhagen (2002) Declarations. The Bologna Declaration is focused on Higher Education and has managed to transform the university studies in Europe. The Copenhagen Declaration has still not managed to minimise the differences of the VET studies in the European Union.

*Key Words:* Vocational education and training; VET; Europe; European Union; legislation; Copenhagen Declaration; EQF; EQAVET; ECVET; ECTS; Erasmus; Leonardo

## **Resumen**

El Tratado de Paris (ECSC, 1951) fundó en 1951 la Comunidad Europea del Carbón y del Acero. Este primer paso fue seguido por el Tratado de Roma, que creó en 1957 la Comunidad Económica Europea. En el Tratado se afirma que el objetivo esencial de sus esfuerzos es la mejora constante de las condiciones de vida y del trabajo de los europeos. En 1963 se redactan los 10 principios para una política común en formación profesional y una de las consecuencias es la creación, en 1975, del Centro Europeo para el Desarrollo de la Formación Profesional, European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training – Cedefop. A finales de los años 80, comienzan las acciones europeas que van fomentar las acciones transnacionales mediante movibilidades en formación profesional. En 1987, se adopta ERASMUS y entre los años 1988 y 1994, se PETRA, EUROTECNET y FORCE, para fomentar la formación profesional. Al terminar estos programas, se unen las acciones de movibilidades de formación profesional durante 1995 y 2006 en los programas LEONARDO. LEONARDO pasa a formar parte del Programa de Aprendizaje Permanente (PAP), en el periodo 2007-2013 y a integrarse definitivamente en el conjunto de acciones para la movilidad educativa en Erasmus+, durante el periodo actual 2014-2020. Según la propuesta del año 2000 en la Agenda de Lisboa que se ha ratificado en las propuestas para el Horizonte 2020, Europa tiene actualmente el objetivo estratégico de convertirse en una economía basada en el conocimiento. El objetivo de la Europa del conocimiento, está presente en las declaraciones para la cooperación en educación de Bologna, 1999 y Copenhagen, 2002. Los objetivos de la declaración de Copenhagen, enfocada en la formación profesional, están lejos de conseguirse, ya que actualmente existen aún muchas diferencias entre los estudios de FP ofrecidos por los países de la Unión Europea.

*Palabras clave:* Formación profesional; FP; Europa; Unión Europea; legislación; Declaración de Copenhagen; EQF; EQAVET; ECVET; ECTS; Erasmus; Leonardo

## 1. Introduction

After World War II, the countries in Europe started to work together to make war between France and Germany “not merely unthinkable, but materially impossible” (Schuman, 1950). The Schuman Declaration, 9 May 1950, warned “World peace cannot be safeguarded without the making of creative efforts proportionate to the dangers which threaten it.”

The Treaty of Rome that established the European Economic Community - EEC (EEC, 1957) “determined to lay the foundations of an ever closer union among the peoples of Europe, [...], affirming as the essential objective of their efforts the constant improvements of the living and working conditions of their people”. Having regard to the Treaty of Rome establishing the European Economic Community, and in particular Article 128, the Council decided on 2 April 1963 (63/266) to lay down the “general principles for implementing a common vocational training policy” (COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY, 1963). More than half a century later, Europe still does not have a common vocational training policy. This means that the European Union has not done enough to foster a common vocational training policy and, as a consequence, the citizens are not able to benefit from it. In a period of economic crisis, the population needs work and work comes as a result of a proper education and training.

The present article describes the policies undertaken in the EEC and the European Union to foster a common vocational training policy.

## 2. The Treaties of Paris (1951) and Rome (1957)

The Treaty of Paris (ECSC, 1951) founded in 1951 the European Coal and Steel Community. France, Germany, Italy and the Benelux countries came together to foster the movement of coal and steel and free access to sources of production. Also, a common High Authority was established to supervise the market, control the competition rules and price transparency. This treaty is the origin of the contemporary European institutions. Article 56 c) of the Treaty of Paris mentions the need for financing retraining measures to help workers acquire new skills and change their work, in case new industrial techniques decrease the demand of outdated technicians. Article 56 c) can be seen as the seed of the Lifelong Learning Programme and the knowledge-based economy of the Lisbon Agenda.

The Treaty of Rome that established the European Economic Community (EEC, 1957) “determined to lay the foundations of an ever closer union among the peoples of Europe, resolved to ensure the economic and social progress of their countries by common action to eliminate the barriers which divide Europe, affirming as the essential objective of their efforts the constant improvements of the living and working conditions of their people”.

The following articles found in the original text of the Treaty of Rome focus on vocational education and training:

Article 57.1 proposes the establishment of “directives for the mutual recognition of diplomas, certificates and other titles”.

Article 118 empowers the Commission to promote “close cooperation between Member States in the social field, particularly in matters relating to: [...] professional training and improvement.”

Article 125 establishes that part of the funds of the *Fonds Social Européen* (European Social Funds) will be used to retrain unemployed workers.

Article 128 states “*le Conseil établit les principes généraux pour la mise en œuvre d’une politique commune de formation professionnelle qui puisse contribuer au développement harmonieux tant des économies nationales que du marché commun.*”, the Council establishes the general principles to create a vocational education common policy that can contribute to the harmonious development of the national economies and the common market.

Javier M. Valle states that articles 57, 118 and 128 demonstrate that “the European Union has had an interest in fostering Vocational Education and Training from its very beginning” [author’s translation from the original text in Spanish (Valle, 2006, p. 17) ].

### **3. The 10 principles (1963) and their consequences**

Having regard to the Treaty of Rome establishing the European Economic Community, and in particular Article 128, the Council decided on 2 April 1963 (63/266) to lay down the “general principles for implementing a common vocational training policy” (COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY, 1963). As mentioned by Javier M. Valle (Valle, 2006, pp. 18,19), this decision focuses on two main objectives. On the one hand, it mentions the urgent need to adapt workers’ professional qualifications to the changes in production technology. On the other hand, a common vocational training policy would contribute to the harmonious development both of the national economies and of the common market.

The ten principles of this decision are summarised as follows (COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY, 1963 as mentioned by Valle, 2006, pp. 18, 19):

“First principle: “A common vocational training policy means a coherent and progressive common action which entails that each Member State shall draw up programmes and shall ensure that these are put into effect [... and] must enable every person to receive adequate training, with due regard for freedom of choice of occupation, place of training and place of work.”

Second principle: “The common vocational training policy shall have the following fundamental objectives:

(a) To bring about conditions that will guarantee adequate vocational training for all;

(b) To organise in due course suitable training facilities to supply the labour forces required in the different sectors of economic activity;

(c) To broaden vocational training on the basis of a general education, to an extent sufficient to encourage the harmonious development of the personality and to meet requirements arising from technical progress, new methods of production and social and economic developments;

(d) To enable every person to acquire the technical knowledge and skill necessary to pursue a given occupation and to reach the highest possible level of training, whilst encouraging, particularly as regards young persons, intellectual and physical advancement, civic education and physical development;

(e) To avoid any harmful interruption either between completion of general education and commencement of vocational training or during the latter;

(f) To promote basic and advanced vocational training and, where appropriate, retraining, suitable for the various stages of working life;

(g) To offer to every person, according to his inclinations and capabilities, working knowledge and experience, and by means of permanent facilities for vocational advancement, the opportunity to gain promotion or to receive instruction for a new and higher level of activity;

(h) To relate closely the different forms of vocational training to the various sectors of the economy so that, on the one hand, vocational training best meets both the needs of the economy and the interests of the trainees and, on the other hand, problems presented by vocational training receive the attention which they deserve in business and professional circles everywhere.

Third principle “When the common vocational training policy is put into operation, special importance shall be attached [...] to forecasts and estimates, at both national and Community levels, of the quantitative and qualitative requirements of workers in the various productive activities [...] during his vocational training and throughout his working life”.

Fourth principle “[...] the Commission shall carry out any studies and research in the field of vocational training which will ensure attainment of a common policy, in particular with a view to promoting employment facilities and the geographical and occupational mobility of workers within the Community [...]”

Fifth principle “In order to promote a wider knowledge of all the facts and publications concerning the state and development of vocational training within the Community, and to help keep current teaching methods up to date, the Commission shall take all suitable steps to collect, distribute and exchange any useful information, literature and teaching material among the Member States. [...]”

Sixth principle “In co-operation with the Member States, the Commission shall encourage such direct exchanges of experience in the field of vocational training as are likely to enable the services responsible for vocational training and specialists in such field to acquaint themselves with and study the achievements and new developments in the other countries of the Community [...]”

Seventh principle “The suitable training of teachers and instructors, whose numbers should be increased and whose technical and teaching skills should be developed, shall be one of the basic factors of any effective vocational training policy. [...]”

Eighth principle “The common vocational training policy must, in particular, be so framed as to enable levels of training to be harmonised progressively. [...] The Member States and the Commission shall encourage the holding of European competitions and examinations.”

Ninth principle “In order to contribute to the achievement of an overall balance between the supply of and demand for labour within the Community [...]”

Tenth principle “[...] particular attention shall be given to the special problems concerning specific sectors of activity or specific categories of persons; special measures may be taken in this respect.”

Taking into account the fourth principle, the Council of the European Economic Community created the Advisory Committee on Vocational Training - ACVT, (63/688/EEC) (COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY, 1963 B). This Committee included two representatives of the Government, two representatives of trade unions and two representatives of employers' organisations of each Member State and would meet, at least, twice a year. As mentioned by Javier M. Valle (Valle, 2006, pp. 19,20), the Rules of the Advisory Committee on Vocational Training were modified (68/189/EEC) in 1968 (COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES, 1968). In order to adapt the size of the ACVT to a European Union of 25 Member States, the 26 February 2004 (2004/223/EC) new rules were set (COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION, 2004). These new rules establish, among others, that the Committee "shall consist of three members for each Member State, there being one representative for each interest group of national governments, trade unions and employers' organisations." and "The term of office of members shall be three years."

In 1964, the Commission drafted an Action programme on common vocational training policy. It was divided into two parts, agriculture and other fields of work. The defined objective of the common action was to establish a system offering 'all young people of the Community, and when necessary adults, an appropriate opportunity for training', (ASCE, BAC 6/1977, 679. *Projet de programme d'action en matière de politique commune de formation professionnelle* [Draft action programme on a common vocational training policy], 1964 as mentioned by Petrinini, 2002). This Programme was meant to be an intermediate stage between the 10 principles and the tangible proposals that the Commission would be presenting to the Council or Member States (Petrini, 2002, p. 31).

In 1966 the Commission made on 18 July 1966 a Recommendation to the Member States about professional guidance (EUROPEAN COMMISSION, 1966). This recommendation mentions that professional guidance in the Member States had not been sufficiently developed. Hence they should foster the guidance activities, assigning resources and increasing the collaboration between the States. In April 1970, Luxembourg hosted the first tripartite conference that included members of the unions, employers' associations, the Commission and the Labour Ministers of the Six. "On that occasion many delegates put forward the idea of creating a standing committee on employment, and this was set up a few months later. In this context the launching of a European social policy, with the inclusion of vocational training, became an obvious topic of debate within the European Community" (Varsori, 2004, p. 85).

In 1971 the Council adopted at its 162<sup>nd</sup> session, held on 26 July 1971, the General guidelines for drawing up a Community programme on vocational training (COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION, 1971). It was also in 1971 that the EEC started to take education as a whole into account. The Commission entitled Altiero Spinelli to report about the situation of education in Europe and his group of experts produced the documents *Bilan et perspective de factivité du groupe enseignement et éducation* and *Memorandum pour une action communautaire dans le domaine de la culture that described the actions taken by the EEC until that moment* (Valle, 2006, p. 31).

In 1972 the Commission assigned Henri Janne the task of formulating a proposal with ideas for a future action programme (Valle, 2006, p. 31). The report *Pour une politique communautaire de l'éducation - For a Community policy on education - created with the information provided by 34 experts from different countries, stated "Education is*



*already a recognized responsibility in the framework of Community policy*” (Janne, 1973, p. 49) and “The vast majority of our interlocutors believe that the field of permanent education should be the priority one for Community intervention” (Janne, 1973, p. 54).

Some conclusions of the Janne Report were:

“(i) It is advisable scrupulously to respect national structures and traditions where education is concerned, but to promote a necessary harmonization by means of permanent concerted action at all levels and through more and more educational exchanges. [...] [...] the Community must make appropriate arrangements to stimulate exchanges of teachers, pupils and students. With regard to young people the solution of the problem of the equivalence of degrees and diplomas constitutes a prerequisite”, (page 53).

As a result of the influence of the work carried out by Spinelli and Janne the Ministers of Education, meeting within the Council, decide the Resolution of 6 June 1974 on cooperation in the field of education. In point IV it establishes “In order to foster action in the fields mentioned under point II, an Education Committee shall be set up, composed of representatives of the Member States and of the Commission.” The 1976 Action Programme that focused on the guidelines of this 1974 resolution and the creation of the Education Committee proved to be decisive in the following years (Valle, 2006, p. 40).

During the 60s and beginning of the 70s the Economic and Social Committees (ESC) studied and informed about the situation of vocational training in Europe. The ESC worked with determination with the issue of vocational training at a time when, in the early 1960s, both the Council and the Commission were focused on other European matters. In 1973, the ESC prepared its “Study of the training and vocational training systems in the European Communities”. This report requested the creation of a European institute for the scientific study of vocational training (Dundovich, 2002, p. 46), the future Cedefop.

## 4. Cedefop

On 10 February 1975 the Council of Ministers announced the creation of a European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training – Cedefop (COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES, 1975). Initially its seat would be West Berlin. The Board would consist of nine representatives of the Governments, three of the Commission, six of the unions and six of the employers (Guasconi, 2002, p. 57).

Article 2 of (337/75/EEC) mentions (COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES, 1975):

- “1. The aim of the centre shall be to assist the Commission in encouraging, at Community level, the promotion and development of vocational training and of in-service training. [...]
2. The main tasks of the centre shall be: — to compile selected documentation [...]; — to contribute to the development and coordination of research [...]; — to disseminate all useful documentation [...]; — to encourage and support any initiative likely to facilitate a concerted approach to vocational training problems. [...]; — to provide a forum for all those concerned.
3. In its activities the centre shall take into account the links which exist between vocational training and the other branches of education.”

At a meeting of the Management Board, held in July 1976, it was stated that ‘the Centre should not duplicate work already being done nor attempt to formulate national policy’ and that ‘the Centre should not give undue priority to harmonisation but pay regard to the nature and differences which do exist in the various countries’ (Cedefop – Minutes of the fourth meeting of the Management Board – Berlin, 8 July 1976. Cedefop Archives, as mentioned by Varsori, 2004, p, 90).

The Centre’s main objectives were:

- “(a) the publication of a bulletin;
- (b) ‘to collect and process documentation and disseminate existing information’;
- (c) to launch studies on subjects such as ‘youth unemployment, especially in relation to the transition from school to work’ [...]” (Cedefop. Working programme 1977. Minutes of the fifth meeting of the Management Board – Berlin, 15-16 November 1976. Cedefop Archives, as mentioned by Varsori, 2004, p, 90).

In 1994 the Cedefop moved to Thessaloniki (Greece). Germany was about to host the future Central European Bank, and at that time Greece had no European organisation or institution within its territory. To foster a political equilibrium, the Council thought it was convenient to transfer the Cedefop to Greece. Cedefop’s budget was significantly increased (by approximately 48 %) to ECU 16.5 million in 1995, settling at about ECU 14.5 million during the subsequent years. There was also an increase in the number of Cedefop staff members to 79 (Varsori, 2004, p. 95).

**Table 1. EU Institutions. Source:** Table created with the information provided by “How the European Union works” (EUROPEAN COMMISSION, DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR COMMUNICATION, 2012).

INSTITUTIONS OR TERM	DEFINITION
<b>European Parliament</b>	Represents the EU's citizens and is directly elected by them
<b>European Council</b>	Consists of the Heads of State or Government of the EU Member States
<b>Council</b>	Represents the governments of the EU Member States and is formed by one minister from each Member State. If, for example, the Council is to discuss environmental issues, the meeting will be attended by the environment minister from each EU Member State and is known as the “Environment Council”
<b>European Commission</b>	Represents the interests of the EU as a whole and is formed by a college of Commissioners, one from each Member State.  In many areas it is the driving force within the EU's institutional system: it proposes legislation, policies and programmes of action and is responsible for implementing the decisions of the European Parliament and the Council. It also represents the Union to the outside world with the exception of the common foreign and security policy.
<b>European Economic and Social Committee</b>	Represents civil society groups such as employers, trade unions and social interest groups
<b>Committee of the Regions</b>	Ensures that the voice of local and regional government is heard.  The Council and the Commission must consult the CoR on matters that concern local and regional government, such as regional policy, the environment, education and transport.
<b>European Central Bank</b>	Manages the euro and euro area monetary policy. The members are the euro area national central banks

The European Council defines the general political direction and priorities of the EU but it does not exercise legislative functions. Generally, it is the European Commission that proposes new laws and it is the European Parliament and Council that adopt them. The Member States and the Commission then implement them.

In addition to the Commission–Council–Parliament triangle, there are a number of advisory bodies that must be consulted when proposed legislation involves their area of interest. Even if their advice is not taken, this contributes to the democratic oversight of EU legislation by ensuring that it is subject to the widest scrutiny.

These bodies are the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. In addition, other institutions and bodies may be consulted when a proposal falls within their area of interest or expertise. For example, the European Central Bank would expect to be consulted on proposals concerning economic or financial matters.

**Table 2.** *EU Types of legislation.* **Source:** *Table created with the information provided by “How the European Union works” (EUROPEAN COMMISSION, DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR COMMUNICATION, 2012).*

TYPES OF LEGISLATION	DESCRIPTION
<b>Regulation</b>	A regulation is a law that is applicable and binding in all Member States directly. It does not need to be passed into national law by the Member States although national laws may need to be changed to avoid conflicting with the regulation.
<b>Directive</b>	A directive is a law that binds the Member States, or a group of Member States, to achieve a particular objective. Usually, directives must be transposed into national law to become effective. Significantly, a directive specifies the result to be achieved: it is up to the Member States individually to decide how this is done.
<b>Decision</b>	A decision can be addressed to Member States, groups of people, or even individuals. It is binding in its entirety. Decisions are used, for example, to rule on proposed mergers between companies.
<b>Recommendations</b>	Recommendations and opinions have no binding force.

## 5. From the creation of the Cedefop (1975) to the Lisbon Agenda (2000)

The resolution of the Council and of the Ministers of Education, meeting within the Council, of 9 February 1976 comprised the first action programme in the field of education (COUNCIL OF MINISTERS OF EDUCATION, 1976).

This resolution for the first action programme in education mentioned, among others:

- “[...] 3. It is necessary to improve mutual understanding of the various educational systems in the Community and to ensure continuous comparison of policies, experience and ideas in the Member States.
- [...] 8. It is necessary to increase and improve the circulation of information between those responsible for education and those receiving it at all levels.
- [...] 16. To increase the possibilities for the academic recognition of diplomas and study periods and studies carried out, [...]”

As part of this action programme, the Committee of Education decides to create the network for information and documentation on European education Eurydice in January 1978. Eurydice officially started to work on 16 September 1980 (Valle, 2006, p. 61). The information of the different European education systems can now (2016) be found in the EURYPEDIA database, situated in the website of EURYDICE. 1984 was the foundation year of the Network of National Academic Recognition Information Centres, NARICs. This network is responsible for recognition activities of certificates and degrees across Europe. It collaborates with the Council of Europe, UNESCO and with the European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education- ENQA.

On 15 June 1987 the Council of the European Communities adopted the European Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students, ERASMUS (87/327/EEC). Article 4 mentions “The funds estimated as necessary for the execution of the ERASMUS programme during the period 1 July 1987 to 30 June 1990 amount to 85 million ECU.” During 1988 and 1991 the Council ran the PETRA action programme for the vocational training of young people and their preparation for adult and working life.

This action programme intended to:

“Article 1 [...] ensure, as called for by the European Council, that all young people in the Community who so wish receive one year’s, or if possible two or more years’, vocational training in addition to their full-time compulsory education. [...]

(a) raise the standards and quality of vocational training within the Community and stimulate improvements in vocational training for young people and their preparation for adult and working life and for continuing training;

(b) diversify the provision of vocational training so as to offer choice for young people with different levels of ability, leading to recognized vocational training qualifications;

(c) enhance the capacity of vocational training systems to adapt to rapid economic, technological and social change;

(d) add a Community dimension to both the supply of, and demand for, vocational qualifications on the labour market, taking account of the need to promote comparability of these qualifications between the Member States of the Community. [...]” (COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES, 1987).

Between 1988 and 1991 the Community invested 40 million ECU. The programme reached around 75,000 youngsters, 10,000 trainers and 70 training institutions. The success of this programme was repeated with PETRA II (1992-1994), increasing the budget, and assigning 40 million ECUs (as for the whole PETRA I) to spend during the last year of PETRA II, 1994. During this second period, quality, European dimension and ICT were included as aims of the programme (Valle, 2006, p. 63).

EUROTECNET was the 1990-1994 programme “to promote innovation in the fields of basic and also of continuing vocational training with a view to taking account of current and future technological changes and their impact on employment, work and necessary qualifications and skills” (COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES, 1989). The budget of 9.2 million ECU generated the distribution of 70,000 publications in the nine languages of the Member States, 64 workshops and seminars and 286 projects

(Valle, 2006, p. 81). FORCE was, during 1991 and 1994, the action Programme for the development of continuing vocational training in the European Community (COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES, 1990). During this programme, 83.4 million ECU financed 720 projects (Valle, 2006, p. 83). During the final years of EUROTENET and FORCE, the Council and the Commission decided they should join both programmes. LEONARDO DA VINCI was implemented to integrate the previous Community action programmes in the vocational training field (COMETT, Eurotechnet, FORCE, PETRA, LINGUA) into a single programme (CORDIS, 1994).

The Maastricht Treaty on European Union establishes in Article 126 education as an aim for the Community action. VET actions are described in Article 127:

“1. The Community shall implement a vocational training policy which shall support and supplement the action of the Member States, while fully respecting the responsibility of the Member States for the content and organization of vocational training.

2. Community action shall aim to:

- facilitate adaptation to industrial changes, in particular through vocational training and retraining;
- improve initial and continuing vocational training in order to facilitate vocational integration and reintegration into the labour market;
- facilitate access to vocational training and encourage mobility of instructors and trainees and particularly young people;
- stimulate cooperation on training between educational or training establishments and firms;
- develop exchanges of information and experience on issues common to the training systems of the Member States.

3. The Community and the Member States shall foster cooperation with third countries and the competent international organizations in the sphere of vocational training.

4. The council, acting in accordance with the procedure referred to in Article 189c and after consulting the Economic and Social Committee, shall adopt measures to contribute to the achievement of the objectives referred to in this Article, excluding any harmonization of the laws and regulations of the Member States.”

The effect of the Maastricht Treaty (COUNCIL AND COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES, 1992) and the creation of the Single Market was the start of global unified programmes for education; SOCRATES for general education and LEONARDO, for vocational education and training. Both programmes ran simultaneously and were active during 1995-1999, first period and 2000-2006, second period. The Council adopted in December 1994 the action programme LEONARDO DA VINCI for the implementation of a European Community vocational training policy (Decision 94/819/EC of 6 December 1994) and assigned a total budget of 620 million ECU to the programme (Valle, 2006, p. 220) for the period 1 January 1995 to 31 December 1999. The Council Decision 99/382 26 April 1999 established the continuation of the LEONARDO DA VINCI programme for the period 2000 to 2006 1999, assigning a budget of 1150 million ECU (Valle, 2006, p. 220). Another outcome of the Maastricht Treaty was the European Training Foundation, ETF. Functioning since 1994, it was created to help

transition and developing countries through the reform of education, training and labour market systems in the context of the EU's external relations policy (ETF, 2016).

The Bologna Declaration of 19 June 1999, joint declaration of the European Ministers of Education, signalled the start of a new European area of higher education. The declaration mentions:

“[...] Adoption of a system of easily readable and comparable degrees, also through the implementation of the Diploma Supplement, in order to promote European citizens' employability and the international competitiveness of the European higher education system.

[...] Establishment of a system of credits - such as in the ECTS system - as a proper means of promoting the most widespread student mobility. Credits could also be acquired in non-higher education contexts, including lifelong learning, provided they are recognised by receiving Universities concerned.

Promotion of mobility by overcoming obstacles to the effective exercise of free movement with particular attention to:

- for students, access to study and training opportunities and to related services

- for teachers, researchers and administrative staff, recognition and valorisation of periods spent in a European context researching, teaching and training, without prejudicing their statutory rights. [...]”. (EUROPEAN MINISTERS OF EDUCATION, 1999)

The Bologna Declaration has also had influence on VET as several countries offer studies that are part of the European area of higher education.

## **6. The knowledge-based economy, Lisbon Agenda (2000)**

On 23-24 March 2000 in Lisbon the European Council held a special meeting to agree a new strategic goal for the Union in order to strengthen employment, economic reform and social cohesion as part of a knowledge-based economy during the coming decade. The presidency conclusions stated (Fontaine, 2000) “The Union has today set itself a new strategic goal for the next decade: to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion.” This strategic goal defines a new future for Europe, a goal that has drastically drifted from the initial aim of facilitating the movement of coal and steel and free access to sources of production, defined in 1951 in the Treaty of Paris.

“The Copenhagen Declaration”, convened in Copenhagen on 29 and 30 November 2002, by the European Ministers of Vocational Education and Training, and the European Commission, was focused on enhancing European cooperation in vocational education and training. The main priorities expressed in this declaration are clearly biased by the Lisbon Agenda:

“European dimension

- Strengthening the European dimension in vocational education and training [..]

Transparency, information and guidance

- Increasing transparency in vocational education and training [..]

- Strengthening policies, systems and practices that support information, guidance and counselling in the Member States, [..]

Recognition of competences and qualifications

- Investigating how transparency, comparability, transferability and recognition of competences and/or qualifications, between different countries and at different levels, could be promoted [..]

- Increasing support to the development of competences and qualifications at sectoral level [..]”. (EUROPEAN MINISTERS OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING AND THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION, 2002).

The Copenhagen Declaration targets on VET with similar objectives to those expressed by the Bologna Declaration in 1999 for the European area of Higher Education and is the origin of the so called “Copenhagen Process”.

“The Copenhagen Process during the period 2002-2010, has been a work method integrated in the Lisbon strategy that has efficiently contributed to link the national and European policies in VET and to develop a global strategy in the EU in this area. Besides, due to the participation of the candidate countries, the process has supported the enlargement of the European Union (from 15 to 25 Member States in 2004 and from 25 to 27 in 2007).” [author’s translation based on the text in Spanish by (Psifidou, 2014, p. 358).

The Maastricht Communiqué from 2004 develops the priorities of the Copenhagen Process and points out:

“The necessary reforms and investment should be focused particularly on:

- the image and attractiveness of the vocational route for employers and individuals, in order to increase participation in VET.

- achieving high levels of quality and innovation in VET systems in order to benefit all learners and make European VET globally competitive.

- linking VET with the labour market requirements of the knowledge economy for a highly skilled workforce, and especially, due to the strong impact of demographic change, the upgrading and competence development of older workers.

- the needs of low-skilled (about 80 million persons aged between 25-64 years in the EU) and disadvantaged groups for the purpose of achieving social cohesion and increasing labour market participation.” (MINISTERS RESPONSIBLE FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING OF 32 EUROPEAN COUNTRIES, THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL PARTNERS AND THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION, 2004).

Also during 2004 the Europass was created. Decision No 2241/2004/EC “establishes a single Community framework for achieving the transparency of qualifications and competences by means of the creation of a personal, coordinated portfolio of documents, to be known as ‘Europass’, which citizens can use on a voluntary basis to better communicate and present their qualifications and competences throughout Europe”.

The Europass documents are:

“Article 5 Europass-CV. The Europass-CV shall provide citizens with the opportunity to present in a clear and comprehensive way information on all their qualifications and competences. [..]

Article 6 Europass-Mobility. The Europass-Mobility shall record periods of learning attended by its holders in countries other than their own. [..]

Article 7 Europass-Diploma Supplement. The Europass-Diploma Supplement shall provide information on its holder’s educational achievements at higher education level. [..]

Article 8 Europass-Language Portfolio. The Europass-Language Portfolio shall provide citizens with the opportunity to present their language skills. [..]

Article 9 Europass-Certificate Supplement. The Europass-Certificate Supplement shall describe the competences and qualifications corresponding to a vocational training certificate. [..]” (EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL, 2004).

The European Parliament and the Council passed on 7 September 2005 the Directive 2005/36/EC on the recognition of professional qualifications, mainly in the area of medicine and engineering. This Directive “establishes rules according to which a Member State which makes access to or pursuit of a regulated profession in its territory contingent upon possession of specific professional qualifications (..) shall recognise professional qualifications obtained in one or more other Member States (..) and which allow the holder of the said qualifications to pursue the same profession there, for access to and pursuit of that profession” (EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL, 2005).

The Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP) was designed to enable European citizens, at any stage of their life, to take part in learning experiences, education and training across Europe. It ran from 2007-2013 with a budget of nearly €7 billion (EUROPEAN COMMISSION, 2013).

The LLP was divided in four main sub-programmes:

- Comenius for schools
- Erasmus for higher education
- Leonardo da Vinci for vocational education and training
- Grundtvig for adult education

The programme also included the “Jean Monnet” actions, designed to stimulate teaching, reflection, and debate on European integration. The Leonardo da Vinci LLP sub-programme funded practical projects in the field of vocational education and training. Initiatives ranged from those providing work-related training to individuals, to



larger cooperation efforts (EUROPEAN COMMISSION, 2013). In 2008 the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions produced the Communication from the - New Skills for New Jobs - Anticipating and matching labour market and skills needs {SEC(2008) 3058} “to enhance human capital and employability by upgrading skills. But upgrading skills is not enough: ensuring a better match between the supply of skills and labour market demand is just as necessary” (COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS, 2008).

The Recommendation on the European Qualifications Framework, EQF, for life-long learning was adopted by the European Parliament and the Council (EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, 2008) on 23 April 2008. An EQF Advisory Group (AG) was created and National Coordination Points (NCPs) were set up in Member States to implement the EQF. On 18 June 2009 the European Parliament and the Council produced the Recommendation on the establishment of a European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training (EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL, 2009a).

The same day, the European Parliament and the Council also set the Recommendation to create a European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training, ECVET, that intends “to facilitate the transfer, recognition and accumulation of assessed learning outcomes of individuals who are aiming to achieve a qualification.” (EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL, 2009b). ECVET covers the Basic and Intermediate VET, ECTS covers Higher Education VET studies and together they cover the full range of VET qualifications.

The Helsinki Communiqué of 5 December 2006 and the Bordeaux Communiqué of 26 November 2008 reviewed the priorities and strategies of the Copenhagen process and in 2010 the Bruges Communiqué, taking into account the results of Copenhagen Process, provided a global vision for vocational education and training for the decade 2011-2020 (EUROPEAN MINISTERS FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING, THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL PARTNERS AND THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION, 2010).

## 7. Europe 2020 Strategy

EU policy during the present decade, 2011-2020, is marked by the 2008 financial crisis and the aim to develop the knowledge-based economy defined in the Lisbon Agenda. Education focuses on key competences that include ‘traditional’ skills such as communication in one’s mother tongue, foreign languages, digital skills, literacy, and basic skills in maths and science, as well as horizontal skills such as learning to learn, social and civic responsibility, initiative and entrepreneurship, cultural awareness, and creativity.

Vocational Education and Training is going to play a key role in achieving results during the present decade: training of youth, retraining of adults and development of new skills for future jobs, VET is the engine that enables the transformations. The Copenhagen Process forms an integral part of the “Education and Training 2020”, ET2020 strategic framework. On 23 November 2010 the Commission communicated to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions the “Agenda for new skills and jobs: A European contribution towards full employment” that will help reach the employment target for

2020: 75 % of the working-age population (20-64 years) in work, and focuses on four key priorities:

- “- First, better functioning labour markets [..].
- Second, a more skilled workforce, capable of contributing and adjusting to technological change with new patterns of work organisation.[..]
- Third, better job quality and working conditions [..].
- Fourth, stronger policies to promote job creation and demand for labour [..].“(EUROPEAN COMMISSION, 2010).

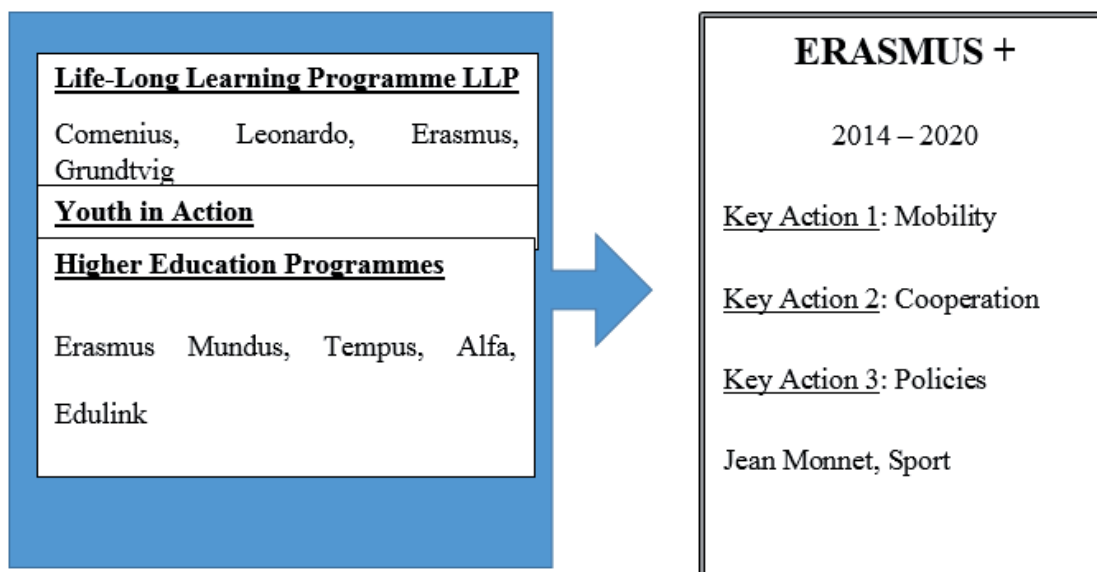
This Agenda is a continuation of the 2008 “New Skills for New Jobs” initiative. It fosters the creation of European Sector Skills Councils designed to anticipate the need for skills in specific sectors more effectively and achieve a better match between skills and labour market needs.

In 2011 the Single Market Act proposed twelve levers to boost growth and strengthen confidence, for a future “Working together to create new growth”. The levers were Access to finance for SMEs, Mobility for citizens, Intellectual property rights, Consumer empowerment, Services, Networks, The digital single market, Social entrepreneurship, Taxation, Social cohesion, Business environment and Public procurement (EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS, 2011). Single Market Act I developed the Key action “Revise system for the recognition of professional qualifications” that includes the creation of the European Skills Passport. Single Market Act II, 3 October 2012, developed the aims of its predecessor and, among others, in its Key action 5 urged to “Develop the EURES portal into a true European job placement and recruitment tool.”

European Skills/Competences, qualifications and Occupations (ESCO) described in (EUROPEAN COMMISSION, 2012) is a new classification system under development by the European Commission together with stakeholders. ESCO will be multilingual, it will focus on skills and it will be published in an open format to be used by third parties’ software. This will make it a valuable building block for online job portals, career guidance tools and databases of learning opportunities. These improvements should lead to very tangible benefits for jobseekers, people seeking career changes, learners and employers.

In 2013, the European Alliance for Apprenticeships is set “to improve the quality and supply of apprenticeships across the EU and to change mind-sets towards apprenticeship-type learning through a broad partnership bringing together key stakeholders from the employment and education sectors” as mentioned in the Declaration of the European Social Partners, the European Commission and the Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union (EUROPEAN SOCIAL PARTNERS, THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION AND THE LITHUANIAN PRESIDENCY OF THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION, 2013).

Erasmus+ is the current European programme in charge of fostering the development of transnational programmes during the period 2014-2020 in the areas of education, training, sport and youth policies. Erasmus+ is focused on the adaptation to a fast changing world, tackling youth unemployment and preparing the workers for highly skilled jobs. Financing is awarded to eligible institutions depending on the points each project receives for its relevance, quality of the project design, quality of the project team and its impact and dissemination. Individuals cannot apply directly for a grant (EUROPEAN COMMISSION, 2015).



**Figure 1.** Erasmus+ integration of previous European programmes. **Source:** Compiled by the author with information from (EUROPEAN COMMISSION, DG EDUCATION AND CULTURE, 2013).

**Note from the author.** Erasmus+ integrates former programmes like the Long Life Learning Programme, Youth in Action, and the different international Higher Education and Sport programmes.

- KEY ACTION 1 (KA1) integrates all the financing programmes that deal with the mobility in education. It includes mobility possibilities for teachers, students and staff dealing with primary, secondary, vocational, higher and adult education. Vocational education and training mobilities are part of KA1.
- KEY ACTION 2 (KA2) integrates all the financing programmes that deal with European cooperation in education. It fosters collaboration between any type of organisation dealing with education like schools, colleges, universities, NGOs, public institutions and private companies.
- KEY ACTION (KA3) offers national and transnational organisations a framework to create and modify European policies.
- JEAN MONNET aims to stimulate teaching, research and reflection in the field of European Union studies worldwide.
- SPORT focuses on creating collaborative partnerships and non-profit sport events at a European level.

## 8. Conclusion

Just after World War II the Treaty of Paris focused on the economy of coal and steel, setting guidelines to move from the primary sector economy towards a manufacturing secondary sector economy as a way of providing wealth and social stability to citizens.

During these decades we have seen how the EEC first and the EU later have been changing these aims and the efforts are nowadays placed on attaining a knowledge-based future, based on research and information technology. A future that will be reached thanks to the changes in European education in a wide sense and in vocational education and training specifically.

Until the mid-70s, the regulations passed by the European institutions mentioned the importance of VET as a catalyser to integrate low skilled citizens into the job market, but it was not until the creation of CEDEFOP in 1975 when actual effects could be noticed. This second period lasted until the establishment of the Lisbon Agenda and was characterised by the creation of organisations like the Committee of Education, EURYDICE and its European education systems database and the Network of National Academic Recognition Information Centres (NARICs). During this period there were already tangible activities that focused on improving VET from a transnational point of view; PETRA, EUROTECNET and FORCE were examples of these type of programmes.

The Lisbon Agenda signalled the start of the commitment of the EU to the knowledge-based economy and from that moment actual changes have been seen that have had a direct effect on professional training. The Bologna Process changed the European Area of Higher Education and the on-going Copenhagen Process is on its way to creating a global European qualifications training framework: Directive 2005/36/EC recognises professional qualifications and EQF, EQAVET, ECVET are actions that are already having a direct effect on national policies of the Member States.

The Europe 2020 strategy aims to improve the social situation of the citizens using education and professional training as the tools to achieve a knowledge-based economy. Leonardo, the Lifelong Learning Programme and Erasmus+ have been the mobility and cooperation actions aimed at improving VET at a European level during these last years.

More than half a century after laying down the “general principles for implementing a common vocational training policy” (COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC COMMUNITY, 1963) Europe still does not have a common vocational training policy. European education policies are constrained by the idea “(i) It is advisable scrupulously to respect national structures and traditions where education is concerned, but to promote a necessary harmonization by means of permanent concerted action at all levels and through more and more educational exchanges.”. This statement, that appeared in the Janne Report (Janne, 1973), and has been later repeated even in the EU legislation, is nearly an oxymoron: we should harmonize education at all levels, without changing the national structures and traditions.

The European institutions have managed to find a way out of this labyrinth. EQF, EQAVET, ECVET, ECTS and Erasmus+ are supranational frameworks that offer the Member States umbrella structures that enable international compatibility. Each State is free to establish gateways between their training systems and these frameworks. This is a top-down harmonization procedure. As it was not possible to transpose the same specific VET system into each Member State, and attain in this form the harmonization, the mentioned frameworks are ideal meeting points and every Member State is expected to arrive at some moment at these terminal stations.

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**ESTUDIOS E INVESTIGACIONES**  
Analysis and Research

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*Segmentación y sistemas educativos: un análisis a través de la comparación de los cambios para la escuela secundaria en Europa y América Latina*

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*Segmentation and education systems: an analysis through the comparison of changes towards secondary education in Europe and Latin America*

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## **Resumen**

El objetivo de este trabajo es analizar los cambios recientes en la organización de la escuela secundaria en distintos países de Europa y América Latina y su relación con procesos históricos de segmentación de la oferta educativa. Interesa analizar el proceso de segmentación por su filiación histórica con la expansión de la escolarización, por un lado, y la distribución desigual de la oferta educativa por el otro. También por su potencial contribución como categoría de comparación.

La perspectiva teórica se enmarca dentro de los estudios de internacionalización de la escolarización y abarca tres dimensiones de análisis: la dimensión histórica para comprender los procesos de herencias de discursos y prácticas que dan forma a las instituciones escolares; la dimensión sistémica para comprender la dinámica desde la que se estructuran las prácticas escolares; la dimensión ligada a los procesos de internacionalización de la educación, es decir la relación entre tendencias de internacionalización y prácticas de localización en la expansión de la escolarización.

Esta tres dimensiones se utilizan para comparar cambios recientes en la organización de la escuela secundaria en países de América Latina y Europa. La comparación comprende la identificación de una matriz internacional, histórica y particular de cada caso y las formas en que esta matriz tiende a reconfigurarse en la implementación de políticas contemporáneas. En función de este punto de partida se comparan los casos en relación con la categoría de segmentación para identificar aspectos comunes y divergentes en las formas de operar de los sistemas educativos en la actualidad. La identificación de las diferencias contribuirá, a su vez, a una mejor comprensión de cada caso.

El trabajo se realiza a partir de fuentes secundarias. Interesa ofrecer un análisis que permita comprender mejor los mecanismos a través de los cuales los sistemas educativos generan ofertas diferenciadoras con efectos sobre la equidad.

*Palabras clave:* enseñanza secundaria; sistema educativo; reforma educativa; Europa; América Latina

## **Abstract**

The aim of this paper is to analyze recent changes in the organization of secondary school in some countries from Latin America and Europe and its relationship in each case with historical processes of segmentation of the educational supply. An analysis of the process of segmentation is relevant due to its historical association with the expansion of schooling, on the one hand, and with the unequal distribution of educational supply, on the other. Such analysis is also pertinent due to its contribution as a potential category of comparison.

The theoretical framework of this paper is studies of the internationalization of schooling. It encompasses three dimensions of analysis: a historical dimension to understand processes of passing on discourses and practices as a legacy that gives shape to school institutions; a systemic dimension to understand the dynamic on the basis of which school practices are structured; a dimension tied to the internationalization of education, more specifically, the relationship between international tendencies and local practices in the context of the expansion of schooling.

These three dimensions are used as the basis for comparison of recent changes in the organization of secondary school in some countries in Latin America and Europe. The comparison encompasses the identification of an international and historical matrix specific to each case and the ways in which that matrix tends to be reshaped with the implementation of contemporary policies. On this basis, the issue of segmentation is compared between different cases in order to identify commonalities and differences in how education systems operate today. The identification of these differences will contribute, in turn, to better understanding of each case.

This paper makes use of secondary sources including historical studies and studies on policies pertinent to each case. The aim is to provide an analysis that sheds light on the mechanisms by which education systems produce differentiating educational supplies that have a detrimental effect on equity.

*Key Words:* secondary school; educational systems; educational reform; Europe; Latin America

## 1. Introducción

La comparación de políticas y programas entre algunos países de América Latina y Europa supone, al menos, dos precisiones. La primera refiere a la delimitación del tipo de políticas a estudiar así como algún foco de interés en particular. En este sentido, un punto de partida de este trabajo es el estudio de políticas educativas recientes caracterizadas por la diversificación de la oferta educativa. Su interés radica en que el estudio de dichas políticas estaría cada vez más fundado en el análisis de características y demandas particulares (políticas focalizadas) y menos en sus efectos en términos de clases y relaciones sociales.

La segunda pregunta refiere al grado de comparabilidad entre políticas y programas de diversificación de la oferta educativa en algunos países de América Latina y Europa, a sabiendas de las diferencias entre ambas regiones, tanto en lo referido a sus indicadores económicos y sociales como a las características particulares de sus sistemas educativos.

Dos posibles respuestas surgen para intentar responder ambas preguntas en forma simultánea. La primera podría ser la de enmarcar el surgimiento de este tipo de políticas en procesos crecientes de globalización educativa, y utilizar dichos procesos como unidad de comparación. La otra, que se adoptará en este trabajo, consiste en la circunscripción de dichas políticas a un nivel educativo, la escuela secundaria, junto con la definición histórica e internacional del problema de la expansión de dicha escuela. Nuestro argumento es que esta perspectiva ofrece una mirada más compleja a la hora de construir explicaciones sobre las políticas de cambio educativo.

Para ello, este trabajo se estructura en tres partes. La primera ofrece un marco conceptual para analizar el problema del cambio en la escuela secundaria desde la dimensión histórica, sistémica y de internacionalización de los procesos de escolarización. La segunda presenta dicho problema en América Latina y Europa con énfasis en los procesos históricos de segmentación educativa. En la tercera parte se presenta la comparación de políticas y programas de diversificación de la oferta de nivel secundario en la actualidad y sus efectos sobre los sistemas analizados. Finalmente, se desarrollan un conjunto de conclusiones acerca de la perspectiva adoptada para una mejor comprensión de las políticas y programas destinadas al logro de trayectorias escolares exitosas para todos los estudiantes.

## 2. El problema del cambio en la escuela secundaria: el par expansión-modelo institucional y una propuesta teórica para su análisis

Para abordar el problema del cambio en la escuela secundaria se propone como argumento principal la corroboración de la existencia de dificultades comunes en los sistemas educativos de Occidente en relación con el par expansión-modelo institucional de la escuela secundaria.

En términos generales, es posible identificar tres causas asociadas a la expansión de la escuela secundaria. Una referida a los cambios en la estructura económica y en el mercado de trabajo y sus efectos sobre la expansión de la escolarización secundaria (formación de recursos humanos y/o contención del desempleo juvenil). Otra ligada a las transformaciones demográficas, particularmente el desarrollo de la población joven

y la necesidad de extender instituciones destinadas a la regulación social de los jóvenes. Una tercera, de índole sistémico-institucional, vinculada con las formas de expansión de los sistemas educativos y sus efectos sobre las trayectorias educativas en contextos de expansión. Este trabajo se centra en esta última hipótesis.

De acuerdo con esta hipótesis, a medida que el completamiento de niveles básicos de escolarización fue presionando sobre la expansión de la educación secundaria, ciertas características de la organización tradicional de ésta generaron dificultades para retener a todos los estudiantes y asegurar la certificación de los estudios. Históricamente, las políticas de extensión de la escolarización secundaria han encontrado problemas de ajuste entre los modelos institucionales y los nuevos sectores sociales que acceden a ese nivel. Fueron las políticas (las reformas) las que dieron cuenta del desajuste entre la obligatoriedad (forzar la expansión) y la forma de organización (Autor, 2011a; Autor, 2013; Acosta y Terigi, 2015). En función de ello, en este trabajo, el problema se reformula en términos del par expansión-modelo institucional.

El concepto de modelo institucional supone la condensación de tres elementos: por un lado una cultura de la escolarización (que supone las variables de la gramática de la escuela sumada a aquellas propias de la sistematización); por otro lado la localización de esa cultura (la que depende de cada escenario y confluye en distintos tipos de regímenes académicos); finalmente la institucionalización de la escuela secundaria en tanto forma histórica (instituciones determinantes en el marco de procesos de sistematización educativa; véase al respecto Autor, 2014).

La reformulación del problema del cambio en la escuela secundaria en términos del par expansión-modelo institucional parte de un marco histórico comparado con énfasis en tres dimensiones:

- La dimensión histórica: herencias institucionales que se arrastran entre modelos y prácticas y que dan forma a las instituciones educativas (Autor, 2014; Tröhler, 2015).
- La dimensión sistémica: dinámica sobre la que se estructuran las prácticas de escolarización (específicamente los procesos de sistematización y segmentación; Mueller, 1992; Ringer, 1979 and 1992; Schriewer and Horney, 1992; Viñao, 2002; Acosta 2011b y 2014).
- La dimensión ligada a los procesos de internacionalización de la educación: esto es la relación entre tendencias globales y prácticas nacionales en la expansión de la escolarización (Schriewer 2002 y 2010) o la confluencia de prácticas y objetos que entran en contacto en procesos de constante mutación (véase Sobe y Kowalczyk, 2012).

La construcción de un marco de este tipo se apoya en algunos supuestos. Se parte de la tesis del proceso de *internacionalización* de ideas y modelos en la configuración de los sistemas educativos en general y de la escuela secundaria en particular. El concepto de internacionalización, tal como lo desarrolla Schriewer (2002; 2010), refiere al proceso de migración, de difusión y de recepción transnacional de discursos y prácticas educativas, proceso constituido históricamente en una variedad de lógicas de apropiación determinadas por estructuras culturales profundas (Caruso y Tenorth, 2011). Supone, al mismo tiempo, la difusión global de guiones educativos estandarizados transnacionalmente y la persistencia de varias redes de interrelación sociocultural (Schriewer, 2010).

Respecto de la configuración de los sistemas educativos y la escuela secundaria, se toman como puntos de partida los siguientes procesos de internacionalización:

- El triunfo de una forma escolar a fines de siglo XIX bajo las variables de la estatalización, la simultaneidad, la gradualidad, la constitución de nuevos oficios (docentes y alumnos).
- La articulación de instituciones educativas bajo procesos de sistematización y segmentación como matriz de configuración de los sistemas educativos (Mueller, 1992; Ringer, 1992).
- La configuración de la escuela secundaria como institución con rol diferencial en el proceso de segmentación educativa a partir dos elementos: su propio modelo institucional y su expansión a partir de modelos institucionales con funciones de instituciones determinantes (Steedman, 1992).

Interesa en este punto agregar un complemento a la hipótesis planteada sobre la internacionalización de la escolarización: históricamente las propuestas sobre planes de estudio y formas institucionales para la escuela secundaria se dieron sobre la base de un «lenguaje» (en el sentido de Thröler, 2013, pág. 27), un «almacén pasivo» que albergó los términos posibles para la discusión. Dichos términos resultaron de la combinación entre las funciones históricas asignadas a las instituciones que luego fueron escuelas secundarias (por ejemplo los colegios humanistas) y los pares sobre los que se reactualizaron dichas funciones durante el siglo XIX:

**Tabla 1.** Pares de la discusión sobre enseñanza secundaria hacia fines del siglo XIX.

**Fuente.** Tabla original.

Funciones históricas de la educación humanista	Formas de la discusión sobre las funciones de la enseñanza secundaria (siglo XIX)
<b>Función de selección</b>	Formación común/Formación diversificada
<b>Función preparatoria</b>	Formación general/Formación orientada
<b>Función generalista</b>	Formación clásica/Formación científica

El encuentro entre este lenguaje posible para la educación secundaria y los procesos de sistematización educativa durante la expansión de la escolarización en la segunda parte del siglo XIX condujo al desarrollo de estructuras segmentadas. Fritz Ringer (1979) formuló el concepto de sistema educativo segmentado en los términos siguientes (se mantiene la cita en idioma original dada su relevancia para el argumento):

“A segmented or tracked system of education, finally, is one in which parallel courses of study are separated by institutional or curricular barriers, as well as by differences in the social origins of their students (...) several distinctive streams can be housed within a single institution, as in the American high school, or the segments can physically separated, as in the case of the classical Gymnasium and the Realschule in the nineteenth century Germany (...) But curricular specialization alone do not constitute segmentation, nor do status difference among people who

have spent unequal amounts of time in school. Segmentation requires simultaneous differences between curricular paths and the social origins of students who travel them. In most instances of tracking one of the streams stands out as the social preserve of the higher strata. This common form of socially vertically segmentation should be distinguished from a horizontal variant, in which some part of the social difference between tracks cannot be described in terms of social altitude (...) It is important to recognize that the divide between those members of an age group who attend educational institutions and those who do not is an instance of segmentation. Indeed, that particular divide is the limiting case of segmentation, and it can be socially horizontal as well as vertical (...) it is best to regard any decisive extension of an educational system as a movement away from segmentation. Obviously, it is educational segmentation that tends to legitimize and to perpetuate social distance” (Ringer, 1979: 29-30).

La segmentación podría concebirse como el resultado sistémico de un lenguaje particular, el referido a las funciones de la educación secundaria. Por qué un problema educativo se resolvió a través de un mecanismo de diferenciación institucional pedagógica con efectos determinantes sobre la distribución social? Podría pensarse aquí en una inversión de la hipótesis propuesta por Tröhler (2013) acerca de la educacionalización de los problemas sociales como reflejo educativo: en este caso no se trató de la resolución educativa de unos problemas sociales (la tensión entre republicanismo y capitalismo por ejemplo) si no de la canalización de la distribución de bienes educativos a través de formas institucionales que expresan una diferenciación social.

Este problema es el que se encuentra en la base de las políticas educativas hacia la escuela secundaria desde mediados del siglo XX hasta la actualidad. En las páginas siguientes propondremos que la expansión de la escuela secundaria debió acompañarse de políticas que, en un primer momento, intentaron modificar el modelo institucional para atenuar los efectos de la segmentación educativa (apartado 2) y, en un segundo momento, dirigidas hacia los que iban quedando fuera, tendieron a acentuar los procesos de diferenciación institucional (apartado 3).

### **3. Expansión, modelo institucional y segmentación durante la configuración y expansión de la escuela secundaria en Europa y América Latina**

Las escuelas secundarias actuales son el producto del cruce de dos tendencias frente al desafío de la expansión: la tendencia a la continuidad del modelo institucional de bachillerato humanista selectivo frente a la tendencia de ruptura que supusieron las escuelas únicas (o comprensivas) en el momento de expansión de la escuela secundaria. En efecto, las escuelas secundarias son fruto del encuentro entre un modelo institucional instaurado alrededor del siglo XVI, pensado para la escolarización de los jóvenes de la elite de la sociedad, y un modelo institucional diseñado en los comienzos de los Estado de Bienestar, pensado para la escolarización de todos los jóvenes (al menos durante la primera parte de la llamada adolescencia) de la sociedad (Acosta y Pinkasz, 2007).



### 3.1. La educación secundaria en Europa

A fines del siglo XIX, momento en el que se sancionó la obligatoriedad de la escuela elemental, en Europa asistían a los bachilleratos (Escuelas de gramática, liceos o gimnasios) entre el 2 % y el 6 % de los jóvenes entre 10 y 19 años (Acosta, 2012; Kaelbe, 2011). Durante los años '60 los países de Europa central y los Estados Unidos produjeron una serie de reformas que acompañaron la extensión de escuela secundaria obligatoria para la mayoría de la población. Estos cambios se expresaron básicamente en tres movimientos: el aumento progresivo de la edad de la escolaridad obligatoria; la estructuración de una oferta escolar más homogénea mediante la reformulación de los históricos formatos escolares segmentados que obligaban a los estudiantes, muy tempranamente, a optar por modalidades secundarias diferentes que preparaban para diversos destinos sociales; y la postergación de la edad en la que las y los estudiantes deberían realizar la opción de las modalidades —por lo general, hasta el inicio del ciclo secundario superior—.

Estas reformas, conocidas como reformas comprensivas y concebidas como un movimiento democratizador, fueron acompañadas por una serie de modificaciones en el interior de las escuelas secundarias: se aseguró un ciclo común de formación general para todos los ingresantes, se evitó la segregación temprana de los niños en escuelas de modalidades diferentes, se dio lugar a la flexibilización curricular a través del sistema de opcionalidades en el que los alumnos podían elegir parte de los contenidos a cursar a lo largo de su escolaridad, y se crearon sistemas de «apoyo» a la función de enseñanza (profesores tutores, consejos de orientación, entre otros; véase Weiler, 1998; Campbell y Sherington, 2006; Wiborg, 2009).

En un lapso de 30 años estos países lograron masificar, tanto en términos de acceso como de finalización, la escuela secundaria. Del 6 % que accedía entre los años '30 y '40 se pasó a un 50 % que finalizaba en los '60 hasta un 75 % en los '90. Según datos de la OECD (2002), Para el año 2000 un 50 % de quienes tenían entre 55 y 64 años contaba con el título de Educación Secundaria Superior, mientras el 75 % de la población entre 25 y 34 años estaba en esta situación. Es decir que la mitad de la generación que probablemente ingresó a la secundaria unificada en los años '50 —comienzos de la expansión— pudo completar ese ciclo, mientras tres cuartos de los jóvenes que probablemente cursaron hacia fines de los años '80 lo completó.

En relación con los procesos de segmentación, las teorías de la reproducción desarrolladas desde fines de los años '70 dieron cuenta de la continuidad de dichos procesos (la «ilusión» de la escuela única; Fernandez Enguita, 1985). El análisis de Weiler (1998) sobre el éxito parcial de las reformas comprensivas en Suecia y Reino Unido y su fracaso en Francia y Alemania concluye de manera contundente: «...El Estado moderno es básicamente incapaz de poner en práctica grandes reformas, por razones que tienen que ver con su compromiso estructural con el orden existente en la distribución de poder y status» (pág. 72).

En la actualidad, la comisión *Tackling early school leaving in Europe* de la Unión Europea calcula que en Europa uno de cada 7 estudiantes abandona la escuela tempranamente y propone el objetivo de reducir a un 10 % la cantidad de jóvenes que abandonen la escuela sin completar sus estudios (Estrategia 2020; para 2011 se calculaba en 13.5 %) y aumentar a un 40 % el logro de estudios superiores (European Commission, 2012 y 2014; Lyche, 2010). Los gobiernos de los Estados miembros se comprometieron a establecer sus propias metas nacionales en la reducción del abandono escolar prematuro (teniendo en cuenta el punto de partida de cada país) y la elaboración de estrategias globales para abordar el abandono escolar a finales de 2012.

### **3.2. La educación secundaria en América Latina: entre tendencias globales y escenarios locales**

Sabido es que los sistemas educativos latinoamericanos tuvieron y tienen otro «ritmo» en relación con estructuras similares de los países centrales. Muchas de esas diferencias se originan, evidentemente, en la forma en que la región se incorporó al proyecto de emancipación de la Ilustración y a la consolidación del Estado moderno.

Como señala Ossenbach (1997), luego de la emancipación de la metrópoli, la educación pública (por oposición al ámbito privado doméstico) se mantuvo en el nivel municipal. Finalizadas las guerras pos independencia, la construcción de los estados centrales fue un proceso largo y laborioso que comenzó a cobrar forma en el último tercio del siglo XIX. En consonancia con lo que ocurrió en Europa, durante ese período los estados centrales comenzaron a hacerse cargo de la educación primaria a través de la noción de Educación Común donde el Estado se definió como Estado docente.

Frente a la homogeneización que dio lugar a la integración nacional como matriz distintiva de los sistemas educativos modernos, es posible resaltar dos rasgos que diferencian a América Latina de la región europea en lo que respecta a la configuración de los sistemas educativos: el escaso vínculo con el desarrollo económico, por lo menos hasta los años '50, y una notable disparidad en la consolidación y expansión de los sistemas educativos al interior de la región dando lugar a desarrollo combinados (Puigróss, 1994).

Los países del Cono sur, de modernización educativa temprana, tuvieron una relativamente rápida organización y expansión del nivel primario, así como un desarrollo muy temprano del nivel secundario, caracterizado por una alta expansión en volumen y un notorio sesgo preuniversitario. En consecuencia, atravesaron una primera gran expansión a mediados del siglo XX, pero a diferencia de los países europeos, ésta se produjo sobre la base de una limitada capacidad de cambio de la estructura del nivel medio y del modelo institucional de origen de la escuela secundaria (no hubo reformas comprensivas).

Luego de una década «perdida», las reformas educativas de los años '90 volvieron a instalar el problema del cambio de los sistemas en la agenda política. Con resultados dispares y efectos de segmentación educativa por su orientación neoliberal, hacia el año 2000 la región se tornó más homogénea respecto de la universalización de la educación elemental. Así, los problemas de la masificación de la secundaria se ubicaron en el centro de la discusión educativa.

En la actualidad, entre la educación primaria y la educación secundaria existe una fluida transición. La inmensa mayoría de los países de la región poseen tasas relativamente altas de transición de alumnos entre la enseñanza primaria y la secundaria, siendo el promedio de la región 93,5 %. Sin embargo, la asistencia a la educación secundaria fluctúa enormemente al interior de los países según el nivel socioeconómico. Ésta va desde un 93,6 % entre los más ricos hasta un 78,9 % entre los más pobres, en promedio para la región.

Finalmente, y en coherencia con lo señalado respecto a la limitada capacidad de cambio de la estructura que dio origen al nivel medio, la cobertura relativamente alta no parece haber alterado los procesos de selección interna que se encuentran en su matriz fundacional: a partir de los 13 años comienza a observarse un proceso de deserción y alteración de la trayectoria educativa hasta un punto tal que, entre los 17 y 18 años (edad de finalización teórica del nivel secundario en la mayoría de los países de América Latina), cerca de la mitad de los jóvenes ya no acuden a la escuela. *Circa 2006*, solo el 48,5 % de los jóvenes de 20 años había culminado el nivel medio (SITEAL, 2010), con

situaciones críticas donde los porcentajes descienden hasta el 19,8 % (Honduras) o al 26,4 % (Nicaragua). La segmentación educativa adquiere aquí su forma más extrema.

El recorrido hasta aquí realizado tuvo como objetivo presentar una síntesis de la forma que adoptó el cambio en la escuela secundaria en los países de Europa y de América Latina a partir de un problema de definición común: la expansión de la escuela secundaria frente al modelo institucional de origen. La segmentación de los sistemas educativos atravesó las reformas comprehensivas en Europa y adquiere sus formas más extremas en algunos países de la región latino americana. En el apartado siguiente se analiza la forma que asumen estas mismas dinámicas en relación con políticas recientes destinadas a la escuela secundaria en ambas regiones, cuya principal característica es la de diversificación de la oferta institucional para asegurar la retención.

#### **4. Expansión, modelo institucional y nuevas formas de segmentación en las políticas y programas para la expansión de la escuela secundaria**

Tal como se propuso en el apartado anterior, la educación secundaria presenta una dificultad histórica: un modelo institucional que refleja el origen selectivo y excluyente frente a procesos de expansión escolar. Algunos países avanzaron más que otros en atender este problema. Sin embargo, todos los países, más allá de su grado de avance, presentan casos de políticas educativas orientados a atender esta problemática. Interesa analizar el cambio desde las políticas orientadas hacia la transformación del modelo institucional a aquellas ligadas a la acentuación de procesos de diferenciación institucional.

En este sentido, la expansión de la escuela secundaria ha llevado al desarrollo de políticas cada vez más centradas en grupos de individuos cuyos efectos tienden a evaluarse en términos de logros de los individuos (los estudiantes y sus profesores). En palabras de Popkewitz (2009): «Las reformas y los estándares se conciben como una forma de reparar la falta de éxito académico entre grupos o poblaciones particulares de la sociedad» (pág. 167). En el caso de la escuela secundaria, los *early school leavers* se transformaron en la nueva Cuestión Social, el nuevo desorden moral a corregir, en palabras del mismo autor (pág. 68). Al par expansión-modelo institucional se le suma un tercero: retención.

Por este motivo, el análisis de las políticas y programas dirigidas hacia la educación secundaria ya no suele realizarse en términos de sus relaciones con las funciones sociales de los sistemas educativos, entre las que se destaca la segmentación, y se focalizan en los logros institucionales frente al objetivo de «mantener a los estudiantes dentro del sistema hasta que obtengan una calificación».

Las políticas, en tanto casos, se clasifican en dos categorías de programas para la escuela secundaria ya utilizadas en otros estudios (Autor, 2011a; Autor, 2013; Acosta y Terigi, 2015): de «sostenimiento de la trayectoria escolar» y de «reingreso». Ambas dan cuenta del problema de origen en su nueva versión: diversificar la oferta a fin de lograr la «retención».

**Tabla 2.** Sistematización políticas orientadas hacia la educación secundaria. Selección de programas para Europa y América Latina por tipo de política. **Fuente.** Elaboración propia en base a documentación de los programas.

Tipo Caso	Sostenimiento de la trayectoria escolar				Reingreso a la escuela secundaria			
	Período de implementación	Población objeto	Ejes de la intervención	Líneas de acción	Período de implementación	Población objeto	Ejes de la intervención	Líneas de acción
<b>Apoyo a Liceos (Chile)</b>	2006 y cont.	Escuelas alumnos vulnerabilizados y bajos resultados	*Mejorar resultados en 3 años  *Mejorar gestión y capacidad institucional	*Programa de asistencia a demanda de liceo en el área institucional, pedagógica y convivencia				
<b>CESAJ (Pcia. Bs.As. Argentina)</b>					2008 y cont.	Jóvenes 15 a 18 fuera del SE (50 CESAJ, 1000 estudiantes a 2011)	*Re ingreso en ciclo superior  *Aceleración de trayectorias  *Vínculo con trabajo	*Espacio puente  *Cambios régimen académico  *Diseño curricular de ciclo básico específico
<b>Combatiendo el abandono escolar (Holanda)</b>	2007 y continúa.	Estudiantes en la educación obligatoria con especial atención a la transición y continuidad pos primaria.	*Reducir las tasas de abandono escolar.	*Sistema de seguimiento de los estudiantes (número personal).  *Portal digital de absentismo.  *Coordinadores de cuidado: asistencia socioeducativa.  *Programas de continuidad educativa, orientación laboral.				

**Tabla 2. (Cont.)**

Tipo Caso	Sostenimiento de la trayectoria escolar				Reingreso a la escuela secundaria			
	Período de implementación	Población objeto	Ejes de la intervención	Líneas de acción	Período de implementación	Población objeto	Ejes de la intervención	Líneas de acción
<b>Micro Lycées (Francia)</b>					2000 y continúa	Jóvenes entre 16 y 25 que abandonaron la escuela con 6 meses en segundo grado o a un año de finalizar el BAC	*Localización geográfica  *Trabaja sobre los modos de socialización para poder devenir estudiantes	*Diseño conjunto de espacios y tiempos para alumnos y profesores (sala común de referencia)  *Grupos reducidos: 10 estudiantes por profesor  *Horarios flexibles
<b>PAC (Uruguay)</b>					2006 y cont.	Jóvenes 12 a 15 fuera del SE o en riesgo de abandono	*Reinsertar en liceo  *Desarrollar innovación pedagógica	*Cert.ciclo básico  *Apoyo vida liceal  *Acompañamiento egreso espacio puente
<b>PIU (Uruguay)</b>	2008 y cont.	Escuelas alumnos vulnerabilizados y repitencia (82 liceos)	*Mejorar aprendizajes  *Mejorar promoción	*Tutorías  *Recursos materiales a estudiantes  *Atención psicosocial				
<b>PMI (Argentina)</b>	2006 y cont.	Escuela secundarias (5254 en 2011)	*Fortalecer trayectorias escolares  *Generar cambios en la propuesta escolar y organización institucional	*Espacios extra clase  *Tutorías  *Articulación niveles  *Variaciones en la enseñanza disciplinar				

**Tabla 2. (Cont.)**

Tipo Caso	Sostenimiento de la trayectoria escolar				Reingreso a la escuela secundaria			
	Período de implementación	Población objeto	Ejes de la intervención	Líneas de acción	Período de implementación	Población objeto	Ejes de la intervención	Líneas de acción
<b>PROA (España)</b>					2005 y cont.	Escuelas de la Educación Secundaria Obligatoria (ESO; participan entre 500 y 600 centros); estudiantes de 1° a 3°	*Mejorar resultados educativos *Promover cambios en la atención pedagógica *Vincular a la familia y al entorno en el sostenimiento de la trayectoria escolar	*Programa de acompañamiento escolar en centros de educación secundaria: monitores, profesores de apoyo *Programa de apoyo y refuerzo en centros de educación secundaria
<b>Programa EXIT (Barcelona, España)</b>	2001 y continúa.	Escuelas primarias y secundarias (Institutos), estudiantes de 5to y 6to de primaria y 1ero y 2do de secundaria	*Mejorar el pasaje entre primaria y secundaria. *Promover proyectos de atención tutorial individual. *Vincular a la familia y al entorno en el sostenimiento de la trayectoria escolar.	*Programa de refuerzo escolar dos veces por semana con tutores y ex estudiantes *Actividades complementarias para el desarrollo de las competencias básicas (lectura, radio, teatro, etc.)				

**Tabla 2. (Cont.)**

Tipo Caso	Sostenimiento de la trayectoria escolar				Reingreso a la escuela secundaria			
	Período de implementación	Población objeto	Ejes de la intervención	Líneas de acción	Período de implementación	Población objeto	Ejes de la intervención	Líneas de acción
SCP (Irlanda)	2002 y continúa.	Todos los estudiantes calificados en “riesgo educativo”.	*Retener a los estudiantes hasta los 16 años ( <i>Senior cycle</i> o equivalente).	*Apoyo dentro del Centro: apoyo extra en horario escolar. *Apoyo extra clase: apoyo adicional fuera del horario escolar. *Apoyo en vacaciones: apoyo a través de servicios juveniles. *Apoyo fuera de la escuela: para estudiantes desertores.				

Los programas analizados indican cierta confluencia en lo referido a: desarrollo y experimentación de formas de atención educativa alternativas o complementarias (articulables) con la enseñanza secundaria escolarizada; contextualización de la oferta en el ámbito local; desarrollo de programas con base en las escuelas y organizaciones locales (generación de capacidad institucional).

Asimismo, la agenda múltiple que enfrenta la expansión de la enseñanza secundaria hace que sea posible encontrar combinaciones de políticas extensivas e intensivas (Terigi, 2012). Los programas como el PMI (Argentina) constituyen un ejemplo de política extensiva con baja capacidad de innovación del modelo institucional y con dificultades para su perfeccionamiento. La creación y expansión de los programas como PAC, CESAJ y *Micro Lycée* constituyen un ejemplo de política intensiva: de menor escala propone la alteración de algunos rasgos del modelo institucional. Entre unas y otras se encuentran programas fuertemente centrados en el sostenimiento de los estudiantes sin provocar grandes transformaciones en el modelo institucional aunque orientados a estudiantes «en riesgo», tal es el caso del SPC en Irlanda, *Éxit* en Barcelona o PROA en España.

En los programas analizados se encuentran arreglos pedagógicos y didácticos flexibles; aunque las iniciativas pueden ordenarse entre dos extremos, desde perfeccionar el dispositivo existente hasta su alteración, existe un grado de conciencia importante acerca de la necesidad de revisarlo (Autor, 2013). Las articulaciones de este tipo tendrían la potencialidad de presentar muchas opciones de flexibilidad en cuanto a instituciones y condiciones para aprender (tiempos, espacios, recursos, figuras docentes, etc.).

Al respecto, la experiencia internacional en la expansión de la escuela secundaria revela modificaciones importantes en cuatro direcciones:

- Modalidades de acompañamiento (actores destinados al seguimiento de los jóvenes en situación de vulnerabilidad respecto a la trayectoria escolar);
- Efectos de alteración en el modelo institucional en función del desarrollo de modalidades de acompañamiento;
- Cambios sobre el régimen académico a partir de la incorporación de modalidades que trabajan sobre las trayectorias;
- Aprovechamiento de medios disponibles en la actualidad –redes sociales– por parte del programa bajo implementación para trabajar sobre las trayectorias de los jóvenes.

Sin embargo, se advierte que las modalidades flexibles podrían estar contribuyendo a aumentar la fragmentación y segmentación del sistema educativo, riesgo que corre toda política intensiva destinada al nivel medio. Por un lado, se advierte el riesgo de una segmentación socioeconómica en las políticas que parten de la identificación de alumnos en situación de vulnerabilidad social y educativa y proponen ofertas para esos grupo. Crear «escuelas para pobres» puede transformarse en un efecto no deseado de la intervención. Por otro lado, se observa también un riesgo de segmentación pedagógica en la medida en que se proponen ofertas curriculares destinadas a alumnos con dificultades sociales y académicas.

En consonancia con el riesgo anterior, las políticas y programas que parten de la focalización corren el riesgo de producir nuevas etiquetas que pueden transformarse en estigmas. Aquí el efecto ya no sería sobre la escuela o el sistema como en la segmentación original,



si no que afectaría en forma directa al alumno que recibe la etiqueta. Toda oferta que diferencia grupos (por escuela o dentro de la escuela) también produce estigmas y las escuelas secundarias, en particular, tienen una larga historia en este tipo de dinámica de manera que el riesgo en los casos analizados es la articulación con esta dinámica propia de la escuela secundaria moderna. De esta manera, políticas de innovación que apuntan a evitar los problemas del sistema escolar tradicional pueden en realidad contribuir a profundizarlos.

## 5. Conclusiones

El objetivo de este trabajo fue proponer un marco de análisis para políticas recientes dirigidas hacia la escuela secundaria. A partir de la definición de un problema propio de la configuración de los sistemas educativos modernos, se avanzó con la caracterización de procesos de expansión de dicha escuela en dos regiones diferentes. Una mirada a las iniciativas recientes permitió considerar cambios y continuidades en relación con el problema de la expansión, el modelo institucional de origen y la segmentación.

Así como las políticas vinculadas con la primera gran expansión de la escuela secundaria se orientaron hacia la modificación del modelo institucional determinante, las políticas de esta nueva etapa parecieran orientarse hacia el diseño de nuevos modelos institucionales que aseguren aquello que los anteriores no pudieron: trayectorias exitosas para todos los estudiantes.

Desde la perspectiva adoptada en este trabajo, es decir el problema común de la expansión versus el modelo institucional y la segmentación como un proceso de educacionalización inversa, cabe destacar los efectos de este tipo de iniciativa en el conjunto del sistema y en cada configuración particular.

Más jóvenes en la escuela secundaria siempre es un dato positivo. Pero también implica un desafío: significa revisar las prácticas existentes porque muchas veces son las condiciones de la escolarización (tanto en su régimen académico como en las formas de enseñanza) las que expulsan a los nuevos estudiantes. Esto no sólo en lo que refiere a los dispositivos de los modelos institucionales, tal como proponen programas recientes, si no a los procesos históricos de diferenciación institucional y sus efectos sobre la segmentación educativa.

En este sentido, se advierte que los esfuerzos dirigidos hacia la consolidación de trayectorias educativas completas para todos los jóvenes, corren el riesgo de acentuar elementos históricos de segmentación en los sistemas educativos, por medio de una nueva forma institucional: la escuela secundaria «a medida». Visto desde una perspectiva de procesos históricos de segmentación educativa, no pareciera muy novedosa.

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*Educación cívica  
y educación ciudadana en México:  
una perspectiva global y comparada*

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*Civic education and citizenship education  
in Mexico: a global and comparative perspective*

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## **Resumen**

La crítica situación del mundo actual requiere fortalecer la cultura de paz entre los países y la convivencia de culturas e individuos respetando la diversidad y la pluralidad. Una de las formas de conseguirlo es mediante el reforzamiento de la ciudadanía y para ello, la educación puede contribuir a lograrlo. Los esfuerzos por ampliar y fortalecer la ciudadanía, entendida como el ejercicio de derechos y el cumplimiento de obligaciones de diverso tipo en una sociedad y más allá de sus fronteras han sido incesantes, desde sus orígenes modernos hasta la actualidad. Hoy en día, sin embargo, estos derechos no han sido plenamente garantizados y su violación ocurre en regímenes políticos autoritarios y aún en los que se dicen democráticos. Si bien la democracia se reconoce como la forma más adecuada de convivencia en las sociedades contemporáneas, aún tiene considerables insuficiencias que se expresan, por ejemplo, en una baja participación en las elecciones. En México la educación cívica forma parte del curriculum de la educación básica. Los programas describen principalmente la estructura del Estado mexicano, fortalecen el nacionalismo y refuerzan lo que es ser «un buen ciudadano». La formación ciudadana de los jóvenes estudiantes también tiene lugar de una manera más informal mediante la socialización en los niveles posteriores de escolaridad. En este artículo se describen y analizan varios programas de educación cívica y educación ciudadana desarrollados en América Latina y México durante las dos últimas décadas. Se incluyen también algunas propuestas derivadas de las anteriores y cuyo objetivo apunta a la construcción de una ciudadanía global.

*Palabras clave:* Educación Comparada; Educación y Ciudadanía; Educación Cívica; Globalización

## **Abstract**

The critical situation of the world today requires strengthening the culture of peace among countries and the coexistence of cultures and individuals respecting diversity. One way to achieve this is by strengthening citizenship to which basic and higher education can help. Efforts to expand and strengthen citizenship as the exercise of rights and the fulfillment of obligations of various kinds in a society and beyond its borders, have been incessant: from its modern origins to date. Today however, these rights have not been fully guaranteed and its violation occurs in authoritarian regimes, and even in some of the so call “democratic”. While democracy is recognized as the most appropriate way of living in contemporary societies it has yet significant shortcomings such as, for example, a disenchantment of citizens to participate in elections. Civic education in Mexico is part of the curriculum of basic education. School programs focus primarily in describing the structure of the Mexican state, the strengthening of nationalism and in what it means to be “a good citizen”. Civic education of young students also occurs in a more informal way through socialization with other colleagues during the years of university life. This article describes and analyzes various programs of civic education and citizenship education developed in Latin America and Mexico over the past two decades. Some proposals derived from the above and whose objective aims at building a global citizenship are also included.

*Key Words:* Comparative Education; Citizenship Education; Civic Education; Globalisation

## 1. Introducción

«Educar para la ciudadanía global es, en este contexto y tomando la expresión de Gimeno Sacristán, un educar para la vida, que es un educar para un mundo en el que nada nos es ajeno.»  
(DE PAZ ABRIL 2007)

Es indudable que la situación en que se halla el mundo requiere del fortalecimiento de una cultura de paz entre las naciones y de la convivencia de culturas e individuos en un marco de tolerancia, reconocimiento y respeto a la diversidad. Una de las formas más efectivas de conseguirlo es por medio del reforzamiento de la ciudadanía. Para lograrlo, la educación en sus distintos niveles y modalidades puede constituir uno de los medios más efectivos.

Los esfuerzos por ampliar y fortalecer la ciudadanía, entendida como el ejercicio de derechos y el cumplimiento de obligaciones de diverso tipo dentro de una sociedad y más allá de sus fronteras, han sido incesantes: desde sus orígenes modernos en la Europa y los Estados Unidos del siglo XVIII, hasta la actualidad. Hoy en día sin embargo, estos derechos no han sido plenamente garantizados y su violación ocurre con frecuencia, sobre todo en regímenes políticos autoritarios e incluso en algunos que se dicen «democráticos». Si bien se reconoce a la democracia como la forma más adecuada de convivencia en las sociedades contemporáneas, diversas situaciones que ocurren en la actualidad indican que aún hay considerables insuficiencias. En algunos países se observan todavía altos niveles de intolerancia religiosa y de restricción a la libertad de expresión. Además, aún persiste entre muchos ciudadanos la idea de que la práctica de la ciudadanía se reduce a la emisión del voto en las elecciones de autoridades locales y nacionales.

Asimismo, en lo que se refiere a la afiliación a partidos y asociaciones políticos, se pueden apreciar en varios países—desarrollados o en vías de serlo—bajos niveles de participación política. Esta falta de interés indica la existencia de un marcado escepticismo y desilusión con la democracia formal. Son muchos los ciudadanos, intelectuales y líderes de opinión que en la actualidad critican fuertemente a los miembros de la clase política por su falta de compromiso con la ciudadanía y los frecuentes escándalos de corrupción que con frecuencia los envuelven. En este sentido, se plantea que uno de los desafíos de América Latina es pasar de una *democracia de electores* a una *democracia de ciudadanos* (PNUD, 2004).

Es indudable por otra parte, que en nuestros días los movimientos internacionales de población, la diversidad étnica y el multiculturalismo, entre otras realidades generadas por la propia dinámica de las sociedades globales, obligan a repensar y conceptualizar la ciudadanía a partir de nuevas categorías analíticas (Saint Paul, 2011). En este sentido, están ocurriendo grandes movilizaciones que, actuando al margen de los institutos políticos tradicionales, luchan por reivindicaciones sociales de distinto tipo. En ocasiones estos movimientos sólo son reactivos y de corta duración, pero ha habido también otros que lograron hacer grandes transformaciones como el ocurrido en Egipto para derrocar al régimen de Hosni Mubarak (Petras, 2011) o los que llevaron a cabo los estudiantes chilenos en los últimos años para demandar cambios en la legislación sobre educación superior (Rodríguez, 2011) y más recientemente los movimientos de resistencia a la reforma educativa en México. Por otra parte, se siguen observando ataques contra minorías y en varias naciones imperan el autoritarismo y la corrupción. Y ni qué decir

de las persistentes desigualdades sociales, que en muchos casos en vez de disminuir se agudizan de manera incontenible. Sigue pendiente, en este sentido, la pregunta que en los años 90 se planteaba el sociólogo francés Alain Touraine «¿Podremos vivir juntos?»

Con el fin de revisar con más detalle estos temas, en la primera parte de este artículo se describen y analizan algunos de los principales elementos conceptuales en torno al vínculo que existe entre educación y ciudadanía. En el segundo apartado, se revisan varios programas y propuestas de educación cívica y de educación ciudadana que han sido desarrollados en México y América Latina durante las dos últimas décadas. La tercera sección del artículo se enfoca al examen de diversas acciones e iniciativas orientadas a fortalecer la educación cívica y la ciudadanía. El cuarto apartado explora las perspectivas y posibilidades de que las acciones en curso para desarrollar la educación para la ciudadanía, transiten hacia un horizonte más global. Finalmente se delinearán algunas conclusiones derivadas de los apartados anteriores.

## **2. Elementos conceptuales del vínculo entre educación y ciudadanía**

### **2.1. El panorama general de la ciudadanía como punto de partida**

La democracia se sigue considerando como el mejor sistema político generado hasta ahora (al menos en el llamado «mundo occidental»), porque permite plantear de forma justa los conflictos de valor que ocurren en la vida colectiva civilizada, y permite la búsqueda de condiciones de mayor igualdad social. Sin embargo, también se la considera como un sistema perfectible en busca de mejores fórmulas de convivencia (GARCÍA-CABRERO y ALBA, 2008).

La ciudadanía es consustancial con los Estados nacionales y con la democracia en la medida en que constituyen la forma característica de relación entre una nación y el Estado: la nación está integrada por ciudadanos y el Estado gobierna, legisla y juzga en su nombre. Asimismo, la difusión de la idea de ciudadanía ha sido asignada de manera preponderante a las instituciones de educación pública, de ahí la estrecha vinculación entre ciudadanía y educación. Tanto la idea de ciudadanía como el papel de la educación pública dependen de las condiciones históricas o políticas de cada Estado-nación. La discusión sobre ciudadanía y educación incluye numerosos enfoques y temáticas específicas que se han ido expandiendo a lo largo de los años (DÍAZ COUDER, *et al.*, 2015).

Según la clásica definición de T. H. MARSHALL (1950), la ciudadanía puede considerarse como la «pertenencia total (*full membership*) dentro de una comunidad» y constituye el conjunto de los derechos civiles, sociales y políticos que, en teoría, eliminan las diferencias entre los individuos al reunirse en una nación dentro de una delimitación territorial conocida como país. Si bien el mérito de MARSHALL fue haber destacado los derechos civiles, los derechos políticos y los derechos sociales, la compleja realidad del mundo actual obliga a contemplar que la definición ya resulta anticuada e incompleta. Lo que falta también a esa definición, según CAMPS (2015), es la referencia a los derechos y deberes ciudadanos. Desde otra perspectiva, esta definición de ciudadanía planteada hace ya más de seis décadas ha sido puesta en tela de juicio junto con el Estado nación por los actuales procesos de globalización en los que las fronteras han sido quebrantadas y las culturas se han desterritorializado. En nuestros días, más que ser una condición que uno invoca o mantiene con base en una lista de experiencias, creencias o acciones

que pueden o no incluir el reconocimiento de privilegios, marginalidad, contradicciones y opresión, la ciudadanía global es un elemento flexible del desarrollo de la identidad (HARSHMAN *et al.*, 2015).

La ciudadanía global implica asimismo una responsabilidad social, el reconocimiento de la interconexión global y una comprensión de la forma en que los temas globales afectan la vida de individuos y comunidades, el cómo y por qué se toman las decisiones que afectan al planeta y la vida dentro de él, y fundamentalmente, los medios por los cuales el futuro puede ser modificado (TORRES, 2002). Así lo han reconocido algunas organizaciones de la sociedad civil como OXFAM, cuyo proyecto pretende construir una corriente de ciudadanos globales, responsables con la humanidad y el planeta. Para ello se busca asentar los fundamentos desde la escuela. Lo que se requiere, según esta perspectiva, es un nuevo modelo educativo humanista, basado en el diálogo y la convivencia, que construya la escuela-comunidad preocupada por la justicia, abierta al entorno y al mundo (DE PAZ, 2007).

El planteamiento anterior aspira a que los «ciudadanos globales» participen y se comprometan de manera activa en la vida ciudadana en todos sus niveles y busquen transformar la realidad; que sean conscientes de sus derechos pero también de sus obligaciones, y se responsabilicen de sus actos. Que se interesen por conocer y reflexionar críticamente sobre los problemas del mundo y sobre cómo éstos afectan sus vidas y las de los demás. Que respeten, valoren, celebren la diversidad y tengan una mentalidad cosmopolita. Y que se indignan frente a la injusticia y la exclusión, y luchen por crear un mundo mejor.

Como puede apreciarse en este apartado, la ciudadanía y con ello su construcción y mejoramiento, enfrenta cada vez mayores retos a medida que el mundo y la democracia se vuelven más complejos e interdependientes.

## **2.2. El vínculo entre ciudadanía y educación**

Es un hecho innegable y natural, obvio si se quiere, que los individuos en general y los ciudadanos en particular, se educan en los más diversos ámbitos sociales: familia, comunidad y nación (Barba, 2009). Sin embargo, la escuela en general y principalmente la de carácter público y laica, constituye el sitio privilegiado en el que el vínculo entre educación y formación para la ciudadanía se formaliza y fortalece. Ello es así porque en ella se imparten conocimientos y valores básicos para la convivencia social. A medida que las sociedades contemporáneas se vuelven más complejas y se amplían las demandas de participación en los asuntos políticos, las escuelas se están viendo rebasadas en su cometido de contribuir a la formación de una ciudadanía cada vez más informada, responsable y participativa. Es por ello que hoy en día se habla del vínculo entre educación y ciudadanía como un proceso en constante construcción (Castro, Rodríguez y Smith, 2014), aunque se sigue considerando a las instituciones educativas como vehículos importantes para la formación ciudadana de los individuos, no sólo en las etapas iniciales o elementales de la escolaridad, sino también en los niveles subsecuentes.

Como sucede en otras naciones, en México la educación cívica forma parte del currículum de la educación básica. Los programas se enfocan principalmente en la descripción genérica de la estructura del Estado mexicano, en el fortalecimiento del nacionalismo y en lo que significa ser «un buen ciudadano» muy cercano a como lo señalan Schugurensky y Myers (2003) «buenos productores, buenos consumidores y buenos patriotas» (p. 21),



aunque también se intenta que tengan una mayor participación en la sociedad<sup>1</sup>. En el nivel universitario no hay materias específicas sobre ciudadanía, pero es importante destacar que los estudiantes mayores de 18 años (la edad típica de quienes realizan estudios de nivel terciario), ya están en condiciones de votar en las elecciones de nivel local, estatal o federal. La formación ciudadana de los jóvenes estudiantes también tiene lugar de una manera más informal a través de la socialización con sus colegas estudiantes durante los años de la vida universitaria. Una característica de la mayoría de las universidades públicas mexicanas (que representan casi dos tercios de la matrícula total en la educación superior) es que son instituciones altamente politizadas y contestatarias, lo que permite a los estudiantes tomar conciencia de los problemas sociales, culturales y políticos de México y el mundo.

Las universidades también pueden cumplir un papel muy importante en el fortalecimiento de la ciudadanía, no sólo con la participación activa de sus comunidades de estudiantes, profesores y trabajadores dentro de la esfera social (tanto en la participación electoral, como en las movilizaciones sociales), sino con el ejercicio de sus actividades académicas sustantivas (docencia, investigación y difusión/extensión) en la tarea de aportar conocimientos y reflexiones que permitan avanzar, por ejemplo, en la elaboración y puesta en marcha de los ordenamientos jurídicos—en diversas áreas—con objeto de garantizar el cumplimiento de los derechos civiles y sociales para todos los miembros de una sociedad.

Aun cuando el número de jóvenes que asiste a la universidad sea reducido en comparación con la población total, su presencia de éstos, una vez que egresan de los establecimientos de educación superior en las diversas ramas y sectores de la economía y de la sociedad, es muy relevante. Asimismo, el ejercicio de la ciudadanía dentro de las propias instituciones de educación superior (IES), también puede darse mediante la participación en los órganos colegiados y en la toma de decisiones académicas. Por otro lado, a juicio de Turner (1994) las universidades se vuelven importantes en la configuración de la dimensión cultural de la ciudadanía, Esas instituciones actúan funcionalmente como instancias de la socialización de los conocimientos y promueven todo el sistema de valores cívicos.

### **3. La educación cívica y la educación para la ciudadanía en México**

Es bien sabido que los regímenes políticos de varios países de la región latinoamericana han tenido durante décadas como rasgos distintivos el autoritarismo y la falta de democracia. Por ello, la apertura y el ejercicio de los derechos democráticos han sido conseguidos después de largas luchas que han significado enormes esfuerzos colectivos y, en no pocos casos, el sacrificio de muchas vidas humanas. En ese sentido, por ejemplo, la lucha por los derechos humanos, expresados en la Declaración Universal hecha por las Naciones Unidas en 1948, sigue siendo todavía un anhelo difícil de alcanzar en muchos puntos del planeta. Más aún, resulta paradójico que en nuestros días haya todavía guerras e intervenciones militares a gran escala cuyo objetivo es «la pacificación» de algunos países y regiones.

<sup>1</sup> En el tercer apartado de este trabajo se revisará el papel que los libros de texto gratuitos (LTG) han jugado durante casi medio siglo en la educación básica mexicana, según el análisis de Sarah Corona Berkin (2015).

Pese a la existencia de los documentos que señalan la obligatoriedad de los Derechos Humanos, no siempre se han puesto en efecto en todos los países, incluyendo los más avanzados. Es bastante conocido, por ejemplo, que el ejercicio pleno de los derechos civiles y la no discriminación para la población de origen africano en los Estados Unidos, se haya conseguido apenas en los años 60 del siglo pasado. A nivel mundial, el derecho a elegir a los gobernantes y demás autoridades ha sido conculcado en múltiples ocasiones por los regímenes autoritarios en varias naciones del planeta. En otros lugares, apenas hasta hace pocos años se logró el voto y los derechos políticos para las mujeres, e incluso en algunas partes todavía no ocurre totalmente. La falta de respeto a las creencias religiosas también sigue siendo motivo de conflictos en varias partes del mundo. Asimismo, pese a los avances de los últimos años, la lucha por el otorgamiento y respeto a diversos derechos de los pueblos indígenas continúa siendo una exigencia. Lamentablemente, la lista se extiende a gran parte de los 30 artículos que componen la Declaración Universal de los Derechos Humanos. Puede desprenderse de este desalentador panorama que si el goce pleno de los derechos humanos es condición necesaria para el ejercicio de la ciudadanía, también ésta constituye una aspiración incompleta.

En México la lucha por la democracia y el pleno respeto a los derechos civiles y ciudadanos también ha sido una larga jornada. Después del fin de la Revolución Mexicana en los años 20 del siglo XX y hasta hoy, la democracia mexicana sigue buscando su consolidación. A pesar de no ser una dictadura, el régimen político mexicano estuvo caracterizado por el dominio de un mismo partido (Partido Revolucionario Institucional, PRI) por más de 70 años. Fue hasta principios de este siglo que un partido de oposición (Partido de Acción Nacional, PAN), obtuvo la presidencia del país en dos ocasiones consecutivas 2000-2006 y 2006-2012. No obstante, en las últimas elecciones el PRI volvió a ganar la presidencia. En varias ocasiones las elecciones presidenciales han estado marcadas por la sombra del fraude y la corrupción. La creación de un organismo que organice las elecciones de manera imparcial y autónoma ha tenido un elevado costo en términos económicos y ha requerido de grandes luchas por el respeto al voto de los ciudadanos. Aún cuando el Instituto Nacional Electoral (INE) ha organizado las últimas elecciones con un presupuesto muy alto, los resultados de los comicios siguen siendo motivo de fuertes controversias y conflictos en algunas localidades del país. Sigue habiendo todavía prácticas clientelistas y compra de votos, como resabios del corporativismo que por mucho tiempo ha caracterizado al sistema político mexicano.<sup>2</sup>

Por otro lado, aunque sin los extremos que se presentan en las dictaduras militares o los regímenes autoritarios, diversos derechos civiles como el derecho de expresión y manifestación han sufrido grandes restricciones en algunos periodos, tal como sucedió hace algunas décadas durante los conflictos políticos con los sindicatos y con los movimientos sociales (entre los que se incluyen diversos movimientos estudiantiles). De manera semejante a lo que ocurre en otros países, a pesar de las luchas por fortalecer la democracia y contar con elecciones libres, así como para conseguir que se respeten los

2 El doble propósito del corporativismo mexicano fue, según LORENZO MEYER (1992), la creación de un mecanismo de representación política y de ajuste entre los grandes sectores económico-sociales, con el fin de neutralizar los elementos conflictivos entre las clases y los grupos, y entre éstos y el gobierno. Asimismo, las corporaciones de trabajadores y empresarios actuaron como mecanismos de control sobre sus miembros individuales, pero a su vez, estas corporaciones quedaron subordinadas, en mayor o menor grado, al Estado. En consecuencia, el corporativismo resultó ser, en la práctica, un arreglo político ideal para la creación y el mantenimiento de un régimen político autoritario.

derechos civiles, existe un cierto desencanto con la participación en la vida democrática, lo cual se puede apreciar en los significativos niveles de abstencionismo electoral. Esta situación se ha complicado todavía más por los altos niveles de inseguridad y violencia que se registran en algunas partes del país. El número de muertos en la llamada «guerra contra el crimen y el narcotráfico» se cuenta por cientos de miles, a los cuales se agregan muchos desaparecidos. A este grave problema de la violencia también se le agrega el de la corrupción y la impunidad.

Una parte muy significativa de la población mexicana sigue viviendo en condiciones de pobreza (poco más de la mitad según cifras oficiales) y los niveles de crecimiento económico son bajos (menos del 2.5 % del PIB en 2015). El precio del petróleo, uno de los principales productos de exportación, ha caído a niveles sin precedente (de más de 100 dólares el barril en la década pasada a poco más de 40 dólares en la actualidad); el desempleo es alto aunque el mercado informal representa una fuente importante de ocupación para millones de personas. Si bien el turismo y la inversión extranjera directa han ayudado a mantener a flote la economía (junto con las remesas enviadas por quienes trabajan en Estados Unidos), sin embargo, la construcción de enormes complejos hoteleros y centros comerciales, así como las grandes industrias mineras y energéticas han provocado en varias ocasiones importantes daños al medio ambiente.

En este difícil contexto socio económico la educación ciudadana en México se caracteriza, de acuerdo con CASTRO y RODRÍGUEZ (2012) por la presencia de problemáticas como la desigualdad y la inequidad. Aún cuando los niños y jóvenes de hoy cuentan con mayores posibilidades de ingresar a la escuela y disponen de habilidades ciudadanas, existe todavía en el país un amplio sector de la población en situación de pobreza, que es altamente vulnerable a la reproducción intergeneracional de la exclusión y la desigualdad, y en riesgo de sumarse a los grandes contingentes de inmigrantes o a la delincuencia organizada. Por ello es urgente la elaboración e implementación de políticas públicas destinadas a generar las condiciones propicias para conformar una ciudadanía inclusiva y democrática.

La educación ciudadana que debiera ofrecer la escuela tendría que plantearse como un proceso de socialización que integrara a los estudiantes a la vida política, así como crear ambientes de aprendizaje significativos donde adquieran las capacidades necesarias para poder incidir como sujetos autónomos en la transformación de la sociedad. De ahí que el logro de una transformación democrática requiere alentar la participación y la socialización política de los estudiantes en cuestiones que afectan a la humanidad como el agotamiento de recursos no renovables, la preservación del planeta y la universalización de los derechos humanos, entre otras. Los contenidos clave de la ciudadanía en el ámbito escolar, la complejidad de las nociones de ciudadano y ciudadanía, y su permanente reconstrucción, requieren de planteamientos interdisciplinarios que comprendan aspectos históricos, políticos, sociales, legales, éticos y tecnológicos (CASTRO y RODRÍGUEZ, 2012).

Por su parte, GARCÍA CABRERO y ALBA (2008) argumentan que en el contexto escolar se ha buscado sentar las bases de la democracia a través de los programas de formación cívica y ética, los cuales hacen énfasis en el diálogo, la reflexión y la toma de decisiones con base en virtudes como la justicia, tolerancia, solidaridad, responsabilidad y participación. No obstante, la realidad de las escuelas indica que la violencia es una forma cotidiana de convivencia entre los alumnos, lo que contrasta con lo señalado en los programas académicos. Para consolidar la democracia se requiere la participación de

los ciudadanos libres, que puedan expresar sus pensamientos y emociones, que sean y se sientan escuchados, y a la vez, que puedan realizar acciones que se visualicen y tengan un impacto social. Para que ocurra esta participación es necesario formar ciudadanos desde el plano afectivo y racional, con el fin de que conozcan y ejerzan plenamente sus derechos y obligaciones, en el marco de la libertad, con el fin de que aprendan a transitar de la vida privada a la vida pública.

Lograr transmitir la importancia de este enfoque para la vida democrática puede permitir que los ciudadanos se asuman como seres íntegros, auténticos, que puedan reproducir actitudes afirmativas y disposiciones que resulten virtuosas en el espacio público. Para ello, es necesario integrar al docente y hacerle explícitas las intenciones que deben estar presentes en el aula para que efectivamente se apliquen los programas y promuevan el desarrollo moral, y no que ante la falta de claridad, el docente realice lo hecho en el pasado, reproduciendo actitudes contrarias a una formación cívica y ciudadana. Si el ideal democrático tiene como fin contar con ciudadanos que puedan y quieran gobernarse, entonces la escuela debe desarrollar en los jóvenes niveles de destreza cada vez más sólidos, impulsando su capacidad moral de entender y evaluar concepciones competitivas de buenas y malas prácticas en lo individual y lo social, inculcando el hábito de no aceptar acríticamente cualquier forma de vida concreta<sup>3</sup> (GARCÍA CABRERO y ALBA, 2008).

Por otra parte, se han realizado en las últimas décadas estudios a nivel regional que muestran el estado en que se hallan la educación cívica y la educación para la ciudadanía. Uno de ellos es el realizado en 2009 por el Banco Interamericano de Desarrollo (BID) intitulado «Estudio Internacional sobre la Educación Cívica y Ciudadana (ICCS)», cuyo objetivo era conocer qué tan preparados estaban los jóvenes de segundo de secundaria en México, en términos de conocimientos y actitudes para desempeñarse como ciudadanos en la sociedad moderna. Entre los resultados más importantes se destaca que los estudiantes mexicanos son capaces de identificar las características más evidentes de las instituciones cívicas y de la sociedad civil, pero tienen dificultad para atender la interconexión entre ellas y los procesos y sistemas a través de los cuales operan. Tampoco les resulta fácil relacionar algunos procesos cívicos formales con su experiencia diaria y no tienen conciencia de que la esfera de responsabilidad de los ciudadanos rebasa su contexto local.

Cabe destacar que los estudiantes mexicanos apoyan fomentar la igualdad de género, así como los derechos y oportunidades de los grupos étnicos y raciales. Favorecen casi en su totalidad algunos principios democráticos fundamentales como la libertad de expresión y el derecho a elegir representantes. Sin embargo, llama la atención que un porcentaje significativo de los jóvenes no se pronunció en contra de los monopolios de los

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3 En una fuerte crítica en contra de las políticas educativas que se enfocan sólo hacia la rentabilidad y dejan de lado los programas filosóficos y artísticos, MARTHA NUSSBAUM (2015), subraya la necesidad de contar con tres valores cruciales para una ciudadanía democrática decente: 1) la capacidad «socrática» de autocrítica y pensamiento crítico acerca de las tradiciones propias de cada uno, en la que los ciudadanos puedan pensar por sí mismos, que puedan razonar juntos sobre sus opciones en lugar de simplemente negociar sus argumentos y contra-argumentos; 2) la capacidad de que los ciudadanos se vean a sí mismos como miembros de una nación y un mundo heterogéneos, entender algo de la historia y el carácter de los diversos grupos que lo habitan, a fin de desterrar los estereotipos culturales y religiosos; y 3) la capacidad de pensar en lo que podría ser estar en los zapatos de una persona diferente de uno mismo, ser un lector inteligente de la historia de esa persona y comprender las emociones, los deseos y los anhelos que ese alguien podría tener. Es decir, contar con una especie de «imaginación narrativa».

medios de comunicación o el nepotismo entre los funcionarios públicos. La escuela como un espacio democrático en donde se aprende a ser ciudadanos, requiere que la formación de los niños y jóvenes contemple la promoción de los derechos y responsabilidades cívicas, a la par de un pensamiento crítico e independiente de los estudiantes (BID, 2011).

Además de las indagatorias antes mencionadas, también se han llevado a cabo una amplia variedad de estudios e investigaciones sobre distintos ámbitos educativos del país. Por ejemplo, en su indagatoria sobre la ciudadanía pluricultural, GÓMEZ (2015) plantea la complejidad de saber si deben prevalecer los derechos colectivos de los pueblos indígenas sobre el concepto universal de ciudadanía y, de ser así, en qué situaciones o bajo qué circunstancias. Para ello, examina un conjunto de tensiones sociales: desigualdad y discriminación; pueblos y ciudadanía; indígenas urbanos y colectivos urbanos no indígenas, las que derivan en lo que denomina «ciudadanías precarias». Estas ciudadanías plantean un enorme desafío para lograr una ciudadanía ampliada, en la que puedan ser compatibles el respeto a la diversidad cultural y los derechos ciudadanos.

Mediante la realización de una serie de observaciones en salones de clase en planteles de nivel secundaria, tanto en las materias de formación cívica y ética, como en otras asignaturas, GONZÁLEZ (2009) buscó conocer el modo en que se llevaba a cabo el proceso de formación desde la práctica de los profesores y la dinámica escolar. Uno de sus principales hallazgos fue que a los profesores les resultaba muy complicado concretar acciones que contribuyeran de modo más efectivo a la formación ciudadana, más allá del trabajo con los contenidos declarativos propuestos en los programas escolares y los libros de texto. Para GONZÁLEZ (2009), el objetivo de formar ciudadanos activos plantea una serie de interrogantes que se relacionan con los contenidos, las prácticas y las mitologías, entre otras. Plantea dos grandes cuestiones, la primera gira en torno a los propósitos de la formación ciudadana, más allá de los programas escolares y la segunda es cómo llevar a cabo la formación de los adolescentes con la certeza que desarrollarán las competencias necesarias para vivir como ciudadanos participativos en la sociedad.

Otro estudio, conducido por DÍAZ COUDER (2015), explora la relación entre la diversidad lingüística y la ciudadanía, proponiendo la coexistencia de ciudadanías paralelas en México, provenientes de dos tradiciones culturales diferentes: la europea y la mesoamericana, las cuales no ha sido posible—hasta hoy—integrar en nuestra idea de nación y, en consecuencia, tampoco en las políticas lingüísticas y educativas. Por un lado, la concepción europea ha sido asociada a la «pertenencia a una nación cultural, que conduce a una noción excluyente y diferenciadora de las lenguas» (p. 12). Lo anterior ha generado un nacionalismo lingüístico poco propicio para la diversidad lingüística. Por el otro, la visión mesoamericana se basa en la comunidad campesina (*altépetl*), la cual ha organizado la vida política y social de los pueblos mesoamericanos desde su origen. En esa comunidad campesina existe un principio «que ordena la vida económica, política, religiosa y social de la población indígena rural» (p.12). De este modo, la identidad lingüística no constituye el factor principal de pertenencia a la comunidad, sino los vínculos de parentesco y el respeto a las normas de ésta. Para DÍAZ COUDER, las implicaciones de la coexistencia de estas dos tradiciones culturales y sus correspondientes visiones de la ciudadanía, ayudan a una mejor comprensión de los procesos culturales que impiden el éxito de programas y políticas lingüísticas y educativas.

Por otra parte, VEGA Y GUTIÉRREZ (2015) examinan el modo en que la participación ciudadana étnica, mediante acciones conjuntas de niños, jóvenes y adultos

indígenas triqui<sup>4</sup>, trabajo infantil, defensa de terrenos invadidos y manifestaciones callejeras (orientadas hacia el bienestar familiar y de la comunidad en ambientes urbanos), suele ser rechazada por autoridades escolares, que «desde una concepción occidental de la niñez, consideran que contraviene su desarrollo natural y académico» (p.13). Para los autores, esa concepción occidental tiende a homogeneizar la diversidad cultural infantil y juvenil, además de reducir la participación ciudadana de los niños «a la mera expresión de sus opiniones en todos los asuntos que les competen, pero alejados del mundo problemático de los adultos» (p. 13).

Asimismo, VEGA Y GUTIÉRREZ (2015), presentan la forma en que la escuela sigue compartiendo una noción de ciudadanía en la que el reconocimiento de ésta no está condicionada por la pertenencia a la mayoría de edad o a cierta identidad nacional. Se trata, por el contrario, de una ciudadanía excluyente que no reconoce las prácticas ciudadanas de los escolares menores de 18 años de edad ni la diversidad de sus ciudadanía étnicas. Sin embargo, intenta a la vez transitar hacia una concepción de ciudadanía de carácter democrático e intercultural, que propone en el curriculum general contenidos y ejercicios de formación ciudadana y de la diversidad cultural que estimulen en los estudiantes el, pensar, valorar y formar una ciudadanía activa, responsable, crítica, implicada en la construcción de procesos sociales y asuntos políticos y culturales de una forma interactiva y comprometida con la familia, la comunidad, el Estado y la nación, «tendiendo hacia una convivencia armónica y pacífica, basada en la igualdad y equidad de todas las personas» (p.14) independientemente del género, grupo étnico o condición socioeconómica y cultural.

Como ha podido verse en algunos de los estudios e investigaciones que han explorado la diversidad cultural lingüística y contextual que caracteriza a distintos sectores de la población escolar mexicana, la ciudadanía adquiere formas y expresiones que no siempre se ajustan a los modelos clásicos de las sociedades occidentales. Ello ha hecho necesario el planteamiento de nuevas categorías analíticas como sería el caso de la «ciudadanía precaria» que tiende a presentarse en los grupos más vulnerables de la sociedad (GÓMEZ, 2015) o el de las «ciudadanías paralelas» planteado por DÍAZ COUDER (2015) para el caso de la diversidad lingüística entre ciertas poblaciones indígenas.

## 4. Acciones para fortalecer la educación cívica y la ciudadanía en México

Entre las formas más comunes de reforzar la educación cívica y la ciudadanía están las que realiza la escuela, las cuales se concretizan en los planes y programas de estudio. En México los instrumentos que durante más de medio siglo ha proporcionado los contenidos de éstas y del resto de las asignaturas, han sido principalmente los libros de texto gratuitos (LTG). Otra modalidad han sido las acciones emprendidas por los organismos encargados de organizar los procesos electorales, sobre todo el Instituto Nacional Electoral (INE).

En el primer caso, la creación de la Comisión Nacional de los Libros de Texto Gratuitos (CONALITEG) en 1959, permitió que a partir de 1960 todos los alumnos de las escuelas primarias del país contaran año con año con los libros necesarios para el desarrollo de

4 Los triquis son un grupo indígena que habita en el noroeste del estado de Oaxaca, en la llamada región mixteca.

las asignaturas que constituían el currículum escolar. El libro «La asignatura ciudadana en las cuatro grandes reformas del LTG en México (1959-2010)» publicado por SARAH CORONA BERKIN en 2015, es un análisis de los contenidos y enfoques para la educación ciudadana durante las cinco décadas de existencia de los LTG. Desde una mirada pedagógica la autora centra su estudio en dos aspectos principales: el concepto de ciudadanía que se busca transmitir a los niños mexicanos, y las estrategias comunicativas orientadas a que los estudiantes desarrollen las habilidades necesarias para su desempeño como ciudadanos.

Es importante destacar el concepto de ciudadanía que la autora asume en el texto, al relacionarlo con las estrategias de formación y las exigencias que los libros de texto formulan a los estudiantes que acuden al espacio público, representado por las escuelas oficiales. Los temas recurrentes que la autora ha observado en los LTG han sido: 1) el mestizaje, el indígena y la diversidad; 2) el nacionalismo; y 3) el laicismo. El primer periodo del estudio llamado «Los libros de la Patria», abarca desde la creación de la CONALITEG a fines de los años 50 hasta la década de los 70, cuando termina el llamado «milagro mexicano» (1940-1970). La etapa siguiente de la pesquisa abarca el periodo 1971 y 1978, cuando se elabora una nueva versión de los LTG para la primaria y la secundaria. El tercer periodo bajo estudio va de 1992 al 2000, época de una fuerte modernización y cambios en la estructura del Estado mexicano, al que acompañan grandes ajustes a la economía nacional. La cuarta etapa del análisis que comprende la primera década del siglo XXI, tiene como principal característica el ser la época en que México tuvo un cambio de partido en el gobierno después de más de 70 años de dominio del Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI)<sup>5</sup>.

La autora subraya que a lo largo de las cinco décadas de existencia de los LTG, éstos han sido un factor importante tanto para aumentar el nivel educativo del país (8.3 años en promedio) como para fortalecer la cultura cívica de la población que ha pasado por la escuela pública. Subraya que por su amplitud y duración los LTG representan un enorme esfuerzo nacionalista casi sin paralelo en el mundo. Sin embargo, su efecto social ha sido insatisfactorio en varios aspectos, dado que en México siguen prevaleciendo altos niveles de desempleo entre su población, particularmente en los jóvenes. Además, los índices de delincuencia y criminalidad son de los más altos a nivel mundial (15.6 por cada 100 mil habitantes, el doble del promedio mundial, que es de 6.9 por cada 100 mil habitantes). A ello habría que agregar el hecho que el sistema democrático mexicano aún tiene deficiencias: los niveles de participación política de la población siguen siendo bajos, en virtud de los resultados electorales y existe una gran irritación social hacia muchos de los gobernantes.

Con base en lo anterior, CORONA propone seis estrategias para fortalecer la educación ciudadana: 1) apropiación de la lengua (mejorar sustancialmente la lectura y la escritura en toda la población); 2) dignificación de la figura del maestro (debe ser respetada su labor educativa y la formación de ciudadanos); 3) tecnología para pensar (hacer un uso adecuado y crítico de las tecnologías en el ámbito educativo); 4) el mestizaje productivo (debe retomarse su aspecto más productivo, el que ha creado un México

<sup>5</sup> Como es sabido, del 2000 al 2012 el partido gobernante fue el PAN (Partido de Acción Nacional). En 2012 el PRI volvió a ganar las elecciones presidenciales y una de sus primeras acciones de gobierno fue iniciar una reforma educativa, basada en la evaluación de los docentes, más laboral y administrativa que académica y la cual ha provocado una enorme resistencia de parte del gremio magisterial con grandes movilizaciones políticas en varios estados del país.

con una invaluable diversidad cultural); 5) la transversalidad de la educación ciudadana (promover la educación ciudadana en todo el curriculum escolar y en la que discutir y llegar a acuerdos sobre cómo actuar en el espacio compartido); y 6) la imagen en la educación (la imagen que circula en el espacio público debe ser con la que los diversos ciudadanos deseen identificarse).

Como se mencionó al principio de este apartado, es común que los organismos encargados de la organización de los procesos electorales en países como México desarrollen de forma continua programas y proyectos dirigidos a fortalecer la educación cívica y la formación de ciudadanía. Es el caso del Instituto Federal Electoral (IFE) (actualmente denominado Instituto Nacional Electoral, INE), que en el periodo 2011-2015 puso en marcha la Estrategia Nacional de Educación Cívica para el Desarrollo de la Cultura Política Democrática en México 2011-2015 (ENEC 2011-2015). Uno de los propósitos de esta iniciativa es la promoción y la concertación de esfuerzos con otros actores sociales para la generación y socialización de información relevante en materia de cultura política y construcción de ciudadanía.

Los objetivos estratégicos de la ENEC 2011-2015 pretenden: 1) contribuir al diseño e implementación de prácticas y políticas públicas para favorecer la construcción de ciudadanía en México; 2) generar y socializar información relevante acerca de las prácticas y condiciones determinantes de la construcción de una ciudadanía que contribuya a la deliberación y acción pública; y 3) desarrollar e implementar procesos y medios educativos eficaces que promuevan el aprecio por lo público y contribuyan a generar la capacidad de agencia<sup>6</sup> de las y los ciudadanos. Los proyectos a desarrollar en la ENEC 2011-2015 buscan fomentar prácticas y políticas en materia de equidad y desarrollo, seguridad y justicia, participación política, democrática y equitativa, así como de espacios de deliberación y encuentro para el fortalecimiento del régimen de partidos políticos. Cabe señalar que se dotó a la estrategia de apoyo financiero dentro de la racionalidad presupuestaria de las entidades del gobierno federal (IFE, 2011).

Cabe señalar, como se ha expresado varias veces en este artículo, que si bien los programas que pretenden fortalecer la educación cívica y promueven la construcción de una ciudadanía democrática alientan la participación social y la convivencia pacífica entre los diversos grupos sociales, sus resultados siguen siendo muy limitados.

## **5. El panorama internacional de la educación para la ciudadanía global y sus implicaciones para México**

En esta parte final del artículo se describen algunas perspectivas y planteamientos que apuntan a la construcción de una educación para la ciudadanía global, provenientes tanto de estudiosos del tema como de organismos internacionales. En el primer caso, JOHN MYERS (2016) argumenta que la educación para la ciudadanía global (ECG) constituye una meta importante para la democracia en las escuelas del siglo XXI. Pese a que ha habido un cambio importante en las políticas y las prácticas educativas en la dirección de una educación que responda a las condiciones actuales de la globalización,

<sup>6</sup> En esta acepción, el término «agencia» (*agency*) significa el poder o la fuerza que produce un resultado, lo que hace que los acontecimientos sucedan. La agencia está íntimamente vinculada al agente motor de un cambio (COCHRAN, 1996).



aún no se cuenta con una visión clara de la posición de la ECG en las escuelas. Las reformas curriculares realizadas en ese sentido enfrentan la situación de adaptarse a los principios generales de la privatización, las pruebas estandarizadas y la rendición de cuentas basada en criterios preestablecidos, o resistir y desafiar estas políticas con visiones alternativas y democráticas de la escuela. Lo que proponen varios autores en la misma línea de MYERS (WANG and HOFFMAN, 2016 y ALVIAR-MARTIN and BUILDON, 2016) para hacer que la ECG alcance su madurez, es que se necesita una agenda de investigación programática que se plantee las complejas dinámicas que la globalización ha introducido a la escuela.

En un interesante estudio, COX, JARAMILLO y REIMERS (2005) plantearon una agenda de cambio a la educación para la ciudadanía y la democracia en el continente americano. Para ellos, los retos de la democracia consisten en alcanzar soluciones no violentas a los conflictos y garantizar que la mayoría de la población apoye formas democráticas de gobierno. La debilidad de las instituciones educativas en formar ciudadanos con criterio, capaces de comprender las necesidades de los demás y dispuestos a trabajar por el bienestar social limita la existencia de una cultura democrática como forma de vida. Pasar de una visión tradicional de la educación cívica a una ampliada requiere promover el desarrollo de competencias para participar cívica y políticamente. Hacerlo implica educar a todos con altos niveles de calidad e incluir contenidos explícitos en los programas de educación cívica.

El concepto de educación ciudadana democrática planteado en la agenda se funda en valores altamente específicos e históricamente determinados, constituyendo uno de sus pilares la Declaración Universal de los Derechos Humanos. El principio universalmente aceptado para una pedagogía de la educación ciudadana es que no es posible concebir a los alumnos como futuros ciudadanos activos si su experiencia de aprendizaje de la ciudadanía ha sido predominantemente pasiva. En este sentido, una educación ciudadana le representa a la escuela el desafío de lograr un acuerdo amplio y profundo en la sociedad, sobre qué es lo que ésta concibe como «buen ciudadano» y cómo debería ser formado.

Derivado de lo anterior, debe surgir una definición clara sobre qué trata la educación ciudadana, en qué consiste y qué aspira lograr. En ocasiones ocupa una posición menor frente a otros temas del currículum. Una vez acordadas las definiciones con las que se pretende abordar el tema de ciudadanía, se vuelve necesario una adecuada estrategia de capacitación y apoyo a los docentes para ejecuten el programa planteado. La redefinición de la educación ciudadana requiere de recursos financieros acompañados de una gestión eficiente y eficaz. Importa destacar algo frecuentemente ignorado: son largos los tiempos para que los cambios del currículum a nivel nacional lleguen a impactar significativamente la enseñanza en el salón de clases; los plazos son más prolongados que un periodo presidencial. Lo anterior obliga a llegar a acuerdos que permitan considerar plazos largos y diseñar una gestión del cambio a la altura de las transformaciones que se visualizan como necesarias.

En septiembre de 2012, el secretario general de la ONU Ban Ki-moon lanzó la iniciativa «La educación ante todo» (*Education First Initiative*), la cual tendrá una duración de cinco años y está orientada a garantizar una educación de calidad pertinente, transformadora para todos. La iniciativa comprende una campaña mundial de promoción al más alto nivel cuya meta es que todos los países recobren el rumbo que les permita cumplir sus compromisos en materia de educación. De acuerdo con el secretario general

de la ONU, «cuando damos prioridad a la educación podemos reducir el hambre y la pobreza, poner fin al desperdicio de capacidades y aspirar a conseguir sociedades más sólidas y mejores para todos» (UNESCO, 2012).

Las cuatro prioridades de la iniciativa son:

- *Escolarizar a todos los niños* (en ese año, 58 millones de niños en edad de asistir a la escuela primaria no lo podían hacer).
- *Mejorar la calidad del aprendizaje* (250 millones de niños no pueden leer, escribir o contar bien, aún aquellos que tienen al menos cuatro años de escolaridad).
- *Fomentar la conciencia de ser ciudadanos del mundo* (el planeta enfrenta retos globales que requieren soluciones mundiales. La educación debe fomentar un cuidado activo para el mundo y para aquellos que lo compartimos).
- *Disminuir la brecha financiera* (las inversiones en materia educativa son inadecuadas para mantener los logros conseguidos en la década pasada o para cumplir las ambiciosas metas de «La educación para todos») (UNESCO, 2012).

Con el propósito de concretizar la iniciativa del secretario general de la ONU y plantear una propuesta de Educación para la Ciudadanía Global (ECG), se reunió en 2013 en Corea del Sur un grupo de expertos internacionales y funcionarios de la UNESCO. En esa reunión acordaron elaborar un documento que respondiera a tres grandes cuestionamientos:

- «(1) ¿Por qué es el momento propicio para la ciudadanía mundial y la educación para la ciudadanía mundial?»<sup>7</sup>
- (2) ¿Qué es la educación para la ciudadanía mundial?
- (3) ¿Qué acciones se deben tomar a nivel internacional con el fin de apoyar y promover la educación para la ciudadanía mundial?».

Para responder al primer cuestionamiento, se han tomado en cuenta los cambios en el discurso educativo, la creciente interdependencia e interconexión entre las personas y lugares, y los desafíos que el mundo enfrenta en la actualidad (tensiones y conflictos entre poblaciones, desarrollo sustentable y cambio climático, entre otros). En lo que corresponde a las definiciones sobre ciudadanía global, se advierte que no hay una conceptualización que sea totalmente aceptable por todos. A este respecto se han postulado diversos términos, tales como «ciudadanía más allá de las fronteras», «ciudadanía más allá del Estado-nación», «cosmopolitismo» y «ciudadanía planetaria». De cualquier forma, en el documento se subraya que:

«En ninguno de estos casos se considera a la ciudadanía mundial como un estado jurídico, sino como un sentido de pertenencia a la comunidad global y a una humanidad compartida, con integrantes que son solidarios y sienten una identidad colectiva, así como una responsabilidad común a nivel internacional. La ciudadanía mundial puede considerarse como una metáfora ética en lugar de cómo una condición formal.» (UNESCO, 2013:3).

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7 Conviene aclarar que en la versión en castellano del documento de la UNESCO que aquí examinamos (Documento final de la consulta técnica de educación para la ciudadanía mundial) (ECG UNESCO 224115s.pdf), se utiliza el término «ciudadanía mundial» y no el de «ciudadanía global». Aunque en esta parte del artículo empleamos la primera acepción, en el resto del texto utilizaremos el de «ciudadanía global», por ser de uso más generalizado.

Además, se espera que la ciudadanía global sea capaz de provocar las acciones y la participación de sus miembros mediante actividades cívicas de carácter público orientadas a que el mundo y el futuro sean cada vez mejores. La base de su funcionamiento, señala el documento, debe ser el respeto irrestricto de los valores universales como los derechos universales, la democracia, la justicia, la no discriminación, la diversidad y la sostenibilidad. Según este documento, el objetivo de la educación para la ciudadanía global será empoderar a los educandos y así tener la capacidad de participar y asumir las funciones—en los niveles local y global—que les permitan resolver los grandes desafíos mundiales. Se busca, de esa manera, que se involucren en la búsqueda de un planeta más justo, pacífico, tolerante, inclusivo, seguro y sostenible. Acerca de las acciones a tomar, el documento de la UNESCO plantea que entre las más urgentes está la de incluir en los *currícula* el objetivo de la educación para la ciudadanía global, lo que significa adaptar a contextos locales los conceptos que han sido aceptados a nivel internacional.

Se hace hincapié en que una educación transformadora como la que el documento postula, requiere una pedagogía también transformadora que haga posible: a) alentar a los educandos a examinar de manera crítica los problemas de la vida real y proponer posibles soluciones de manera creativa e innovadora; b) respaldar a los educandos en sus reflexiones acerca de suposiciones, visiones del mundo y relaciones de poder existentes en el discurso tradicional, y tomar en consideración a los grupos a personas y grupos que sistemáticamente han sido marginados o subrepresentados; c) respetar las diferencias y la diversidad; d) enfocarse en la participación para lograr las transformaciones deseadas; e) involucrar a múltiples actores, incluyendo a los que se hallan fuera del entorno de aprendizaje en la comunicad y en los sectores más apartados de la sociedad. Otra de las acciones recomendadas por los especialistas que elaboraron el documento es el fortalecimiento de los intercambios de conocimientos y experiencias a nivel regional y mundial.

Es indudable que tanto la iniciativa del secretario general de la ONU, como los planteamientos hechos por el grupo de expertos reunidos por la UNESCO plantean un enorme desafío para los sistemas educativos de los países afiliados a esas dos organizaciones en el horizonte que contempla el fortalecimiento de la ciudadanía a nivel planetario. Además de la plena vigencia de los derechos humanos y el cumplimiento de los deberes que implica el vivir en sociedades cada vez más complejas, diversas y en riesgo, los cambios curriculares necesarios para desarrollar las capacidades y habilidades que habrán de tener los educandos para convertirse en verdaderos ciudadanos globales no serán una tarea fácil. Será necesario organizar múltiples foros en los que desde los diversos países se expresen y discutan las estrategias que en sus condiciones específicas habrán de realizar para cumplir con las acciones y los compromisos contemplados en la iniciativa «La educación ante todo» y el planteamiento de la UNESCO de construir una educación para la ciudadanía global.

## **6. Consideraciones finales**

Uno de los supuestos que orientó la elaboración de este artículo fue que la educación en sus diferentes niveles juega un papel importante en la construcción de la ciudadanía y de la cultura política. Para ello se establecieron cuatro grandes apartados en los que se revisaron algunos de los elementos conceptuales que subyacen en el vínculo entre educación y ciudadanía. También se revisaron varias investigaciones y estudios realizadas en México en diversos contextos sociales y culturales, con el fin de mostrar las condiciones

en que se desarrolla la formación ciudadana. De la misma manera, se examinaron algunas de las acciones para fortalecer la educación cívica y la construcción de la ciudadanía, en las que se destacó el papel que han jugado los libros de texto gratuitos (LTG) en la historia reciente de la educación pública del país. Finalmente, se revisaron los planteamientos más recientes en el contexto mundial, que apuntan a la creación colectiva de una educación para la ciudadanía global (ECG).

De todo lo anterior puede concluirse que el campo de estudio de la educación cívica y la educación para la ciudadanía es todavía inacabado debido a que la ciudadanía y la democracia siguen buscando su plena vigencia en sociedades cada vez más complicadas por las difíciles condiciones sociales, económicas y culturales. Como se expresó varias veces en el texto, después de más de dos siglos de existencia, la Declaración de los Derechos del Hombre continúa siendo una aspiración mundial, debido a las constantes violaciones que los derechos humanos siguen sufriendo en muchos países, tanto en los que se consideran más avanzados como en los que pretenden llegar a serlo. El camino sigue siendo muy escarpado a pesar de ser cada vez mayor la conciencia que se tiene a nivel internacional de lograr el pleno respeto a los derechos ciudadanos y la consolidación de la democracia. El desafío incluye también el derecho a la educación, a la cual se le sigue considerando como el vehículo más adecuado para el mejoramiento de la vida de los individuos y las sociedades. En este contexto, el momento que vive la educación pública en México frente a la reforma educativa del gobierno actual, que ha sido fuertemente cuestionada por su carácter más laboral que académico, es de suyo difícil.

Es indispensable que el nuevo modelo educativo resultante de esa reforma y el cual deberá ser compartido por los maestros y los demás actores involucrados en la educación del país, tome en cuenta como un factor esencial, el tema de la educación ciudadana. Como se ha mencionado en este artículo, a pesar de que en México la sociedad y el gobierno se han esforzado por fortalecer la democracia y la participación de los ciudadanos en las elecciones y en diversos aspectos de la vida pública, así como en la construcción de una institución sólida a cargo de la organización de los comicios electorales, persiste la baja participación de la ciudadanía. A ello se agrega el estado de malestar e incertidumbre que provocan la inseguridad y la corrupción que vive el país desde hace varias décadas. Más aún, la educación ciudadana habrá de estimular el fortalecimiento de una perspectiva internacional que permita ir desarrollando lo que para la ONU y la UNESCO es la educación para la ciudadanía global.

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## *La Historia de la Educación tras Bolonia: ¿hacia la extinción?\**

*History of Education after Bologna  
process: towards extinction?*

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## **Resumen**

Este artículo compara la presencia de la historia de la educación en las extintas licenciaturas y en los nuevos grados de Pedagogía establecidos tras el proceso de Bolonia. Para ello analiza la situación de la historia de la educación en los planes de estudios de Pedagogía en las universidades públicas españolas desde diferentes variables como la carga obligatoria y optativa, la ubicación en los cursos y los criterios para la configuración de asignaturas optativas. La comparación arroja como resultado la drástica disminución de los contenidos de historia de la educación en los planes de estudio de Pedagogía, con una reducción a la mitad en el caso de la obligatoriedad y a un tercio en la optatividad. La historia de la educación ha quedado circunscrita a una asignatura de primer ciclo introductoria y secundaria que dos tercios de las universidades complementan con una segunda asignatura. Se completa así el proceso iniciado en los setenta de progresiva erosión de la tradicional posición central de la historia de la educación en la formación de los futuros profesionales de la Pedagogía. Un paso más supondría la práctica desaparición del campo disciplinar.

*Palabras clave:* Historia de la educación; Convergencia Europea; Proceso de Bolonia; Pedagogía; España

## **Abstract**

This article compares the weight of history of education in the old Spanish degrees of Pedagogy and in the new ones established after the Bologna Process. In order to do this, it analyzes the situation of history of education courses in the curriculum of Pedagogy in Spanish public universities from different variables such as the compulsory or elective character, the location in the years and the criteria for the configuration of elective courses. The comparison shows a drastic reduction of the contents related to History of Education in the curricula of Pedagogy, with a reduction in half in the case of compulsory courses and to one-third in elective one. History of Education has been limited to a first year course, configured as an introductory and secondary course, which two thirds of the universities complement with a second course. This completes the process begun in the seventies of progressive erosion of the traditional central position of history of education in the education of the future professionals of pedagogy. A further step would be the practical disappearance of the disciplinary field.

*Key Words:* History of Education; European Higher Education Area (EHEA); Bologna Process; Pedagogy; Spain

## 1. Introducción

La historia de la educación fue durante muchas décadas uno de los pilares de la formación de los profesionales de la educación, maestros en primer lugar y posteriormente también pedagogos (RICHARDSON, 2000:19; DEPAEPE, 2007:17). No resulta extraño, pues, que el campo se definiera en estrecha relación con la formación de docentes desde el siglo xix hasta el último tercio del siglo xx. Así, en España la historia de la educación figuraba entre las ocho cátedras sobre las que se constituía el primer título universitario de Pedagogía en 1932 (MAINER, 2009: 266). En 1944, bajo un régimen diametralmente opuesto, la historia de la educación mantenía una posición central como asignatura obligatoria en tres de los seis cuatrimestres de la especialización (BOE, 4/8/1944). Esta centralidad en la formación de maestros y pedagogos comenzó a verse cuestionada en los años setenta. En las últimas décadas, tanto en España como a escala internacional, la historia de la educación ha ido perdiendo su antigua condición de saber fundamental en la formación de estos colectivos para perfilarse progresivamente como una materia introductoria y secundaria (MCCULLOCH, 2011).

Esta progresiva pérdida de centralidad de la historia de la educación ha dado lugar a una notable reflexión tanto a escala nacional (GUEREÑA, RUIZ BERRIO, TIANA, 2010; SANCHIDRIÁN, 2013 y 2016; VIÑAO, 2008 y 2016) como internacional (FUCHS, 2010; CASPARD and ROGERS, 2012; OSTERWALDER, 2012; FITZGERALD, 2013; LE CAM, 2013). Se ha constituido además un grupo de trabajo en el seno de la International Standing Conference of History of Education (ISCHE) denominado *Mapping the Discipline History of Education*, bajo la dirección de Eckhardt Fuchs, Rita Hofstetter, Emmanuelle Picard y Solenn Huitric. A través de los simposios internacionales celebrados desde 2014 en Londres, Estambul y Chicago, este grupo viene recopilando información con el fin de realizar una cartografía internacional de la situación institucional de la historia de la educación. (HOFSTETTER, FONTAINE, HUITRIC and PICARD, 2014; ISCHE).

Desarrollando esta línea internacional de trabajo, el presente artículo pretende dar cuenta de este proceso de marginalización de la historia de la educación en España a través de un estudio comparativo de la situación de la disciplina antes y después de la última reforma de los planes de estudios realizada en el marco del proceso de Bolonia, que sustituyó las tradicionales licenciaturas por los nuevos grados. Para ello se han tomado en consideración los planes de estudios de las 18 universidades públicas españolas que ofrecían la licenciatura de Pedagogía con anterioridad a la reforma (dos de ellas sólo como titulación de segundo ciclo), que son las mismas que en la actualidad ofrecen los grados. La comparación, pues, se basa en la totalidad de los títulos ofrecidos por universidades públicas y no incluye las privadas. Para los planes de estudio se ha tomado como base el Boletín Oficial del Estado y se ha recurrido puntualmente a las guías docentes de las asignaturas en los casos en que los contenidos no quedan claros en el título o se presentan combinados. La presencia de la historia de la educación en estos títulos se analiza en función de cuatro variables básicas: el número de créditos, la obligatoriedad – optatividad, la ubicación en los cursos y los criterios para la creación de asignaturas optativas.

## 2. Las extintas licenciaturas

En las extintas licenciaturas de Pedagogía, la carga media de las asignaturas de historia de la educación superaba los 15 créditos obligatorios (troncales y obligatorios de universidad), cifra que venía a suponer un 5 % de la carga total del título. Por encima de esta carga se situaban siete universidades, entre las que destacaban Valencia con 21 y La Laguna con 19,5 (7 % y 6 % del título respectivamente); por debajo de la media se ubicaban sólo tres universidades, de las cuales dos, Santiago de Compostela y la Autónoma de Barcelona, se alejaban notablemente de la pauta común al ofrecer una carga muy inferior a la media, 9 y 8 créditos respectivamente.

**Tabla 1.** Créditos de historia de la educación en las licenciaturas de Pedagogía extinguidas.  
Fuente. Elaboración propia a partir de información oficial.

Universidad <sup>§</sup>	Oblig.	Totales: Obl. + Opt.
UV	21	55,5
ULL	19,5	33
UB	18	48
UOV	18	27
UCM	18	24
US	17	26
UMA	16,5	34,5
UGR	15	33
UM	15	28,5
UPV	15	27
UIB	15	27
UNED	15	25
USAL	15	24
URV	13,5	31,5
USC	9	13,5
UAB	8	15
UdG*	6	15
UBU*	0	24
MEDIA <sup>&amp;</sup>	15,71	30,09
§ Véase listado de abreviaturas en el Anexo I		
* Titulación de segundo		
& Sólo titulaciones completas		

La toma en consideración de la optatividad incrementa notablemente tanto la carga total como la variabilidad de casos. En general, la carga media incluyendo las asignaturas optativas se situaba en 30 créditos, con el grueso de las universidades situadas entre 24 y 33. Fuera de este rango descollaban Valencia con 55,5 créditos y Barcelona, que con 48 disparaba su carga con respecto a la obligatoriedad. En el otro extremo, las universidades de Santiago de Compostela y Autónoma de Barcelona repetían como las titulaciones con menor presencia de la historia de la educación, igual o incluso menor que en las universidades que sólo ofrecían la titulación en segundo ciclo.

**Tabla 2.** *Universidades con sólo una asignatura obligatoria. Fuente. Elaboración propia a partir de información oficial.*

Univ.	Asignatura	Tipo	Curso	Créd.	Total
<b>UAB</b> <b>1993</b>	Historia de la Educación	TR	I	8	8
	Historia de la Educación Social	OPT	2 ciclo	4	
	Historia de la Educación en Cataluña	OPT	2 ciclo	3	15
<b>USC</b> <b>2001</b>	Historia de la Educación	TR	I ciclo	9	9
	Educación y Sociedad en Galicia	OPT	I ciclo	4,5	13,5

Si se atiende al número de asignaturas en que se concretaba la obligatoriedad, las universidades que menos créditos incluían, Autónoma de Barcelona y Santiago de Compostela, constituyen un grupo diferenciado con una única asignatura. La opción en ambas era cumplir únicamente con la troncalidad establecida por el ministerio, de manera estricta en el caso de la Autónoma de Barcelona. Sin embargo, esta no fue la fórmula más común como muestran las siguientes tablas.

**Tabla 3.** *Universidades con cuatro asignaturas o más de historia de la educación. Fuente. Elaboración propia a partir de información oficial.*

Univ.	Asignatura	Tipo	Curso	Créd.	Total
<b>URV</b> <b>1993</b>	Historia de la Educación	TR	I	9	13,5
	Teoría e Instituciones Contemporáneas de la Educación	OBL	I	4,5	
<b>2007</b>	Teoría e Historia de la Educación de Género	OPT		4,5	31,5
	Historia de la Pedagogía Catalana	OPT		4,5	
	Teoría e Historia de la Educación Juvenil	OPT		4,5	
	Teoría e Historia de las Instituciones Educativas Europeas	OPT		4,5	
<b>USAL</b> <b>2000</b>	Historia de la Educación	TR	I	9	15
	Historia de la Educación Española	TR	3	6	
	Historia de la Educación en América	OPT	4	4,5	24
	Historia de la Educación en Castilla-León	OPT	4	4,5	
<b>UNED</b> <b>1999</b>	Historia de la Educación	TR	I	10	15
	Historia de la Educación Española	OBL	2	5	
	Historia del Currículum	OPT		5	25
	Historia de la Infancia	OPT		5	
<b>UIB</b> <b>1997</b>	Historia de la Educación	TR	I	9	15
	Historia de la Educación Catalana Contemporánea	OBL	3	6	
	Historia de la Educación Social	OPT		6	27
	Historia de la Escolarización y la Instrucción	OPT		6	

Tabla 3. (Continuación)

Univ.	Asignatura	Tipo	Curso	Créd.	Total
<b>UPV</b> <b>1999</b>	Historia de la Educación	TR	2	9	15
	Historia de la Educación en el País Vasco	OBL	4	6	
	Curso Monográfico de Historia de la Educación	OPT	2 ciclo	6	27
	Historia de la Escuela	OPT	2 ciclo	6	
<b>UM</b> <b>2001</b>	Historia de la Educación	TR	1	8	15
	Historia de la Educación Española	OBL	2	7	
	Historia Social de la Educación	OPT	1 ciclo	4,5	28,5
	Historia del Currículum	OPT	2 ciclo	4,5	
	Historia de la Educación de la Mujer	OPT	2 ciclo	4,5	
<b>UGR</b> <b>2001</b>	Historia de la Educación	TR	1	9	15
	Historia del Currículum	OBL	2	6	
	Historia de la Educación de las Mujeres	OPT		6	33
	Historia de la Educación de la Infancia y su Escolarización	OPT		6	
	Investigación Histórica en Educación	OPT		6	
<b>UMA</b> <b>1999</b>	Historia de la Educación	TR	2	9	16,5
	Historia de la Educación en España	OBL	3	7,5	
	Historia del Currículum	OPT		4,5	34,5
	Historia de la Educación en Andalucía	OPT		4,5	
	Infancia y Educación Infantil en la Historia	OPT		4,5	
	Historia de la Profesión Docente	OPT		4,5	
<b>US</b> <b>1998</b>	Historia de la Educación	TR	1	9	17
	Historia de la Educación en España	OBL	2	8	
	Historia de la Educación en Andalucía	OPT	1	4,5	26
	Historia y Desarrollo Socioeducativo de las Mujeres	OPT	4	4,5	
<b>UCM</b> <b>2000</b>	Historia de la Educación	TR	2	9	18
	Historia de la Educación en España	OBL	3	9	
	Historia de la Educación en la Comunidad de Madrid	OPT	5	6	24
<b>UOV</b> <b>2000</b>	Historia de la Educación	TR	2	9	18
	Historia de la Educación en España	OBL	3	9	
	Historia del Currículum	OPT		4,5	27
	La Educación Social en la Época Moderna y Contemporánea	OPT		4,5	
<b>ULL</b> <b>2000</b>	Historia de la Educación	TR	1	9	19,5
	Historia de la Educación Moderna y Contemporánea	OBL	2	10,5	
	Historia de la Educación en Canarias	OPT	2 ciclo	6	33
	Pedagogía Contemporánea en España y América Latina	OPT	2 ciclo	7,5	

**Tabla 4.** Universidades con tres asignaturas de historia de la educación. **Fuente.** Elaboración propia a partir de información oficial.

Univ.	Asignatura	Tipo	Curso	Créd.	Total
<b>UB 2000</b>	Historia de la Educación hasta la Rev. Francesa	TR	I	6	18
	Historia de la Educación Contemporánea	TR	I	6	
	Historia de la Educación en la Cataluña Contemp.	OBL	2 ciclo	6	
	Historia de la Infancia	OPT	I ciclo	6	48
	Historias Sectoriales de la Educación	OPT	2 ciclo	24	
<b>UV 2000</b>	Historia de la Educación	TR	I	9	21
	Historia de la Escuela	OBL	3	6	
	Historia de la Educación en España	OBL	4	6	
	Historia de la Educación Especial	OPT	I ciclo	6	55,5
	Historia de la Educación Popular y de Adultos	OPT	I ciclo	6	
	Historia de los Sistemas Educativos Europeos	OPT	I ciclo	4,5	
	Historia de la Educación de las Mujeres	OPT	2 ciclo	4,5	
	Historia de la Educación Valenciana	OPT	2 ciclo	4,5	
	Historia de la Educación Social en España	OPT	2 ciclo	4,5	
	Historia Política de la Educación	OPT	2 ciclo	4,5	

**Tabla 5.** Universidades con titulación de segundo ciclo. **Fuente.** Elaboración propia a partir de información oficial.

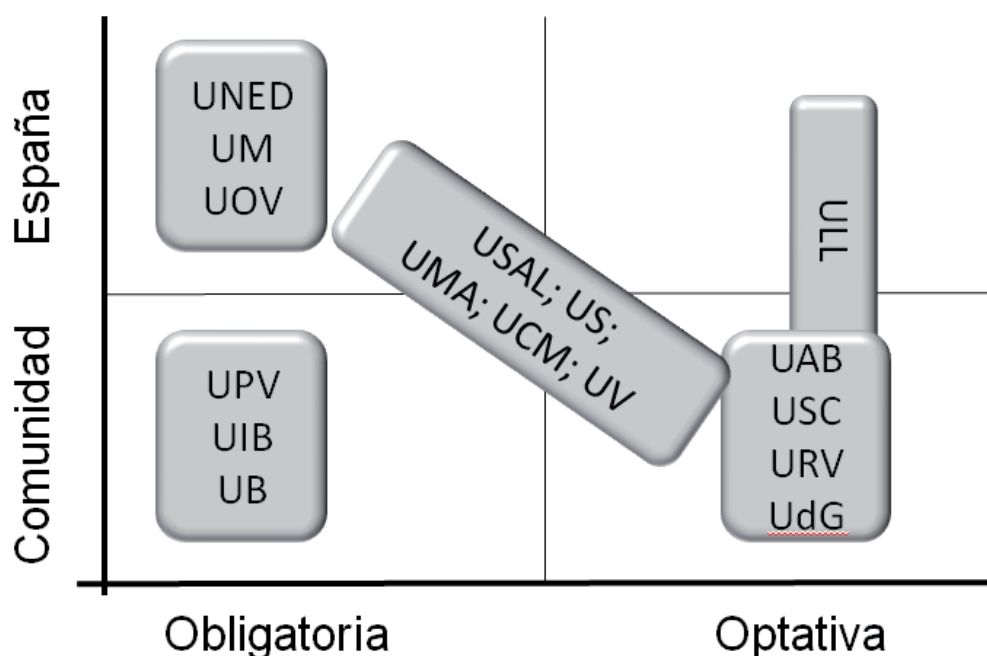
Univ.	Asignatura	Tipo	Curso	Créd.	Total
<b>UBU 1998</b>	Historia de la Educación en España	OPT	5	6	24
	Análisis Histórico de las Reformas Educativas	OPT	4	6	
	Historia de la Infancia y de la Escuela	OPT	5	6	
	Evolución Histórica de la Educación Especial en Europa	OPT	5	6	
<b>UdG 2000</b>	Historia de la Educación	OBL	3	6	6
	Evolución Histórica de los Movimientos Educativos y Sociales Contemporáneos	OPT	2 ciclo	4,5	15
	Historia de la Pedagogía en Cataluña	OPT	2 ciclo	4,5	

La inmensa mayoría de las universidades (12 sobre 16 con titulación completa) optó por completar la troncalidad establecida por el ministerio con una segunda asignatura obligatoria de universidad. El criterio mayoritario para esta división en dos asignaturas era el geográfico. Nueve universidades añadían a la genérica Historia de la Educación

una asignatura específica para un ámbito geográfico concreto, España en siete de ellas, el País Vasco en esta universidad y Cataluña en la Universitat de les Illes Balears. Sólo tres universidades de este grupo con dos asignaturas utilizaron un criterio alternativo al geográfico. La Universidad de la Laguna optó por un criterio cronológico introduciendo una Historia de la Educación Moderna y Contemporánea; Granada utilizó un criterio temático para crear una Historia del Currículum y en la Rovira i Virgili encontramos ya la combinación de los contenidos históricos con otros en una Teoría e Instituciones Educativas Contemporáneas, una combinación restringida al área de Teoría e Historia de la Educación.

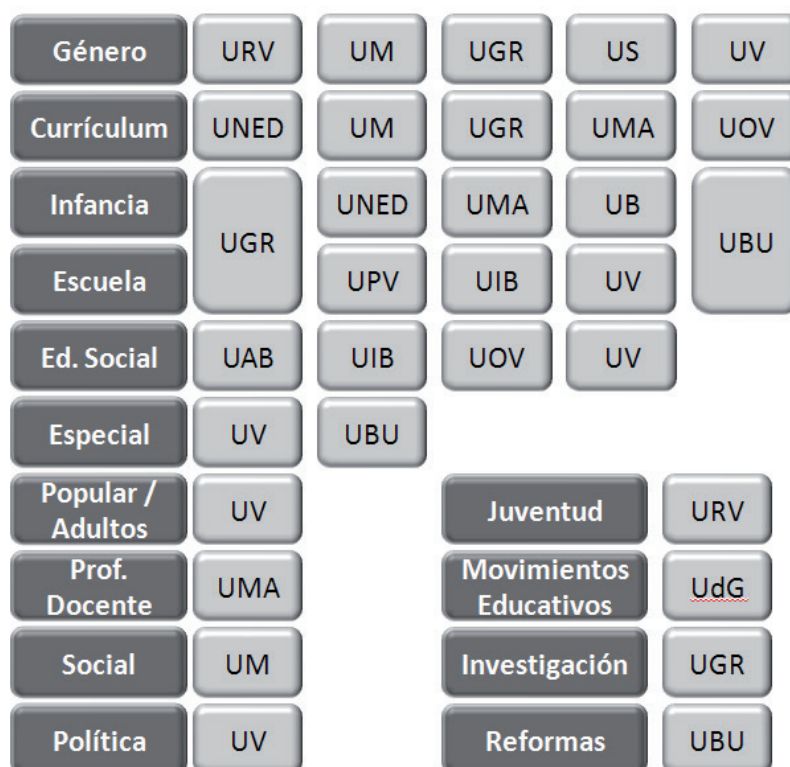
Finalmente, dos universidades planteaban tres asignaturas obligatorias de historia de la educación a partir de combinaciones específicas de los criterios señalados con anterioridad. La Universitat de Barcelona utilizaba el criterio cronológico utilizado también por la Universidad de La Laguna (en este caso restringido a la Edad Contemporánea) y lo completaba con el criterio geográfico para incluir una Historia de la Educación en la Cataluña Contemporánea. La Universitat de València, por su parte, combinaba este criterio geográfico con el criterio sectorial de la Universidad de Granada para ofertar una Historia de la Escuela, además de una Historia de la Educación en España.

La toma en consideración de la optatividad ampliaba notablemente el abanico de asignaturas. El criterio más común de delimitación de optativas era el geográfico aplicado a la propia comunidad autónoma. Aparecían, así, dos historias de Cataluña optativas, que se sumaban a las dos obligatorias, dos de Andalucía y una de Canarias, Castilla-León, Galicia, Madrid y Valencia. Se creaba así una significativa combinación de territorialidad y obligatoriedad/optatividad de la que da cuenta el diagrama 1.



**Diagrama 1.** Asignaturas con concreción geográfica por ámbito de referencia y carácter obligatorio u optativo. **Fuente.** Elaboración propia a partir de información oficial.

Tres universidades (UNED, Murcia y Oviedo) ofertaban como única concreción territorial una historia de la educación en España de carácter obligatorio. En el otro extremo, las universidades de las comunidades con movimientos nacionalistas propios (o en su ámbito de influencia cultural como Baleares) incluían únicamente la historia de la educación en la comunidad respectiva, ya fuera en la modalidad obligatoria como en el País Vasco, Barcelona e Illes Balears o como optativa en la Rovira i Virgili, Autònoma de Barcelona y Santiago de Compostela. Sólo seis universidades parecían considerar que las concreciones española y autonómica no eran excluyentes y combinaban en su oferta una historia de España obligatoria y una historia de la comunidad optativa (Complutense de Madrid, Málaga, Murcia, Sevilla, Salamanca y Valencia). La Laguna presentaba un modelo particular que fundía España con Latinoamérica en la misma asignatura optativa, en paralelo con Canarias. Salamanca, por su parte, desarrollaba esta dimensión iberoamericana con una Historia de la Educación monográficamente dedicada a América. Así, pues, los contenidos americanistas sólo se contemplaban en los rótulos de las asignaturas de La Laguna y Salamanca. Finalmente, la Rovira i Virgili y Valencia eran la únicas en incluir una asignatura con Europa como marco.



**Diagrama 2.** Asignaturas sin concreción geográfica. **Fuente.** Elaboración propia a partir de información oficial.

Este acuerdo general en el criterio geográfico no se reproducía en los criterios utilizados para delimitar el resto de las asignaturas optativas, que eran muy variados y claramente condicionados por los créditos ofrecidos por cada universidad. Como muestra el diagrama 2, los más comunes entre ellos eran la perspectiva de género y la Historia



del Currículum, optativas ofertadas en cinco universidades. Granada, Murcia, Rovira i Virgili, Sevilla y Valencia ofertaban bajo diferentes rótulos contenidos de Historia de la Educación de las Mujeres y Granada, Málaga, Murcia, Oviedo y la UNED una Historia del Currículum. A continuación se situaban las Historias de la Infancia (Barcelona, Málaga y UNED) y de la Escuela o la Escolarización (Illes Balears, País Vasco y Valencia), opciones que Granada y Burgos combinaban en una única asignatura. Un poco por debajo en popularidad se situaba la Historia de la Educación Social (Autònoma de Barcelona, Illes Balears, Oviedo y Valencia). Fuera de este repertorio quedaban la Historia de la Educación Especial, ofertada únicamente por dos universidades (Valencia y Burgos) y un conjunto de optativas únicas en cada universidad. Entre ellas se encontraban las historias relacionadas con grupos de edad como la juventud (Rovira i Virgili) y adultos, unidos a la educación popular (Valencia), con colectivos profesionales como la profesión docente (Málaga), los movimientos educativos (Girona) o las reformas (Burgos). Finalmente, Murcia y Valencia optaban por subrayar una perspectiva histórica concreta con una historia social de la educación en el primer caso y una historia política en el segundo. Granada, por su parte, se singularizaba con una asignatura teórico-metodológica sobre investigación histórica en educación.

#### *Recapitulación:*

Dos universidades españolas, el 12,5 %, se ajustaban al mínimo legal de ocho créditos de Historia de la Educación establecido por el ministerio para los planes de estudios de Pedagogía (Santiago de Compostela [9] y Autònoma de Barcelona).

Seis universidades, el 37,5 %, ofrecían 15 créditos troncales y obligatorios (Illes Balears, Granada, Murcia, País Vasco, Salamanca y UNED).

El grueso de las universidades (12 - 75 %) situaba su oferta troncal y obligatoria entre los 13,5 créditos y los 18, con la Rovira i Virgili en la posición inferior y Barcelona, Complutense de Madrid y Sevilla en la superior.

Sólo dos universidades, el 12,5 %, ofrecían más de 18 créditos: La Laguna con 19,5 y Valencia con 21.

Doce universidades (el 75 %) contemplaba una segunda asignatura obligatoria, mayoritariamente una historia de la educación en España, y dos ellas, Barcelona y Valencia, introducían tres.

La oferta de contenidos de Historia de la Educación se incrementaba notablemente gracias a la optatividad hasta una media de 30 créditos. 12 universidades (75 %) situaban su oferta global entre los 24 créditos y los 34,5. Por debajo, destacaban de nuevo la Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona y Santiago de Compostela con apenas 15 y 13,5 créditos respectivamente. Por encima, descollaban Barcelona con 48 y Valencia con 55,5.

La introducción de Historias de la Educación de la comunidad autónoma respectiva era el criterio más común para la creación de asignaturas optativas. Entre obligatorias y optativas, sólo seis universidades (37,5 %) ofertaban a la vez Historias de España y la comunidad autónoma, mientras que tres (18,75 %) ofertaban sólo una Historia de España y seis (37 %) sólo la historia de la comunidad.

Tras las historias acotadas geográficamente, las optativas más comunes eran:

- Historia de la Educación de las Mujeres (Granada, Murcia, Rovira i Virgili, Sevilla y Valencia)
- Historia del Currículo (Granada, Málaga, Murcia, Oviedo y UNED)
- Historia de la Educación Social (Autònoma de Barcelona, Illes Balears Oviedo, Valencia)
- Historia de la Infancias (Barcelona, Málaga y UNED)
- Historia de la Escuelas o de la Escolarización (Illes Balears, País Vasco y Valencia)

La Universitat de València se situaba en la cabeza de las universidades españolas tanto por número de créditos de Historia de la Educación ofrecidos (55,5) como por asignaturas: tres troncales/obligatorias y siete optativas.

### 3. Los nuevos grados<sup>1</sup>

**Tabla 6.** *Créditos de Historia de la Educación en los grados de Pedagogía. Fuente. Elaboración propia a partir de información oficial.*

Universidad§	Obl.	Totales
UV	12	21
UCM	12	18
UGR	12	18
US	12	18
ULL	12	12
UMA	12	12
UM	12	12
UOV	12	12
UNED	12	12
UB	6	12
UPV	6	12
USAL	6	12
UdG	6	9
UIB	6	6
USC	6	6
UAB	4	4
UBU	3	2
URV	¿	?
MEDIA	8,38	11
§Véase listado de abreviaturas en el Anexo I		

<sup>1</sup> Para el proceso de elaboración de los nuevos grados de Pedagogía y su contextualización, véase GRANA, 2012. Para su análisis véase, además del anterior, ÁLVAREZ, 2012.

La carga lectiva media obligatoria dedicada a la Historia de la Educación en los nuevos grados de Pedagogía de las universidades públicas españolas ronda los ocho créditos. No obstante, como muestra la tabla 6, este dígito no es más que un efecto aritmético, pues ninguna universidad se acerca a esa carga. La mitad de las universidades se sitúa notablemente por encima con una oferta de 12 créditos obligatorios (5 % de la carga del título), mientras que la otra mitad ofrece seis créditos o incluso menos (2,5 %). Esta carga se traduce en dos asignaturas obligatorias de seis créditos en el primer bloque y en una, o menos, en el segundo.

La inclusión de la optatividad amplía la variabilidad, aunque no tanto como en las licenciaturas. La media de oferta total se sitúa en los 11 créditos, por encima de la cual se sitúan dos tercios de las universidades: ocho con 12 créditos, tres con 18 (Complutense de Madrid, Granada y Sevilla) y con 21 la Universitat de València, que es la universidad española que más peso confiere a la historia de la educación en su grado.

Por debajo de la media, se encuentran cinco universidades. Dos de ellas, (Illes Balears y Santiago de Compostela) otorgan prácticamente la mitad de la media a la Historia de la Educación con apenas seis créditos y la de Girona un poco más con nueve. En las posiciones finales, tres universidades se sitúan incluso por debajo de los seis créditos que suponen una asignatura e integran la Historia de la Educación en asignaturas más amplias. Así, Burgos y la Autónoma de Barcelona optan por la integración en la asignatura de Teoría e Historia de la Educación (UNIVERSIDAD DE BURGOS, 2016 y UNIVERSITAT AUTÒNOMA DE BARCELONA, 2016).<sup>2</sup> La Universitat Rovira i Virgili constituiría el caso extremo de práctica desaparición de la Historia de la Educación, pues si bien parece integrarla en la asignatura de Procesos y Contextos Educativos, lo cierto es que en su guía docente no hay ningún descriptor histórico entre sus contenidos y la competencia relativa al conocimiento histórico aparece únicamente vinculada a los exámenes, y no a ninguna otra actividad formativa como clases o trabajos. Sí que incluye por el contrario dos resultados de aprendizaje relacionados con la historia, cuya consecución plantea la inquietante incógnita de si los aprendizajes relativos a la historia de la educación pueden adquirirse por *ciencia infusa* al margen de cualquier actividad formativa (UNIVERSIDAD ROVIRA Y VIRGILI, 2016).

**Tabla 7.** Universidades con sólo una asignatura o parte de ella. **Fuente.** Elaboración propia a partir de información oficial.

Univ.	Nombre	Tipo	Curso	Créd.
UIB	Historia de la Educación	BAS	1	6
USC	Historia de la Educación	OBL	2	6
UAB	Teorías e Historia de la Educación	OBL	1	4
UBU	Teoría e Historia de la Educación	BAS	1	2
URV	Procesos y Contextos Educativos	BAS	1	?

Como muestra la Tabla 7, las cinco universidades que menos créditos otorgan a la Historia de la Educación lo hacen con la totalidad o parte de una sola asignatura en su

<sup>2</sup> La carga que figura en la tabla se ha establecido a partir de la proporción de los contenidos correspondientes a historia en los totales de la asignatura. UNIVERSIDAD DE BURGOS (2016): Guía docente 2016-17. Teoría e Historia de la Educación. Teoría e Historia de la educación (GPED) 2016-17 (<http://www.ubu.es/grado-en-pedagogia/informacion-basica/guias-docentes>), consultado el 1 de abril de 2017

plan de estudios. Todas ellas sitúan esta asignatura en el primer curso de carrera, excepto la Universidad de Santiago de Compostela que la coloca en el segundo. El escaso número de créditos más esta ubicación en el primer curso del plan de estudios (o segundo en Santiago) deja claro que estas universidades han optado por conferir a la Historia de la Educación un carácter introductorio en la formación de los/as futuros/as pedagogo/as. La inclusión en los nuevos planes de otras materias de formación básica externas al núcleo de contenidos tradicionalmente incluidos en los planes de Pedagogía, como la economía o el derecho, amplifica este carácter introductorio. No cabe esperar que con esta ubicación y carga lectiva los/as pedagogos/as formados en estos planes consideren a la Historia de la Educación como un elemento sustancial de su formación, sino simplemente como un complemento formativo introductorio ajeno a sus competencias fundamentales.

La mayoría de las universidades españolas ha intentado paliar este carácter secundario e introductorio de la Historia de la Educación añadiendo una o más asignaturas a lo largo del programa de estudios. El grueso de ellas, ocho, lo ha hecho con una segunda asignatura, como muestra la Tabla 8. Las diferencias en el seno de este grupo radican en tres cuestiones: el curso en que esta segunda asignatura se coloca, su carácter obligatorio u optativo y el criterio seguido para la delimitación de sus contenidos.

**Tabla 8.** *Universidades con más de una asignatura de Historia de la Educación. Fuente. Elaboración propia a partir de información oficial.*

Univ.	Nombre	Tipo	Curso	Créd.
UdG	Historia de la Educación y de la Pedagogía	OBL	2	6
	Historia de la Educación en Cataluña	OPT	2, 3 y 4	3
ULL	Historia de la Educación	OBL	1	6
	Actividades de Integración 2: Análisis de los Procesos Históricos y Políticas Educativas	OBL	1	6
UMA	Historia de la Educación	OBL	1	6
	Historia de la Educación de la España Contemporánea	OBL	2	6
UM	Historia de la Educación	BAS	1	6
	Historia de los Sistemas Educativos Contemporánea	OBL	2	6
UOV	Historia de la Educación	BAS	1	6
	Historia de las Ideas Pedagógicas y del Currículum	OBL	3	6
UPV	Historia de la Educación	BAS	1	6
	Educación Contemporánea en Euskal Herria <sup>3</sup>	OPT	4	6
USAL	Historia de la Educación	BAS	1	6
	Historia de la Educación en España	OPT	4	6
UNED	Historia de la Educación	BAS	1	6
	Historia de la Educación Española	OBL	2	6

3 Aunque la palabra historia no aparezca en el título de esta asignatura, un análisis de los contenidos establecidos en su guía docente revela que se trata de una asignatura íntegramente dedicada a la historia de la educación (UNIVERSIDAD EL PAIS VASCO, 2016)

La primera asignatura se ubica en todos los casos en el primer curso, exceptuando en Girona que la coloca en segundo. La segunda asignatura ha sido situada en segundo curso por cuatro de las nueve universidades, en tercero por una y en cuarto por dos. La Universidad de La Laguna es la única universidad española que coloca ambas asignaturas de historia en el mismo curso, y además las hace coincidir en el mismo cuatrimestre. En el caso de Girona, esta segunda asignatura puede cursarse en cualquier curso a excepción del primero.

Con respecto al carácter de esta segunda asignatura, la mayoría de las universidades, seis sobre nueve, la ha considerado obligatoria; mientras que tres la ofrecen como optativa.

Finalmente, cabe identificar tres criterios básicos para delimitar los contenidos de la segunda asignatura: temporal, geográfico y temático. Tres de las ocho universidades utiliza el criterio temporal para introducir una Historia de la Educación Contemporánea. Se trata de las universidades de La Laguna, Málaga y Murcia. Las universidades de Salamanca, UNED, Girona y el País Vasco, por su parte, utilizan el criterio geográfico para circunscribir esta segunda asignatura de Historia de la Educación a España en las dos primeras y a Cataluña y el País Vasco respectivamente en las últimas. Finalmente, la Universidad de Oviedo opta por el criterio temático y centra esta segunda asignatura de carácter histórico en las ideas pedagógicas y el currículo.

**Tabla 9.** *Universidades con tres asignaturas de Historia de la Educación. Fuente. Elaboración propia a partir de información oficial.*

Univ.	Nombre	Tipo	Curso	Créd.
UB	Historia de la Educación	BAS	1	6
	Historia de la Pedagogía Catalana	OPT	2	3
	Memoria Histórica y Educación	OPT	3	3
UCM	Historia y Corrientes Internacionales de la Educación y la Cultura.	BAS	1	6
	Historia del Pensamiento Pedagógico	OBL	4	6
	Historia de la Educación de las Mujeres	OPT	3 y 4	6
UGR	Historia Social y Cultural de la Educación	BAS	1	6
	Historia del Sistema Educativo Español y sus Instituciones	F.DISC	2	6
	Historia de la Educación de las Mujeres	OPT	3	6
US	Historia de la Educación	BAS	1	6
	Historia de la Educación Contemporánea	OBL	2	6
	Desarrollo Educativo y Profesional de las Mujeres <sup>4</sup>	OPT	3	6

Entre las cuatro universidades que ofrecen tres asignaturas de Historia de la Educación se distinguen claramente dos modelos: las universidades Complutense de Madrid, de Sevilla y de Granada, de un lado, y la de Barcelona, de otro. Las tres primeras

4 Aunque la palabra historia no aparezca en el título de esta asignatura, un análisis de los contenidos establecidos en su guía docente revela que se trata de una asignatura dedicada a la historia de la educación (UNIVERSIDAD DE SEVILLA, 2016)

universidades incluyen 18 créditos de Historia de la Educación que distribuyen en tres asignaturas de seis créditos. En ambos casos, el carácter de estas asignaturas es el mismo: dos obligatorias y una optativa. Coinciden además estas tres universidades en la perspectiva de género para dedicar la asignatura optativa a la Historia de la Educación de las Mujeres. Difieren, sin embargo, en el criterio temático para delimitar los contenidos de la segunda asignatura y en su ubicación. La Universidad Complutense de Madrid dedica esta segunda historia obligatoria al pensamiento pedagógico (como Oviedo) y sitúa esta asignatura en cuarto. La Universidad de Granada, por su parte, opta por el sistema educativo español y sus instituciones y Sevilla por un planteamiento temporal más clásico. Ambas sitúan esta segunda asignatura obligatoria en el segundo curso.

La Universitat de Barcelona se diferencia de estas tres universidades en varios aspectos. En primer lugar, el número de créditos ofertados es sólo 12 en lugar de 18, pues la segunda y tercera asignaturas sólo tienen tres créditos. En segundo lugar, estas dos asignaturas son optativas en lugar de obligatorias como en las otras universidades. Por último, difiere también en el criterio utilizado para delimitar su contenido. De un lado, utiliza el criterio temático para introducir una asignatura dedicada a la memoria histórica; de otro, combina los criterios temático y geográfico para delimitar una Historia de la Pedagogía Catalana.

En todo caso, más allá de los criterios utilizados para delimitar las asignaturas, en estas cuatro universidades el alumnado recibe historia en los tres primeros cursos de su carrera, de manera obligatoria en los dos primeros (con la excepción de Barcelona) y optativa en el tercero. Estas universidades perfilan, por tanto, a la Historia de la Educación como un elemento constitutivo del currículum formativo de la Pedagogía y no como una simple materia introductoria a la manera de la mayoría de universidades españolas.

**Tabla 10.** *Universidades con cuatro asignaturas de Historia de la Educación. Fuente. Elaboración propia a partir de información oficial.*

Univ.	Nombre	Tipo	Créd.	Curso
UV	Fundamentos Históricos de la Educación	BAS	1	6
	Historia de la Educación en España	OBL	3	6
	Historia de la Educación de las Mujeres	OPT	4	4,5
	Historia Política de la Educación	OPT	4	4,5

La Universitat de València, por su parte, refuerza esta importancia de la Historia de la Educación en su plan formativo y se sitúa a la cabeza de las universidades españolas, no sólo por el número de créditos dedicados a historia de la educación (21), sino también por su distribución en 4 asignaturas. Para la delimitación de la segunda asignatura obligatoria esta universidad se decanta por el criterio geográfico, como Granada, País Vasco, UNED y Salamanca. Estas dos asignaturas obligatorias se ven complementadas con dos asignaturas optativas: una Historia de la Educación de las Mujeres y una Historia Política de la Educación. Coincide, por tanto, con Granada, Sevilla y Complutense de Madrid en la perspectiva de género para crear la tercera asignatura y añade una perspectiva única (la política) para la cuarta.



**Diagrama 3.** Otras asignaturas. **Fuente.** Elaboración propia a partir de información oficial.

El resultado de la combinación de los diferentes criterios para la delimitación de otras asignaturas aparte de la Historia de la Educación ofrece una oferta mucho más limitada que el caso de las licenciaturas. El criterio geográfico da lugar a una asignatura acotada a España en cuatro universidades (Salamanca, Granada, Valencia y UNED) y a las respectivas comunidades en Barcelona, Girona y el País Vasco. El criterio temporal genera historias contemporáneas de la educación en cuatro universidades (La Laguna, Málaga, Murcia y Sevilla). Cuatro son también las universidades que utilizan el criterio de género (Granada, Complutense de Madrid, Sevilla y Valencia). La novedad más destacable de esta oferta es la aparición en tres universidades (Barcelona, Oviedo y Complutense de Madrid) de una Historia de la Ideas Pedagógicas, una dimensión inexistente en los planes anteriores. Finalmente, la Universidad de Oviedo mantiene la Historia del Currículo, la de Valencia la Historia Política de la Educación y Barcelona introduce la memoria histórica.

#### Recapitulación:

Cinco universidades españolas (27 %) ofrecen seis créditos o menos de Historia de la Educación en sus planes de estudios de Pedagogía (Illes Balears, Santiago de Compostela, Autónoma de Barcelona, Burgos y Rovira i Virgili, en orden decreciente).

Ocho universidades, el 44 %, ofrecen 12 créditos (Barcelona, La Laguna, Málaga, Murcia, Oviedo, País Vasco, Salamanca y UNED).

Sólo cuatro universidades, el 22 %, ofrecen más de 12 créditos: Sevilla, Granada y Complutense de Madrid con 18 créditos y Valencia con 21.

Las universidades que sólo ofrecen seis créditos, o menos, incluyen en su plan de estudios una única asignatura que se sitúa en primer curso, con la excepción de la Universidad de Santiago de Compostela que la coloca en segundo.

Las universidades que ofrecen 12 créditos lo hacen con dos asignaturas, mayoritariamente obligatorias, con la excepción de Barcelona, País Vasco y Salamanca que incluyen una o varias optativas.

La Universidad Complutense de Madrid y las de Sevilla y Granada ofrecen 18 créditos en tres asignaturas: dos obligatorias y una optativa.

La Universitat de València se sitúa en la cabeza de las universidades españolas tanto por número de créditos de Historia de la Educación ofrecidos (21) como por asignaturas: dos obligatorias y dos optativas.

A pesar de esta variabilidad en la oferta, las universidades españolas se dividen únicamente en dos grupos con respecto a los créditos obligatorios. La mitad establece 12, la otra mitad sólo seis.

El criterio seguido para la delimitación de la segunda asignatura, mayoritariamente obligatoria, es:

- de género en las universidades Complutense de Madrid, Sevilla, Granada y València.
- temporal en las universidades de La Laguna, Málaga, Murcia y Sevilla, dando lugar a Historias Contemporáneas de la Educación.
- geográfico en Granada, Salamanca, UNED, País Vasco, Girona y Valencia, dando lugar a Historias de la Educación en España, Cataluña y País Vasco.
- temático en Barcelona, Complutense de Madrid y Oviedo, dando lugar a asignaturas de Historia del Pensamiento Pedagógico.

## 4. Un campo en extinción

La comparación de los planes de estudios de las últimas licenciaturas y los nuevos grados muestra una drástica reducción de los créditos de Historia de la Educación en los títulos de Pedagogía. Esta reducción es de casi la mitad en la obligatoriedad y de nada menos que dos tercios en la optatividad. Se trata, por tanto, de un retroceso radical.

**Tabla 11.** Comparación de los créditos de Historia de la Educación en las licenciaturas y los grados de Pedagogía. **Fuente.** Elaboración propia a partir de información oficial.

Licenciatura en Pedagogía			Grado en Pedagogía		
Univ.	Oblig	Total	Univ.	Oblig	Total
UV	21	55,5	UV	12	21
ULL	19,5	33	UCM	12	18
UB	18	48	UGR	12	18
UOV	18	27	US	12	18
UCM	18	24	ULL	12	12
US	17	26	UMA	12	12
UMA	16,5	34,5	UM	12	12
UGR	15	33	UOV	12	12
UM	15	28,5	UNED	12	12
UPV	15	27	UB	6	12
UIB	15	27	UPV	6	12
UNED	15	25	USAL	6	12
USAL	15	24	UdG	6	9
URV	13,5	31,5	UIB	6	6
USC	9	13,5	USC	6	6
UAB	8	15	UAB	4	4
UdG*	6	15	UBU	3	2
UBU*	0	24	URV	?	?
MEDIA <sup>&amp;</sup>	15,71	30,09	MEDIA	8,8	11
* Titulación de segundo ciclo					
<sup>&amp;</sup> Sólo titulaciones completas					



No obstante, algunos cambios producidos en el diseño de los títulos de grado como la reducción del número de créditos de los grados y la radical reducción de la optatividad pueden distorsionar un tanto esta primera imagen. Por ello es necesario acotar los elementos a comparar.

Tomando en consideración únicamente la obligatoriedad, obtenemos que mientras la media de la carga global de los títulos se ha reducido en algo más de un 20 %, la de la carga obligatoria de Historia de la Educación lo ha hecho en un 44 %, es decir, en más del doble. Para mantener la proporcionalidad, la carga obligatoria de Historia de la Educación en los grados debería superar los 8,8 créditos actuales para situarse en torno a los 12. De hecho, así parecen haberlo entendido la mayoría de las universidades que se ajusta a esa cifra en su obligatoriedad.

La reducción de la optatividad ha sido mucho más radical. Sólo siete universidades completan su obligatoriedad con asignaturas optativas; cinco con una y dos con dos. No obstante, la introducción de optatividad ya no es un indicador de la fortaleza de la especialidad, pues depende de la dimensión de la obligatoriedad a la que completan, si 6, 12 o 18 créditos. Dentro del grupo de las universidades que sitúan su oferta en los 12 créditos, la mayoría ha apostado por la obligatoriedad de todos ellos, mientras que tres combinan una obligatoriedad mínima de 6 créditos con la misma carga de optatividad. En todo caso, tomando en cuenta la optatividad, el peso de la historia de la educación en los nuevos grados de Pedagogía ha quedado reducida a un tercio de su peso en las antiguas licenciaturas.

En términos generales, los 12 créditos que la mayoría de las universidades reserva para la Historia de la Educación suponen un 5 % de la carga total del título, un porcentaje que se incrementa hasta el 7,5 % en Granada, Sevilla y la Complutense y hasta un máximo del 8,75 % en Valencia, en caso de que el alumnado cursara todas las asignaturas optativas. Por contraste, los 30 créditos obligatorios y optativos de las licenciaturas suponían un 10 % de la carga del título.

Con respecto a las posiciones relativas de las universidades no se detectan como norma cambios dramáticos. Cuatro universidades repiten en el grupo de cola: Autònoma de Barcelona, Santiago de Compostela, Burgos y Girona. Las dos primeras ya ocupaban las últimas posiciones en las licenciaturas y el paso a la titulación completa en los últimos casos no se ha traducido en un aumento de los contenidos de historia. En el otro extremo, el liderazgo sigue correspondiendo a la Universitat de València, seguida ahora por la Complutense de Madrid, Granada y Sevilla, en detrimento de la posición anterior de La Laguna y sobre todo de Barcelona, que cae en picado desde la tercera a la décima posición.

Además de empobrecer el rico abanico de las licenciaturas, la drástica reducción de la oferta de asignaturas históricas revela algunos cambios significativos en los criterios priorizados por las universidades para la creación de asignaturas. El cambio más importante se ha producido en las historias acotadas geográficamente que se han reducido de 21 a tan sólo seis. Por el contrario, han aparecido dos nuevos criterios: el temporal en cuatro casos (La Laguna, Málaga, Murcia y Sevilla) y la historia del pensamiento pedagógico en tres (Barcelona, Complutense de Madrid y Oviedo). Finalmente, en contra de lo que pudiera parecer a primera vista, la perspectiva de género en Historia de la Educación ha conseguido minimizar los daños en una coyuntura tan adversa como fue la última reforma con asignaturas en cuatro universidades frente a las cinco anteriores. Las universidades Granada, Sevilla y Valencia, que tradicionalmente han liderado

la investigación en este campo, mantienen sus asignaturas, mientras que la perspectiva de género desaparece en Murcia y la Rovira y Virgili. En contra de esta tendencia, se ha incorporado en la Complutense de Madrid, que cuenta con un notable grupo de investigación en el campo.

En conclusión, pues, en el tránsito de las licenciaturas a los nuevos grados, la presencia de la Historia de la Educación en los planes de estudio de Pedagogía se ha visto reducida a la mitad en la obligatoriedad y a un tercio en la oferta total incluyendo la optatividad. Se trata a todas luces de un duro golpe que derriba lo poco que quedaba de la antigua posición central en la formación de los futuros profesionales de la Pedagogía. Un paso más significaría la práctica erradicación, y no es poco común la sensación entre los profesionales del campo de que podía haber sido todavía peor y que por esta vez se ha conjurado ese peligro. No obstante este alivio coyuntural, no debe ocultar que esta escasa presencia se circunscribe a los primeros cursos, de tal manera que para el futuro profesional de la Pedagogía la historia ya no es más que una breve contextualización inicial, más o menos curiosa y atractiva, pero completamente ajena a las cuestiones claves que se barajan en su campo disciplinar. Únicamente, en las universidades Complutense de Madrid, de Granada, de Sevilla y de València la presencia de asignaturas históricas de manera continuada y en los últimos cursos de carrera rompe con esta lamentable situación y apunta a la consideración de la Historia de la Educación como una línea de investigación solvente y con credibilidad en las facultades de educación. Así, pues, la Historia de la Educación es hoy un campo en extinción en su antiguo feudo de las titulaciones de Pedagogía.

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### Licenciaturas:

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Universidad de Burgos: BOE 23 de octubre de 1998  
Universidad de Granada: BOE 10 de febrero 2001  
Universidad de La Laguna: BOE 3 de febrero de 2000  
Universidad de Málaga: BOE 2 de abril de 1999  
Universidad de Murcia: BOE 13 de marzo de 2001  
Universidad de Oviedo: BOE 30 de agosto de 2000  
Universidad de Salamanca: BOE 23 de agosto de 2000  
Universidad de Sevilla: BOE 20 de julio de 1998  
Universidad del País Vasco: BOE 14 de mayo de 1999  
Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia: BOE 03 de diciembre de 1999  
Universidade de Santiago de Compostela: BOE 24 de agosto de 2001  
Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona: BOE 16 de octubre de 1993  
Universitat de Barcelona: BOE, 1 de diciembre de 2000  
Universitat de Girona: BOE 10 de febrero de 2000  
Universitat de les Illes Balears: BOE, 17 de diciembre de 1997  
Universitat de València: BOE 16 de agosto de 2000  
Universitat Rovira i Virgili: BOE 25 de noviembre de 1993

### Grados:

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Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia: BOE 17 de octubre de 2011  
Universidade de Santiago de Compostela: BOE 5 de marzo de 2010  
Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona: 30 de octubre de 2013  
Universitat de Barcelona: BOE 10 de abril de 2012  
Universitat de Girona: BOE 30 de enero de 2015  
Universitat de les Illes Balears: BOE 19 de julio de 2010  
Universitat Rovira i Virgili: BOE 11 de agosto de 2011

## **Anexo 1: Abreviaturas utilizadas**

<b>Siglas</b>	<b>Universidad</b>
<b>UAB</b>	Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona
<b>UB</b>	Universitat de Barcelona
<b>UBU</b>	Universidad de Burgos
<b>UCM</b>	Universidad Complutense de Madrid
<b>UdG</b>	Universitat de Girona
<b>UGR</b>	Universidad de Granada
<b>UIB</b>	Universitat de les Illes Balears
<b>ULL</b>	Universidad de La Laguna
<b>UM</b>	Universidad de Murcia
<b>UMA</b>	Universidad de Málaga
<b>UNED</b>	Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia
<b>UOV</b>	Universidad de Oviedo
<b>UPV</b>	Universidad del País Vasco
<b>URV</b>	Universitat Rovira i Virgili
<b>US</b>	Universidad de Sevilla
<b>USAL</b>	Universidad de Salamanca
<b>USC</b>	Universidad de Santiago de Compostela
<b>UV</b>	Universitat de València

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*Dos apuestas por redefinir las funciones del Estado respecto al trabajo magisterial: reformas educativas recientes en México y Ecuador*

*Two strategies towards a change in public teachers` labour regulations: recent educative reforms in México and Ecuador*

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## **Resumen**

Las primigenias interrogantes de la Sociología de la Educación sobre las funciones del Estado, han sido revitalizadas por la era global. El presente artículo, desestima que la reducción de las funciones estatales opere como la única e inevitable tendencia. Por el contrario, se sostiene la tesis de una reorientación de las funciones del Estado siempre mediada por orientaciones políticas. A fin de demostrarlo, se analiza cómo afectan a las condiciones laborales de los docentes las últimas reformas educativas emprendidas por México y Ecuador, ambas de carácter profesionalizante. En esta esfera se muestra con claridad la naturaleza de un nuevo intervencionismo, capaz de coexistir con la desregulación (pérdida de derechos) o la subregulación (insuficiente protección) del trabajo de los maestros. Gracias al tiempo transcurrido desde la promulgación legal de sendas reformas, el análisis pone de manifiesto los desfases entre los términos en que se definieron, y cómo se implementan. Se reivindica así el carácter procesual de la refuncionalización, y el papel activo que tienen las distintas fuerzas implicadas en su desarrollo.

*Palabras clave:* reformas educativas; refuncionalización; profesionalización docente; México y Ecuador

## **Abstract**

The early questions of the sociology of education about the State roles have been revitalized by the global age. This article dismisses that the reduction of state functions operates as the only and inescapable trend. On the contrary, this paper postulates the thesis of a reorientation on State functions, always directed by political imperatives. To this end, it is analyzed how the last educational reforms undertaken by Mexico and Ecuador -both of a professionalizing sign- affect the working conditions of teachers. In order to this end, we use methodologies of multiple case study. In this area, is clearly shown the nature of a new interventionism, mixed with deregulation (loss of rights) or subregulation (insufficient protection) of teachers' work. Due to the time gap since the legal enactment of these reforms, and their current implementation, the analysis reveals differences between the definition terms and their practical verification. Thus, is confirmed the refuncionalization as a process in which different forces have active roles.

*Key Words:* educational reforms; refuncionalization; teachers' professionation; México and Ecuador

## 1. Otra vuelta de rosca al debate sobre el funcionalismo de la Sociología de la Educación

En buena medida, la historia de la Sociología de la Educación ha estado entrampada en el debate sobre el funcionalismo (Martín-Criado 2013), corriente que fundó la disciplina al preguntarse cómo tributa el hecho educativo a la reproducción del sistema social. Aquella interrogante del siglo XIX, era consustancial a la ampliación del acceso a la educación, en la cual los Estados habían tenido que implicarse. Hoy en día, esta continúa siendo una pregunta inevitable, puesto que la participación del Estado en la educación se ha demostrado creciente, y en algunos puntos irreversible, lo cual no es óbice para preguntarse cómo cambian estas funciones.

Durante los años 80s América Latina vivió una particular reedición del debate sobre las funciones del Estado. Por entonces se operaron considerables recortes en los presupuestos nacionales que fueron interpretadas de forma simple y llana como la reducción del Estado, adoptándose el concepto de Estado de mínimos. No obstante, desde una perspectiva más dilatada en el tiempo, la imagen devuelta no termina de calzar con los vaticinios minimizadores. A pesar de ello, es innegable que la presencia estatal ha cambiado. Por estas razones, en este artículo se prefiere utilizar el concepto de *refuncionalización*, según el cual los instrumentos estatales no desaparecen sino adquieren nuevas funciones en consonancia con los requerimientos del proceso de globalización (Mercado, 2005). En otras palabras, se pretende analizar la reorientación de las funciones estatales, ostensible en la regulación de las condiciones laborales avanzada por las reformas educativas recientes de México y Ecuador. Las reestructuraciones funcionales son indisolubles de los reajustes de fuerzas en cada país, factores que complementa la explicación sobre por qué las políticas educativas no son homogéneas, a pesar de existir orientaciones globales y nuevos mecanismos de influencia sobre los Estados (Dale, 2007)

Es útil recordar que el crecimiento de la cobertura educativa conllevó un intervencionismo estatal caracterizado por una clara apuesta presupuestaria, centralización, expansión burocrática, y, finalmente, sólidos pactos con los sindicatos del ramo. En particular para América Latina, Guillermina Tiramonti (2001) señala que los sindicatos fueron «protagonistas del proceso de institucionalización de los sistemas educativos», y así se incorporaron a la «trama del poder». Estos nexos llegaron a desbordar la simple transferencia de prerrogativas a cambio de convenientes apoyos electorales, dirimiéndose también en este terreno cuestiones cardinales para el funcionamiento del sistema educativo, como los mecanismos de acceso y promoción del personal educativo. Justamente las reformas que aquí examinaremos destacan por la intención de alterar tales vínculos. A lo largo del artículo se intentará demostrar que esta pugna pone en marcha el proceso de *refuncionalización*, en el que entremezcla intervencionismo, desregulación y subregulación. Esta amalgama si bien se centra en el sistema público, tiene igualmente repercusiones en la enseñanza privada.

A propósito de la transformación que se va abriendo paso en los 80s, es preciso mencionar el énfasis en la calidad educativa, promovido por agencias internacionales como la OECD (1991). Esta nueva preocupación surge impregnada de claroscuros,<sup>1</sup> y entre sus

<sup>1</sup> Cómo se ha reivindicado, la atención a la calidad expresó al menos en parte la intención de subvertir los déficits de aprovechamiento escolar que había traído la ampliación de la cobertura, o de reducir el despilfarro de recursos (Reimers, 2000), pero también se llama la atención a su uso como cuartada para suplantarse las políticas universalistas tendentes a la equidad (Sosa, 2012).



implicaciones directas estuvo la proliferación de evaluaciones estandarizadas, orientadas a realizar comparaciones internacionales. Con el tiempo no sólo los aprendizajes, sino el sistema educativo en su conjunto fue objeto de evaluación, incluyendo sus «recursos humanos». La conjunción de la calidad con los métodos evaluativos, empujó a la docencia a abandonar la condición de empleo para transitar hacia el estatus de profesión.

La tendencia a la profesionalización de la labor docente, implica múltiples supuestos en polémica (Sánchez, 2004:32-48; Feldfeber, 2007). Uno de sus elementos centrales es atribuir a la actividad docente conocimientos y habilidades específicas sujetos constante actualización, y por ende, evaluación. Correlativo a esto, es la implementación de un sistema de movilidad y retribución salarial en función de los resultados de desempeño, donde la antigüedad en funciones pierde su tradicional centralidad. A partir de los efectos de este tipo de incentivos en reformas previas de la educación superior, se considera que las mismas tienden a diferenciar y sobre todo «individualizar» las trayectorias de los maestros, en detrimento de su identificación como colectivo y de las formas de trabajo colegiado (Bensusán y Tapia, 2014:100).

En América Latina, las apuestas por la profesionalización comenzaron en los 90s (Banco Mundial, 1996; CEPAL/UNESCO, 1992), pero su debate se intensificó a inicios del presente siglo, cuando diversos gobiernos incorporaron el tema a sus agendas (Tenti, 2004; Murillo, 2007). Es de resaltar que la polémica ha sido mayor en aquellos contextos -como México y Ecuador-, donde no se había dado una burocratización de los empleados públicos del sector educativo, en el sentido de organizar un sistema de reglas objetivas a partir de las cuales reconocer el mérito y la capacidad de desempeñar de determinadas funciones como los criterios efectivos de acceso y promoción a un cargo público. La solución burocrática había pretendido limitar las influencias políticas de diversos actores en la asignación de empleos (gobiernos, partidos, etc.), para lo cual era esencial la estabilidad laboral. En contraste, las reformas profesionalizantes hoy en boga, si bien reivindicán la acreditación de conocimientos específicos, condicionan la permanencia en el cargo a la demostración recurrente de competencias. Tanto por limitar las interferencias del sindicato en la gestión de los recursos humanos, como por sus afectaciones sobre derechos laborales previos, las reformas profesionalizantes han enfrentado gran resistencia gremial y, en general, del cuerpo docente. El presente artículo examina las dimensiones que permiten calificar de profesionalizantes a las reformas educativas recientes de México y Ecuador, en el entendido de que esta línea de análisis es donde se concentra el cambio de las funciones estatales respecto al trabajo magisterial.

Desde el punto de vista metodológico, el presente artículo se inscribe en una perspectiva comparativa de estudio de casos múltiples. Para ello, se apoya en una reconstrucción de los contextos particulares de ambos países, a partir de lo cual se avanza mediante las posibilidades de comparación que ofrecen los marcos normativos de ambas reformas, sus últimos ajustes, así como los documentos oficiales que precisan aspectos poco claros de la legislación. Finalmente, en tanto la implementación de las reformas y los conflictos subyacentes son temas de extrema actualidad, se apela a técnicas de revisión hemerográfica para detallarlos.

## 2. Las distintas caras de la reforma educativa mexicana

Hacia finales de 2012 se estrenaría un nuevo gobierno en México, decidido a impulsar reformas en distintos ámbitos. La educación no escaparía a la vorágine, y a lo largo de 2013 se promulgarían cambios constitucionales (artículos 3 y 73), modificaciones a la Ley General de Educación (LGE) vigente y dos nuevas leyes, la Ley General de Servicio Profesional Docente (LGSPD) y la Ley del Instituto Nacional para la Evaluación de la Educación. Entre las múltiples dificultades que aquejaban a la enseñanza obligatoria,<sup>2</sup> las medidas se centraron en el problema de la «calidad». En términos discursivos, el gobierno adoptó la consigna de «recuperar la rectoría del sistema educativo nacional», incluyéndola en el Pacto por México.<sup>3</sup> Como se detallará a continuación el grueso de los cambios introducidos se orientaban a la educación pública, y específicamente a trasladar nuevos imperativos al personal educativo, en un intervencionismo que llegaría asomarse a los umbrales de la enseñanza privada. No obstante, a diferencia de la agenda intervencionista clásica, en este caso la reforma supondría retrocesos en cuanto a la protección laboral, al tiempo que mantendría subreguladas otras áreas del trabajo docente.

### 2.1 Las contradicciones del nuevo intervencionismo mexicano

El uso del concepto de «rectoría» en la reforma educativa de México, anunciaba ante todo un nuevo intervencionismo del Estado,<sup>4</sup> cuya razón de ser implicó un profundo reajuste en sus relaciones con los principales sindicatos del sector, el Sindicato Nacional de Trabajadores de la Educación (SNTE) y la Coordinadora Nacional de Trabajadores de la Educación (CNTE), una organización escindida del primero. Esta orientación se presentaba como respuesta al amplio reclamo social en pos de subvertir la notable influencia del sindicalismo magisterial en las políticas educativas.<sup>5</sup> La pugna se ha centrado en afianzar la regencia del Estado sobre la regulación del trabajo docente, promoviendo un nuevo sistema que considera a los maestros no como meros empleados públicos sino ante todo como profesionales. Al acentuarse la profesionalización, se colocó en un primerísimo plano los procedimientos evaluativos. La centralidad del concepto de evaluación es donde se manifiesta con mayor claridad el intervencionismo de nuevo cuño que distingue a la reforma educativa mexicana.

La evaluación se demuestra emblemática de los ánimos de rectoría desde la afirmación de su carácter obligatorio en el artículo 3<sup>ro</sup> constitucional. El texto le confiere a

2 La reforma no abarcaría el nivel preescolar.

3 Iniciativa desarrollada por el presidente Enrique Peña Nieto mientras se efectuaba la transición gubernamental en 2012, a fin de articular consensos entre las cúpulas de los partidos mayoritarios (PRI, PAN y PRD) e impulsar así un conjunto de reformas.

4 Este significado difiere del primigenio concepto de «rectoría», introducido en la Constitución en 1982 para limitar las funciones del Estado en determinadas áreas del desarrollo económico, y reivindicar la necesidad de coordinación con el sector privado pero también el sector social - los sindicatos- (Art.25 de la Constitución)

5 El peso del sindicalismo magisterial en la gestión del sistema educativo mexicano es un hecho documentado (Ornelas, 2008 y 2012; Arnaut, 2010; Fernández-Martínez, 2012) y también un sentimiento extendido entre la población. Estas percepciones han sido utilizadas por el grupo de presión Mexicanos Primeros, productor del conocido documental «De panzazo» que enfatiza en una visión negativa de los maestros mexicanos. A este grupo se le atribuyen vínculos con figuras relevantes del empresariado mexicano (Hernández, 2010).

los resultados de la evaluación un carácter determinante para el ingreso, la promoción (obtener más horas, estímulos económicos o cargos de supervisión y dirección), el reconocimiento (acceder a cargos de tutor o asesor técnico pedagógico) o la permanencia (mantenerse en la misma función) dentro del servicio docente de educación básica y media superior. Lo anterior, se hizo acompañar por una manera diferente de implementar los procesos evaluativos.

La primera novedad de los actuales procedimientos evaluativos es la preponderancia que adquiere el Instituto Nacional para la Evaluación de la Educación (INEE), sobre quién recae la competencia de emitir los lineamientos a que se sujetarán las Autoridades Educativas –federales y locales- para aplicar las evaluaciones (Art. 29 de la LGE y Art. 28 de la Ley del INEE). Por lo demás, las modificaciones constitucionales definieron al INEE como «organismo público autónomo», con el fin de garantizarle «la independencia necesaria para asegurar la confianza en los resultados de las evaluaciones».<sup>6</sup> De esta manera, se refuerza la pretensión de hacer del INEE un ente cuya objetividad descansa en el saber de sus especialistas, capaces de aportar soluciones técnicas pero sobre todo libres de las influencias políticas de la SEP, los empresarios, y muy especialmente, de los sindicatos.

Con la redefinición del INEE, se introdujo un contrapeso al control de la administración educativa por fuerzas de la SNTE y CNTE, al excluirles de participar en la elaboración de los lineamientos de evaluación. Al respecto, el artículo 28 de la Ley del INEE siquiera les considera en el papel de «observadores» de las evaluaciones, aludiendo sólo a las llamadas organizaciones de la sociedad civil (OSCs). A mayores, si bien la Ley prevé la participación del «sector social» en el Consejo Social Consultivo del INEE, en su posterior Estatuto Orgánico, sólo se precisan los requisitos de participación para las OSCs, quienes han sido de hecho las únicas representadas en este órgano, además de la patronal COPARMEX. En esto se trasluce la nueva influencia que adquieren las OSC's y cámaras empresariales en el rumbo de las políticas educativas, otro de los signos políticos del actual proceso reformador.<sup>7</sup> En todo caso, se llama la atención sobre las funciones consultivas –no vinculantes- del citado Consejo. Por su parte, la LGSPD reducirían aún más la influencia de los sindicatos. En primer lugar dejó sin efecto las comisiones mixtas SEP-SNTE, que determinaban el ingreso, promoción y reconocimiento de los maestros, siendo la SEP quien asume la determinación de los estándares para cada uno de estos movimientos, que quedan mediados por las evaluaciones elaboradas según los lineamientos del INEE. La LGSPD sin embargo sí menciona a los sindicatos como «observadores» no meramente de los concursos sino de «los procesos» de promoción a cargos con funciones de supervisión y dirección (Art. 33)

Es importante acotar que en la práctica y a pesar de su autonomía, el desempeño del INEE ha tendido a alinearse con la política de la SEP. Esta conjunción no se explica sólo porque la SEP haya dado pasos en el sentido de regularizar el proceso de asignación de las plazas docentes y depurar el diagnóstico de las necesidades de formación de los maestros, procesos viciados por las intervenciones sindicales. Suscribir tales intenciones, no obligaba al INEE a asumir de forma implícita las consecuencias laborales de la evaluación, a pesar de existir indicios de que la Directiva del INEE preferiría un enfoque

6 Ver Resumen Ejecutivo de la Reforma Educativa. Disponible desde internet en [http://www.gob.mx/cms/uploads/attachment/file/2924/Resumen\\_Ejecutivo\\_de\\_la\\_Reforma\\_Educativa.pdf](http://www.gob.mx/cms/uploads/attachment/file/2924/Resumen_Ejecutivo_de_la_Reforma_Educativa.pdf) con acceso 18-08-2016

7 Han llamado la atención sobre este aspecto investigadores como Manuel Gil Antón, Hugo Aboites, Raquel Sosa, y Luis Hernández Navarro, aunque es un asunto todavía pendiente de mayor investigación.

más flexible y formativo.<sup>8</sup> La línea política que ha terminado permeando el trabajo del INEE tiene disímiles condicionantes, entre las que destacamos el modo de designación de los integrantes de su Junta Directiva,<sup>9</sup> y las escasas posibilidades de intercambios con los docentes que prevé su diseño institucional.<sup>10</sup> Puntualizando, en el tándem SEP-INEE afloran de forma nítida una cualidad del nuevo intervencionismo estatal, la cual consiste en apelar a un ente legitimado por el saber experto y la «autonomía», para impulsar evaluaciones que acrediten el nivel profesional de los docentes, y —como veremos— subordinar a ello sus derechos laborales. A fin de redondear la cualidad intervencionista del INEE, es útil corroborar el aumento exponencial del financiamiento público que se le destina.<sup>11</sup>

Llegados a este punto, es importante destacar que la actual reforma educativa que se implementa en México, si bien supone para el Estado un nuevo intervencionismo, le conmina de igual modo a prácticas de desregulación laboral. A propósito se ha llegado a valorar que la reforma educativa introduce un régimen laboral específico para el magisterio público (Ramírez, 2013:123; Alcalde, 2014:115-116). En última instancia, la cualidad distintiva de este ordenamiento se define por una sustantiva disolución de la estabilidad laboral que distinguía a los maestros. A estos fines es imprescindible analizar la LGSPD que si bien no aumentó significativamente el número de causales de despido —homologando las vigentes para el resto del sector público—, sí concretó el imperativo constitucional de condicionar la permanencia a la evaluación.

A fin de ilustrar la tesis anterior, es conveniente comenzar por las vías de acceso al servicio docente. La instauración de concursos representó avances innegables (especialmente el de interrumpir la venta o herencia de plazas), pero se conjugó con un condicionamiento perentorio a la permanencia en el empleo. Según el artículo 22 de la LGSPD, quienes resulten ganadores de una plaza mediante la superación del respectivo concurso, obtendrán el nombramiento definitivo a los 6 meses. Sin embargo, esta «definitividad» podrá darse por terminada a los dos años, si el docente no atendiera a los programas de capacitación, no asistiera a la evaluación diagnóstica o resultara insuficientemente evaluado en la misma. A mayores, son reforzadas las condiciones punitivas del despido al pautar que este se efectúe «sin responsabilidad para la Autoridad Educativa o para el Organismo Descentralizado», es decir, sin liquidación y afirmando por anticipado su carácter procedente. De esta forma, se suprime el componente de inamovilidad que estaba asociado a un nombramiento definitivo.

Tampoco se encuentra al margen riesgos el personal de más experiencia o con funciones de mayor rango. Así, los artículos 52 y 69 de la LGSPD pautan la obligatoriedad de someterse a evaluaciones de desempeño periódicas a los docentes, directores

8 Cfr. Opiniones de Sylvia Schmelkes (2014) y Gilberto Guevara Niebla (2016), presidenta y Consejero de la Junta de Gobierno del INEE.

9 Según la ley que regula al INEE, los integrantes de la Junta directiva son propuestos el Ejecutivo Federal y ratificados por el SENADO donde los partidos firmantes del Pacto por México determinan las mayorías.

10 La ley del INEE no estipula que participación alguna de los docentes en la definición de los «parámetros e indicadores» a partir de los cuales serán evaluados. A pesar de esto, el INEE ha intentado por su cuenta y riesgo incorporar los puntos de vista de los docentes en la elaboración del modelo de evaluación que registró para 2017.

11 Según la Información de Gestión Administrativa publicada en la web institucional del INEE (<http://www.inee.edu.mx/index.php/micrositio-transparencia/502-micrositio-transparencia/informacion-sobre-el-presupuesto/1646-fraccion-ix> con acceso 25-06-2016) el presupuesto para 2016 fue de 1060 Mdp, con un crecimiento del 261 % respecto al aprobado para 2013.

y supervisores.<sup>12</sup> De hecho, en el caso mexicano la participación de los docentes en la primera evaluación de desempeño es indisociable del miedo generado por las advertencias de despido cursadas por la SEP, teniendo nula incidencia los incentivos económicos anunciados.<sup>13</sup> Para los docentes que distribuyen su jornada entre diversas asignaturas, las exigencias se acrecientan pues la SEP defiende que es obligatoria la evaluación en todas las disciplinas (Poy, 4 de marzo de 2016). Para más señas, la LGSPD contempla ocho obligaciones que de ser incumplidas pueden originar la finalización de nombramientos definitivos (Art. 69), a las que se adicionan la prohibición de incumplir con la asistencia a sus labores por más de tres días consecutivos o discontinuos en un periodo de treinta días naturales (Art.76), y la completamente inédita de reprobar en tres ocasiones de las evaluaciones de desempeño (Art. 53). La radicalidad del Artículo 53, se intentó matizar pautando la reubicación en puestos administrativos o programas de retiro, pero sólo para quienes hubiesen obtenido su nombramiento antes de la promulgación de la LGSPD (disposición Transitoria Octava)

El sustancial vaciamiento de la estabilidad laboral de los docentes públicos, se amarra en un modo simplificado de tramitar la terminación de un nombramiento, es decir, su despido. Se ha argumentado que la modificación del Artículo 3 constitucional sus trajo a los trabajadores de la educación de la protección que brinda el Artículo 123 y la Ley Federal de Trabajadores al Servicio del Estado, a los empleados públicos (Fuentes, 2013). Así, mediante el cambio constitucional y la LGSDP (artículos 74 y 76), se avala que la finalización de un nombramiento acontezca no sólo sin derecho a percibir indemnización, sino también eliminando el requisito de que exista «resolución previa del Tribunal Federal de Conciliación y Arbitraje o sus equivalentes en las entidades federativas», esto es, de un órgano autónomo de justicia laboral —resabio de la organización corporativa del Estado— en el cual el trabajador puede solicitar representación sindical y donde además interviene un magistrado designado por los sindicatos, dada su conformación tripartita. En lugar del procedimiento anterior —por lo general tardado— la LGSPD insta un trámite ágil, donde en el plazo de veinte días hábiles la administración notifica al trabajador, este presenta pruebas en su defensa y la misma instancia administrativa emite la resolución definitiva, sin que se contemplen garantías suficientes para calificar el trámite como un sumario administrativo (Art 75.) A partir de la ampliación de las causales de despido, naturalmente se reduce la efectividad de los mecanismos de impugnación (Art. 80 y 83). Aunque desde octubre de 2013 se pusieron en marcha tentativas de revertir estas disposiciones de la reforma mediante recursos de amparo que alegaban su carácter inconstitucional, estas se demostraron infructuosas a mediados de 2015, cuando la Suprema Corte de Justicia Nacional (SCJN) confirió plena validez a las medidas de separación del cargo después de tres faltas consecutivas, de reprobar en tres ocasiones las evaluaciones de desempeño o finalmente de ausencia injustificada a las

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12 El INEE ha determinado que las evaluaciones de desempeño se realizarán cada dos años para la totalidad del personal educativo, salvo quienes obtengan calificaciones insuficientes que deberán ser evaluados al año siguiente.

13 La más notoria de ellas fue realizada por el Secretario de Educación Pública Aurelio Nuño el 15 de octubre de 2015 (Hernández, 15 de octubre de 2015). Por otra parte, el monto de los incentivos salariales asignados a los profesores con mejores niveles de desempeño, no sería dado a conocer oficialmente hasta el 16 de mayo de 2016 -Comunicado 219 de la SEP- esto es cerca de 5 meses después de finalizada la primera ronda de evaluaciones.

evaluaciones.<sup>14</sup> Es importante precisar que estos nuevos dispositivos no constituyen una amenaza latente, sino que han dado paso a millares de despidos.<sup>15</sup>

Con base en los argumentos anteriores, se observa un retraimiento de las funciones de protección laboral que había desempeñado el Estado mexicano, al cual se califica como desregulación. Existen opiniones de que era imprescindible refrendar legal e incluso constitucionalmente este tipo de poder determinante de las evaluaciones, como único modo de contener el poder enquistado del SNTE (Paoli, 2013:174). En realidad, otras experiencias recientes cuestionan tal «necesidad», en especial la reforma de la Educación Superior realizada en el país durante los 80s, en la cual se instauraron los requisitos de un concurso de oposición para acceder a una plaza y una evaluación académica única para acceder a la estabilidad laboral (definitividad), mientras las mediciones de desempeño se vincularon a incentivos económicos. Debe considerarse además que el poder sindical se mantiene a resguardo en otros recovecos de la administración educativa, entre ellos el control de algunas Secretarías de Educación estatales (Del Valle, 2015) pero sobre todo de los mandos medios (supervisores escolares, jefes de área y directores de escuelas). En realidad, el saldo de esta avanzada sobre los sindicatos si bien ha debilitado su presencia institucional en la administración del sistema educativo, se inclina en mayor medida hacia un acrecentado control de la SEP sobre el personal educativo.

El peso de las disposiciones laborales dentro de la reforma ha determinado que las iniciativas de modificar su corpus normativo, tomen a la LGSPD como primer objetivo.<sup>16</sup> Por otra parte, los enormes conflictos derivados del contenido laboral de la reforma educativa, ponen en cuestión la idea de que estos cambios eran una antesala para otros. Un mal comienzo fue el deficiente tratamiento conferido al financiamiento educativo y su federalización (Fernández-Martínez, 2014). Mucho más improbable parece que en lo que resta de sexenio se pueda avanzar con solidez en un nuevo modelo educativo, cuyo debate público fue aplazado por la SEP hasta la segunda mitad de 2016. Queda también por verificar si el fuerte énfasis en los aspectos negativos, alcanzará a ser equilibrado en la balanza coste-beneficio de los docentes, por los estímulos positivos, tales como: incrementos salariales, el aumento de número de horas, los ascensos verticales, los mecanismos de apoyo al trabajo docente, las opciones gratuitas de superación profesional contenidas en la reciente Estrategia Nacional de Formación Continua, o el plan de fortalecimiento de la formación inicial de los docentes y del Sistema de Normales Públicas.

Es interesante notar que el intervencionismo de la presente reforma no sólo coexistió con la desregulación en el plano laboral, sino también con una insuficiente regulación de distintas áreas del trabajo docente. En este sentido, se ha apuntado que la reforma mexicana no pauta la distribución de la jornada laboral entre tareas frente a grupo y otro tipo de actividades pedagógicas; no promueve formas de trabajo colegiado; no se pronuncia sobre abatir la contratación temporal—profesores interinos, docentes contratados por obra o tiempo determinado— y, finalmente, tampoco especifica cómo se atenderá la desigualdad de condiciones o «contextos locales» (De Ibarrola, 2014:90-92). Esta

14 Un análisis detallado de los argumentos de los magistrados de la SCJN para fundamentar estos y otros fallos a los amparos interpuestos en (Marín, 2015a, 2015b)

15 El mayor número de despidos involucró a 3 mil 360 docentes que no se habían presentado a las evaluaciones de desempeño en 2015 (SEP, 1 de marzo de 2016)

16 Revisar el acuerdo entre representantes de la CNTE y senadores del PRD, PT y Morena para crear un frente parlamentario, alcanzado el 11 de julio de 2016 (Mercado y Brito, 11 de julio de 2016), o la propuesta de modificaciones a la legislación secundaria que miembros del PRD sugirieron a militantes de la CNTE encaminar como iniciativa ciudadana, el pasado 24 de agosto de 2016. (Rosas, 24 de agosto de 2016)

última condición parece ser a ser incorporada parcialmente, a partir de la redefinición del modelo de evaluación de desempeño anunciada por el INEE para el 2017.

## **2.2. Las derivas de la reforma mexicana sobre la enseñanza privada**

Hasta aquí, se ha hecho evidente, el centro de las reformas atañe al sector público. Sin embargo, otra serie de cambios predisponen también una mayor injerencia del Estado en la enseñanza privada. Esta arista nos permite apreciar como al interior de la reforma actúan imperativos de control burocrático con cierta independencia respecto de las motivaciones políticas. Al mismo tiempo, se observará que la reforma no tiene mayores implicaciones sobre la realidad laboral de estos docentes, que se mantienen *subreguladas* en el escueto marco de las protecciones laborales previas.

Siguiendo la tesis de que la actual reforma educativa supone grados mayores de intervencionismo estatal sobre la enseñanza privada, esta se ampara en la precisión incorporada al artículo 3ro constitucional sobre la «calidad en la educación obligatoria», la cual abarca a las escuelas particulares. En cuanto a la legislación secundaria, el cariz intervencionista se revela en la obligación de que la SEP evalúe el desempeño de los maestros de planteles privados según los mismos lineamientos que determine en INEE para instituciones públicas (Artículo 21 de la LGE).<sup>17</sup> De conseguir resultados satisfactorios, los docentes obtendrían un certificado que los avale, de lo contrario se le ofrecerán cursos de capacitación o programas de regularización, sin mencionar si estos serán obligatorios. Aunque no solventar con éxito la evaluación, no se impone aquí como causal de despido ni afecta el reconocimiento de validez oficial del centro, sí se mandata que deberán hacerse públicos los nombres de los docentes que hayan cumplido con esos requisitos (Artículo 56), apelando con ello a la sanción indirecta de los padres de familia. A pesar de estas prevenciones, a la fecha no se ha realizado ninguna evaluación de esta naturaleza, y al menos hasta junio de 2016 el INEE sostenía en el apartado de preguntas frecuentes de su web institucional que «la evaluación del desempeño docente sólo será para las escuelas públicas».<sup>18</sup>

En paralelo con la avanzada intervencionista prevista para los docentes de las privadas, es llamativo que el Estado no haya tomado medida alguna para reducir las diferencias en las condiciones laborales que distinguen a estos trabajadores respecto de quienes laboran en el sector público, entre las que destacamos su menor capacidad negociadora —y por tanto de obtener mejores salarios—, o su mayor incertidumbre laboral (Hernández, Llamas y Garro; 2012:319). Al menos sobre la estabilidad laboral los datos del Censo de Escuelas, Maestros y Alumnos de la Educación Básica (CEMABE) publicado en 2013 reflejaban que el 35,2 % de los docentes de las privadas estaban contratados por honorarios, mientras que un 7,6 % eran trabajadores eventuales. Como resulta obvio, la incidencia de las formas de contratación temporal se traduce igualmente en un acceso limitado a las prestaciones de ley y a la cobertura en seguridad social. La no implementación de las evaluaciones de desempeño en el ámbito privado, limita que se pudieran

17 Hasta la presente reforma educativa, la adecuada preparación profesional del personal directivo y de las escuelas privadas se controlaba mediante las inspecciones a los planteles, donde mayormente se comprobaba que estuvieran en posesión de las cédulas profesionales o documentos académicos, según diversos acuerdos secretariales relacionados con la autorización para impartir educación (254,255,276 y 357)

18 Esta información se puede consultar su versión caché con fecha del 12 de junio de 2016 en <http://webcache.googleusercontent.com/search?q=cache:guISMTUTsagJ:www.inee.edu.mx/index.php/proyectos/524-reforma-educativa/preguntas-frecuentes/1622-preguntas-frecuentes+&cd=1&hl=es&ct=clnk&gl=mx> con acceso 1-09-2016

utilizar sus resultados para incentivar por ejemplo la contratación a tiempo completo, u otros beneficios laborales.

A modo de síntesis, el intervencionismo, la desregulación y la sub-regulación, son distintas caras del concepto de «rectoría» que bien expresan la *refuncionalización* que se opera en la reforma educativa mexicana. Como se examinó, el proceso se ha caracterizado por una nueva avanzada intervencionista, centrada en distintos mecanismos de evaluación del personal docente. En paralelo, la reforma también ha flexibilizado disposiciones laborales que protegían al magisterio del sector público, desdibujando los contornos de su anterior estabilidad laboral. A pesar de primar los vectores del intervencionismo y la desregulación en el sector público, se evidencian igualmente áreas de subregulación. Por último, es interesante notar que el intervencionismo abarca sólo tangencialmente al ámbito de la enseñanza privada, dejando a sus trabajadores en el mismo entorno de derechos garantizados de modo deficitario.

### 3. Ecuador, una apuesta intervencionista entre el querer y el poder

Desde el nuevo gobierno instaurado en 2006, el sistema educativo ecuatoriano ha experimentado cambios significativos en todos sus niveles y modalidades, incluida la educación superior. En aras de propiciar el contraste con México, se ha delimitado como campo de análisis la educación obligatoria.<sup>19</sup> En este marco, la expresión más elaborada de las transformaciones llegaría con la promulgación de una nueva Constitución en 2008, la Ley Orgánica de Educación Intercultural (LOEI) de 2011, su respectivo Reglamento General de 2012, más las reformas de 2015 a las dos últimas normativas. Como se detallará, este cuerpo legal resulta especialmente novedoso en las distinciones que introduce en la regulación del trabajo del personal educativo.

#### 3.1. El predominante intervencionismo de la reforma ecuatoriana, viejos y nuevos métodos

Con la proclamación de la Constitución de 2008, se definieron un número importante de exigencias para la educación y la conducción estatal de la misma, resumidas con la siguiente fórmula:

«El Estado ejercerá la *rectoría* del sistema a través de la autoridad educativa nacional, que *formulará la política nacional de educación*; asimismo *regulará y controlará* las actividades relacionadas con la educación, así como el funcionamiento de las entidades del Sistema» (Art. 344).

Le envergadura del concepto de «rectoría» se profundizaba al enumerarse las políticas de educación entre los ámbitos de competencia exclusiva del gobierno central (art. 261), prefigurando un mayor intervencionismo. Sin embargo, en Ecuador, se incluyeron elementos del repertorio intervencionista clásico «[...] fortalecer la educación pública, ampliación de la cobertura, la infraestructura física y el equipamiento necesario[...]» y se incorporaron funciones más novedosas como la de «asegurar el mejoramiento permanente de la calidad» (Art. 347). Respecto al problema de la calidad, el texto constitucional

19 En el país ésta comprende a la Educación General Básica y —desde la Constitución de 2008— al Bachillerato, suponiendo 13 años de escolarización continuada.



apuntó la creación de «una institución pública, con autonomía, de evaluación integral interna y externa» (Art. 346), en un giro semejante al planteado por la reforma mexicana.

En cuanto a la regulación del trabajo docente, el intervencionismo asumió varias tonalidades. Para comenzar, se definió encomienda del Estado el garantizar a los docentes las condiciones idóneas para su trabajo, comenzando por la «estabilidad» (Art. 349). En el mismo artículo, se pautó la necesidad de una ley que regulase la trayectoria profesional, un sistema de evaluación del desempeño y la política salarial. De forma idéntica a lo revisado para México, se abría la brecha para instalar un régimen laboral específico para los profesores. Es de resaltar que se adoptó una designación comprensiva de los docentes, aspecto que permitió que la legislación secundaria incorporara a los maestros de las escuelas privadas. Por lo demás, la Constitución incluye un compromiso explícito de tomar «medidas con el fin de superar la precariedad» y a diseñar políticas adecuadas para «el mejoramiento y regularización de la planta docente» (Disposición Transitoria Decimonovena).

Luego de agudas movilizaciones en 2009 y 2010,<sup>20</sup> debates espaciados a lo largo de tres años y un veto parcial del Presidente, a finales de marzo de 2011, estaba lista para su promulgación la Ley Orgánica de Educación Intercultural (LOEI). En el plano de las relaciones laborales, la ley profundizó el intervencionismo estatal. En este sentido organizó el funcionamiento de la carrera docente, entendida como la trayectoria laboral de los maestros de colegios públicos y fiscomisionales,<sup>21</sup> de un modo más completo que como hasta el momento la había regulado la anterior Ley de Carrera Docente y Escalafón (LCDE) de 1991 y profundizando las directrices del Decreto 708 de 2007 en cuanto a sustraer estos procesos del control de la Unión Nacional de Educadores (UNE). Atípicamente, el ordenamiento laboral específico para los docentes, fue mejor apreciado que el establecido por la Ley Orgánica de Servicio Público (LOSEP) de 2010 para el resto de los empleados públicos, especialmente en términos salariales.

Los cambios de la LOEI consolidaron la organización por el MINEDUC de un sistema meritocrático para el ingreso y ascenso de los docentes, cargos directivos y diversos funcionarios (Arts. 97–110), con reglas claras para la inscripción de los candidatos, la participación en los certámenes y la asignación de nombramientos en función de los resultados. En el empeño de dar nuevos pasos, la LOEI definió las competencias del Instituto Nacional de Evaluación Educativa (INEVAL) como entidad responsable de diseñar e implementar los concursos de oposición y también de la totalidad de las evaluaciones del sistema educativo ecuatoriano. Para ello se constituía «como entidad de derecho público, con autonomía administrativa, financiera y técnica» (Art. 67). Sin embargo, el diseño institucional del INEVAL es clave para situar como el intervencionismo se alineaba más con las fuerzas que dirigían el Estado, en desmedro del poder sindical. Así, la máxima instancia de decisión dentro del órgano —la Junta Directiva— se conformaría por tres miembros, designados por el titular del Ejecutivo Ecuatoriano, por la Secretaría Nacional de Educación Superior, Ciencia, Tecnología e Innovación; y por la Secretaría Nacional de Planificación y Desarrollo, tras superar concursos de oposición y demostrar

20 En 2009 se produjeron protestas y un Paro Magisterial en septiembre en contra de la evaluación docente obligatoria (El Universo, 7 de octubre de 2009). El 2010 fue un año crítico por las protestas de sindicatos del sector público contra la tramitación de la Ley Orgánica de Servicio Público e incluso una sublevación policial contra el gobierno el 30 de septiembre, sin que se haya aclarado la participación de la UNE en estos eventos.

21 En las escuelas fiscomisionales la administración es privada pero los recursos financieros son parcial o totalmente públicos, estando obligadas a ofrecer sus servicios de forma gratuita.

sus aptitudes para el cargo. Sin embargo, el otro puesto clave en el funcionamiento del Instituto —el de Director Ejecutivo— sería seleccionado directamente por la Junta Directiva a partir de una terna presentada por el MINEDUC. A mayores, en el INEVAL no se prevén instancias consultivas, ni mucho menos órganos colegiados de decisión con otros actores, mientras sí se especifica la «necesidad de procesos de coordinación con la Autoridad Educativa Nacional» (Art. 68). De hecho, a diferencia del INEE mexicano, reconocido con claridad como autoridad en materia de evaluación educativa, el INEVAL en Ecuador se apega a los estándares de calidad educativa definidos por el MINEDUC para definir los indicadores operativos que finalmente se aplicarán en las evaluaciones. En resumen, el Instituto se constituye en órgano ejecutor —y no rector— de la política evaluativa y —en el orden operativo— su cúpula se hace depender del Poder Ejecutivo. A pesar de su menor autonomía, el INEVAL está facultado para evaluar incluso la gestión de las autoridades educativas (Art. 68), aportando una visión más integral de la función evaluadora.

Puntualizando, en el caso de la reforma ecuatoriana presenciamos similitudes respecto a los cambios legales analizados para México, en tanto la regulación del ingreso y el ascenso laboral de los docentes se hace descansar en certámenes encargados a entes formalmente autónomos, sobre los cuales el Estado —y en este caso particular la Autoridad Educativa— tiene significativas posibilidades de influir. El nuevo esquema ciertamente limita la incidencia de la tramitación clientelares bajo el control sindical. La entronización de este tipo de evaluación obligatoria, se conjuga en la ley con prohibiciones que reducen aún más el margen de maniobra de la UNE, detallando como infracciones como la de «ordenar la asistencia del personal docente, administrativo y/o alumnado a actos públicos de proselitismo político de cualquier naturaleza» (Art.132). Sin embargo, la disputa por limitar las interferencias sindicales en la evolución del sistema educativo, no se conjugó con avances en las cláusulas de protección laboral como veremos a continuación.

Antes de avanzar hacia el análisis de la desregulación, conviene apuntar un último aspecto elocuente del intervencionismo de la LOEI. Se trata de la definición de la jornada laboral, aspecto también sujeto a considerable polémica.<sup>22</sup> A partir de 2011 esta quedó fijada en 40 horas-reloj semanales, de las cuales 30 horas serían frente a clase, de acuerdo con el Reglamento General. El resto del tiempo, se reservaba para «labores educativas fuera de clases» —planificar clases, atender a familiares, corregir exámenes, etc.— pero especificando que estas implicaban la permanencia en el centro educativo. Esta era una exigencia inédita, que el gobierno juzgó coherente con las políticas de ampliación de los nombramientos y de aumentos salariales, condiciones que limitaban la necesidad de recurrir al pluriempleo. La ley reformativa de 2015 y las consiguientes modificaciones al Reglamento General, limitaron a 6 horas académicas diarias la permanencia en el centro escolar, permitiendo que el resto de tiempo dedicado a otras tareas pedagógicas pudiera realizarse en otros entornos, pero reportando las labores realizadas mediante el programa «Comunidad Educativa en Línea», para lo cual les ha sido entregado un kit tecnológico.

Sobre cómo resultan afectados los derechos laborales de los trabajadores con la reforma educativa en Ecuador, la dimensión más problemática vuelve a ser la estabilidad en el empleo, limitada ahora de forma *sui generis*. Es de reconocer que tanto en

22 Muestra de ellos son las manifestaciones convocadas por la UNE en 2011 (La República, 5 de octubre de 2011), así como las advertencias de autoridades del MINEDUC de que los faltistas serían sancionados (PP Digital, 5 de octubre de 2011)

la Constitución y como en la LOEI prima el espíritu de concebir la estabilidad como un componente central en el servicio docente. Así por ejemplo, para quienes superan los concursos de ingreso y adquieren un nombramiento provisional, la LOEI no impone una evaluación diagnóstica para mantenerse en el servicio y obtener la definitividad, sino las razonables condiciones de aprobar cursos de inducción de dos años y la obtención de una titulación pedagógica para bachilleres o licenciados en otras disciplinas. De hecho, los concursos de ingreso han sido la vía fundamental de asumir el compromiso constitucional de abatir los altos índices de contratación temporal.<sup>23</sup> Sin embargo, el principio de la estabilidad laboral no resulta siempre garantizado de modo adecuado.

En primer lugar, la LOEI aumentó significativamente el número de prohibiciones, que superan las vigentes para el resto de los servidores públicos, entre ellas quince determinantes de «destitución del cargo». A estas se agrega la de reprobar en sólo dos ocasiones consecutivas las evaluaciones de desempeño (Art. 133, inciso f), para las cuales el INEVAL fijó una frecuencia bianual, salvo para los «evaluados de insuficientes» que tendrían que rendirla al año siguiente. Más problemático que el aumento de las causales de despido, resulta el proceso de tramitación de las destituciones. En este sentido la LOEI establece que este tipo de sanción grave se imponga por la vía de sumario administrativo, contemplando dos posibilidades de impugnación: apelar ante la autoridad educativa del nivel inmediato superior o recurrir ante un Tribunal de lo Contencioso Administrativo. Si bien este procedimiento abreviado estaba en la anterior LCED y es recurrente en las leyes de servicio público de la región, contrasta con otras soluciones por ejemplo del derecho administrativo español donde las sanciones graves conllevan un proceso disciplinario ordinario con mayores garantías legales. Hasta aquí, se podría concluir que el aumento del número de prohibiciones causantes de destitución, deja a los trabajadores más expuestos a enfrentar fallas procesales.<sup>24</sup> Pero captar la singularidad de la desregulación —en tanto deterioro de la estabilidad laboral previamente garantizada— exige examinar las instancias implicadas.

Según la LOEI, será competencia de las Juntas Distritales de Resolución de Conflictos imponer las medidas disciplinarias más severas, cuyos miembros son nombrados por la autoridad ministerial (Art. 65). De este modo, se sustituyeron a las anteriores Comisiones Regionales y Provinciales de Defensa Profesional, donde sí intervenían los sindicatos con gran capacidad de bloqueo de las sanciones, garantizando de facto la estabilidad laboral. Más allá, se han apuntado otras imperfecciones en el diseño de las Juntas, entre ellas que sus integrantes —al tener otras ocupaciones— no disponen del tiempo pertinente para desarrollar el sumario, ni cuentan con una adecuada composición profesional de abogados y psicólogos (Salazar, 2016:89). La LOEI tampoco determinó jerarquías entre los integrantes de la Junta, aspecto que la reformatoria de 2015 resolvió indicando que serían presididas por el Director Distrital. En este punto específico, se observa que la combinación entre el aumento de las prohibiciones, los procedimientos de sumario, y un diseño insatisfactorio de las Juntas Distritales, podría atentar contra los derechos de los trabajadores. Nuevamente se plantea aquí el dilema de si esta era la única solución

23 Según las declaraciones del ministro del rubro cerca del 90 % de los maestros públicos habían obtenido un nombramiento oficial en abril de 2015 (El Telégrafo, 14 de abril de 2015).

24 Considérese por ejemplo que según el Reglamento de la LOEI el sumariado sólo dispone de dos ocasiones para presentar pruebas en su defensa: una al momento de ser notificado del inicio del sumario (plazo de 3 días naturales) y otra en la etapa de pruebas (5 días hábiles en los que también podrá solicitar se practiquen nuevas investigaciones); además se limita a 24 horas de anticipación la convocatoria a audiencia; y finalmente, no se fija el plazo en que la Junta debe resolver el sumario.

para limitar el control sindical sobre el sistema educativo. En todo caso, cabe aclarar que hasta el momento no se han producido despidos masivos. Quizá más riesgoso para la estabilidad resulte la ampliación del rango de los nombramientos provisionales o incluso la rehabilitación legal de los contratos de servicios ocasionales, que se observa en las reformas de 2015.

Concretamente en cuanto a la evaluación de desempeño, vale decir que el magisterio ecuatoriano e incluso la UNE terminaron aceptando el nuevo esquema, como lo demuestra el acuerdo alcanzado en octubre de 2009 (Ecuador Inmediato, 7 de octubre de 2009) y la masiva participación en concursos. Tal desenlace fue favorecido por un aumento explícito de las remuneraciones, tanto las que supusieron las categorías de escalafón.<sup>25</sup> La reciente simplificación de las categorías escalafonarias —reducidas de once a siete por la ley reformativa de 2015— aumentó la valoración positiva de los mecanismos de ascenso. Asimismo, la regulación por acuerdos ministeriales en 2014 y 2015 de la «recategorización docente» enunciada por la LOEI —una posibilidad excepcional y voluntaria de ascenso acelerado en el escalafón— ha aumentado la legitimidad de las evaluaciones.<sup>26</sup> Además la variedad de instrumentos evaluativos (incluidos evaluación por pares, observación de clases, y cuestionarios llenados por estudiantes y padres de familia), compensan el peso de las pruebas estandarizadas. Respecto a estas últimas, se le permite al docente seleccionar la especialidad en que preferían ser evaluados dentro de la prueba de saberes especializados, una de las cuatro que tienen que enfrentar.<sup>27</sup> Esta metodología evaluativa ha producido resultados satisfactorios.<sup>28</sup> Se valoran sin embargo como insuficientes respecto a la demanda, las posibilidades de formación continua y capacitación gratuitas, a pesar de haber sido potenciadas por la creación del sistema SIPROFE, la Universidad Nacional de Educación (UNAE) y convenios con IES internacionales.<sup>29</sup>

### 3.2. Innovaciones de la reforma ecuatoriana en la regulación de la enseñanza privada

Como es evidente, también en el caso ecuatoriano las pretensiones de rectoría se concentraban en el sistema educativo público. No obstante, aumentaron de forma significativa las atribuciones estatales respecto a la enseñanza privada. En cuanto a la regulación específica del trabajo de sus docentes, con la reforma éstos quedaron sujetos igualmente

25 Considerérese que para la primera categoría de ingreso (Categoría J en el escalafón inicial de 2011) se estableció un sueldo mensual de 500 dólares, esto es, un 140 % mayor que los 208 dólares que percibían con anterioridad. Posteriormente, si bien la evaluación de desempeño se generalizó para todos los ascensos, las mejoras salariales asociadas a cada categoría actuaron como poderosos incentivos. Por ejemplo para la primera categoría de ascenso (la H) se fijó un salario de 695 dólares. Además, los resultados obtenidos en la evaluación —por el docente y/o la institución de adscripción— serían considerados como uno de los componentes para la determinación de los salarios y se denominó «remuneración variable por eficiencia» (Art. 116). Otro aspecto importante de la LOEI fue homologar el sueldo de los docentes con los del resto de los servidores públicos regidos por la LOSEP, a partir de lo cual los maestros se beneficiarían automáticamente de los aumentos salariales para el sector público.

26 Según estadísticas de la prueba SER Maestro Recategorización publicadas por el INEVAL en su web institucional, en la convocatoria 2014-2015 participaron más de 65 mil docentes, lo que equivale a un 44 % de los maestros que trabajan en las escuelas fiscales.

27 Cfr. Resolución 026 de 2016 del INEVAL

28 Según reportes de INEVAL sobre la prueba SER Maestro 2016 —evaluación de desempeño docente— aprobaron un 93,2 % de los maestros evaluados.

29 Según un informe de la Subsecretaría de Desarrollo Profesional Educativo (2015), de 2008 a 2012 el programa SIPROFE atendió como promedio —anual— al 38 % de la planta docente total.

a la evaluación de desempeño (Art. 126). Según se documenta en los informes del INEVAL relativos a la prueba «Ser Profesor» en 2015, tales evaluaciones se han aplicado de forma efectiva aunque sólo a centenar y medio de docentes. Aunque no era posible para la legislación educativa ordenar un vínculo directo entre los resultados obtenidos en estas evaluaciones y la remuneración salarial, la LOEI estableció que no debían ser menores que el salario básico unificado (Art. 127), el cual ha aumentado en un 104 % aproximadamente (de 2006 a 2016), situándose en los 366 dólares. Para aumentar el peso de esta disposición, en las últimas reformas a la LOEI en 2015 se determinó que la autoridad educativa garantizaría que los maestros privados además percibieran las prestaciones correspondientes, y añadió que en caso de incumplimiento las autoridades educativas podrían «sancionar a los responsables». Otra brecha abierta para que el Estado interviniese en la fijación de las retribuciones salariales de los maestros privados, se promueve en el Reglamento General de la LOEI, cuando enuncia que «las remuneraciones de los docentes y directivos serán proporcionales a su antigüedad, experiencia, eficiencia, funciones y responsabilidades» (Art. 136), estándar que se infiere será revisado al ubicar a las escuelas en los rangos para el cobro de pensiones y matrículas que establezca el MINEDUC. El cumplimiento de tales disposiciones, se ve reforzada por el salto cualitativo que ha experimentado la supervisión escolar, en tanto el MINEDUC ha implementado inspecciones aleatorias —ya no motivadas por quejas— y nuevas instancias para la denuncia inmediata de irregularidades por los ciudadanos, estándares que —en contraste— México había incorporado antes. La profesionalización de los empleados del sector público también ha tributado a supervisiones más efectivas. Un último aspecto relacionado con la evaluación de los profesores privados, es que en principio la LOEI les permite acceder a las opciones de formación continuas del SIPROFE. En la práctica, al menos hasta diciembre de 2016 esta opción continuaba limitada a los docentes de escuelas públicas.

En lo atinente a jornada laboral, cabe añadir que el Reglamento General precisó que si bien ésta debía adecuarse a lo prescrito en el Código de Trabajo, de igual modo respetaría la distribución de tiempos para la labor educativa fuera de clases pautada para los docentes públicos (Art. 40). No obstante, en el problema neurálgico de estimular la contratación a tiempo completo, la legislación no avanza ningún incentivo, manteniendo así el estado de sub-regulación previa. A modo de balance, aun cuando la nueva ley educativa tenía límites claros en su capacidad de alterar el ordenamiento laboral de los maestros privados, este ámbito no se mantiene inmune a los ánimos de rectoría de la norma. Así, se trazan pautas explícitas que en principio obligan a la administración de estos centros, y los sujetan a supervisión.

De forma general, la reforma educativa ecuatoriana expresa tendencias similares a las apuntadas mediante el concepto de *refuncionalización* para México. En el país andino, se observa con claridad la presencia de un intervencionismo que apela a medidas semejantes e incluso avanza más allá. Lo anterior no es óbice para que al menos en el plano de la estabilidad laboral se observe una particular desregulación espoleada por la pugna sostenida con el sindicato magisterial más importante del país. En todo caso, el sentido político de los cambios educativos se demuestra atravesado por vectores diversos. Si por una parte, se observa la intención de debilitar a la UNE, las claras medidas en pro de las condiciones laborales de los docentes —tales como la retribución salarial y opciones de formación— favorecen la construcción de nuevas alianzas por el gobierno. Por su parte, la mayor regulación del sector privado no se plantea como una guerra abierta

a sus gestores, sino más bien como un modo de afianzar los derechos de sus usuarios y de apuntalar mejoras para su personal educativo. Por esta vía, se pretende de igual modo incrementar la legitimidad social del gobierno. En este último aspecto, es interesante observar que el Estado ecuatoriano procura superar una inveterada sub-regulación del importante sector privado y mixto, empeño en el cual debe incorporar estándares ya alcanzados desde mucho antes por países como México, pero también sobrepasarlos mediante mecanismos indirectos de regulación salarial.

## 4. Comentarios finales

Hasta este punto, la revisión de los casos estudiados devuelve argumentos suficientes para concluir que el estudio de las funciones del Estado respecto a la educación no ha dejado de ser un semillero fructífero para la investigación especializada. Tanto la experiencia de México como Ecuador en las nuevas regulaciones del trabajo docente, denotan que no hay un retraimiento estatal, sino más bien una efectiva *refuncionalización*, en la que alternan proyecciones intervencionistas (clásicas y novedosas) con la desregulación e inclusive subregulación. Resaltamos entre estas tendencias, la emergencia de una nueva variante de intervencionismo. Este redundante en un mayor control del Estado sobre el servicio docente y el impulso a su profesionalización, a través de la instauración de concursos de méritos organizados por entes con competencia técnica y diferentes dosis de autonomía. Aunque el centro del nuevo intervencionismo estatal atañe al sector público, el espíritu de las reformas alcanza a la enseñanza privada, que no obstante sigue siendo un ámbito expuesto a una importante subregulación.

Pero no todo son semejanzas en las reformas analizadas, siendo sus diferencias un espacio oportuno para la retroalimentación. Por ejemplo, los modos en que la reforma mexicana regula la autonomía del ente evaluador pueden ser de aportación para su homólogo en el país andino. Por su parte, la preponderancia de los incentivos positivos y la complejidad de las metodologías evaluativas de Ecuador ofrece un referente práctico para México.

Es importante remarcar que en ambos países las reformas han desplazado el papel desempeñado hasta entonces por las organizaciones sindicales y debido a ello enfrentan su resistencia. Este filo anti-sindical de las reformas, amenaza con derivar hacia problemas de desregulación y no ha estimulado un enfoque más garantista de la legislación laboral. A pesar de ello, es un hecho que tanto en México como en Ecuador las reformas han logrado avanzar, bien por el amplio descrédito de las cúpulas sindicales, por la determinación estatal de impulsarla, o por el respaldo que suscitan ciertas mejoras en las bases docentes. No obstante, las próximas coyunturas electorales en ambos países traen incertidumbre sobre el desarrollo de las reformas, por lo cual se prefiere denominarlas como «apuestas», y no como realidades ya cristalizadas.

Por último, suponiendo lo no reversibilidad de las reformas, quedan numerosos desafíos pendientes para ambos países. Entre los más acuciantes se encuentran los de subordinar la evaluación al fortalecimiento de la formación (inicial y continua) al alcance de los maestros, así como a la optimización de modelos educativos que orienten su trabajo. La progresiva conciliación de evaluaciones recurrentes y estabilidad laboral es otro imperativo insoslayable. Asimismo, reclama mayor atención cómo fomentar el trabajo colectivo de los maestros, o cómo habilitar instancias efectivas de incidencia en las distintas fases de la política educativa. En un horizonte más amplio, el cometido estatal de mejorar la calidad educativa reclama atender otros factores que también afectan el aprendizaje de los estudiantes, especialmente las enormes desigualdades de contextos (económicos-sociales-culturales).

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*El enfoque socio-histórico en el mapa  
de la Educación Comparada. Revisión  
y revalorización de sus postulados*

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*The socio-historical approach in mapping Comparative  
Education. Review and revaluation of its postulates*

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## **Resumen**

Este trabajo tiene por objeto el análisis del papel que, la dimensión histórica y social adquiere, en el campo de la Educación Comparada, y subraya la necesidad de realizar una revisión teórica de los supuestos, de las pretensiones y de las posibilidades de la investigación comparativa. Para ello, partimos del hecho de la transformación que el enfoque comparativo está teniendo en los últimos tiempos, y nos hacemos eco del resurgir de las diferentes perspectivas que, de alguna manera, pretenden arrojar luz y hacer frente a los retos actuales a los que se enfrenta la metodología comparada clásica. Desafíos provenientes por un lado, de los cambios en la organización de las estructuras socioeconómicas globales, y por otro, de las propias dificultades que los modelos epistemológicos de corte positivista están teniendo para hacer frente a dichos acontecimientos.

En este sentido, el enfoque socio histórico, estudiado e impulsado por autores contemporáneos como Schriewer, Pereyra, Nóvoa, Popkewitz y Ringer entre otros, aboga por la reconciliación de las ciencias sociales e históricas con la comparación y reivindica su posición como paradigma dentro del discurso configurativo del mapa de la Educación Comparada.

Así pues, dotar el trabajo comparativo de una mayor profundidad histórica permite superar la barrera de la mera descripción e interpretación de datos para analizar, no sólo la materialidad de los hechos educativos, si no las comunidades discursivas que los describen.

*Palabras clave:* enfoque socio-histórico; metodología; perspectivas; mapa de Educación Comparada

## **Abstract**

The aim of this study is to analyse the role that historical and social dimensions play in the field of comparative education, and underscores the need for a theoretical revision of the suppositions, aspirations, and possibilities of comparative research. To do so, we begin with the transformation that the comparative approach has been undergoing recently, and discuss the resurgence of different perspectives that are intended to throw light on and address the current challenges that classical comparative methodology is facing. These are challenges that come, on one hand, from changes in the organization of global socio-economic structures, and on the other, from the difficulties that the positivist epistemological models are having in facing these events.

Thus, the socio-historical approach studied and promoted by contemporary authors such as Schriewer, Pereyra, Nóvoa, Popkewitz and Ringer, among others, advocates a reconciliation between the social/historical sciences and comparative approaches, and defends their position as a paradigm within the discourse that is shaping the map of comparative education.

Providing comparative study with a greater historical depth will therefore make it possible to overcome the barriers of mere description and interpretation of data in order to analyse not only the materiality of educational realities, but also the discursive communities that describe them.

*Key Words:* Socio-historical approach; Methodology; Perspectives; Comparative Education Mapping

## 1. Introducción

Fue a mediados del siglo XIX cuando situamos el momento en el que Emilie Durkheim introdujo, a través de su obra<sup>1</sup>, el método comparativo como «regla de demostración» por excelencia (SCHRIEWER, 2010). Esta caracterización supuso la apertura hacia numerosas metodologías comparadas que se fueron desarrollando principalmente tras la Segunda Guerra Mundial y que encontraron en las ciencias sociales un gran campo de actuación.

Es a partir de los años setenta del pasado siglo, cuando se comienza a cuestionar las concepciones teóricas modernistas que pretendían explicar la complejidad del mundo por sí mismo. Tras un telón marcado por la depresión económica y la crisis del modelo de Estado de Bienestar, se presenta imprescindible la revisión de las teorías que conforman la Educación Comparada, aspecto que va a servir de apertura hacia nuevas propuestas. Y es que de la ciencia comparativa podemos decir que es un tranco con numerosas ramas y así lo manifiesta Sartori: «el árbol del saber crece, y al tronco se le agregan ramas nuevas o más extendidas» (2002: 34). El resurgir de diferentes perspectivas se manifiesta en la pluralidad de enfoques que pretenden arrojar luz y hacer frente a los retos a los que se enfrenta la investigación comparada clásica. Desafíos provenientes por un lado, de los cambios en la organización de las estructuras socioeconómicas globales, que introducen, entre otros, problemas de conceptualización de la Educación Comparada (GARCÍA GARRIDO, 1997), y por otro lado, de las propias dificultades que los modelos epistemológicos de corte positivista están teniendo para hacer frente a dichos acontecimientos.

En este escenario, toma una posición relevante el llamado enfoque socio-histórico, que aboga por investigaciones socio-educativas desafiantes a la linealidad de la producción teórica positivista (POTTS, 2010), exclusivamente basados en la razón (POTKEWITZ, 1994), y recalca la necesidad de buscar alternativas metodológicas que partan de perspectivas críticas (KLEES, 2015). Bajo estas premisas justificativas, este trabajo tiene por objeto el análisis del papel que, la dimensión histórica y social adquiere, en el campo de la Educación Comparada, y subraya la necesidad de realizar una revisión teórica de los supuestos, de las pretensiones y de las posibilidades de la investigación comparativa. Aspira esta orientación a hacerse un hueco en el mapa de la Educación Comparada, marcado éste por el pluralismo epistemológico y el rechazo del imperio de las tesis positivistas.

Por todo ello, este estudio pretende adentrarse, así como, revalorizar los postulados configurativos del enfoque socio-histórico que, aboga por el tránsito de la descripción a la explicación, encontrada ésta en el contexto histórico y la influencia de las fuerzas culturales. A partir de la posición del mismo en el mapa configurativo propuesto, el trabajo se imbuje en el análisis de los que entendemos son los aspectos clave en su fundamento: La explicación como razón de ser de la investigación comparada en las Ciencias Sociales y la necesidad de reconciliar la historia con la Educación Comparada.

## 2. Configuración de un mapa de la Educación Comparada

No son muchas las iniciativas que podemos encontrar respecto a la presentación, de manera ordenada y completa, de una clasificación de las diferentes teorías y metodologías existentes en el campo de la Educación Comparada. A pesar de ello, si existen

1 «Las reglas del método sociológico», 1895.

algunas iniciativas bien conocidas, Epstein (1983), García Garrido (1982), Halls (1990) y Paulston (1993) entre otros<sup>2</sup>, que vienen a enriquecer el panorama epistémico del área científica que nos ocupa.

Uno de los trabajos más provechosos en este sentido lo encontramos en el realizado por A. NÓVOA (1998)<sup>3</sup>, que será el referente a lo largo de este artículo, ya que en la codificación que propone, se alude y se sitúa el enfoque que es objeto de nuestro estudio. El autor presenta una cartografía a partir de la cual establece, concretamente, siete *perspectivas o configuraciones* a través de las cuales agrupa las diferentes tendencias teóricas y metodológicas en el campo científico de la educación comprada así como, ubica a los diferentes autores referentes de las mismas. Para ello, conjuga dos variables; por un lado las teorías (del consenso y del conflicto), que aportarían un valor ideológico a la categorización, y por otro, las orientaciones (descriptivas y conceptuales) que delimitarían el carácter de la investigación.

Aunque resulta un tema polémico e incluso molesto, el aspecto de reconocer la presencia de la ideología en la actividad investigadora, hemos de aceptar el hecho de que una teoría de la educación esté cargada de juicios de valor que en muchos casos se omiten, y que condicionan las concepciones de la misma. No escapa de estos postulados la Educación Comparada, y así lo afirmaba Epstein (1990) al destacar la importancia que tiene para la misma los resultados de sus estudios como herramienta de reforma educativa:

«[...] hay que señalar que la Educación Comparada incorpora una dimensión ideológica por cuanto posee una utilidad práctica en la reforma de la enseñanza. Si la Educación Comparada no fuese más que un ejercicio académico no habría motivo para el desarrollo de una conciencia política en su seno. Sucede, no obstante, que nos obsesiona la idea de obtener algún beneficio práctico de los estudios comparados» (pp. 268-269).

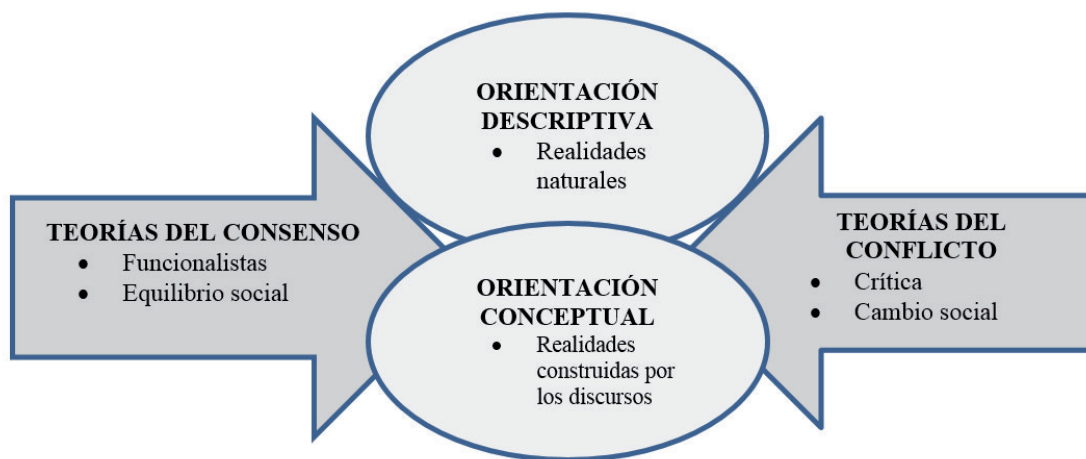
En este caso, la tipificación presentada viene marcada por las teorías del consenso que encuentran su base en el funcionalismo, fundamentado por la idea de que la sociedad es un sistema cuyas partes están interrelacionadas y que dichas partes «buscan el equilibrio y armonía entre ellas, que se alcanza mediante el consenso» (GAVARI, 2012: 54). El marco de esta teoría lo encontramos en la estabilidad y continuidad de los sistemas. Se le critica la incapacidad de dar explicaciones respecto a todos los hechos sociales. A pesar de que sí admite los cambios en el sistema, no integra el conflicto como «productor» de cambios del sistema.

Por su parte, los enfoques críticos se distinguen de los anteriores, por su conexión con la teoría general de la sociedad. Las teorías del conflicto suponen un primer alejamiento de las orientaciones funcionalistas, describen las dinámicas sociales como luchas por el poder social entre los diferentes grupos de interés. Es por ello que «subrayan el conflicto

2 EPSTEIN, E.H. (1983): Currents left and right: ideology in comparative education, *Comparative Education Review*, 27, pp. 3-29; GARCÍA GARRIDO, J.L. (1982): Fundamentos de Educación Comparada (Madrid: Dykinson); HALLS, W.D. (1990): *Comparative education. Contemporary issues and trends*, Unesco (Londres/París); y PAULSTON, R. G. (1993): Mapping discourse in Comparative Education Texts, *Compare*, 23, 2, pp.117-152.

3 Tomamos como referencia el libro escrito por el autor *Histoire comparaison*, publicado en el año 1998, siendo conscientes que este planteamiento se ha recogido en otros trabajos de A. Nóvoa y ha sido referido por varios autores que se han hecho eco del mismo en sus publicaciones, destacando su valor académico y científico.

de clase, los distintos intereses de las clases y las diferentes relaciones de éstas con (y los beneficios que obtienen de) la actividad del sistema educativo» (MASEMAN, 1990: 28).

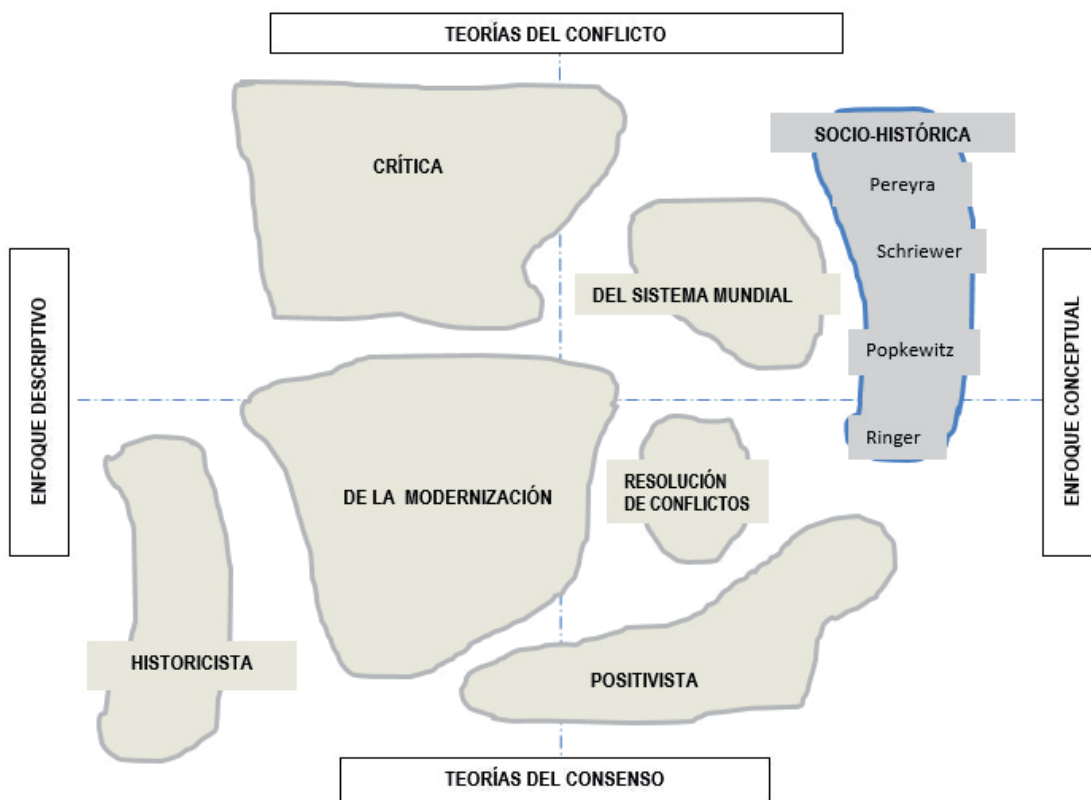


**Gráfico 1.** Relación de variables en la configuración cartográfica. **Fuente.** Elaboración propia a partir de NÓVOA (1998).

Los enfoques metodológicos que sirven de base en la diferenciación están delimitados por aquellos en los que predomina la descripción y los que buscan y adoptan una postura teorizante. Quedarían representadas, por un lado, las tendencias que abogan por la recogida de datos diseñada a gran escala, a partir de las cuales los fenómenos y hechos educativos se considerarían realidades naturales observables. Por otro lado, se representan las disposiciones que resaltan los déficits del análisis conceptual en los estudios de Educación Comparada, a partir de la cual, los hechos educativos se entenderían como realidades construidas por los discursos, localizadas en un espacio y tiempo.

Para identificar cada una de las siete representaciones resultantes, utiliza Nóvoa cuatro parámetros, a través de los cuales caracteriza esos perfiles, en función de sus miras comparativas:

- Propósito de la comparación, intenciones.
- Teorías y conceptos de la comparación empleados.
- Unidades y objetos de la comparación.
- Métodos de la comparación /prácticas.



**Gráfico 2:** Comunidades discursivas de la Educación Comparada. **Fuente.** Elaboración propia a partir de NÓVOA (1998).

Como podemos apreciar, dibujar un mapa de la Educación Comparada en el que se plasme el territorio imaginario marcado por las diferentes teorías, y el espacio entre una y otra, así como los representantes de cada una de ellas, resulta un ejercicio muy fructífero y al mismo tiempo, una tarea no exento de controversias. Se corre el riesgo de caracterizar un enfoque comparativo como unívoco, sin tener en cuenta que dentro o detrás del mismo puedan existir diversos enfoques. Y en estos términos se manifiestan autores como Ferrer (2002), que aun resaltando el valor de la propuesta realizada por Nóvoa, ven en la misma cómo el uso del término *histórico*<sup>4</sup> sería inadecuado ya que podría suponer cierta descalificación de alguna de las otras opciones propuestas:

«[...] Emplear el término «historicista» en la primera perspectiva supone infravalorar esta opción, sobre todo cuando la séptima perspectiva se denomina «socio-histórica» [...] entiendo que se emplee para resaltar que el auténtico enfoque válido es el «socio-histórico». No obstante, a pesar de todo ello, creo que debería hacerse un esfuerzo para proponer otro tipo de denominaciones, más aún teniendo en cuenta que el propio autor está implicado en esta cuestión, al estar identificado con la séptima perspectiva» (p. 113).

4 Así, el enfoque denominado por Nóvoa como «historicista» estaría próximo a las teorías del consenso y dentro del carácter descriptivo, y marcará el devenir de los estudios centrados en la descripción de sistemas educativos a partir de factores históricos. Parece como si uno y otro enfoque; historicista y socio-histórico, tomaran posiciones completamente antagónicas, en las que el enfoque socio-histórico aportaría «algo más» que una visión historicista del conocimiento.

Del mismo modo, destacamos como ardua la labor de posicionar a los autores en cada una de las perspectivas, ya que hay autores que aun siendo relevantes en el campo de la Educación Comparada no aparecen en la categorización y otros que podrían estar recogidos en más de una de las perspectivas propuestas. También, se podrían añadir otros enfoques que no quedan representados y que sí serían de interés para la investigación en el campo comparativo (VEGA, 2011).

### 3. El enfoque socio-histórico: búsqueda del sentido histórico de los hechos

Podemos comprobar cómo la perspectiva socio-histórica quedaría posicionada en la parte superior derecha, próxima a la orientación conceptual y dentro del espacio encuadrado por las teorías del conflicto. Sitúa Nóvoa a autores como Schriewer, Pereyra, Popkewitz y Ringer en el impulso y desarrollo de esta concepción histórico-social de la metodología comparada.

En esta emergencia de nuevos modelos teóricos y metodológicos de la Educación Comparada, el enfoque socio-histórico viene a «consagrar una nueva epistemología del conocimiento que define las perspectivas de trabajo centradas en las comunidades discursivas, es decir, en la manera en que se producen y se difunden los discursos» (NÓVOA, 2000: 116), los hechos educativos que se describen, interpretan y ubican en un espacio-tiempo determinado (POPKEWITS, 1998).

Las prácticas discursivas se convierten en su objeto de estudio, presidido por la necesidad de *historificar* la Educación Comparada, y así lo justifica el profesor Pereyra al afirmar que:

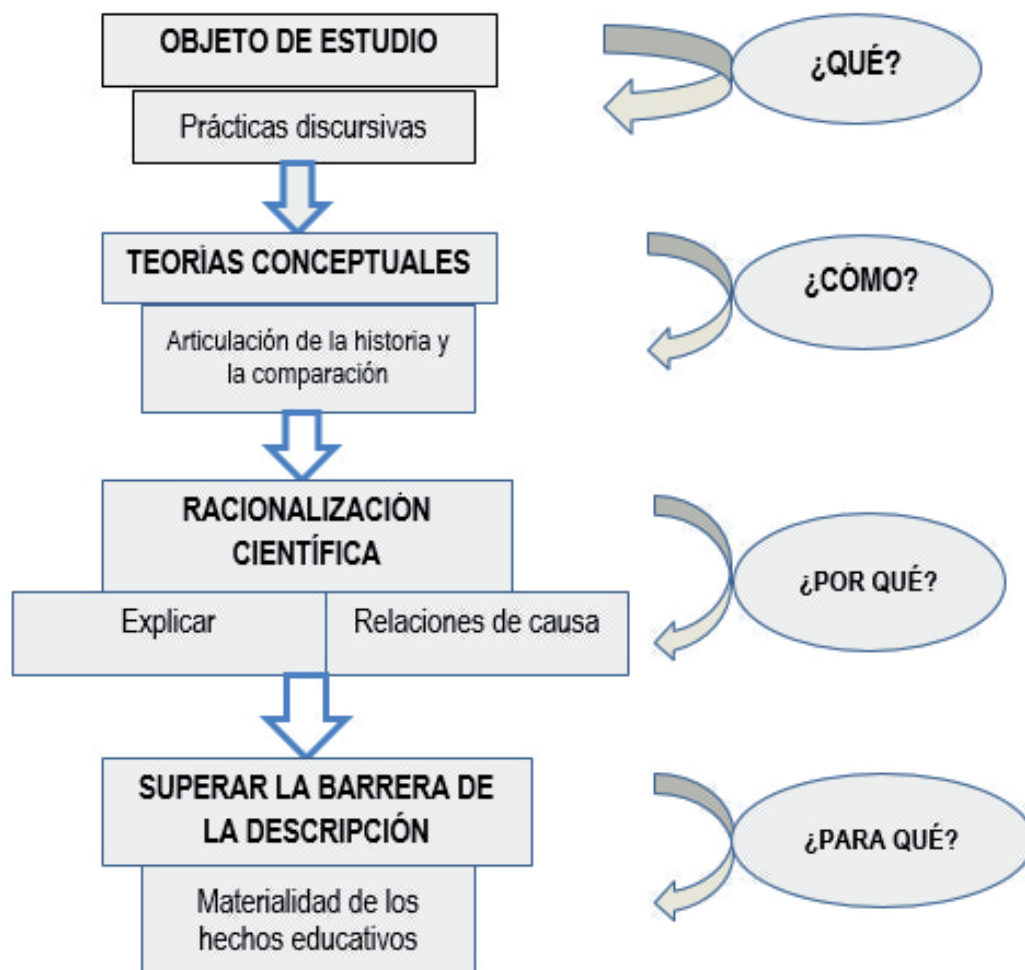
«[...] esta renovación viene definida por la historificación de la comparación, o, para ser más preciso, por el fortalecimiento de un uso diferente de lo histórico, de la historia, dentro del discurso social. En lugar de la simple ilustración de sus interpretaciones, la historia vendría a clarificar y articular conceptualmente a la comparación» (1990: 30).

Reconoce pues, «el valor explicativo de la historia y la importancia estratégica de la génesis histórica de la Educación Comparada» (MARTÍNEZ USARRALDE, 2006: 86). Podemos afirmar que, estamos ante una de las tendencias más prolíferas dentro del escenario comparado que:

«da un paso más, al reconocer cómo la importancia no ha de recaer [...] en los hechos educativos, sino en las corrientes intelectuales que generan retóricas discursivas diferentes para describirlos, interpretarlos y contextualizarlos en un espacio y tiempos concretos a fin de organizar y gestionar las prácticas educativas» (MARTÍNEZ USARRALDE, 2003: 119).

Es por ello, que el foco de investigación y de acción se amplía con respecto a otros enfoques, el ímpetu que recae sobre la historia abre paso a la teoría y a la práctica social como elementos de interés, al tiempo que se critica firmemente, aquellas corrientes centradas exclusivamente en resultados educativos cuantificables, enfatizando la historia y la teoría en detrimento de la simple descripción (SCHRIEWER, 1993).





**Gráfico 3:** Esquema de articulación del enfoque socio-histórico. **Fuente.** Elaboración propia.

Así pues, se trata de un enfoque que, de una manera coherente, pretende unir el análisis de los discursos educativos con la historia, entendida ésta como un instrumento que nos va a proporcionar claves explicativas, y todo ello, fundamentado en un marco social, que va a servir de elemento legitimador de los propios hechos educativos.

Esta corriente, toma las cuestiones de identidad y las eleva a un primer plano, posicionándolas en el centro de su objeto de estudio. Esto le lleva a interesarse por temas que van desde la construcción del currículo y la formación de las disciplinas escolares hasta el estudio de las regulaciones políticas y sociales, pasando por la disertación de formas legítimas de conocimiento escolar (NÓVOA, 2000). Los impulsores de esta corriente entienden que a la Educación Comparada se le presentan una serie de retos a los que han de hacer frente, entre ellos la de desarrollar enfoques capaces de generar orientaciones teóricas y sistemas conceptuales con el fin de concebir la comparación como práctica científica social (NÓVOA, 1998).

### 3.1. La explicación como razón de ser de la investigación comparada en las Ciencias Sociales

«La Educación Comparada no consiste en comparar sino en explicar»

Adam Przeworski, 1970

Conocida es la afirmación que realizó Przeworski respecto a la función que, para él, radicaba en la Educación Comparada. Remarca la existencia en los estudios comparados de un predominio continuo de análisis correlacionados de datos, en detrimento de discusiones epistemológicas, aspecto que resta valor científico a la investigación, y aboga por la necesidad de superar limitaciones presentadas por la metodología comparada a lo largo de su historia.

Sin entrar a valorar y mucho menos a negar que la comparación deba comparar (SARTORI, 2002), sí parece que exista cierto consenso en reconocer, tal y como manifestó en su momento Ringer, «la pretensión explicativa que subyace en la investigación comparada en el ámbito de las ciencias sociales» (SCHRIEWER, 1990: 79) y es que a la Educación Comparada se le ha achacado la escasa aportación que a lo largo del tiempo ha tenido con respecto al desarrollo del conocimiento científico dentro de su área, materializada ésta en la inexistencia de sólidas bases teóricas que acompañen a la comparación. En general, la investigación comparada existente «ha hecho un uso muy limitado de diseños o modelos teóricos para organizar y categorizar conceptualmente el trabajo de comparación» (PEREYRA, 1990:34).

Se considera a Michael Sadler el teórico pionero en cuestionar la utilidad científica de la mera recogida de datos e informaciones en investigación comparada, ya que los trabajos simplemente descriptivos, sin ningún tipo de aproximación analítica, ponen en duda el rigor epistemológico de los procesos de comparación. Se apela a la utilización de una metodología cualitativa y de observación participante, cuyos fundamentos teóricos encontramos en los derivados de la sociología y la filosofía crítica. Los postulados introducidos por la filosofía de las ciencias se asientan sobre la base de los aportes desarrollados por la investigación socio-histórica. Esto nos lleva a una concepción menos abstracta de la propia ciencia y a la superación del reduccionismo epistemológico, a través de la *explicación* de los fenómenos históricos, y así, «al fundamento epistemológico de la ciencia se le integran el fundamento histórico y el social, a través de la historia y la sociología de la ciencia» (PEREYRA, 2000: 34).

Sacar partido a las descripciones, que hasta el momento, habían marcado la senda de los trabajos realizados en este campo, requería profundizar en «el por qué» y en el «para qué» de las mismas, encontrar la «*fuera espiritual intangible, impalpable* que servía de sostén y dotaba de eficacia a determinados sistemas e instituciones» (GARCÍA GARRIDO, 1990: 110).

La orientación explicativa de la investigación comparada, en el ámbito de la educación, no pretende prescindir de la descripción, simplemente subraya la insuficiencia científica de la misma. Explicación sucede a descripción en el sentido de que, a través de ella, se intenta descubrir, dentro de estas constataciones, la razón de ser de las mismas, lo que nos lleva a acudir al concepto de causa y a la necesidad de analizar las circunstancias que rodean un hecho concreto, para poder así clarificar el porqué del mismo. Es por ello que, «encontrar causas genéticas (o históricas) significa poner en claro el origen de la situación actual a través del tiempo» (OLIVERA, 2008: 168), y de esta manera se posicionaba Ringer al respecto al advertir que:

«desconfío de la perspectiva que sostiene que las ideas son causas incausadas, que se generan unas a otras mediante «influencias», o que se «infiltran por goteo» hasta inundar unas opiniones inarticuladas pero generalizadas» (2010: 197-198).

Estas formulaciones, aun siendo proyectadas en épocas pasadas, han perdurado en el tiempo, a pesar de que, en la práctica, ha sido difícil mantener las pretensiones que la investigación social comparativa tiene a la hora de proporcionar explicaciones convincentes (RINGER, 2006). La necesidad de comprender, explicar e interpretar subyace en toda investigación planteada, ahora bien, quizás lo que resulta actualmente más problemático es la aplicabilidad práctica (SCHRIEWER, 1990) que tiene en la investigación social, la pretensión de *explicar*. El método comparado se atribuye la pretensión de explicar fenómenos sociales, para ello, parte de una problemática característica de las ciencias sociales comparadas que contiene unos aspectos que pasamos a resumir:

- a) que los contextos sociales (nacionales, culturales, etc.) ejercen una influencia decisiva sobre los fenómenos intrasociales, tales como procesos, formas de organización, modelos de pensamiento, de comportamiento y de relaciones-y sobre los efectos y problemas que resultan de ellos;
- b) que los contextos sociales que se consideren de influencia pueden descomponerse, de acuerdo con aspectos de interés temático y teórico, en distintos factores condicionantes y;
- c) que la ampliación de la base empírica inter-social que se puede lograr con la comparación despliega un campo de observación, desarrollado históricamente, [...] permitiendo así identificar de forma metódica y evaluar con respecto a su fuerza explicativa, las relaciones entre los factores condicionantes sociales y los fenómenos de interés particular [...]

Todos ello, nos conduce a la necesidad de apostar por una investigación comparativa en Educación Comparada que se base en orientaciones teóricas y sistemas conceptuales, capaces de incorporar perspectivas analíticas y contemplar la Educación Comparada «como una empresa razona de análisis» (PEREYRA, 1990:68).

### **3.2. ¿Por qué hablamos de necesidad de reconciliación entre la historia y la comparación?**

Prácticamente desde sus orígenes, la Educación Comparada ha manifestado un sólido vínculo de parentesco con la historia de la educación, relaciones que se vieron envueltas en un proceso de alejamiento, motivado quizás por un desinterés mutuo. Es a partir de los años setenta del pasado siglo cuando se comienza a «reflexionar sobre el papel de la historia en la comparación» (PEREYRA, 1990: 31). La sociología histórica aporta unas valiosas conclusiones en este sentido. Así pues, el descrédito de las teorías de la modernización y del funcionalismo estructural va a propiciar que, una nueva generación de sociólogos, aboguen por el renacimiento del uso de lo histórico en la teoría social. Un movimiento que pretende llenar el vacío de la teoría, a través de la reformulación del uso de la historia dentro del discurso social.

Jürgen Schriewer es sin duda, uno de los principales intérpretes contemporáneos en la explicación de la tradición historicista de la Educación Comparada. En sus numerosas obras plasma con ahínco la necesidad de «reconciliación de historia y comparación». Fundamenta su discurso en las tesis de Michael Sadler y sus continuadores (Nicholas

Hans e Isaac Kandel, entre otros), y defiende la idea de que a la Educación Comparada le compete el estudio de las causas que producen los fenómenos educativos así como las «fuerzas intangibles» que subyacen en todos los sistemas educativos. Concibe la Educación Comparada como una interpretación histórica de la educación, la cual a su vez se contempla como un hecho cultural, de construcción social. Y es por ello, que apela en sus postulados a la necesidad de reconciliar la historia con la comparación:

«Esta reconciliación no significa sólo combinar el análisis de procesos históricos con el análisis comparado de estructuras; implica, además, la historicación de las mismas unidades de la comparación, es decir, de entidades de contorno impreciso, sujetas a cambio a lo largo del tiempo y construidas en interacción con otras unidades nacionales (sociales, culturales, etc).»(SCHRIEWER 2010: 46).

El profesor García Garrido, invitado a comentar la ponencia presentada por Schriewer (1990)<sup>5</sup>, nos proporcionó una relevante valoración justificativa de lo que él definió como «una continua imbricación discursiva, manifestada por el ponente, entre historia y comparación». Recoge Garrido, aplicando la vieja teoría escolástica de los «tres grados de abstracción», la existencia de tres grados de comparación. La comparación «de primer grado» consistiría en una constatación plana, elemental, superficial, de semejanzas y diferencias entre situaciones educativas, que en muchos casos tienen como objetivo confirmar realidades que las justifique o formular propuestas de reforma, pero que carecen de marco de contextualización. Por su parte, en la «comparación de segundo grado», el interés científico recaería en las causas que producen los fenómenos o los hechos sometidos a comparación y que entre ellos, muestran rasgos de semejanza o diferencia. Esta línea de investigación, superaría la mera constatación de fenómenos y se plantearía la explicación de los mismos, es decir, estudiar «su razón de ser». Es por ello, que en este nivel científico, los razonamientos de naturaleza histórica se hacen imprescindibles, ya que las causas de los fenómenos sociales pueden ser muy diversas, pero todos ellos han necesitado de tiempo para fraguarse y para llegar a producir unos resultados.

Así, comparar hechos educativos, cuyas causas han sido analizadas, explicadas y contextualizadas, va a dotar a los estudios comparados de un gran rigor científico que superaría la mera descripción y constatación de realidades. Profundizar en el conocimiento de estas realidades puede llevarnos a la necesidad de avanzar en la búsqueda de respuestas que encontraremos no sólo en las causas de los fenómenos sociales sino en las razones que han provocado tales convergencias o divergencias entre las unidades comparadas. En este momento, el investigador estaría frente a un estudio de «tercer grado comparativo», de carácter más especulativo, en el que, nuevamente, la profundización histórica es absolutamente necesaria ya que conocer los hechos que causan esas similitudes o disonancias sólo se puede realizar mediante el recorrido histórico de un período temporal lo suficientemente amplio. Historia y comparación van de la mano y constituyen un eje metodológico básico en la investigación. La conceptualización de la comparación se vería articulada a través de la clarificación histórica.

5 El seminario titulado «Los usos de la comparación en ciencias sociales y en educación», se celebró en el año 1989 en la Universidad Complutense de Madrid. Las ponencias presentadas se recogieron en un nº extraordinario de la *Revista de Educación*, 1990. Jürgen Schriewer, participó con la ponencia titulada: «Comparación y explicación en el análisis de los sistemas educativos». El profesor García Garrido, es el encargado de realizar los comentarios a las ideas presentadas y éstos se recogen también en la citada revista en las páginas 129-134.

Tal y como apunta NÓVOA (2003), para que se materialice esta vanagloriada reconciliación entre historia y comparación, se requiere de una reconceptualización de la relación espacio-tiempo, no en vano, se destaca la definición de un nuevo espacio-tiempo de la comparación como uno de los principales retos actuales a los que ha de hacer frente la epistemología comparada. La comprensión de la investigación comparativa en educación como un recorrido histórico, requiere superar la definición física de espacio cerrado, centrado en la geografía del Estado-nación, y desmarcarse de la definición cronológica del tiempo, ya que, estas orientaciones, no son capaces de explicar los procesos históricos y la forma en que son concebidos por las personas y los grupos.

## **4. Reflexiones finales**

Queda constatada la idea de que la sencillez y linealidad de los métodos neopositivistas impiden resolver las cuestiones y problemas que la Educación Comparada encuentra en su recorrido epistémico. La propuesta que define a la Educación Comparada como «*ciencia de la complejidad*» (SCHIEWER, 2002), exige realizar una revisión del alcance y posibilidades, así como de las nuevas perspectivas de la Educación Comparada en la época actual.

Autores como García Garrido y García Ruíz, se detienen en el desarrollo del concepto de Postmodernidad, como frente abierto en la línea de investigación comparada, destacando que «mediante el prefijo «post» se enfatiza el hecho de que se continua con la línea teórica previa pero cuestionándose nuevas perspectivas» (2012: 60). En esta situación, la Educación Comparada no puede obviar el impacto de fenómenos como la globalización (GARCÍA RUÍZ, 2012) que afectan directamente a la gobernanza política mundial. Y es por ello, que estas emergencias epistemológicas que presentamos, vienen a discutir los aspectos teórico-metodológicos de la ciencia social comparada ya que no ha sido capaz de satisfacer las expectativas de explicación comparativa. La propuesta de enfoques que abogan por la explicación de los hechos educativos, pretenden poner en entredicho la concepción tradicional del principio de causalidad, según el cual, un efecto siempre corresponde a una misma causa. Así pues, parten de la complejidad de las relaciones causales, aspecto que nos va a conducir a un horizonte plural en las mismas, defendiendo la no-linealidad y no- simplificación de los análisis científicos, basados éstos en las dinámicas de no equilibrio y de dependencia histórica. Desde esta consideración:

«[...] la multiplicación de las perspectivas o marcos desde las que se miran los fenómenos complejos —y, en concreto, los fenómenos educativos— no sólo sería una estrategia eficaz para su comprensión y conocimiento objetivo, sino una condición necesaria para su constitución como objetos de conocimiento» (RINGER, 1990: 13).

En este sentido, el enfoque socio-histórico pretende historificar conceptos, apela a reconstrucciones históricas como vía de clarificación científica, a través de la cual, se superarían las deficiencias de las metodologías centradas en las relaciones existentes entre hechos observables para afrontar aquellas que establecen relaciones entre relaciones. Con todo ello, se destaca la riqueza y posibilidades que el mundo sociocultural humano tiene en sus relaciones y cómo este tipo de métodos puede enriquecer las investigaciones y el saber sistemático, destacando la evolución a la que está abierta la actividad social que supera las nociones de constructo estático en permanente equilibrio para

ser considerada como un elemento de cambio social. Se enfrenta pues a perspectivas que le piden ser capaz de trabajar simultáneamente trayectorias de modernización social, configuraciones socioculturales y procesos transculturales (NÓVOA, 1998).

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6



*La movilidad estudiantil en el proceso  
de internacionalización. Estrategias  
metodológicas para su estudio*

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*Student mobility in the process  
of internationalization. Methodological strategies*

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## **Resumen**

Este artículo analiza la movilidad estudiantil como estrategia de internacionalización en uno de los Centros Regionales de la Universidad de Guadalajara, el Centro Universitario del Norte (CUNorte) localizado en Colotlán, Jalisco, México. El objetivo de este trabajo es mostrar las estrategias metodológicas idóneas para evaluar la movilidad internacional desde la perspectiva de los estudiantes. En una primera parte se abordan las características del proceso de internacionalización en la Universidad de Guadalajara y se describe el contexto donde se realiza el estudio. El estudio de casos se presenta como estrategia metodológica para identificar los aprendizajes que resultan de la experiencia de estudiar en el extranjero. Se propone, igualmente, el diseño de un instrumento para conocer y valorar las percepciones de los estudiantes respecto a la movilidad internacional con el propósito de identificar los factores que inciden en los bajos índices de movilidad en este centro universitario.

*Palabras clave:* movilidad estudiantil; internacionalización; educación internacional; estudio de caso

## **Abstract**

This paper analyzes student mobility as internationalization strategy in one of the Regional Centres of the University of Guadalajara, University of Center North (CUNorte) located in Colotlán, Jalisco, Mexico. The aim of this paper is to show the methodological approaches most suitable to assess the international mobility from the perspective of students. In the first part the characteristics of the internationalization process are addressed in the University of Guadalajara and the context in which the study is conducted. The case study is presented as a methodology to identify the learning strategy that result from the experience of studying abroad. It also proposes the design of an instrument for analyzing and evaluating the perceptions of students regarding the international mobility in order to identify factors that affect the low rates of mobility in this university.

*Key Words:* student mobility; internationalization; international education; case study

## 1. Introducción

Los procesos de internacionalización y de movilidad a escala global en el contexto de la Educación Superior están en constante crecimiento. Asociados a su expansión, son cada vez más numerosos los estudios e investigaciones en relación a las características y dimensiones que rodean a estos procesos de internacionalización de la Educación Superior, así como el significado y relevancia que tienen para determinadas regiones o contextos, tanto nacionales como de carácter supranacional. Cabe mencionar los trabajos de TEICHLER (1999, 2004, 2007 y 2008) referidos a Europa y especialmente al programa de movilidad Erasmus (1996, 2002); DE WIT, JARAMILLO, GACEL ÁVILA y KNIGHT (2005) relacionados con América Latina; DE WIT (2002, 2011) de un carácter más analítico y explicativo sobre los mecanismos que operan en los procesos de internacionalización, (CARUSO y DE WIT, 2015; COMISIÓN EUROPEA, 2014; NØRGAARD, 2014), referidos a los determinantes de la movilidad de los estudiantes en Europa y al Programa Erasmus, e incluso también los de KNIGHT (2008, 2012), así como los de ALTBACH, REISBERG y RUMBLEY (2009) sobre las tendencias globales en la Educación Superior y más recientemente STREITWIESER (2014) en clara referencia a la movilidad.

Justamente las investigaciones y estudios en el ámbito de la Educación Superior ponen de manifiesto un incremento exponencial de las becas de movilidad en este nivel académico, lo que evidencia un inusitado interés de los investigadores, profesionales y «stakeholders» por la internacionalización de la educación superior, en concreto por los nuevos desafíos y expectativas que ofrece ante los retos planteados por la globalización económica (KNIGHT, 2012; ALTBACH *et al.* 2009), donde cada vez mayores contingentes de estudiantes a nivel mundial participan en intercambios educativos y donde las instituciones han de estructurar y gestionar estas movilidades hacia el extranjero.

Sin embargo, el fenómeno no es nuevo, sino que se ha incrementado de manera notable en las últimas décadas, de ahí su interés. El intercambio y la movilidad de estudiantes se pueden considerar como un campo de estudio dentro de la Educación Internacional WILSON (1994). Fue después de la Primera Guerra Mundial cuando surge la necesidad de utilizar la educación para formar ciudadanos con una mentalidad más internacional que contribuyera al entendimiento mutuo entre naciones. Desde entonces el aumento constante y notorio de la movilidad estudiantil ha sido un hecho que ha despertado el interés de su estudio ya no sólo por el número de estudiantes, sino de las consecuencias desiguales que comporta y efectos no deseados. Si se considera el perfil del estudiante internacional (quién es), el sentido de la movilidad (cuáles son los países emisores y cuáles los receptores) o su sentido (fuga de cerebros), entre otros.

Precisamente este artículo pretende mostrar las estrategias a seguir para el estudio de un caso. Se trata de conocer más ampliamente las percepciones de los estudiantes de una pequeña comunidad perteneciente a la Universidad de Guadalajara en México en torno a la movilidad. Ello nos permitirá igualmente desarrollar unas estrategias metodológicas para saber con más exactitud las razones, las causas y las motivaciones que movilizan hacia otros destinos de educación superior a una comunidad estudiantil con bastantes reticencias iniciales hacia la movilidad.

## 2. La movilidad internacional un valor en alza

La internacionalización de la educación superior es uno de los mecanismos que un país establece como respuesta a los desafíos que representa la globalización. Un mundo que cada vez representa unos cambios de forma más acelerada, con unos dispositivos globales que requieren de una mayor preparación, una mejor cualificación y dotados de una mayor competitividad (DEARDOFF, 2008). Como pone de relieve GACEL-ÁVILA (1999, 2000, 2005 y 2006) en varios trabajos, TEICHLER, FERENCZ y WACHTER (2011), NØRGAARD, (2014), CARUSO y DE WIT (2015), la trascendencia de la internacionalización de la Educación Superior y la movilidad constituye una tendencia dominante en todos los sistemas de educación superior. Paralelamente unido a este proceso de internacionalización de los procesos de aprendizaje están surgiendo nuevos procesos de transferencia y gestión del conocimiento, nuevas formas de gobierno de las instituciones y un incremento notable y relevancia de la movilidad estudiantil en todo el mundo (JONES y BROWN, 2014). Aunque dicho de forma muy genérica esta tendencia e incremento de la movilidad estudiantil sea como consecuencia de la creciente demanda y expansión de Educación Superior en el mundo<sup>1</sup>. Una muestra de esta tendencia han sido los efectos y el impacto de la movilidad sobre las competencias y la empleabilidad de los estudiantes y la internacionalización de las instituciones de educación superior, más concretamente el programa Erasmus, promovido por la Unión Europea desde hace tres décadas. En tan sólo once años, de 1998 a 2009 se ha duplicado el número de estudiantes que han participado en el programa de movilidad Erasmus, pero a pesar de ese fuerte incremento siguen representando una proporción muy pequeña del número total de estudiantes del conjunto de países europeos (TEICHLER, FERENCZ y WACHTER, 2011; COMISIÓN EUROPEA, 2014). Sin embargo, las universidades europeas siguen siendo uno de los destinos preferidos de los estudiantes a nivel mundial. Reino Unido, Alemania y Francia continúan siendo los países preferidos por los estudiantes extranjeros (CARUSO y DE WIT, 2015: 268), aunque a nivel comunitario España, Alemania, Francia y Reino Unido son los países más demandados para la movilidad Erasmus (COMISIÓN EUROPEA, 2017).

Precisamente las actividades de movilidad en el ámbito de la educación superior intraeuropea fueron muy populares en los dos primeros años del renovado programa Erasmus+. Los datos muestran que en 2014 más de 290.000 estudiantes universitarios se beneficiaron del programa, lo que muestra un nuevo récord<sup>2</sup>. En 2015, el programa Erasmus+, en su conjunto, ha supuesto una movilización de 678.000 personas, a través de más de 19.000 proyectos y un presupuesto de más de dos billones de euros<sup>3</sup>.

Estos datos muestran la trascendencia que ha tenido y sigue desempeñando el Programa Erasmus de la Unión Europea respecto a la internacionalización de la

1 Según la UNESCO (2013: 3) en 1990 había 97 millones de estudiantes en el nivel de Educación Superior a nivel mundial, según estimaciones para 2015 se espera que hay 263 millones de estudiantes. Puede consultarse en <http://www.uis.unesco.org/Library/Documents/international-student-mobility-asia-pacific-education-2013-en.pdf>

2 Estos datos pueden consultarse con más detalle en Anexo 7A y Anexo 7B del *Erasmus+ Programme Annual Report 2015*, disponible en <https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/sites/erasmusplus/files/erasmus-plus-annual-report-2015.pdf>

3 Véase en [http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/about\\_en#tab-1-5](http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/about_en#tab-1-5) (ver detalles en el Anexo 7B).

Educación Superior. Además de ser un referente mundial, constituye uno de los principales intereses estratégicos de la movilidad en la promoción de una identidad europea.

### **2.1. La internacionalización de la educación superior y movilidad estudiantil van de la mano**

El proceso de la internacionalización de las universidades se lleva a cabo a través de un conjunto de estrategias programáticas y organizacionales. Las estrategias organizacionales son la forma de institucionalizar la dimensión internacional, visualizarla, desarrollar por tanto los procedimientos, la normatividad y la planeación de las mismas. Las estrategias programáticas son el medio para integrar la dimensión internacional en las funciones sustantivas de las Instituciones de Educación Superior (IES), constituyendo pues la internacionalización del currículo, las redes de cooperación internacional, los servicios educativos transfronterizos, la internacionalización de la investigación, la internacionalización de recursos humanos y la movilidad de estudiantes y académicos (GACEL 2010; TEICHLER, FERENCZ y WACHTER, 2011, JONES y BROWN, 2014, STREITWIESER, 2014). Un argumento importante para la internacionalización de la educación superior es la contribución que realiza para mejorar la calidad de ésta en todos sus ámbitos (DE WIT, 2002b).

Justamente, una de las principales estrategias de internacionalización de la educación superior es la movilidad (GACEL, 2010; JONES y BROWN, 2014 y STREITWIESER, 2014), que puede ubicarse en dos niveles: académico y estudiantil. En la movilidad estudiantil, por lo general los estudiantes de grado, licenciatura y posgrado realizan prácticas, cursos cortos y visitas académicas fuera de su institución y de su país. Entre las motivaciones de carácter educativo emergen las mayores oportunidades que ofrece a los estudiantes la educación superior, su compatibilidad y diversidad del sistema, así como su valoración nacional, el grado de potencialidad en el mercado de trabajo y el coste que supone la educación superior. Además de estos factores intrínsecos, hay que considerar también otros elementos coadyuvantes de carácter político, sociocultural y económico, tales como el lenguaje, los lazos culturales, población, políticas de inmigración, alianzas estratégicas con el país de origen, desarrollo económico, recursos humanos y distancia geográfica entre otros (CARUSO y DE WIT, 2015).

La UNESCO (2011: 297) califica a los estudiantes internacionales (o internacionalmente móviles) como aquellos que han cruzado las fronteras nacionales o territoriales con el objetivo de estudiar. Estos grupos, según la UNESCO se clasifican en base a tres ámbitos: a) estudiantes que adoptan un país como residencia permanente; b) país donde los estudiantes han realizado sus estudios o c) país de ciudadanía, que suele coincidir con el segundo grupo, aunque no siempre.

Según el Informe de la OCDE (2015) *Education at a Glance*<sup>4</sup> 4,5 millones de estudiantes han estudiado fuera de su país en 2012. Cada año esta cifra se incrementa de forma significativa, lo que evidencia la revalorización creciente de la movilidad estudiantil desde 1990 como se refleja en los sucesivos informes de la UNESCO o la OCDE. De 1,3 millones de estudiantes que optaron por estudiar en el extranjero en 1990, hasta los 4,5 millones de 2012, demuestra una tendencia alcista, claramente regeneradora y que busca ampliar nuevos desafíos y retos en otros lugares, a pesar de que no regresen a sus países de origen, lo que plantea problemas de otro calado que no es objeto de este trabajo.

4 Véase Gráfico C.4.b: *Education at a Glance* (2015: 389)

También, el análisis de los informes de UNESCO y OCDE muestra que el flujo más importante de estudiantes ha derivado hacia los países de habla inglesa, como Reino Unido, Estados Unidos y Australia. Sin embargo, este modelo está cambiando con un fuerte aumento en el flujo e intercambio de estudiantes en la región Asia-Pacífico. Los datos de la OCDE (2015) muestran que el mayor número de estudiantes extranjeros en 2013 eran de China, India y Corea. De hecho, los estudiantes asiáticos representan el 53 por ciento de todos los estudiantes matriculados en instituciones de educación superior en el extranjero en todo el mundo. Sólo los estudiantes originarios de China suponen un 22 % del total, donde un tercio de los cuales han elegido los Estados Unidos, mientras que más del 45 % de ellos se divide entre Australia, Canadá, Corea, Japón y el Reino Unido. En este contexto de movilidad internacional, los países de la OCDE acogen a más estudiantes internacionales que envían al extranjero. En términos absolutos, en los países de la OCDE, hay 2,9 millones de estudiantes procedentes del extranjero, frente a menos de un millón de estudiantes ciudadanos de la OCDE que se forman en otros países externos a la misma organización. El citado informe anual de la OCDE (2015), *Education at a Glance* asegura que son los estudiantes de Alemania los que representan el porcentaje más elevado de estudiantes de movilidad internacional de los países de la OCDE, suponiendo un 3,9 %, seguidos de los estudiantes de Corea (3,6 %), Francia (2,4 %) y EE.UU. (1,7 %). Por otra parte, Alemania, Austria, Canadá, Estados Unidos, Francia, Japón y Reino Unido reciben a más de la mitad del efectivo total de estudiantes. Un indicador a tener en cuenta en la movilidad internacional es la cercanía y países que comparten la misma lengua oficial<sup>5</sup>.

Este flujo incesante de movilidad de estudiantes está de hecho originando una serie de problemáticas y consecuencias para las instituciones de Educación Superior y sus gestores, no exentos de complejidad. Estudiar en el extranjero se ha convertido en una de las facetas más visibles de la internacionalización de la educación superior, que durante las últimas décadas está alcanzando unas dimensiones cada vez más relevantes y de gran trascendencia, no sólo para la política educativa, sino también desde la esfera económica. Para los estudiantes, como se expone a lo largo de este artículo, estudiar en el extranjero ya no es sólo una importante experiencia cultural y personal, junto a la posibilidad de aprender otros idiomas, sino que la movilidad les permite a los estudiantes disponer de un importante capital para mejorar sus posibilidades de empleo en aquellos sectores cada vez más globalizados del mercado de trabajo. De hecho, la Unión Europea, estableció como objetivo en 2011 que para 2020 (*Horizon 2020*), el 20 % de sus titulados en la enseñanza superior tendría una movilidad internacional, en cualquiera de sus niveles (Consejo de Europa, 2011).

Por otra parte, diversos estudios demuestran que existe un vínculo entre los estudios en el extranjero y la adquisición de competencias globales e interculturales (OPPER, TEICHLER y CARLSON 1990, INGRAHAM PETERSON 2004, cit. HERNÁNDEZ 2009). Diversas investigaciones (HANVEY, 1982 y 2004; SPITZBERG y CHANGNON, 2009; BENNET, 2009; DELORS 1996), confirman que la educación internacional tiene potencial para lograr en los egresados el perfil y las habilidades intelectuales y cognoscitivas descritas en lo que la UNESCO denomina los cuatro pilares de la educación del siglo XXI, que son: aprender a conocer; aprender a hacer; aprender a convivir; y aprender a ser (GACEL, 2006: 91-98).

5 Véase Tabla C 4.5, en OCDE (2015:398 ). *Education at a Glance*, recuperado de: <http://www.oecd.org/edu/education-at-a-glance-19991487.htm>

Al margen de otras consideraciones de orden socioeconómico o político, el fenómeno de la movilidad estudiantil constituye un ámbito de estudio novedoso dentro del campo de la Educación Superior, que integra una dimensión o perspectiva internacional e intercultural dentro de las principales funciones de la universidad, principalmente la docencia, la investigación y el sector servicios (ANUIES,1999).

### **3. La movilidad estudiantil en México en el marco de la internacionalización de la educación superior. El caso de la Universidad de Guadalajara**

El sistema educativo mexicano, al igual que gran parte de los sistemas educativos a nivel mundial contempla tres niveles educativos: básica, media superior y superior. La educación básica contempla la educación preescolar, educación primaria y secundaria, mientras que la educación media superior comprende el bachillerato. La denominada educación superior contempla las modalidades de licenciatura y posgrado. Del total de la población escolar, el 74.6 % se ubica en la educación básica y, sin embargo, la educación media superior representa sólo el 12.2 % de la población estudiantil. La educación superior abarca el 8.7 % y el restante 4.5 % está cubierto con otras modalidades educativas técnico-profesionales orientadas esencialmente para el trabajo<sup>6</sup>.

Como refiere acertadamente el estudio de GACEL-ÁVILA (2005) sobre el proceso de internacionalización en las universidades mexicanas, su principal objetivo de fomento de la internacionalización y de hecho la movilidad como una estrategia de ésta, es el mejoramiento de la calidad educativa, ente otros focos de atención como la competitividad y difusión de las culturas nacionales.

Las investigaciones y estudios de GACEL-ÁVILA (2005) muestran la importante acción de movilización a favor de la movilidad en el marco del proceso de internacionalización de las universidades realizada en México por las becas para estudiar en el extranjero por parte del Consejo Nacional de Ciencia y Tecnología<sup>7</sup>, más conocido por sus iniciales, CONACYT que ha permitido a gran número ciudadanos y universitarios realizar estudios las mejores universidades del mundo, siendo Estados Unidos el país más demandado.

Un estudio reciente de GARCÍA PALMA (2013), menciona que alrededor de un 1 % de estudiantes mexicanos de Educación Superior (29.831 personas) estaba estudiando fuera del país en 2011. Si consultamos la unidad estadística de la UNESCO<sup>8</sup> esta cantidad oscila en torno al 0,7 % indicando un total de 26.587 estudiantes que en la actualidad estudian en el extranjero, siendo las universidades de EEUU (13.451) y la Unión Europea (España, Francia, Reino Unido y Alemania) las que albergan el mayor número de estos estudiantes.

6 Puede consultarse en *Anuario Estadístico de Educación Superior*, 2012, recuperado de: <http://www.anui.es.mx/content.php?varSectionID=166>

7 Para más información se puede consultar <http://www.conacyt.mx/>

8 <http://www.uis.unesco.org/education/Pages/international-student-flow-viz.aspx>

### 3.1 El proceso de internacionalización y movilidad en la Universidad de Guadalajara. Capacitar para una cultura global

El estudio sobre movilidad estudiantil se contextualiza en la Universidad de Guadalajara porque es la segunda universidad pública más grande e importante del país. A nivel nacional, después del Estado de México y del Distrito Federal, Jalisco es una de las entidades federativas con mayor matrícula en nivel medio superior y superior. En este estado, La Universidad de Guadalajara atiende alrededor del 67 % de los alumnos inscritos en estos niveles. Aglutina el 38 % de la matrícula en bachillerato y mantiene un 44 % de estudiantes que cursan los niveles de licenciatura y un 42 % en posgrado. Su cobertura representa el 4 % del total de los alumnos matriculados en el país en los niveles mencionados<sup>9</sup>.

Se citan estas cifras para fundamentar la trascendencia y características de esta universidad en el contexto educativo mexicano. Además, para comprender su dimensión internacional y la problemática que sobre movilidad estudiantil plantea.

Oficialmente, la Universidad de Guadalajara (UdG), estableció la internacionalización como eje estratégico en sus funciones sustantivas desde su Plan Institucional de Desarrollo (PDI), en el programa Puesta a Punto de la Red Universitaria 2002-2010. La Coordinación General de Cooperación e Internacionalización (CGCI) es la dependencia encargada de proponer, coordinar y evaluar las políticas y estrategias de cooperación académica e internacionalización en la universidad. Así pues, todas las actividades de internacionalización que gestiona la CGCI, están encaminadas al cumplimiento de las metas establecidas en el Programa Institucional de Desarrollo (PDI) de la Universidad. El propósito final de las acciones y estrategias de internacionalización en todos los centros de la Universidad de Guadalajara es que los estudiantes adquieran un perfil con capacidades y habilidades requeridas en los mercados internacionales y que obtengan una conciencia global fundada en una actitud humanista de respeto hacia culturas y valores distintos. En este sentido la universidad forma parte de diversas Asociaciones y Redes nacionales e internacionales que trabajan en beneficio de la educación internacional. Así pues, la movilidad estudiantil se ha transformado en una de las acciones académicas y de colaboración internacional que la universidad sostiene y apoya económicamente a través de convenios firmados con más de cuatrocientas instituciones de educación superior de distintos países (GACEL, 2012).

Sin embargo, los indicadores de movilidad internacional de los estudiantes pertenecientes a uno de los centros regionales que integran la red universitaria como es el Centro Universitario del Norte (CUNorte), ubicado en Colotlán (Jalisco) no correlaciona con la media de movilidad estudiantil de toda la red. De acuerdo con las cifras oficiales que anualmente publica la CGCI, desde el año 2001 hasta hoy día, la movilidad internacional en toda la universidad se ha incrementado significativamente, pero el CUNorte es uno de los centros universitarios que mantiene los índices más bajos de toda la red universitaria.

Por su ubicación geográfica, desde sus inicios la matrícula del CUNorte tiene procedencia diversa. Actualmente, un 76,4 % del alumnado matriculado reside en diversos municipios de la zona norte del Estado de Jalisco, mientras que el 22.2 % radica en Zacatecas y el 1.4 % restante pertenece a otros estados de la República (Mejía, 2014). Otro dato importante a destacar del Centro Universitario Norte (CUNorte), es la atención que presta a las comunidades indígenas de la región, particularmente la etnia *wixarika*, que representa una tercera parte del total de población indígena (INEGI, 2005).

<sup>9</sup> Puede consultarse en *Anuario Estadístico de Educación Superior*, 2012 (ANUIES), Recuperado de: <http://www.anui.es.mx/content.php?varSectionID=166>



Igualmente hay que contemplar que los índices de deserción son desfavorables, en el último calendario escolar. Representan el 6 % que junto al porcentaje de titulación también es desalentador, solamente el 14 % del total de estudiantes egresados desde el año 2005 están titulados<sup>10</sup>. Aun así, el Centro Universitario del Norte (CUNorte) atiende el problema de la cobertura académica y la demanda de distintos sectores de la sociedad; diversifica su oferta académica de acuerdo a las necesidades de la región y su modelo educativo, basado en el uso de las tecnologías, responde a las características del contexto.

Precisamente este trabajo está enfocado en analizar las expectativas de los estudiantes como factor de incidencia en los bajos índices de movilidad internacional en este centro universitario. La cuestión es detectar, conocer las razones que encubren la ausencia de expectativas hacia las posibilidades de futuro que ofrece estudiar en un país extranjero y sobre todo cómo abordar esta problemática y de qué estrategias metodológicas hablamos. Dicho de forma más concreta: ¿qué percepción tienen los alumnos del CUNorte sobre las estancias de estudios en universidades extranjeras? Ello nos permitirá conocer por una parte los aprendizajes o competencias que se adquieren durante la movilidad, sobre todo en los estudiantes que ya han vivido la experiencia. Y por otro conocer las expectativas de futuro de aquellos estudiantes potenciales de realizar estancias, conocer sus percepciones y sus valoraciones respecto a lo que supone estudiar fuera de su ambiente, de su contexto de amigos y de su familia.

## 4. La identificación de aprendizajes adquiridos durante las estancias de movilidad

Ya hemos mencionado la relevancia y el potencial que ostenta la movilidad estudiantil en el campo de la educación internacional. Pero, ¿cómo evaluar el impacto que tiene para los jóvenes esta experiencia?, ¿qué aprendizajes adquieren cuando estudian en el extranjero?, ¿qué competencias desarrollan cuando viven inmersos en contextos culturales distintos al propio?

Para encontrar respuesta a estos cuestionamientos es necesario, primero que nada, encontrar la forma correcta de realizar un análisis que permita identificar qué situaciones viven los estudiantes que afecten algún aspecto de su vida y de qué forma. Dicho de otra forma, el análisis del impacto de la movilidad internacional en la vida de los estudiantes requiere una metodología que permita conocer todas las condiciones que afectan a los jóvenes durante su estancia en el extranjero. El estudio de caso permite este tipo de análisis.

Tal y como expone WALKER (1983: 4) y GRUPO LACE (2013: 7), el estudio de caso es el examen de un ejemplo en acción. Este tipo de estudio de unos incidentes y hechos específicos, así como la recogida selectiva de información de carácter biográfico, de personalidad, intenciones y valores, permite al investigador o persona que lo realiza captar y reflejar todos los elementos de una situación que le dan significado. Existe en los estudios de casos una cierta centralidad y concreción hacia el conocimiento y descripción de lo idiosincrásico y específico de los hechos en sí mismos.

Precisamente, a través del estudio de casos HERNÁNDEZ (2008), analizó la experiencia de movilidad de estudiantes angloamericanos durante estancias en universidades mexicanas. Categorizó los hallazgos en impactos lingüísticos, culturales, académicos y

10 Informe de actividades 2013-2014 Universidad de Guadalajara. CUNorte.

profesionales. Entre los resultados de su trabajo, se menciona que el desarrollo de las sensibilidades interculturales impactó positivamente la identidad de los alumnos. En el desarrollo de las competencias lingüísticas, sobresale el desarrollo de un segundo idioma en el contexto académico-profesional y el mejoramiento de la fluidez oral. Concluye esta investigación aludiendo que las habilidades cognitivas e intelectuales que desarrollaron los estudiantes a lo largo de su estancia en México.

En la misma línea se encuadra el trabajo desarrollado por VILLALÓN DE LA ISLA (2012) sobre el impacto de la movilidad presencial y de la movilidad virtual en estudiantes de la Universidad de Guadalajara, en base al Modelo Reflexivo de la Competencia Intercultural «The Reflective Model of Intercultural Competency» de TRACY WILLIAMS (2009). Según este modelo, la competencia intercultural está compuesta por un conjunto de aprendizajes que se integran en tres dimensiones: cultural, cognitiva y afectiva. Este análisis estudió la comprensión y alcance de los significados que tuvo la experiencia vivida por los estudiantes, en cuanto a su movilidad presencial como virtual.

Los resultados evidenciaron que la movilidad presencial tiene un impacto positivo mayor del que tiene la movilidad virtual respecto al desarrollo de la competencia intercultural. La mayoría de los participantes con movilidad presencial mostraron empatía cultural a través del conocimiento de diversos aspectos del país donde estuvieron. La experiencia de su estadía ha incrementado la capacidad de adaptarse a contextos y situaciones distintas a las que estaban acostumbrados. Sus testimonios revelan el crecimiento que tuvieron en el desarrollo de la comprensión de diferencias culturales y cambios en su percepción sobre sí mismos y sobre su propio contexto de origen.

Ambos estudios HERNÁNDEZ (2008) y VILLALÓN DE LA ISLA (2012) coinciden en que la experiencia de vida durante el período de estudio en el extranjero comprende y abarca un conjunto de situaciones donde los jóvenes estudiantes aprenden a resolver los retos que implica interactuar y trabajar en ambientes multiculturales. Esa experiencia holística los lleva a percibir y captar el mundo desde una perspectiva más amplia, una vez transcurrida su estancia fuera de su hogar.

La experiencia de estudios anteriores corrobora la idoneidad del estudio de caso como estrategia metodológica para el estudio de problemáticas relacionadas con la movilidad y evaluar sus resultados. Sobre todo, en la medida que nos ayuda a identificar los aprendizajes que resultan de la experiencia que perciben los estudiantes cuando estudian en el extranjero. Una vez que las cuestiones encaminadas a detectar el problema orientan la investigación son de significado, es decir, explicitan con mayor sentido y rigor la esencia de las experiencias de los actores. Por consiguiente, el camino más adecuado para enfrentarse a este tipo de interrogantes es la fenomenología (MORSE 1994, cit. en RODRÍGUEZ *et al.*, 1999). La fenomenología busca conocer los significados que los individuos dan a su experiencia. El estudio de caso facilita la comprensión del lector del fenómeno que se está estudiando. Puede dar lugar al descubrimiento de nuevos significados, ampliar la experiencia del lector o confirmar lo que se sabe (RODRÍGUEZ *et al.* 1999).

## **5. Estrategias metodológicas para conocer e incentivar la movilidad**

Específicamente, para los casos de movilidad internacional en CUNorte, se propone adaptar el cuestionario del modelo de Williams con cuestionamientos utilizados por HERNÁNDEZ (2008) para enriquecer las entrevistas que se realicen a los alumnos

y obtener una visión más amplia y enriquecida de sus percepciones, de tal forma que sea posible analizar en los testimonios de los alumnos, aprendizajes que conforman las dimensiones afectiva, conductual y cognitiva de la competencia intercultural y también aprendizajes relacionados con el aspecto persona y académico, además del desarrollo de competencias y habilidades lingüísticas, en el caso de los alumnos que realicen estancias en países con idioma distinto al propio.

### **5.1. Las dimensiones de estudio que comprende la movilidad internacional de los estudiantes**

La elaboración de un instrumento de medida orientado a conocer las percepciones, las motivaciones de los estudiantes, en este caso de CUNorte, comienza con la definición de aquello que queremos medir. De acuerdo con GUIL (2006), se trataría de un objeto de actitud, que generalmente consta de diversos componentes o dimensiones. Para estudiar las percepciones, actitudes e intereses de los estudiantes ante la movilidad internacional, deben concretarse las dimensiones que lo componen antes de diseñar el instrumento de medida. Por ejemplo, en este caso nos centramos en el estudio de actitudes hacia la movilidad internacional. Es posible que algún estudiante tenga una actitud positiva para estudiar un semestre en una determinada universidad extranjera, pero por otra parte tenga miedo o presente ciertas reticencias a las exigencias académicas, o bien que se sienta atraído por estudiar en otro país, pero carece de recursos y carezca de información sobre las opciones de becas y ayudas que ofrece la universidad al respecto.

Teniendo en cuenta las sugerencias y aportaciones de GUIL (2006), se definen las siguientes dimensiones para detectar las percepciones e intereses de los estudiantes de CUNorte respecto a la movilidad internacional:

1. Valoración académica
2. Costos económicos
3. Dominio de un segundo idioma
4. Situación familiar
5. Conocimiento/desconocimiento de opciones, trámites, becas, formas de financiamiento.
6. Interés y motivación
7. Flexibilidad curricular

Teniendo en cuenta estas dimensiones y los objetivos de los que partimos, se propone el siguiente esquema de variables a considerar en el caso de los estudiantes de CUNorte, objeto de estudio:

**Tabla 1.** Variables a considerar en el estudio. **Fuente.** Elaboración propia.

Grupo de variables		Variables independientes	Actitud sobre la movilidad internacional o variable dependiente
<b>Variables estructurales</b>	Perfil del encuestado	Edad Sexo Licenciatura Semestre Ciudad de origen	Percepción de los estudiantes de CUNorte sobre la movilidad internacional
<b>Variables psicológicas y contextuales</b>	Dimensión Subjetiva	Interés Motivación Valoración académica	Valoración sobre las opciones y condiciones de la movilidad como alumnos de la Universidad de Guadalajara
	Dimensión Objetiva	Situación familiar Situación económica Dominio de un segundo idioma Conocimiento / desconocimiento de opciones y trámites Flexibilidad curricular	Valoración sobre la difusión y apoyo a la movilidad internacional en CUNorte

La determinación de la confiabilidad y validez de la escala, se realiza teniendo en cuenta la estimación del coeficiente alfa de Cronbach como evidencia de consistencia interna y utilizar el método de validez de constructo factorial.

Este estudio de caso se centra en el análisis factorial por ser una técnica estadística multivariante que se utiliza para estudiar las dimensiones que subyacen en las relaciones entre varias variables. Se opta por este método cuantitativo porque el análisis factorial permite en este caso dos objetivos (ABAD *et al.*, 2006). Por una parte, determinar cuál es el número de dimensiones o factores que se desean conocer y el significado de cada una; y por otra, obtener la puntuación de cada estudiante en cada dimensión, que en definitiva es lo que se persigue conocer. El cuestionario se aplicará a través de la plataforma de aprendizaje a distancia que se utiliza en el modelo educativo del CUNorte, plataforma Moodle. Además, se tendrá en cuenta una muestra representativa de los estudiantes.

## 6. Los participantes en el estudio. Una concreción de la muestra

NAMAKFOROOSH (2005) afirma que si la población que participa en un estudio es pequeña deben estudiarse todos sus miembros; pero si es grande, es conveniente escoger una muestra representativa con base en cuatro criterios: población deseada como meta; número de sujetos de la muestra; cómo entrar en contacto con los sujetos y cómo extraer de la población los sujetos de la muestra. Sin embargo, para GOETZ y LE COMPTE (1988)

la selección requiere que el investigador determine los perfiles relevantes de la población o del fenómeno; para lo cual utilizará criterios teóricos o conceptuales, se basará en las características empíricas del fenómeno o de la población, o se guiará por su curiosidad personal u otras consideraciones. En este estudio el fenómeno que se investiga son aspectos relacionados con la movilidad internacional desde la perspectiva de los estudiantes.

No obstante, si queremos conocer las percepciones, las motivaciones, e incluso los aprendizajes que resultan de la movilidad como modelo o ejemplo para otros estudiantes, se buscará la participación de gran parte de los estudiantes que han vivido la experiencia de estudiar en el extranjero. Para recabar la información sobre las competencias desarrolladas durante la estancia, se utilizará el cuestionario diseñado por Williams (2009), previamente adaptado al contexto y se aplicará una entrevista semiestructurada con una serie de preguntas, similar a la utilizada por HERNÁNDEZ (2008) en su estudio sobre el impacto cultural, lingüístico, académico y profesional de la movilidad estudiantil.

Para identificar los factores que inciden en los bajos índices de movilidad se aplicará un instrumento para medir la percepción y actitudes aplicadas a una muestra representativa de la población estudiantil que no haya vivido ninguna experiencia de movilidad. Nos referimos a muestreo ya que la población estudiantil en este caso es más numerosa. La información recabada se triangulará con los datos que se obtengan aplicando una entrevista en profundidad con algunos de los participantes en una muestra aleatoria.

Como se observa, este estudio se puede considerar como un intento de obtener una comprensión más amplia y profunda de los significados que supone para los estudiantes estudiar en otra universidad perteneciente a un país extranjero (RUIZ e ISPIZUA, 1989; WAINWRIGHT, 1997). Por otra parte, se pretende que el alumnado exprese de forma libre sus ideas y valoraciones acerca del reto que supone la movilidad. En este supuesto, la entrevista se convierte en un instrumento básico en el procedimiento de recogida de información para detectar con mayor amplitud y profundidad las creencias, las percepciones y sus motivaciones, hasta los significados que maneja y utiliza para comprender e interpretación el mundo (VÁZQUEZ y ANGULO, 2003). En el caso que nos ocupa optaremos por una entrevista semiestructurada, dado su el carácter relevante de la información que se desea obtener y la estructura abierta de las preguntas, donde el investigador tiene más opción de intervenir en su desarrollo.

## 7. A modo de conclusión

La tendencia de movilidad estudiantil dentro del proceso de internacionalización de la Educación Superior, en todas sus manifestaciones, sigue siendo una tendencia global (TEICHLER, FERENCZ y WACHTER, 2011; STREITWIESER, 2014; CARUSO y DE WIT, 2015). Además del fuerte contingente de movilización en la Unión Europea a través del Programa Erasmus+, para los próximos años se espera un incremento notable, principalmente en los países asiáticos que en la actualidad presentan unos elevados índices de movilidad internacional como China e India, así como Brasil y Arabia Saudí, como países emergentes (UNESCO, 2013).

Por otra parte, y más concretamente, en la Universidad de Guadalajara, la movilidad estudiantil ocupa un lugar preponderante en su proceso de internacionalización. Las redes de cooperación y los convenios establecidos en el marco de proyectos de intercambio académico entre universidades de todo el mundo, facilitan la movilidad de los estudiantes de nivel superior. No obstante, la movilidad académica también representa

un reto en diversos aspectos y en el caso específico del Centro Universitario del Norte, significa un problema, debido a su estancamiento y retroceso. Principalmente porque registra aún bajos índices de movilidad, ya que carece de acciones de preparación, seguimiento y evaluación en las escasas movildades y estancias que se producen.

Ante la evidencia de ser uno de los centros con más bajos índices de movilidad en toda la red universitaria de Guadalajara, ya que el porcentaje de estudiantes con movilidad internacional no representa ni siquiera el uno por ciento del total de estudiantes inscritos potenciales de movilidad (GACEL, 2012). Por otra parte, cuando ésta se produce, los estudiantes no reciben ningún tipo de preparación que pueda enriquecer su estancia, ni se realizan acciones de evaluación de los aprendizajes que resultan de la experiencia, ni en el ámbito cultural ni en el académico.

Por tanto, examinar y analizar las estrategias metodológicas encaminadas a conocer de forma exhaustiva las expectativas de los estudiantes, permitirá identificar aquellos factores que inciden en la ausencia de movilidad y documentar así el impacto positivo de las estancias en el extranjero. En este centro universitario no se ha realizado ningún estudio en el ámbito de la internacionalización desde esta perspectiva ni con propósitos parecidos a los planteados en este trabajo.

Se espera que la información que se recabe con sucesivos estudios, sobre todo de carácter comparado con otras realidades, proporcione elementos que fundamenten y contribuyan a la implementación de programas que fortalezcan la dimensión internacional del CUNorte, en su estrategia y dinámica de movilidad.

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# NOVEDADES EDITORIALES

Book Reviews

1



**RESEÑA de:** DA CUNHA, C.; VIEIRA DE SOUSA, J.; y ABÁDIA DA SILVA, M. (Org.) (2016): *Internacionalização da educação: Discursos, práticas e reflexos sobre as políticas educativas* (Belo Horizonte: Fino Traço Editora), 296 pp. ISBN: 978-85-8054-282-0

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**A CARGO DE:**

Víctor González López\*

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El libro que el lector tiene en sus manos ha sido publicado por la editorial Fino Traço y pertenece a la «Coleção Políticas Públicas de Educação». Dicho libro, escrito casi en su totalidad en portugués, es el resultado del esfuerzo de los investigadores pertenecientes al programa de Posgrado en Educación de la Universidad de Brasilia y que componen el Grupo de Investigación de Políticas Públicas y Gestión en Educación, cuyo máximo interés ha sido plasmar en este documento el debate y la reflexión en torno a las políticas educativas internacionales, su elaboración y toma de decisiones. La organización del documento corre a cargo de Célio da Cunha asesor especializado de UNESCO en Brasil y profesor en la Universidade Estadual de Campinas, José Vieira de Sousa, Doctor en Sociología por la Universidade de Brasília y profesor de la misma, y Maria Abádia da Silva, Doctora en Educación por la Universidade Estadual de Campinas y en la actualidad profesora en la Universidad de Brasília

El presente libro reúne los trabajos de investigadores nacionales e internacionales que han desarrollado sus pesquisas en los niveles de la educación superior y básica, siempre desde una perspectiva internacional. El libro consta de tres partes; la primera lleva por título *Internacionalização da educação e construção de territórios acadêmicos* y está conformada por cinco capítulos. Maria Luiza de Santana y Fernanada Antônia de Fonseca exponen en su trabajo los posibles efectos que tiene la perspectiva transnacional en la producción de conocimiento desde un punto de vista internacional. El segundo capítulo, obra de Gilberto Lacerda, Thomas Petit y José Vieira, analiza las contribuciones llevadas a cabo por el EUROMIME que pretende estimular la realización e internacionalización de prácticas con carácter innovador en el marco de la educación superior. Seguidamente, Mario Luiz Neves ofrece un documento mediante el cual pretende desentrañar los mitos y errores alrededor de la internacionalización de la educación superior. Marília Costa y Antônio Pedro Barbosa nos ofrecen una investigación sobre la comprensión y análisis de la implementación de un Sistema de Educación Superior en Cabo Verde. El último capítulo de este primer bloque corre a cargo de Faní Quitéria Nascimento que discute el desarrollo de las políticas de educación infantil puestas en marcha bajo la lógica y apoyo del Banco Mundial y cuál es su verdadera interferencia en la elección de los temas centrales de estudio para su posterior desarrollo.

La segunda sección de las tres en las que se divide este libro y que responde al nombre de *Orientações políticas e impactos do PISA nas práticas educativas*, ofrece tres investigaciones que muestran los efectos provocados por los resultados ofrecidos por el Informe PISA en los sistemas educativos de los países que participan en dicho programa. El primer capítulo responde a una investigación llevada a cabo por Maria Abádia y Rodrigo da Silva. En ella los autores analizan la participación de Brasil en el Programa PISA. El segundo trabajo, redactado por Luiz Miguel de Carvalho y Estela Costa aborda la influencia que sobre la administración educativa ejercen los niveles competenciales diagnosticados por PISA en Brasil desde una doble perspectiva, nacional (pública) e internacional (comparativa). Por último, en este apartado se encuentra el trabajo de Leoncio Vega Gil. La tesis central de este trabajo de investigación parte del axioma siguiente: el programa PISA, con los datos desagregados para el caso español, viene a reforzar y fundamentar los «cuasi-estados» de la educación en España. Una política básica y común con implementación diferenciada en contextos también diferenciados. Los elementos de análisis se centran en la equidad, la eficiencia, los resultados diferenciales y el estudio de los «resilientes». La crisis económica de los últimos años ha venido a profundizar en las diferencias geográficas, sociales y culturales de la educación, como se demuestra en el estudio

El tercer y último apartado de este libro, titulado *Cenários da avaliação na política supranacional do Mercosul* consta de tres capítulos en los que se discuten las relaciones entre la educación superior y los niveles de graduación y posgraduación en Mercosul. El primer capítulo de este bloque, a cargo de Giselle Cristina Martins y Verônica de Lourdes Pioto, analiza, a través del *Sistema de Acreditação Regional de Cursos de Graduação do Mercosul* (ARCU-SUL), las evaluaciones supranacionales y sus posibles efectos en las políticas educativas del país. Siguiendo la línea argumental de este tercer bloque temático, Claudia Maffini y Suzana Schwerz, parten de la premisa de que el *Sistema Nacional de Avaliação da Educação Superior* (SINAES) ha estimulado el desarrollo de la internacionalización como un criterio esencial de calidad. El último capítulo de esta sección y del propio libro escrito por Kátia Siqueira y Ailana Freitas, aborda las políticas educativas del *Setor Educacional do Mercado Comum do Sul*, a través del análisis de dos cursos de posgrado, uno en Brasil y otro en Argentina, destinados a la formación de futuros directores escolares.

En definitiva, el libro presentado supone una herramienta de indispensable lectura para todos los profesionales de la Educación Comparada interesados en conocer la estructura, los discursos y reflexiones expuestas en torno a la internacionalización de la educación, siempre bajo el prisma de estudio del contexto brasileño, desde donde se interpretan los organismos internacionales como impositores de políticas y programas.

2



**RESEÑA de:** INSTITUTO NACIONAL DE EVALUACIÓN  
EDUCATIVA (2016): *Panorama de la educación 2016.*  
*Indicadores de la OCDE. Informe español*  
(Madrid, Secretaría General Técnica).  
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**A CARGO DE:**  
Boxi Ma\*

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La OCDE (Organización para la Cooperación y el Desarrollo Económicos) lleva a cabo anualmente un informe estadístico sobre el sistema educativo de sus 35 estados miembros. Este informe se publica con el nombre *Education at a Glance. OECD* y compara los datos de España con los de la OCDE y los 22 países de la Unión Europea que están dentro de esta organización y que son estos: países mediterráneos: Francia, Grecia, Italia y Portugal, países centroeuropeos: Alemania y Países Bajos, países nórdicos: Finlandia, Noruega y Suecia, países latinoamericanos: Brasil, Chile, México, países anglosajones: Estados Unidos, Reino Unido e Irlanda y países asiáticos: Japón.

El estudio español ha sido llevado a cabo por el Instituto Nacional de Evaluación educativa (INEE) del Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte, con la colaboración de la Subdirección General de Estadística y Estudios del MECD. Cuenta con muchos gráficos ilustrativos que facilitan la comprensión del texto, así como pequeños resúmenes al principio de cada epígrafe, lo que facilita la comprensión y la lectura.

El informe tiene tres partes: La primera es «La expansión de la educación y los resultados educativos», que analiza el nivel de formación de los adultos en comparación con los jóvenes, las diferencias educativas entre padres e hijos, el número de estudiantes inscritos, cuántos terminan sus estudios, las diferencias entre sexos y el nivel y tipo de estudios que se llevan en cada caso y el número de estudiantes extranjeros en la Educación Terciaria. La segunda parte, «Educación, mercado laboral y financiación educativa», analiza la relación entre la formación y el trabajo y el paso del mundo estudiantil al laboral, la relación entre nivel de estudios y tipo de trabajo, diferencias de sueldo por género, relación entre el nivel de estudios y la salud y el compromiso político, la comprensión lectora y de matemáticas y la inversión en educación de cada país desde la Primaria a los estudios superiores. La tercera parte se dedica al análisis de «El entorno de los centros educativos y el aprendizaje» y se centra en el número de horas lectivas en Primaria y Secundaria, la relación de alumnos/profesor por clase, y las horas que los profesores dedican a su trabajo, incluyendo preparar clases, darlas, atención a padres y otras actividades. También se analizan los salarios comparándolos con los de los países de la OCDE y de la UE22. Por último se presentan el rol y la importancia de los directores de los centros educativos. Lo que más llama la atención de manera general en este informe son las diferencias entre hombres y mujeres.

## **1. La expansión de la educación y los resultados educativos**

Este primer capítulo analiza la formación de la población adulta entre 2005 y 2015, que ha aumentado en casi todos de los países de la OCDE en todos los niveles. Se observa que la movilidad social ascendente en las familias es mayor en España, en particular entre las mujeres. También cabe destacar que la escolarización en Educación Infantil es algo mayor en España que en el resto de los países comparados, y está estudiado que esto tiene repercusiones muy positivas en el rendimiento académico de los alumnos posteriormente. Una temprana educación infantil beneficia a los estudiantes más retrasados, ya sea por el nivel educativo familiar o por su trimestre de nacimiento, ya que al ser pequeños hay muchas diferencias entre los nacidos a principios o a finales del curso académico. Se comparan los estudiantes de Bachillerato y de formación profesional, que presentan menos alumnos en España, quizás debido a los prejuicios todavía existentes sobre este tipo de enseñanza, aunque esto está cambiando debido a que la FP favorece la integración al mercado laboral. En cuanto a los estudios superiores (educación Terciaria), el tipo de grados escogidos en España son parecidos a los



de otros países europeos, con Ciencias Sociales, Empresariales y Derecho a la cabeza, aunque hay notables diferencias entre hombres y mujeres, ya que los primeros optan por Ingeniería, Producción Industrial y Construcción. Tanto en educación secundaria como terciaria, en España hay más alumnas que alumnos matriculados. Sin embargo, en la educación superior existen muchas diferencias entre los estudios que cursan las chicas (Enseñanza, Enfermería), que desembocan en trabajos con salarios más bajos, mientras que los que escogen los chicos (Ciencias, Tecnología, Ingeniería y Matemáticas), proporcionan mejores sueldos. En algunos países se están promoviendo programas terciarios de ciclo corto. Los estudios terciarios con mayor número de estudiantes son los de grado, seguidos de los de máster y doctorado. Más de la mitad de los graduados en educación terciaria son mujeres, excepto en Doctorado, tanto en la OCDE como en la UE22. En lo relativo a los estudiantes extranjeros, están presentes especialmente en los estudios de máster y de doctorado, aunque en España su número es todavía reducido comparado con los otros países del estudio. Países como Reino Unido tienen una tradición de recibir estudiantes extranjeros, en parte por el interés que despierta su lengua, y este fenómeno todavía es reciente en España, donde solamente el 2,4 % de los estudiantes terciarios son internacionales. Esto es debido en parte a las dificultades del idioma y a las trabas de las formalidades de convalidaciones, por lo que sería necesario establecer medidas que favorezcan la movilidad de los estudiantes.

## **2. Educación, mercado laboral y financiación educativa**

En este segundo capítulo se analiza la relación entre educación y acceso al mercado laboral y las ventajas económicas que esto produce, que es un tema de gran preocupación actualmente, debido a la situación de crisis. Aquí cabe resaltar que España, junto con Italia y Grecia, presenta el porcentaje de jóvenes de entre 15 y 29 años que no estudian ni trabajan (22 %), los familiarmente conocidos como «ninis», en relación con los países de la OCDE (14 %). Asimismo, la crisis ha provocado una prolongación del tiempo de estudios entre los jóvenes entre 2005 y 2015, siendo en España este aumento tres veces mayor que en los países de la OCDE y la UE22. España, Grecia, Portugal e Italia comparten tasas elevadas de paro en relación con los otros países. En cuanto a las diferencias entre hombres y mujeres titulados en Educación Terciaria, los niveles de desempleo son inferiores entre los primeros, independientemente de lo que hayan estudiando. Únicamente en educación las tasas de empleo femenino superan al masculino. Asimismo, los estudios de ciencias, mayoritariamente masculinos, permiten un mayor número de empleos. En el sector donde más ha aumentado el empleo es en el de la salud, y esto se debe al envejecimiento de la población, lo que demanda más profesionales en este sector. La relación entre salario y nivel educativo es muy evidente en todos los países analizados. Los países que presentan menos diferencias son los nórdicos y los que más, Estados Unidos, Portugal, Chile, Brasil y México. En España las diferencias salariales entre los trabajadores con estudios superiores y con estudios secundarios o inferiores es de un 40 % y un 60 % respectivamente. Es importante analizar las causas de las diferencias salariales entre hombres y mujeres, que se deben sin duda a las responsabilidades maternas de las mujeres y a las dificultades de conciliación, a la segregación laboral horizontal por motivo de género (en campos como la salud y la educación), a la precariedad laboral, sufrida mayormente por mujeres, al tamaño de la empresa (siendo las empresas pequeñas las que contratan a mayor número de mujeres) y a la propia mentalidad de las familias. Está comprobado que los adultos con mayores niveles de comprensión lectora y matemática disfrutan de mayor salud y mayor

participación política y social. En cuanto al gasto en educación total por alumno en España (4,3 % del PIB), los datos no son muy diferentes del gasto de los países de la OCDE (5,2 %) y de la UE22 (4,9 %). En la mayoría de los países, el mayor porcentaje de gasto público está destinado a la Educación Secundaria, seguida por Educación Primaria y Terciaria. En España, por su estructura administrativa descentralizada, el 80 % de los fondos públicos provienen de los gobiernos regionales o autonómicos.

### **3. El entorno de los centros educativos y el aprendizaje**

Este último capítulo se centra en el trabajo de los profesores y directores de los centros educativos. En lo relativo al número de horas de clase impartidas, a mayor nivel educativo, mayor número de horas lectivas. En particular, España supera a los países de la OCDE y de la UE22 en las horas dedicadas a Lengua, Matemáticas y Ciencias en Primaria y Secundaria. La ratio de alumnos por profesor es inferior en España a la de la OCDE, pero similar a la de la UE22. Cabe mencionar aquí el descenso de la natalidad aunque también existen variables geográficas. La ratio de alumnos por clase y la calidad del profesorado son elementos claves en la calidad de la enseñanza. En España los profesores dedican más horas a impartir clase que el resto de los países analizados y menos a otras tareas como preparación de clases, comunicación con los padres, actividades extraescolares, gestión escolar o formación. En relación con los salarios, llama especialmente la atención que el informe indica que en España los salarios son superiores a la media de los países de la OCDE y de la UE22, aunque se tarde más años en alcanzar las remuneraciones más altas de la escala. Las cifras se dan en dólares, por lo que no es del todo ilustrativo. La imagen del profesor es muy valorada por los propios profesores, aunque estos creen estarlo menos por la sociedad. Esta valoración no se ha modificado mucho en los últimos veinte años. El prestigio social y la valoración de los profesores están estrechamente ligados con las buenas relaciones entre el profesorado, la colaboración con el centro y el alumnado. En lo que a la edad del profesorado respecta, los profesores más jóvenes son los de Irlanda, Reino Unido y Chile. En España seis de cada diez profesores tienen más de 40 años en Educación Primaria, cifra que aumenta a 7 en Secundaria, con una gran mayoría de mujeres, que disminuye en la Educación Terciaria. Los países con mayor paridad universitaria son Finlandia y Estados Unidos. Por último, se destaca la importancia de los directores, como columna vertebral de los centros, ya que son el nexo de unión entre profesores, alumnos, padres y el sistema educativo. En España presentan una media de 49 años y el número de directoras es inferior que al de la media del resto de países estudiados. El liderazgo escolar se tiene cada vez más en cuenta, y ha de hacer frente a nuevos desafíos que representan los rasgos de la sociedad, como la diversidad, las necesidades educativas especiales y la retención de los estudiantes para que no se vayan a otros centros. El rol de los directores influye en la eficacia de los centros, en el desarrollo de nuevas prácticas de enseñanza y en los resultados académicos del alumnado. Esto ha sido estudiado y analizado también en los informes PISA y TALIS.

3



**RESEÑA de:** FERNÁNDEZ-SORIA, J.M.; LÓPEZ, M.; CRUZ, J.I.; BASCUÑÁN, J.; MENGUAL, S.; GARCÍA, S.; LLORET, C.; y GRAU, R. (EDS.) (2016): *La formación inicial del profesorado de educación secundaria* (Valencia: Tirant Humanidades). ISBN: 978-84-16556-67-0

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**A CARGO DE:**

David Revesado Carballares\*

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El libro que se presenta a continuación recoge una serie de ponencias presentadas y defendidas en el *I Seminario Internacional* que tuvo lugar en la Universidad de Valencia, a cargo de la Unidad de Investigación en Política de la Educación —UINPE—, entre los días 3 y 4 de junio del año 2015. Esta obra ha sido posible gracias a la estrecha colaboración con la editorial Tirant Humanidades. El editor principal del libro, es el profesor Juan Manuel Fernández-Soria, catedrático del área de conocimiento de Teoría e Historia de la Educación en dicha universidad. Le acompañan como editores del libro, los investigadores: Manuel López Torrijo, José Ignacio Cruz Orozco, Javier Bascuñán Cortés, Santiago Mengual Andrés, Sandra García de Fez, Carmen Lloret Catalá y Roser Grau Vidal. Será el profesor Fernández-Soria, el redactor de la introducción con la que se abre esta obra. En ella se pone de manifiesto la gran preocupación que existe a nivel internacional hacia la formación inicial del profesorado de educación secundaria bajo la premisa de que la calidad de los docentes, es la variable más significativa a la hora de hablar del rendimiento de los alumnos. Además, existe el convencimiento de que esta calidad a la que aludimos, está estrechamente relacionada con la formación inicial del profesorado, cuyo propósito se asienta sobre tres grandes ejes: atraer, formar y retener.

La estructura del libro, está sujeta a cuatro partes claramente diferenciadas. La primera de ellas, titulada *la formación inicial de profesores de enseñanza secundaria en clave europea*, contiene aportaciones de investigadores de gran relevancia en el plano nacional e internacional, y consta de cinco capítulos. El primero de ellos, a cargo de Alejandro Tiana Ferrer, centra su atención en las políticas europeas de calidad en la formación de profesores, unas políticas que son entendidas por el autor como una pequeña parcela dentro del marco de la profesión docente. En segundo lugar, Gill Richards explica un modelo de capacitación profesional para docentes, a partir de la reforma conservadora llevada a cabo en el año 2010 en Reino Unido; una reforma con la que el gobierno británico apostaba por una formación inicial de profesores, impartida por los propios docentes en activo, y no desde las universidades, basada en el proyecto académico renovado del Nottingham Institute of Education. Francesc Pedró centra su intervención en el uso efectivo de la tecnología en la formación de los docentes, considerando estas nuevas tecnologías como una herramienta eficaz al servicio de la educación. Seguidamente, Leoncio Vega Gil, analiza la calidad de los modelos globales de formación, centrándose fundamentalmente en cuatro: Singapur, Finlandia, Reino Unido y Hong Kong. La tesis que postula el autor, se concentra en defender que la calidad del desempeño de los docentes, depende de la calidad de los procesos de transición, prestando especial atención a dos tiempos clave: acceso y reclutamiento. Por último, Joan María Senent analiza la calidad y los modelos de formación de profesores en Europa, haciendo especial hincapié en los modelos de formación y en el rol desempeñado por los docentes.

La segunda parte de esta obra, que la componen cuatro capítulos, se titula *Políticas de calidad en la formación inicial del profesorado de educación secundaria. Experiencias y análisis en España*. El primero de los capítulos, a cargo de Josep Alsina, muestra un pequeño análisis de la formación inicial de profesores en la Universidad de Barcelona, prestando atención a los retos futuros que se plantean. Por otro lado, María Rosa Salas Labayen y Juan Pedro Montañés Gómez, ponen su foco de atención sobre las políticas de calidad de la formación inicial de docentes, a partir de la experiencia del Máster de Secundaria de la Universidad de Comillas. Cristina Yanes Cabrera, en una línea semejante de trabajo, analiza los modelos de formación de profesores en Andancia. Por último, Alfredo Jiménez Eguizábal y Carmen Palmero Cámara, abordan los sistemas de garantía de calidad en el Máster de Educación Secundaria.

La tercera parte, que la conforman cinco capítulos, lleva por título *Políticas valencianas de calidad en la formación inicial del profesorado de educación secundaria. Modelos de gestión*. Durante el primer capítulo, Ana María Botella Nicolás desarrolla una propuesta de mejora del TFM en la especialidad de música, para la Universitat de València. Posteriormente, Valentín Gil Lorenzo, centra su intervención en las políticas de calidad en la Universidad Jaume I de Castellón. Finalmente, encontramos tres nuevos capítulos, donde se analizan los diferentes modelos de gestión en la formación inicial de profesores, de las universidades de Alicante, «San Vicente Mártir» y Valencia, respectivamente. El primero de ellos a cargo de José María Esteve Faubel; el segundo a manos de Raquel Ibáñez Martínez; y último, el que desarrollan Sandra García de Fez y Javier Bascuñán Cortés.

La cuarta y última sección de este libro, *Otras miradas y reflexiones en torno a la calidad de la formación inicial del profesorado de educación secundaria*, está formada por tres nuevas aportaciones. La primera, a cargo de Manuel López-Torrijo y Fran J. García-García, donde analizan la inclusión ausente en los programas de formación de profesores, pese al notable aumento de la inclusión educativa en los nuevos programas de formación. Seguidamente, Roser Grau Vidal, pone el foco de atención sobre las competencias para la convivencia dentro de los programas de formación. Finalmente, Alexandra Carrasco González hace una pequeña revisión del modelo de formación inicial de profesores en nuestro país, prestando especial atención en los modelos de formación y a la influencia supranacional sobre estos.

Por todo ello, consideramos que este libro es una pieza fundamental, y de obligada lectura, tanto para la comunidad comparativa, como para cualquier otro colectivo interesado en la temática expuesta, con especial atención a la profesión docente de educación secundaria. La indudable calidad de los trabajos incluidos en el libro, así como de los autores de los mismos, avalan nuestros consejos.